

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

Petition Number: [PE1866](#)

Main Petitioner: Daryl Cooper

Subject: Introduce legislation to improve bus travel for wheelchair users

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to introduce legislation so that wheelchair users are able to face frontwards when travelling on a bus.

Background

Requirements set out in the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000 mean that all full sized (that is, able to carry 22 or more passengers) single deck buses, double deck buses and coaches currently providing scheduled passenger services in Scotland should be fully wheelchair accessible. All such vehicles must be fitted with a boarding device to enable wheelchair users to get on and off, such as a ramp, and a dedicated space for a standard wheelchair.

There is no statutory requirement for a wheelchair space in a bus or coach to face rearwards. However, there are significant differences in the requirements for the design and use of rearward and forward-facing wheelchair spaces. A wheelchair user travelling in a rearward facing space can travel unrestrained if their wheelchair is parked against a backrest or bulkhead. However, a wheelchair user travelling in a forward-facing space must use the fitted wheelchair restraint system and wheelchair user restraint system – usually a seatbelt.

[UK Government guidance](#) for bus and coach manufacturers and operators states:

“If a wheelchair user needs to travel seated in their wheelchair they must only be carried in a wheelchair space and facing either forwards or rearwards according to the instructions or diagram for the use of the space. Buses will usually be constructed with a backrest to enable a wheelchair to travel rearward facing. Coaches are likely to be designed for a forward facing wheelchair.”

Scottish Government Action

Equal opportunities legislation is largely reserved to the UK Parliament, including legislation governing public service vehicle accessibility and design. Given this, the Scottish Government has not considered issues around the accessibility or internal layout of buses and coaches for wheelchair users.

Scottish Parliament Action

The Scottish Parliament has not considered issues around the accessibility or internal layout of buses and coaches for wheelchair users.

Key Organisations and relevant links

- **Department for Transport:** UK Government department responsible for legislation and guidance on vehicle design and use.
- **Transport Scotland:** Responsible for Scottish transport policy and national support bus services, including the national concessionary fares scheme for older and disabled people.
- **Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland:** Considers issues around disabled people's travel needs and advises Scottish Ministers on these matters.
- **Confederation of Passenger Transport:** UK-wide bus industry representative body.
- **Bus Users Scotland:** Bus passenger representative group.

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