

25th January 2016

Dear Sir or Madam,

Petition 'All on Board' accessible transport petition no: 1575

Thank you for providing the details of those that have engaged with the petition I am sure they provided a view that considered regulation requirements however, we believe that it may well be that it would be costly, time consuming and difficult but what we do not see in the reasoning of the objections to the spirit of the petition is the human approach that says clearly that it is possible to make changes.

Angel trains

In response therefore to Angel trains I provide the following; we do not consider it reasonable to merely rely on the minimum standards provided by the regulations, we are happy that there is compliance with the regulations but do not see any valid reason why the expressed considerations in the petition are not achievable in the longer term.

By working with groups such as Community a standardised approach could be developed for future rolling stock. Working to improve access must be paramount in our view to ensure accessibility for all members of society not just those able to navigate through a complex array of buttons and positions of access points. We therefore consider the objection somewhat negative.

Secondly on the issue of short notice changes to schedules trains and the issue of the wider UK infrastructure what better time seek to influence new rolling stock than when major projects are about to get underway. We therefore urge the Scottish Government to seek to develop a working group to look at championing changes to the way manufactures look and decide designs without real consideration to those less able to use the transport system, we therefore consider that the issue of the wider UK should be explored to ensure that influence on manufactures is placed to bear by ensuring the voice of those seeking to use the transport systems within Scotland but also beyond are assured a voice.

The response from the Transport Policy Directorate is welcome however, we do have a couple of points that we wish to raise for clarity.

We welcome the standardisation of the height of buttons throughout rolling stock however, we would like to see this extended to the standardising of the location of buttons this will enable those using the transport to do so in a safe and more user friendly way.

In supporting organisations that provide life skills training to enable independent living would it also not be relevant to the training to be able to provide a standardised system that could be incorporated into training, independent living is important to the individuals and the societies in which we all live. We therefore ask that the request is explored further and that at design stages we seek to influence at all levels as a priority.

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We note the response indicates an awareness of the problems with multi locking mechanisms and suggests that users would be better placed to access the single locking toilets on the train and in doing so staff will be at hand to offer help and support we seek clarity on the steps being taken to rectify the problem.

Although we welcome that the response assures that staff will be on hand we are all too aware this is not always the case, in addition locating the single use toilets alone for visually impaired members at busy times on trains would be considerably difficult to navigate if possible at all. The issue is one off inclusivity and as such the petition is seeking to ensure that from the point of design through to roll out consideration is given to ensuring that the transport system is accessible to all without the need to seek out alternative toilets, without the humiliation of multi locking systems and further more we truly embrace the needs of all society.

SATA response;

We welcome in the main the response from SATA and agree that the issue although initiated as affecting those who are visually impaired evidently is far wider in its possible benefits. The example of telephones, keyboards and calculators appears simple and one, we have all taken for granted that there is a standardisation that is simply adopted as the most practical approach, then as rightly SATA indicate could this not be adopted across transport. The 'functional not just a design' point is extremely relevant in taking the issues in the petition forward.

Overall we welcome the approach to developing a dialogue with manufacturers at all levels of decision processes if we are truly to bring about change and support accessible transport in the spirit of Alex Scott's heartfelt petition it will require us to work together to bring about change and Community NLBD through our long history is ready to play our part, Scotland should be the innovator in bringing about meaningful change and we seek your support in doing so.

Kind regards,

Bev Bambrough

Director Education and Equality