

I use public footpaths, trains, trams & buses to move around my local community and live my ordinary life.

My Whole of Journey begins pushing in my wheelchair down the street to board the W90 bus to Clarence Park railway station. In order to get to the bus stop I need to cross from the Eastern side of Winston Avenue to the Western side. There is no pedestrian crossing close by on Winston Avenue so I have to wait for a gap in-between the continuous trail of cars.

The bus arrives lowers its suspension and the driver pulls up a metal ramp lowering it to the pavement. I usually need the driver to push me up the ramp and round the tight bend into the central corridor of the bus. He then returns the ramp to its original position whilst I try to raise the seats which are in the down position. This is sometimes not possible due to the amount of force required to do this. I am usually given assistance by an able bodied passenger or on some occasions the driver checks the seats are raised first before lowering the ramp. I press the button to provide a signal to the driver that I wish to get off however more often than not the button is not working and so the driver starts to drive away after the other passengers have disembarked and I have to shout to alert him and he stops at the next stop and lets me off. So now let me describe getting off the bus after the ramp has been deployed. The angle of the ramp to the footpath is too acute resulting in the underside of my footplate striking the pavement forcing the chair to stop suddenly. It now requires further assistance from the driver to pull me forward whilst holding the chair until I have all four wheels on the pavement.

I have been told by some drivers " we are not supposed to provide any physical assistance as we are not insured to do this"

Now when crossing the train track there is a large enough gap between the ground and metal track for my front castor wheels to wedge in between. This makes me anxious when I 'bunny hop' over each track.

Now getting onto the train platform is impossible for me to do independently due to the steep incline from pavement level to platform level. I wait (in the rain and wind or blazing heat) until somebody passes by and ask for a push up.

No problem getting on or off the train and no problem finding a designated wheelchair space. I've never had a button not work or a ramp slope too steep. In fact trains and trams are great once you're on board. It's just the ageing stations that prevent independent access for people with a disability.