



Iain Stewart MP
Chair
Transport Select Committee
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

18 December 2023

Dear Mr Stewart

Transport Committee inquiry - Accessible transport: legal obligations

There were a couple of points that I didn't get to make when I gave oral evidence to the inquiry recently and as suggested, I am therefore following up with the details. I'm sorry for the delay and hope this information isn't too late to be considered.

We discussed closed-door transport services and it is important to consider the nature of these. Such services are provided for a defined group of passengers, who are eligible to travel because they meet specific criteria – usually that they attend a certain school and live a certain distance from their nearest school. The group usually remains unchanged during an academic year. The individuals that make up the group and their special characteristics are known in advance. It is therefore possible to make provision for any special needs in advance; this includes wheelchair access. It should therefore not be necessary to provide wheelchair access if none of the passengers have a need for this. This is why we believe that the provision of wheelchair access on the basis of demand is appropriate and balances the needs of users and the costs of provision.

We believe that demand for wheelchair accessibility on closed-door home-to-school (HTS) services is generally very low. Responses from 13 local authorities that we requested information from indicated that they procure 2377 public service vehicles (coaches & buses) for HTS services and we believe these would regularly transport around 110,000 children. However, the authorities advised that only three of these services regularly transport a wheelchair user. In most cases, due to the challenges of getting a wheelchair to or from a stop where the wheelchair lift can be deployed, those with accessibility needs accept alternative transport such as a taxi or minibus when the local authority offers this.

I hope this additional information is useful to the Committee when forming its recommendations.

Yours sincerely



Keith McNally
Operations Director, Confederation of Passenger Transport