

The attitudes and behaviours of others were a key challenge with travel during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Disabled people were most likely to find the attitudes and behaviours of non-disabled people a challenge when using transport during the pandemic.

In February 2022, 32% of disabled people agreed this was a challenge, making it the challenge most likely to be selected from a range of potential challenges.

Only a minority of interactions when travelling are negative for most participants. However, negative interactions with others can significantly impact confidence to travel.

"I think people need to be a little bit more educated and aware. I can walk, but people don't know the pain I'm in, or the impact. Sometimes when I get on the bus I really need to sit in the disabled seat, and you can see people watching you."

However, positive experiences interacting with non-disabled people can also make a big difference in someone's journey.

How you can help?

Be more conscientious when travelling.

Be aware that not all disabilities are visible.

Offer your seat.

Be patient with others.

Jed – long-term health condition, cancer

Jed from Sutton Coldfield is 67 years old, and currently undergoing cancer treatment. Chemotherapy has greatly weakened his immune system, making him more susceptible to Covid-19. As such, Jed has reduced his use of public transport, mainly using hospital transport to travel to and from appointments, and occasionally taking the bus for essentials like food shopping.

Mask wearing no longer being mandatory is a real challenge for Jed, as it increases his anxiety about catching Covid-19. In addition to this, he finds that non-disabled people are sitting in the accessible seats at the front of the bus, and due to his long-term health condition not being visible, won't give them up unless he asks.

To mitigate this challenge, Jed avoids travelling on the bus at crowded times, reducing his risk of catching Covid-19, and does a lateral flow test after every outing.



about people understanding that the seats at the front of the bus are meant for old or more vulnerable people. They just sit there. I've seen disabled people having to sit at the back. I know everyone has to get on the bus but it just gets full and you can't do anything about it.



With my social anxiety, it's affected me greatly. A lot of the time it feels as if I can't breathe. In certain instances, I've had panic attacks which have caused me to pass out (which is never good on a train or bus).



Hamid - social, behavioural and learning difficulties, mental health condition

Hamid uses public transport to travel to his university. Prior to the pandemic, Hamid would use this time to revise and read his course materials, as services were usually quiet. As restrictions have been lifted, Hamid has returned to in-person classes and has found that the buses and trains have grown very crowded as a result of services being reduced in his area during the pandemic.

Hamid has found the experience of travelling to class extremely stressful since the pandemic. His conditions lead to him feeling anxious and experiencing sensory overload in crowds. However, Hamid has no other way to travel. He has continued attending classes but tries to no longer leave the house at any other time unless necessary, negatively impacting his quality of life.