



**Glasgow Disability Alliance**  
Confident Connected Contributing

‘Hard to reach or  
easy to ignore?’  
**Accessible Travel  
for Active Lives**



# About Glasgow Disability Alliance

- Founded 2001 by small group of working class disabled people
- 50 members: collective voice to tackle barriers and improve lives
- Accessible lifelong learning, peer support, confidence to claim rights
- Membership free to anyone with any impairment or long-term condition including:

Sensory impairments, physical impairments,  
Autism, Mental Health Conditions, Brain Injury,  
Neurological conditions, Learning difficulties



# Social Model of Disability

- “Medical Model”: disabled person’s impairment is the problem, they need to be cured or fixed

## Social Model:

- Impairments and conditions are a normal part of life!
- Problem is the world is not designed to accommodate different bodies and needs...
- **Barriers** in the environment, and the way we run things put many people at a disadvantage
- Crux of disability rights movement: remove barriers so we can live full, active lives on an equal basis with others.

# Medical Model vs Social Model

Her **impairment**  
is the problem!  
They should  
cure her or give  
her prosthetics.

The *medical model*  
of disability



The **stairs** are  
the problem!  
They should  
build a ramp.

The *social model*  
of disability

Image by UAA: <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/accessibility/topic/architecture.cfm>

# Examples of Barriers:

**Inaccessible housing – can't get out, or get around to wash, eat, live!**

10,000+ disabled people across Scotland are on waiting lists for an accessible home. Some have been waiting decades.

**Inequality in Education and Employment**

22% of working age disabled people have no qualifications, compared with 6.8% non-disabled

**Poverty and cuts to services**

48% of all those in poverty in the UK are disabled or in a household with a disabled person; 70% GDA members live in Scotland's most deprived deciles  
Welfare 'reform' and cuts to social care disproportionately affect disabled people



# Inaccessible Transport

- **Subway unusable for most**
- **Trains** restricted access in stations, limited space on many carriages, 24hrs notice required, information can be very unclear, assistance isn't foolproof
- **Buses:** limited space (prams, shopping – can be a battle); Driver awareness is crucial; negative attitudes / hate crime; 'MyBus' restricted hours; walking distance to bus stops can be
- **Taxis:** only option for many people, cost prohibitive



When it comes to plans...



# Inaccessible Environment

- As well as housing, many public buildings, facilities and services inaccessible:

Not just ramps: doorways, accessible toilets, seating, layout, lighting

- **Streets and pavements:** potholes, scarce dropped kerbs, street furniture: disabled people's average mileage can be many more times Google's estimation, when seeking out accessible ways from A to B.



# Inequalities in Active travel

Most well-off Glaswegians are 3 times more likely to cycle than the least well-off: and more likely to own bicycles.

...Risk that investing in cycling infrastructure and initiatives might **reinforce existing inequalities in health** if they only benefit those that already cycle.

Active Travel in Glasgow: Jill Muirie GCPH March 2017



# Cycling



- Adapted bikes – great for sport
- As a mode of transport, is it a realistic option?
- Cost, infrastructure, safety, confidence – mobilising at destination?

# Walking

- Planning and layout of
  - roads
  - pavements
  - dropped kerbs
  - street furniture
  - parking
  - crossings
  - Lack of seating in public places
- All of these can create barriers that stop disabled people getting from A to B.
- Restricted mobility – power chairs, limited access

# Access: barriers to an active life

- **Shared Space** – very controversial: exacerbates many challenges disabled people face navigating streets and using public transport. Ideal is to instil awareness – long way to go! How can we address this?
- **Traffic-free zones:** prohibitive for disabled people. Exempt taxis and mobility cars, or if an event, provide wheelchairs / buggies and support to mobilise
- **Improvements to pavements, kerbs, roads:** involve disabled people, so we can access our streets and more of us can travel actively too
- **Recognise** that even if all barriers were removed, **taxis and mobility cars** are crucial lifeline for many disabled people to get anywhere.



# Active Travel: Where do disabled people fit?

Vast infrastructure improvements are needed before disabled people can use public transport, and mobilise around the city streets.

- How do we ensure that active travel does not have detrimental impact on disabled people (e.g. shared spaces)?
- How can you involve disabled people/ other equalities groups in your planning/ and projects/ work?
- What needs to happen for disabled people to be involved in Active Travel planning and action?
- Any other thoughts?