



# Independent Disability Advisory Group

November 2019



MAYOR OF LONDON



**TRANSPORT  
FOR LONDON**  
EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

# Making London more accessible and inclusive

Transport for London (TfL) has an Independent Disability Advisory Group (IDAG) that helps shape our work to keep London moving, working and growing in a way that works for everyone.

Its advice is invaluable as we are committed to making London more accessible and inclusive. IDAG provides strategic and practical recommendations which are based on best practice for inclusivity, informed by evidence and supported by lived experience.

It has 10 paid members with a variety of professional expertise and lived experience of disability. The members are not employed by TfL or the Greater London Authority (GLA) to ensure the group's independence.

## What does IDAG do?

IDAG helps TfL better understand the impact of its policies, projects and programmes on disabled customers. It evaluates and influences our strategies, policies, services and projects, highlighting where change is needed to reduce barriers to travel. These barriers may be practical (eg lack of seating), psychological (eg feeling anxious) or attitudinal (ie staff or other passengers). Recommendations will be based on best practice, informed by evidence and supported by lived experience.

It encourages TfL to move beyond compliance and to think creatively and inclusively about how our transport network can work for everyone, today and tomorrow. It has strong working relationships throughout TfL's business areas and feeds into our diversity and inclusion governance structure, which helps TfL to embed accessibility and inclusivity.

## Staynton Brown

Director of Diversity and Inclusion

IDAG's advice is invaluable as we are committed to making London more accessible and inclusive for everyone



<b>What IDAG does</b>	<b>What IDAG is not</b>
Strategic advice body, with expertise in access, disability issues, transport, policy, customer service, marketing and other areas	Campaign group  Representative of all disabled visitors or Londoners – TfL has a separate process for obtaining feedback
Provides internal confidential advice to TfL on policies, projects and programmes	Access group to solve detailed access problems – access consultants and charities will usually be used in these situations
Issues guidance recommendations and/or constructive appraisal/feedback but without power to veto	Sign off group

### **What expertise do IDAG members have?**

All members must have professional expertise that will be useful for TfL. This ranges from expertise in access or disability issues, to transport, policy, customer experience, marketing and other areas.

Every member also has experience of living with disability, whether it is sensory or mobility impairments, mental health or specific learning difficulties. Some will have more than one impairment or condition. Some have lived with these since birth, while others acquired them as adults. This gives the group a broad collective perspective and a personal understanding of what it is like to experience barriers when travelling in London.

What makes IDAG powerful and gives it authority is this combination of professional expertise and personal experience.

IDAG biographies can be found on the following pages.

### **Want to be a member of IDAG?**

IDAG vacancies are advertised on TfL's website. However, as we have just recruited five new members, it is unlikely we will be recruiting more in the near future. If you want to give feedback to TfL as to how we can improve transport, please contact customer services.

# Joanna Wootten

## Chair

Joanna is an age, disability and inclusion expert who loves using public transport in London. She believes everyone should have access to public transport and maintains that if you get it right for disabled people, you get it right for all passengers, including older people and families with young children.

She has been Chair of IDAG since 2017 and facilitates IDAG in encouraging, challenging and supporting TfL so that London's historic transport system becomes increasingly accessible and inclusive, in the short and long term.

As a consultant, she works with private and public sector organisations plus non-government organisations in thinking strategically and practically about the needs of their disabled and older customers, and employees. She has ongoing relationships with some organisations. For example, she has worked with the Sainsbury's customer experience team for more than five years, providing advice, conducting research, running focus groups and managing trials. She is also a member of Pay.UK's end user advisory panel.



If you get it right for disabled people, you get it right for all passengers

Joanna, who worked as a solicitor before joining the charity sector, has held senior roles including deputy and acting chief executive officer of SignHealth, and director at the Business Disability Forum. She has a MSc in Gerontology (older people) from King's College London. She is a governor of Frank Barnes School for deaf children.



There are 78 step-free London Underground stations



Assistance dogs are welcome on all TfL services

# Agnes Fletcher

Agnes has championed disability rights for nearly three decades – from her time as a campaigner for anti-discrimination legislation in the early 1990s, to her current work promoting diversity strategies, policies and plans across public, private and third sector organisations.

For 12 years, she has provided advice, training and consultancy services to more than 150 organisations. In 2014, she conducted a statutory independent review for the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Previously, she worked for the Disability Rights Commission until it closed in 2007. Her final role there was as Director of Policy and Communications.

In 2015, she co-authored the Cabinet Office research report 'Tackling disability and health-related barriers to progression within the Civil Service', and in 2018, Agnes wrote 'Disabled people's inclusion within UK technical and vocational education and training', published by the British Council.

Previously vice-chair of Radar (now Disability Rights UK), Agnes has also been a trustee of three other charities. She is currently a governor at her local primary school.



Agnes has championed disability rights for nearly three decades

# Allison Peter

Allison is a disability expert with specialist knowledge in mental health and neurodiversity, as well as in measuring the impact of projects and interventions.

Allison's experience has included seven years in both advisory and support roles where she aimed to bring about change for young people and adults with disabilities. She is currently the head of Mentoring Services at BITT Services.

Her other work has included four years in disability services in the higher education sector. As a disability advisor, Allison was responsible for assessing barriers to education for individuals with diverse physical and mental health conditions, and making strategic recommendations for reasonable adjustments. In addition, she worked with academic and professional services leaders to advise on inclusive policies and practices. Allison has also worked as a specialist mentor for adults with mental health conditions, brain injury, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and long-term illnesses.

Allison has been responsible for assessing barriers to education for individuals with diverse physical and mental health conditions



Allison also spent two years working as an analysis and impact manager in higher education. She used surveys, focus groups and quantitative methods to understand barriers to success for adults at university, predict student outcomes, and assess the impact of interventions. She has two Masters degrees – an MSc in Psychology of Education from University College London and MSc in Data Science from University of East London.





Dial-a-Ride is TfL's free accessible service for people who have difficulties using public transport



Everybody should feel safe and confident when travelling

# Esther Leighton

Esther wants all disabled people to have equal opportunities and access as part of a more inclusive society. For more than a decade she has been working towards this as a consultant, trainer, campaigner and peer support mentor.

Esther provides diversity and inclusion training and consultancy for universities, businesses, charities, schools and the wider community. She particularly enjoys helping organisations to come up with ways to embed changes and ensure consistency across the organisation. She also gets excited about projects where she's part of a creative and one-off solution.

Since 2005, she has been working to influence local and national policy on behalf of disabled people. This has included reviewing town transport networks and advising on improvements to encourage more disabled people to use public transport. She has undertaken research into children's early mobility and how movement affects thinking, and has a particular interest in research-driven transport decisions.

Esther has been working to influence local and national policy on behalf of disabled people



She co-founded the Cambridge Disabled Students' Campaign and was heavily involved in advocating for disabled students' rights, including obtaining extended study, accessible transport and paid support. She is one of the founding trustees of Reasonable Access, her most recent 'passion project'. This Disabled People's Organisation uses peer support to help people to understand, assert and enforce disability rights.

Esther enjoys disability sport and has just completed her first triathlon. She founded a RaceRunning club in the East of England where she will soon lose her current title of only, and thus best, RaceRunning athlete. Esther is particularly interested in the inclusion of disabled pedestrians and cyclists.

# James Lee

James works as a consultant on social mobility and equalities issues for a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations. His job takes him to a range of locations across London and he is reliant on an accessible and inclusive public transport network.

He believes that public transport plays a pivotal role in providing economic opportunity and improving quality of life: the work of IDAG ensures that provision is accessible to all. James will consider intersectionality when providing advice and support to colleagues at TfL. He likes to emphasise the importance of both policy and practice in providing an inclusive public transport network, and has a long history of doing so with campaigning organisations and statutory authorities.

Outside his work as a consultant, James is also the Chair of the Access Forum at the O2 Arena; Chair of the Grants Committee for BBC Children in Need (London and South East) and sits on advisory boards for the UK Cinema Association; Habinteg Housing Association; Scope; UnLtd; The Joseph Patrick Trust and the GLA.



Public transport plays a pivotal role in providing economic opportunity and improving quality of life



Most Tube trains have at least two designated wheelchair spaces per carriage



TfL is working towards making London Overground fully accessible

# Jean Marc Feghali

Being severely visually-impaired himself, with progressively degrading sight, Jean Marc realises that his impact on civil engineering will need to come quickly and truly change the lives of the visually- impaired. This was the motivation behind his Master's thesis, which highlighted significant mobility issues on the London Underground for visually-impaired users, and his PhD research in the mobility and evacuation of those with a visual impairment.

Studying at Imperial College London and winning the Student Medal for Outstanding Achievement and the Walter Redlich Prize for Academic Excellence, Jean Marc has conducted breakthrough research including the first group dynamics testing focused on the visually-impaired.

Jean Marc also leads the research and development at Arikovani UK to develop cutting-edge accessibility technologies



Jean Marc also leads the research and development at Arikovani UK to develop cutting-edge accessibility technologies. In collaboration with Microsoft and international institutions for the blind, his team has created a unique smart cane, called WeWALK, for the visually-impaired. This technology has been demonstrated at 10 Downing Street, the House of Commons and several national and international conferences.

As a regular public transport user and a specialist in transport and accessibility, Jean Marc believes that accessibility challenges must be overcome effectively, regardless of size, as every journey and every destination matters.

# Jo Becker

Jo is a freelance coach and consultant, working with organisations and individuals to encourage the enablement of everybody. This ranges from supporting creatives to build successful businesses, to developing marketing strategies that consider all audiences and advising organisations on the inclusivity of their practices.

The onset of a genetic condition in her late twenties affected Jo's mobility, highlighting the multitude of barriers and issues – physical and otherwise – that disable people worldwide. For Jo, true inclusivity requires a holistic approach to transport – from product design to the built environment, communications and customer service.

Jo spent several years working in marketing at TfL, and continues to work with transport organisations, developing travel-related marketing strategies for Abu Dhabi's Department of Transport and Highways England, as well as for major sporting events.

True inclusivity requires a holistic approach to transport – from product design to the built environment, communications and customer service



This year, Jo has enjoyed working with a number of disability charities, including Scope, Disability Rights UK and Muscular Dystrophy UK. She also joined the grant allocating panel of the Joseph Patrick Trust and has been selected as a candidate for Disability Rights UK's Board of Trustees.

Jo is studying towards a MA in Disability Studies at the University of Leeds, underpinning her work and lived experience with academic foundations so that she can better contribute to the work being done to improve inclusion, equal opportunities and the representation of disabled people in society.





TfL staff are trained to assist disabled customers



We aim to make London safer and more accessible for everyone

# Maggie Heraty OBE

Maggie has had a long career in transport and logistics, with an MSc in Transport from Cranfield University.

As a transport consultant in the 1980/90s, Maggie carried out many innovative research studies related to access and mobility for older and disabled people in London and nationwide. These covered operations, practices and policy, with topics ranging from the best colour for bus handrails to the operation of dial-a-rides and kneeling buses. For nine years she was Rapporteur to an international working group in this field, covering meetings and international conferences in Western Europe and North America, with associated technical visits.

Before disability issues became mainstream, Maggie raised awareness among professional bodies, universities and charities, promoting the introduction of specialised lectures and courses. She was awarded an OBE for her services to disabled people.

Maggie has carried out many research studies including the best colour for bus handrails, to the operation of kneeling buses



She worked on transport development projects in less developed countries worldwide, before joining the UN Refugee Agency in 1995 to manage transport and logistics in areas affected by war and natural disasters.

When reduced mobility ended her humanitarian work, she wanted to continue to make a difference. She was delighted to join IDAG and to draw on her past work while contributing lessons from her current experience of travelling around London as a mobile disabled passenger.

# Natalie Doig

Natalie is a disability rights and equality expert. As someone who is unable to drive because of a visual impairment, Natalie has relied on public transport all of her life and has developed a keen professional and personal interest in making transport more accessible for everyone. She is happy to be called a transport nerd.

Natalie has been a member of IDAG since 2016, contributing to TfL's equality impact assessment work, and as a keen walker, the work particularly relating to an accessible street environment. She has been involved in the disability rights field for more than 20 years, including at the Disability Rights Commission and Royal National Institute of Blind People. Her work to promote accessible public transport has led to her travelling around England on a bus full of disabled comedians, handing in a suitcase of postcard campaigner testimonies to the Minister for Transport, completing a bus relay from England to Scotland,

As someone who is unable to drive because of a visual impairment, Natalie has relied on public transport all of her life



providing evidence to parliamentary select committees, and appearing more often than she can remember on local news at various bus depots wearing a high visibility vest.

Natalie currently works as the Inclusion and Diversity lead at Scope and has spent the last decade running a business providing disability and equality advice and services to the third, public and private sectors.

Natalie is also a volunteer campaigner for better local public transport in Bedfordshire. She enjoys photography, creative writing, eating cake and is a real book worm.



Every bus route in the Capital is wheelchair accessible

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Priority Seating  
Please  
consider other  
passengers  
when using  
this seat



#travelkind

Please offer  
me a seat



Public transport should be accessible for all, regardless of their disability

# Sarah Rennie

Sarah is a disability equality and accessibility specialist.

Living in Birmingham but working in London several days a week, Sarah believes disabled visitors and tourists should be able to get around the Capital in an intuitive and spontaneous way, without extra cost or time.

She provides advice, project management and training to clients on inclusive practice, policy and customer experience products. With a particular interest in transport, she was commissioned to lead on accessibility during the mobilisation and first year of West Midlands Trains and Transport for Wales. Sarah has also developed Accessible Travel Policies (and previously Disabled People's Protection Policy) for several train operators. Her other clients include Greater Anglia, Transport for All, Shaw Trust, Network Rail, Sheffield Hallam University and National Express West Midlands.

Sarah is a director of Sisters of Frida, an experimental collective of disabled women. This has allowed her to advocate for disabled women and girls at the UN in Geneva, as well as develop her understanding of how our multiple identities (eg gender, age, ethnicity and sexuality) overlap with disability discrimination. She previously worked as a property solicitor before re-training as an accessibility professional.



Sarah believes disabled visitors and tourists should be able to get around the Capital in an intuitive and spontaneous way

To find out more, please contact  
the Diversity and Inclusion Team

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