

**We are Communities Inc** - a social enterprise passionate tackling inequalities faced by the most disadvantaged groups.

## **BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES**



**Building Stronger Communities** is a project that empowers people to overcome discrimination by building their skills to better support and understand each other. We want to build resilience within the communities affected by hate so that they are part of the solution in addressing the decline of community cohesion.

### **Contact us:**

 0115 964 8227

 [www.communitiesinc.org.uk](http://www.communitiesinc.org.uk)

 [admin@communitiesinc.org.uk](mailto:admin@communitiesinc.org.uk)

 Communities\_INC

 Communities Inc

Dec 2019

In recent years we have seen an increase in hate incidents and crimes committed against people with disabilities and the Government's national hate crime strategy identifies public transport as an emerging 'high-risk environment' for hate crime.

Disability hate crime ranges from name calling, offensive gestures and cyber bullying to threats, physical attacks and violence. However, incidents in any form can have a profoundly negative impact.

During National Hate Crime Awareness Week 2019, we worked with Nottingham Mencap and Disability Support to run dialogues on the issue of disability hate crime on public transport. These built on two dialogues we held back in 2017. In the first of the 2019 dialogues, people with disabilities shared their experiences and opinions on what transport providers could do to address the issues. In the second dialogue, we shared their feedback with transport providers such as Stagecoach and NET Nottingham Trams, as well as representatives from the Council and the Police, and facilitated discussions on good practice.



## **Disability Hate Crime on Public Transport.**

Certain incidents came up repeatedly in our dialogues, one of which was those arising from disagreements over whether wheelchairs or pushchairs should take precedence in allocated spaces. Those who had experienced these common events were frequently in agreement as to what changes needed to take place in order to improve the situation.

Many people contributing to our dialogue had been the target of hate incidents which they felt had continued or escalated due to a lack of intervention from witnesses and/or members of staff. However, they also agreed that when bystanders had intervened, their impact had been extremely positive, even when it involved seemingly small actions.



## Key issues:

- **Lack of understanding amongst staff** such as not allowing sufficient time for passengers to get on and off the bus, failing to put down ramps or wearing headphones while driving meaning they cannot hear requests from passengers.
- **Lack of awareness and empathy from other passengers and staff** about the nature of disabilities and about upholding the rights of disabled people e.g. making fun and taking photos of a person's disability; responding negatively to how long it takes a person with a disability to get on/off the vehicle; causing or ignoring disagreements over whether a pushchair or wheelchair should take priority in the allocated space.
- **The effect of decisions made by councils and transport providers** e.g. cutting services to rural areas resulting in limited/no access to vital services for people with disabilities, bringing in new 'green buses' which restrict access where the allocated wheelchair space is too small for some chairs, and restrictions on disability passes adversely affecting users, including not being allowed to travel at peak times to get to work.

## Recommendations:

- **Hate crime awareness and bystander intervention training for transport staff**, so they feel empowered to take action when needed.
- **Disability awareness training** to help staff anticipate or react appropriately to problems and increased levels of autonomy for staff to address disability-related situations.
- **Regular consultations between councils and transport providers and people with disabilities** on issues such as the design of new vehicles, the provision of rural services and the use of concessionary passes.
- **Appropriate signage on all forms of public transport** to increase public awareness and empathy, such as signs stating that wheelchairs have legal priority over pushchairs in allocated spaces or hidden disabilities.
- **Increase hate crime and safe bystander interventions awareness** amongst the general population, to prevent incidents occurring in the first place.
- **Adapt and promote existing hate crime charters** to work for local transport providers.
- **Promote and work with existing schemes** such as the Sunflower Lanyard, The Access Card.

## Good practice:

- **NET Nottingham Trams was frequently cited as providing examples of good practice.** These included: 'Try a Tram' days and outreach projects, telecom systems enabling passengers to speak to the driver, marked squares on the floor at each stop indicating where to wait to get on and platforms built to be level with the doorways. NET staff have also been trained by Communities Inc in hate crime awareness.
- **Appropriate signage**, such as the signs on Nottingham City Transport vehicles, which helps to raise awareness and encourage empathy amongst passengers e.g. signs above priority seats stating that not all disabilities are visible.
- **CCTV cameras** across all forms of public transport, as these can deter potential perpetrators and enable the police to identify those who carry out a hate incident/crime.
- **Events such as these dialogues** due to the fact they enable all parties to openly identify, discuss and find appropriate solutions to, the issues involved.

## Our Partners:



Disability Support is a registered charity and has been set up to meet the needs of Nottingham's disabled people, carers and older people, in a fast, flexible and local way.

☎ 0115 978 50 95

✉ [info@ddnottingham.com](mailto:info@ddnottingham.com)

🌐 <https://www.ddnottingham.com>



Independent Nottinghamshire charity supporting people with learning disabilities to keep safe and to encourage the reporting of disability hate crime via training, campaigning, and working in partnership with a wide range of local and national partners.

☎ 0115 920 95 24

✉ [info@n-mencap.org](mailto:info@n-mencap.org)

🌐 [www.nottinghammencap.org.uk](http://www.nottinghammencap.org.uk)