# Disabled man removed from easyJet flight before take-off



A 79-year-old disabled man has reported being removed from an easyJet flight at Manchester Airport just minutes before take-off, after cabin crew expressed concerns about his ability to access the on-board toilet. Barry Dobner, who has been reliant on a wheelchair since suffering a stroke 18 years ago, was due to travel with his wife Alison and their friend Sheila to Athens for a two-week holiday on 3 April.

The couple had carefully arranged wheelchair-friendly transportation and accommodation in Greece, but their plans were abruptly thwarted when a cabin crew member overheard Barry discussing a portable urinal bottle he had brought in his hand luggage. Barry recounted the incident, stating, "A stewardess walked by and she said 'excuse me, do you have a urinal bottle?'. My wife said yes, in case of emergencies. She said 'hang on a minute'; she came back and said 'can your husband walk to the toilet'?"

Upon confirming that he was unable to walk, Barry claims the cabin crew insisted that he leave the plane, despite having informed easyJet of his need for assistance when booking the flight. He reflected on the scene, stating, "The whole plane was standing up watching what was going on. You can imagine how that made me feel."

Alison, 67, expressed her dismay at the treatment Barry received, acknowledging the couple's prior experiences flying with easyJet and other airlines without incidents. She remarked, "What upsets me the most is the way he was spoken to. To treat a disabled person like that was appalling, especially when they had all the information beforehand."

Barry reported that his experience has significantly impacted his emotional well-being. "I've always been a happy-go-lucky chap but this has knocked me back a bit," he said. "I feel like just an object, I'm not a person any more." He added, "Your confidence just disappears."

The Dobners believe they have incurred approximately £2,000 in losses due to the cancellation of their trip, which included pre-booked hotels and a hire car in Athens. After the incident, they were forced to arrange alternative transportation home from the airport and reported their experience to easyJet and their holiday insurance provider.

An easyJet spokesperson addressed the incident, expressing regret over the situation and confirming the airline's commitment to accessibility. The airline is reportedly in touch with Mr Dobner and his party to apologise for the error, offering a full refund for their flights and compensation for the denied boarding. The spokesperson also noted that easyJet supports around one million passengers requiring assistance each year, with a high satisfaction rate among those passengers.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.easysky.com/en/information-for/accessible-travel-guidelines> - This link provides general guidelines for accessible travel, which may relate to the airline's responsibilities in handling passengers with special needs.
* <https://www.easyjet.com/en/help/travel-documents/disabled-passengers> - This URL could offer insights into easyJet's policies for accommodating disabled passengers, which might have been relevant in the reported incident.
* <https://www.caa.co.uk/Passengers/PRMs/Assistance-when-you-travel/> - The UK Civil Aviation Authority provides information on rights and assistance for passengers with reduced mobility, which is pertinent to the situation described.
* <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32006R1107> - This URL links to EU regulations concerning the rights of passengers with disabilities when traveling by air, relevant to understanding airline responsibilities.
* <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/disabilities/resources/disability-and-air-travel.html> - The United Nations provides resources on disability and air travel, which can offer context on international standards for airline accessibility.
* <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&furtherNews=yes> - The European Commission discusses accessibility in air travel and passenger rights, offering insights into legal frameworks that govern such situations.