# Criticism of London's transport network highlights challenges for badge holders



London's public transport network is facing criticism regarding the treatment of passengers using the "Please Offer Me A Seat" badge, a scheme operated by Transport for London (TfL) aimed at supporting individuals with disabilities and chronic health conditions. As the initiative marks its eighth anniversary this month, experiences shared by users highlight challenges that many face while seeking a seat on the city's buses and trains.

Eliza Rain, a 28-year-old content creator living with a chronic pain condition, recounted a distressing incident while commuting. She reported that a fellow passenger "threatened to push me off the train because I'd asked for their seat." This is indicative of the difficulties faced by badge holders who often encounter resistance from other passengers when requesting a seat, despite the visible display of their badge. Eliza, who has relied on the badge for over four years, explained that repeated refusals from fellow commuters forced her to switch to using a wheelchair for public transport. "People wouldn’t give me a seat, and I couldn’t stand... without potentially having a dangerous medical episode," she articulated.

Eliza's experiences are not isolated. She expressed frustration over being questioned about her condition while using the badge, noting that the TfL website clearly states badge holders are not required to justify their need for priority seating. Eliza has taken to social media to document her encounters, aiming to raise awareness about the challenges faced by those with invisible disabilities. "I've seen people in my comment section be like, 'Why don't you just show a doctor's note or something?' Why would I do that? Nobody else is doing that to be able to get on the Tube," she said.

The TfL Priority Seating scheme, which includes the "Please Offer Me A Seat" badge, is intended to assist those with both visible and non-apparent disabilities, as well as parents and older individuals, to find seating. Despite initiatives to improve awareness and attitudes toward the scheme, recent surveys reveal that compliance remains a significant issue. TfL's research indicated that in 26% of the instances where all seats were occupied, passengers in priority seats did not give them up when asked. Many of those interviewed were unaware of the seating policy, suggesting a need for further education on the issue.

Luke Raggett, 31, another badge holder who has polycystic kidney disease, described a mixture of positive and negative experiences while using the badge. Although he found many passengers to be accommodating, he still encountered difficulties. On one occasion, he was confronted by another passenger who told him to move from a seat simply because of his age. Luke noted the challenge of being recognised as needing a seat due to his invisible disability, reflecting a broader concern that younger passengers often overlook those requiring priority seating. "A lot of people that are younger than me don’t look around or necessarily have that thought in their mind of giving up a seat," he observed.

Mark Evers, TfL's chief customer officer, issued a statement addressing these incidents, acknowledging that the behaviour described by badge holders is unacceptable. "These incidents must have been distressing and demoralising for those involved," he stated. Evers encouraged all passengers to remain vigilant and considerate of those who may require a seat, regardless of whether they are visibly displaying a badge.

As this discussion unfolds, it raises significant questions about the experiences of disabled individuals in public spaces and the social attitudes that influence their daily lives. The narratives from Eliza and Luke, alongside the ongoing efforts by TfL, signal the importance of fostering an inclusive environment for all London commuters.

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

## References

* <https://forum.scope.org.uk/discussion/33234/tfl-please-offer-me-a-seat-badge> - This URL corroborates the existence and purpose of the 'Please Offer Me A Seat' badge, which is intended for individuals with visible and invisible disabilities to receive priority seating on public transport.
* <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2022/april/tfl-marks-the-fifth-anniversary-of-please-offer-me-a-seat-badge> - This press release from TfL marks the fifth anniversary of the 'Please Offer Me A Seat' badge and highlights efforts to raise awareness about priority seating for those with disabilities.
* <https://tfl.gov.uk/transport-accessibility/please-offer-me-a-seat> - This webpage explains the 'Please Offer Me A Seat' scheme, emphasizing that badge holders do not need to justify their need for a seat and that the badge can be used across various TfL services.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This is the source of the article discussing challenges faced by users of the 'Please Offer Me A Seat' badge and the broader social attitudes concerning disability visibility in public spaces.
* <https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/scv/rulesofcourt.pdf> - Although not directly related to the article, this document pertains to legal procedures and could indirectly relate to discussions on legal protections for disabled individuals, though it does not support any specific claim about the badge.