



Purple Orange

Accessibility of Public Transport in South Australia Survey Results

Planes

October 2019

purpleorange.org.au

JFA Purple Orange is an independent, social-profit organisation that undertakes systemic policy analysis and advocacy across a range of issues affecting people living with disability and their families. Our work is characterised by co-design and co-production, and includes hosting a number of user-led initiatives.

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An online survey was used to explore the views and experiences of public transport for 87 South Australians living with disability

Objective

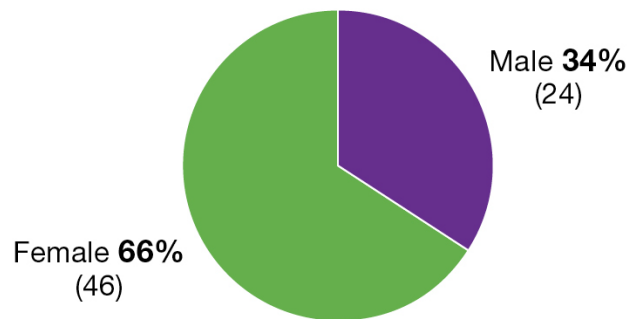
To better understand the views and experiences of public transport (including buses, trains, trams, taxis, rideshare and planes) for South Australians living with disability, so that we can identify what needs to be done to make public transport more accessible. **This slide pack focuses on planes.**

Methodology

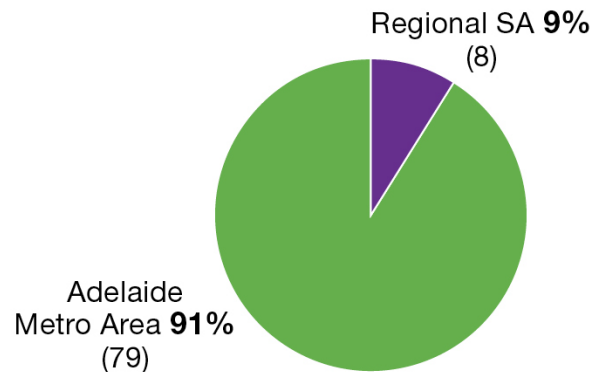
- **Sample:** South Australian adults living with disability or caring for someone living with disability
- **Source:** JFA Purple Orange contact lists
- **Online platform:** SurveyMonkey
- **Fieldwork period:** 13 Aug – 5 Sep 2019
- **Average survey length:** 19 mins
- **Total responses:** 87
- **Complete responses:** 70

Two thirds of respondents were female and most lived in the Adelaide Metro area

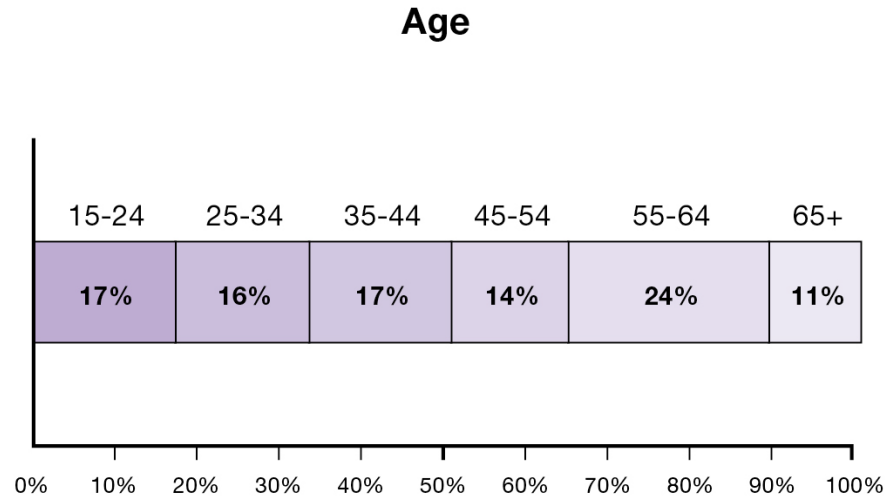
Gender



Location



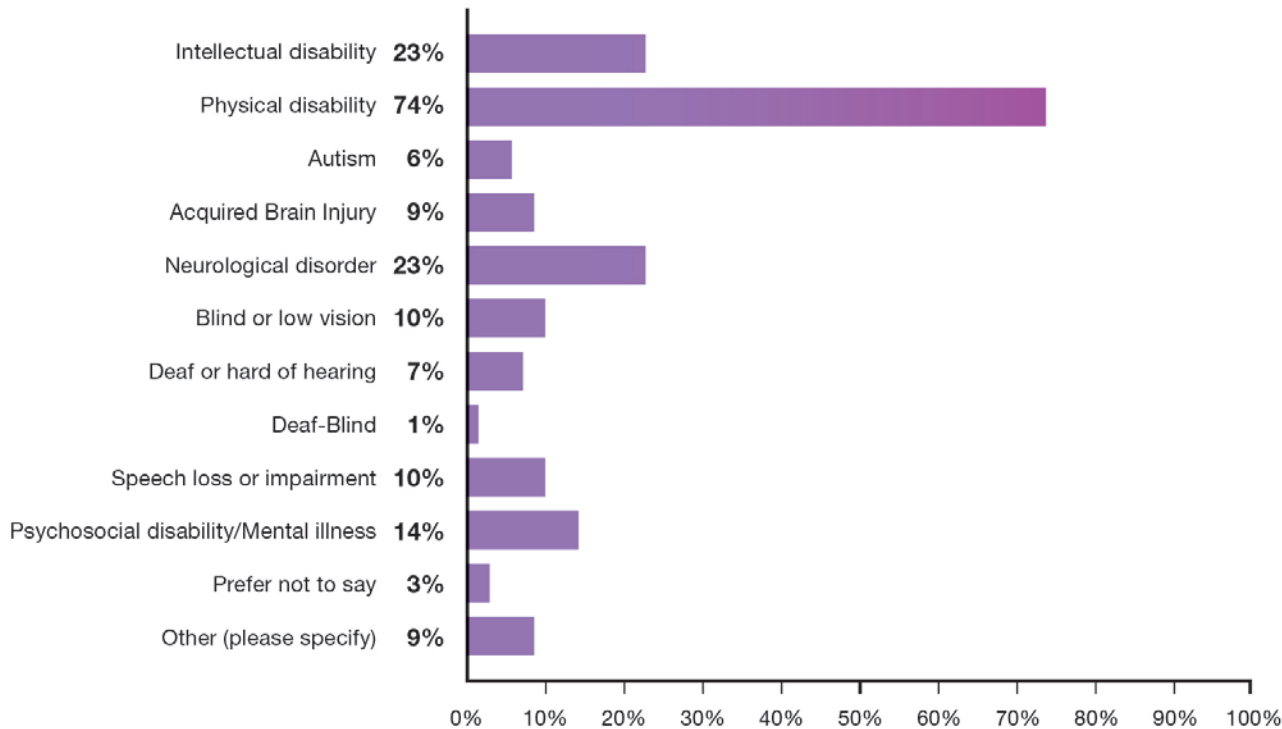
Respondents represented a diverse range of ages aged 15+



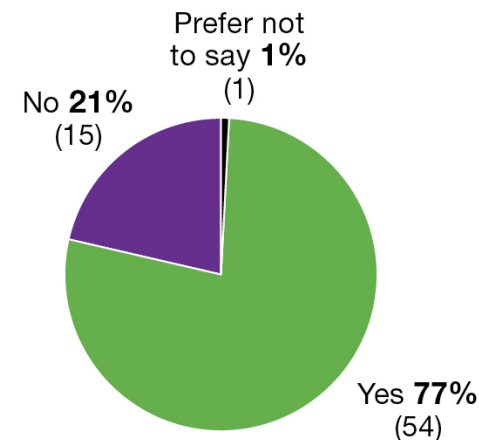
$\frac{3}{4}$ of respondents lived with physical disability, $\frac{1}{4}$ with intellectual disability and a neurological disorder, $\frac{3}{4}$ were NDIS participants

Disability

Number of respondents = 70



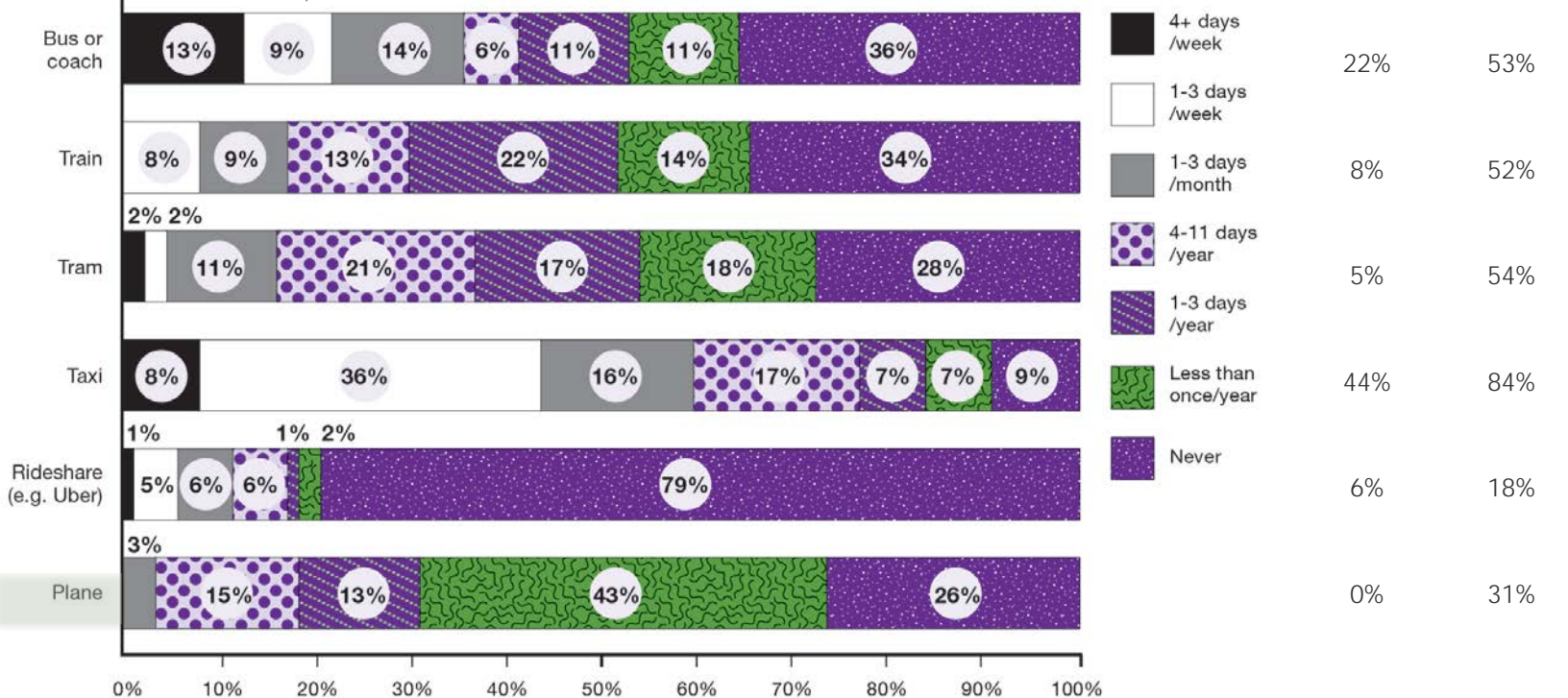
NDIS Participant?



1 in 3 respondents travelled by plane at least once a year, lower than most other public transport modes, but only a quarter never travelled by plane

Travel by Public Transport

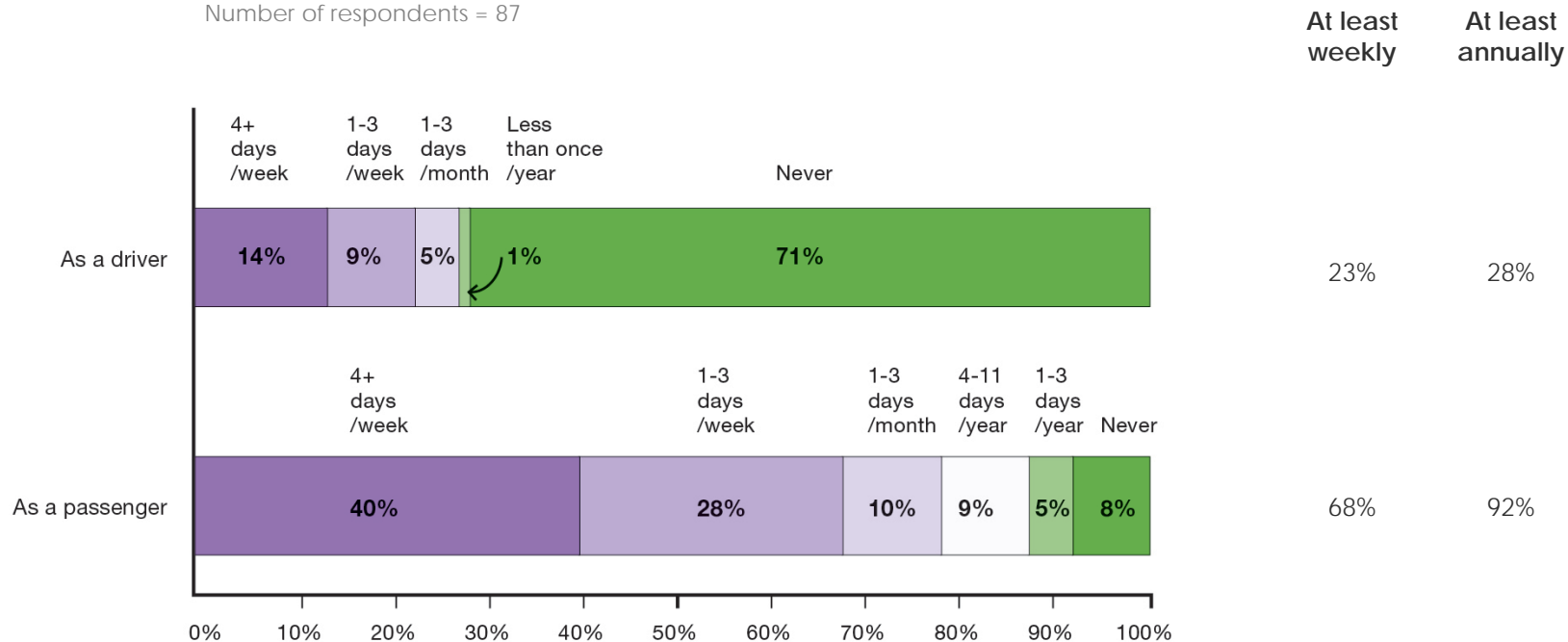
Number of respondents = 87



The most common way for respondents to travel was as a passenger in a private motor vehicle (only a minority were able to drive)

Private Motor Vehicle Travel

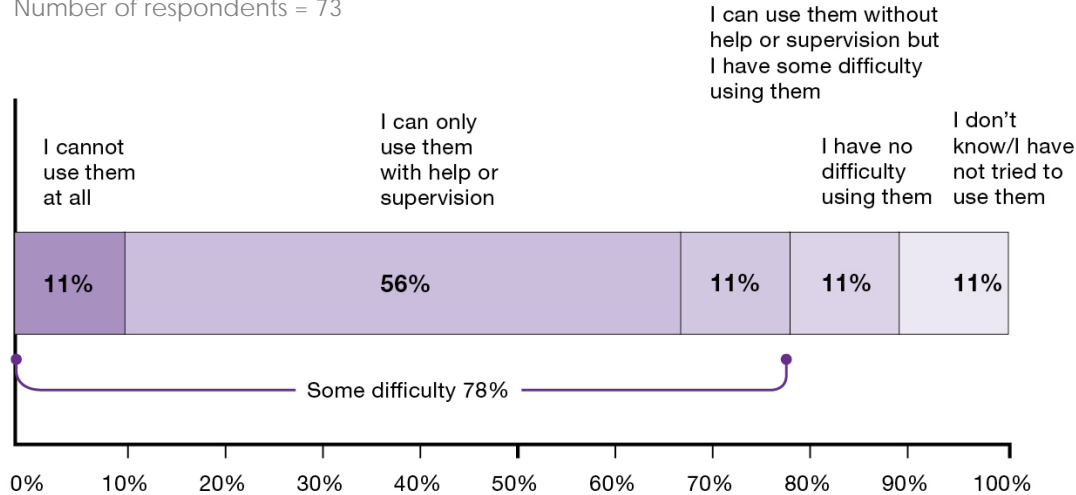
Number of respondents = 87



Most respondents could use planes, but only with help or supervision, meaning they were more likely to have difficulty using planes than other modes

Ease of Using Planes

Number of respondents = 73



Other mode	Some difficulty	No difficulty	Don't know
Bus/Coach	82%	13%	5%
Train	66%	18%	16%
Tram	59%	21%	20%
Rideshare	25%	8%	67%
Taxi	51%	42%	7%

Around a quarter of respondents could identify recent air travel improvements, relating to lifters, aerobridges, wheelchairs, companion fares and staff

Improvements in recent years

Lifters

"Having a lifter, despite being uncomfortable is a great help."

"Eagle lift to get on planes, (provided by Qantas)."

"Motorised stair crawler to get on and off the aircraft."

"Eagle hoist on Qantas flights."

Greater use of aerobridges

"The best improvement for me has been the bridge to get on instead of stairs."

"Most airports have tunnels to planes and no stairs."

Greater access to wheelchairs

"The wheelchair for the airplane aisles."

"Ability to bring your chair to the gate/plane door."

Companion fares

"Reduced price for my abled bodied partner."

"Ticket a little cheaper for carer but difficult to get."

"Companion card tickets."

"There is also the possibility of concessions for carers who travel with you."

More helpful staff

"Less insistence on me fitting their rules and more people asking 'what help do you need?'"

"Having assistance from airline staff when requested."

"Qantas staff are very helpful and accommodating."

The most common difficulties using planes related to flight wheelchair caps, getting from gate to seat, toilet access and plane seating

Difficulties Using Planes

Number of respondents = 56; Responses shown where selected by at least 20%



"If I have to use stairs I have trouble with my balance and I can be very slow which can annoy other passengers."

"Don't like getting on or off planes. It's a difficult, uncomfortable process."

"Being in a wheelchair, it's soooo difficult to get on the plane, get off and get back in my wheelchair."

"It is impossible to use the toilet while in flight."

"I've done long haul flights and been 14 hours without being able to use the toilet as there are no wheelchair accessible toilets on board."

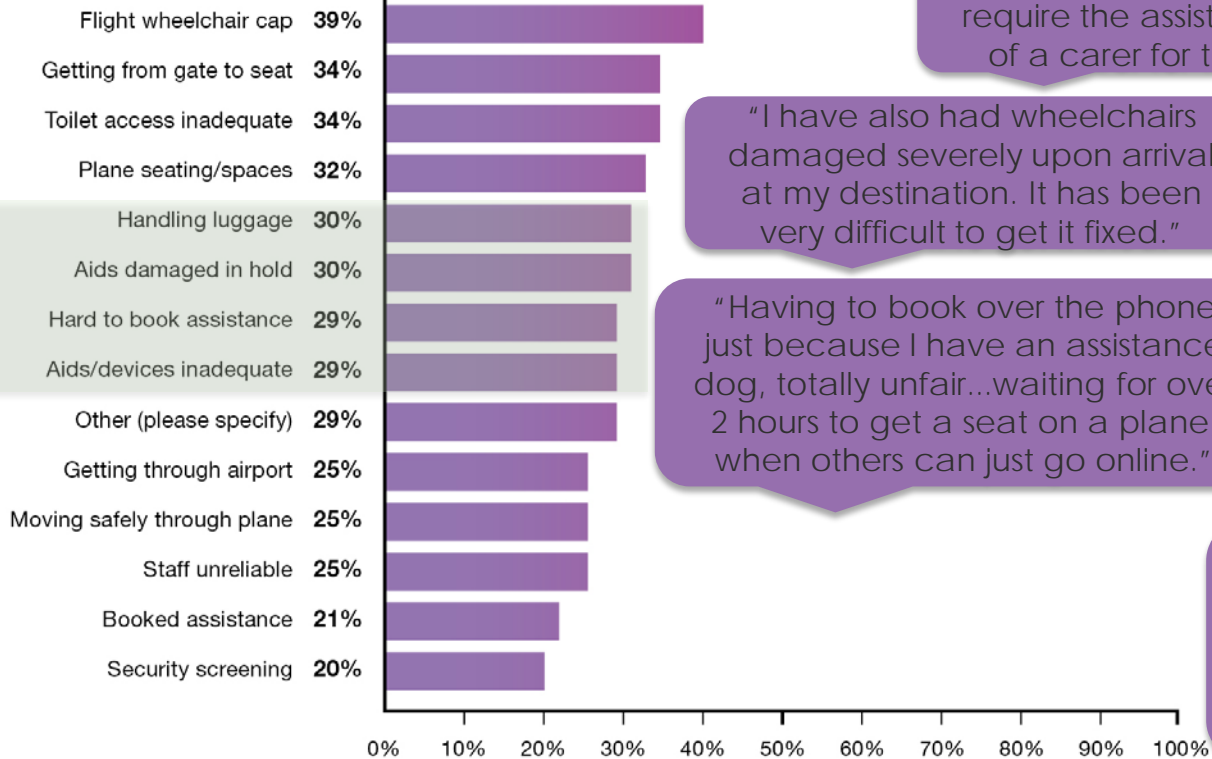
"Need more secure seating."

"There is the additional thing for some people that they cannot sit in an airline seat as they have specialised shaped seating which supports their body."

Other fairly common difficulties using planes related to handling luggage, aids getting damaged, booking assistance and inadequate aids provided

Difficulties Using Planes

Number of respondents = 56; Responses shown where selected by at least 20%



"I'm not able to collect my own luggage and require the assistance of a carer for this."

"If assistive technology equipment is lost or damaged during plane travel, this can generate immense logistical and emotional strain. This is especially pertinent, as one's physical mobility is at stake."

"I have also had wheelchairs damaged severely upon arrival at my destination. It has been very difficult to get it fixed."

"Having to book over the phone just because I have an assistance dog, totally unfair...waiting for over 2 hours to get a seat on a plane, when others can just go online."

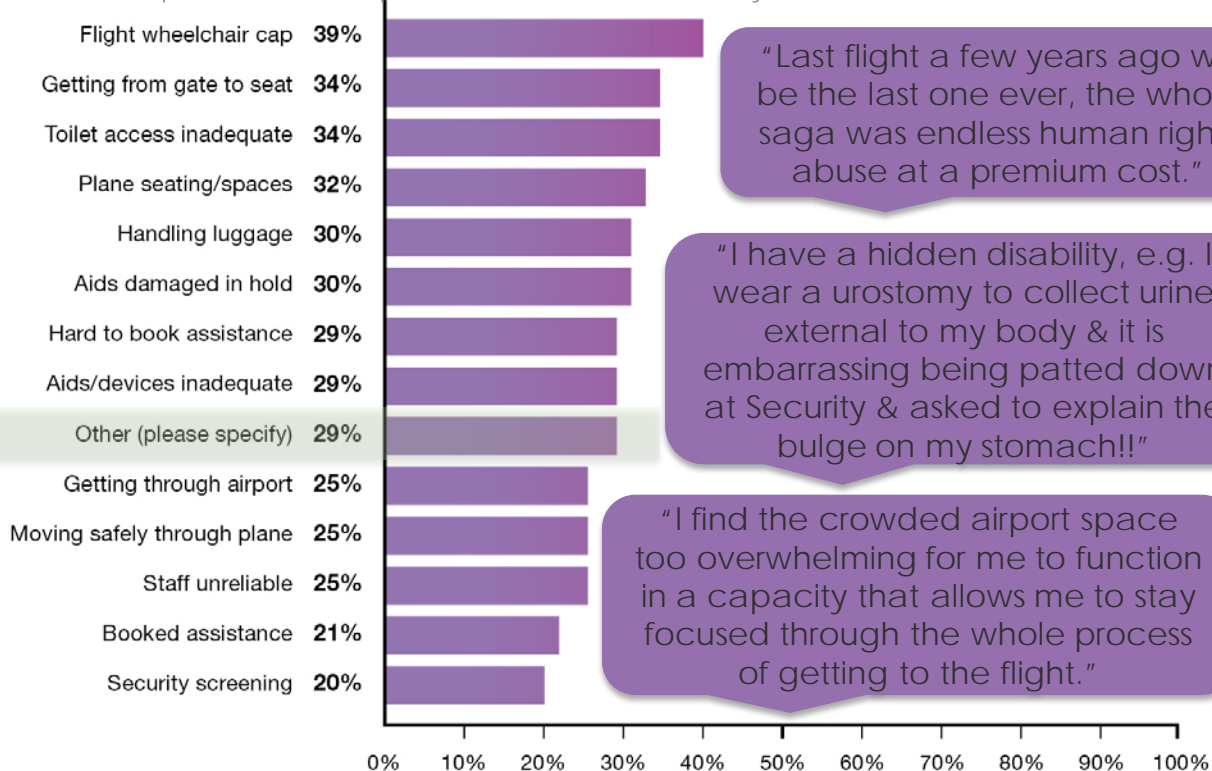
"To get disability assistance, I have to book via phone, my speech is not clear, so the person on the phone would have trouble understanding me, I have to get someone to book it for me."

"I am often left sitting in an airline provided wheelchair that I can not wheel myself. I have been left sitting near the gate desk but unable to get assistance to use the toilet or move independently around the airport."

A range of other difficulties were mentioned, including many who have been put off from flying entirely by their experience

Difficulties Using Planes

Number of respondents = 56; Responses shown where selected by at least 20%



"Last flight a few years ago will be the last one ever, the whole saga was endless human rights abuse at a premium cost."

"I have a hidden disability, e.g. I wear a urostomy to collect urine external to my body & it is embarrassing being patted down at Security & asked to explain the bulge on my stomach!!"

"I find the crowded airport space too overwhelming for me to function in a capacity that allows me to stay focused through the whole process of getting to the flight."

"The latest policy to not take me further than top of ramp, while my wheelchair is down stairs in baggage, and not reconnecting to battery means I will never travel by plane again!!!"

"Too exhausting to fly."

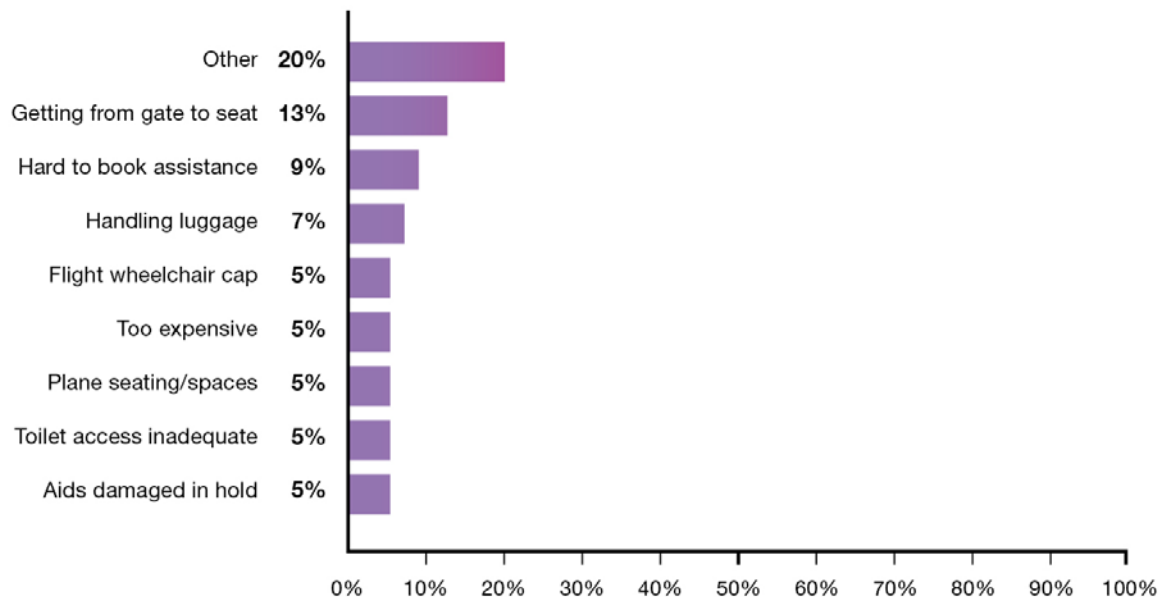
"Just about everything is onerous, exhausting, patronising, degrading, undignified. And that is in addition to the worry that my wheelchair will either be left behind or wrecked by the airline."

"Because I was treated with total disrespect, poor service, they made many errors and blamed me for the delay publicly when it was all their own failed procedures that lead to the delay."

The biggest difficulty using planes related to getting from the gate to the seat, followed by difficulties booking assistance and handling luggage

Biggest Difficulty Using Planes

Number of respondents = 56; Responses shown where selected by at least 5%



To address booking barriers, respondents proposed removing wheelchair caps, improved process transparency and better online functionality

Solutions to address booking barriers

Remove cap on number of wheelchair users per flight (as per US regulations)

"Should be no cap."

Make the booking process for specific assistance clearer and easier

"The process from start to finish could be a lot easier and more transparent."

"Having to fill out dangerous goods form annually despite my equipment not changing."

Enable passengers to view and book specific assistance online prior to purchase

"Incorporate a section of the online booking system for people to identify to the airline that they have a disability and requires assistance when travelling."

To address customer service barriers, respondents proposed better staff training, improved assistance at airports and reduced need for assistance

Solutions to address customer service barriers

Ongoing staff disability awareness training

"More staff trained in disability and special needs."

"More staff training."

Improved passenger assistance at airports

"Help is needed from drop off and pick up points to get to check in."

"The ability to be patted down out of the public gaze."

"Airlines could assign a disability liaison to each customer that is flying, meeting them at check-in, helping through security, assist transfer to airline chair & drop off of my wheelchair at appropriate location and hand me over to the person at my flights gate."

Greater use of aerobridges, eagle lifters and self-propelled airline wheelchairs

"If I can get on the plane using a bridge from the gate to the plane it is easy."

To address aircraft design barriers, respondents proposed redesigning aircraft to better accommodate wheelchairs

Solutions to address aircraft design barriers

Major aircraft redesign

"Airlines themselves and all of their staff and all of the aeroplane manufacturers do some work on making us equally welcome and accommodated on their aircraft. Again it means going back to the drawing board and building planes that accommodate disabled people."

"Aircraft must be redesigned so that we can travel in a similar way to others while having our particular needs accommodated."

Develop restraints to allow people to remain in wheelchairs

"Allow wheelchairs on planes."

"Better seating arrangements on plane, space for own chairs not airline chairs."

"They need to travel in their wheelchair just as they do on a train or tram or taxi or bus."

More space in cabins and hold to accommodate wheelchairs

"I transfer into their wheelchair so I can get to the seat so I think by now they should have made their aisles a tad wider."

"I use an electric wheelchair and I can't take my wheelchair with the aircraft and it makes it hard to travel."

"All planes can accept all size wheelchairs."

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