

Silvertown Tunnel Cycle Bus: Access information

Overview

Transport for London are opening a [cycle shuttle bus through the Silvertown Tunnel](#).

Our accessibility reviews of the Silvertown cycle shuttle bus service found that it has poor accessibility and is unsafe for most Disabled cyclists:

- We consider this service inaccessible and unsafe to use for most Disabled people using **non-standard cycles** and do not consider it a viable way to cross the river.
- We consider this service unlikely to be accessible or safe to use for many Disabled people using **standard bicycles**, especially for people using heavier e-bikes or if carrying cargo (including additional mobility aids) or children.
- **Shuttle bus staff are not permitted to assist cyclists:** We suggest Disabled cyclists interested in trying to use the shuttle service bring a non-disabled companion who is able to help them and their cycle on and off the bus.
- **Cycling is not permitted through the Silvertown tunnel:** We advise Disabled cyclists interested in trying to use the shuttle service to ensure they have plenty of time and alternative routes planned for their journey.

Access information in detail:

To use the shuttle bus, people need to:

1. **Have a cycle of max length 2.14m, max width 0.76m and max height 1.4m** – but be advised that Wheels for Wellbeing operations staff were unable to get cycles smaller than these dimensions onto and off the bus safely or without dismounting and lifting the cycles.
2. **Ride up a steep, standard bus ramp 0.88m wide, which has no side rails to prevent falls:** We consider this to be a significant safety risk for non-standard cycle users and others unable to dismount and walk.
3. **Reverse down the same steep, narrow standard bus ramp:** We consider this to be a very high safety risk for non-standard cycle users and others unable to dismount and walk.
4. **Cycle backwards, including around corners:** There is not space to turn non-standard cycles around on the bus nor is there roll-straight-through boarding and disembarkation. Users will need to be able to perform complex manoeuvres and need to reverse in tight spaces - most non-standard cycles do not reverse easily or at all.
5. **Turn through very tight spaces into a standard bus wheelchair space:** The boarding area of the bus is the same as a standard TfL single decker bus, with all poles and railings still in place. The turning space is inadequate for the majority of Disabled cyclists maneuvering and parking a non-standard cycle.
6. **Lift folding cycles in order to use the designated folding cycle spaces.**

Mobility scooter and powerchair users

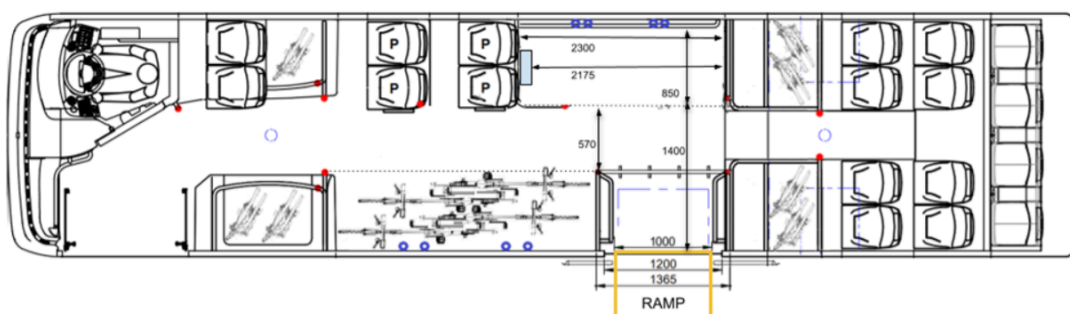
There currently appears to be no information provided on whether people using mobility scooters or powerchairs are permitted to use the Silvertown cycle bus despite WfW's early recommendation that they should be.

TfL [confirmed in 2023](#) that people with wheelchairs up to 70cm x 120cm and mobility scooters up to 60cm x 100cm (if approved through the Mobility Aid Recognition Scheme) [may use buses in general](#). These size and approval restrictions exclude many people's essential mobility aids from being taken on buses.

We believe the Silvertown cycle bus rules should be changed to explicitly allow all class 1, 2 and 3 mobility scooter and wheelchair users to use the service. However, we have the same access and safety concerns regarding this service for larger mobility scooter and wheelchair users as for Disabled cyclists (see above).

Shuttle bus layout

Image from Transport for London. Only the middle door will be used on the shuttle bus:



Information from Wheels for Wellbeing testing

1. During testing, our staff were advised that the bus floor could not be lowered and have the ramp deployed simultaneously. This meant the ramp was very steep.
2. Our non-disabled staff were only able to ride a small upright e-trike up the ramp.
3. A non-disabled expert staff member was unable to ride a recumbent cycle up the ramp due to the amount of strength needed.
4. Our staff did not try out handcycles on the service due to logistical limitations, but considered that handcyclists are likely to need e-assist to be able to go up the ramp and will face significant accessibility issues accessing the non-standard cycle space and even more exiting from it and alighting from the bus.
5. A Jorvik Elite e-trike (1.69m long by 0.75m wide) and Circe Helios tandem (2.11m long) could not be safely manoeuvred into and out of the cycle/wheelchair spaces without lifting by non-disabled expert users. The Helios tandem did not fit into the wheelchair user space. It had to be placed diagonally in the bay intended for single cycles, filling the bay.
6. If users cannot dismount and lift their cycles, then it will be difficult or impossible to manoeuvre into and out of the very tight space provided.
7. There are steps to access the 12 seats at the rear of the bus and the two front seats.