

News story: Sir Bert Massie tribute

Sir Bert Massie CBE was a powerful campaigner for the rights of disabled people for more than 4 decades. He was instrumental in persuading ministers to set up the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) over 30 years ago and in making it a statutory body in the 1985 Transport Act. As a founder member of DPTAC Bert served on the Committee for 16 years and was a key driving force in building up the Committee from scratch.

He played a crucial role in ensuring that parliament passed the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). In the lobbying work that led to the DDA he worked with the department and the transport industries to develop and set standards for accessibility, and secured the access regulations formula which is the basis of the current provision of accessible public transport.

It's rare to be able to say of somebody that they changed people's lives, but Bert did exactly that, as a highly effective lobbyist and campaigner, and in taking full advantage of the unique role DPTAC plays in giving expert, evidence-based advice to government.

Bert's legacy is tangible. And those who knew Bert will know that he always worked with a real sense of purpose, a focus on outcomes that would improve the lives of disabled people, and always with an underlying sense of fun.

He was a great champion for disabled people and will be incredibly missed. All of us on DPTAC are acutely aware that we are standing on Bert's shoulders and are grateful that DPTAC has such strong foundations to build on. It is very sad to think that Bert is no longer with us.

Transport Minister Paul Maynard said:

Sir Bert was a tremendous supporter of accessibility in transport and leaves behind a proud legacy.

From the role he played in convincing the government to form DPTAC to his work on the committee over a 16 year period, he was a leading campaigner.

This government will strive to continue Sir Bert's great work in this area.