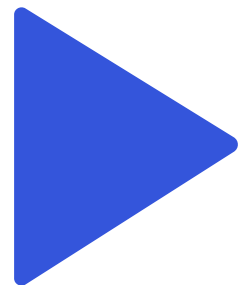
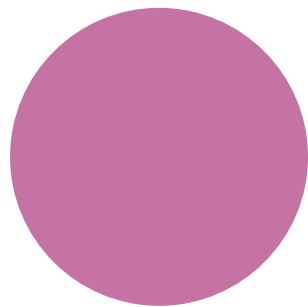


The Barriers to Streetscape Access

The difficulties disabled people have using our streets



An easy-read summary

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About this report



This report uses **Blue Words**. When a word or phrase is difficult, we have written it in **Blue** writing and explained it below.



This easy-read version has been created with people who use easy-read materials themselves.



Section 1.

Why did we do this work?



Disabled people face many barriers to real independence in their day to day lives.



One of those **barriers** is streets!

Barriers are the things that make it difficult for disabled people to access services, information, or physical spaces.



Streets aren't just the pavements and the roads.

Streets also have trees, bins, signs, cafe tables and chairs.



There are also parked cars and road works – and other people!



These ordinary parts of the streets can make moving about difficult and sometimes dangerous when you are disabled.



Streets do not need to be difficult and dangerous to use.



A more thoughtful way of how streets are planned would make moving about so much easier.

This is called street design.



More thoughtful behaviour from other people would make using streets so much easier.



We asked disabled people to tell us what the most important difficulties are in our streets.



Together, we are making clear recommendations about how to change the design of our streets.

Section 2. What did we do and how did we do it?



We wanted to:



1

Understand the barriers disabled people face when using our streets.



2

Understand why changes are not being made to the design of our streets.



3

Understand what the impact on a disabled person's life is because of the barriers in our streets.



4

Make a list of the most important actions needed to remove the barriers in our streets.



Firstly, we interviewed 26 disabled people from around the UK.



40 min



60 min

Each interview was around 40-60 minutes long.



The interviews were over the phone, on Microsoft Teams or on Zoom.



Secondly, we sent out an online survey. 408 people filled in the survey.



The survey could also be done by phone or video link.

It took around 15-20 minutes to complete.



In the interviews, and in the survey, we asked disabled people about:



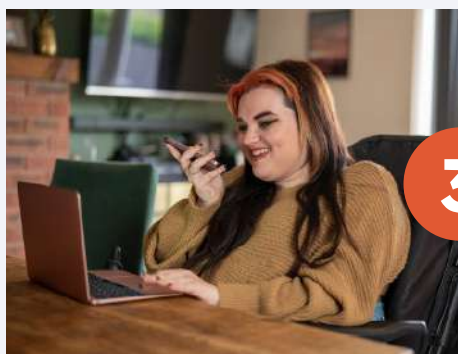
1

their experiences of using the streets



2

the biggest barriers they faced



3

what happened when they contacted their local authority



4

how the streets are changing and how this affects the journeys they want to make.



We made sure that the questions and the online survey page were accessible.



We asked our Community of Accessible Transport panel for their advice and guidance about the best way to do the interviews and the survey.

Section 3: What did we find out from the interviews?



The 4 main concerns are:



Exhaustion.

1

Disabled people are worn out from dealing with all the barriers and challenges in our streets.



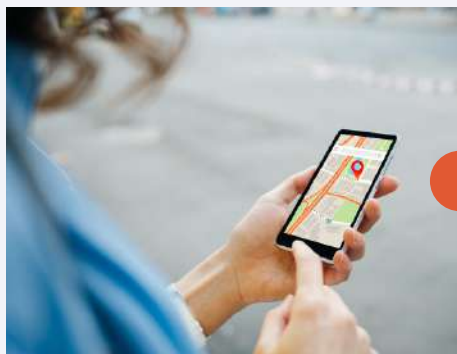
They said that just trying to take part in society is draining.



This is because there are so many issues to deal with like:



● the street design



● how difficult it is to plan a journey



● other people's behaviour and attitudes



Not knowing what barriers are in the streets from one day to the next.

This was the biggest difficulty for people and it caused a lot of anxiety.



It is a real worry when you go out not knowing what new or different barriers might exist.



These include:



roadworks



public behaviours on streets



how available and accessible facilities like toilets are



not knowing if a town or city you want to go to has good or bad street design.



People also said they need to be told what is about to happen in their local streets.

For example, digging up the pavement.



Invisibility.

3

Disabled people felt that society does not think about what they need.



These are the sorts of things people said:

“It is like we are invisible when our streets and the areas around them are being developed.”

“This feeling of being invisible makes life even more exhausting than it needs to be.”



4

Being responsible for speaking up.

People felt that society left it to them to fight for what they need.



Planners and street designers should come to disabled people first, to find out what is needed.



Again and again, people said that they had to be responsible for speaking up.

No one came to them first to ask what was needed.



They had to speak up for themselves about how streets could work better for them.



Here is a list of the main interview findings:



Society does not pay enough attention to how disabled people can move around well.



Trees, bins, signs, cafe tables and chairs and other objects like parked cars are hazards.



Roadworks suddenly appearing add to the worry of going out.



The public being unkind adds to risks and barriers.

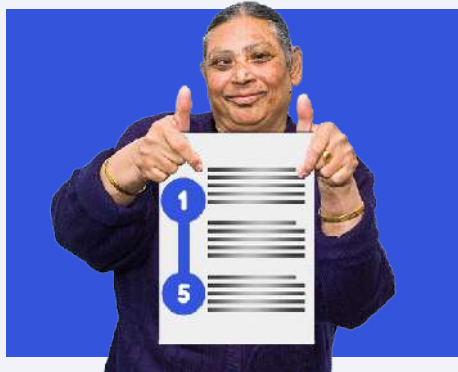


Electric cars, bikes and scooters are a new worry for disabled people using the streets.

Section 4: What did we find from the survey?



Below is a list of the 5 most important concerns from people who did the survey.



The list is in order of the most importance (1 is the most important).



Problems with pavements:

1

poorly kept pavements and temporary paths during roadworks that are not good enough for disabled people to use.



2

Trees, bins, signs, cafe tables and chairs and other objects like parked cars being in the way.



3

Being anxious because of previous experiences.



4

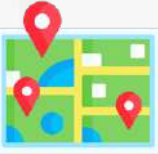
Local Councils:

when issues are reported, disabled people often feel ignored, and nothing changes after they complain.



5

Roadworks



Some people who filled in the survey said they come across other problems when they go out.



These are things like e-scooters and information about changes happening in their streets.



Not enough people wrote in the survey about these other problems.

So, we can't say too much about them in this report.

Section 5: What conclusions did we come to?



Disabled people face barriers when using the streets.



Here are some ways that could make using streets better for everyone.



Inclusion

Society needs to think more carefully about making sure everyone can use streets.



Disabled people are not asked about street design.



Planners and street designers must talk to disabled people first, to find out what is needed.



Communication

The organisations who make decisions about using our streets must communicate better.



This is especially true for local councils.

Not everything needs communicating – but it must be much better than it is now.



Education

Many barriers happen due to a lack of awareness by the public. For example, poorly parked cars.



The people who make decisions about our streets need to educate people to understand the impact of their actions.

Section 6: What needs to happen next?



Our report makes 7 recommendations:



Most importantly, maintain and improve pavements.

Pay attention to areas around GP practices, high streets and shops.



Change the law so that disabled people must be included in the design of new street spaces.



3

Maintain the facilities that already exist for disabled people, like toilets.



4

Reporting issues to local authorities, and getting an answer back, needs to hugely improve.



5

The government should appoint someone to take responsibility for making sure complaints are managed properly.



6

Change the law about what needs to happen when there are temporary paths and ramps.



The law must make sure that paths remain accessible.

People must be told about plans to carry out road and pavement works.



7

Information campaigns should educate the public about how to avoid creating barriers in our streets.



This would help stop things like pavement parking and advertising boards blocking the way.

Section 7: About The National Centre for Accessible Transport



ncat means the **N**ational **C**entre for **A**ccessible **T**ransport.



ncat works to make ssure that no disabled person faces challenges with poor access to transport.



We meet and talk to disabled people to better understand their experiences.

We then work together to come up with solutions.



We also work with disability organisations, transport providers and other people involved in transport.



We do this work to make sure that disabled people's experiences are heard when decisions are being made.



We want to see a more equal world for disabled people where barriers are no longer in the way.



The organisations that make up The National Centre for Accessible Transport are:

Coventry University, Policy Connect, The Research Institute for Disabled Consumers (RiDC), Designability, Connected Places Catapult, and WSP.

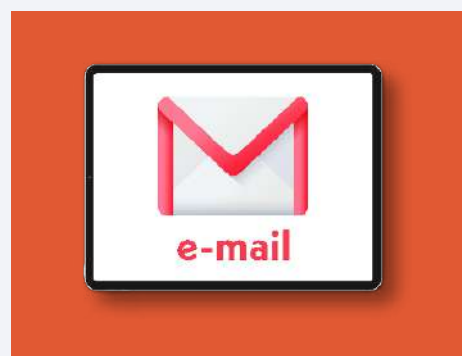


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For more information about ncat please visit:

www.ncat.uk



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The information in this booklet was adapted from an original written by ncat.

This easy-read version has been created with the help of the people below who use easy-read materials themselves.



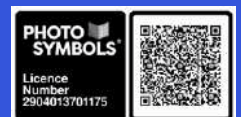
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