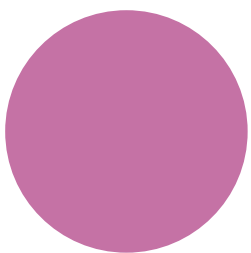


Understanding & identifying barriers to accessing transport

The experiences of disabled
people in the UK



An easy-read summary

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Accessible Transport**



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 make **38% fewer journeys using transport than non-disabled people.**



This is called the **transport accessibility gap.**



In this document, we talk about **access barriers.**



Access barriers (often called ‘barriers’ in this report) are the things that make it difficult for disabled people to access services, information, or physical spaces.



These barriers affect people with all types of disabilities.



This means that disabled people make less journeys because of the difficulties they face while travelling.



When ncat started in 2023 this had not changed for the past 10 years.



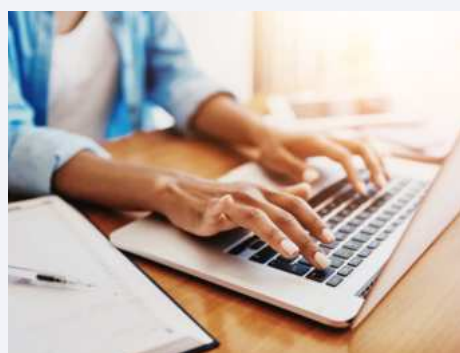
ncat works with disabled people and people in the transport industry to understand how transport could be improved for everyone.



We did a survey about the experiences of disabled people using transport.



The survey aimed to find out more about the **access barriers that disabled people face while travelling.**



We also asked some disabled people to complete travel diaries.



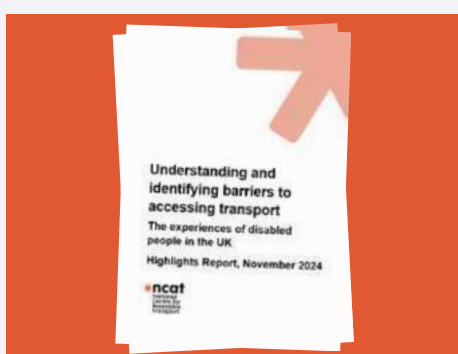
In their diaries, people told us about the barriers they experienced when travelling.



For example, wheelchair users experience barriers when travelling because of the lack of step-free train stations.



They also told us about the things that helped them.



This is a link to the full report:

www.ncat.uk/what-we-do/projects

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



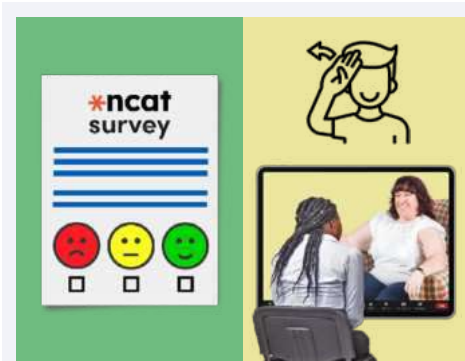
How did we design the survey?



A group of 9 disabled people, called Experts by Experience, helped to design the research.



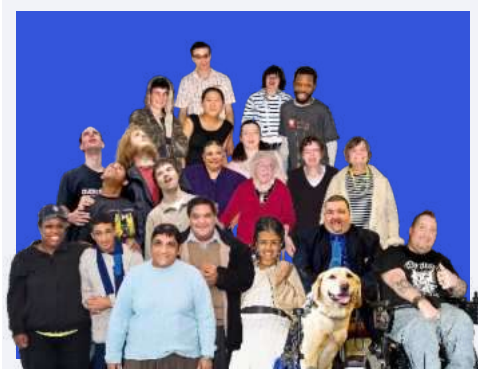
We wanted to make sure that disabled people could access the survey easily.



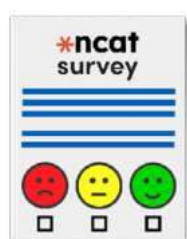
People could respond online, by phone, or through a Video Relay Service for British Sign Language users.



Who took part in the research?



1,195 people filled in the survey.



The survey included responses from disabled people living in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.



It included responses from people who use all modes of transport, such as:



Trains



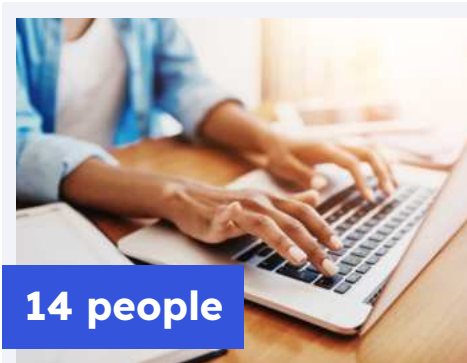
Planes



Cars



Boats



14 people

14 disabled people filled in the travel diary.



They wrote about their normal day-to-day journey experiences and shared photos.

Section 3: What did we find?



Disabled people face many different types of barriers when they travel.

But this is not new.

Things **must** change!



Disabled people have been campaigning for changes for a long time.



They are still not hopeful that things will change for the better anytime soon.



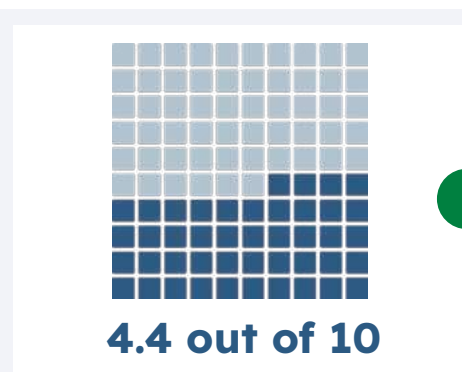
What do disabled people think about transport?



1 Finding 1:
Disabled people do not think transport is accessible.



Most disabled people who filled in the survey said that transport in the UK today is not accessible.



4.4 out of 10

The average accessibility score for all type types of transport was under 5 out of 10.



Only cars and wheelchair accessible vehicles scored over 5 out of 10.



Disabled people are not confident that accessibility will improve in the next 10 years.



For people who filled in the survey, only 34 out of 100 said they think things will get better in the future.



Finding 2:

2

Disabled people experience barriers when travelling.



Cars and wheelchair accessible vehicles are the most used modes of transport.

This was followed by walking, wheeling, cycling or scootering.



Most disabled people surveyed have experienced barriers on at least 1 mode of transport.



Train users face the most barriers.



How does inaccessible transport impact disabled people?



Finding 3:

3

Inaccessible transport makes disabled people travel less, and it makes journeys take longer.



Access barriers make it much more difficult for disabled people to travel.



79% of disabled people travel less often.

84% experience longer journey times due to transport barriers.



4

Finding 4:

Inaccessible transport impacts the wellbeing of many disabled people.



77 out of 100 disabled people said that transport barriers make them feel unwell or stressed when travelling.



What barriers do disabled people face when travelling?



5

Finding 5:

Disabled people face many barriers when they travel.



The access barriers that have the greatest impact are:



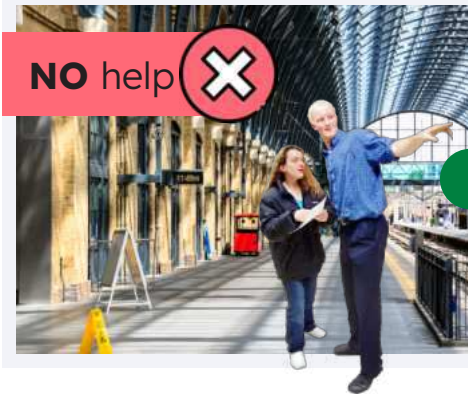
Pavements and curbs are poorly designed.



Getting on and off a vehicle is difficult, including step-free access, gaps, ramps and lifts.



Things on the street get in the way, such as advertising signs and parked cars.



Using staff assistance is an issue, including people not being around to help.



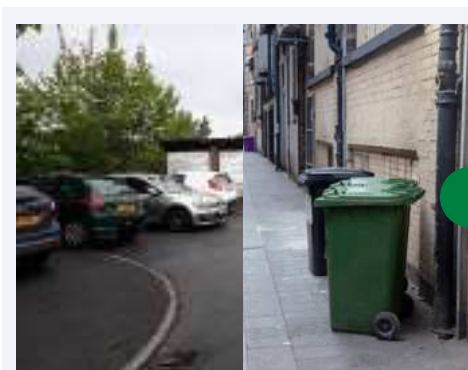
There are not many **step-free stations**.



Finding 6:

6

Inaccessible streets and pavements are the biggest barrier in public spaces.



This includes things like cars, bins and advertising signs getting in the way.



In a disabled person's words, "I have experienced ongoing problems with shopkeepers placing their signs on the footpath, just giving enough space for pram users and pedestrians just enough space to get past, but not enough for mobility scooter, and then stand laughing."



Issues with pavements and curbs include:



Pavements in a bad condition



Not enough dropped kerbs

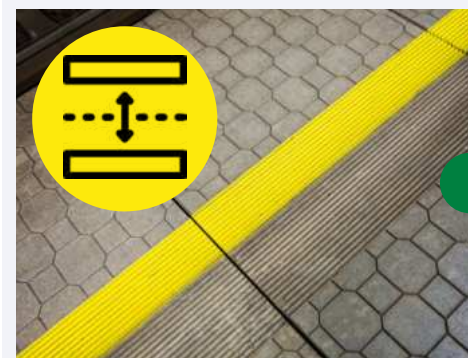


Roadworks blocking access

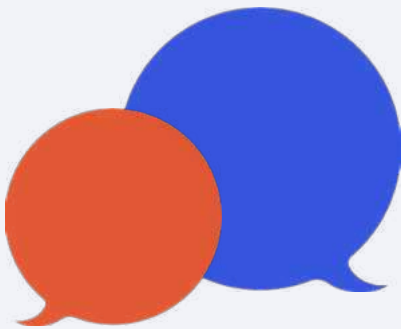


Finding 7:

Getting on and off vehicles is a concern for many disabled people.



This includes things like gaps on to vehicles, ramps and lifts.



One disabled person said:

“Many of the ‘step free’ platforms still have huge gaps or a small step up to the trains which can cause a lot of anxiety and not all wheelchairs can manage.”



Finding 8:

8

Transport stations are not designed to meet the needs of disabled people.



Many disabled people said that stations were inaccessible.



Toilets and changing places are unavailable or poor quality.



One person said: “Being blind I use the disabled toilets. These are often out of order and not clean (in Britain particularly unfortunately).”



Step-free access at stations is not good enough.

This includes things like stairs to train platforms, lifts and long distances.



Finding 9:

9

Interactions with other people can make travelling difficult.



Staff assistance is not reliable.

This includes staff being unavailable, even if assistance is booked.



Public and staff attitudes can be negative. This includes the way that people treat disabled people when travelling.



One person described it as “abuse from others, following, stalking me, yelling at me shouting things like you’re not really disabled.”

Finding 10:



10

The way public transport vehicles are designed makes it hard for disabled people to be comfortable when travelling.



Moving vehicles create problems for people on board, including things like:



Lack of handrails



Vehicles not stopping for long enough



One disabled person said, **“Walking to the toilet onboard when coach is moving is scary and dangerous; I’m so shaken by the movement...I’m scared I’ll fall down.”**



Toilets and changing places on vehicles are poor.



11

**Finding 11:
Car journeys**



Finding parking spaces or spaces with enough room can be difficult.

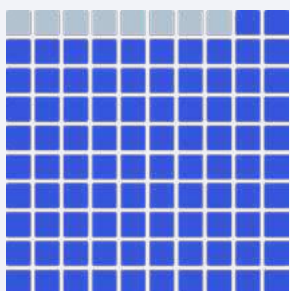
Section 4: What conclusions did we come to?



Transport is not accessible for everyone.



Disabled people have difficulty accessing transport services, information, and physical spaces.



92%

92 out of 100 disabled people have experienced a barrier on at least one type of transport.



There are barriers on all types of transport across the UK.

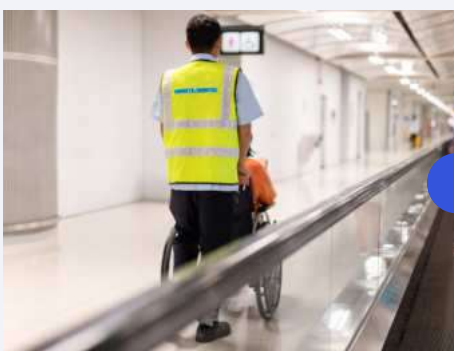
The key barriers are:



badly designed and cluttered streets



unreliable step-free access



poor staff assistance.



This means disabled people cannot freely choose how or when to travel.

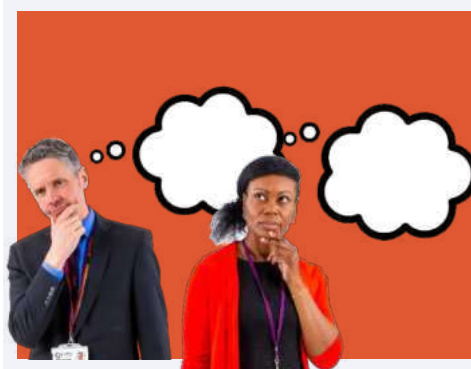
Things **must** change!



This is not new information.

Disabled people have been sharing their experiences of transport and campaigning for change for a long time.

Section 5: What should happen next?



For change to happen, people working in transport need to understand and care about the issues in this report.



This report about transport barriers is only part of our work.



ncat has written about other important transport issues such as:



Working together for accessible transport:

This report includes feedback from transport professionals.



Streetscapes:

This report is about disabled people's difficult experiences of using streets.



ncat's work shows that society needs to reduce the barriers that prevent disabled people accessing transport.



Our recommendations



Governments across the UK should make sure changes are made.

For example:



Update the law for accessible transport



Make sure disabled people are included in decisions about accessible transport



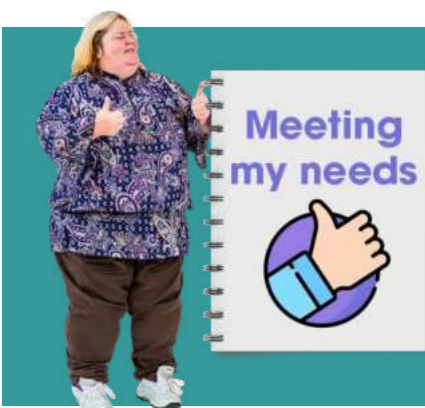
Make sure disabled people are members of transport project teams.



We have also made recommendations for people doing research:



Include disabled people in research from the beginning.



Make sure research is done fairly and takes everyone's needs into account.



Pay people for their time



People should also have their access needs met and they should be told about what the research finds out.

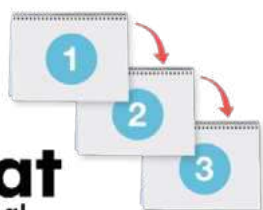


Make sure research results are shared with the people and organisations who need to know.

ncat can help share findings.



Make sure the research findings are accessible to disabled people. Publish research in Word format, Easy-Read and British Sign Language.



What ncat will do next:



Share the information from this research on the [ncat website](#).



Provide funding for projects that want to make changes. See our [ncat website](#).



Share the survey, ideally every year.



Ask more disabled people to join the Community for Accessible Transport panel.



Find out more about the barriers that stop people travelling. This survey focused on barriers when using transport, not barriers to travelling generally.



Raise awareness about transport barriers using the experiences written about in this report.



We will put all our survey findings on our website. People will be able to search and see what others told us about accessing transport.

Section 6: About The National Centre for Accessible Transport



ncat means the **National Centre for Accessible Transport**.



ncat works to ensure that no disabled person faces challenges arising from 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 policy.



We do this work to make sure that the experiences of disabled people 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.



It is funded for 7 years from 2023 by the Motability Foundation.



For more information about ncat please visit:

www.ncat.uk



To contact ncat, please email:

info@ncat.uk



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.



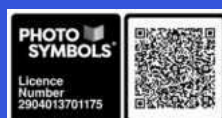
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