



# **Equipping Councils for Change:**

**Building local government capacity to  
deliver accessible transport with  
disabled people**

**Full Report, January 2025**

# Introduction

This report is part of a series of research conducted by the National Centre for Accessible Transport (ncat) since its launch as an Evidence Centre in early 2023. Whilst this is a standalone report, we would recommend it is considered alongside other ncat research published from late 2024. As ncat progresses further, reports and insights will also be published on our website [www.ncat.uk](http://www.ncat.uk)

ncat encourage you to freely use the data available in this report for your research, analyses, and publications. When using this data, please reference it as follows to acknowledge ncat as the source:

ncat (2024). 'Understanding the Roles and Responsibilities of Accessible Transport Staff in Local Government'. Available at [www.ncat.uk](http://www.ncat.uk)

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## Highlights

### Background

This research explored the roles and responsibilities of accessible transport staff in local government (henceforth ‘accessible transport staff’). These are staff whose jobs have a specific focus on accessibility or who are in positions with a wider remit that include accessibility as a key responsibility.

Our aim was to make recommendations on how accessible transport staff can be better supported to make transport accessible for disabled people.

We looked at how disability and accessibility featured in the personal backgrounds, education, training and day to day practices of accessible transport staff.

### What we did

Our research had five elements. We conducted:

- A rapid evidence review of existing studies about local government accessible transport staff and other jobs (such as special educational needs teachers, employment support staff) that involve working with disabled people.

- A survey of 422 disabled people to learn what types of local support and services disabled people find most useful in using the local transport network.
- A survey of 42 accessible transport staff regarding the nature of their jobs, educational backgrounds and experiences of disability and accessibility.
- A focus group and a series of interviews with nine accessible transport staff to explore in detail their roles, responsibilities and experiences of working towards a more accessible transport system.
- A policy roundtable with local and regional authority leaders and disabled people, disabled people's organisations and other stakeholders to discuss the findings and recommendations from the research. The roundtable was hosted in Parliament by the Accessible Transport Policy Commission and chaired by Richard Baker MP.

## **What were our findings and conclusions?**

**Conclusion 1:** Disabled people and accessible transport staff agree that making local streets accessible should be the top priority in efforts to make sure transport is accessible for all.

### **Supporting findings:**

- Three-quarters of disabled people (78%) and transport staff (75%) who took part in our surveys said that they would advise local policy makers to focus on making streets more accessible.
- Improving the accessibility of local transport services and connectivity between different modes of transport were also among the top three priorities for both groups.

**Conclusion 2:** Transport staff feel that collaborating with stakeholders – including disabled people – is a vital part of their roles but do not have enough time to do this effectively.

**Supporting findings:**

- Over three-quarters (76%) of accessible transport staff who took part in our survey reported that they often collaborated with stakeholders in the course of their work.
- Our interviews indicated that staff frequently lacked the time and funding to run effective coproduction exercises due to heavy workloads.
- Fifty-eight percent (58%) of survey respondents also rated a lack of staff time and expertise as 8 or above out of 10, indicating that this was a significant barrier to making transport accessible.

**Conclusion 3:** Local governments often fail to meet their legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 because they do not allocate enough funding to compliance efforts.

**Supporting findings:**

- Respondents to our survey of accessible transport staff said limited funds was the biggest barrier to making services accessible, with two-thirds giving this issue a rating of at least 8 out 10.
- Policy roundtable attendees said that funding constraints in local government over the past decade had led to accessibility specialists across the country being made redundant, leading to a loss of expertise
- Staff who took part our in interviews and focus groups said budgetary constraints can mean either that transport services and infrastructure are built to only meet the minimum legal standards and lead to accessibility features being delayed.

**Conclusion 4:** Most staff have some training on accessibility, but the quality of such training varies widely.

**Supporting findings:**

- Thirty-two percent (32%) of accessible transport staff gave a rating of 8 or above out of 10 to the statement suggesting they lack adequate training and awareness of the challenges faced by disabled people on transport.
- Participants in our focus groups and interviews said that training courses often felt tokenistic and were not effective in helping them to do their jobs.
- Just under half of respondents to our staff survey (46%) favoured our suggestion that ncat should help to set up a Community of Practice for local government staff around accessible transport.

**Conclusion 5:** Involving disabled people in decision making is vital to improving outcomes for disabled people.

**Supporting findings:**

- Staff highlighted examples of the advantages of having disabled people directly involved in transport services and decision making. These included a visually impaired councillor who took on a leading role in transport policy making at his authority and disabled staff who had shaped decisions.
- Our review of existing studies shows the importance of formalising coproduction in organisational structures: this is only way to ensure that the practice of coproduction can survive changes in staff personnel.
- The literature also indicates the critical role that leaders play in creating a culture that encourages staff to advocate for better policy, services and outcomes for disabled people.

# What should happen next?<sup>1</sup>

## National government

### Recommendation 1

- a) The UK and devolved governments should create and maintain a national website where disabled people and transport professionals can access regulations, guidance, case law, and resources on accessible transport.
- b) The Department for Transport (UK), Transport Scotland, Transport for Wales, and the Department for Infrastructure (Northern Ireland) should lead this initiative.
- c) The UK's Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland, the Northern Irish Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee and the Welsh government's Disability Taskforce should form a joint working group to oversee this project.

### Recommendation 2

- a) The UK and devolved governments should reinstate the Access to Elected Office Fund to support disabled people in running for office, including councillors and mayors.
- b) They should also promote the scheme with a public awareness campaign, highlighting the importance of disabled people's representation in policy making.

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<sup>1</sup> This section provides a summary of our recommendations. For more detailed recommendations, please see Chapter 5 of this report "What should happen next?"



## **Local government**

### **Recommendation 3**

The Local Government Association (England, Wales, Northern Ireland) and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities should work with Disabled People's Organisations to develop guidance on how local governments can coproduce with disabled people.

### **Recommendation 4**

- a) Local and regional authorities should formalise coproduction with disabled people in their decision making structures.
- b) Each authority should assign one elected official and one administrative leader to ensure genuine involvement of disabled people in decision-making.

### **Recommendation 5**

Local and regional transport authorities should assess their teams' capacity and capability in accessibility and disability, identifying strengths and gaps. These assessments should be co-produced with disabled people and relevant organisations.

### **Recommendation 6**

Local and regional authorities should ensure all staff receive high-quality disability and inclusion training, tailored to their specific roles within the organisation (see Recommendation 8).

## **National Centre for Accessible Transport (ncat)**

### **Recommendation 7**

- a) ncat should commission a pilot for an accessible transport community of practice (CoP) for local government in a limited area (e.g., Scotland or the Midlands).

- b) If successful, the CoP should expand across the UK to foster knowledge-sharing, support, and the growth of accessible transport as a local government specialism.
- c) The CoP should embed the social model of disability and coproduction in its governance, with disabled professionals involved in shaping priorities and activities.

### **Recommendation 8**

ncat should review the current training landscape in accessible transport and develop a framework for education, training, and professional development in this area.

### **Recommendation 9**

ncat should commission a pilot of the accessibility capability and capacity assessment at a local and a regional authority (see Recommendation 3).

## **1 Why did we do this work?**

Disabled people make 38% fewer journeys using transport than non-disabled people. This has not changed for over ten years.<sup>2</sup>

In 2023, the National Centre for Accessible Transport (ncat) was set up to help reduce this transport accessibility gap. Throughout most of the UK, local and regional government is responsible for delivering accessible transport policy and services. However, these responsibilities are often fragmented across different roles, teams and departments, and arrangements vary across authorities. This means that staff working on accessibility are often isolated within organisational structures. As a

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<sup>2</sup> [The Transport Accessibility Gap: The opportunity to improve the accessibility of transport for disabled people, Motability, 2022](#)

result, the task of making the transport system more accessible is frequently overlooked in favour of other priorities.

We conducted research to explore the roles and responsibilities of transport staff in local government (henceforth 'accessible transport staff'). These are staff whose jobs have a specific focus on accessibility or who are in positions with a wider remit that include accessibility as a key responsibility. We looked at how disability and accessibility featured in the personal backgrounds, education, training and day to day practices of accessible transport staff.

Our aim was to make recommendations on how accessible transport staff can be better supported to make transport accessible for disabled people.

This report outlines our research methodology, findings and recommendations.

## **2 What did we do, how did we do it, and who did we work with?**

This project had five parts:

1. A rapid evidence review of existing studies about local government accessible transport staff and other similar jobs which involve working with disabled people.
2. A survey of disabled people to explore what types of local support and services disabled people find most useful in using the local transport network.
3. A survey of local government accessible transport staff whose jobs had a specific focus on accessibility and those in positions with a wider remit that included accessibility as a key responsibility. The

purpose of the survey was to map out staff roles, responsibilities and experiences.

4. A focus group and a series of interviews with local government accessible transport staff to explore in detail their roles, responsibilities and experiences of working towards a more accessible transport system.
5. A policy roundtable with local and regional authority leaders and disabled people, disabled people's organisations and other stakeholders.

The following sections describe the methodology used for each part of the research in more detail.

## **Rapid evidence review**

- To make sure our research was informed by relevant existing research, we conducted a rapid evidence review of the academic literature on accessible transport staff and similar professions.
- The review addressed two research questions:
  1. What is the relationship between the organisational arrangements in which staff work (eg the size of their teams, whether they work in specialist or generalist teams, organisational policies) and the outcomes they achieve for disabled people?
  2. What is the relationship between the backgrounds of staff and the outcomes they achieve for disabled people?
- We searched for studies published between January 2019 and the present. The searches were conducted in February 2024 on the academic search engines Scopus, ERIC and Google Scholar.
- Due to a lack of available studies accessible transport staff in the UK, we widened the scope of the review to include:

- Research published about school SEND coordinators and teachers, higher education support staff, employment advisers and housing support officers.
- Research published in other developed English-speaking countries. These were the Republic of Ireland, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.
- You can read more about the methodology followed by the review in Appendix 1.

## Survey of disabled people

- To make sure the survey questions were comprehensive of the full range of transport services and policy areas that local governments manage, Policy Connect consulted information published by organisations such as the Local Government Association and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.
- Policy Connect also used publications on disability and transport – including the Motability Foundation's *Transport Accessibility Gap*<sup>3</sup> report – to identify the outcomes and barriers associated with the use of transport by disabled people. We looked at the words and phrases that were used to describe and measure key terms, which informed the language used in our own questionnaire.
- The survey was designed by Policy Connect, with input from RiDC and WSP (see Appendix 2 for the full survey).
- The survey presented disabled people with a list of services that local government is responsible for delivering. The survey had the following structure:

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<sup>3</sup> [The Transport Accessibility Gap: The opportunity to improve the accessibility of transport for disabled people, Motability, 2022](#)

- Which three transport services and functions that local government is responsible for are most important for disabled people, and why?
- What three things would disabled people advise their own local council to do to make transport more accessible where they live?
- Of the three actions, which would make the single biggest impact on their lives?
- The survey design was assessed and pre-tested to ensure accessibility, and respondents participated via online survey software and by phone. Video Relay Service was also offered.
- 422 disabled people completed the survey.

## **Survey of local government accessible transport staff**

- The purpose of this survey was to ask local government accessible transport staff who identified themselves as responsible for helping to make sure local transport systems are accessible for disabled people about their backgrounds, training and daily practices. This included staff whose jobs had a specific focus on accessibility and those with a wider remit that included accessibility as a key responsibility.
- The survey was drafted to Policy Connect with input from WSP and RiDC (see Appendix 3 for the full survey). It was adapted from a questionnaire developed by Policy Connect for another project that surveyed disability support staff in higher education institutions about their experiences of helping disabled students use assistive technology.
- Survey was designed to:

- Map out the different roles and responsibilities of local government accessible transport staff;
  - Understand accessible transport staff training and experience of disability;
  - Ask about the opportunities and challenges associated with providing accessible transport; and
  - Gauge respondents' interest in joining a community of practice for accessible transport staff.
- We recruited respondents by circulating the survey with a wide range of local government organisations and professional associations, as well as directly with regional and local authorities across the UK.
  - 42 accessible transport staff completed the survey.

## **Staff focus group and interviews with local government accessible transport staff**

- We spoke to a total of nine local government accessible transport staff.
- They were recruited to take part through our survey of local government transport staff, professional bodies and via social media.
- Four participants took part in a focus group, and five were interviewed individually. The focus group and interviews all took place over Microsoft Teams.
- Policy Connect developed a schedule of questions exploring (see Appendix 4 for the full list of questions):
  - Participants' confidence that disabled people's transport needs were being met by the authority they worked for;
  - The tools and practices they used to address accessibility issues in their work;

- The extent to which the public sector equality duty informed decision making in transport projects and how local authorities' legal responsibilities in relation accessible transport could be made easier to understand and carry out;
  - The main factors (eg funding, political leadership, team member expertise) that influence whether accessibility is made a priority in transport projects; and
  - What might help have staff embed accessibility for disabled people in their everyday work.
- Each of the sessions were recorded and transcribed.
  - The transcriptions were analysed thematically both manually and with the help of ChatGPT to isolate and group relevant quotations.
  - The quotations from each participant were structured using a colour-coded mind map (where the colour identified the participant who gave the quotation and the branch of mind map denoted the theme of the quotation).

## **Policy roundtable**

We held a policy roundtable with local and regional authority leaders, disabled individuals, disabled people's organisations, and other stakeholders. At the roundtable, we presented the main findings and recommendations from our research and gathered feedback from stakeholders to help shape the final set of recommendations. The roundtable was hosted in Parliament by the Accessible Transport Policy Commission and chaired by Richard Baker MP – vice chair of the Commission. See Appendix 5 for a summary of the findings from this meeting.

## **3 What did we find?**



In this section, we will outline the findings from the rapid evidence review, surveys of disabled people and local government accessible transport staff and focus group and interviews with local government accessible transport staff.

## **Rapid evidence review**

### **Results**

- Our searches generated a total of 285 studies (200 from Google Scholar, 39 from ERIC and 46 from Scopus).
- We downloaded the studies and screened them against our search criteria using their titles and abstracts. Following the screening process, we found that 18 studies were eligible to be included in the review.
- Of the 18 studies, none were transport related. Eight looked at SEND Coordinators and school teachers, seven looked at university tutors and other support staff and three looked at support provided in employment settings.
- Seven of the studies were based in the UK, six were in the United States, four were in Australia and one was an international study.
- See Appendix 1 for detailed information on the study's research methodology, results tables and the full list of references.

### **Question One: Organisational factors**

#### **Involving disabled people in governance processes:**

The review found strong evidence that embedding formal coproduction mechanisms in organisational governance structures leads to better outcomes for disabled people.

#### **Key findings:**

- Having formal coproduction groups of disabled people can improve outcomes for disabled people (White 2019). These groups provide

an opportunity for staff to work with people with lived experience to develop strategies to overcome barriers to participation (Lund 2023).

- Coproduction groups may also encourage staff to take a more positive view of the importance of inclusion. Participating in these groups encourages staff to engage directly with disabled people and their views about why it is possible and desirable to make sure they have equal access to services (Tarantino 2022 et al).
- Coproduction groups and other strategies for involving disabled people in decision making and governance processes are most effective when they are made a formal part of the organisations corporate governance arrangements and are formally documented. This helps ensure that they continue after the staff who first set them up leave the organisation (Watkins 2020).
- By making coproduction a formal requirement, organisations can make sure disabled people's perspectives are always part of decision-making processes (Tyshoe et al 2021).

### **Creating an inclusive culture**

The review highlighted the influence that an organisation's management and senior staff have on the experiences of their disabled employees and service users. While leaders can establish practices that are hugely beneficial for disabled people, their actions can also entrench discrimination.

#### **Key findings:**

- Organisational leaders should aim to create antiableist environments where disabled people are encouraged to communicate the barriers they face and celebrate the contribution that disabled staff members and service users make to their

operations (Renauer 2021; Watkins 2020; Lund 2023; Tarantino 2022 et al).

- Senior organisational leaders can play an important role in actively encouraging staff to be creative in meeting the needs of disabled people (Renauer 2021; Edwards 2022).
- Leaders must make sure that staff understand the requirements of disabled people who use their services and allow these to guide the development of organisational objectives and success measures in relation to accessibility. This can help organisations avoid taking a superficial approach to disability equality which leads to little substantive improvement in disabled people's experiences. (Hayward et al 2022; Maher 2021 et al).
- In addition to having disabled people directly involved in organisational management, services should also openly promote reasonable adjustments and other accommodations. This can make it easier for disabled people to request support (Lund 2023).
- Less experienced staff often find it useful to learn from senior colleagues about inclusive practices – particularly when they are provided with concrete examples that they can adopt in their own roles (Lund 2023; Tarantino et al 2022).
- However, the tendency for junior staff to take cues from more senior or experienced colleagues can sometimes have a detrimental effect. In some cases, staff spread poor working practices that encourage disablist attitudes and behaviours (Tarantino 2022). Organisations can mitigate this risk by drawing on external expertise and resources to refresh, update and improve current practices (Lund 2023; Watkins 2020).

### **Overcoming resource constraints:**

The review showed that limited resources and inadequate expertise often compromise outcomes for disabled people. However, it also found that organisations can sometimes overcome these challenges by changing organisational structures in ways that make it easier for staff to make disability and inclusion a priority.

### **Key findings:**

- Support for disabled people is often undermined by inappropriate resources and poor coordination between different teams, departments and agencies (Wearmouth & Butler 2019; White 2019; Little et al 2020).
- Disability support officers may be required to play a wide range of roles and be stretched too thin as a result (White 2019). Staff within an organisation may lack a common understanding of their legal responsibilities in relation to supporting disabled people or the social model of disability (Little et al 2020).
- Solutions to the challenges presented by scarce resources include pooling expertise and funding across teams. This works best when the organisation's leadership explicitly prioritises accessibility and inclusion and ensures that disability specialists have equal status within and across teams (Wood and Legg 2020).
- Staff members and teams with different focuses and specialisms can bridge their differing perspectives when they have shared goals and objectives and a joint strategy for achieving them (Cullen et al 2020).

### **Question Two: Staff backgrounds**

#### **Staff can be influential advocates for disabled people within organisations**

The review found evidence that empowered and well-trained staff can lead to increased advocacy and better services for disabled people.

## **Key findings:**

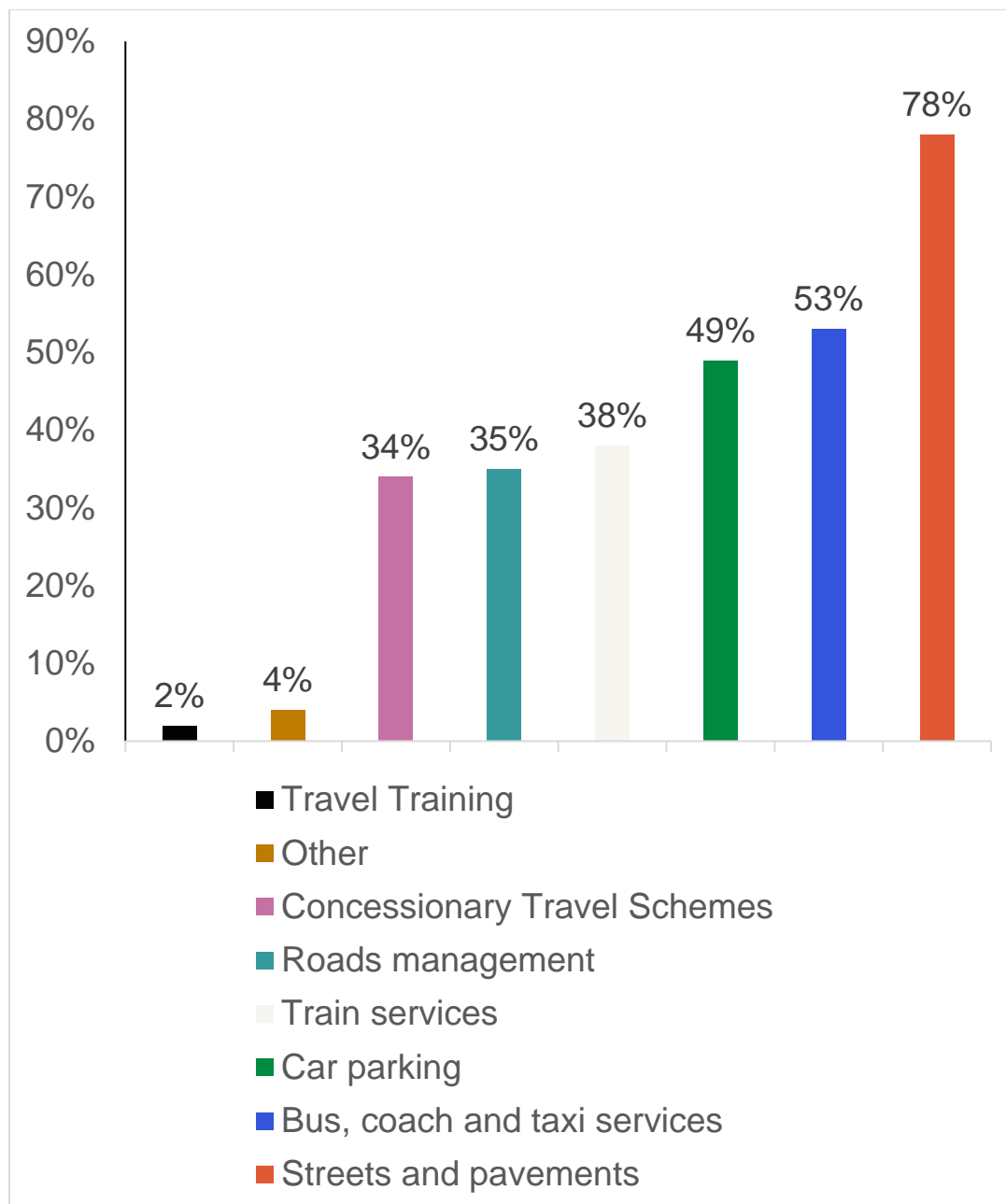
- While organisational structures and resources are important, the attitudes of individual staff who are responsible for making services accessible for disabled people and their ability to shape decision making can be pivotal (Tyshoe et al 2021).
- Staff with education and training in key disability rights concepts, implementing inclusive practices and accommodations, and advocacy skills are significantly more likely to achieve positive outcomes for disabled people (Newman 2023; Lund 2023).
- Training programmes and professional networks should provide opportunities to engage directly with disabled people and their needs and perspectives (Maher et al 2021).
- In addition to formal learning opportunities, practitioners' previous interactions with disabled people – both in their professional and personal lives – often significantly shape their current attitudes and behaviour (Lund 2023; Dew 2023; Devi and Ganguly 2022).
- While past experience of working with disabled people can increase staff confidence, one study of psychology graduate programme supervisors found that prior experience was associated with feeling overwhelmed and concerned about trainees fulfilling expectations. However, the study also noted that more experience was related to increased consultation with disabled trainees and greater awareness of disability. The authors do not offer any explanations for why more experience of working disabled people might have a negative impact on their attitudes (Wilbur et al 2019).

## **Survey of disabled people**

## **Transport services**

The survey asked which three transport services and functions that local government is responsible for are most important to them.

**Chart 3.1: Of the following local transport services, which three are most important to you?**



*Figure 1: Of the following local transport services, which three are most important to you?*

### **Key findings**

- The three most important local transport services overseen by local government are:
  - Streets and pavements (78%)
  - Bus, coach and taxi services (53%)
  - Car parking (49%)

## Reasons local services are important

We asked disabled people to say why their top three services were important to them.

**Table 3.1: Why are your top three services important to you?**

<b>Reason why the local service is important</b>	<b>Streets and pavements</b>	<b>Bus, coach and taxi services</b>	<b>Car parking</b>
Allows me to get around my community	93%	86%	83%
Gives me a greater independence and control over my daily routine	84%	81%	82%
Improves my health and wellbeing	72%	59%	56%
Increases my social contact	67%	76%	71%
Helps me to enjoy cultural and recreational activities	66%	68%	76%
Helps me get to work	17%	21%	22%
Other (please specify)	15%	21%	18%
Helps to attend my school, college or university	4%	5%	7%

*Figure 2: Why are your top three services important to you?*

### Key findings

- Table 3.1 shows that disabled people's top three services were chosen primarily because these services allow them to get around their communities and enjoy greater independence.
- Increased health and wellbeing, more social contact and enjoying cultural and recreational activities are also important considerations for the majority of disabled people.



- Disabled people commented that accessible pavements and streets allowed them to feel safer and more comfortable when travelling:
  - "I worry so much about being stuck when I go out in my powerchair. It puts me off going out. The kerb and lack of properly dropped kerbs leave me stranded or having to rely on my carer. "
  - "Being a wheelchair user, a good safe well maintained pavement is essential not only for the management of my pain levels but also for the preservation of my wheelchairs (in the past I have had a front caster break off hitting a large tree root growing out of the pavement)."
  - "I have ADHD and PTSD with social anxiety so walking where it is calm and uncluttered is a primary issue that allows me to have any chance of being outside."
- Disabled people said buses, coaches and taxis were vital for routine journeys:
  - "Helps me to get to my voluntary groups and hospital."
  - "Enables me to access my surgery & shops."
  - "Buses essential to me as helps me shop and visit people and galleries or museums."
- Disabled people said the suitable parking for their personal vehicles could be the difference between being independent and safe and finding it difficult to travel and feeling isolated:
  - "Free parking close to amenities allows me to be more independent and be able to travel the short distances without having to cross any busy roads."
  - "Without a suitable disabled space I cannot get out the car!"

- "As a disabled person with mobility issues, parking and safe walking surfaces are massively important to prevent isolation."

### **Which actions should be a council priority?**

We asked disabled people to imagine that their local council had asked them for advice on how transport could be made more accessible in their area; we asked them to tell us which three actions they think local decision makers should make a priority.

### Chart 3.2: Which of the following actions would you tell the council to make a priority?

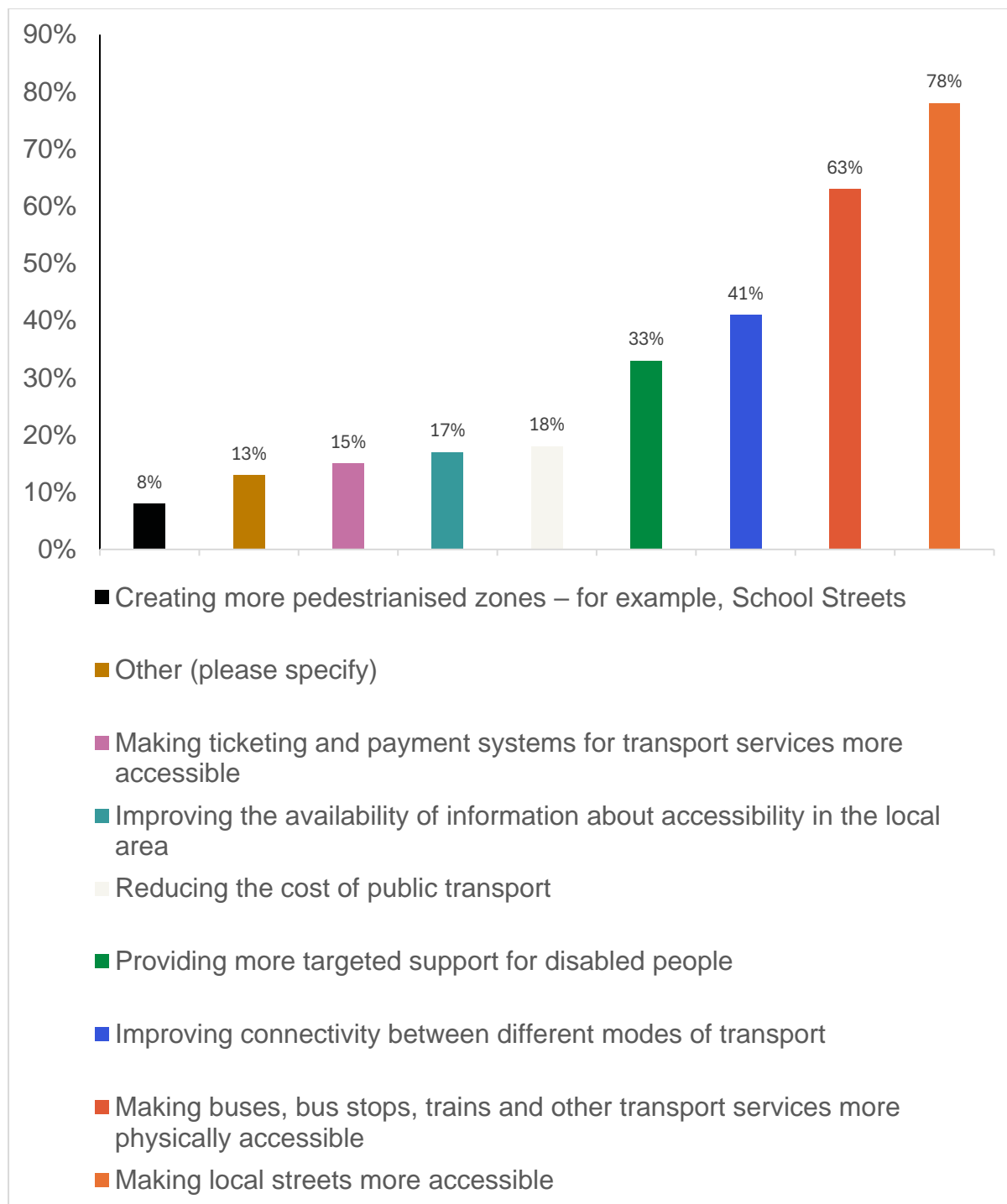


Figure 3.2: Which of the following actions would you tell the council to make a priority?

#### Key findings

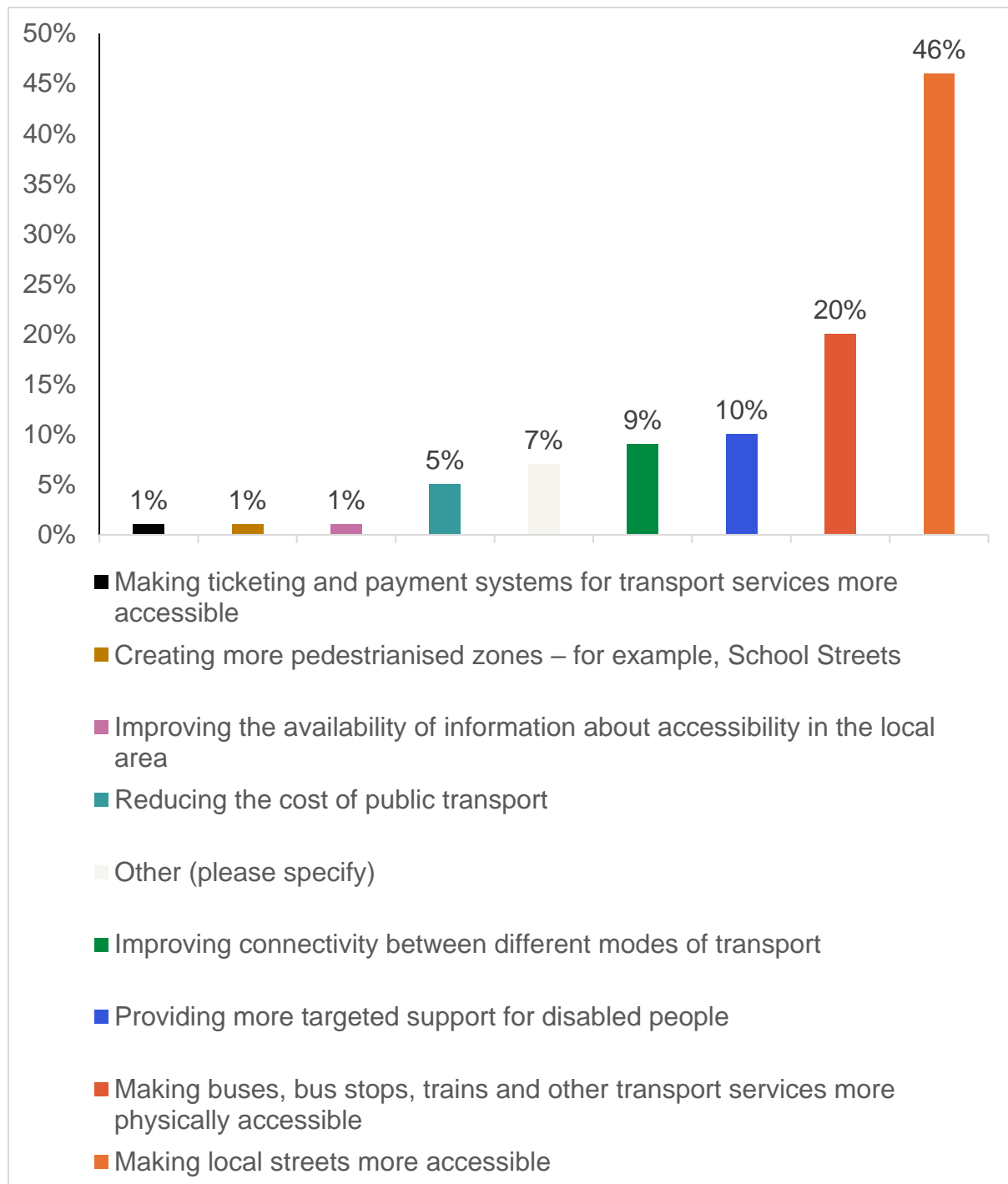
- Disabled people said local councils’ priorities in making transport more accessible should be:

- Making local streets more accessible – for example, by building drop kerbs, fixing broken or uneven pavements, installing tactile paving, improving signage, promoting safe driving (78%).
- Making buses, bus stops, trains and other transport services more physically accessible (63%).
- Improving connectivity between different modes of transport by creating hubs to bring together buses, railways, trams, cars and other types of travel (41%).
- Disabled people commented on the importance of public transport:
  - "Better design of buses. With an aging population our buses are not designed for the elderly and disabled."
  - "Improve the carrying capacity of trains and buses."
  - "Providing a basic bus service. Despite shelters and a bus lane, all of our services have been diverted."
  - "Enable two disabled friends / people to travel on the same public transport."
- Some highlighted the importance of disabled parking – often to allow them to use access another mode of transport to continue their journeys:
  - "Providing free parking for disabled persons."
  - "To be able to park close to station would allow me to use a train to get to places and therefore easier not to mention increase my public transport use."
  - "Introducing long stay blue badge parking at transport hubs such as railway stations..."
  - "Creating more well thought out disabled parking spaces."

**Which council action would have the biggest single impact?**

We followed up the question about which three actions local councils should make a priority by asking respondents to select the one action that would have the biggest single impact on them.

**Chart 3.3 Which action would have the biggest single impact on you?**



*Figure 3.3: Which action would have the biggest single impact on you?*

## **Key findings**

The three most frequently selected possible actions that local councils can take to remove barriers to transport that disabled people said would have the biggest single impact on their lives were:

- Making local streets more accessible – for example, by building drop kerbs, fixing broken or uneven pavements, installing tactile paving, improving signage, promoting safe driving (46%).
- Making buses, bus stops, trains and other transport services more physically accessible (20%).
- Providing more targeted support for disabled people such as community transport, travel buddy schemes and transport training (10%).

## **Survey of local government accessible transport staff**

### **The roles and backgrounds of accessible transport staff <sup>4</sup>**

The first part of the survey asked accessible transport staff to tell us about their current roles and backgrounds.

#### **Key findings**

- Over two-thirds of respondents were based in England (68%), followed by Wales (17%), Scotland (10%) and Northern Ireland (5%).
- Almost all job titles were non-disability specific. This includes job titles such as “public transport manager”, “project manager”, and “principal and strategy officer”; only two respondents had job titles that were more clearly related to disability: “home and community care transport manager” and “school transport officer”.

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<sup>4</sup> Sample size range: 42 - 35

- Two-fifths (40%) had been in their current role for 7 or more years.
- Almost all (95%) had an annual salary of over £30,001, with the most common earnings brackets being £50,001 - £60,000 (27%), £30,001 - £40,000 (27%) or £40,001 - £50,000 (24%) per year.
- Eleven percent (11%) said they had created an accessibility specialism within an existing role, 32% said their role was newly created when they applied for it, and 57% said their role already existed within their authority before they took their post.
- Fifty-four percent (54%) said that in their organisation, funding for adaptations, maintenance and programmes to make transport accessible comes from general transport budgets. Seventeen percent (17%) said their authority had a dedicated budget to help a range of disadvantaged groups including disabled people, while 3% (one respondent) said they had a budget dedicated to helping disabled people use transport.

## **Wider experience of disability <sup>5</sup>**

We ask respondents about their experience of disability beyond their current role such as from previous jobs and in their personal lives.

### **Key findings**

- Forty-six percent (46%) of accessible transport staff said that they had a disabled friend or close acquaintance and 37% said they had a family member who is a disabled person. One-fifth (20%) said that they did not have any personal experience of disability.
- Fifty-four percent (54%) of respondents said that they had worked with disabled people in a previous transport-related role. Such past roles included “community transport manager”, “concessionary travel manager”, “school transport operations manager”, “access and countryside officer”, “travel trainer” and architect, working with

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<sup>5</sup> Sample size range: 35 - 33

access consultants. However, half (50%) of the names of previous jobs that involved working with disabled people did not reflect a focus on disability or accessibility.

- Almost half (48%) said they had worked with disabled people in a non-transport related role. These roles included working as a special education teacher, a teaching assistant, a day care centre employee, a care coordinator for children in care, an employee of a company of disabled actors, and holiday playscheme and outreach workers for different types of organisations.
- Over half (52%) of respondents said that they did not have any formal qualifications in either transport or disability. Of those who had studied for a transport qualification, 19% had completed qualifications in public transportation systems and 10% had undertaken a formal qualification related to accessible transport. One person had formal training related to disability studies. Some reported having qualifications in other transport related areas such as fleet management.
- Seventy-two percent (72%) received some form of disability awareness training, and 34% had completed specific training on accessible transport; a quarter of respondents (25%) said that they had not undertaken any such training.
- When asked about the challenges they had experienced in relation to developing their professional experience and understanding of accessible transport, 45% said they had difficulty finding relevant training and continuing professional development opportunities. Forty percent (40%) said that a lack of peer support and mentorship was a barrier.

## **What accessible transport staff do <sup>6</sup>**

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<sup>6</sup> Sample size range 29 - 28



We asked transport staff to help us understand their responsibilities with a series of questions exploring their current roles in more detail.

## Key findings

- The three most common activities that respondents said they undertook in relation to accessibility in the course of their work were:
  - Collaborating with stakeholders to improve accessibility policies and practices (76%)
  - Ensuring compliance with accessibility regulations and standards (59%)
  - Implementing accessible design features in transportation infrastructure and services (55%).
- Thirty-eight percent (38%) also said that advocating for the rights of disabled people to use transport was part of their job.
- Respondents also commented that seeking funding for accessibility improvements was part of their job as was setting standards and policies.
- Over half (53%) of respondents said that they "Occasionally, when necessary" used policy documents and guidance from the UK and devolved governments. Less than a quarter (23%) reported that consulting such documents was a regular part of their routine.
- When asked to name the government documents that were important to their roles, many respondents pointed to design standards such as:
  - Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure (DfT 2021)
  - The Manual for Streets (DfT 2007)
  - The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' building regulations including Parts M (2024) and K (2013).

- Other documents that respondents referenced included strategic policy documents such as the Department for Transport's *Inclusive Transport Strategy* (2018) and *Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy* (2019), and Transport Scotland's *Accessible Travel Framework* (2016). *The Equality Act 2010* and *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* amendments were also highlighted.

## Opportunities and challenges<sup>7</sup>

In the last part of the survey, we asked transport staff for their views on the opportunities and challenges that local governments face in making transport in their areas more accessible for disabled people.

### Key findings

- The top three actions selected by accessible transport staff when asked what they would advise their senior teams to make a priority in their plans to improve local transport services for disabled people are:
  - Making local streets more accessible – for example, by building drop kerbs, fixing broken or uneven pavements, installing tactile paving, improving signage, promoting safe driving (75%).
  - Improving connectivity between different modes of transport by creating hubs to bring together buses, railways, trams, cars and other types of travel (71%).
  - Making buses, bus stops, trains and other transport services more physically accessible (64%).
- On a scale of one to 10 - where 10 represented the highest level of significance - respondents tended to view limited budgets and

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<sup>7</sup> Sample size range: 28 - 28

infrastructure retrofitting as the most significant barriers to making the local transport systems accessible.

- Sixty-seven percent (67%) of respondents rated limited budgets as 8 or above, with a notable 32% rating it as 10 (making it the biggest challenge according to those who took part in the survey).
- Three quarters (75%) rated infrastructure retrofitting as 7 or higher, with 29% rating it a 10.
- Respondents indicated that limited staff resources, difficulties coordinating with other departments, maintenance and upkeep of transport infrastructure and access to technological solutions to accessibility barriers are moderate challenges.
  - A lack of staff time and expertise to commit to making sure transport services and infrastructure are accessible was rated by 57% as 8 or above. Fourteen percent rated it as a 10.
  - Fifty-three percent (53%) of respondents rated 8 or above the statement that 'ensuring that accessibility features on transport networks remain in good condition can pose logistical and budgetary challenges'
  - Half (50%) rated 7 or above the statement that 'integrating technologies into the transport system to improve access for disabled people can be made difficult by the investment such solutions may require and the need to coordinate with technology'.
  - Forty-seven percent (47%) rated coordinating with other relevant council departments, such as social services and planning, as an 8 or above - agreeing that a joined-up approach is essential to improving disabled people's

experiences on the transport system but can be challenging to make a reality.

- Compliance with Regulations, Legal and Regulatory Barriers, Training and Awareness, Community Engagement, and Lack of Accessibility Guidelines were regarded as less critical challenges.
  - Thirty-six percent (36%) of respondents said the ongoing monitoring and investment needed to ensure compliance with national and local regulations and standards created significant enough challenges to score a rating of 8 or above. However, a notable proportion (42%) rated it between 5 and 7.
  - Only 11% rated as 7 or above the statement suggesting that 'legal and regulatory barriers can impede progress towards a more accessible transport system'.
  - Training and awareness to make sure staff understand the accessibility challenges disabled people face on the transport system received a rating of 8 or higher from almost a third (32%) of respondents.
  - Eighteen percent (18%) said that engaging with disabled people to understand their needs and preferences represented a challenge significant enough to attract a rating of 8 or above. But 60% rated this issue between 5 and 7.
  - A lack of accessibility guidelines to support staff to make accessibility improvements was rated by 18% of respondents as 8 or above. Forty-three percent gave this a rating of between 5 and 7.
- The statement suggesting that an unsupportive senior leadership could undermine the work to make transport services more accessible was rated as 4 or below by 40% of respondents, making it the least significant challenges according to those who

took part in the survey. Only 29% rated this challenge as 8 or above.

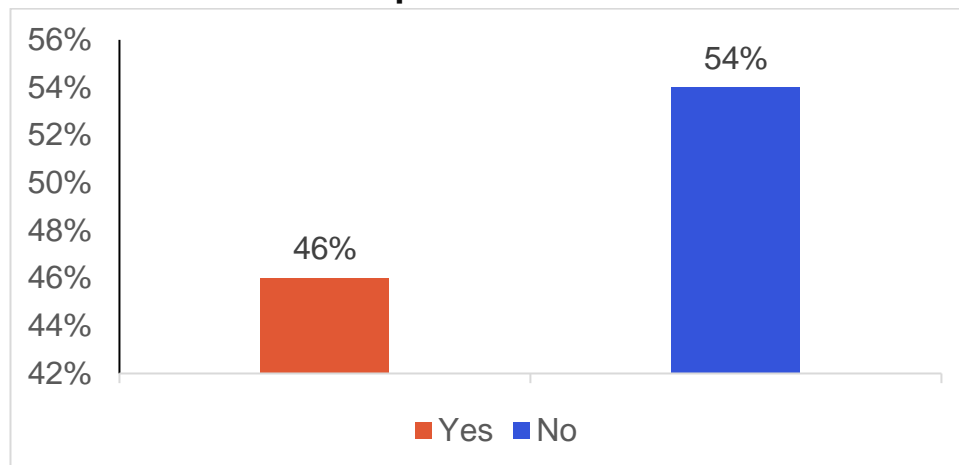
## Joining a community of practice on accessible transport

We asked accessible transport staff whether they would be interested in joining a community of practice for accessible transport.

### Key findings

- Respondents were narrowly split on whether they would consider joining a community of practice, with 54% saying "No" and 46% saying "Yes".

**Chart 3.4: Would you be interested in joining a community of practice for accessible transport staff?**



*Figure 3.4: Would you be interested in joining a community of practice for accessible transport staff?*

### Further insights

At the end of the survey, we asked accessible transport staff whether they had any additional comments or insights about barriers to making transport accessible. We have grouped their comments together by theme below.

### Key findings

- Project Planning and Decision-Making

- "Accessibility should be considered at project board level and integrated into decision making from the beginning and not towards the end of projects to ensure as collaborative an approach as possible."
- "Balancing the needs of disabled people and those who aren't disabled - sometimes we can't do something that would benefit loads of people because it doesn't fit the right accessibility guidelines."
- "Those completing EQIA's [equality impact assessments] for all projects do not necessarily have the training, experience or expertise to accurately assess impacts."
- Challenges with Implementation and Compliance
  - "Local authority budgets are so squeezed that even with the best efforts it is hard to future-proof accessibility measures, which can result in meeting legal requirements rather than ideal conditions."
  - "Making transport more accessible in your local authority is not a priority until it becomes a legal requirement to do so in specific areas / fields."
  - "The number one problem I find is that when there is a choice of either providing the policy compliant requirements or other priorities, disabled requirements misses out everytime."
- Political and Organisational Barriers
  - "Raising political awareness can be a challenge. Political decision making can be erratic and driven by parochial issues often failing to see the bigger picture around accessibility."

- "Resources (financial and staff) are the biggest barrier, as well as unrealistic political rhetoric without consideration of the former!"
- "The lack of knowledge from developers, contractors, management to the reasons why improving accessibility to public transport is important. Budget restraints also effect [sic] improvements to public transport."
- "This survey focusses on local government practitioners, when many advising and working in this field work in private practices, commissioned by less experienced public servants."
- Specific Accessibility Issues
  - "Inconsiderate and Illegal parking is a major impediment to accessible footways, bus stops etc. and tackling it is not given a high enough priority. Also footway and road maintenance and cleaning / sweeping. Also badly placed street furniture and advertising boards /street signs / roadworks."
  - "Different user groups require, or prefer, different standards and layouts of the highways network; there is no one size fits all solution."
- Future Directions and Solutions
  - "We are keen to follow the PAS 1899 guidelines, but I feel a bigger impact would be made across the UK if the guidelines were made mandatory."
  - "We have struggled to increase attendance at a quarterly online forum we set up for those with a disability to discuss micromobility (bike share and e-scooters) with council staff and the operators. I hope this will change in the coming

years, as there seems to be a growing Disability Forum that we are now linked in with."

## **Focus group and interviews with local government accessible transport staff**

### **About the participants**

- To make sure that participants felt free to speak openly, we made clear that their remarks would be anonymised. Therefore, we will not provide the names of the people who took part or the authorities they work for.
- Each participant has been assigned a number to identify them for the purposes of this report.
- Eight participants worked in England. One worked in Northern Ireland. We were unable to speak to practitioners based in Wales and Scotland – despite our efforts to recruit interviewees via regional groups and organisations.
- The participants had a variety of roles. Five worked in policy-focused strategic positions, two were accessibility advisers and two were inclusion and community engagement officers.
- Six worked for regional authorities, and the others worked for a borough council, a city council and a county council respectively.

### **Analysis**

#### **Direct community engagement**

All of the participants saw working with disabled people to involve them in the development of transport projects as an important part of their jobs. One of the professionals we spoke to said it was the single most important factor in making transport more accessible.



Participant 1 said: "You've got to get out there and talk to people in the first place to understand what issues they're facing. So, we do a lot of that."

Two participants highlighted the benefits of engaging with disabled people as early as possible in the course of a project to make sure their views and experiences were not overlooked. Participant 7 said their team preferred to consult "a lot earlier rather than presenting people with plans that we have developed in isolation, bringing them in right at that formative stage to set the agenda."

Participant 5 said that the commitment of senior leaders within the authority was important to carrying out effective early engagement: "the equality analysis and the way we go about consultation and engagement at quite an early stage, that it really does pay heed to these important issues is probably because we have got that buy in, you know, all the way up the organisation so it makes things easier".

Participant 1 highlighted the importance of going out and meeting people where they are comfortable as many would be uncomfortable speaking in a more formal environment such as a focus group: "I would say from my role in policy, engagement and consultation, working with those community groups and actually just getting out there, rocking up at a community centre and hearing their views is just the best way of really engaging with these groups."

Some of the participants pointed out the distinction between consulting with disabled people and coproducing with them so that they were active partners in guiding projects and shaping their outcomes. They thought that their organisations needed to get better at practising coproduction.

Participant 4 said: "We'd always go out externally then to our key stakeholders and disability groups, recognized groups promote more of

our collaborative co-design approach rather than a purely engagement model."

Participant 7 also noted that their authority was trying to improve: "One of the areas for improvement around bringing that lived experience voice in is looking at how we bring people in earlier in the process to co-design."

Participant 9 said coproduction should be seen as an operational requirement: "Design reference groups being there as something that we should have regardless, not by choice."

However, the professionals believed that engagement with disabled people was often overlooked by local authority staff.

Participant 7 argued professionals' heavy workloads mean their community outreach exercises are not as thorough as they should be: "Often these kind of considerations are given lip service by staff who are up the wall, they're stacked, you know, they've got multiple projects that they are managing and it's not always, understandably, their top priority."

### **Leadership and governance**

Participants discussed how organisational governance is often important in setting boundaries for transport staff in making services and infrastructure accessible. Participant 6 said that their authority's political leadership and the wider legal framework in which it operates "sets the tone for what engagement and consultation we can do, for instance" and noted the lack of representation on decision making committees: "Most of the decision makers, the councillors, most of them don't have a disability, most of them are white, most of them are male, most of them are middle aged."

Participant 9 also empathised that some of barriers to better transport decision making were cultural: "It's about inherent structures that

probably need to, kind of, grow and develop to make it more encompassing a culture thing, isn't it."

Participant 5 described the impact that a visually impaired councillor at an authority that they had previously worked for had had on policy: "He was such a champion, both in sharing his experiences and making sure, when he was lead member for transport, that we could fully understand it but also just getting other people who were in the community who maybe never thought of themselves as people who would attend council meetings or even respond to consultations, and getting those voices amplified."

Participants acknowledged that who put themselves forward for election was beyond their control. However, as participant 3 pointed out, staff are responsible for advising elected officials: "Quite often they do rely on the officers to help them understand not only what is the best practice in terms of doing something, but also the legislative requirements, what we are able, what we're not able to do."

Participant 4 said they felt that it was necessary to push leaders to go further than the legal requirements: "There can be a bit of a power imbalance in terms of those legal requirements and often, my job is to try and advocate to go beyond the standards so that they would help and assist people who maybe need a bit more space to go about their business."

Participants also thought it was important to make sure senior managers were as informed as possible about their authority's responsibility to make sure disabled people had access to transport. Participant 7 said: "We're trying to really put a focus on getting senior officers to attend and actually feed into the planning and the agenda setting and reporting on their actions and their progress."

In addition, organisational structure can be vital for staff to share ideas and advice with colleagues in different teams. Participant 1 said that working groups such as their authority's race equality task force and disability working group provided opportunities for staff to consult each other on the challenges they are encountering in their work: "Having those different groups within the organisation, I think does help with our accessibility policies, because you can get them to scrutinise what you're working on and get their views."

## **Standards**

Participants believed that many accessibility challenges were caused by a lack of standardisation across transport systems. Participant 6 acknowledged the impact this could have on the quality of disabled people's journeys as they travelled between different areas: "There are certain differences with local transport when, say, a disabled person is trying to travel from Greater Manchester but beyond that boundary, either on a bus or a train, and something is different." They pointed out that these differences can make it difficult to develop accessibility tools like the Passenger Assist app that can work everywhere.

Participants discussed some of the decision-making tools that they use to guide their work. Participant 4 described a procurement standard that Translink in Northern Ireland developed with disability groups that ensures accessibility has a 10% weighting in the scoring system used to select suppliers of a new fleet of buses: "This is the first year that a percentage is scored against the accessibility, essentially as yes/no, so people will lose marks if they can't provide accessibility elements within the fleet."

Participant 1 said that they used the Triple Access System developed by Glenn Lyons<sup>8</sup>. This aims to make people's daily lives easier by making sure they have good access to both physical and online spaces through management of transport, land use and telecommunication systems.

Participant 8's authority had adopted Healthy Streets guidance, which is based on 10 indicators that can be used to assess how people experience their local area.

Participant 9 said their authority had developed its own impact assessment toolkit to help staff evaluate projects: "[It] looks at everybody who might have some characteristic that could cause challenges to interacting with the transport network".

Participant 2 said: "I use as normal the BS 8300, the Inclusive Mobility and the Accessible Railways, as a minimum." However, they also said that they sometimes searched the Internet for examples of best practices.

Participants felt that they would benefit from having more evidence of good practice to help them design more accessible transport systems. Participant 5 felt that this is one of the ways ncat could contribute to their work: "When the formation of ncat popped up on my LinkedIn feed and I felt, 'Yes, that was the thing I was thinking, it could be great, to really bring together a lot of this best practice and good examples into a prominent place.'" Participant 9 also suggested that ncat could help to develop a resource: "Maybe if you work with MPs and government and some sort of central guidance on how to develop the schemes because I guess, people with different needs, a variety of different needs, there's no one solution for everyone."

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<sup>8</sup> [Exploring triple access in sustainable urban mobility planning](#)

Participant 1 said that having a single resource with relevant information and advice would help: "Like what everyone else has said, yes, having more toolkits, best practice examples in one place, really good case studies where things have worked really well, I think I would value that."

Participant 6 thought it would be useful to have a way of sharing examples of good practice and case law from across the UK: "Collecting together all the different learnings across different regions, for example."

Participant 4 said that they would value a resource that simplified technical knowledge: "Almost like a checklist or easy to understand readers guide for infrastructure to put manager the same thing as somebody with the technical knowledge who would be responsible for that."

### **Training and professional development**

Most of the participants noted there was a shortage of formal training opportunities for transport professionals on disability. Participant 2 said many people have to undertake advanced degrees to learn about accessible design: "For me to learn about access and inclusivity, I had to do a postgraduate. But that should be before, because we had architects on the course who said they didn't know anything about access, and yet, they were going round designing buildings, designing roadways and whatnot."

They were also sometimes skeptical about the quality and effectiveness of training that does exist. Participant 1 said that training courses can feel like "tick box exercises": "So, to me, I know training courses can help, but sometimes you just come away and you forget what you've learnt."

Participant 4 argued that the training their organisation offers does not always translate into better practices: "No matter if everybody gets the

same training, it's how that member of staff potentially responds or acts." They said this is partly a result of the organisation's large workforce: "Because we are working with so many staff, we're maybe working with 2,500 frontline staff, it's always difficult to make sure that everybody's needs are fully accommodated whenever they're interacting with our staff as well."

Participants said that while more formal learning opportunities would help, having an inclusive organisational culture that makes use of the skills and experiences of disabled people was also required to have a significant impact. On formal training, participant 4 said that accessible design should be an integral component of educational programmes: "It's trying to make more of an inclusive cultural shift within how we educate and train people. We can do that within a workplace environment, yes, but I think it needs to be done at an earlier stage, whether that's within university or school."

Participant 2 reflected on the high standard of continuing professional development opportunities provided by some disability organisations: "They used to run courses, and it was people, the RNIB, wheelchair users, Deaf Association and autism as well. So, for one group, you'd go and see how it is to be in a wheelchair and how difficult it is to get around."

However, employing people with direct experience of the challenges disabled people encounter on transport was viewed as a particularly effective way of improving the wider workforce's understanding of these issues. For example, participant 7 highlighted the importance of the make-up of their team: "Team member expertise and working culture is really important informing those considerations around accessibility and lived experience."

Participant 1 said that staff in their combined authority had held sessions in which colleagues shared their expertise of living with an impairment: "Now, I can talk to them openly, and I'll be, like, 'Oh, do you know what, I've done this policy. Can you have a look at it? From your perspective, how do you feel it meets your needs?'" Participant 5 said that they had also seen how disabled colleagues could help improve how disability was approached by their local authority: "you've got someone you can speak with about, how was this policy? How would it impact you? and so on."

Participant 5 said that their authority had taken part in a transport planning apprenticeship programme which had led their team to recruit an autistic person. Participant 6 suggested that the transport sector had an obligation to ensure it resembles the communities it serves: "it's obviously, the responsibility of the organisation. But more widely attracting the right people to the transport industry, for example. Does it feel like an option for people from all different equalities groups, really?"

## **Legal**

Most participants said they had good awareness of the public sector equality duty but did not always know how to apply it. Participant 5 said that they and several other colleagues had been on training courses about the duty delivered by PTRC Education and Research Services (which is part of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport) and the Constitution Institute. The learning from these had also been "well disseminated internally".

Participant 2 said the legal duties were often hard to understand: "I think all legal responsibilities are difficult, or can be difficult to understand and interpret." Participant 1 said they asked their legal team for advice when required: "I do ask our legal services for advice. So any report, any



policy I do. It's not my expertise, so I would just naturally go to our legal teams."

Participant 4 pointed out that colleagues from certain technical backgrounds such as architecture and engineering were much more likely to be up to date on relevant legislation and regulations because these things were part of their initial education and continuing professional development training: "if you're a building surveyor, architect or engineer, you're going to be trained in the size and specifics of door openings and steepness of ramps etc."

Participant 9 said that while the public sector equality duty was integrated into their combined authority's equality impact assessment framework, "there's probably more that could be done in a governance capacity to firm up some of our legal responsibilities on transport decisions around this."

Participant 6 felt that there was a need for someone to promote the duty to colleagues across their combined authority: "Getting that message out to the officers that they have a duty, there is this public sector equality duty but, 'It's okay, this is how we can help you make sure you do fulfil it.'"

Participant 3 indicated that while their own policy focused team was aware of the requirements of the duty, they did not refer to it in their day-to-day work and sought advice from their other parts of their county council when required: "We would require or lean on the advice of those other teams, if we thought that was necessary." They said legal requirements were considered in greater detail as projects progressed: "The legal requirements are much more touched on, probably, as you go further down the process, in terms of the design and delivery of projects on the ground."

Participant 4 explained how legal responsibilities were often overseen through their authority's governance processes: "A lot of the projects at the board level have equality screening and then projects and policies, they would go through our equality working group as well, so they would be screening essentially for disability [under equality legislation]."

Some participants were concerned that equality impact assessments often did not receive sufficient scrutiny to make sure authorities were generally fulfilling their legal obligations. Participant 5 said that while projects are reviewed by two or three people from the transport and equality teams, there was a lack of legal oversight: "We don't have the lawyers checking this sort of stuff that does mean that there probably is a better chance something sneaking through that was awful, where it really was just this minimal tick box exercise."

Participant 1 suggested that staff often did not have enough training to conduct effective assessments: "I'm not against equality impact assessments. I think they're so vital but my worry with us in our organisation is we haven't had the training to do it properly."

Participant 5 said independent scrutiny of assessments would help to address these weaknesses: "Somebody external coming in with a fresh pair of eyes and a degree of independence that an officer won't have is always really helpful." However, they also said that it would be too expensive to commission an independent review on a regular basis.

Participants said that better guidance and case studies would help them to implement the public sector equality duty. Participant 6 said that this would be particularly valuable when the correct course of action was unclear: "Sometimes when there are things that are a little bit ambiguous, it's like, well, do you do this or this? What's best? Case law proved useful."

Participant 3 said that they would like to have a way of following key legal rulings to understand their implications: "What the impact of any legal judgement has been, in terms of, has there been any recent case law that has affected how a local authority might be required to rethink what it has been doing and apply what we have been doing in a slightly different way."

Participant 7 said their authority was developing a consultation toolkit that would include relevant legal considerations: "We'll be looking to incorporate key parts of case law in there so people will be able to get a sense of considerations."

## **Funding**

Participants saw a lack of funding for accessibility improvements as a key barrier to an inclusive transport system. Money can trump the legal duties in determining whether a transport service is made accessible.

Participant 2 said that bus operators were able to delay the implementation of new regulations requiring buses to have audio commentary for blind and visually impaired people by 2026 by saying they simply do not have the necessary funding: "The bus operators just turn around and say, 'We can't afford it.'"

Participant 3 explained the risk of relying on general budgets rather than dedicated funding to deliver accessible transport: "You'd need to be making sure it was channeled to the right things and being specifically ring-fenced in terms of, 'Well, this is funding for this, and to do this.' Otherwise, it could just simply get swallowed up in the other funding and not actually meet your desired outcomes."

However, participant 9 said that dedicated funding pots were often spent on updating older infrastructure: "Dedicated funding pots end up being spent on retrofit, which is the right thing for them. Whereas what we

should be doing is designing it in the right way in the first place.” They suggested that one of the keys to making sure more funding gets allocated to accessibility features was to show decision makers at the start of a project that the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs:

“Making those mechanical processes more receptive of doing things like building a ramp, if you get what I'm saying, in a way that is not seen as an inhibitor to the benefits of the scheme is probably one of the key things, I would say.”

Participant 7 also said that the lack of funding compromised the extent to which authorities are able to work with disabled people: “We try and pay for lived experience where possible and that isn't always possible given budget constraints.” They also said that the lack of funding limits staff engagement: “Staff that are working in services don't necessarily have the time or the capacity to engage in that meaningful process and that is part and parcel of, you know, squeezes in local authority budgets.”

## **4 What conclusions did we come to?**

In this section, we bring together the results of our research to identify five main conclusions.

**Conclusion 1: Disabled people and accessible transport staff agree that making local streets accessible should be the top priority in efforts to make sure transport is accessible for all.**

Three-quarters of disabled people (78%) and transport staff (75%) who took part in our surveys said that they would advise local policy makers to focus on making streets more accessible.

Improving the accessibility of local transport services and connectivity between different modes of transport were also among the top three priorities for both groups of respondents.

**Conclusion 2: Transport staff feel that collaborating with stakeholders – including disabled people – is a vital part of their roles but do not have enough time to do this effectively.**

Over three-quarters (76%) of transport staff who took part in our survey reported that they often collaborated with stakeholders in the course of their work.

Our interviews indicated that staff frequently lacked the time and funding to run effective cocreation exercises due to heavy workloads.

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of survey respondents also rated a lack of staff time and expertise as 8 or above out of 10, indicating that this was a significant barrier to making transport accessible. Thirty-six percent (36%) of respondents to our survey of local government staff rated least 8 out of 10 or above our statement suggesting that it is a significant challenge to monitor and invest in transport infrastructure and services to make sure they are compliant with relevant regulations and standards.

### **Conclusion 3: Local governments often fail to meet their legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 because they do not allocate enough funding to compliance efforts.**

Respondents to our survey of local government transport staff and those who took part in our interviews and focus groups said that the implementation of the Public Sector Equality Duty is undermined by a lack of funding – resulting in the services falling short on access and inclusion. Policy roundtable attendees said that funding constraints in local government over the past decade had led to accessibility specialists across the country being made redundant, leading to a loss of expertise.

Survey respondents said limited funds were the biggest barrier to making services accessible, with two-thirds rating this issue at least 8 out of 10. Staff said that budgetary constraints can mean either that transport services and infrastructure are built to only meet the minimum legal standards or lead to accessibility features being delayed.

Our rapid evidence review shows that in other contexts pooling expertise and resources among different teams and departments can help to overcome some of the problems associated with funding limitations. This works best when the organisation's leadership explicitly prioritises accessibility and inclusion and ensures that disability specialists have equal status within and across teams.

## **Conclusion 4: Most staff have some training on accessibility, but the quality of such training varies widely.**

Our research suggests that local government transport staff often have at least a general awareness that disabled people face barriers on transport but the training available to them is often of poor quality – except for those in certain technical fields.

Thirty-two percent (32%) of local government transport staff gave a rating of 8 or higher to the statement suggesting that a lack of training and awareness of the challenges faced by disabled people on transport. Policy roundtable attendees noted that the lack of established training opportunities means that authorities and individual staff must invest in their own training and qualifications in order to develop expertise in disability and accessibility.

Participants in our focus groups and interviews said that training courses often felt tokenistic and were not effective in helping them to do their jobs. They said that learning directly from people with lived experience – including their own colleagues – could be a particularly effective way to build an understanding of disability and accessibility issues. Some participants said that ncat should develop a single resource with relevant information and advice.

The rapid evidence review showed that an organisation's staff are more likely to provide high-quality services for disabled people when they have been trained in disability rights concepts and have had opportunities to interact with people with lived experience and understand their needs and preferences. However, just less than half of respondents to our staff survey (46%) favoured our suggestion that ncat

should help to set up a Community of Practice for local government staff around accessible transport.

## **Conclusion 5: Involving disabled people in decision making is vital to improving outcomes for disabled people.**

Participants in our focus group and interviews with local government transport staff highlighted examples of the advantages of having disabled people directly involved in transport services and decision making. These included a visually impaired councillor who took on a leading role in transport policy making at his authority and disabled staff who had been able to shape decisions.

Policy roundtable attendees said that local government must work with disabled people's organisations to coproduce all policy, strategy, infrastructure design and construction and all stages of service delivery. They also pointed out that while local disabled people's organisations were well placed to work with local government organisations, national and devolved governments should coproduce country wide standards with national disabled people's organisations. This will provide a stronger foundation for coproduction at the local level.

The studies in our rapid evidence review show that coproduction can help organisations develop better approaches to overcoming barriers and leads to more empathy and understanding of disability among non-disabled peers. The literature also indicates the importance of formalising coproduction in organisational structures and the critical role that leaders can play in creating a culture that encourages staff to advocate for better policy, services and outcomes for disabled people.



## 5 What should happen next?

In this section, we will make eight recommendations based on the conclusions of our research. The recommendations are addressed to the UK and devolved governments, local governments and ncat.

### National government

#### Recommendation 1

- a) The UK and devolved governments should develop and maintain a national website where disabled people and transport professionals can find and understand regulations, guidance, case law and other resources relevant to making transport accessible.<sup>9</sup>
- b) The UK's Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland, the Northern Irish Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee and the Welsh government's Disability Taskforce should form a joint working group to oversee this project and invite key industry bodies to observe and promote the project to local government and wider transport sector stakeholders.

#### Recommendation 2

- c) The UK and devolved governments should reinstate the Access to Elected Office Fund that supports disabled people to run for election – including to become councillors and mayors.
- d) The UK and devolved governments should promote the relaunched scheme with a public awareness campaign designed to highlight the impact disabled office holders can make on public

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<sup>9</sup> See the Care Quality Commission website's "[Regulations for service providers and managers](#)" page for an example of a similar resource.

policy and the importance of making sure disabled people are represented at the highest levels of decision making.

## **Local government**

### **Recommendation 3**

- a) Local and regional authorities' transport teams should conduct comprehensive capability and capacity assessments<sup>10</sup> in relation to accessibility and disability inclusion to identify current strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.
- b) The assessments should include a consideration of whether the authority's team includes officers with a dedicated accessibility role, and whether they have sufficient seniority and support from leadership (see Recommendation 4b), as well as appropriate training (see Recommendation 5) and peer support (see Recommendation 7).
- c) Capability and capacity assessments should be coproduced with local disabled people and Disabled People's Organisations.

### **Recommendation 4**

The Local Government Association in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities should work with Disabled People's Organisations to develop guidance on how local government should coproduce with disabled people.

### **Recommendation 5**

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<sup>10</sup> See the Local Government Association's "[Capability and capacity reviews](#)". See also recent reviews of local government capability and capacity with respect to other areas, such as [data science](#)

- a) Local and regional authorities should codify coproduction with disabled people in their formal decision-making structures and processes.
- b) Every authority should name one elected official and one administrative leader as responsible for making sure disabled people are genuinely involved in decision making at every level of their organisation.

## **Recommendation 6**

Local and regional authorities should make sure that every member of staff receives high-quality disability and inclusion training. This should include training specific to their roles and responsibilities within the authority (see Recommendation 8).

## **The National Centre for Accessible Transport**

### **Recommendation 7**

- a) ncat should look at what's needed to commission a pilot of an accessible transport community of practice (CoP) for local government.
- b) The pilot CoP should be geographically limited (e.g. to Scotland, or the English Midlands) and, if successful, should be expanded to cover the whole of the UK. The CoP will help professionals share knowledge and best practices, provide mutual support, and build accessible transport as a specialism within the local government sector.<sup>11</sup>
- c) The initiative should have the social model of disability and coproduction embedded in its governance, with disabled transport

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<sup>11</sup> See for example [The Advanced & Predictive Analytics Network in Local Government \(APAN\)](#) run by the Local Government Association.

professionals directly involved in shaping the community's priorities and taking part in its activities.

### **Recommendation 8**

ncat should review the current training landscape in accessible transport and look at what's needed to develop a framework for education, training, accreditation, and professional development in this area.

### **Recommendation 9**

ncat should commission a pilot of the accessibility capability and capacity assessment at a local and a regional authority (see Recommendation 3).

## 6 About ncat

The National Centre for Accessible Transport (ncat) works as an Evidence Centre developing high quality evidence, best practice, and innovative solutions to inform future disability and transport strategy, policy, and practice by:

- Engaging with disabled people to better understand their experiences and co-design solutions
- Amplifying the voices of disabled people in all decision making
- Collaborating widely with all transport stakeholders
- Demonstrating good practice and impact to influence policy

ncat is delivered by a consortium of organisations that includes Coventry University, Policy Connect, The Research Institute for Disabled Consumers (RiDC), Designability, Connected Places Catapult, and WSP. It is funded for seven years from 2023 by the Motability Foundation.

For more information about ncat and its work please visit [www.ncat.uk](http://www.ncat.uk)

To contact ncat, either about this report or any other query, please email [info@ncat.uk](mailto:info@ncat.uk)



## **7 Terms used in this report**

### **Borough council**

A borough council is a type of local authority that governs a borough, which is a defined administrative area. Borough councils are responsible for services like housing, waste collection, and local planning. They are more common in urban or suburban areas.

### **City council**

A city council is the governing body of a city, responsible for delivering local services such as education, social care, transport, and environmental planning. City councils usually have broader responsibilities in larger, more densely populated areas.

### **Co-production**

Co-production is a collaborative approach in which disabled people and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) work as equal partners with public bodies, service providers, or organisations to design, create, and deliver products, services, and infrastructure. It ensures that the lived experiences of disabled people inform and shape outcomes.

### **County council**

County councils operate at the upper tier of local government in two-tier areas (alongside district or borough councils). They are responsible for services that cover larger areas, such as education, highways, social services, and public health.

### **Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs)**

DPOs are organisations led by and for disabled people. They are run on the principle of disabled people having control over decisions and activities, ensuring their rights, needs, and experiences are represented and prioritised in policy, services, and advocacy.

## **Local authority**

A local authority is an administrative body in the UK responsible for providing local government services and facilities. It can refer to councils at various levels, including borough, city, district, and county councils.

## **Local government**

Local government refers to the system of administration through which local authorities provide public services and governance at a local level. It operates independently of central government and is responsible for services such as education, housing, transport, and planning.

## **Local government accessible transport staff**

Local government staff who are either specialists in accessibility and those who have a broader role that includes accessibility. The term was created for the purposes of this report.

## **Rapid evidence review**

A rapid evidence review is a research methodology that surveys and synthesises secondary research literature in a condensed timeframe. It is designed to provide a quick, systematic overview of existing evidence to inform decision-making.

## **Regional authorities**

Regional authorities oversee strategic planning and services across a larger geographical area, often spanning several local councils. Their responsibilities may include transport, economic development, and spatial planning. Examples include combined authorities, such as those led by metro mayors.

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## **9 Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Rapid evidence review**

#### **Review objectives and research questions**

The purpose of this review is to examine the existing literature on the roles and responsibilities of accessible transport staff and those in similar occupations.

1. What is the relationship between the organisational arrangements in which staff work (eg the size of their teams, whether they work in specialist or generalist teams, organisational policies) and the outcomes they achieve for disabled people?
2. What is the relationship between the backgrounds of staff and the outcomes they achieve for disabled people?

## Search strategy

### Information sources

- SCOPUS
- ERIC
- Google Scholar

### Keywords

Tables A1.1 and A1.2 show the keywords that were used in each of the searches.

**Table A1.1: Search terms for Question 1**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Comparator</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Disabled people OR people with disabilities OR individuals with disabilities OR people with impairment* OR impaired people	Transport planner* OR transport professional* OR transport practitioner* OR transport policy advis* OR transport	Organisation* culture* OR organisation* commit* OR team size OR department size OR leadership support* OR political support*	Independence OR quality of life OR agency OR social inclusion OR social integration OR life

<b>Population</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Comparator</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
OR disabled passengers OR passengers with disabilities	access* advis* OR transport inclusive design advis* OR transport disability coordinator*	OR service climate OR corporate climate OR work ethos OR organisation* ethos OR service ethos OR corporate ethos OR work environment OR organisation* environment OR service environment OR corporate environment	chances OR outcomes
Children with special educational needs and disabilities OR child* with SEND OR pupils with special educational needs and disabilities OR pupil* with	SEND Coordinator* OR Special Educational Needs Coordinator* OR SENCo	Organisation* culture* OR organisation* commit* OR team size OR department size OR leadership support* OR political support* OR service climate OR corporate climate OR work ethos	Independence OR quality of life OR agency OR social inclusion OR social integration OR life chances OR outcomes

<b>Population</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Comparator</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
SEND OR disabled child* OR disabled pupil* OR pupil* with disabilities		OR organisation* ethos OR service ethos OR corporate ethos OR work environment OR organisation* environment OR service environment OR corporate environment	
Disabled student* OR disabled *graduate* OR disabled *graduate* OR students with disabilities OR *graduate*s with disabilities OR student* with impairment* OR *graduate*s with impairment*	Student advis* OR student support officer* OR student support worker OR student assist* OR learning support officer* OR learning support worker,	Organisation* culture* OR organisation* commit* OR team size OR department size OR leadership support* OR political support* OR service climate OR corporate climate OR work ethos OR organisation* ethos OR service ethos OR corporate ethos	Independence OR quality of life OR agency OR social inclusion OR social integration OR life chances OR outcomes

<b>Population</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Comparator</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
		OR work environment OR organisation* environment OR service environment OR corporate environment	
Disabled people OR disabled unemployed person OR disabled jobseeker* OR disabled worker* OR people with disabilities OR jobseeker* with disabilities OR worker* with disabilities	Disability employment advis* OR employment support officer* OR job coach	Background OR education OR training OR experience OR knowledge OR expertise	Independence OR quality of life OR agency OR social inclusion OR social integration OR life chances OR outcomes
Disabled people OR people with disabilities OR individuals with disabilities OR	Housing advis* OR housing officer* OR housing facilities officer* OR housing	Organisation* culture* OR organisation* commit* OR team size OR department size	Independence OR quality of life OR agency OR social inclusion OR

<b>Population</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Comparator</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
people with impairment* OR Disabled tenant OR tenant* with disabilities OR tenant* with impairment*	occupational therapist* OR housing manager* OR housing specialist*	OR leadership support* OR political support* OR service climate OR corporate climate OR work ethos OR organisation* ethos OR service ethos OR corporate ethos OR work environment OR organisation* environment OR service environment OR corporate environment	social integration OR life chances OR outcomes

Figure A1.1: Search terms for Question 1

Table A1.2: Search terms for Question 2

<b>Population</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Comparator</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Disabled people OR people with disabilities OR individuals with disabilities OR	Transport planner* OR transport professional* OR transport practitioner* OR	Background OR education OR training OR experience OR knowledge OR expertise	Independence OR quality of life OR agency OR social inclusion OR

<b>Population</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Comparator</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
people with impairment* OR impaired people OR disabled passengers OR passengers with disabilities	transport policy advis* OR transport access* advis* OR transport inclusive design advis* OR transport disability coordinator*		social integration OR life chances OR outcomes
Children with special educational needs and disabilities OR child* with SEND OR pupils with special educational needs and disabilities OR pupil* with SEND OR disabled child* OR disabled pupil* OR pupil* with disabilities	SEND Coordinator* OR Special Educational Needs Coordinator* OR SENCo	Background OR education OR training OR experience OR knowledge OR expertise	Independence OR quality of life OR agency OR social inclusion OR social integration OR life chances OR outcomes

<b>Population</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Comparator</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Disabled student* OR disabled *graduate* OR disabled *graduate* OR students with disabilities OR *graduate*s with disabilities OR student* with impairment* OR *graduate*s with impairment*	Student advis* OR student support officer* OR student support worker OR student assist* OR learning support officer* OR learning support worker,	Background OR education OR training OR experience OR knowledge OR expertise	Independence OR quality of life OR agency OR social inclusion OR social integration OR life chances OR outcomes
Disabled people OR disabled unemployed person OR disabled jobseeker* OR disabled worker* OR people with disabilities OR jobseeker* with disabilities OR	Disability employment advis* OR employment support officer* OR job coach	Background OR education OR training OR experience OR knowledge OR expertise	Independence OR quality of life OR agency OR social inclusion OR social integration OR life chances OR outcomes



<b>Population</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Comparator</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
worker* with disabilities			
Disabled people OR people with disabilities OR individuals with disabilities OR people with impairment* OR Disabled tenant OR tenant* with disabilities OR tenant* with impairment*	Housing advis* OR housing officer* OR housing facilities officer* OR housing occupational therapist* OR housing manager* OR housing specialist*	Background OR education OR training OR experience OR knowledge OR expertise	Independence OR quality of life OR agency OR social inclusion OR social integration OR life chances OR outcomes

*Figure A1.2: Search terms for Question 2*

### **Search date range**

- Start date: January 2019
- End date: The present

### **Search criteria**

- Our search criteria includes both qualitative and quantitative studies, and a wide range of methodologies such as randomised controlled trials, systematic reviews, observational studies, case reports.
- Our first round of searches will focus exclusively on finding systematic reviews that may be relevant to our project.

- Studies must be in English.
- In the first instance, our search will be confined to the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). If this approach yields too few studies, the research team may choose to expand the search criteria to other developed English-speaking countries (specifically the Republic of Ireland, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand).

## Results tables

Tables A1.3 and A1.4 summarise the study methodologies and relevant findings to our review.

**Table A1.3: Summary of study methodologies**

<b>Author (date)</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Purpose of study</b>	<b>Study population and sample size</b>	<b>Research design / methodology</b>
White (2019)	United States	To explore the characteristics of disability support offices at postsecondary education institutions offices that can increase graduation rates among students with disclosed disability (SWDD).	Data collected from 153 disability support services directors.	Mixed methods analysis of surveys of directors and data collected from the National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).
Hayward et al. (2022)	Australia	To assess the efficacy of the Australian Disability Employment Services (DES) for autistic jobseekers	24 autistic individuals 7 family members of autistic individuals	Surveys and interviews.

<b>Author (date)</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Purpose of study</b>	<b>Study population and sample size</b>	<b>Research design / methodology</b>
		and suggest reforms.	46 DES employees	
Little et al (2020)	UK	To explore staff awareness, attitudes, and confidence in implementing reasonable adjustment for students with disabilities in higher education. Also attitudes towards reasonable adjustments held by teaching staff.	38 staff members (including teaching staff, disability liaison officers and a central dyslexia & disability support team) at one higher education institution.	Survey.
Renauer (2021)	United States	Identifies factors that promote and support best practices at to help disabled people secure employment a community rehabilitation organisations.	31 members of staff at Executive, Mid Manager and Direct Service of the organisation.	Interviews.
Lund (2023)	United States	To address the under-representation of disabled individuals among psychology faculty and graduate students, and to provide evidence-based suggestions and strategies for supporting graduate students with disabilities in	Academic scholarship on the experiences of disabled student enrolled in psychology postgraduate courses. Sample size unspecified.	Literature review.

<b>Author (date)</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Purpose of study</b>	<b>Study population and sample size</b>	<b>Research design / methodology</b>
		teaching roles within psychology.		
Watkins (2020)	United States	To examine the perspectives of advisors regarding student leadership within College Organisations for Students with Disabilities (COSDs). It aimed to understand the nature and development of student leadership in COSDs.	3 advisers based at northeastern universities and colleges.	Interviews, surveys and document collection.
Maher et al (2021)	UK	To explore mainstream secondary school physical education (PE) teachers' views and experiences of assessing the learning of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	31 PE teachers from state secondary schools across three cities in the north of England.	Interviews.
Newman (2023)	United States	To examine how disability academic advisers can support the success of disabled black students in community colleges through the lens of disability critical race theory.	13 participants (including 8 students and 5 disability academic advisers) from an urban community college district	Interviews.

<b>Author (date)</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Purpose of study</b>	<b>Study population and sample size</b>	<b>Research design / methodology</b>
			on the West Coast.	
Dew et al (2023)	Australia	To evaluate a film industry internship for people with intellectual disability.	8 interns and 10 mentors in the Back-to-Back Theatre film internship programme for people with intellectual disability.	Interviews.
Wood & Legg (2020)	UK	Capturing staff vision for SEND provision, and the barriers they face in its realisation.	3 focus groups of 9 leadership team staff at a Multi-Academy Trust (4 schools)	Document analysis (of 4 SEND reviews) and focus groups.
Wilbur et al (2019)	United States	To understand supervisors' experiences, attitudes, and biases when working with psychology disabled trainees.	151 supervisors across various specialties of psychology.	Survey.
Wearmouth & Butler (2019)	UK	Explore the degree to which school staff had the appropriate knowledge and skills to meet their statutory obligations	18 SENCOs from a variety of East Midlands schools.	Questionnaires and follow up interviews.

<b>Author (date)</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Purpose of study</b>	<b>Study population and sample size</b>	<b>Research design / methodology</b>
		with regard to autistic pupils.		
Cullen et al (2020)	UK	Broad review of approaches to supporting and teaching pupils with SEND, effective in improving academic, social and emotional outcomes in mainstream schools.	21 systematic reviews.	Literature review of systematic reviews, focused on 8 review questions.
Tyshoe et al (2021)	UK	To inform professional practice and improve delivery of the principles underpinning the SEND reforms in the Children and Families Act 2014	5 special educational needs coordinators working in London schools.	Interviews structured using a SWOT analysis tool.
Morley et al (2020)	UK	To explore physical education teachers' perceptions of including pupils with SEND in mainstream PE classes	31 UK mainstream secondary school teachers.	Interviews.
Tarantino et al (2022)	International	To assess teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of pupils with SEND in physical education, and identify the personal, professional, social and practical factors	Review of 44 studies of primary and secondary school physical education teachers.	A mixed methods systematic review and a meta-analysis.

<b>Author (date)</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Purpose of study</b>	<b>Study population and sample size</b>	<b>Research design / methodology</b>
		that shape those attitudes.		
Edwards (2022)	Australia	To encourage discussion about how the needs of disabled students are supported by Australian universities in the context of online learning.	Review of official policy documents and academic studies relating higher education. policy, the student voice and universal design for instruction (UDI).	Literature review.
Devi and Ganguly (2022)	Australia	To explore how the attitudes of new and trainee teachers towards autistic pupils are affected by their own education, their experiences with students with ASD and the level of support they receive from the school administration.	Eight trainee teachers and eight recent teaching graduates from an Australian University.	Interviews.

*Figure A1.3: Summary of study methodologies*

**Table A1.4: Summary of study findings**

<b>Author (date)</b>	<b>Findings relevant to</b>	
	<b>Q1 Organisational arrangements</b>	<b>Q2 Staff backgrounds</b>
White (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutions whose disability support services have a</li> </ul>	

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
	<p>student advisory council reported higher graduation rates among students with a disclosed disability (higher than services without a student council) .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutions with a disability studies major are negatively correlated to the 4-year graduation rates of SWDD.</li> <li>• Disability support services directors play multiple roles, and are often spread too thin, especially as the disabled student population increases.</li> </ul>	
Hayward et al. (2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The following organisational arrangements are linked to improved outcomes: (a) more time allowed to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practitioners that support autistic clients are not specialists – they also support clients who are not autistic, and non-disabled clients.</li> </ul>



Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
	<p>practitioners to spend with and on clients, (b) enabling practitioners to stay with a single disabled client throughout the entire employment journey, (c) better organisational success measures, focused on sustainable outcomes rather than short term, 'tick-box', goals (job placements).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff current lack of awareness about autism and the related need for training can undermine the quality of support for autistic clients.</li> </ul>
Little et al (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff lack training and access to advice on how to make reasonable adjustments.</li> <li>• Concerns about practical adjustments not being possible or proportionate for professional accredited courses.</li> <li>• No common understanding of the</li> </ul>	

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
	<p>responsibility for upholding legal duties or adopting the social model of disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability Liaison Officers need more specialist training, as well as a strengthened role for central IT services.</li> </ul>	
Renauer (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service delivery practices should be based on a mission-driven culture of continuous improvement that aims to drive upward mobility for disabled people.</li> <li>• Organisational culture, structure, leadership, healthy workplaces and the implementation of effective practices are intertwined and crucial</li> </ul>	

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
	<p>for achieving positive outcomes for disabled people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational structure facilitated open communication at all levels.</li> </ul> <p>Leadership played a crucial role by encouraging risk-taking, thus improving staff morale and motivation to develop and implement innovative practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational barriers like poor leadership can impede the maintenance and implementation of innovation.</li> </ul>	
Lund (2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By asking all students if they require any reasonable accommodations, faculty can remove the burden of starting the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practitioners who are more aware of the challenges faced by disabled people and who hold positive, supportive attitudes are</li> </ul>

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
	<p>conversation from students. This can also signal that they are open to working with and accommodating graduate student teachers with disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies to overcome barriers should be co-produced with disabled students and staff.</li> <li>• Faculty members should use the insights accumulated over their own careers to advise disabled graduate students what kinds of accommodations and approaches might be helpful to them as they gain teaching experience.</li> <li>• Universities should draw on external resources and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The education and training that practitioners receive significantly influence their ability to effectively work with disabled individuals. Training that includes a focus on disability rights, accommodations, and inclusive practices can lead to better outcomes.</li> <li>• Practitioners who have personal experiences with disability or who work closely with disabled colleagues may have a better understanding of the needs and challenges faced by disabled individuals.</li> </ul>

	<b>Findings relevant to Q1 Organisational arrangements</b>	<b>Q2 Staff backgrounds</b>
	<p>expertise to help disabled students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty members need to be willing to reconsider common practices - for example, marking coursework by annotating printed papers by hand - to make tasks more accessible to disabled colleagues.</li> <li>• Create an anti-ableist working environment that encourages disabled colleagues to communicate openly about the challenges they face at work.</li> </ul>	
Watkins (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration supported the success of all three COSDs in the form of leadership training; working relationships with</li> </ul>	

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
	<p>campus organisations; seeking advice from experts on and off campus; and participation in events sponsored by allied groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student leadership structures and procedures should be documented and formalised to make sure that they can easily be continued when students and staff leave the institution.</li> <li>• Institutions should recognise the contribution of student leaders to their organisations and celebrate their achievements.</li> </ul>	
Maher et al (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior leaders and teachers in schools need to recognise the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial teacher education and teacher networks need to support the</li> </ul>

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
	<p>needs and capabilities of pupils with SEND, through more holistic assessment approaches that focus on social, affective, cognitive and physical learning and development.</p>	<p>voices of pupils with SEND.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early career teachers find it more difficult to challenge ableist assumptions and practice that are often embedded into PE teaching.</li> <li>• The study suggests that expert teacher educators and researchers in SEND and assessment should work with teachers to help them reflect on their beliefs about ability and assessment in PE to support them to understand and implement more inclusive assessment arrangements.</li> </ul>
Newman (2023)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important 'hard skills' that disability academic advisers needed to support students</li> </ul>

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
		<p>effectively included competency, knowledge of applicable resources, understanding of how to identify and implement accommodations, and advocacy for the student.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability academic advisers needed to be able to build a rapport and provide encouragement to students.</li> </ul>
Dew et al (2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The programme improved interns' their skills development and confidence.</li> <li>• The interns recognised the need for more skills development and identified areas where they needed assistance.</li> <li>• The programmes partially met the interns' expectations,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mentors drew on their previous experiences with people with disabilities and mentoring roles to support the interns.</li> <li>• Most mentors felt confident in their mentoring roles, but the time pressures of the programme affected their ability to provide</li> </ul>



Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
	<p>but there were some mismatches between the roles they were given and their desired roles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The compressed timeline of the programme due to pandemic-related restrictions created time pressures and limited the support that could be provided to the interns.</li> </ul>	<p>the desired level of support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mentors recognised the need for more support and communication among programme participants, including an induction and follow-up sessions.</li> </ul>
Wood & Legg (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality and coherence of the SEND offer from each setting was varied, with staff at the individual schools having different capabilities for identifying and managing SEND.</li> <li>• Proposed solutions include pooling resources and</li> </ul>	

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
	<p>expertise. Role for leadership in prioritising SEND provision and enhancing equality between staff groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instead of a universal approach, each academy should base SEND provision around its needs and cultures.</li> </ul>	
Wilbur et al (2019)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most supervisors' lack formal training and knowledge on how to establish reasonable accommodations for disabled trainees.</li> <li>• Supervisors with previous experience working with disabled trainees were the most likely to report feeling overwhelmed and concerned about trainees fulfilling expectations, but also</li> </ul>

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
		<p>reported benefits such as increased consultation, networking, and awareness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisors with previous experience were more likely to recognise their responsibility in providing disability accommodations and to ask about disability concerns.</li> <li>• There was confusion among supervisors about who is responsible for establishing accommodations, with many supervisors not recognising their central role in this process.</li> <li>• Supervisors need to develop an appreciation of disability as an aspect of diversity. They</li> </ul>

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
		should educate themselves about accommodations in order to establish a disability-affirming training environment.
Wearmouth & Butler (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of training, external and from SENCOs was varied, sometimes competing with national curriculum issues, ie not prioritised by leadership staff.</li> <li>• Information from feeder schools was rated as not very useful and informative, or varied.</li> <li>• Assessments from local authority specialist staff eg education psychologist were often complicated and delayed, leading to resourcing and planning problems and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All SENCOs had specialist qualifications and many years of teaching experience. Most reported high levels of confidence for providing classroom interventions and practical CPD for other staff (required by DfE code of practice). Far fewer provided classroom support themselves.</li> <li>• Support in classrooms was mainly delivered by teaching assistants and mainstream teachers but these were seen by SENCOs as less informed than</li> </ul>

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
	<p>direct impact on learning and challenging behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding from the local authority and managed by the school was varied.</li> <li>• The marketisation of education makes inclusion of students who cannot achieve as highly, unattractive, despite the legal rights of those children.</li> </ul>	<p>themselves. Fewer than a quarter of the teaching assistants had been trained to support autistic children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only 3 SENCOs had confidence their colleagues were well equipped to adopt approaches for autistic children's progress and wellbeing.</li> <li>• The willingness of mainstream staff and teaching assistants to work with autistic children was perceived as mixed, possibly linked to the availability of quality training. Classroom teachers were perceived as varied in their willingness to take on advice and revise their pre-existing own views</li> </ul>

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
		<p>about what works with autistic children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers often left differentiation tasks to the teaching assistants due to their overall workload, despite being responsible.</li> </ul>
Cullen et al (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The review of three systematic reviews showed that where teaching assistants are trained and supported, they can be used effectively to improve pupil outcomes.</li> <li>• One review illustrated that models of working with external services tend to fall into: expert-led consultative models; collaborators holding joint responsibility; and 'teaming' with an</li> </ul>	

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
	<p>organised group of professionals from different disciplines who have a shared aim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Another study illustrated different starting points and perspectives in relation to the child, from the Education and eg Speech and Language teams; and examples of possible negotiated, shared goals.</li> <li>• Delivery of external support services to schools is widely understood as tiered, from universal and preventative; through targeted and groups; to specialised and individualised interventions. Again, support delivered by teaching assistants</li> </ul>	

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
	<p>was only found to be successful where those roles are well trained and supported.</p>	
Tyshoe et al (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SENCOs reported that the reforms have encouraged them to give pupils more control over decisions made about their support.</li> <li>• SENCOs reported that a lack of resources and teacher support and poor communication between local authorities and health agencies were key barriers to meeting pupils' needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While external agencies such as local authorities and health trusts can have some influence on how schools implement SEND reforms, the attitudes of SENCOs towards the legislation and their ability to shape decision making and work with colleagues is pivotal.</li> </ul>
Morley et al (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools can improve disabled pupils' participation in physical education lessons by providing opportunities for</li> </ul>	



Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
	<p>teachers to undertake continuing professional development opportunities relevant to SEND; encouraging teachers to design inclusive class activities; and training learning support assistants to support pupils with SEND in PE.</p>	
Tarantino et al (2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less experienced teachers tend to find it particularly helpful to learn about inclusive practices from other teachers.</li> <li>• Teachers' levels of confidence around supporting pupils with SEND can be improved by providing them with concrete examples of successful approaches</li> </ul>	

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
	<p>that they can use in their own lessons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The views of peers and pupils can be influential in shaping teacher perceptions of whether it was possible or desirable to include pupils with SEND in mainstream lessons.</li> <li>• Teachers should be encouraged to use the classroom to highlight and celebrate the different ways in which pupils can take part in physical education and reduce perceptions that those with SEND are different from their peers.</li> </ul>	
Edwards (2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy makers and educational leaders must be presented with sound evidence-based strategies that</li> </ul>	

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
	<p>make online learning more accessible and inclusive before they will act decisively to make changes to the way courses are delivered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecturers need to be supported to teach in more inclusive ways. This requires broader cultural change within universities.</li> </ul>	
Devi and Ganguly (2022)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' levels of confidence about working with autistic pupils were enhanced by two key factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Teacher education programmes offering compulsory courses on teaching autistic students combined with practical</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Author (date)	Findings relevant to	
	Q1 Organisational arrangements	Q2 Staff backgrounds
		<p>experience and effective mentorship from another teacher.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prior contact with autistic people – either in their personal or professional lives.</li> </ul>

*Figure A1.4: Summary of study findings*

## **Appendix 2: Survey of disabled people**

### **Survey of disabled people**

#### **Does transport need improving in your local area?**

At NCAT, we want to understand how local authorities make decisions about accessible transport.

(A local authority, or local council, is a local branch of the national government. It is responsible for things like local education, rubbish collection, and transport.)

In this research project, we will be talking to local authority transport staff. We will ask about their jobs, backgrounds, and training in accessibility or disability. We will also ask them how they prioritise transport accessibility work.

Before we talk to the local authorities, we want to talk to you!

We want you to tell us what questions we should ask local authority staff during this project.

This survey will ask you to choose the transport services that are most important to you. We will also ask what you think local authorities should do to improve transport accessibility.

The findings from this research will help NCAT decide how to support local authorities and their staff in making local communities accessible for disabled people.

### **About this survey**

We would like to invite you to take part in this survey about the accessibility of local transport.

Completing the survey will help us design our research into local transport provision.

At the end of the survey, you will have the option to be entered into a prize draw for the chance to win one of five shopping vouchers worth £50 each.

Policy Connect is leading this project as part of the National Centre for Accessible Transport (NCAT), which aims to make transport accessible for all disabled people.

The findings from this research will help NCAT decide how to support local authorities and their staff in making local communities accessible for disabled people.

This survey should take up to 10 minutes to complete.

The data we collect will be kept securely, as outlined in the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations.

### **Alternative Formats**

If you need an alternative way to complete this survey, please email [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED].

We can provide a Microsoft Word version, or complete the survey with you over the phone, or via a Video Relay Service with a BSL interpreter.

## **Consent**

**Do you consent to take part in this survey?**

- Yes, I consent to take part
- No, I do not consent to take part

## **Most Important Services**

**Think about the transport services offered in your local area.**

**Of the following services, which three are most important to you?**

- Streets and pavements – including cycling, wheeling, walking and rights of way
- Bus, coach and taxi services – including community transport (such as school buses and Dial-a-Ride)
- Roads management – including promoting road safety, traffic calming, street lighting, designing cycle lanes and road layouts
- Train services – including providing parking and bus stops near railway stations, and funding improvements to station buildings and facilities
- Car parking – including creating car parks, disabled parking spaces, providing Park and Ride stops
- Concessionary Travel Schemes – including congestion charge exemptions and free travel passes for public transport
- Travel Training
- Other (please specify):

## **Loop**

**For each of the services you selected, please tell us why they are important to you.**

**You said the following local service is important to you: [SERVICE NAME]. Why is this service important to you? (Select all that apply.)**

- Allows me to get around my community
- Helps to attend my school, college or university
- Helps me get to work
- Gives me greater independence and control over my daily routine
- Improves my health and wellbeing
- Increases my social contact
- Helps me to enjoy cultural and recreational activities
- Other (please specify):

### **Local Council Priorities**

**Imagine that your local council has asked you for advice on how transport could be made more accessible in your area. Which of the following actions would you tell the council to make a priority? (Select your top three options.)**

- Improving connectivity between different modes of transport by creating hubs to bring together buses, railways, trams, cars, and other types of travel
- Making ticketing and payment systems for transport services more accessible
- Making buses, bus stops, trains, and other transport services more physically accessible
- Making local streets more accessible – for example, by building drop kerbs, fixing broken or uneven pavements, installing tactile paving, improving signage, promoting safe driving
- Creating more pedestrianised zones – for example, School Streets
- Improving the availability of information about accessibility in the local area

- Reducing the cost of public transport
- Providing more targeted support for disabled people such as community transport, travel buddy schemes, and transport training
- Other (please specify):

**Of the actions you have selected, which one would have the single biggest impact on you?**

- Improving connectivity between different modes of transport by creating hubs to bring together buses, railways, trams, cars, and other types of travel
- Making ticketing and payment systems for transport services more accessible
- Making buses, bus stops, trains, and other transport services more physically accessible
- Making local streets more accessible – for example, by building drop kerbs, fixing broken or uneven pavements, installing tactile paving, improving signage, promoting safe driving
- Creating more pedestrianised zones – for example, School Streets
- Improving the availability of information about accessibility in the local area
- Reducing the cost of public transport
- Providing more targeted support for disabled people such as community transport, travel buddy schemes, and transport training
- Other (please specify):

**Do you have any other thoughts about how councils could make transport more accessible?**



## **Prize Draw**

**Thank you for completing this survey. The findings from this research will help NCAT decide how to support local authorities and their staff in making local communities accessible for disabled people.**

**Would you like to be entered into the prize draw for the chance to win one of five £50 shopping vouchers?**

- Yes
- No

## **Appendix 3: Survey of accessible transport staff**

### **Introduction**

**The purpose of this survey is to ask about your experiences, roles, and responsibilities in making the transport system more accessible for disabled people as a transport practitioner working in local government.**

It is part of a research project being undertaken by the **National Centre for Accessible Transport (NCAT)** to understand how local governments across the UK carry out their responsibilities to help disabled people use local transport services and infrastructure. The survey will ask you about your current job, professional and personal background, and experience with disability. We will also seek your views on the opportunities and challenges of making the transport system more accessible. The findings of this research will help NCAT decide how to support local government to fulfil its vital role in making transport accessible for disabled people.

This survey should take around 10 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey, you will have the option to be entered into a prize draw for the chance to win one of five shopping vouchers worth £50 each.

The data we collect will be kept securely, as outlined in the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations.

### **Alternative Formats**

If you need an alternative way to complete this survey, please email [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED]. We can provide a Microsoft Word version, or complete the survey with you over the phone, or via a Video Relay Service with a BSL interpreter.

### **Consent**

#### **Do you consent to take part in this survey?**

- Yes, I consent to take part
- No, I do not consent to take part

### **Personal Details**

**To begin, please tell us who is completing this survey.**

- Name:
- Contact email:
- Position / job title:
- Local authority:

#### **In which country are you based?**

- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales
- England

The information you share during this survey will be kept confidential and all data will be fully anonymised before being published. There are no right or wrong answers, we just want to know about your personal experiences.

## **Your Role and Background**

**Firstly, we would like to know more about your role and background.**

**How long have you been in your current role?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7 or more years

**What is your current annual salary?**

- Under £24,000
- £24,000 - £30,000
- £30,001 - £40,000
- £40,001 - £50,000
- £50,001 - £60,000
- £60,001 - £70,000
- £70,001 - £80,000
- £80,000 and over

**What department or team do you currently work in?**

**What was the status of your role when you applied for it?**

- I applied for a newly created role
- I applied for a role that already existed within the authority
- I developed the role as a specialism from within an existing role

**How are adaptations, maintenance, and other programmes to make transport accessible for disabled people funded at your authority?**

- We have a dedicated budget to help disabled people use transport
- We have a dedicated budget to help a range of disadvantaged groups access transport, including disabled people
- Accessibility is funded through general transport budgets
- I don't know

**What is the job title of the person authorised to make spending decisions relating to helping people access transport?**

### **Wider Experience of Disability**

**This section is about your wider experience with disability.**

**What is your identity or relationship regarding disability?**

- I am a disabled person
- I have a family member who is a disabled person
- I have a friend or close acquaintance who is a disabled person
- I have another kind of relationship with a disabled person (please specify):
- I do not have any personal experience with disability
- Prefer not to say

**Before starting in your current role, had you ever had a transport-related job where you worked with disabled people?**

- Yes
- No

**What was your job title in this previous role?**

**Have you ever worked with disabled people in a non-transport-related role?**

- Yes
- No

**Which of the following best describes that previous role?**

- Occupational Therapist
- Counsellor
- Psychologist
- Special Education Teacher
- Teaching Assistant
- Day Care Centre Employee
- Social Care Worker
- Social Worker
- Speech Therapist
- Workplace Support Worker
- Public Policy Officer / Campaigner
- Something else (please specify):

**Education and Training**

**This next section will ask about your education and training.**

**What is your highest level of education?**

- GCSE or equivalent
- A-Level or equivalent
- Undergraduate degree
- Masters degree
- PhD
- Other (please specify):

**Do you have any of the following types of formal qualification?**

- Yes, I have a formal qualification specifically related to accessible transport
- Yes, I have a formal qualification specifically related to disability studies
- Yes, I have a formal qualification in public transportation systems
- Yes, I have a formal qualification in another transport-related field
- No, I do not have any formal qualifications related to transport or disability studies
- Other (please specify):

**Have you received specific training related to accessible transport or disability more generally?**

- Yes, I have received specific training on accessible transport
- Yes, I have received training on disability awareness
- I am not sure if the training I received covered accessible transport or disability-related topics
- No, I have not received any training specifically focused on accessible transport or disability
- Other (please specify):

**Have you experienced any of the following challenges in relation to developing your professional experience and understanding of accessible transport?**

- Finding peer support and mentorship
- Finding opportunities for continuing training and professional development
- Lack of career progression opportunities
- Lack of access to senior leadership

- Other (please specify):

## **Role Responsibilities**

**Now we will ask about the responsibilities of your current role.**

**Which of the following activities does your job entail?**

- Ensuring compliance with accessibility regulations and standards
- Implementing accessible design features in transportation infrastructure and services
- Providing assistance to disabled passengers
- Conducting accessibility audits and assessments
- Collaborating with stakeholders to improve accessibility policies and practices
- Training staff on accessibility awareness and assistance techniques
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of accessibility initiatives
- Advocating for the rights of disabled people to use transport
- Other (please specify):

**How often do you use UK or devolved government transport accessibility policies, guidance, legislation in the course of your work?**

- Rarely, if ever
- Occasionally, when necessary
- Regularly, as part of my routine
- Frequently, it's a primary aspect of my work
- Always, it's essential for every task

**Can you please name some of the government documents that are important to your role?**

## **Opportunities and Challenges**

**This final set of questions are about opportunities and challenges within your role.**

**Imagine your senior team has asked you for advice on how transport could be made more accessible in your area. Which of the following actions would you tell the council to make a priority?**

- Improving connectivity between different modes of transport by creating hubs to bring together buses, railways, trams, cars, and other types of travel
- Making ticketing and payment systems for transport services more accessible
- Making buses, bus stops, trains, and other transport services more physically accessible
- Making local streets more accessible – for example, by building drop kerbs, fixing broken or uneven pavements, installing tactile paving, improving signage, promoting safe driving
- Creating more pedestrianised zones
- Improving the availability of information about accessibility in the local area
- Reducing the cost of public transport
- Providing more targeted support for disabled people such as community transport, travel buddy schemes, and transport training
- Other (please specify):

**Of the actions you have selected, which one do you think would have the single biggest impact on disabled people's lives?**



- Improving connectivity between different modes of transport by creating hubs to bring together buses, railways, trams, cars, and other types of travel
- Making ticketing and payment systems for transport services more accessible
- Making buses, bus stops, trains, and other transport services more physically accessible
- Making local streets more accessible – for example, by building drop kerbs, fixing broken or uneven pavements, installing tactile paving, improving signage, promoting safe driving
- Creating more pedestrianised zones
- Improving the availability of information about accessibility in the local area
- Reducing the cost of public transport
- Providing more targeted support for disabled people such as community transport, travel buddy schemes, and transport training
- Other (please specify):

**Think about the challenges you face in making transport more accessible. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

**Limited budget is a challenge:** We face challenges in allocating sufficient funds to implement accessibility features across all modes of transport, including buses, trains, and stations.

- 0 (Strongly disagree)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (Strongly agree)

**Infrastructure retrofitting is a challenge:** Retrofitting existing infrastructure to make it accessible can be costly and logistically complex, especially in older transport systems.

- 0 (Strongly disagree)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (Strongly agree)

**Compliance with regulations is a challenge:** Ensuring compliance with accessibility regulations and standards set by local and national authorities requires ongoing monitoring and investment.

- 0 (Strongly disagree)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

- 9
- 10 (Strongly agree)

**Legal and regulatory barriers are a challenge:** Overcoming legal and regulatory barriers can impede progress in making transport services more accessible for disabled people.

- 0 (Strongly disagree)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (Strongly agree)

**Training and awareness is a challenge:** Providing adequate training for staff members to interact sensitively with disabled passengers and raising awareness among the public about accessibility issues are ongoing challenges.

- 0 (Strongly disagree)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (Strongly agree)

**Coordination with other departments is a challenge:** Collaboration with other departments, such as social services and planning authorities, is essential but it is often challenging to take a joined-up approach to accessibility.

- 0 (Strongly disagree)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (Strongly agree)

**Maintenance and upkeep is a challenge:** Ensuring that accessibility features remain in good working condition and are regularly maintained poses logistical and budgetary challenges.

- 0 (Strongly disagree)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (Strongly agree)

**Community engagement is a challenge:** Engaging with the disabled community to understand their specific needs and preferences and

incorporating their feedback into our accessibility initiatives requires dedicated resources and outreach efforts.

- 0 (Strongly disagree)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (Strongly agree)

**Limited staff resources is a challenge:** We may face constraints in terms of staff availability and expertise in implementing accessibility measures effectively.

- 0 (Strongly disagree)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (Strongly agree)

**Unsupportive senior leadership is a challenge:** Our political and administrative leaders do not prioritise the needs of disabled people in transport policies and plans.

- 0 (Strongly disagree)
- 1

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (Strongly agree)

**Access to technology is a challenge:** Integrating technology solutions to improve accessibility, such as real-time information systems for disabled passengers, may require investment in infrastructure and coordination with technology providers.

- 0 (Strongly disagree)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (Strongly agree)

**Lack of accessibility guidelines is a challenge:** There are too few good practice manuals or how-to guides to support staff to make accessibility improvements to the transport system.

- 0 (Strongly disagree)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (Strongly agree)

**Do you have any additional comments or insights about the challenges you face in making transport more accessible in your local authority?**

**Finally, do you have any additional comments or insights you would like to share regarding your role, experiences, and training, or suggestions for improving accessible transport?**

### **Next Steps**

**Would you be willing to take part in a focus group to help us delve deeper into the questions asked in this survey?** The focus groups would be conducted online within the next month.

- Yes, please send me more information
- No

**Would you be interested in joining a community of practice for accessible transport practitioners?** For example, to develop a good practice design guide to accessible local transport systems.

- Yes, please send me more information
- No

### **Prize Draw**

**Would you like to be entered into the prize draw for the chance to win one of five £50 gift vouchers?** If you win, you will also have the option to donate your prize money to charity.

- Yes
- No

# Appendix 4: Question schedule for interviews and focus groups

## Questions

1. We will begin with a warm-up question: On a scale of one to 10 how confident are you that the transport needs of disabled residents are being adequately met in the area your authority serves?
2. Can you tell me what practices and tools you and your team might use to think about the requirements of disabled people in your work?
3. To what extent do legal requirements, such as the public sector equality duty, affect the way decisions are made about how transport services are designed and delivered?
  - a. Secondary question: Are there any ways in which the legal responsibilities of local transport decision makers could be made easier to understand and carry out?
4. What are the main factors that would affect the way accessibility issues are addressed in the overall context of transport projects? What considerations (e.g. policy priorities, resource issues, team member expertise) might make accessibility more or less of a priority?
5. What would help you to better embed accessibility for disabled people in your everyday work? Clearer national policy, more best practice toolkits on different aspects of accessibility, more staff training?
6. Of all the things we have discussed, what is the single most important thing that would help you and your colleagues make sure local transport systems are accessible for disabled residents?



## Appendix 5: Policy roundtable

### Overview

On Wednesday 9th October, Richard Baker MP chaired a meeting of the Accessible Transport Policy Commission on the role and responsibilities of accessible transport staff working in local government. For the purposes of this project, the term accessible transport staff refers to both professionals who are specialists in accessibility and those who have a broader role that includes accessibility.

The roundtable was part of a yearlong research project undertaken by the National Centre for Accessible Transport to explore how local government staff involved in designing and managing transport can be better supported to embed accessibility into their work. It brought together disabled people's organisations, accessible transport staff, policymakers and researchers to discuss the project's draft findings and recommendations of the final report.

The roundtable was used to refine the conclusions and recommendations of the draft report and will help to shape any papers produced for decision makers to assist with implementation of the recommendations. This briefing captures the main findings from the roundtable.

### Key findings

- 1. Participants said our recommendations would help make transport more accessible and equitable across the country**

***“...The challenge we currently have, which you sum up in your report really well, is the variability across the country. And variability created by different levels of resource, different structures for governance, and different abilities and knowledge***

***and capacity to deliver.”* Helen Ellerton, Head of Transport Policy, West Yorkshire Combined Authority**

- Attendees said that the report's recommendations would help local and regional authorities to understand and embed good practice around accessible transport into their policies and practice. This would help to raise standards and reduce variation across the country.
- The recommendations for local and regional authorities to conduct an assessment of their capacity and capabilities around accessible transport would be a first step towards making sure adequate funding and resources are dedicated to making sure disabled people can use their services and infrastructure.
- Authorities need to ringfence accessibility funding, so it is formally embedded into revenue and capital funding streams.
- Rural areas are often neglected in discussions about how to make the built environment more accessible.
- Making accessible standards and regulations easier to find, understand and use would encourage more innovation. For example, making standards about the design of bus stops and train stations more readily available would allow Google Maps and other journey planning tools to provide better guidance to disabled people.

**2. When implementing our recommendations around coproduction, local and regional authorities should make sure that disabled people are actively involved in decision making at the most senior levels of the organisation**

***“...it's even more important that the recommendations around having people in positions of power,...and potentially have their own lived experience of having barriers to accessibility, is critically important to making sure we are making the right decisions.”*** Keith

## **McKain, National Bus Strategy Programme Manager, Surrey County Council**

- Attendees said that councillors and senior staff within authorities have an important role to play in making sure disabled people's needs and preferences are prioritised in the way policies are formed and services are delivered.
- Transport teams are ultimately accountable to their political and administrative leaders and have to respond to the objectives that leaders set.
- Having people with lived experience of disability in positions of power is vital to making sure that the right decisions are made. They can draw on a practical understanding of why accessibility and inclusion is important to the communities they serve.
- For example, the priorities at the top of an authority can decide whether transport projects are put through a rigorous equality impact assessment.

### **3. Disabled People's Organisations – both local and national – should be involved in both national and local decision-making structures to make the best use of their expertise and resources**

***“Local Disability groups can only do what they can to support local implementation, helping with consultation, etc. but national standards are needed first. National organisation like mine...are here to help with the development of these national standards and the development of training standards etc. But there needs to be a move towards this at DfT level.”*** Isabelle Clement, Director, Wheels for Wellbeing.

- Coproduction with local disabled people's organisations must encompass all aspects of policy, strategy, infrastructure design and construction and all stages of service delivery.
  - The Disability Design Reference Group in Greater Manchester provides accessibility advice for transport projects across the region. The disabled people's organisation Breakthrough has been commissioned to run the group.
  - Surrey County Council is working with the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People to coproduce training videos for the Bus Centre of Excellence covering accessibility needs for disabled people with different types of impairments.
  - National and devolved governments must coproduce country-wide standards with national disabled people's organisations. This will provide a stronger foundation for coproduction locally.
  - It may be helpful to create a disabled people's organisations directory for local government staff to consult.<sup>12</sup>
  - It is an important principle that disabled people must be paid for offering their insights as experts by experience, in the same way expert consultants receive remuneration in other industries.
- 4. A new education and training framework should seek to rebuild local government expertise in accessible transport by taking a comprehensive approach that covers the wide range of professionals involved in shaping transport systems**

***“The only course I could find was a postgraduate course, which I did, and went through. But on my course, I found out that accessibility, when it comes to architecture work or design work, is not one of the modules that they get taught. They only get taught it***

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<sup>12</sup> Inclusion London has created a [directory of Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations](#)

***if they volunteer.” Debbie Preston, Access Advisor, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority***

- A lack of established training opportunities on accessible transport means that authorities and individual staff must invest in their own training and qualifications in order to develop expertise in disability and accessibility.
- Surrey County Council have created training for managers and senior staff on reviewing accessibility assessments.
- The shortage of training courses has been made worse by local government funding constraints in the last decade which has resulted accessibility specialists being made redundant across the country. This expertise needs to be restored.
- Any new training standards or frameworks for local government must encompass the range of professions and roles that staff involved in designing and managing local transport systems hold.
- Training and qualifications in accessible transport must be coproduced with disabled people's organisations.