Office for Statistics Regulation

Systemic Review Programme

Review of Transport Accessibility Statistics

February 2022

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The role of the Office for Statistics Regulation

As an independent UK-wide regulator, we are in a unique position to take a broader look at issues of importance to society and to make the case for improved statistics across organisation and Government boundaries. This is supported by our ability to convene, influence and highlight best practice from other sectors.

This review forms part of our programme of systemic reviews which, underpinned by the Code of Practice for Statistics, are aimed at driving improvements in the public value provided by official statistics.

We want to ensure that statistics provide a robust evidence base for national and local policy development and decision making. We champion the need for statistics to support a much wider range of uses, including, by charities, community groups and individuals. They should allow individuals and organisations to reach informed decisions, answer important questions, make the case for change or hold government to account.

Executive summary

Why we did this review

Accessible transport describes a transport network which allows all users equal opportunity to travel when they want, where they want, how they want, at a price they can afford.

Accessible transport is a key part of having an equal society. Statistics on the topic should reflect this importance. In our early research for this review, we heard concerns from statistics users that statistics are not adequately reflecting the lived experiences of those who rely on transport to be accessible, nor are they useful to those who want to better understand whether the transport network is meeting the needs of users.

The responsibility for producing official statistics on transport topics is largely devolved to each of the four nations. This review comes at an important time for transport strategies across the UK. All countries in Great Britain have national strategies for transport which include elements of improving accessibility. Northern Ireland is developing a disability strategy which touches on transport.

This review was wide-ranging, cutting across many different areas related to statistics about the accessibility of transport. We invited a broad range of organisations to meet with us. We met with statistics users, which included disabled people's organisations, charities, and independent accessibility committees, and also statistics producers and policy makers. We reviewed statistics from the four nations of the UK to understand what questions are asked about the accessibility of transport and how disability is recorded. Alongside this, we identified sources of administrative data and a wide range of sources of data collected by charities and other non-government organisations.

What we found

Whilst many statistics on transport and transport use are well developed, we found that existing official statistics are not fully answering the key questions of those with an interest in the accessibility of transport networks. Across the UK we found differences in the availability of statistics on the accessibility of transport, however many of the concerns and issues in the statistics are common across the UK. We identified examples where statistics have been well developed to meet users' needs. These are highlighted throughout the report, including in the case study boxes.

We found **five key issues** with statistics and data on transport accessibility namely:

1. **Statistics, data and analysis could better reflect the lived experience of disabled people to support a focus on removing barriers to access**

There are many reasons why individuals are not able to access transport in the way they would like. The most mentioned accessibility issues we heard related to the barriers faced by disabled people.

We heard that there is often inconsistency in the use of questions to identify disabled people and to collect data about specific impairments. This can make it difficult to understand the barriers faced by specific groups, plan improvements, and tell a coherent story when bringing different sources of data together. Even where impairment specific data are collected, small sample sizes can limit what data are published.

Statistics are largely focused on measuring constituent parts of the transport experience, such as the number of accessible buses, rather than capturing entire journeys. This is significant, as the connections between legs of journeys often pose significant challenges to disabled people. As these are not routinely captured, statistics producers are unable to quantify how many opportunities people have missed out on due to failures or barriers in the transport network as a whole.

2. A fully inclusive statistical approach is needed to ensure everyone is counted and better decisions are made

Across a wide range of policy areas, including transport, disabled people are systematically excluded from statistics which are based on surveys. The reasons for this are varied. Some individuals live in establishments such as care homes that are not included in samples based on households. Many survey questionnaires have not been adapted to enable completion by those with some disabilities.

The National Statistician established the UK Statistics Authority's Inclusive Data Taskforce in October 2020 to understand how improvements could be made to the UK's inclusive data holdings across a broad range of areas. The taskforce has published recommendations aimed at ensuring everyone is visible in statistics. These include recommendations related to the systematic exclusion of some groups from household surveys.

3. Publishing more statistics, data and analysis could help identify areas for improvement to the accessibility of transport

After the barriers faced by disabled people, the next three most common barriers to travel we heard about in our research were affordability, safety and journey times. We found that there was scope for more data to be made available as, in some cases, data are being produced by statistics producers but not published or used for analysis. Data associated with railcards is one such example.

We heard concerns about a lack of information in crime statistics about physical abuse and hate crimes on public transport, particularly towards disabled people. We found that some statistics do exist, but generally only at a high level and with limited detail, meaning it can be difficult to get a coherent understanding of what is happening.

4. Bringing data and statistics together helps present a coherent story and supports users to answer questions about accessible transport

We found that both qualitative and quantitative data are needed to understand the experiences of those accessing transport. When qualitative and quantitative data are brought together, they can help to paint an insightful and engaging picture.

Some statistics users are not aware of the extent of available data and statistics, suggesting that engagement with users could be improved and existing publications could be promoted more. We also found that once users had identified the relevant statistics, data or analysis, many publications provide only a snapshot of experiences, making it difficult to understand how these are changing over time.

5. Publishing data enables the impact of strategies to be evaluated and improvements to accessibility to be identified

The development and publication of Government strategies offers a significant opportunity for departments to develop new surveys and other data sources.

In England, we welcome the recent publication by the Department for Transport of the evaluation baseline report and scorecard for the Inclusive Transport Strategy. We are concerned it has taken more than three years following the publication of the strategy for baseline data to be produced, although we recognise some of the delay was unavoidable due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In Wales, we note there is very limited data about the travel experience of disabled and older people, but welcome the work underway to develop data to support the Wales Transport Strategy's evaluation framework, including plans to introduce a new National Travel Survey for Wales.

In Scotland, we welcome the development and publication of new analysis of the experience of disabled travellers based on the Scottish Household Survey. However, we are concerned that, whilst many of the identified metrics are now produced, baseline data and updates have not been published together in one place to allow the impact of the Accessible Travel Framework to be easily monitored. We welcome plans set out in the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy for the National Transport Strategy 2 on how the strategy will be evaluated, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data.

In Northern Ireland, the Department for Infrastructure are developing a new Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan. An Executive Disability Strategy is currently also under development, led by the Department for Communities. Monitoring and reporting arrangements for the Strategy are to be confirmed and proposed arrangements will form part of the public consultation on the draft Strategy.

Our recommendations

We have identified the following recommendations for producers of transport statistics.

1. Develop statistics which reflect the lived experience of disabled people to support a focus on removing barriers to access

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1.1 As part of their development of a new survey of disabled people exploring barriers to social participation, the Cabinet Office Disability Unit should produce statistics exploring the reasons why disabled people are unable to access transport as much as they would like, including around confidence to travel, and the issues faced between legs of journeys including experiences of changing between transport modes.

1.2 During the development of their new public transport statistics report, the Department for Infrastructure should explore ways to produce statistics about the accessibility of buses and coaches for those with a wide of range of accessibility issues, for example through passenger experience surveys.

1.3 During the development of the new National Travel Survey for Wales, Transport for Wales should review their sampling frame and questionnaire to ensure it follows best practice on reflecting lived experience.

1.4 All producers should ensure they use the current relevant harmonised questions (long lasting health conditions and illness, activity restriction, and impairments), or more granular questions which are compatible with the harmonised standards, and should keep informed of ONS developments of new measures of disability. Producers should be prepared to trial or implement new harmonised questions when available from the GSS Harmonisation Team.

1.5 As part of their work to develop new harmonised standards, the GSS Harmonisation Team should develop high level groupings to enable publication to data that represent different experiences - for example high level barrier groupings, and/or high-level impairment groupings such as visible/invisible impairment, or mobility/cognitive/sensory.

2. Develop fully inclusive statistical approaches to ensure everyone is counted

2.1 The Inclusive Data Taskforce set out recommendations to support producers to be more inclusive with their data. Producers should put in place plans to deliver relevant recommendations, for example those under Principle 1 to 'create an environment of trust and trustworthiness which allows and encourages everyone to count and be counted in UK data and evidence' and recommendation 3.7 to evaluate the coverage of non-private household population groups in UK data and take the necessary action to address those missing from the current data. Further details in Annex C.

2.2 To support the delivery of this recommendation, the GSS should develop guidance around ensuring surveys can be completed by those with disabilities. Producers should ensure their collection methods and outputs reflect best practice guidance.

3. Publish more statistics, data and analysis to help identify areas for improvements to the accessibility of transport

3.1 Following the current audit of station accessibility being led by the Department for Transport, the Department for Transport and the Office of

Rail and Road should work together to publish, and regularly update, statistics about the accessibility of train stations across GB, covering accessible infrastructure to support those with different types of disabilities (such as step free access for those with mobility impairments) and geographical breakdowns.

3.2   The Department for Transport should explore whether new or existing data (for example the English National Travel Survey) can be used to fill data gaps highlighted in the report, for example around community and coach travel.

3.3   Transport Scotland and Transport for Wales should publish internal analysis on journey times, and seek user engagement on what else is needed to support local understanding and policy development.

3.4   Office of Rail and Road should work with the Department for Transport and the Rail Delivery Group to develop a publication about the use and impact of railcards, drawing on data from Rail Delivery Group and other sources, such as the English National Travel Survey.

3.5   All statistics producers should explore where further demographic breakdowns of survey data provide new insights into the experiences of different population groups, and publish data where this could be of interest to users. For example, new urban-rural splits of national figures, and more age breakdowns, such as focussing on the experiences of younger adults.

4. Bring data and statistics together into one place, to tell a coherent story and support users answer questions about accessible transport

4.1   All producers should improve their user engagement and awareness of user needs, particularly in light of the GSS User Engagement Strategy, to improve awareness of their statistics, and ensure that they are continuing to develop their outputs to meet users' requirements

4.2   Statistics producers in policy departments should support users to find and interpret relevant statistics about the accessibility of transport in their devolved administration. For example:

- Welsh Government could develop a new publication drawing on the available data about the accessibility of transport specific to Wales, including Census 2021 data to set out relevant demographics and the new data sources mentioned within this report.

- The Department for Infrastructure could ensure that its new statistics publication on public transport includes, or signposts users towards, available data about the accessibility of transport specific to Northern Ireland, including Census 2021 data about relevant demographics and the new data sources mentioned within this report.

- Transport Scotland could continue to develop their Disability and Transport publication to ensure it supports Government and the public to monitor whether the National Transport Strategy and Accessible Travel Framework are achieving their desired outcomes, introducing

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time series data and drawing on other sources of data where already available.

5. Publish data to enable the impact of strategies to be evaluated and improvements to accessibility identified

5.1   Policy departments should draw on the expertise of statisticians, and other analytical professionals, to be clear with users about how they, and the public, will be able to evaluate the short-term and long-term impacts of their transport strategies.

5.2   Statistics producers in policy departments should publish data, metrics and statistics which support the evaluation of strategies in accessible formats to enable those with an interest to carry out their own analysis, and track progress over time.

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Introduction

Why we did this review

In April 2021 we began a systemic review to understand whether statistics related to the accessibility of transport are meeting user needs. Accessible transport describes a transport network which allows all users equal opportunity to travel when they want, where they want, how they want, and at a price they can afford.

Accessible transport is a key part of having an equal society, and statistics on the topic should reflect this importance. In our early research for this review we heard concerns from statistics users that statistics are not adequately reflecting the lived experiences of those who rely on transport to be accessible, nor are they useful to those who want to better understand whether the transport network is meeting the needs of users.

Our vision is that statistics should serve the public good. For statistics to serve the public good they need to provide a reliable evidence base for policy creation and evaluation and be informative for the general public. As the regulator of official statistics in the UK, we are able to independently examine issues which are important to society and make recommendations for the improvement of statistics. This is underpinned by the Code of Practice for Statistics, which advocates the trustworthiness, quality, and value of statistics. We want to ensure that statistics are serving the widest possible range of users, and that the statistics are accessible and able to be understood by anyone with an interest in them.

The statistical system has committed to improving inclusivity in data and statistics. In 2020, the UK Statistics Authority published its strategy Statistics for the Public Good, with a commitment to increasing inclusivity in data, statistics and analysis. Inclusivity in this context means ensuring statistics reflect the experiences of everyone in our society, so that everyone counts, is counted, and no one is forgotten. In 2020, the National Statistician established the Inclusive Data Taskforce to develop recommendations on how to improve the inclusivity of UK data.

This review comes at an important time for transport strategies across the UK. In England, the Department for Transport has published the Inclusive Transport Strategy (November 2020); Transport Scotland has published Going Further: Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework (July 2016) and the National Transport Strategy 2 (December 2020), Wales Transport Strategy 2021 was published by Welsh Government in March 2021 and Northern Ireland are developing a Disability Strategy, which will touch on accessible transport, as part of a larger Social Inclusion Strategy from the Department of Communities. Additionally, the Cabinet Office Disability Unit published the Government's UK wide National Disability Strategy in July 2021, which intends to improve the everyday lives of disabled people, including the journeys they take.

It is essential that statistics are available to objectively assess whether these strategies are achieving their aims.

Our review approach

To carry out this review we developed three research questions which we used as a framework for desk research and interviews with users and producers of statistics.

- Do the existing statistics reflect the lived experiences of those relying on transport to be accessible?

- Do the existing statistics help answer the key questions of those with an interest in understanding the accessibility of transport networks?

- Do the statistics provide a comprehensive and reliable evidence base to inform decision making about improvements to the accessibility of our transport networks?

Importantly, we did not predefine what we meant by "accessibility of transport", as we wanted to hear from users of data and statistics how they defined this term. We found that it means different things in different contexts and to different people. For some, it refers to transport being accessible to people who require adjustments in order to travel easily, such as disabled people or people with prams or bicycles. For others, accessible transport refers to transport being affordable for the people who want to use it, or it refers to location, for example transport being as accessible in rural locations as it is in urban locations.

We also wanted to understand from users how they defined the "transport network". We found that this broadly included public transport (vehicles such as buses and trains which operate at regular times on fixed routes for public use), taxi and private hire vehicle services, the road network (including motorway service stations and the provision for bicycles) and pavements. Some users also referred to the transport network as including airplanes and ferries.

As transport is a devolved matter, we reviewed statistics from the four nations of the UK. To reflect this, we invited a broad range of organisations to meet with us. We met with statistics users, which included disabled people's organisations, charities, and independent accessibility committees, and also statistics producers and policy makers. A full list of the organisations we spoke to as part of this review is provided in Annex A.

In addition to our user engagement, we reviewed transport-related statistical surveys to understand what questions are asked about the accessibility of transport, and how disability is recorded. Alongside this we identified sources of administrative data about the accessibility of transport. Through our stakeholder engagement we identified a wide range of sources of data collected by charities and other non-Government organisations. A full list of the statistics and surveys we reviewed is provided in Annex B.

The statistical landscape

The responsibility for producing official statistics on transport topics is largely devolved to each of the four nations.

In England, the Department for Transport publishes statistics and draws on data from other organisations, including the Office of Rail and Road and Transport Focus. Their main publication on accessibility, Transport: disability and accessibility statistics, was published for the first time in March 2021, and includes a wide range of statistics.

The Department for Transport published The Inclusive Transport Strategy: Achieving Equal Access for Disabled People in July 2018. A strategy evaluation baseline report and scorecard were published in January 2022, and the Department for Transport has committed to publishing a final evaluation report in 2024. The baseline report and scorecard provide baseline estimates for the evaluation, and reflect the views and experiences of both disabled people and non-disabled people whose experience and usage of transport may be different.

In Scotland, Transport Scotland have produced a new statistics publication on accessible transport: Disability and Transport: Findings from the Scottish Household Survey, published in July 2021.

In July 2016, Transport Scotland published a ten-year strategy to improve travel for disabled people Going Further: Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework. In February 2020, Transport Scotland published the National Transport Strategy 2 and subsequently a Delivery Plan 2020 to 2022 and a Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy. The Accessible Travel Framework supports the Reducing Inequalities priority within the National Transport Strategy.

In Wales, there is very limited data about the accessibility of transport, and no current household transport survey.

Welsh Government published Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy 2021 in March 2021. This is a 20-year strategy for an accessible, sustainable, and efficient transport system, and outlines the need for a new national travel survey to provide an evaluation framework. The development of the Strategy was supported by research and engagement with industry stakeholders and users, as set out in this background report. Work is underway to develop a new National Travel Survey for Wales.

Data are collected across Great Britain by the Office of Rail and Road, which publishes statistics on Passenger Assistance and Disabled Persons Railcards, and Transport Focus, which publishes statistics more broadly on passenger views and attitudes.

In Northern Ireland, management information data from Translink (the public transport provider), and statistics from the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland about the accessibility of transport, were previously brought together in the Department for Infrastructure's publication Northern Ireland Transport Statistics. Work is now underway to develop a new Public Transport Statistics report which will include

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Official Statistics based on Translink data. The Northern Ireland Executive is developing an Outcomes-based Programme for Government, and strategies are being developed which cut across departments to address societal issues. The Department for Communities is leading on the development of four new cross-departmental Social Inclusion Strategies, including a Disability Strategy. This will set the strategic framework within which all departments will seek to address the inclusion of disabled people, for example, influencing the work by the Department for Infrastructure on regional transport planning.

In England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland there are transport accessibility committees who advise the respective government departments on what their priorities are, including data and statistics. The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) in England, the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) and the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) in Northern Ireland consider the needs of disabled people in regard to transport and provide advice to Ministers based on this. The committees also provide advice and support the development of new statistics in this area. In Wales, Transport for Wales has an Accessibility Panel which provides advice on rail services.

Due to limitations in the availability of data, some think tanks, charities and policy officials also commission their own research. For example, Disability Equality Scotland carry out weekly surveys to collect data which can include topics related to transport. These findings may be used by government transport departments to gain insights, but primarily these organisations are commissioning their own research as a means to gain insights which are of interest to their work.

In the case of some charities or Disabled People's Organisations this often means investigating issues which are most relevant to their members. For example, Guide Dogs have carried out research with blind and partially sighted people on the impact of vehicles parked on pavements.

Such organisations often use qualitative statistical methods, where smaller groups of participants are asked to talk about their thoughts, feelings, or experiences. This is in contrast to the quantitative methods used by government transport departments, which typically involve larger groups of participants completing a survey. Qualitative methods are often favoured because they can provide richer insights. For example, Go Upstream's Future Journeys Observatory carries out weekly discussions with members about topics related to journeys to gain qualitative insights into the travel priorities, concerns and hopes of disabled people. This is of particular relevance due to changes made to the transport network during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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What we found

This review was wide-ranging, cutting across many different areas related to statistics about the accessibility of transport. We heard lots of issues - from specific data gaps and requirements for more granularity, to concerns with the way data are defined, collected and published.

We found that, for a variety of reasons, existing official statistics are not fully answering the key questions of those with an interest in the accessibility of transport networks, although there are some specific areas of good practice. We heard that most organisations and individuals with an interest in understanding the accessibility of transport are interested because they want to see the accessibility of transport improved.

Across the UK we found differences in the availability of statistics on the accessibility of transport. We also found that there were differences in what users wanted from the statistics.

- In England, we found significant demand for statistics about the accessibility of transport from within and outside of Government and from the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee. We found a wide range of data available. Despite the significant amounts of data published, there are some gaps to be filled.

- In Wales, we identified fewer statistics about the accessibility of transport, however there was a notable amount of general interest in the area, both within and outside of Government.

- In Scotland, we did not identify a significant demand for data beyond internal Government and the Mobility and Access Committee. Other organisations we spoke to were, on the whole, able to answer their questions with their own more qualitative information sources.

- In Northern Ireland, once again the main demand for data that we identified came from within Government and from the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee. We found that some data collections cover only Great Britain, which limits the statistics available to users in Northern Ireland on some topics.

Despite differing levels of interest and engagement, many of the concerns and issues we identified are common across the UK. Where concerns are specific to one particular country, this is flagged within the report.

In the following five sections we outline what we consider are the key issues with statistics and data on transport accessibility, and support these with examples and case studies demonstrating good practice in this area.

In sections one and two we focus on improving statistics to better reflect the experiences and concerns of disabled people in particular. In section three we explore the provision of data to answer questions about broader aspects of accessible travel. In sections four and five we discuss how improvements to the publication of data and statistics can help better meet user needs.

1. Statistics, data and analysis could better reflect the lived experience of disabled people to support a focus on removing barriers to access

There can be many reasons why individuals are not able to access transport in the way they would like. During our stakeholder engagement the most mentioned accessibility issues related to the barriers faced by disabled people. Often statistics did not reflect their lived experience.

> **Lived experience** is defined as 'the experience(s) of people on whom a social issue, or combination of issues, has had a direct impact'.

1.1 Inconsistencies in defining disability and impairment types

All the main surveys relating to experiences of transport networks in the UK ask a question to identify whether the respondent is disabled or has a long-term health condition and, in most cases, at least some data are published with a disabled / not disabled split. These breakdowns show at a high level how the lived experiences of people with disabilities varies from those without.

Statistics could go further to explore issues specific to disabled people and make it easier to explore how the experience of people with different disabilities varies dependant on their different lived experiences. Improving statistics in these ways would make it easier to identify specific barriers to travel, which could lead to improvements in the transport network.

The Government Statistical Service (GSS) has published three harmonised standards which relate to disability. The first asks about long lasting health conditions and illness and the second about activity restriction; these two combined identify people who are disabled as defined by the Equality Act 2010. The third identifies specific impairments. However, we heard that there is often inconsistency in the use of questions to identify disabled people and to collect data about specific impairments.

These inconsistencies can make it difficult to understand the barriers faced by specific groups and to plan improvements and tell a coherent story when bringing different sources of data together. For example, the Scottish Government Scottish Household Survey list of impairments are different to the GSS Harmonised Standard. Respondents can select more than one impairment type, with some categories potentially overlapping (for example 'Arthritis' and 'Problems or disabilities related to arms or hands' are both listed). We heard that these differences can complicate onward use of data.

We heard that some users of statistics would like questions to go further than the GSS harmonised questions. They would like to see questions based around a social model, rather than medical model, of disability. The charity Scope explains that a social model recognises that "people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference". Depending on the context, this could mean asking questions such as "How far can you walk?" "Is standing a problem?" "Do you need assistance?".

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The UK Statistics Authority [Inclusive Data Taskforce recommendations report](#), published in September 2021, sets out recommendations for improving the UK's inclusive data holdings and infrastructure. The report includes a recommendation that "as a priority, ONS should transition its measures of disability to approaches more firmly based upon the WHO ICF and ICF-CY biopsychosocial model conceptual frameworks." The Taskforce made a further recommendation that "Data producers should use harmonised standards when collecting data, or more granular systems which are compatible with the harmonised standards, to improve comparability and better use existing data".

We welcome the GSS Harmonisation Team's plans to build on the recommendation of the Inclusive Data Taskforce and review the harmonised definition of disability.

We found that where impairment specific data are collected, they are often not published because sample sizes are too small to provide breakdowns for each of the 10 impairments included in the harmonised standard, meaning statistical publications do not fully reflect different types of impairments.

Case Study: Transport Focus Datahub

Transport Focus use the [GSS Harmonised definition for impairment](#) in their [National Rail Passenger Survey](#). In the [Transport Focus Datahub](#), users are able to explore data to see how passengers with different demographics respond to each question.

For example, looking at data for 2018 and 2019 combined, it is possible to see how 'ease of ticket purchase' varies by impairment type. Overall, 79% of people with a disability said it was 'very or fairly good', slightly lower than the 83% of people without a disability who found it 'very or fairly good'. Looking within impairment type, there is much more variation with 81% of people with a mobility impairment finding it 'very or fairly good' which is much higher than the 61% of people with a 'learning or understanding or concentrating impairment' who said the same.

In many cases, when looking at individual waves of data, the sample sizes for individual impairment groups is too small for meaningful analysis (results based on fewer than 75 responses are suppressed within the tool). To help overcome small sample sizes, Transport Focus have introduced three summary impairment groupings – movement, sensory and cognitive/mental health. When looking at the question 'How train met needs as passenger with disability' which has only been asked in two waves of the survey, these groupings make it possible to see how experiences vary, with 65% of passengers with sensory impairments satisfied, compared to 56% of passengers with mental health/cognitive impairments satisfied (looking at data from Autumn 2017 and Autumn 2018 combined)

We would encourage Transport Focus to do more to draw user's attention to this tool and the in-depth analysis which it enables.

1.2 Whole journey and journeys that don't happen

We heard that statistics do not always provide an accurate representation of how disabled people experience the transport network holistically.

Understanding the whole experience is critical to knowing whether the transport network is meeting users' needs. As statistics are typically broken into measuring constituent parts of the transport experience, for example passenger assistance requests or the number of accessible buses, they are not currently capturing entire journeys. This is significant. It means statistics producers are unable to quantify how many opportunities people have missed out on due to failures or barriers in the transport network as a whole.

Users told us that, as the current statistics focus more on individual modes of transport, information is not being captured about whether disabled people are able to make complete journeys the way they had intended to. As an example, making a journey relies on more than just using a bus or a train. It involves activities such as planning a route and feeling confident enough to embark on it, leaving the house and getting to the stop or station, boarding and alighting the vehicle, connecting to subsequent legs which might be required and ultimately arriving at a desired destination at the time that is wanted.

We found that individuals are missing from statistics, as they are not being asked about activities they have been unable to take part in. For example, the National Rail Passenger Survey is based on passengers departing stations, and therefore does not capture the experiences of those who wished to make a train journey but were unable to, perhaps because they had difficulties in planning the journey, or because their lack of confidence had been a barrier to travel. Whilst we recognise that this is an appropriate sampling frame for this particular survey, we note that since the Life Opportunities Survey (which provided data on how disabled and non-disabled people participate in society) ended in 2015, there has not been a regular survey in the UK exploring the barriers to transport of disabled people who have been unable to make their preferred journey.

We welcome the Cabinet Office Disability Unit's commitment within the National Disability Strategy to start a new survey of disabled people exploring barriers to social participation. We believe this is an opportunity to fill some of the gaps around the whole journey and the journeys that do not happen.

Current statistics highlight that disabled people make fewer journeys than non-disabled people. They also make shorter journeys. Many users told us about the importance of confidence in making journeys.

Transport Scotland's Disability and Transport: Findings from the Scottish Household Survey finds that disabled people are less positive about the journeys they made, stating that they felt less safe, and with fewer disabled people agreeing it was 'easy to change from bus to other transport' compared to non-disabled people. These differences are not easily explainable by the current available statistics, but understanding more about the confidence disabled people have in using the transport network may contribute towards understanding the reasons behind this difference.

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Users also reported to us that transportation companies focus on complying with accessibility legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) in Northern Ireland or the Equality Act (2010) in Great Britain, but do not do enough to ensure the transport needs of disabled people are being fully met.

Northern Ireland transport statistics show that all buses and coaches in Northern Ireland are wheelchair accessible, suggesting compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. However, users in Northern Ireland told us that not all bus or coach stops are wheelchair accessible. Therefore, whilst the buses and coaches may fulfil the requirements of the legislation, the transport network is not fully accessible. Additionally, viewing accessibility solely focused on wheelchairs may mean the needs of all disabled passengers are not being met. The Department for Infrastructure are investigating how they can improve their statistics about the accessibility of buses, for example by including information about the percentage of fleet with audio visual announcements.

In the past, Translink, the main public transport provider in Northern Ireland, has commissioned a passenger experience survey, however it does not specifically ask about disability or accessibility requirements of passengers. Users told us that having more detailed knowledge of the accessibility requirements of disabled people in Northern Ireland would support efforts to ensure their diverse needs are being met. The Department for Infrastructure told us that a public transport monitoring group has recently been set up to develop a new passenger experience survey.

Case Study: Office of Rail and Road

Passenger Assistance statistics detail how many disabled passengers requested passenger assistance using the National Passenger Assistance Booking System. These statistics do not cover whether the passenger was able to successfully make their journey the way they had intended to, whether they had encountered access fails, or whether they were satisfied with the assistance they received. Following research carried out by Transport Focus, Office of Rail and Road started commissioning regular research to understand how well the system is meeting the needs of users. The research explores what type of assistance is booked, the type of disability or condition the passenger has, and their experience, including whether they were confident they would get the assistance they required, whether they were able to complete their journey as planned, and satisfaction with the assistance provided.

Both Transport Focus and the Office for Rail and Road highlighted how this research has helped them to identify areas for improvements in the user experience.

These statistics, and the accompanying research do not include assistance which has not been pre-booked, such as 'Turn up and Go' assistance. We have encouraged the Office for Rail and Road to look into this.

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2. A fully inclusive statistical approach is needed to ensure everyone is counted and better decisions are made

During our research, we heard both directly and indirectly about the challenges in accessing statistics faced by those with impairments, highlighting concerns about the way that data are collected about disabled people, and how they are published. These concerns are relevant to statistics about the accessibility of transport and also more broadly.

Many surveys do not consistently collect the experiences of disabled or older people. Communal living establishments such as care homes are often not included in the sampling frame for household surveys. Disabled people living in such establishments are systematically excluded from statistics based on surveys that sample on a household basis. For example, as both the National Travel Survey in England and the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland are based on a sample of private households, individuals who may rely on accessible transport but live in other types of accommodation, such as sheltered accommodation or care homes, are not sampled.

In some situations individuals are included in the sampling frame, but are unable to complete surveys because adjustments to ensure the survey are accessible to them are not in place. For example, someone with a visual impairment may be unable to complete the survey because it cannot be interpreted by a screen reader, or someone with learning difficulties maybe be unable to respond because an easy read version is not provided. Some users also raised concerns about the way statistics are published, for example, because they cannot be read easily by screen readers. The Government Statistical Service provide support to statistics producers on making outputs more accessible for example, guidance on making analytical publications accessible and making spreadsheets accessible. We were reassured to hear that many producers have used this guidance to make improvements to their outputs.

The UK Statistics Authority's Inclusive Data Taskforce noted the issues of data gaps in relation to the non-household population in their recommendations. The details of this recommendation, and others relevant to our findings, can be found in Annex C.

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> **Case Study: Office for Disability Issues, Life Opportunities Survey**
>
> The Life Opportunities Survey from the Office for Disability Issues (now known as the Disability Unit) collected data from 2009 to 2014 in Great Britain. This survey allowed a comparison of the experiences of disabled and non-disabled people in work, education, social participation, transport and use of public services. Our research highlighted, although no longer carried out, this was a particularly good example of an accessible publication.
>
> The survey had the advantage of being longitudinal, meaning that it was possible to gain insights into barriers faced by people over a period of time, and was designed to include disabled and non-disabled people. The sample for this survey came from British households, meaning people living in care or retirements home were not included.
>
> To make data collection inclusive, an easy read information leaflet about the survey was produced. For respondents with welfare guardians, an information sheet was also produced to explain to them the purpose of the study and what it entailed. The survey was administered in an interview and interviewers received disability awareness training to guide them on interviewing adults with learning disabilities.
>
> To make the findings of the survey more accessible, an easy read version and an audio version of the executive summary were provided for users.

3. Publishing more statistics, data and analysis could help identify areas for improvement to the accessibility of transport

In this next section we explore broader issues around the data that are available to answer questions about the accessibility of transport. We found that some statistics only exist at a high level and with limited detail. Where it would support greater understanding for users, we would encourage statistics producers to publish statistics from existing analysis and data sources. We have looked at the three most commonly mentioned barriers to travel: affordability, safety and journey times, as well as at modal specific data gaps and concerns about data granularity.

3.1 Affordability

Having a better understanding of the affordability of transport is a priority for many. Two specific examples mentioned during our research relate to understanding journey costs and to understanding and improving the impact of reduced travel fare schemes.

Understanding journey costs

Users told us that a having a better understanding of the costs associated with different modes of transport is important for policy development. Across the UK, encouraging modal shift from private cars to more sustainable transport modes is a

key strategic policy area. One motivation behind modal choice is cost, which is not well understood.

Data about the average cost per journey, for example costs for commuters of making the same journey by different modes of transport, is not currently published in England, Scotland, or Wales. In Northern Ireland, the Consumer Council has recently developed a data portal, which includes data about the average cost of journeys.

Case Study: Consumer Council, Transport Knowledge Hub

The Consumer Council in Northern Ireland has developed a Transport Knowledge Hub to make internal data about the average cost of travel available to consumers.

The hub presents data in a user friendly interactive dashboard and includes public transport prices across different regions in the UK, average flight and sea crossing costs and petrol and diesel prices. It also includes average commuter costs which breaks down the costs of commuting to Belfast by different modes of transport from different places within Northern Ireland.

Although data is not yet available, we welcome recent changes to the Scottish Household Survey which introduced questions about expenditure on public transport, fuel, and parking as well as questions which probe whether respondents have difficulties meeting travel costs and the extent to which their transport choices are affected by cost.

Reduced travel fares

One way to encourage the use of public transport and to make it more affordable is to offer reduced fares for specific groups of travellers. Concessionary travel fares are subsidised by local or central Governments, whilst some other reduced non-concessionary travel fares are subsidised in other ways, for example by the transport operating company. Across the UK, older people can apply for a bus pass which gives them access to free bus travel in their area, and National Rail sell a wide range of railcards which entitle the traveller to reduced fares on National Rail services. In Northern Ireland SmartPasses offer free or reduced fare travel on public transport for some travellers.

The Office of Rail and Road produce statistics about the number of Disabled Persons Railcards issued and in circulation in GB. The English National Travel Survey published by the Department for Transport provides some data about the take-up of age-based concessionary travel schemes in England. Transport Scotland publish data on the number of concessionary card holders and the number of journeys made by concessionary card holders in Scotland.

The Department for Infrastructure have recently published the results of their Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Survey 2019 which explores how SmartPasses improve access to public transport. It found that a majority of

respondents agreed the SmartPass helped them to be more active, more social, less reliant on friends and family, as well as their car, and more able to afford other things. The survey also provided insights into the reasons why respondents might find it difficult to use their passes; 9% responded that difficulty getting on and off vehicles was one reason they were prevented from using their pass, indicating that accessibility is a barrier for some.

Beyond the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Survey, there are very few statistics that evidence the impact of reduced travel fares on the accessibility of transport. Our research highlighted that little is known about who is using railcards and how they impact on the choices made by travellers or how this spend leads to improved outcomes for those who hold them. It is difficult to identify where changes to travel card policies in Great Britain would deliver best value for money and increase use of sustainable travel modes.

The Inclusive Transport Strategy: evaluation baseline report published by the Department for Transport includes data from their own Panel Survey. It found that "Just 10% of disabled people who had travelled by train in the last year had a Disabled Person's Railcard. Of those disabled people who had travelled by train in the last year but did not have a Disabled Persons Railcard, a quarter were not aware they existed, and awareness was lower amongst those on low incomes. Thirty percent of disabled people had a concessionary bus pass, and around half of these were disability related passes."

3.2 Feeling safe when travelling

Some organisations we engaged with raised concerns about the lack of, and poor quality of data available about physical abuse and hate crimes on public transport, particularly towards disabled people.

We found that some relevant statistics do exist, for example some organisations with responsibility for transport statistics ask about travellers' perception of safety, and some organisations with responsibility for crime statistics publish counts of incidence of crime on transport. Both are helpful to understanding how accessible transport is from a safety perspective, however, in both cases we found that generally statistics are only available at a high level with limited detail, making the data difficult to analyse to form a coherent understanding of what is happening.

For England, the Home Office annually publish the number of recorded hate crime by Police Force Area, which includes the British Transport Police who police railways. Data is published by monitored hate crime strand, which includes disability.

The Crown Prosecution Service publishes figures for hate crime prosecutions as part of its quarterly data summaries. The hate crime annual data tables (table AR1), published as part of the quarter 4 release, contain figures for the number of pre-charge decisions on cases referred by the British Transport Police.

In addition, Transport Focus' National Rail Passenger Survey asks passengers to rate their 'personal security' whilst using the station and train, and their bus passenger survey asks about 'personal security' whilst using the bus.

Transport for London publish a [crime and incident statistical bulletin](#) which includes data about hate crime by mode of transport within London.

For Wales, data is included in the Home Office and Crown Prosecution Service outputs mentioned above, whilst the [National Survey for Wales](#) biennially asks about the feeling of safety on public transport after dark. However, this is only available by two Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics: age and sex.

For Scotland, we were unable to find any regularly published statistics specifically about hate crimes on public transport however, the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey does explore where crimes take place, and [data are published](#) which show the proportion of violent crimes which take place 'while travelling or near transport facilities'. Transport for Scotland have recently requested that questions about harassment on public transport are added to the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey. Currently, the [Scottish Household Survey](#) includes questions about 'Feel[ing] safe and secure' on the train and bus during the day and during the evening, and the results are published by Transport Scotland with a disability split.

For Northern Ireland, we were unable to find any regularly published statistics specifically about hate crimes on public transport. The [Northern Ireland Travel Survey](#) includes 'Concerns over personal safety' as an option when exploring barriers to travel for work and food shopping, and a question about the feeling of safety when using public transport was placed in the most recent [Continuous Household Survey](#) in Northern Ireland and published in the [Active and Sustainable Travel](#) statistical release.

We heard concerns that where statistics specifically about hate crime do exist, they do not fully represent the scale of hate crime, as, like with many types of crimes, many hate crimes are unreported. This issue has been explored by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services [in this series of reports on hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales.](#) We are currently reviewing hate crime statistics in more detail as part of our regulation of crime statistics.

3.3 Journey times

The time it takes someone to get to their nearest mode of public transport, the number of onward connections they then make, combined with the overall journey time can have a big impact on the accessibility of transport. This is particularly important in the context of encouraging individuals to swap from private to public transport (modal shift).

Users told us about the importance that should be placed on understanding how far individuals live from their nearest bus stops. This was raised as being a particular issue in cities. Such information can support local authority planning and inform changes to services for example, when bus companies are considering how to increase the speed of services without unfairly reducing services in certain areas.

Different statistics are available across the UK to help explore this issue. The [Travel Survey for Northern Ireland](#) asks individuals how long it would take to walk to the nearest bus or train station, whilst Transport Scotland told us about their [Scottish](#)

Access to Bus Indicator, which shows the areas which are most and least accessible by bus. Although data is available directly from Transport Scotland, it is more easily understood through analysis provided by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre.

Both Scottish Government and Welsh Government publish data on journey times by public and private transport to a range of predefined services as part of the Scottish and Welsh Indices of Multiple Deprivation, although supporting documentation and analysis to support interpretation of the journey times indicators are limited. In our research, we heard that Transport Scotland and Transport for Wales produce additional analysis of journey times data which is not currently published.

The Department for Transport regularly publishes Official Statistics on journey times.

Case Study: Department for Transport, Journey Times

Journey time statistics present estimates of travel times from where people live to key local services for England. These include average journey times to food stores, education, healthcare, town centres and employment centres by car, cycling, walking or public transport/walking. The statistics show how journey times vary by urban and rural classifications.

The Department for Transport told us that their journey time statistics have a wide range of uses. The Department use regional travel time to reach nearest large employment centre (region) metric as a performance metric in their Outcome Delivery Plan, and they feed into Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs' Statistical Digest of Rural England. They are also used by Local Authorities to understand journey times in their areas.

Producing journey time statistics is complex and time consuming. We welcome the team's ongoing engagement with users of statistics to ensure they are meeting user need and hence delivering greater value from the resource required to produce them.

Transport for London make data available through interactive tools to support those with responsibility for planning to understand public transport access levels and travel times across London.

3.4 Modal specific gaps

Whilst understanding whole journeys and moving away from focusing on individual legs of journeys is a key finding of this review, we also identified an interest in, and need for, statistics about specific parts of the transport network. We found that as different parts of the transport network are operated by different types of organisations, be it public bodies, private operators or the voluntary sector, there are a variety of different challenges in collecting data.

We found opportunities to improve data about a variety of modes of transport. This included Community Transport in England, bus and coach travel in Northern Ireland, and, following the Department for Transport's station accessibility audit, the accessibility of railway stations across Great Britain. In addition, our research

highlighted concerns that statistics about walking and wheeling and taxi services do not reflect the lived experiences of disabled people.

We have provided more details on these issues, broken down by modes of transport, in Annex D: Modal data.

3.5 Demographic breakdowns

Users told us of their need for more geographical and demographic information. When statistics are presented in a more granular way, they can better support comparisons, such as with age, geography, and socio-economic status. Users told us about the benefits from having information on more than one category at a time, for example, being able to understand the impact of being disabled, having a lower socioeconomic status and how location can affect this.

Across the UK, where statistics do exist, often they are not of sufficient granularity to be able to answer questions about the experiences of different groups. When thinking about the accessibility of transport, geography plays an important role. The experiences of those in towns and cities can be very different to those who live in the countryside. Often sample sizes are too small to allow for local authority or regional breakdowns.

Users told us that more geographical information would be beneficial, particularly in being able to differentiate the experiences of those living in urban areas and those who live in rural areas. This is particularly an issue in Wales and Northern Ireland. Both nations have relatively large rural populations: 33% of the population of Wales live in a rural area (based on data from the 2011 census) and 35% of the population of Northern Ireland live in a rural area (based on 2017 data from NISRA). In Wales, data for average journey times to a variety of services by public and private transport are published by Urban Rural classification, as part of the Welsh Indices of Multiple Deprivation. However, little is known about how many disabled people live in rural settings and how much living in a rural setting impacts on the availability of accessible transport.

The Travel Survey for Northern Ireland publishes statistics on how many men and women in the sample have difficulty with travel due to physical disability, including a breakdown of ages. However, there is no information provided about how many disabled people live in urban and rural environments.

Transport Scotland's publication Disability and Transport does elaborate on this, stating that there is no difference between disabled and non-disabled people in terms of the location where they live, as the same proportion of disabled people live in urban locations as non-disabled people (83%). However, there is no further information provided comparing the experiences of disabled people and non-disabled people in urban-rural settings.

Users also told us that a greater number of age breakdowns would be beneficial, for example to identify whether the experiences of young adults with disabilities varies from that of older adults with disabilities.

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More demographic breakdowns would be valuable for users to understand how well the transport network is meeting people's needs. However, small sample sizes in data collection makes it difficult to provide this granular information. As an example, users felt that annual household surveys sample so few disabled people that meaningful data cannot be extracted.

4. Bringing data and statistics together helps present a coherent story and supports users to answer questions about accessible transport

We found that both qualitative and quantitative data are needed to understand the experiences of those accessing transport.

Qualitative data provides rich insights into specific experiences, enabling researchers to gain an understanding of the lived experience of individuals. Quantitative data can give insight into the extent of the issues, how much they affect different groups and how these are changing over time.

When qualitative and quantitative data are brought together, they help to paint an insightful and engaging picture. A good example of this is the research publication Accessible Transport: Unlocking a better normal produced by Transport Focus.

Some users were not aware of the extent of available data and statistics, suggesting that engagement with users could be improved and existing publications could be promoted more.

We welcome the Department for Transport and Transport Scotland's new publications, Transport: disability and accessibility statistics and Disability and Transport, and have set out our views in letters to the Department for Transport and Transport Scotland on how they can be further improved.

We also welcome the recent consultation carried out by the Department for Infrastructure on replacing the Northern Ireland Transport Statistics report with a statistical report focussed on Public Transport, which would be published alongside supporting management information. As set out in the consultation response the new report, which is being developing with Translink, will focus in part on the accessibility of transport.

Even when users have identified the relevant statistics, data or analysis, many publications only provide a snapshot of experiences. For example, Accessing Health Services in Wales: Transport Issues and Barriers, published by the Older People's Commissioner in Wales and Disabled rail passengers research commissioned by Transport Focus on behalf of the Department for Transport, are helpful for diagnosing issues and informing policy development however, as they reflect a single period of time, provide only limited value for those with an interest in impacts over time. Due to changes with the way data was collected through the Covid-19 pandemic, Disability and Transport published by Transport Scotland also does not yet provide time series data.

> **Case Study: Department for Transport, Transport: Disability and Accessibility Statistics**
>
> The Department for Transport has brought together a wide range of data sources to create the publication, Transport: Disability and Accessibility Statistics for England. This contains data from the Department for Transport's National Travel Survey and National Travel Attitudes Survey, as well as data collected by other organisations, such as Transport Focus, the Office of Rail and Road, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, and the privately run National Highways and Transport Survey.
>
> The publication also signposts users to other relevant data and statistics, such as the Department for Transport 'All Change? Travel Tracker' publication, which is a longitudinal study into how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on travel.
>
> The Department for Transport have included some time series data, so users can see changes in statistics over time. These include the number of buses, private hire vehicles and taxis with accessibility certificates, the number of authorities who require taxi drivers to have disability awareness training, and the number of blue badges issued annually.

5. Publishing data enables the impact of strategies to be evaluated and improvements to accessibility to be identified

The development and publication of Government strategies offers a significant opportunity for departments to develop new surveys and other data sources. Value and insight are maximised when data are published in a way that can be analysed by anyone with an interest in the topic area, particularly when they allow for analyses looking at change over time.

In **England**, we welcome the recent publication by the Department for Transport of the Inclusive Transport Strategy baseline evaluation report and the supporting scorecard which gives users the ability to see change over time of key metrics used to track the impact of the strategy. We note that it has taken more than three years following the publication of the strategy for this baseline report to be published, although we understand it is in part due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We were encouraged by the Department for Transports' work to run a panel survey of both disabled and non-disabled people, which has provided important new insights.

We welcome the Department for Transport's plans for a follow-up evaluation in 2023, including repeating this survey. However, as 'the overall goal of the strategy is to create a transport system that offers equal access for disabled passengers by 2030', we are concerned that the longer-term evaluation mechanism is not in place.

In **Wales**, there is very limited specific data about the travel experience of disabled and older people. This means that some of the analysis to support the development of the Wales Transport strategy is based on either old data or proxy data from England. Whilst we welcome the publication of the background report setting out the

analysis supporting the development of the Wales Transport Strategy we note that it references unpublished data which could be of wider interest to the public, particularly in tracking progress of the strategy. We welcome the work underway in both Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to bring together and, where necessary, develop data to support the strategy's evaluation framework. This includes Welsh Government and Transport for Wales plans to introduce a new National Travel Survey for Wales as part of their strategy evaluation work.

In **Scotland**, the Accessible Travel Framework was published in 2016. It aims to support disabled people's rights by removing barriers and improving access to travel, and to ensure disabled people are fully involved in work to improve all aspects of travel. The accessible travel framework helpfully sets out a list of 'Initial Indicators' which lists each of the framework's outcomes, together with an initial set of measurements that could indicate if they are being achieved. However, baseline data and updates to the data are not published together in one place to allow progress to be monitored. Transport Scotland explained that, as part of the annual delivery model for the framework, annual delivery plans are now produced in agreement with disabled people, organisations that represent them and the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland Transport Scotland, and that they have started publishing progress reports. To help monitor impact, the statistical team have developed a new publication Disability and Transport.

The National Transport Strategy 2, published in February 2020 reiterated a commitment to the vision of the accessible travel framework. Due to the pandemic, priorities in Scottish transport have changed slightly, but the National Transport Strategy Delivery Plan 2020-2022 published in December 2020, continues to focus on reducing inequalities to access transport in Scotland.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy, published in August 2021, for the National Transport Strategy sets out how the strategy will be evaluated, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data. Transport Scotland explained to us that their newly developed publication Disability and Transport will also support the evaluation of the accessibility elements of their National Transport Strategy. We welcome this monitoring and evaluation strategy, and encourage Transport Scotland to ensure that all of the underpinning data are published in a user-friendly, accessible way.

In **Northern Ireland**, an Executive Disability Strategy is currently under development by the Department for Communities as part of a suite of four new Social Inclusion Strategies. Reporting and monitoring arrangements for the Disability Strategy are currently in development and will be subject to consultation. We encourage the Department for Communities to consider how the strategy will be evaluated and to publish their plans in an accessible way.

In addition, the Department for Infrastructure are developing a new Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan which will set out future investment and improvements to Northern Ireland's strategic transport networks by road, rail and bus. We would similarly encourage the Department for Infrastructure to be clear how the delivery of their plans will be monitored and evaluated.

Our recommendations

In this section we set out our recommendations for the statistical system to improve the provision of statistics and wider understanding about the accessibility of transport.

- 'Policy departments' refer to the four main Government bodies with policy responsibility for transport across the UK: Department for Transport, Welsh Government, Transport Scotland and the Department for Infrastructure.

- 'All producers' refers to the four policy departments above, plus the three other transport Official Statistics producers in the UK: Transport Focus, Office of Rail and Road and Transport for Wales.

- It would be beneficial if other organisations, such as the Cabinet Office Disability Unit, Transport for London and Translink, applied recommendations written for 'All producers'

1. Develop statistics which reflect the lived experience of disabled people to support a focus on removing barriers to access

Producers need to develop statistics that reflect the barriers individuals, such as people with disabilities, face when accessing transport. These include understanding the reasons why individuals do not use public transport when they might want to, and the problems they face completing journeys. By moving to a model of defining disability that reflects social barriers, not just impairments, policy makers will better understand the experiences of individuals. Specifically:

1.1 As part of their development of a new survey of disabled people exploring barriers to social participation, the Cabinet Office Disability Unit should produce statistics exploring the reasons why disabled people are unable to access transport as much as they would like, including around confidence to travel, and the issues faced between legs of journeys including experiences of changing between transport modes.

1.2 During the development of their new public transport statistics report, the Department for Infrastructure should explore ways to produce statistics about the accessibility of buses and coaches for those with a wide of range of accessibility issues, for example through passenger experience surveys.

1.3 During the development of the new National Travel Survey for Wales, Transport for Wales should review their sampling frame and questionnaire to ensure it follows best practice on reflecting lived experience.

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1.4 **All producers should ensure they use the current relevant harmonised questions (long lasting health conditions and illness, activity restriction, and impairments), or more granular questions which are compatible with the harmonised standards, and should keep informed of ONS developments of new measures of disability. Producers should be prepared to trial or implement new harmonised questions when available from the GSS Harmonisation Team.**

1.5 **As part their work to develop new harmonised standards, the GSS Harmonisation Team should develop high level grouping to enable publication of data that represent different experiences - for example high level barrier groupings, and/or high-level impairment groupings such as visible/invisible impairment, or mobility/cognitive/sensory.**

2. Develop fully inclusive statistical approaches to ensure everyone is counted

Improvements to statistical processes will enable the collection of more diverse views and ultimately improve the decisions made based on these statistics. Both the GSS and the Inclusive Data Taskforce play a role in this space.

The Inclusive Data Taskforce have addressed many of issues we have identified in their recommendations, and we have included in this report those which we think are particularly relevant for producing statistics about the accessibility of transport. As a priority, producers should plan to deliver all of the Inclusive Data Taskforce's recommendations under Principle 1 along with Recommendation 3.7. Full details of these recommendations, along with others mentioned in the report are in Annex C.

The GSS Best Practice and Impact team has produced guidance to improve the accessibility of statistics, including making analytical publications accessible and making spreadsheets accessible for screen readers. We think further guidance around producing easily accessible surveys would be helpful. Specifically:

2.1 **The Inclusive Data Taskforce set out recommendations to support producers to be more inclusive with their data. Producers should put in place plans to deliver relevant recommendations, for example those under Principle 1 to 'create an environment of trust and trustworthiness which allows and encourages everyone to count and be counted in UK data and evidence' and recommendation 3.7 to evaluate the coverage of non-private household population groups in UK data and take the necessary action to address those missing from the current data. Full details in Annex C.**

2.2 **To support the delivery of this recommendation, the GSS should develop guidance around ensuring surveys can be completed by those with disabilities. Producers should ensure their collection methods and outputs reflect best practice guidance.**

3. Publish more statistics, data and analysis to help identify areas for improvements to the accessibility of transport

Producers should aim to publish data and analysis that are already being collected or produced to improve transparency of ministerial statements and policy development, and to increase clarity and value from the findings. Producers should explore survey data to identify where further demographic breakdowns may help shine a light on different experiences of the accessibility of transport. Specifically:

3.1 **Following the current audit of station accessibility being led by the Department for Transport, the Department for Transport and the Office of Rail and Road should work together to publish, and regularly update, statistics about the accessibility of train stations across GB, covering accessible infrastructure to support those with different types of disabilities (such as step free access for those with mobility impairments) and geographical breakdowns.**

3.2 **The Department for Transport should explore whether new or existing data (for example the English National Travel Survey) can be used to fill data gaps highlighted in the report, for example around community and coach travel.**

3.3 **Transport Scotland and Transport for Wales should publish internal analysis on journey times, and seek user engagement on what else is needed to support local understanding and policy development.**

3.4 **Office of Rail and Road should work with the Department for Transport and the Rail Delivery Group to develop a publication about the use and impact of railcards, drawing on data from Rail Delivery Group and other sources, such as the English National Travel survey.**

3.5 **All statistics producers should explore where further demographic breakdowns of survey data can provide new insights into the experiences of different population groups, and publish data where this could be of interest to users. For example, new urban-rural splits of national figures, and more age breakdowns, such as focussing on the experiences of younger adults**

4. Bring data and statistics together into one place, to tell a coherent story and support users to answer questions about accessible transport

Statistics producers should help users to find, understand and reuse the wide array of data available about the accessibility of transport across the UK. Specifically:

4.1 **All producers should improve their user engagement and awareness of user needs, particularly in light of the** GSS User Engagement Strategy**, to improve awareness of their statistics, and ensure that they are continuing to develop their outputs to meet users' requirements.**

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4.2 **Statistics producers in policy departments should support users to find and interpret relevant statistics about the accessibility of transport in their devolved administration. For example:**

- **Welsh Government could develop a new publication drawing on the available data about the accessibility of transport specific to Wales, including Census 2021 data to set out relevant demographics and the new data sources mentioned within this report**

- **The Department for Infrastructure could ensure that its new statistics publication on public transport includes, or signposts users towards, available data about the accessibility of transport specific to Northern Ireland, including Census 2021 data about relevant demographics and the new data sources mentioned within this report**

- **Transport Scotland could continue to develop their** Disability and Transport **publication to ensure it supports Government and the public to monitor whether the National Transport Strategy and Accessible Travel Framework are achieving their desired outcomes, introducing time series data and drawing on other sources of data where already available**

5. Publish data to enable the impact of strategies to be evaluated and improvements to accessibility identified

Statistics producers should publish baseline data and regular updates which allow short, medium and long terms impacts of strategies to improve the accessibility of transport to be independently evaluated. Policy departments should be open about how impacts can be monitored for the lifetime of the strategy. Specifically:

5.1 **Policy departments should draw on the expertise of statisticians, and other analytical professionals, to be clear with users about how they, and the public, will be able to evaluate the short-term and long-term impacts of their transport strategies.**

5.2 **Statistics producers in policy departments should publish data, metrics and statistics which support the evaluation of strategies in accessible formats to enable those with an interest to carry out their own analysis and track progress over time.**

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Next steps

Our research has identified that, although the existing statistics on Transport Accessibility do go some way to meeting users' needs, there is clearly more that could be done. Our recommendations outline how we expect the producers of the statistics, and the wider Government Statistical Service, to work to develop the statistics so that they address the issues outlined.

It will be possible for producers to implements some of the recommendations in this report relatively quickly however, some of the statistics covered by the recommendations in this report are annual surveys with significant time lags. This means that some of the new developments and changes to production processes cannot not be achieved immediately. We will support statistics producers in meeting our recommendations and continue to monitor their approach to meeting user needs.

Annex A: User Engagement

Direct Engagement		
Age UK	Disability Equality Forum	Office of Rail and Road
Cabinet Office Disability Unit	Disability Equality Scotland	Older People's Commission for Wales
Campaign for Better Transport	Disability Rights UK	Rail Delivery Group
Centre for Equalities and Inclusion, ONS	Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee	Rail Safety and Standards Board
Community Rail Network	Eastbourne Cycle Group	Scope
Community Transport Association	Edinburgh Bus Users Group	Translink
Consumer Council	Equality and Human Rights Commission	Transport Focus
Department for Infrastructure, Accessible and Community Transport Branch	Go Upstream	Transport for All
Department for Infrastructure, Analysis, Statistics and Research Branch	Government Statistical Service Harmonisation Team	Transport for Wales
Department for Infrastructure, Roads and Rivers Group	Guide Dogs	Transport Scotland
Department for Transport Access for All Team	Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee	Welsh Government
Department for Transport ITS Evaluation Team	Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland	Wheels for Wellbeing
Department for Transport Local Transport Accessibility, Accessible and Inclusive Travel Division	National Transport and Highways Network	
Department for Transport, Travel and Environment Data and Statistics	Office for National Statistics Census and Disability Analysis Team	

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Correspondence		
London Travel Watch	Shop Mobility	Transport for West Midlands
Motability	Transport Statistics User Group	

Annex B: Statistics landscape

Producer	Title	Status	Geography
Department for Infrastructure	Travel Survey for Northern Ireland	National Statistics	Northern Ireland
Department for Infrastructure	Public Transport Journey Planning	Official Statistics	Northern Ireland
Department for Infrastructure	Northern Ireland Transport Statistics	National Statistics	Northern Ireland
Department for Infrastructure	Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Survey	Ad hoc research	Northern Ireland
National Highways & Transport Network	The National Highways & Transport Network satisfaction survey	Private organisation	Great Britain
Office of Rail and Road	Passenger Assistance	Official Statistics	Great Britain
Office of Rail and Road	Disabled Persons Railcard	Official Statistics	Great Britain
Scottish Government	Scottish Household Survey	Experimental Statistics	Scotland
Transport Scotland	Disability and Transport	Official Statistics	Scotland
Sport England	Active Lives Adult	Official Statistics	England
Sport England	Active Lives Children and Young People	Official Statistics	England
Department for Transport	Transport: Disability and accessibility statistics	Official Statistics	England
Department for Transport	National Travel Survey	National Statistics	England
Department for Transport	National Travel Attitudes Survey	Official Statistics	England
Welsh Government	National Survey for Wales	National Statistics	Wales

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Annex C: Inclusive Data Taskforce Recommendations

The Inclusive Data Taskforce, which was established by the National Statistician in October 2020, has set out eight principles to help make data in the UK more inclusive. Here we have set out the recommendations we consider are particularly pertinent to the findings of our review.

Inclusive Data Taskforce Recommendation 1

1. Create an environment of trust and trustworthiness which allows and encourages everyone to count and be counted in UK data and evidence.

1.1 Trust is crucially important for the collection and use of data and for inclusion in statistics. People are happy to provide their personal information when they believe that (1) their data matters and will be used to improve people's lives and are convinced of the (2) reliability, (3) responsiveness, (4) openness and inclusiveness, (5) integrity and (6) fairness of the data producer. To enhance trust and trustworthiness in the provision and use of data, data producers should develop a social contract with those who provide their data (the respondents). This should include:

> 1.1.1 a clear explanation of why the data are being collected and how they will be used

> 1.1.2 the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents, if and why their information will be shared with third parties and under what circumstances, if any, de-anonymisation might occur

> 1.1.3 the provision of timely, free and accessible feedback to respondents

> 1.1.4 engaging with relevant groups and populations across the whole data process, seeking their advice and support with conceptualisation and planning, data collection, analysis and distribution

> 1.1.5 the public interest should prevail over organisational, political or personal interests at all stages in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics

This will help to address the most important issues for participants of data collection, to ensure that there are demonstrable benefits, and that the risks and costs to participants have been minimised.

1.2 Data producers should work together to undertake long-term engagement activities with relevant groups and populations in order to maintain open dialogue and build trustworthiness. This could be achieved through outreach, local-level knowledge building and recognition, reporting costs and benefits of engaging with data collection activities, and learning from previous data collection activities to address the costs and barriers to participation, such as the 2021/22 Censuses (see also recommendation 1.4)

1.3 Data producers should facilitate trust among potential participants and demonstrate their own trustworthiness by increasing diversity among their staff, including those directly collecting data from the public, and by ensuring that participants are all treated with equal respect.

1.4 Data producers should undertake appropriate research to identify the practical barriers to participation and implement best practice in data collection, including ethical considerations, to enhance the inclusiveness of the approaches taken. This might entail providing internet access to address the barriers for digitally excluded groups, and translators for those not fluent in English.

1.5 Data producers should ensure that data collection instruments are accessible to all, recognising differences in language, literacy, and the relative accessibility of different modes and formats. For example, using multi-mode surveys as standard practice and implementing additional adjustments to enable the participation of adults and children with a range of disabilities, and those who experience other forms of exclusion, including digital exclusion.

1.6 Data producers should avoid the use of proxy responses and ensure that the default approach is for self-reporting of personal characteristics, including, where appropriate, collecting information directly from children.

1.7 Practical barriers to the access and use of ensuing data should be investigated, as well as ways of promoting confidence in these data.

And further relevant recommendations from the Inclusive Data Taskforce:

3.7 Data producers should evaluate the coverage of non-private household population groups in UK data and take the necessary action to address those missing from the current data. In particular, ensuring longer-stay residents in care homes, hospitals, and prisons, and the turnover of people between private households and other (or no) residences is reflected.

5.1.1 As a priority, ONS should transition its measures of disability to approaches more firmly based upon the WHO ICF and ICF-CY biopsychosocial model conceptual frameworks.

7.4 Data producers should use harmonised standards when collecting data, or more granular systems which are compatible with the harmonised standards, to improve comparability and better use existing data.

8.4 Data producers should consider language, literacy, format and comprehension when presenting analysis and evidence, in line with the 2018 Accessibility Regulations, and produce accessible websites and outputs for diverse audiences, including the digitally excluded.

Annex D: Modal data

Bus travel

On the whole, users were positive about bus statistics. Our research highlighted that the Department for Transport's Bus statistics are useful for understanding accessibility features of the bus network in England, Scotland and Wales. These statistics include data on features such as step-free access and audio-visual guides.

Transport Focus publish data from their Bus Passenger Survey with a disability breakdown. For some calendar years, breakdowns for Scotland and Wales are available. These statistics demonstrate how the experiences of disabled and non-disabled passengers vary.

In Northern Ireland, bus statistics are helpful for identifying how many buses comply with accessibility legislation related to wheelchair access, but do not provide any wider information about accessibility for people with other disabilities and statistics about disabled passenger experiences are not available.

Coach travel

Whilst providing a transport service for the public, many coach services are privately owned and so it is therefore difficult to collect data about coaches and their accessibility. However, Transport Focus carried out research in 2019 looking at how people get to the airport, which concluded that the experience of coach travel is largely positive for those disabled passengers able to use it.

Across the UK, coaches are used for a variety of public transport services including transport to and from school, rail-replacement services and, in Northern Ireland, some longer distance bus services. As with buses, in Northern Ireland coach statistics are helpful for identifying how many buses comply with accessibility legislation related to wheelchair access, but do not provide any wider information about accessibility for people with other disabilities.

Community Transport

Community transport, described by the Community Transport Association as "flexible and accessible community-led solutions in response to unmet local transport needs", provides transport for people who are under-served by mainstream public transport services. This includes those with additional mobility support needs, those in rural areas and those unable to afford other transport modes.

We heard that a lack of data about community transport is making it difficult for the sector to demonstrate its value, and for those funding it to understand where it is providing greatest value for money. Our research found that England's National Travel Survey, run by the Department of Transport, includes questions about access to Community Transport, but that the responses are not routinely published due to small sample sizes.

Walking and Wheeling

Most journeys using public transport begin and end with a pedestrian phase to reach the nearest stop or station. The ease of this pedestrian phase plays an important role in the accessibility of local facilities and transport networks. This is particularly relevant in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, where rules have changed to enable cafes and restaurants to have more outside seating, and where keeping distance from others has become more important.

In terms of data on the subject, the National Travel Survey in England contains a section on walking; respondents are asked how much walking they do and the purposes of their walks. However, these data are not disaggregated by disability status, meaning that it is not informative about barriers to pedestrian environments for disabled people. In our research, we heard from users that there is a lack of information about streetscapes and how well the pedestrian environment works for walking and wheeling, which is an oversight considering how many journeys are multi-modal.

In considering pavements and the built environment from the perspective of disabled people, Disabled People's Organisation and charities have carried out research and raised awareness of this issue. Disability Equality Scotland have surveyed participants asking if they had problems with physical distancing on pavements and found that pavement parking and street clutter made physical distancing challenging. These concerns are echoed by Guide Dogs, who campaign to make streets more accessible and raise awareness of issues with street clutter, pavement parking, and shared surfaces. Transport for All have researched the impacts on disabled people to changes made to streets which impact on accessibility, including widened pavements, street clutter, and low traffic zones.

Our research highlighted tactile paving as a concern, particularly following the death of Cleveland Gervais, a partially sighted man who died at a train station which did not have tactile paving. There are no official statistics on tactile paving in the UK, however the Department for Transport have a programme to install tactile paving in all stations which follows the recommendations of the Rail Accident Investigation Branch. The Department for Transport audit of stations, explained in the train travel section below, will provide this information for users.

Taxi and dial-a-ride travel

Whilst the number of taxi journeys taken are small for all demographic groups, statistics show that disabled people use taxis more often than people who are not disabled. The 2019 National Travel Survey outlines that, in terms of trips per person per year by main mode, taxis account for 3% of journeys for people with mobility difficulties and 0.7% of journeys for people with no mobility difficulties.

Taxi statistics published by the Department for Transport provide some details about taxis and Private Hire Vehicles licensing policies relating to accessibility in England and Wales. These include whether licensing authorities have a requirement for disability awareness training for drivers, whether there is a requirement for vehicles

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to be wheelchair accessible in all or part of the fleet and whether a list of wheelchair accessible vehicles is maintained. However, our research suggested that these statistics about policies do not reflect the lived experience of users of taxis, particularly those who require wheelchair access or are travelling with a guide dog.

We heard concerns that statistics are not reflecting the rate at which taxi companies are illegally refusing access to disabled people, or whether attitudes of drivers are a barrier to access for some. A concern was also raised about Transport for London's Dial-a-ride statistics, which suggest a high rate (around 88% in 2019/2020) of requests for a ride are accepted, however our research suggested users of the service can find it difficult to get through to book a ride, which is not reflected in the statistics. Transport for London told us they are developing a new booking and scheduling system which may help those who have difficulty making a booking.

Train travel

We found a number of data sources about the accessibility of trains. The Office of Rail and Road publish statistics about Disabled Passenger Railcards and Passenger Assistance requests. We have recently reviewed these statistics and have published our findings. These include recommendations for increasing confidence in the quality of the statistical outputs and in their public value. Transport Focus's National Rail Passenger Survey includes breakdowns for those with disabilities which enables comparisons to be made about different people's experiences

Information is collected about the accessibility of train stations across Great Britain and made available as an open data source. These data are not official statistics. As such, there are no quality assured data available on accessible stations. The Williams-Shapps plan for rail states that 'around 20% of stations have step-free access to all platforms', but no data source is given. This figure is in contrast with a 2019 House of Commons library research report, which uses a different (undefined) definition of step-free access, and includes the figure that 61% of stations have step-free access. This highlights a real need for agreed definitions and quality assured data. The Access for All programme is a significant part of the Department for Transport's budget, however, with no transparent statistics, it is not possible to publicly track progress in the improvement of the accessibility of stations.

To address this, following the Williams-Shapps plan for rail, the Department for Transport has commissioned an accessibility audit of all GB stations. The audit aims to provide robust, consistent and detailed information across the full range of station facilities and standards. The audit, which has already begun, aims to assess and identify accessibility solutions at all 2,565 Great Britain train stations over the next 18 months. The Department for Transport has committed to making the data publicly available and updated regularly so that passengers can plan journeys with greater confidence and to provide greater information to improve future investment decisions.

Northern Ireland train stations are not covered by this audit and there is not currently a reliable source of information about the accessibility of train stations. This makes it difficult for people with accessibility requirements to plan their journeys and difficult for analysts to understand how accessible the train network is and where improvements are required.

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