



**TRANSPORT  
SCOTLAND**  
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

## **TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY SUMMIT 2015**

ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY



## ONLINE SURVEY RESEARCH SUMMARY

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- 1.1 The Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF) was asked to run an online survey for Transport Scotland. The survey asked four questions in order to get people's views on the 50 transport accessibility issues to be discussed at the Transport Accessibility Summit.
- 1.2 The survey was available in easy-read format and publicised through the SDEF website and other Disabled People's Organisations. 157 people responded to the survey.
- 1.3 In this summary the top five issues from each question are identified, comparisons made with these issues and those identified as priorities by Summit delegates and examples are given of the feedback provided by survey respondents illustrative of their experiences and views.

### **Question one: Connectivity**

- 2.1 The first question asked for the views of respondents about which out of 10 issues concerning transport connectivity and physical improvements were priorities. This theme covered the journey from home to destination including getting to the mode of transport, changing between modes of transport and getting to the destination. 153 respondents answered this question, with four skipping the question.
- 2.2 The top five issues raised by participants as their priorities were:
  1. Make each mode of transport more accessible to disabled people at least to, but preferably beyond minimum standards and as quickly as possible. 74 respondents identified this as a priority.
  2. Set up a working group which will include public transport bodies, Regional Transport Partnerships and Disabled People's Organisations. 63 respondents identified this as a priority.
  3. Consider how to have better integration between different modes of transport. 40 respondents identified this as a priority.

4. Make the journey experience better for disabled people getting to and from (and between) bus/train stations and ferry terminals. 37 respondents identified this as a priority.
5. Ensure paths are clear of obstructions – bollards, road works, wheelie bins and accessible for all. 29 respondents identified this as a priority.

2.3 The theme of connectivity, with the same issues (albeit worded slightly differently, was discussed at the Transport Accessibility Summit. The Summit report shows that the issues prioritised above by survey respondents were also the issues prioritised by delegates to the Summit.

2.4 The survey enabled respondents to provide comments and personal experiences about how the issues raised in the theme affected them. Some examples of their feedback are presented below.

#### **Examples of feedback on connectivity**

- Bins need to be removed from traffic light areas. Drivers cannot see wheelchairs or pushchairs. Road signs need to be removed promptly – they can be dangerous at night scattered across pavements.
- I use crutches and tripped over advertising boards
- Bus design is requiring improvement especially when one considers the growing population of wheelchair users. There is space for only one chair. If I wait for a bus and there is already a chair (even a pram) on it, I am stranded feeling foolish. This was not resolved. Design should allow more space to manoeuvre, older models of buses are particularly difficult to allow the chair to back into the space avoiding poles.
- Train stations ideally to be more user friendly to wheelchair users. Personally I have stopped travelling by rail because of my negative experiences. More policing of abuse, dedicated parking spaces.
- Regional Transport Partnerships have the potential to get their

member authorities to address the problems in this survey, smooth out the sometimes marked differences and inequalities in service provision between areas, set standards and involve disabled people in the process.

- While waiting at the bus stop, lack of information when a problem occurs with a bus
- Every day that it's a bin day I have to get my personal assistant to move bins and obstructions.
- Having no spontaneity at all is frustrating and infuriating. I have to book train journeys in advance to ask for a ramp to be there so I can get on and off the train. Quite often the assistance is not provided, even when booked. There is no guarantee that if I get on a train, I will be able to get off again at my destination. Sometimes I can see the ramp is there, propped up against the wall, but there are no staff nearby to help! Being carried off the train in my wheelchair by other passengers is terrifying! It shouldn't happen. I can be injured very easily by well-meaning individuals who shouldn't have to step in in the first place.
- As a family our experience of using local public transport is limited and stressful compared to using public transport abroad

## **Question two: Deliverability**

- 3.1 The second question asked for the views of respondents about which out of 16 issues concerning the things which support the ability to travel were priorities. This included affordability, safety and comfort. It also covered alternatives to registered public transport such as community transport. 150 respondents answered this question, with seven skipping the question.
- 3.2 The top five issues raised by most participants as their priorities were:
1. Ensure Blue Badge parking is rigorously enforced. 51 respondents identified this as a priority.
  2. Ensure appropriate toilet facilities near transport hubs: Changing Places toilets. 47 respondents identified this as a priority.

3. Consider dangers when vehicles and pedestrians share the same space without obvious dividing lines and consult disabled people for solutions. 32 respondents identified this as a priority.
4. Extend/improve concessionary travel to include community transport. 30 respondents identified this as a priority.
5. Address issues where there is not enough demand responsive transport – especially when needed for hospital appointments. 19 respondents identified this as a priority.

3.3 The theme of deliverability, with the same issues (albeit worded slightly differently) was discussed at the Transport Accessibility Summit. The Summit report shows that the issues prioritised by survey respondents were somewhat different from the issues prioritised by delegates to the Summit. The first column of the table below presents the issues mentioned in the report as raised by Summit delegates to compare with those above. The second column indicates how many survey respondents marked the issue raised by Summit delegates as a priority.

Issue raised by Summit delegates	Survey respondents giving priority to issue raised by Summit delegates
Make sure 1 in 5 taxis that are running at one time are accessible to wheelchair users	15
An accessible taxi should cater for people with different access needs	6
Taxis should have a certificate to say they cannot take passengers in wheelchairs or assistance dogs	8
Local authorities should collect information about accessible taxis in their area. This will help them to see where they need to improve things.	11
Try out an accessible taxi share system in areas where no taxi firms have accessible taxis	7

3.4 It may be noted at this stage that were some of the issues concerning taxis combined, the number of survey respondents giving priority to them could be sufficiently high as to make it a top

five priority. For example, were all five taxi issues mentioned in the table above to be combined into one issue, and assuming all respondents giving priority to the five separate issues gave priority to the combined taxi issue, that issue would have joint second place in the top five issues for deliverability.

3.5 The survey enabled respondents to provide comments and personal experiences about how the issues raised in the theme affected them. Some examples of their feedback is presented below.

#### **Examples of feedback on deliverability**

- I have had bikes nearly knocking me over when walking on a shared space. I felt scared and sometimes, I don't even get an apology from the cyclist.
- Again the list really fails to address the issues in the Highlands. It is pointless setting a standard of 20% accessible taxis when taxi license holders cherry pick the areas they work in and leave huge areas of country with no taxi coverage. DRT is a solution but it requires to be funded properly because there is no business case for running transport for single passenger who want to make what are often long journeys to hospital. In many parts of Highland the return journey exceeds 100 miles to Raigmore, from Skye it is over 200 miles round trip. Public Transport officers suggest modal shift to bus or train but often these services are not accessible because coaches are used or crossing the track to another platform is over steps.
- Have come across taxi drivers who won't help disabled passengers.
- Far too many people think they can park in a disabled space, just because it is raining and they don't want to get wet... but getting wet is not a disability.
- Changing places toilets are essential to families with profound and multi able disabilities. My son will become severely distressed if he has soiled himself, banging head, biting hands, punching his nose, this brings his mother to tears as this is dreadful to witness. everyone has the right to use a toilet. This cuts our day short,

spoils the day for his twin brother, and causes a very difficult journey home.

- Yes some disabled toilets are too small for a large wheelchairs plus two support staff and the person supported.
- Blue badges are used by many illegally without any shame. We were given a ticket while displaying our sons badge, when confronting the traffic warden to witness our disabled son in the car, only to be told I don't want to see him. We took photographic evidence to show we had parked correctly, just as well as the next day the council had painted yellow lines. We had a terrible time fighting this, it was Christmas Eve, we just wanted to see the lights. A despicable attitude that day.
- Was told that community transport is available only for those who are incapable of using public transport. It is not available to those who are capable of using public transport even if isn't any public transport available

### **Question three: Information and Assistance**

- 4.1 The third question asked for the views of respondents about which out of 11 issues about getting information in accessible formats, and getting the right assistance from planning a journey to practical assistance during a journey, were priorities. 141 respondents answered this question, with 16 skipping the question.
- 4.2 The top five issues raised by most participants as their priorities were:
1. Develop better travel information, for example on times and places of accessible buses, increase in use of audio and visual description. 59 respondents identified this as a priority.
  2. Ensure disabled people are aware of any breakdowns, changes, and alternative accessible transport/assistance is provided to complete the journey. 46 respondents identified this as a priority.

3. Ensure people know exactly where and when an accessible bus will be available (including an accessible bus stop). 34 respondents identified this as a priority.
4. Develop integration of timetable information of different modes of transport. 33 respondents identified this as a priority.
5. Ensure more publicity for Passenger Assist, a central booking system for assistance to travel by rail. 30 respondents identified this as a priority.

4.3 The theme of deliverability, with the same issues (albeit worded slightly differently) was discussed at the Transport Accessibility Summit. The Summit report shows that issues 1, 2 and 5 above mentioned as being priorities by survey respondents were also issues prioritised by delegates to the Summit. The Summit report identifies these three issues only as having been prioritised by delegates.

4.4 The survey enabled respondents to provide comments and personal experiences about how the issues raised in the theme affected them. Some examples of their feedback is are presented below.

#### **Examples of feedback on information and assistance**

- I have had experiences of bus stops not knowing times and info of buses.
- The positioning and spacing between bus stops requires to be addressed.
- We want accessible buses now.
- Audio and visual information still not available on many bus services.
- I am not very confident about making sure I am on the right bus or train. More approachable help would be good.
- General information on accessible transport should be more widely



available as it is not getting through. Sometimes we just don't have the necessary information. Various accessible media must be used.

- Traveline online doesn't work with speech software e.g. JAWS making it inaccessible. On the phone there is no local knowledge of routes from people on the phone. They only have the bus stop information, not the specific route detail.
- While I have no problem with assistance in Scotland I have been left on a train without assistance while travelling in the South. A UK assistance line would be helpful. Audio description on buses would ensure that I am never again let off at the wrong stop and on the wrong side of a dual carriageway.
- Bus breaks down – I had travel booked at station – couldn't get ETA for Aberdeen – taxi did not stay – had to source other assistance from colleagues to travel to work

#### **Question four: training and customer service**

- 5.1 The fourth and final question asked for the views of respondents about which out of 11 issues about delivering training and ensuring a good customer service were priorities. A focus of the questions was on the extent to which it would be valuable for transport providers to be asked to go beyond legal requirements and take leadership on accessibility. 140 respondents answered this question, with 17 skipping the question.
- 5.2 The top five issues raised by most participants as their priorities were:
1. Include disabled people and Disabled People's Organisations in decisions on transport. 86 respondents identified this as a priority.
  2. Standardise, evaluate and make mandatory delivery of disability equality training across all transport bodies – enforce in service contracts? 63 respondents identified this as a priority.
  3. Give prioritisation of wheelchair users over buggies on buses. 34 respondents identified this as a priority.

4. Discuss with disabled people how to influence attitudes of staff. 23 respondents identified this as a priority.
5. Provide a guide for providers and disabled people to help them understand the equality responsibilities by giving them targeted, focussed information on legislation, policies, regulation, contractual obligations etc. 21 respondents identified this as a priority.

5.3 The theme of training and customer service, with the same issues (albeit worded slightly differently) was discussed at the Transport Accessibility Summit. The Summit report shows that issues 1 and mentioned as being priorities by survey respondents were also issues prioritised by delegates to the Summit. The Summit report identifies two issues only as having been prioritised by delegates.

5.4 The survey enabled respondents to provide comments and personal experiences about how the issues raised in the theme affected them. Some examples of their feedback is presented below.

#### **Examples of feedback on training and customer service**

- I find written information regards the standards expected from service providers is helpful and useful for reference. It provides a benchmark regarding the standard of customer service an employer will expect to be provided to any vulnerable traveller.
- Disabled people are the ones who best know what is required. Many providers are at fault only because of their ignorance of the difficulties involved. We have had occasions where when we have pointed out the problems the response often is “Oh we never thought of that”. Too often there have been many complaints about drivers especially not fulfilling their duties because it is inconvenient for the drivers/ Perhaps there should be some way of monitoring the conduct of the drivers.
- Very difficult to choose two topics here as they are all of high importance! Many experiences of questionable staff, but often down to inadequate training I believe.
- A bus driver drove past me in my wheelchair without stopping. He did see me. I was more angry than hurt, reported the incident and

had a written apology from the company. Training is needed, especially taxi drivers using telescopic ramps. These can be unsafe and it seems that the only training is one member passing on his experiences and in some cases bad habits.

- Really need to ensure extensive and regular training for staff interacting with public. This needs to be targeted to the particular jobs of the staff e.g. drivers, ticket office, attendance, assistance
- Training needed ASAP, staff need to experience accessing public transport using blind fold etc. themselves, they also need to experience the feeling of being on the lifts (i.e. on coaches)
- I have travelled with a friend who uses a wheelchair. The bus arrived and there was a buggy in the wheelchair space. The driver told us we could not get on. We had to wait at an open bus stop in Highlands and wait till the next bus arrived after 20 minutes.

## Conclusion

- 6.1 The survey identified that a number of priorities attracted significant support from respondents. Respondents identified similar priorities to those of delegates at the Transport Accessibility Summit, with the exception of question two, where taxi accessibility featured more prominently in the responses from delegates. It should be noted the number of issues identified in the Summit report as being prioritised by delegates are more varied (from two identified in training and customer service to seven in deliverability) as compared with the five selected from each question of the survey by the writer when compiling this summary. This limits the extent to which comparisons may be made between the priorities evinced by survey respondents and delegates at the Summit.
- 6.2 With these caveats, the list below is presented as showing the all issues identified as the top five priorities by survey respondents in order of the number of respondents identifying them as priorities. From comparison with the table at page 22 of the Summit Report it may be concluded the priorities are broadly similar.

- Include disabled people and Disabled People's Organisations in decisions on transport. 86 respondents identified this as a priority.

- Make each mode of transport more accessible to disabled people at least to, but preferably beyond minimum standards and as quickly as possible. 74 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Standardise, evaluate and make mandatory delivery of disability equality training across all transport bodies – enforce in service contracts? 63 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Set up a working group which will include public transport bodies, Regional Transport Partnerships and Disabled People's Organisations. 63 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Develop better travel information, for example on times and places of accessible buses, increase in use of audio and visual description. 59 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Ensure Blue Badge parking is rigorously enforced. 51 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Ensure appropriate toilet facilities near transport hubs: Changing Places toilets. 47 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Ensure disabled people are aware of any breakdowns, changes, and alternative accessible transport/assistance is provided to complete the journey. 46 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Consider how to have better integration between different modes of transport. 40 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Make the journey experience better for disabled people getting to and from (and between) bus/train stations and ferry terminals. 37 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Ensure people know exactly where and when an accessible bus will be available (including an accessible bus stop). 34 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Give prioritisation of wheelchair users over buggies on buses. 34 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Develop integration of timetable information of different modes of transport. 33 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Consider dangers when vehicles and pedestrians share the same space without obvious dividing lines and consult disabled people for solutions. 32 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Extend/improve concessionary travel to include community transport. 30 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Ensure more publicity for Passenger Assist, a central booking system for assistance to travel by rail. 30 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Ensure paths are clear of obstructions – bollards, road works, wheelie bins and accessible for all. 29 respondents identified this as a priority.

- Discuss with disabled people how to influence attitudes of staff. 23 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Provide a guide for providers and disabled people to help them understand the equality responsibilities by giving them targeted, focussed information on legislation, policies, regulation, contractual obligations etc. 21 respondents identified this as a priority.
- Address issues where there is not enough demand responsive transport – especially when needed for hospital appointments. 19 respondents identified this as a priority.

## **TRANSPORT SCOTLAND**

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