



House of Commons
Transport Committee

The work of the Transport Committee in the 2019 Parliament

First Report of Session 2023–24

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

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Transport Committee

The Transport Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure of the Department for Transport and its associated public bodies.

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The work of the Transport Committee in the 2019 Parliament

1. The announcement of a General Election to take place on 4 July 2024 has brought to an end the work of the Transport Committee in the 2019 Parliament. We thank all those who have contributed to our work in scrutinising the Department for Transport: the many stakeholders, officials, experts, researchers, campaign groups, Ministers and members of the public who have taken the time to respond to our calls for evidence, attend private events, facilitate visits and appear on our public panels. The work of select committees is perhaps the most valuable interface between external expertise and Parliament, and would be impossible without these contributions. Parliament is better informed because of them.

2. This is also an opportunity for us to set out, briefly, our thoughts on work that we think the Transport Committee in the next Parliament could valuably take forward, if it wishes to do so. We have sought to hold the Government to account on its policy and on its promises for transport, and we are conscious of recurring threads in that scrutiny which have not come to fruition, such as clarity on the future pipeline of rail infrastructure investment, and legislation on subjects including pavement parking, e-scooters and greater consumer enforcement powers for the Civil Aviation Authority. We have also held regular scrutiny sessions on delivery of High Speed 2 to ensure that HS2 Ltd is properly held to account, and examined the outworkings of the decision to cancel future phases of the project. The Government will inherit an already long to-do list after the election.

3. First on that list will be the ongoing work on rail reform, begun by the Plan for Rail in 2021. We completed our evidence-gathering on the Government's draft Rail Reform Bill before the Dissolution, but have not had the opportunity to make our recommendations.¹ The draft Bill is a welcome step forward in implementing some of the Plan for Rail's intentions, including statutory provision for an Integrated Rail Body (IRB) which will become Great British Railways (GBR)—a “guiding mind” which will integrate the infrastructure management functions of Network Rail and the franchising powers currently held by the Secretary of State.

4. We have heard the view that the draft Bill, if enacted, would provide the necessarily legislative foundations for the IRB, but that it does not provide clarity on how its governance framework and relationship with the Secretary of State would operate, how its structure would be regionalised, or how it would work with stakeholders on its key statutory functions, such as the production of a business plan. Furthermore, we draw attention to the following provisions in the draft Bill which have been highlighted in our evidence:

- unfettered powers of direction over the IRB afforded to the Secretary of State (Clause 1(2)), the Secretary of State's ability to modify the IRB's licence (Schedule 1), and the requirement of the IRB to have “due regard” to a statement of policy issued by the Secretary of State when making franchise decisions (Schedule 2);

1 Transport Committee, [Scrutiny of the draft Rail Reform Bill](#)

- franchising functions of Scottish and Welsh ministers and their interaction and compatibility with the respective devolution settlements for Scotland and Wales (Clause 3);
- changes to ORR's competition duty, requiring it to balance the promotion of competition with a consideration of costs to the taxpayer (Clause 4);
- extensive powers for the Secretary of State to amend access and management regulations without clear justification (Clause 8);
- broad powers for the Secretary of State to make consequential changes to legislation (Clause 16).

We believe that these provisions require attention in further scrutiny of the draft Bill, if proceeded with by a future Government.

5. We also completed our evidence-gathering on the subject of legal obligations for accessible transport, but have not been able to bring forward a full report on this important subject.² Annexed to this Report is qualitative analysis of the survey we conducted, to which we received over 800 responses from disabled people or people who travel with a disabled person. Just over 90 per cent of respondents said that they experienced access challenges or barriers that make it difficult to travel either often, most of the time, or always. The all-pervasive nature of transport inaccessibility across all modes—including the street environment—and the profoundly negative impact it has on daily life for disabled people came through very strongly in the formal evidence we received. More than a third of respondents to our survey told us that more than once a week they decided not to make a particular journey because they knew it would be too complicated, too unsafe or things would be too likely to go wrong. We also heard from witnesses that in some respects matters had got worse since the Covid-19 pandemic.

6. Among the themes of this inquiry were:

- The need for a practical pathway, backed by long-term plans and resources, to achieve the Government's stated ambitions for equal access to the transport network. This needs to overcome the frequency with which the demands of accessibility are set aside when they are deemed to be in conflict with other policy goals, technical requirements or cost pressures. The needs of people who are unable or unwilling to travel at all because of the inaccessibility of transport networks must be better understood and reflected in this pathway.
- The lack of recognition that accessibility cannot be regarded as a matter of regular customer service: that it is both a health and safety issue and a matter of human rights and protection from discrimination. In the light of this, the whole transport system needs a change of mindset, so that operators and others act on the basis that failures must be vanishingly rare, not commonplace.
- The complexity and fragmented nature of the legislative and enforcement framework, which works against easy understanding of obligations and effective access to redress.

2 Transport Committee, [Accessible transport: legal obligations](#)

- The immense burden that is placed on disabled people themselves in ensuring that transport operators are fulfilling their legal duties. This burden is manifested in the difficulty of bringing complaints and seeking remedies through complex and unresponsive systems, and the ineffectiveness of the enforcement frameworks in capturing systemic issues and effecting change on the back of individual action. Regulators and enforcement agencies are not at present sufficiently proactive, or do not have the powers or resources necessary, to reduce this burden. As a first step, we welcome the suggestion of the Minister for Roads and Local Transport, Guy Opperman MP, that there may be practical ways of making the process of alerting the correct body to an accessibility failure more streamlined and user-friendly, and better suited to ensuring systemic change.³
- The lack of an effective enforcement route for accessibility in the street environment, where issues such as pavement parking, parking or riding of e-scooters, and certain kinds of infrastructure such as ‘floating’ bus stops have all caused widespread difficulties for disabled people, especially those with visual or mobility impairments. In this domain and others, we heard the view that mechanisms such as the Public Sector Equality Duty may be insufficient to secure good outcomes for accessibility.

We hope that these observations will be of use to the Committee in the new Parliament.

7. In 2023 we conducted an exercise called ‘Our Future Transport’, through which we invited proposals for subjects relating to disruptive technologies and innovations which we could explore in inquiries. We received many more suggestions than we could take up, and the pitches that submitters made to us in person will be a valuable resource for our successors.⁴

8. An inquiry which arose from this exercise was into the future of transport data.⁵ We are partway through that inquiry, which has focused on the potential uses of data and data-enabled technologies to improve the delivery of transport services and the management of transport assets, and to help transport users get around more quickly, efficiently, and safely. These uses include artificial intelligence, digital twins and mobility-as-a-service platforms. Stakeholders have told us about several barriers to the further development of transport data, including a lack of data sharing across the sector, data being difficult to access and the need for upskilling across the transport sector.

9. We are also partway through our examination of how the Government sets its strategic transport objectives and how these objectives do—or should—influence investment in, and cross-government planning of, services, networks and infrastructure.⁶ Amongst the themes that have emerged, and that we would urge a future Committee to address, are the efficacy of the appraisal process across different modes and regions, the effects of ongoing, and asymmetric, devolution of transport powers and funding, and, perhaps most importantly, how different parts of Government, public bodies and other stakeholders can work better together to build a transport system fit for the future.

3 [Accessible transport: legal obligations, HC 82, Q198](#)

4 Transport Committee, [Our future transport](#)

5 Transport Committee, [Future of transport data](#)

6 Transport Committee, [Strategic transport objectives](#)

10. On all these subjects and more, we hope that the written and oral evidence we have gathered and published, and the conclusions of our reports, will be an invaluable resource for the Committee in the new Parliament to draw on.

Annex: Key themes from the House of Commons Transport Committee's survey on accessible transport

1. Background

The House of Commons Transport Committee in 2023 undertook a survey of people who have a disability and/or travel with somebody that has a disability as part of its inquiry on accessible transport: legal obligations. The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) was asked to prepare a short report detailing the key issues raised by individuals based on responses to the open-ended survey questions.

The Committee received 825 responses. Most respondents (72 per cent) were disabled or had specific accessibility needs (597 responses). 19 per cent of respondents travelled with a disabled person or somebody with specific accessibility needs (156 responses).

The survey included two open-ended questions:

- (1) Are there any other situations that have caused you or the person you travel with who is disabled or has specific accessibility needs difficulty whilst travelling? [Q4]
- (2) Is there anything else you would like to tell us about problems you have experienced while travelling, or how well you think that passenger transport meets the needs of people with disabilities or people with access needs? [Q10]

Survey responses were analysed using thematic analysis, assisted by qualitative analysis software Nvivo (see Appendix A for full methodology).

Both open-ended questions asked respondents specifically about negative experiences, as Q4 asked about situations that have caused difficulty and Q10 asked about problems experienced while travelling. Therefore, positive experiences are less likely to be represented. The open-ended responses cannot be interpreted as an overall indication of respondents' views towards transport accessibility; instead, responses indicate respondents' perception of where the issues lie.

The survey responses received are likely to demonstrate 'self-selection' or 'volunteer' bias, whereby they overrepresent individuals who have strong opinions or interests. As such, this report is intended to summarise and reflect the key perspectives of the individuals as outlined in the survey responses received and should not be interpreted as representative of all disabled travellers and their companions.

2. Overview of key findings

Across both open-ended questions, respondents often identified issues along the following broad themes:

- availability and attitudes of public transport staff (around 100 responses);
- accessibility and standard of toilets (93 responses);

- accessibility of bus stops and train stations (58 responses);
- access to wheelchair space (51 responses); and
- availability and service provided by accessible taxis (50 responses).

Responses on **availability and attitudes of public transport staff** included issues on lack of available staff for assistance (particularly in train stations), as well as issues with staff not following protocol or leaving enough time for disabled travellers. Others mentioned restrictions on travelling without giving enough notice, and advocated for staff to have more support and training.

Responses related to **accessibility and standard of toilets** mostly referred to lack of access to disabled toilets (with facilities such as a chair) or any toilet either through toilets being regularly out of order, or requiring a key to unlock them. Others commented that toilets can be in inconvenient places without clear signage, while some respondents reported discrimination using disabled toilets with non-visible disabilities. Many of the responses mentioning toilets also mentioned specific disabilities, including Crohn's disease, colitis or inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

Responses that mentioned **accessibility of bus stops and train stations** often focused on inadequate facilities (such as seating and shelter at bus stops, or lack of working lifts at train stations), insufficient timetabling information and signage (particularly for visually impaired people) and difficulties reaching bus stops due to obstacles on the pavement or distance from convenient locations.

Responses that referenced **access to wheelchair space** referenced issues where designated wheelchair space was occupied by other travellers (such as people with prams or large luggage), and reluctance of staff to make these spaces available. Others pointed to logistical issues, such as difficulty navigating into the space, or difficulty seeing the information board from the wheelchair space.

Responses that described situations related to **availability and service provided by accessible taxis** referred to problems such as limited availability of taxis suited for disabled travellers (particularly at peak times or a short notice), and reluctance from drivers to use safety ramps and follow safety protocol.

It was common for respondents to identify multiple issues that made travelling difficult, rather than one specific cause.

- “Complete lack of trust that procedures will be followed. Lifts or accessible toilets broken down. Expense and lack of availability of wheelchair accessible taxis. Loss of pressure relief cushion by airline. Inaccessible toilets on planes. Undignified boarding and disembarking procedures on planes. No room on accessible buses. Bus replacement services for rail journeys not accessible. [...]”

Although this did not fit into one key coded theme, many respondents reported that they limit or avoid using public transport due to the difficulties encountered.

- “You need to understand that we don’t even try to use services now because of poor experiences in the past so if a response to the next questions is ‘don’t use’ it is not through choice but because we don’t trust them to be completely accessible!”
- “I don’t use public transport at all anymore. I can’t cope with buses refusing me space; trains leaving me stranded in the sidings; airside crew destroying my wheelchair; taxis refusing wheelchairs. I barely go out of my home because there are no WAV [wheelchair accessible vehicle] parking spaces and the pavements are all cluttered with scooters and A boards. [...]”

Due to the inquiry’s focus on legal obligations, we also ran a text search query to identify responses that mentioned words relating to ‘legal’ and ‘law’. This search returned a small number of responses (~20). These responses were varied, but some centred around:

- lack of legal protection;
- lack of compliance to legal standards by transport staff;
- lack of compliance to legal standards by transport infrastructure; and
- advocacy for disabled people’s involvement in legal decision-making
- “[...] Disability access is not taken as seriously as other discrimination. The onus seems to be on the individual to chase, no Government organisation aids you when you come across repeated breaking of the law. [...] This law is nearly 25 years old and has no teeth, the only thing that gets Government/Companies to do anything is to take cash off them.”

Consultation of the data indicated that there was a wide variety of issues raised, which often varied based on personal circumstances. Many respondents emphasised that people with disabilities are not a homogenous group, and that there will be extensive and complex variation in the issues that people encounter and the support needed. Not all of these issues fit under the broader themes identified, which have been prioritised based on the number of responses.

3. Are there any other situations that have caused you or the person you travel with who is disabled or has specific accessibility needs difficulty whilst travelling? [Q4]

A total of 597 respondents submitted an answer to this question. The most frequent words are shown in Figure 1. Appendix B displays a hierarchy chart indicating key themes.

141 responses mentioned the word ‘station’ and 11 responses mentioned ‘station staff’ specifically. Responses that mentioned ‘station staff’ largely referred to people who work in train stations.

The main issues were around the absence of staff, which made some respondents feel unsafe and prevented them from accessing station facilities (such as ticket machines, toilets) and boarding/alighting trains.

- “Ticket office/ station staff not rostered for duty meaning the station is an unsafe space [...]”
- “Not having any station staff to sort a ramp.”

Other respondents mentioned the difficulties of having to plan ahead for assistance, and suggested that staff are not equipped to provide support without notice:

- “The rule about having to do everything in advance when requesting assistance, is discriminatory. Staff should be allowed time to help us when we need to travel without notice. It should be planned for in a normal part of everyday tasks for transport staff.”

To explore this theme further, we conducted a text query for the word ‘staff’, which returned 56 references. Some of these references overlapped with references returned for ‘bus driver’ and ‘station staff’.

The results from this text query contained many of the same themes outlined for ‘bus drivers’ and ‘station staff’. In addition, multiple responses suggested the need for greater training and support for transport staff:

- “Often when speaking to staff, they are very apologetic but have absolutely no clue how to help me or What the solution is whenever we encounter issues.”
- “[...] I am thoroughly fed up with deciding that I can’t undertake a journey because I can’t guarantee that I’ll be able to get the seat I need or be able to access the station properly, without any presence or support from staff (which isn’t their fault; it’s the fault of too few staff and too little training).”
- “If the intention is to have an inclusive transport system, then turn up and go is an integral element of that as is the retention of guards, or on board staff trained in assisting passengers.”

Accessibility and standard of toilets

93 responses mentioned ‘toilets’. Many of these responses referred to a lack of facilities:

- “Many train stations lack toilet facilities which makes it very difficult to choose train/tube transport and sometimes bus depots too with toilets closed.”
- “The lack of facilities, particularly accessible toilets, hate to think what it’s like if I needed a Changing Place Toilet, make the whole process 100 times more difficult.”
- “Lack of changing places toilets with hoists and shower chairs.”

Others reported difficulty accessing toilets, due to the toilets being locked or out of order:

- “The disabled toilet should never have a red key scheme. Transport staff should be paid to monitor toilets.”
- “There is often little or no toilet access, the disabled toilets are locked with no one there to provide access or I am charged to use the toilets and I feel disadvantaged due to this.”
- “I also travel by train on longer journeys because there is a toilet available although I have been on a train where the accessible toilet was out of order.”
- “Disabled toilets on the train are often out of order and I do question the seriousness of train companies in repairing these as it seems to be a low priority.”

Some responses mentioned difficulties arising from perceptions and attitudes from staff and members of the public:

- “Long queues for toilets, comments made when using disabled toilets when disability is invisible. Difficult access to toilet on train due to baggage or busy service. Toilets not always next to platforms once through barrier.”
- “There are many stations where there are either no public toilets or these toilets are locked during certain hours which were not advertised online. Also staff are usually not trained properly in helping people with disabilities or having anxiety attacks, and refuse support or access to staff toilets when needed in an emergency.”

Many of the responses mentioning toilets also mentioned specific disabilities, including Crohn’s disease, colitis or inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

- “Few or no accessible toilets or access to them, poor signage/directions, unclean facilities, poor awareness of peoples requirements if they have a disability like crohns or colitis.”
- “Limited access to toilets. Most train stations do not have toilet accessibility or are locked. Toilets on trains not always available. As someone who has a stoma and inflammatory bowel disease I only use public transport if absolutely necessary for this reason.”
- “The fact that the majority of stations do not have toilet facilities makes travel almost insurmountably difficult as someone with IBD.”
- “Easy access to toilets for someone with Crohn’s disease. Crohn’s disease alone tends not to entitle you to a blue badge, but when you are in a flare up you need access to a toilet almost immediately. This renders public transport mostly unusable.”

Accessibility of bus stops and train stations

Of the 165 responses that mentioned ‘bus’, 30 mentioned ‘bus stop’.

Some respondents identified issues with the facilities at bus stops, including lack of shelter and seating:

- “No shelters at bus stops and seats that are too small/narrow. [...]”
- “Seats disappearing from bus stops & train/tube stations. Have orthostatic intolerance & have times when urgently need to sit & can’t. Some bus stops now unusable.”
- “Lack of seating or inappropriate seating at bus stops. I have difficulty in standing for more than a short time. This is particularly a problem when trains are cancelled.”

Others commented on issues reaching bus stops. This included the distance to/between bus stops, uneven pavements and pavement obstructions:

- “Public transport interchanges involve walking too far -- I’m told they’re accessible because there’s level access. E.g.: We’ve been told that we should use buses. The bus stop is a long way to walk for me -- it’s 20 exhausting minutes. That isn’t covered in the council’s equality assessments: they ONLY consider the accessibility of the actual buses.”
- “Pavements and bus stops blocked by clutter, preventing access. Causes include pavement parking, but also street lights, traffic signs, eV charging points, litter bins, domestic/commercial bins out for collection by the council, “A frames” and other advertising, road works, and temporary road signs.”

Other respondents mentioned the need for clear signage and timetables:

- “Can’t see the number on the bus when it approaches, so digital signage at bus stop is key.”
- “A couple of my service users have disclosed that on buses when at a bus stop they cannot see the sign on the front of the bus to know if it is the one they are waiting for until it is too late, the buses do not stop unless they put their hands out to them.”
- “[...] Timetables too small to read and electric signs not working or blank display.”

Of the 165 responses that mentioned ‘station’, 28 mentioned ‘train station’.

Some responses identified issues that do not allow travellers sufficient time to board services:

- “Many train station and underground stations don’t mark on the platform where you should wait for the wheelchair-accessible carriages, meaning that it’s a last minute dash to the only carriage(s) I can use before the train leaves.”
- “Last minute platform announcements at train stations make travelling very difficult e.g. a rush of people to the same area is dangerous for many disabled people and for many including myself who are slow moving it is impossible to get to the platform in time for the train.”

Others referred to accessibility equipment being unavailable or broken, such as lifts and ramps:

- “At many train stations that are stated to be accessible, access in relies on one lift per platform. These frequently fail, and can be out of service for months if being replaced such as at Manchester Victoria a few years back.”
- “Train stations not having ramps or the lift always being broken and when it comes to rail replacement they always try to force onto a coach which isn’t suitable and half the tube isn’t wheelchair accessible meaning forced to taking the bus taking 3 times as long.”

Access to wheelchair space

146 responses mentioned the word ‘wheelchair’ and 51 responses mentioned ‘wheelchair space’ specifically.

Some responses referred to issues where the designated wheelchair space is occupied for another purpose (such as prams or luggage):

- “Trying to board any bus is a nightmare. The chances are the wheelchair space will have a buggy in it, & the driver will not get buggy to move. This is a wheelchair space by law yet apparently we can’t use the one wheelchair space.”
- “If there’s a buggy in the wheelchair space bus drivers often don’t stop at all; I’ve been late for volunteer work, religious events, birthday gatherings and a funeral because of that specific problem, and missed medical appointments entirely.”
- “There are very few accessible buses in my area, and even in those that are, wheelchair spaces are often filled with luggage, prams or pushchairs. In addition, drivers do not allow sufficient time for me to manoeuvre into the space before driving off.”

Other responses commented on issues of transport only having one wheelchair space:

- “Not enough wheelchair spaces on buses to travel with other wheelchairs users.”

Respondents also commented on practical and logistical faults with wheelchair spaces:

- “On the bus if you’re in the wheelchair space you cannot see the visual display, which tells you the stops.”
- “Even if I can get on the bus the one designated wheelchair space is so badly designed that it is very difficult to get my electric wheelchair into the space which has on occasions caused the driver to become very short and agitated with me [...]”

Availability and service provided by accessible taxis

Of the 50 responses that mentioned ‘accessible’, 10 mentioned ‘accessible taxi’. The majority of these responses mentioned limited availability of accessible taxis, with respondents stating that taxis usually have to be booked in advance and may be unavailable during times of need:

- “Difficulty in accessing wheelchair accessible taxis (outside London there are very few and in some towns none at all) or they only operate between 10:00–16:00).”
- “Not being able to find an accessible taxi even when a firm claims to have them. Being seriously overcharged for a standard taxi fare when in my wheelchair.”
- “It is hugely difficult now to even get a wheelchair adapted taxi, especially at school run times, as both Education Authorities and Hospital Transport services contract them. [...] I have asked licensing authorities why they do not insist on a percentage of adapted taxis for companies they license.”
- “When there is rail disruption or railway accessibility equipment failure waits of 40 minutes or more for a wheelchair accessible taxi to come from a different district, even when there is a queue of wheelchair accessible taxis waiting at the station (but not contracted to ‘cabfind’).”

Others reported that some taxi drivers may refuse to use the ramps or use the ramps in unsafe ways:

- “need a wheelchair accessible taxi, as I live in London we have black cabs with ramps. However drivers just will not use the extension ramps for me. They will argue we don’t need and try and push back of chair as I try & get up an extremely steep ramp. I have nearly fallen off the ramp twice. This causes great anxiety, stress and physical injury and can’t be good for drivers back either... as a result I don’t use a taxi unless it is for rare medical appointments. Instead [of] using them 2–3 times a week.”
- “Taxi drivers who put the ramp down in unsafe ways.”

4. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about problems you have experienced while travelling, or how you well you think that passenger transport meets the needs of people with disabilities or people with access needs? [Q10]

A total of 517 respondents submitted an answer to this question. Appendix C displays a hierarchy chart indicating key themes.

Figure 2: Word cloud of responses to open-ended question: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about problems you have experienced while travelling, or how well you think that passenger transport meets the needs of people with disabilities or people with access needs? [Q10]



Word cloud showing the 50 most frequently occurring words in the responses to the open-ended question, n=517. Frequently occurring words are in larger fonts. The following stop words were excluded from the analysis to ensure words contained in the cloud are meaningful: 'disability', 'disabled', 'transport'. This is because these words reflected the theme of the inquiry rather than specific issues and comments arising from the question.

Many of the themes identified in responses to Q10 were similar to those discovered for Q4. The most common reference was 'train' (112 responses), with 20 responses mentioning 'train station(s)'. Many of these responses referred to the availability of staff at train stations:

- “While Entering bus or train stations having ticket offices closed or partially staffed had lead on many occasions to me missing or being late for my journey. When this has happened it generally means assistance is missed at the end of my journey and I get left this mostly happens while using the trains”
- “Having someone at the train station just to let them know you have arrived and for them to be aware that you need assistance. She does not have a smart phone and relies on station staff to make journeys”

Others pointed to the need for clear signage and safety markings:

- “As a blind person, I struggle to find a seat, even if there are plenty of them available. When on a train, I don't know the carriage number I am in. This can potentially mean that when the train stops at my stop, the doors don't open, as the train has pulled up to a short platform. Yellow lines at train stations, which indicate where you need to be behind for your own safety are often faded and I can't easily see them.”

Around 91 responses mentioned ‘bus’, and the most common subtheme was ‘bus driver(s)’ (25 responses).

Some responses pointed to lack of training or support for transport staff:

- “Lack of knowledge and training of bus drivers and train guards”
- “I think training staff is the main issue here, bring the bus drivers up to the same level as the tube staff.”
- “Bus drivers should also have the confidence that they will be supported by their managers when they have to remind certain passengers that wheelchair users take precedence over other travellers, when using the spaces designated for their use.”
- “Staff rarely know how to support people with significant disabilities and don’t seem to appreciate the trauma it causes when it’s not available and someone is left stranded on their own, not knowing - for example - which train to catch or even which station they are at, or which bus stop they need. Bus drivers seem particularly difficult to get to help or to intervene if a passenger is giving abuse to someone for being in a disabled area that they wish to use for their pushchair for example”

Other responses pointed to lack of awareness of “hidden” or “invisible” disabilities:

- “Not all disabilities are “seen” so just because a Bus Driver/Taxi Driver can’t see her disabilities doesn’t mean she doesn’t struggle everyday!”
- “There should be more training for bus drivers so they are aware of hidden disabilities.”

Multiple responses referenced transport staff or operators not taking responsibility for accessibility issues:

- “When I complained to the Bus Company, they basically put the blame on me. They never acknowledged that the bus driver’s language was inappropriate & never really apologised.”
- “The biggest problem, with so many of the root causes of problem, is people not taking ownership and responsibility to fix it. Bus drivers not requesting that other passengers move, railway employees treating it as someone else’s problem, taxi drivers following policy + treating me as a human being as well as more systemic issues like problems with failed train assistance bookings and station inaccessibility.”

However, other responses commended transport staff:

- “Most black cabs and bus drivers are thoughtful and take care with me. Journey times are becoming ridiculous, a short trip to my hospital appointment takes ages. [...]”

5. Responses related to legal obligations

Due to the inquiry's focus on legal obligations, we also ran a text search query to identify responses that mentioned words relating to 'legal' and 'law'. This text search returned ~20 responses across both open-ended questions.

Some responses indicated issues where there is a lack of legal requirement:

- “No legal requirements to have accessible taxis. No legal requirements to pick up disabled passengers as drivers can pick and choose.”
- “I use a tiny mobility scooter (fits in a wheelchair space), a class 2 invalid carriage, just like a powered wheelchair - there is apparently no protection for me in law, every transport company has their own rules, many demand you obtain a 'pass' from them before traveling, and some refuse to take me at all! [...]”
- “Walking/wheeling- getting to public transport stops or to nearby facilities (shops etc) is made difficult or impossible by poorly designed infrastructure such as uncontrolled crossings with high vehicle speeds and poor sight lines, lack of enforcement of current laws (eg pavement obstruction) and lack of maintenance (broken glass, dog waste, overgrown hedges, broken paving).”

Others pointed to lack of enforcement of legal protections:

- “Staff not knowing what their policies or the law is for disabled passengers.”
- “Staff ignoring the law and leaving me to having to advocate for myself or not travel. (Particularly on buses) [...]”
- “Drivers are reluctant to ask buggy users to move or fold their buggies, despite a legal obligation.”
- “Rail replacement busses are often not accessible even though they legally have to be.”
- “Finally, there is legislation that businesses need to meet accessibility standards, but they are never enforced and rely on members of the public bringing about a legal case to challenge denial or removal of access. This should instead be enforced by the government and hefty fines levied against inaccessible businesses, and even more so for those who HAD access and decided to arbitrarily remove it.”
- “Standards for disabled people are very low. [...] There is no redress for discrimination in transport, the Equality Act leaves the onus on individual, un-resourced disabled people to fight large wealthy transport companies. [...] Leaving it to individual disabled people to fight for access and challenge discrimination is another barrier to transport and another discrimination against disabled people.”

Other responses mentioned lack of adherence to COVID-19 safety measures, and removal of protections that benefited disabled travellers during the pandemic:

- “Even when it was the law to have masking, social distancing and ventilation in place, the rules often weren’t followed on buses and trains. Mask exemptions existed, but staff could at least have offered free masks to any unmasked people as standard to help normalise their use.
- “[...] All the improvements for us disabled folks have been swept away “Covid law” and we’ve gone back 15 years at least.”

Another response indicated difficulties in accessing benefits that they are legally entitled to:

- “Disabled people are frequently frightened even to try active travel such as cycling, due to fear of public opinion, being accused of fraud and losing benefits. I was recently turned down for PIP because I can cycle, using an e-cycle, and I “sounded jovial” on a phone call. I can only walk short distances very slowly - at speeds that should easily make me eligible for PIP under the legal criteria. I have not been able to face appealing as I’m also dealing with paperwork for two children who have EHCPs and DLA while working and dealing with a chronic pain condition. This is not an uncommon experience.”

Some responses suggested new policies, including legal requirements for accessibility information to be made available:

- “There also needs to be a legal requirement for access information (meeting a standardised set of values) to be visible on the website of every business/location, not hidden away but in a click from the first page, highly visible, which includes photographs of entrances, ramps and measurements of steps etc. People should not be forced to phone businesses in order to track down access information which should be available easily online.”
- “Apps are generally not being made accessible so we can’t track buses like sighted people can, we need the entirety of every public transport app to be made accessible by law, including alternatives for maps, which will never work for blind people.”

Other responses advocated for the direct involvement of disabled people in setting the legal standards for accessible public transport:

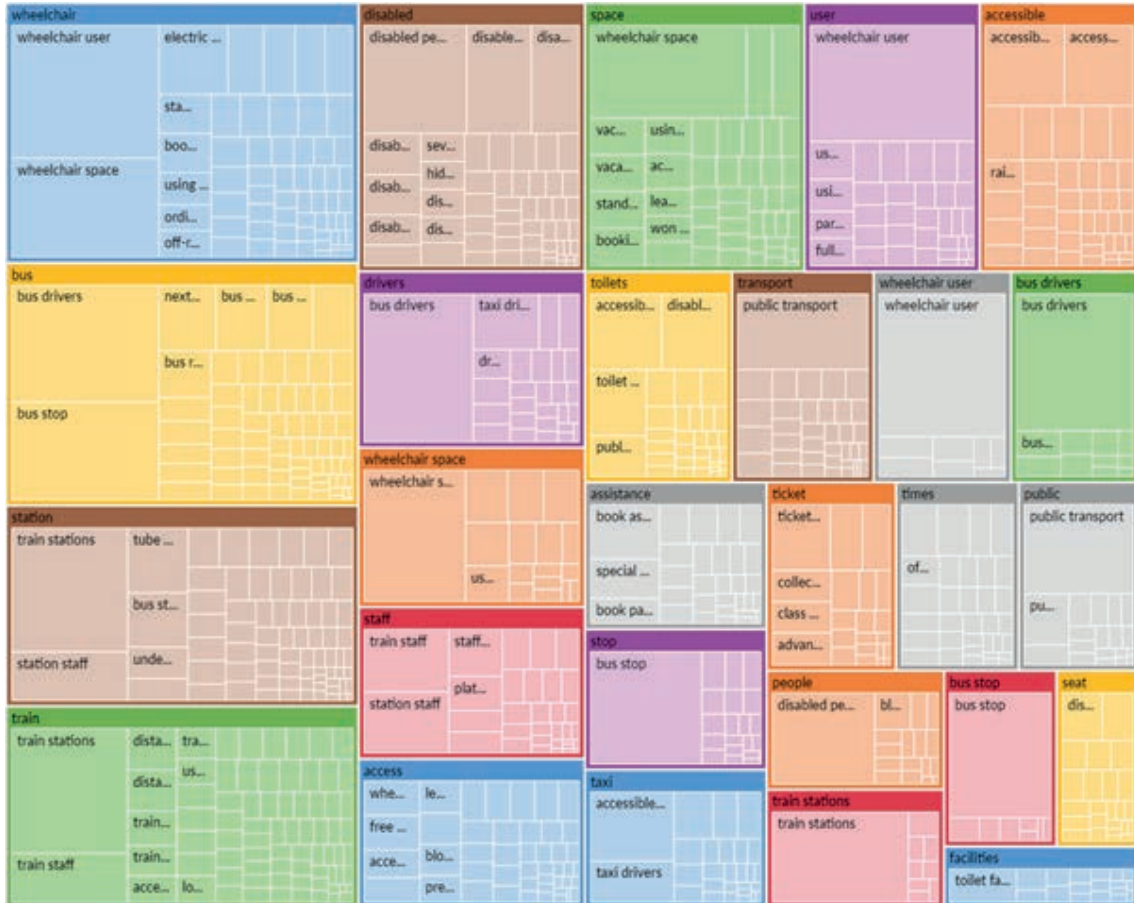
- “Actual disabled users (and not a SINGLE type of disabled person - eg not just an active user wheelchair user who can do wheelies over obstacles) - need to be involved to sign off plans and final infrastructure, and there should be a legal requirement to meet certain standards before an organisation or business is allowed to claim it is accessible.”

Appendix A: Methodology

Responses were analysed thematically using NVivo, a qualitative software analysis software tool. Thematic analysis involves systematically identifying patterns within qualitative data through reduction, abstraction and re-structuring, to identify recurring topics and ideas that come up repeatedly.

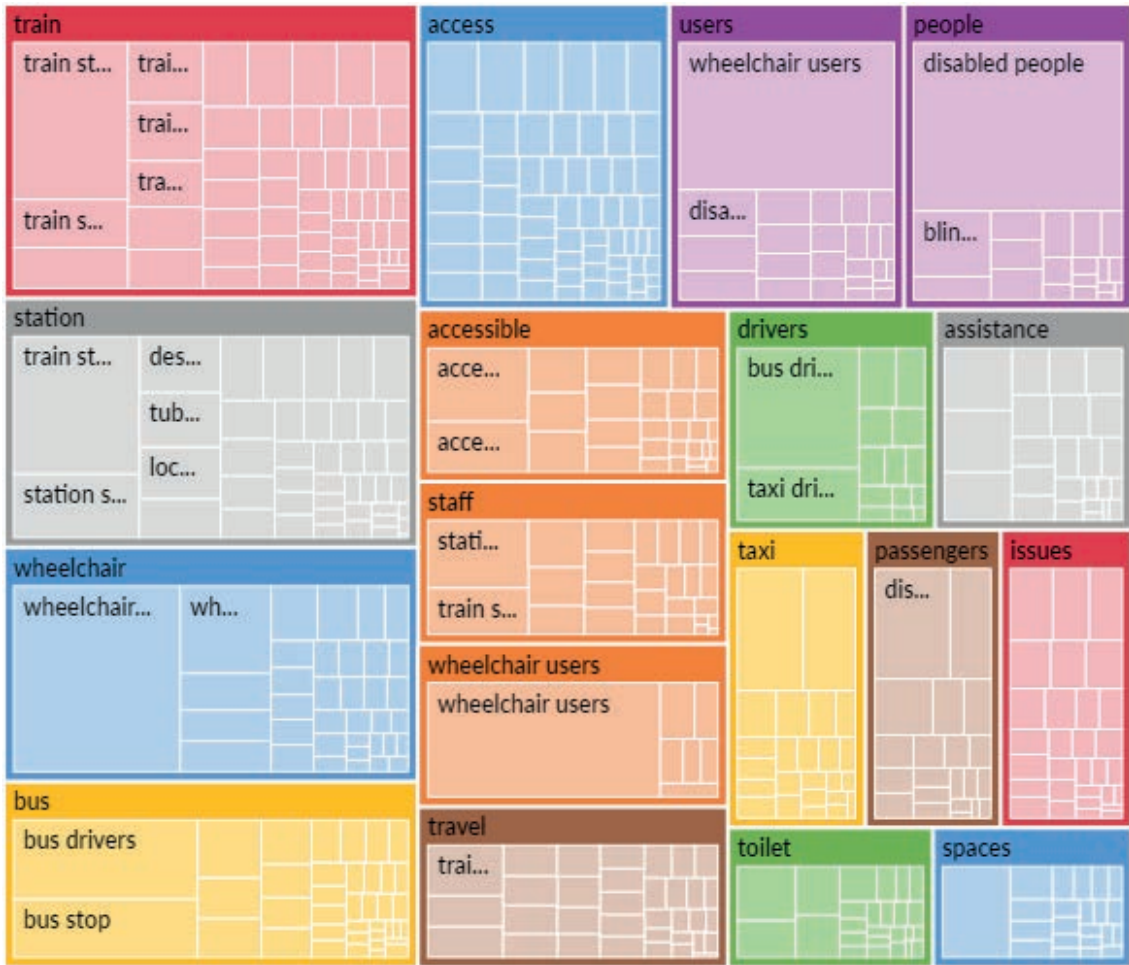
Themes were initially identified using the automated insights tool in Nvivo. This uses machine-based algorithms to analyse the content and sentence structure and detects significant noun phrases to identify the most frequently occurring themes. The process collects the themes and counts their mentions across all the data in the files being processed and filters themes to show groups that represent the largest proportion of the content. This was used as the starting point to code the data and undertake more detailed thematic analysis.

Appendix B: Hierarchy chart for Q4



Hierarchy chart of key themes identified using automated insights tools in Nvivo, based on responses to “Are there any other situations that have caused you or the person you travel with who is disabled or has specific accessibility needs difficulty whilst travelling?” [Q4] (N=597). The diagram shows hierarchical data as a set of nested rectangles of varying sizes. Size represents the amount of coding (data tagged as relevant) at each code.

Appendix C: Hierarchy chart for Q10



Hierarchy chart of key themes identified using automated insights tools in Nvivo, based on responses to “Is there anything else you would like to tell us about problems you have experienced while travelling, or how you well you think that passenger transport meets the needs of people with disabilities or people with access needs?” [Q10] (N=517). The diagram shows hierarchical data as a set of nested rectangles of varying sizes. Size represents the amount of coding (data tagged as relevant) at each code.

Formal minutes

Thursday 23 May 2024

Members present:

Iain Stewart, in the Chair

Jack Brereton

Grahame Morris

The work of the Transport Committee in the 2019 Parliament

Draft Report (*The work of the Transport Committee in the 2019 Parliament*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 10 read and agreed to.

Annex agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the First Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Adjournment

The Committee adjourned.

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the publications page of the Committee's website.

Session 2023–24

Number	Title	Reference
1st Special	Self-driving vehicles: Government response to the Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2022–23	HC 264
2nd Special	Minimum service levels for rail: Government Response to the Committee's Eighth Report of Session 2022–23	HC 331

Session 2022–23

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Road freight supply chain	HC 162
2nd	The Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands	HC 292
3rd	Fuelling the future: motive power and connectivity	HC 159
4th	Implementation of the National Bus Strategy	HC 161
5th	Maritime 2050	HC 160
6th	Strategic road investment	HC 904
7th	Self-driving vehicles	HC 519
8th	Minimum service levels for rail	HC 1153
9th	Draft revised National Policy Statement for National Networks	HC 903
1st Special	UK aviation: reform for take-off: Government response to the Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 542
2nd Special	Road freight supply chain: Government response to the Committee's First Report	HC 701
3rd Special	Road Pricing: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 1178
4th Special	Fuelling the future: motive power and connectivity: Government response to the Committee's Third Report	HC 1382
5th Special	Maritime 2050: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 1420
6th Special	Implementation of the National Bus Strategy: Government response to the Committee's Fourth Report	HC 1431
7th Special	The Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands: Government response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 1729

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Zero emission vehicles	HC 27
2nd	Major transport infrastructure projects	HC 24
3rd	Rollout and safety of smart motorways	HC 26
4th	Road pricing	HC 789
5th	UK aviation: reform for take-off	HC 683
1st Special	The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the aviation sector: Interim report: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 28
2nd Special	Road safety: young and novice drivers: Government Response to Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 29
3rd Special	Trains Fit for the Future? Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 249
4th Special	Safe return of international travel? Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2019–21	HC 489
5th Special	Zero emission vehicles: Government Response to the Committee's First Report	HC 759
6th Special	Rollout and safety of smart motorways: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report	HC 1020
7th Special	Major transport infrastructure projects: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 938

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Appointment of the Chair of the Civil Aviation Authority	HC 354
2nd	The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the aviation sector	HC 268
3rd	E-scooters: pavement nuisance or transport innovation?	HC 255
4th	Road safety: young and novice drivers	HC 169
5th	The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the aviation sector: Interim report	HC 1257
6th	Trains fit for the future?	HC 876
7th	Safe return of international travel?	HC 1341