



**TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND**
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework

Annual Delivery Plan 2021-22

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Ministerial Foreword

This is the second Annual Delivery Plan for Scotland's [Accessible Travel Framework](#) since it was published in 2016. This is also my first opportunity to bring this Delivery Plan to you at the mid-point in the Framework's ten year journey.

Accessibility and inclusion are at the heart of the [National Transport Strategy 2](#), sitting within the "Reduces Inequalities" pillar, where we will provide fair access to services we need, will be easy to use for all and will be affordable to all.

My colleague Michael Matheson signed off a progress report on the [Annual Delivery Plan](#) at the beginning of the year, where he stated that Covid-19 meant that work on the eight priorities contained in the 2019-2020 Annual Delivery Plan were paused at the end of March 2020, as resources were pivoted to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. However, he indicated that significant progress had been made on a number of our priorities such as:

- Despite demand being severely suppressed **ScotRail** strived to ensure that assistance was made available to those who continued to require it and in consultation with disabled people's organisations they implemented a number of physical distancing measures, and reduced its notice period for assistance bookings from **two hours to one hour**;
- **The Thistle Assistance** card being extended to provide an exemption message for those who are unable to wear a face covering on public transport. Since December 2019 over **100,000 new cards have been distributed** and over **11,000** have downloaded the new app;
- **Northlink Ferries** introduced a "Ramble Tag" ensuring continued assistance for visually impaired passengers and;
- **The Hate Crime Charter** was launched on 24 March in collaboration with Disability Equality Scotland, Police Scotland, British Transport Police, SEStran and People First Scotland, taking a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment on our buses and trains.

Turning to the year ahead, I would like to reiterate that our vision, set out in Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework that **all disabled people can travel with the same freedom, choice, dignity and opportunity as other citizens**, will remain our guiding principle. The Covid-19 pandemic has not changed that, although it may have changed what it looks like in practice, and the steps we have to take as a government to achieve it.

This year's priorities have been agreed through an extended period of engagement with disabled people which has involved one to one meetings, group discussions with various organisations from our Accessible Travel Steering Group, a series of webinars hosted by Disability Equality Scotland and weekly polls on a range of subjects that are important to disabled travellers which have helped us better understand the impact of the pandemic on their journeys, including how confidence to travel can be strengthened.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to pay particular thanks to the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS), Disability Equality Scotland (DES) and all the members of our Accessible Travel Steering Group. All of whom have continued to support the development and implementation of the Framework, and it's delivery plans and also to the wide range of operators who continue to work towards lasting improvements for disabled people's travel. And to finish I would like to take this opportunity to say that I look forward to working with you all, in the coming year.



Figure 1 Graeme Dey, Minister for Transport

Best Wishes

Graeme Dey, Minister for Transport

Introduction to The Accessible Travel Framework

We are fully aware that some of you may not be familiar with the Accessible Travel Framework, and as we did in our first Delivery Plan we are providing some background in relation to the journey of the Framework and our progress to date.

[Going Further](#) was the first national Accessible Travel Framework for Scotland. It was created in 2016 from conversations between disabled people, their representatives and people who work in transport across Scotland with the purpose of;

- supporting disabled people's rights by removing barriers and improving access to travel; and
- ensuring disabled people are fully involved in work to improve all aspects of travel.

We know that accessible travel can enable people to enjoy equal access to full citizenship, so the conversations we held back then were about identifying and removing disabling barriers which prevent people travelling, or serve to make their journey an unpleasant experience. We are aware that this is about more than transport, and includes access to vital services such as employment, education and healthcare.

The Framework provides a national vision and outcomes for accessible travel and a high level action plan to tackle the key issues facing disabled people. Its vision is that **“All disabled people can travel with the same freedom, choice, dignity and opportunity as other citizens.”**

This vision is supported by four outcomes;

- more disabled people make successful door-to-door journeys, more often;
- disabled people are more involved in the design, development and improvement of transport policies, services and infrastructure;
- everyone involved in delivering transport information, services and infrastructure will help to enable disabled people to travel; and
- disabled people feel comfortable and safe using public transport – this includes being free from hate crime, bullying and harassment when travelling.

New challenges have emerged rapidly over the past year and the priorities and issues identified by disabled people pre-pandemic, whilst still important, may no longer be the most pressing issues.

Work on the Framework was paused as we responded to the pandemic, but we took time to further engage with disabled people and those that represent them. We also, with the help and support of Disability Equality Scotland, undertook a series of webinars and polls exploring a range of issues important to disabled people, such as face covering exemptions, returning to public transport safely, and 20 minute neighbourhoods through an equalities lens.

Additionally we sought further support to expand our engagement through the Future Journeys Observatory, a group that aims to extract and understand the impact

Covid-19 is having an impact on disabled people, including their mobility, how inclusive and accessible newly reconfigured streets and services are, and how we can work collaboratively to build confidence to enable disabled people to return to public transport.

Through these informative, emotive and heart-warming discussions we are able to provide you with our focus and priority areas for the coming year which is set out in our **Vision and Priorities Section** below.

Summary of current position

As we are at the mid-way point in the Framework's lifespan, we thought it would be a good opportunity to update you on our overall progress on the 48 issues within it.

The 48 issues raised in 2016 form the basis of our Accessible Travel Framework. We are however, not bound to these issues. As the needs and expectations of society and people evolve we must be flexible to adapt to the key issues that are affecting disabled people – particularly in response to Covid-19. For example, this year we have decided to include Transport to Health and Social Care as one of our key priorities despite it not being an issue within our original Framework.

Over the last five years Transport Scotland officials have made significant progress in addressing the key issues of the Framework, which cover a vast array of topics including;

- Infrastructure,
- Ticketing,
- Staff,
- Training and Assistance,
- Information, and
- Key issues for specific transport operators.

At the time of publishing this report, we have successfully addressed 37% (18) of the Framework's issues and continue to monitor and make progress with the remaining 63% (30). We fully understand that certain issues will take longer than others to resolve and may need revisiting over time. Some issues remain reserved to the UK Government, and although we recognise there is still much to do, we can also celebrate our progress so far.

Progress against the 48 issues within the Accessible Travel Framework

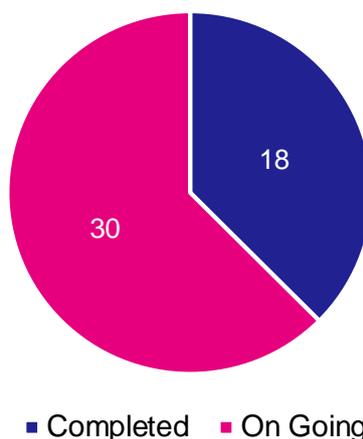


Figure 2: Image Descriptor: the image is a pie chart split to show 18 issues are complete and 30 issues are on-going.

Since the Frameworks inception we have made a number of key achievements as we work towards addressing each of the 48 issues. They include;

- Creation of an **Accessible Travel Steering Group** (our delivery partners) to help inform our priorities and understand the needs of disabled travellers.
- Working with **Disability Equality Scotland** to ensure all of our correspondence is published and disseminated in accessible and easy read formats;
- Working closely with colleagues with responsibility for the **British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan** to cover our 5 actions within it;
- Publishing our first [Annual Delivery Plan](#) in June 2019;
- **Publishing our [Progress Report on the 2019-2020 Annual Delivery Plan](#);**
- **Undertaking a series of engagement sessions in 2020** to hear directly from disabled people on what the priorities within this Delivery Plan should be;
- **Launching an on-line Hate Crime Charter** on public transport in collaboration with Disability Equality Scotland, Police Scotland, British Transport Police, SEStran and People First Scotland.
- **Establishing** a formal and online process of engagement with Local Authorities to share information and strengthen our relationships on **Blue Badge**.
- **Worked with MACS to undertake a series of Ministerial engagements** that focused primarily on Equality Impact Assessments, 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, Spaces for People and Transport to Health and Social Care, as well as a focus on the Islands Delivery Plan.
- **Published the [WSP Research Report](#)** on Inclusive Design in Town Centres and Busy Streets areas, with work now underway to produce the necessary guidance.
- **Provided funding to Neatebox** who have developed and trialled an app focussing on bus travel for disabled users, with a primary focus on wheelchair users who require use of a particular designated space when using the bus.

- **Provided funding to Values Into Action** to deliver valuable travel training to those with learning difficulties and autism.
- **Provided funding to Go Upstream** who looked at a pan-disability project on how the spaces between connections are navigated; and
- **Provided funding** to SEStran to further develop the Thistle Assistance app.

We have also worked closely with our Transport Operators:

- **ScotRail**, as anticipated, at the start of April 2021, reduced its notice period for assistance booking to just one hour. This compares with many other UK train operators still requiring 6 hours' notice.
- Ferries **Accessibility Fund, (£427,000 total match funding)** improvements to our ferries and ports which has enhanced the ferry travelling experience of disabled people and others facing mobility or access challenges. Projects for example have included improvements to ferry terminal access and surrounding infrastructure such as: accessible doors, changing places toilets and training, including guide dog and dementia training rolled out for staff annually. This includes passengers that have hidden disabilities. The last round of funding awarded was in 2020/2021.
- **Calmac Ferries** have provided information on their [website](#) to help the travelling public in planning and completing their journey.
- **And on our buses** the Scottish Parliament passed legislation, on 3 March, that extended the existing [National Concessionary Travel Scheme](#) to eligible disabled children under the age of five, allowing free bus travel an accompanying companion using the National Entitlement Card (NEC). (Under 5s already typically travel for free under operators' commercial terms.) This will give around **4,000 eligible disabled children across Scotland** access to the same benefits as those aged five and over, helping reduce household costs for their families.

Vision and Priorities for 2021-2022

This years' Annual Delivery Plan, and the priorities within it, have been agreed in co-production with our Transport Accessibility Steering Group and its 30 strong representatives of disabled people's organisations, local government, transport operators from across all modes and the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) with its 15 Public Appointees, and by policy officials from across Transport Scotland and Scottish Government.

We have devised a set of robust objectives that will look to deliver positive outcomes for disabled travellers in **5 new policy areas**. We will also continue to progress those areas not completed last year (**our legacy priorities**).



Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) was mentioned by many of our key stakeholders and whilst we understand the role DRT, and in particular community transport, has played over the course of the pandemic in delivering flexible door-to-door services for disabled people, and ensuring people in rural communities can continue to access key services, we have taken the **decision not to include** this as a priority at this stage in the Framework's lifespan.

Transport Scotland colleagues are looking at a range of issues relating to the future for DRT in Scotland, including what our financing arrangements should be for bus and other public transport services as they recover from the pandemic and the scope for specific interventions. For example supporting the introduction of a Scotland-wide IT platform which could be used by local DRT services.

We will therefore work closely with our colleagues to ensure consideration is given to disabled travellers throughout the further development of this policy area.

Our Rural Focus

As we take forward these priorities we will continue to work closely with colleagues and stakeholders with an interest in rural transport ensuring that existing and future transport related policies, strategies and services fully meet the needs of island and rural communities.

The Accessible Travel team will also forge stronger, more focussed relationships with both the Rural Parliament and Scottish Rural Action.

Our New Priorities

Passenger Assistance

Continue to raise awareness of Thistle Assistance and Passenger Assist and explore opportunities for similar offerings with Bus Operators

In the main passenger assistance is used to great affect across most transport modes including rail, ferries and aviation, and good practice can be shared across modes to provide the best possible service to disabled passengers.

Across **Scotland's Railway** passengers have largely experienced good assistance. The latest passenger assist [satisfaction stats](#) from 2019-20, gathered by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), shows that passenger satisfaction for the overall experience is 86% - this includes satisfaction with assistance received at a station and satisfaction with helpfulness and attitudes of staff. Additionally, the launch of the new [passenger assistance app](#) by the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) in May 2021 will make it easier for disabled people to request assistance for their train journeys

On our ferries CalMac's passenger satisfaction scores for passenger assistance for 2019 showed that 80% of passengers who requested assistance were either confident or very confident that they would be able to complete their journey. In total **91% of all assistance** requests were met, or partially met, in 2019.

NorthLink Ferries are trialling the [Neatebox Solution](#) at their terminals. This system allows disabled passengers to effectively communicate their requirements to staff with boarding assistance being part of the booking process. NorthLink are keen to integrate the Neatebox solution into their existing booking system to better promote its benefits. NorthLink had 219 assistance requests in 2019, this dropped to 134 in 2020 due to decreased patronage.

The Civil Aviation Authority's [annual accessibility report](#) highlighted the quality of work being done across Scotland's airports. Seven Scottish airports scored 'very good' or 'good' with Glasgow airport being highlighted for consistently providing on-time service for more than 100,000 assistance requests throughout the year. Many of our airports have various assistance programmes including mobility equipment such as AmbuLift which offers a comfortable and easy transfer for passengers with disabilities to and from the aircraft, pre-assistance booking, and access guides for passengers who require additional support.

When we explored passenger assistance as part of our extensive stakeholder engagement programme it became clear that there was a need for assistance on **bus services too**. A clear recommendation was provided from disabled passengers for Transport Scotland to explore similar assistance offerings in the Bus sector.

In order for assistance to work well it is important that transport staff, particularly those who work in passenger facing roles, are provided with adequate training and have awareness of all the various assistance tools for example Thistle Card and the sunflower lanyard that is in use across the country.

And there are many examples of good practice across the country including **CalMac** working with the **National Autistic Society** to create “story boards” detailing journey processes for major and small vessels due to be rolled out this month, and **SignLive** introduced at **Edinburgh Airport**, the first UK airport to introduce this service, which provides an online British Sign Language (BSL) interpreting service, allowing immediate and effective communication with BSL users.

Key actions for 2021-2022

In order to fulfil this objective Transport Scotland will;

- Continue to promote, and raise awareness of passenger assistance services, and the various tools used by disabled passengers to highlight their needs to staff and other passengers.
- Convene quarterly discussions with key members of our Accessible Travel Steering Group and hold a webinar with interested parties to explore options for providing bus operators and staff with guidance on how to provide and deliver assistance to its disabled passengers.
- Carry out a survey of bus operators to explore what is currently in place.
- Undertake a poll, through Disability Equality Scotland to gauge the lived experience of our disabled bus travellers.
- Through discussions with bus operators consider a trial of assistance at interchanges and bus terminals.

Journey Planning

Promote and raise awareness of technology and initiatives that provide passengers with timely and up to date information to help them to make informed decisions in order to complete their journey

The need to plan journeys in more detail and to gather information on what to expect when travelling has taken on a new importance as a result of Covid-19. There are now a range of things to consider: capacity constraints in order to abide by physical distancing guidance; a new emphasis on public health safety; queuing requirements, wearing of masks (unless you are exempt); changing timetables; and in some instances reduced services as well as new street and road layouts. This has made it all the more challenging, especially for disabled travellers, so knowing what to expect in real time information is vitally important.

As Scotland's Coronavirus restrictions ease, the demand on services, including from disabled people, will increase. It is therefore essential that disabled people are able to plan their journeys, which includes the accessibility measures to meet their needs, for example, lowered kerbs, lifts, clear direction with marked distances, information on accessible buses and stops etcetera.

The predominant use of English for written communication and audible announcements on journeys highlights the need for a more inclusive approach to communication too, including providing information in more accessible formats.

If we are to encourage greener travel choices, people need to feel confident that they can safely walk or wheel to the tram stop, wait for a bus or train and good journey planning options will increase levels of confidence. We know that most door-to-door journeys include more than one mode of transport, and therefore different steps in that journey should not be thought of in isolation. If we want people to make different travel choices, we must think more clearly about their whole journey, how each part of it connects, and how we can better integrate those parts. This applies to all citizens but is perhaps even more relevant to those members of our communities that have a disability or restricted mobility.

And there are many examples of good practice across the country including the introduction by **ScotRail** of a [British Sign Language \(BSL\) app](#) to allow its staff to aid BSL customers in any part of their journey and **Calmac** and **NorthLink Ferries** have introduced a range of accessible information and projects to support disabled travellers with their journeys including [Information on accessible cabins](#); that shows the full range of cabin facilities and a ["Recite Me"](#) function which reads the content of all documents on their website;

Key actions for 2021-2022

In order to fulfil this objective Transport Scotland will;

- Promote a more inclusive approach to communication and raise awareness of technology and initiatives that ensure passengers can access timely and up to date information that suits their needs, ensuring they feel safe to complete their journey.

- Continue to work with Traveline Scotland, Disability Equality Scotland and Scottish Government Digital to ensure the digital travel information needs of disabled people have been considered. This is helping us understand areas for further improvement within the Traveline Scotland website and app services, and also where enhancements can be made to travel planning information currently available.
- Continue to support development of the **Thistle Assistance Programme** to increase awareness and use of the existing card and app, utilising the new branding, creative and [website](#). We will also be supporting the development of journey planning and wayfinding by working with SEStran and the project team to deliver a prototype solution by **July 2022**.
- Work with transport operators and Disability Equality Scotland to enhance and promote the information on the [accessible travel hub](#) to ensure we can further provide support and raise awareness of new and existing journey planning apps.

Staff Training & Awareness

Work with Transport providers to ensure that staff are provided with up-to-date, regular disability awareness and equality training

There are number of training modules being used across transport modes, but disabled people stressed that this training needs to be consistent, continuous, updated regularly and delivered by certified trainers. Training also needs to include information in relation to assistance tools/cards that disabled people use to go about their day to day journeys for example the Thistle Assistance Card and sunflower lanyard.

In December 2020, the Department for Transport (DfT) created the [REAL \(Respect, Empathy, Ask, Listen\) disability equality training programme](#) to improve the transport sector's confidence and skills in delivering inclusive journeys for disabled passengers. The training is underpinned by two important values: respect and empathy, and promotes two important actions: ask and listen. The modules within the programme have been developed in collaboration with people with lived experience of disability. These modules have been shared across all modes of transport in Scotland for their use as required.

As part of the revised Accessible Travel Policy guidance published in July 2019 the **Office of Rail and Road (ORR)** introduced enhanced obligations on train and station operators to provide up-to-date, regular disability awareness / equality training to their staff by 31 July 2021. This will mean that thousands of frontline staff in Scotland will be trained to communicate more effectively with disabled passengers, understand the challenges they may face when travelling, and will have refreshed their knowledge and skills to provide any assistance needed.

Similarly, the **Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)** who oversee, and regulate all aspects of civil aviation in the UK, require all employees, including the management, who deal directly with the travelling public at airports, to receive necessary training that is developed in partnership with recognised national and European forums of people with disabilities.

Good practice already exists across the country including **CalMac's** recently updated Disability Awareness training programme to incorporate **Hate Crime** and their work with **PAMIS** on training staff on their newly installed Changing Places facilities. Additionally **NorthLink Ferries** are undertaking training to ensure all staff are familiar with current legislation and safety procedures, including weekly drills, covering the actions necessary to assist all passengers in an emergency situation and have an on-going programme of **disability awareness training** for both their shore side and sea faring personnel.

Key actions for 2021-2022

In order to fulfil this objective Transport Scotland will;

- Undertake a survey with all Local Authority areas to understand the training provided to taxi and private hire car drivers, analysis the findings and consider next steps.
- Work with bus operators to explore and understand the training provided to bus drivers and station staff.
- Promote and facilitate disability awareness training schemes through our Accessible Travel Steering Group and convene regular discussions with key transport providers to ensure training is being undertaken.
- Work with Disability Equality Scotland, Police Scotland and People First Scotland as they deliver disability awareness and hate crime training in formats that suit the needs of operators.

Transport to Health and Social Care

Work with Scottish Government Health colleagues to ensure disabled people are equipped with the information and services they need to ensure that they are able to travel safely to medical / health appointments

We know that poor access to transport has a disproportionate effect on people in low incomes, disabled people, older people and people with ongoing health and social care needs.

The 2019 'Scottish Household Survey' showed that 60.3% of all respondents believed that access for hospital outpatients was "very or fairly convenient", which was the lowest score of all services surveyed. The satisfaction level varied significantly depending on the income of the respondent - dropping to 54% for those with a net household income of up to £15,000 per annum. During 2019 the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) undertook research to explore the transport barriers faced by disabled people and older people when accessing health and social care appointments and facilities.

This work was undertaken to explore offerings in the 32 Local Authority areas, gather insights, find out about initiatives that worked well, and to gain a better understanding of the issues and barriers facing disabled and older people when accessing these essential services. This research and evidence gathering involved a Transport to Health and Social Care roundtable discussion, hosted by MACS with assistance from Transport Scotland, and independently facilitated by the Scottish Government.

This event brought together around **40 stakeholders**, including individual disabled people, Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs), Community Transport Association (CTA), Transport Scotland (TS), Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs), representatives from NHS Boards, Access Panels and Local Authorities (LAs).

It was followed up by a second Roundtable event in March 2020, that looked at prioritising the recommendations from MACS phase one work and earlier roundtable. These recommendations reflected the National Audit Office Report of 2011 on Transport to Health and Social care, which identified similar failings of transport provision and made similar recommendations that had not been progressed to date.

MACS recommended that transport should be integral to care plans and that organisations need their requirements to be better joined with NHS Boards, Local Authorities and the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS). MACS also recommended that the CTA should be recognised as a key partner in the planning and care pathway due to the key role they play in this sector.

This MACS Report: [Transport to Health and Social Care](#) is a summary of the findings of this work, including **9 key issues clustered around five themes**.

Additionally an extensive evidence gathering exercise to capture the voices of disabled people was undertaken by **Disability Equality Scotland** asking the question "Have you had problems booking, or getting transport to medical/healthcare

appointments? They received 848 responses with 98% (829 respondents) stating Yes and 2% (19 respondents) stating No.

Overall their membership felt that more had to be done to shake up the planning and organisation of patient transport as it plays such an important part in ensuring patients receive the treatment and consultations that they require. The research showed that some patients chose not to travel to appointments at all, citing that the process was too stressful or too costly, while others prepared for them but on many occasions had to cancel due to the transport not arriving at the correct time, or not at all. This in turn has an impact on NHS resources and waiting times and creates real challenges for patients in accessing the right care at the right time.

Again it is worth noting that good practice exists across the country including to meet the demand for the newly developed Clinical Assessment Centres an alternative Patient Transport Service was quickly established to support patients without access to their own transport. This new service was created collaboratively between the Scottish Government, NHS National Services Scotland and Transport Scotland, with the support of the Scottish Ambulance Service and incorporated offers of support from external organisations including Arnold Clark, **who provided 120 minibuses at no cost** and **NorthLink Ferries** put processes in place early in the Covid-19 pandemic to allow passengers travelling for hospital appointments to remain on their vessels for up to 3 hours after arrival.

We have also seen many good cross organisational initiatives during the pandemic, some of which improved transport access to medical facilities and the CTA provided free transport to medical facilities and for vaccinations. These initiatives have proved concept and cannot be lost as we move out of the pandemic.

Key actions for 2021-2022

In order to fulfil this objective Transport Scotland will;

- Ensure that patient's needs inform our approach to this activity and ensure transport initiatives continue to operate to good effect as lockdown restrictions ease and our NHS and transport services recover from Covid-19.
- Work with partners to ensure we do not lose good practice initiatives from the pandemic that helped people get to essential medical appointments and travel for vaccinations.
- Participate in workshops led by SG Health colleagues and MACS to explore how Transport to Health recommendations can be taken forward.
- These Workshops will help identify the membership and remit of a Transport to Health Working Group, whose role will be to work towards the implementation of MACS recommendations from their 2019 report.

Blue Badge

Review the Blue Badge Code of Practice Review to provide Local Authorities with a more clear and concise approach in order to deliver the scheme with a greater level of consistency.

As of March 2021 there were **238,970 Blue Badges in use across Scotland**. A Blue Badge lets a disabled person park closer to their destination and can provide those who have mobility issues with an additional means of travelling.

There was a commitment given in Parliament in 2019 to review the Blue Badge Code of Practice which was last updated in 2014. Since then there have been several changes to legislation and Scheme policy and the expectations of disabled people and society in general has moved on considerably.

Work has already begun on this and we will aim to provide a more clear and concise approach that will achieve a greater level of consistency for Local Authorities and blue badge holders alike.

We have already completed a review of all Local Authority Blue Badge webpages which has highlighted some gaps in the availability of information, as well as some great examples of good practice which can be included in the reviewed Code of Practice.

The Department for Transport (DfT) amended their eligibility criteria in 2019 to include hidden disabilities, including distress when travelling. In Scotland we already have taken similar steps by opening up eligibility criteria to those who have a psychological disorder which results in a lack of awareness around traffic, endangering themselves or others. However there is scope here to enrich the Code of Practice with further guidance on how hidden or psychological disorders could be treated.

With thanks to Disability Equality Scotland we launched a poll with Blue Badge users in January 2021 to understand how effective the current Scheme was operating and what could be done to deliver improvements. The results of the poll reaffirmed the need for improvements with 71% of respondents stating that the current system did not deliver a user-friendly, effective service.

In March 2020, Transport Scotland officials, along with Local Authorities and Motor Neurones Disease (MND) nurse consultants, explored and trialled a fast-tracked prescription model for eligible applicants who have been diagnosed with MND, to provide them with a blue badge without having to participate in the full application phase. Following conclusion of the trial and seeking feedback from those involved Transport Scotland believe that the trial has been successful in delivering its objective. Local Authorities have continued to process MND applications using the fast-tracked method and alongside MND nurse consultants have agreed to continue to work together to streamline and improve the efficiency of the fast-tracked model ahead of a full roll out in 2022.

Key actions for 2021-2022

In order to fulfil this objective Transport Scotland will;

- Engage and work closely with Local Authorities, Healthcare Professionals and Blue Badge holders to revise the existing Code of Practice in order to reduce variation in local practice and to provide a user friendly service.
- Revise existing digital and printed media, including the Blue Badge 'Rights and Responsibilities' leaflet, to provide current and future badge holders with all the necessary information they need to fully utilise their blue badge, increase their travel options and provide a better quality of life.
- Work with Local Authorities to provide useful, consistent and reliable information online.
- Work with Local Authorities and MND Scotland to implement a fast-track prescription model for blue badge applicants who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness following a successful trial for those with Motor Neurones Disease in 2020/21

Our Legacy Priorities

We always envisaged that some priorities would take a little longer and would continue to be a primary focus for us. Last year also saw the pausing of many areas of Transport Scotland's work with staff pivoted into other critical Covid-19 areas. However we are pleased to say that some progress has been made as we continue to make improvements for disabled travellers.

Bus

Enable more disabled people in Scotland to use buses by working towards fully accessible information, infrastructure and design

Bus is the most widely used form of public transport, accounting for 73% of Scotland's public transport journeys in 2019/20 and is disproportionately relied upon by individuals from low income areas. Of all bus journeys made in 2019/20, 38% were made under the National Concessionary Travel Scheme for older and disabled people. In 2019, 3% of adults travelled to work by bike and 12% walked or wheeled to work.

Demand has been higher for bus during the pandemic than for any other land based public transport mode, allowing people to access essential jobs/services, while rates of walking, cycling and wheeling increased from pre Covid-19 levels.

In 2018 the UK Government consulted publicly on plans to require the provision of audible and visible information on board local bus and coach services across Great Britain. This included the holding of events to understand the perspective of stakeholders in Scotland (Edinburgh and Aberdeen). Responding to the consultation has taken longer than anticipated, however the UK Government remains committed to increasing the provision of accessible information across local bus and coach networks, and hope to respond formally to the consultation, including confirming next steps, in the near future. Recently the UK Government announced its intention, subject to final analysis, to make regulations by Summer 2023 requiring the provision of audible and visible information on board local bus services across the UK.

In the meantime, the Department for Transport continue to encourage operators not to wait for regulations to be made before providing accessible information on board their vehicles, and are grateful to those that now specify such provision as a standard feature of new vehicles.

Bus operators in Scotland continue to introduce new accessibility features such as low-floors and real time trackers that feed into both on-street real time information screens and mobile apps, which allow users' access to the most up to date information available.

In 2020 we launched the [Bus Partnership Fund](#) as part of our response to the climate emergency. The Fund will support mode shift from cars to bus, as part of over £500 million of long-term bus priority infrastructure funding to tackle the negative effects of congestion on bus, so that bus journeys are quicker, more punctual and reliable.

Key Actions for 2021 – 2022

In order to fulfil this objective Transport Scotland will;

- Work with delivery partners, including local government, to deliver commitments to extend free bus travel to under 19s and under 22s.
- Continue to work closely with the UK Government on their review of the Public Sector Vehicles Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) following their commitment to do so by the end of 2023.
- Undertake a consultation to help inform the development of regulations and guidance of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 to enable Local Transport Authorities to provide bus services tailored to the specific needs of local communities. The consultation will also explore requirements for any provisions made in respect of Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIPs) plans and schemes service standards and associated guidance. This includes considering the accessibility of bus services for disabled persons and persons with limited mobility.

Taxi and Private Hire Cars/Vehicles

Ensure Taxi and Private Hire Cars (PHCs) are available across Scotland and meet the needs of disabled people

The Scottish Government first published its Taxi and Private Hire Car Licensing Best Practice for Licensing Authorities in December 2007. The guidance set out to offer best practice advice to licensing authorities on a range of issues relating to the licensing of taxis, private hire cars and their drivers. The most recent iteration of that [guidance](#) was published in 2012.

Taxis and private hire cars are licensed under the [Civic Government \(Scotland\) Act 1982](#). The aim of the licensing regime is to ensure that taxi and private hire car customers have a safe, reliable and accessible service. The Scottish Government has responsibility for the overarching legislation. The day to day administration of the licensing regime for taxis and private hire cars is devolved to independent licensing authorities who are responsible for implementing the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 that seek to protect disabled people from discriminatory treatment, and which sought inclusion of wheelchair accessible vehicles in each Local Authority area.

Transport Scotland's [transport statistics](#) from 2020 confirm that there are a total of 23,900 Taxi and Private Hire cars in operation across Scotland. Of those 23% (5,506) are wheelchair accessible.

Taxis and private hire companies have been at the heart of a number of local initiatives throughout the pandemic, providing support in delivering food and essential services as well as offering free, or discounted transport provision, to disabled and older passengers accessing essential journeys, including access to Covid-19 vaccination centres. However, there is fear amongst disabled people that taxi services may be disappearing in rural areas due to financial constraints and the lack of available accessible taxis.

Key actions for 2021-2022

In order to fulfil this objective Transport Scotland will;

- Undertake work with Local Authorities to understand the provision (and variance) of accessible vehicles currently in operation in Scotland and the level of disability awareness training being carried out by taxi and private hire car operators.
- Produce a short document reminding Licensing Authorities of their duties within the [2017 Statutory Guidance from DfT](#), and why it is important that they adhere to these requirements.
- Work with local authorities and MACS to develop **a good practice guide for Local Authorities and taxi operators to ensure the provision of taxis and private hire cars meet the needs of disabled people.**

- We will work closely with the Department for Transport (DfT) as they launch their consultation on taxis and private hire companies which will seek to significantly strengthen the accessibility guidance currently in place
- Ensure information on taxi and private hire cars is made available on the [Accessible Travel Hub](#)

Clear Pathways

Ensure paths and pavements are clear and accessible for all

Clear pathways are an essential component of ensuring that streets, pavements, paths (whether in the urban environment or countryside) are kept accessible for disabled people, older people, parents with prams, buggies and small children, etcetera.

Street design and clear pathways are a key responsibility of Local Authorities, who design and maintain all of the non-trunk road network and (equating to 93% of all Scottish roads), walking, wheeling and cycling ways and footpaths.

Following a national shared spaces conference in April 2017, Transport Scotland, Scottish Government and the Department for Transport have collaboratively taken forward a programme of work to engage with stakeholders in order to inform the approach to developing guidance on inclusive design

Part of this work involved commissioning a research piece on Inclusive Design in Town Centres and Busy Street areas. The research was commissioned from WSP Consultants in July 2019 and was required to gather evidence and recommendations on methods and approaches to help deliver inclusive design environments within town centres and busy street areas. The research has established a set of key principles that support the delivery of inclusive engagement and inclusive physical design measures.

This guidance is aimed at street design in town centres and busy streets. These are streets which serve a civic or public service function, such as shopping streets or areas where one or more public service is accessed, and that have a proportionately higher level of vehicle traffic than other areas within the neighbourhood or settlement. Busy streets are also more likely to be serviced by public transport.

Traffic flows have been avoided as a means of determining a busy street area, as what is considered 'busy' within a rural environment will differ significantly in terms of vehicle use from an urban environment. We know that disabled people have difficulties accessing busy streets and this is why the design of streets are so important for accessibility.

The guidance has two main sections. The first part sets out the principles in plain English for members of the public who are interested in street design, but who may not have technical knowledge. The annex sets out details on technical design elements, with links to relevant legislation and other street design guidance.

Key Actions for 2021 – 2022

In order to fulfil this objective Transport Scotland will;

- Re-convene our working group to focus on inclusive engagement for street design looking at the high level principles of: why the need for engagement, when engagement needs to commence (concept stage), what do we need to ensure

engagement is inclusive, how we engage communities and where engagement takes place.

- We will continue to work alongside our stakeholder working group which includes representatives from Guide Dogs, RNIB, MACS, SCOTS and Disability Equality Scotland to complete part two of the guidance focussing on physical design.
- The Guidance on Town Centres and Busy Street Areas will undertake the necessary public consultation together with relevant Impact Assessments.
- We are continuing to consult with Local Authorities to develop both the secondary legislation required to allow them to enforce the National pavement parking prohibition as well as the Parking Standards Guidance which will underpin the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. Additionally we will need to consult with the public on some areas contained within secondary legislation and Local Authorities will need around 12 months to undertake an assessment to consider whether they wish to exempt, subject to certain criteria, any areas of pavement from the prohibition.
- As such, the majority of the secondary legislation is likely to be in place by 2022. Some aspects however, such as the appeals process for those who wish to appeal a ticket issued for pavement parking, may not be in place until 2023.

Information, Signs & Wayfinding

Improve information, signage & wayfinding

Signs, wayfinding and information is more important than ever in responding to Covid-19 and it is pleasing to see so many significant improvements being made by transport providers as they continue to be proactive in developing better signage and other wayfinding techniques to help people get around their buildings, vehicles and vessels.

The main focus of our work in this area moving forwards will be centred around improving the availability and access to better information and wayfinding tools. We will do this in conjunction with our **Journey Planning priority** and will continue to engage with Transport Operators and Local Authorities as they work to improve their signage and wayfinding, enabling disabled passengers to complete their journeys – particularly at interchanges.

Glossary

Accessible Travel Steering Group	A stakeholder group consisting of transport providers and disability groups, chaired by Transport Scotland Accessible Travel Policy Team
Bus Partnership Fund	In response to the climate emergency, the Scottish Government committed to providing a long-term investment of over £500m to deliver targeted bus priority measures on local and trunk roads.
Changing Places	Changing Places toilets have specified modifications which meet the needs of individuals with learning or physical disabilities.
(CAA) Civil Aviation Authority	The UK's specialist aviation regulator
COSLA	Convention Of Scottish Local Authorities
(DRT) Demand Responsive Transport	DRT is on-demand passenger transport operated by local authorities, bus, taxi or community transport operators.
(DfT) Department for Transport	The Department for Transport is the English equivalent of Transport Scotland.
(DES) Disability Equality Scotland	DES are a membership organisation for disabled people and disability groups/organisations.
(HITRANS) Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership	HITRANS is the statutory regional transport partnership covering Eilean Siar (Western Isles), Orkney, Highland, Moray and most of the Argyll and Bute area
(MACS) Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland	MACS are an advisory body who advise Scottish Minister in accessible travel issues
MND Scotland	MND Scotland is the leading charity in Scotland providing care and support to people affected by Motor Neurone Disease
National Concessionary Travel Scheme	The Scheme provides unlimited free bus travel across Scotland on eligible services for older and disabled people.
National Entitlement Card	The NEC allows older and disabled people to access transport on eligible modes free of charge.
National Islands Plan	The National Islands Plan provides a framework for action in order to meaningfully improve outcomes for island communities.

Office of Road and Rail	The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) is the independent safety and economic regulator for Britain's railways and monitor of Highways England
Regional Transport Partnerships	The collective name for Scotland's seven Transport Partnerships
RNIB	Royal National Institutes for Blind People
SEStran	South East Scotland's Transport Partnership
WSP	Private Engineer, Design, Planning and Research Consultants

Annex A: 48 issues within the Accessible Travel Framework

Consider how to have better integration between different modes of transport
Ensure paths are clear of obstructions like bollards, road works and wheelie bins and are accessible for all
Improve accessibility at more railway stations
Make each mode of transport more accessible to disabled people at least to, but preferably beyond, minimum standard and as quickly as possible
Consider how we influence design of buses/minibuses for people with different access needs
Make the journey experience better for disabled people getting to and from (and going between) bus and train stations and ferry terminals
Ensure that transport providers take responsibility for completion of a journey
Make tickets easier to access
Set up working reference groups involving public transport bodies, Regional Transport Partnerships Disabled People's Organisations and local groups to inform on priority connection issues
Include disabled people and Disabled People Organisations in decisions on transport
Standardise, evaluate and make mandatory delivery of disability equality training across all transport bodies
Train all transport providers in human rights and their roles and responsibilities in relation to disabled people
Seek commitments to improve effectiveness of equality training to taxi drivers to be able to assist disabled people
Ensure customer surveys are in accessible formats and relevant to issues for disabled travellers
Provide a guide for providers and disabled people to help them understand the equality responsibilities by giving them targeted, focused information on legislation, policies, regulation, contractual obligations, etc.
Provide a reference guide for transport operators on what they could do to support disabled people to travel more easily
Discuss with disabled people how to influence attitudes of staff

Use the upcoming Clyde and Hebridean ferry services tender to do more in terms of access
Accommodate the different needs for an accessible taxi
Funders such as Scottish Government could offer grants to help taxi firms improve their fleet to include accessible taxis
Local authorities should collect information on numbers and types of accessible taxis in their area to help them identify where improvements are needed
Require taxis to provide evidence of their exemption from taking passengers in wheelchairs or assistance dogs from taking passengers in wheelchairs or assistance dogs
Use taxi licensing to ensure a percentage of taxis at any one time are accessible to wheelchair users in each local authority area
Consider dangers when vehicles and pedestrians share the same space without obvious dividing lines and consult disabled people for solutions
Consider some form of central leadership or guidance for local demand responsive transport
Address issues where there is not enough ambulance transport – especially when needed for scheduled hospital appointments
Consider the removal of Blue Badge charges for those on low incomes
Consult locally and decide with disabled people on the number of Blue Badge spaces
Ensure that Blue Badge parking is rigorously enforced
Ensure appropriate toilet facilities near transport hubs: changing places toilets
Extend/improve concessionary travel to include community transport
Provide accessible information for disabled people to help them be safer on public transport
Tackle hate crime on public transport with help from British Transport Police
Address low availability of sign language interpreters or people with some knowledge of signing.
Agree on a universal symbol signage system across all modes of transport to make travelling more accessible for all
Produce a good practice strategy for signage replacement
Develop better travel information, e.g. on time and places of available buses, increase in use of audio and visual description
Develop integration of timetable information of different modes of transport

Ensure disabled people are aware of any breakdowns or changes to travel and alternative accessible transport/assistance is provided to complete the journey
If an accessible bus breaks down, ensure that it is replaced by an accessible bus
Ensure people know exactly where and when an accessible bus will be available
Provide a means of contacting operator in accessible format if things go wrong
Ensure more publicity for Passenger Assist, which is a central booking system for assistance to travel by rail
Make booking of accessible taxis more accessible
Taxis to be contactable by SMS, not just a phone number
Upgrade the class 156 train which serves the Highlands to current vehicle accessibility standards
Pilot an accessible taxi share scheme for local areas where no taxi firms have wheelchair accessible vehicles taxi firms have wheelchair accessible vehicles
Give prioritisation of wheelchair users over buggies on buses



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Published by Transport Scotland, July 2021

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