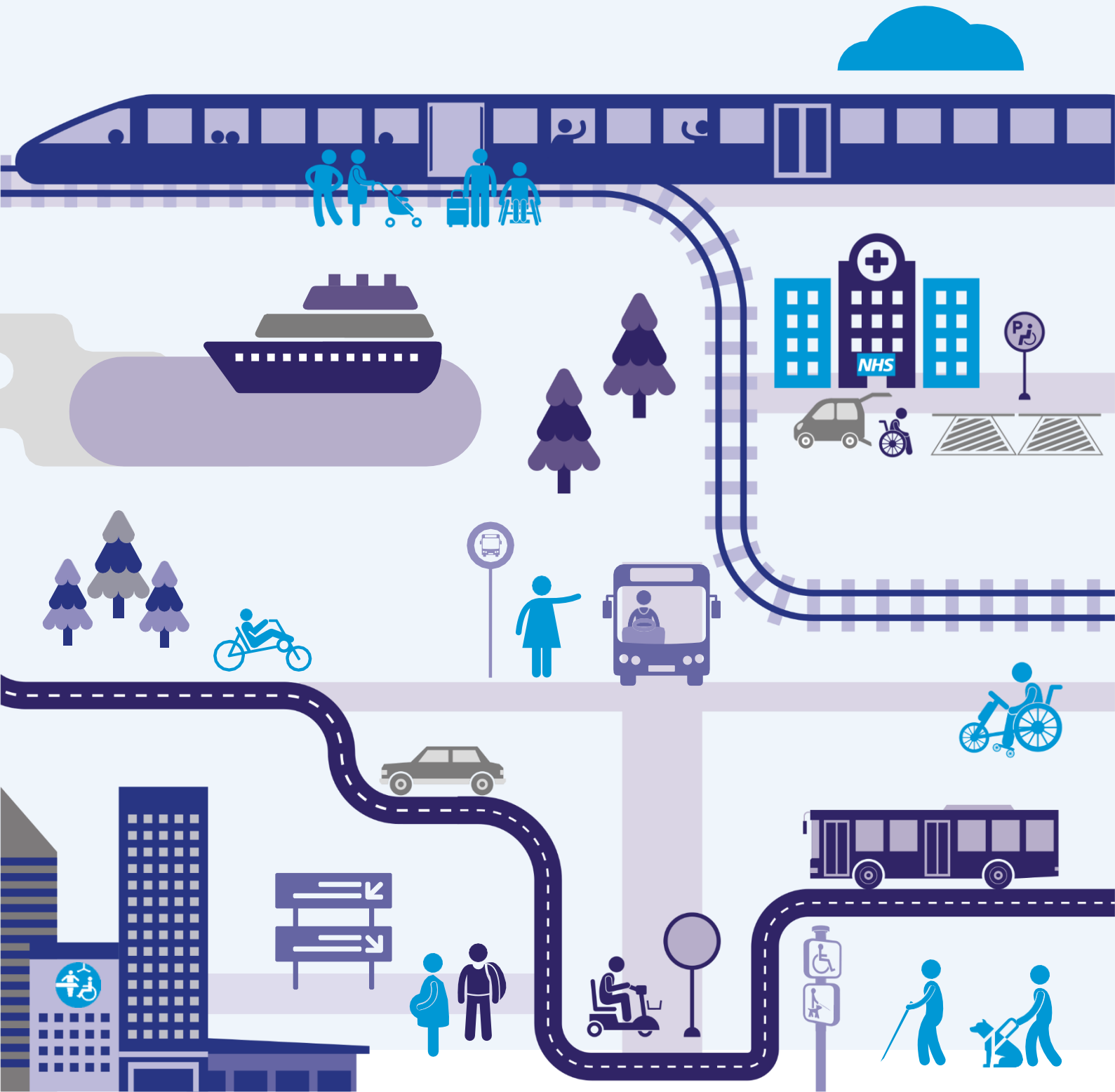




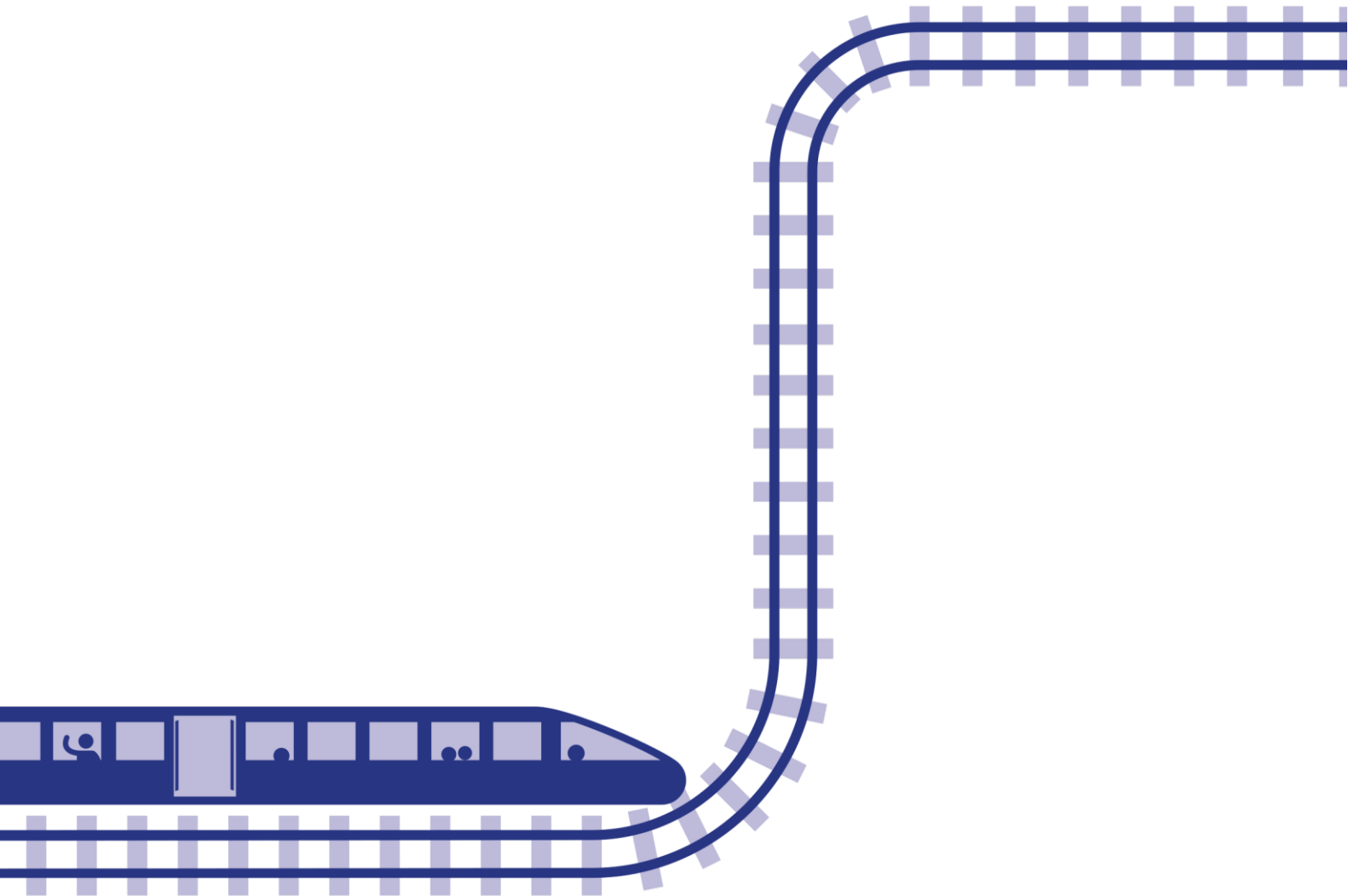
Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland Annual Report **2025-2026**





MACS

Advising Scottish Ministers
on Accessible Travel



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Convener's Foreword



As I reflect on my first year as Convener of MACS, I am delighted to report that it has been a year marked by transformation, learning, and renewed momentum. The past twelve months have seen significant development in how the Committee works, engages, and looks ahead, and I am proud of the progress we have made together.

From the outset, I have benefited from the support of the MACS Committee members, whose collective expertise, insight, and lived experience have been central to my transition into the role. Their openness, constructive challenge, and shared commitment have underpinned an effective and productive year of work.

A key focus of my first year has been relationship-building — within the Committee itself, and across our wider landscape. We have strengthened our engagement with colleagues in Transport Scotland, the Scottish Government, and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs), recognising that meaningful progress on accessible transport depends on collaboration, shared understanding, and sustained dialogue.

This year has also brought a marked change in the Committee's membership, as we bid farewell to our members who had completed their final terms with MACS; Joanne Devitt, Michael Tornow, and Naghat Ahmed. Their knowledge, expertise, and the valuable lived experience each brought to the Committee will be greatly missed. However, we were pleased to welcome Andrew Witty, Diana Winfield, Kate Samuels, Rachel Birch, and Simon Whyte to MACS, each introducing valuable skills, perspectives, and lived experience.

As we look ahead, MACS moves forward refreshed, resilient, and ready for the year to come. We anticipate working closely with the new Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Tourism and Transport and will continue to prioritise engagement as we raise our profile and advocate for disabled people across Scotland. Our purpose remains clear: to challenge barriers, influence policy, and ensure that transport systems are designed, delivered, and experienced as accessible for all.

A Brief Overview of MACS

Who We Are

The Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) is an advisory body established in 2002. We are dedicated to ensuring that the transport needs of disabled people are met across Scotland.

Our Mission

Our mission is to advocate for accessible, inclusive, and barrier-free transport systems that enable disabled people to travel independently and confidently.

Our Vision

We envision a Scotland where disabled people can enjoy seamless, door-to-door journeys, contributing to their full participation in society.

What We Do

- **Advise Scottish Ministers** - We provide expert advice on policies, legislation, and practices that impact the travel experiences of disabled people.
- **Promote Awareness** - We raise awareness about the importance of accessible transport and the challenges faced by disabled travellers.
- **Collaborate with Stakeholders** - We work closely with transport providers, planners, and other organisations to improve accessibility.
- **Monitor and Evaluate** - We assess the effectiveness of transport services and advocate for continuous improvements.

Our Impact

Since our inception, MACS has played a crucial role in shaping transport policies and practices, ensuring that the voices of disabled people are heard and their needs are prioritised.

Get Involved

We encourage feedback and participation from the community. Your insights help us to better understand the challenges and work towards more inclusive transport solutions.

Please email us at MACS@gov.scot or contact us on Twitter/X [@WeAreMACS](https://twitter.com/WeAreMACS), [LinkedIn](#) and [Bluesky](#)

The MACS Strategy

Strategic Plan 2026 - 2030

This year marked a significant milestone for MACS with the development and publication of our new Strategic Plan spanning 2026-2030, representing a key achievement for the reporting period and setting a clear direction for our work over the coming years.

The new Strategic Plan has been developed at a time of change for MACS, with refreshed leadership, new Committee members, and an evolving political and public transport landscape. It reflects both continuity and progress – building on MACS’ previous objectives while refining its focus to ensure it remains relevant, responsive, and impactful.

MACS’ previous strategic framework was structured around five high-level objectives and seven key priorities, which together focused on embedding accessibility across government, strengthening cross-portfolio working, promoting early engagement in policy and procurement, and supporting an inclusive and sustainable transport system. These priorities also included specific areas of focus such as Transport to Health and Motability, alongside broader themes including active travel and equality.

Our newly developed Strategic Plan retains the core intent of these objectives but introduces a clearer emphasis on delivery, accountability, and measurable progress. The updated objectives strengthen MACS’ role in not only advocating for accessibility but also supporting and influencing meaningful change across government and public bodies. There is a renewed focus on ensuring that accessibility is actively progressed, that duties are upheld, and that engagement with MACS is embedded more consistently in policy development.

The revised set of priorities reflects a more streamlined and integrated approach. While key themes such as Accessible Transport Systems, the National Transport Strategy, Active Travel, Island Connectivity, and Representation, Equality and Engagement remain central, there has been a consolidation of related areas. Notably, Transport to Health and Motability are now embedded within the broader priority of Active Travel and Infrastructure, recognising the interconnected nature of transport challenges and opportunities. This shift supports a more holistic approach to addressing accessibility across the full journey, including the critical “first and last mile”.

The development of this updated strategy positions us to respond effectively to current and future challenges, while continuing to influence policy, legislation and practice. It provides a strong, coherent framework for the Committee’s work and reinforces its commitment to driving progress towards a more accessible, inclusive and equitable transport system across Scotland.

High Level Objectives

Objective One

To build on the Scottish Government's policy to promote a fair, accessible and inclusive Scotland.

Objective Two

To work across Cabinet and Ministerial portfolios to ensure the need for an accessible transport system is recognised, supported, and meaningfully progressed.

Objective Three

To ensure that the Scottish Government has public bodies and local authorities uphold their duties regarding the provision of accessible public transport and infrastructure and supports progress in these areas.

Objective Four

To advocate for engagement with MACS when developing or revising policy and ensure accessibility is given priority consideration when developing or revising policy, plans or contracts by officials in the Scottish Government and other areas of influence.

Objective Five

To support Transport Scotland to deliver on accessibility and equality outcomes within the National Transport Strategy, ensuring delivery plans lead to meaningful change for disabled persons, and working in close collaboration with Transport Scotland on the Accessible Travel Framework.

Key Priorities

1. Accessible Transport Systems
2. National Transport Strategy
3. Active Travel & Infrastructure (including Transport to Health & Motability)
4. Island Connectivity Plan
5. Representation, Equality & Engagement

Influencing Policy

Throughout 2025–2026, MACS continued to provide expert advice and lived experience insight across a wide range of national policies, consultations, and legislative developments. By engaging directly with Ministers, civil servants, industry stakeholders, and Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs), we ensured that accessibility and inclusion remained central to transport policy decisions.

National Cross-cutting Policy and Strategy

MACS played an active role in shaping national policy across multiple portfolios, reinforcing the importance of transport as an enabler of rights and inclusion:

- **Strengthening the evidence base for policy:** MACS drew on the recently published *Disability and Transport* report to highlight declining satisfaction, safety concerns, and reduced travel among disabled people. This evidence was used to inform engagement with Transport Scotland and underpin policy recommendations.
- **Responding to consultations and legislative developments:** MACS contributed to a wide range of national and UK Government consultations, including the Scottish Government’s *Draft Climate Change Plan (2026–2040)*, the *Scottish Bus Open Data consultation*, the Department for Transport’s consultation on *Reviewing the Law for Powered Mobility Devices*, and the Call for Evidence on *Developing the Automated Vehicles Regulatory Framework*. Across these, as well as responses to the *Long-Term Conditions Consultation* and *Just Transition Draft Plan*, MACS consistently highlighted risks of digital exclusion, the importance of accessible and accurate passenger information, and the need for inclusive design in both emerging technologies and data-driven services. The Committee emphasised that accessibility must be embedded from the outset in policy development, particularly in relation to open data, new mobility technologies, and future regulatory frameworks.
- **Influencing major policy frameworks:** MACS engaged in the development of the Accessible Travel Framework Successor, advocating for early and meaningful involvement of lived experience. The Committee also contributed to discussions on the Public Service Reform Strategy, raising concerns around the impact of digitalisation on accessibility.
- **Embedding accessibility across sectors:** Through engagement with public health, planning, and sustainability networks, MACS reinforced the links between transport, health inequalities, and inclusive economic growth, particularly in relation to active travel and place-based interventions.

Ministerial Engagement and Strategic Influence

MACS maintained strong relationships with Ministers, senior officials, and national stakeholders to influence decision-making at the highest level:

- Regularly engaged with Transport Scotland's senior leadership, including biannual meetings with the CEO and Director General for Net Zero.
- Wrote to Ministers and engaged directly on key issues, including the Motability scheme's value for money and recommendations for the Accessible Travel Framework Successor.
- Continued dialogue with Motability Foundation and Operations, contributing to the development of a new Transport Equity focus group to ensure reinvestment decisions reflect disabled people's priorities.
- Supported wider system change by engaging with organisations such as DriveAbility and Policy Connect, promoting joined-up approaches to transport, health, and social policy.

Lived Experience and Engagement

A key focus this year has been strengthening engagement with disabled people and their representative organisations to inform policy:

- **Building relationships with DPOs:** MACS initiated structured engagement with a range of organisations including People First, Carers Scotland, Cornerstone, and The Assembly. These discussions provided valuable insight into barriers such as inaccessible consultation processes, digital exclusion, and the complexity of concessionary travel systems.
- **Embedding lived experience in policy:** Insights gathered highlighted persistent issues including inconsistent concessionary schemes, inaccessible journey planning tools, and challenges accessing healthcare due to transport barriers.
- **Championing meaningful engagement:** MACS advocated for improved consultation practices, including longer timescales, accessible formats, and better resourcing to enable participation from people with learning disabilities and other seldom-heard groups.

This work has strengthened MACS' ability to provide informed, evidence-based advice rooted in lived experience.

MACS provided targeted advice across transport modes, influencing both national programmes and service-level improvements:

- **Rail Reform and Accessibility:**

- Responded to the Great British Railways consultation, successfully influencing the inclusion of accessibility considerations within new governance structures.
- Contributed to the UK Government's Rail Accessibility Roadmap and ongoing work on Passenger Assist, including monitoring and compensation processes.
- Supported increased investment in the station accessibility programme.

- **Ferries and Aviation:**

- Provided detailed feedback on vessel design, accessibility standards, and new procurement processes, including Northern Isles vessel plans and the NIFS4 contract.
- Advised on sensory space provision and accessibility improvements across the CalMac fleet.
- Continued to raise concerns about accessibility on lifeline air routes, emphasising the need for step-free access and robust impact assessments.

- **Infrastructure and Active Travel:**

- Contributed to national guidance on *Inclusive Design for Town Centres and Busy Streets*, reinforcing the need for accessible environments.
- Participated in a Transport Scotland working group to inform updates to *Cycling by Design*, ensuring that active travel infrastructure takes account of the needs of disabled people, both in using and interacting with it. MACS highlighted concerns about "floating bus stops", noting the dangers created where passengers must cross live cycle lanes to board or alight from buses. We have expressed our opposition to any form of floating bus stop due to the significant and severe risks they pose to disabled people. While supporting the expansion of active travel, MACS also worked with officials to identify safer, more inclusive design solutions, including improved engagement with end users.
- Worked with Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans) to review and improve Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) guidance for local authorities, which contributed

to the development of a practical tool to support more robust and accessible active travel planning under the Equality Act 2010.

- Continued engagement with the Scottish Road Works Commissioner and Roads for All Forum, contributing to ongoing updates to *Roads for All Guidance* and supporting improved practice to reduce barriers across the transport network.

Cross-Government and Parliamentary Engagement

MACS continued to engage across the parliamentary landscape, ensuring accessibility was reflected in wider policy discussions:

- Participated in Cross-Party Groups (CPGs), including Disability, Poverty, Sustainable Transport, and Rural Policy, highlighting the links between transport, inequality, and human rights.
- Contributed to discussions on poverty and disability, reinforcing the role of accessible transport in reducing exclusion and enabling participation in society.
- Engaged with UK-level inquiries and reports, including the Transport Committee's *Access Denied* report, aligning Scottish insights with wider system challenges.

Digital and Communication Influence

MACS expanded its influence through improved communication and engagement:

- Strengthened its digital presence across LinkedIn, X (Twitter), and BlueSky to share policy insights, promote consultations, and amplify lived experience.
- Used social media strategically to build relationships with stakeholders, increase visibility, and reinforce MACS' role as a trusted authority in accessible transport.
- Continued to promote inclusive communication practices and highlight gaps in digital accessibility across transport services and government engagement.

Overall, our influencing work this year has demonstrated the importance of integrating lived experience into policy development, strengthening cross-sector collaboration, and ensuring accessibility is embedded across all aspects of transport planning and delivery.

Big Ticket Items -Year at a Glance

Successor to the Accessible Travel Framework (ATF)

This year, MACS set influencing the shape of the Successor to the Accessible Travel Framework as one of its objectives. We were keen to ensure that the successor benefitted from the experience of the Framework and resulted in some improvements. In November, MACS wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, setting out our position. The points we are particularly keen to see actioned are:

- A better linkage between the Accessible Travel Framework and mainstream transport policy, particularly the National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2), which should have a role to play in monitoring it.
- A series of concrete targets to be achieved by the end of the Successor's timeframe in ten years' time, e.g. level-boarding for all ScotRail rolling stock.

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport accepted our case overall and our views are being fed into the restructuring of the Successor, including how it fits into the NTS2. MACS has also drawn up a series of concrete targets that could be included in the Successor, which are being considered.

This work has been an example of effective collaboration and engagement, with the Convener and Vice-Convener meeting with the Accessible Travel Team Leader on a semi-regular basis. Transport Scotland's Accessible Travel Team have also engaged with the full Committee on this regularly, providing updates and taking on queries at our Quarterly Board meetings.

RAUCs (Roads Authorities and Utilities Committee for Scotland) Seminar

Continuing our work with the Road Works Commissioner, members of the Active Travel and Infrastructure Workstream were invited to attend their annual seminar, where we presented videos showing the barriers some people face when temporary roadworks are not installed allowing for accessibility.

Our presentation was received very positively by the members with many queries from members including utility companies. MACS welcomes this type of opportunity to engage with those responsible for shaping our built and natural environments that we use to access public transport.

Working with Motability

MACS has been working hard to advocate for value for money for customers of the Motability scheme, building upon our positive relationships with the CEOs of both Motability Operations (MO) & Motability Foundation (MF).

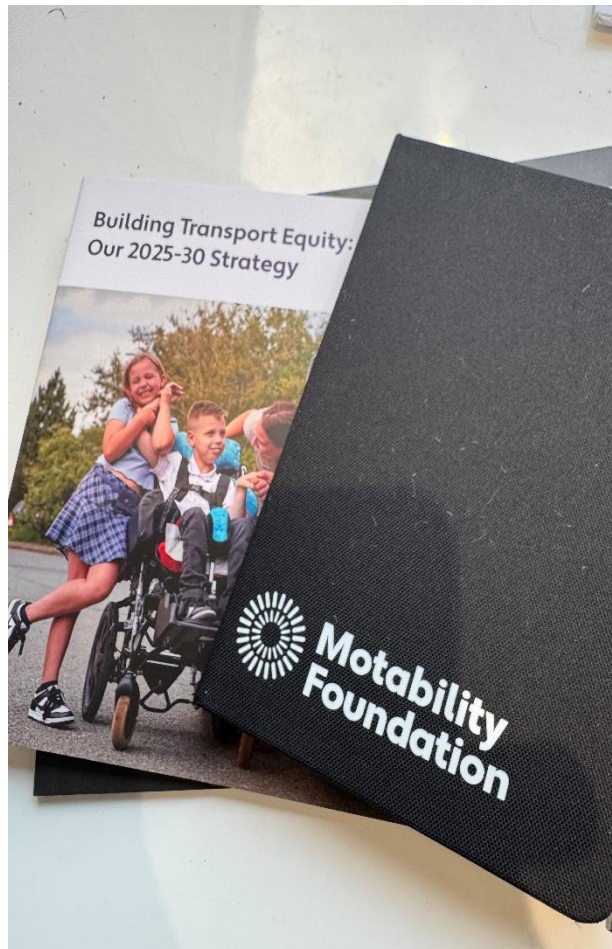
We asked them to set up a Scottish Transport Equity Group to explore how MO & MF could better

support both disabled people and their organisations. The Scottish Transport Equity Group has met twice over the year, and it will continue to meet to influence how profits can be better directed to support disabled people in Scotland.

We are in active and regular dialogue with Motability about the recent changes to the scheme as a result of the Westminster Budget. MACS are deeply concerned that Accessible Vehicle Equipment (AVE) scheme users are being subject to disproportionate financial impact by the UK Government, facing higher deposits and increasingly expensive running costs. We will continue to raise our great concerns over this issue, highlighting the adverse impact on disabled peoples' wellbeing to Scottish Ministers.



MACS Member Michael Tornow and his guide dog navigate road works on their way to the RAUC Seminar



A snap taken by MACS Member Naghat Ahmed at Motability Foundation's Scottish Stakeholder Convening Event

Workstream Lead Reflections



Simon Watkins – MACS Vice Convener and Rail Lead

“There have been some big leaps forward in 2025-26 in the accessibility of Scotland’s railways. The biggest of these was the announcement that all ScotRail’s future rolling stock (apart from Inter-City services) will be designed for level boarding. This is a huge step forward which will benefit not only disabled passengers, but parents with buggies etc., and something we have sought for a while.

We had also suggested in our response to the Government’s proposals for the railways next Financial Period, that the UK-wide Access for All scheme be beefed up in Scotland. We wanted this as analysis by our sister organisation south of the border, DPTAC, had revealed that it will take 80-100 years to give all stations step-free access through this scheme. The Scottish Government has responded and is in the process of setting up an additional budget to supplement Access for All.

We are also in the process of trying to influence the Railways Bill, which sets up Great British Railways, as it goes through the UK Parliament. The Bill does now include a new duty on both Great British Railways and especially its Passenger Council to look after the needs of disabled passengers, which we and many other DPOs had called for in the consultation on the Draft Bill. We are also seeking to guarantee disabled representation on the Passenger Council, but it is currently too early in the process to know if we will be successful in this.”



Anne Macleod – Ferries and Aviation Lead

“This year, we’ve continued to build strong relationships with key stakeholders and service providers. Lots of good things are happening around ferry accessibility including the trialling of NaviLens to assist sight-impaired passengers and the establishment of CalMac’s Accessibility Board, on which we sit.

This is another platform where we can push for firm commitments to improve design across booking systems, terminals and vessels. We have been advising on replacement vessels at design stage, sharing lived experience and suggesting modifications to improve the journey for disabled passengers, ensuring new vessels entering service meet the needs of everyone.”



Susan Fulton – Active Travel and Infrastructure Lead

"It's been a challenging year for the group with diminishing numbers to carry out the sheer volume of work associated with the subject area of Active Travel and Infrastructure; however we have been able to contribute to consultations, working groups and engage directly with organisations that affect how we all negotiate the environments we use every day to try and ensure that they are as accessible and inclusive as possible.

We were happy to see the Inclusive Design for Town Centres and Busy Streets published as well as Cycling by Design and delighted to be asked to attend the RAUCs (Roads Authorities and Utilities for Scotland) Seminar where we were able to impress upon the attendees the importance of removing as many barriers as possible when temporary works are being carried out.

The workstream sadly lost two long-standing members who had completed their final terms after 8 years with MACS; Naghat Ahmed and Michael Tornow. Both Naghat and Michael worked tirelessly to contribute to MACS work and their talent and expertise will be hugely missed by all of us."



Anya Kettles – Acting Planning, Strategy and Engagement Lead

"It has been a pleasure to engage with disabled people and their organisations over the past year. We have represented MACS at many events and conferences. Some of the highlights include: Transport Scotland's Staff Conference, the Accessibility Four Nations Meetings, DriveAbility's Glasgow Launch, the Cross-Party Group on Disability, the

National Centre for Accessible Transport's (NCAT) Scotland Roundtable and Joined Up Policy's 'Joined Up Journeys' Launch.

We have also attended the National Transport Accessibility Steering Group and met regularly with Transport Scotland's Accessible Travel Team to support the development of the new Accessible Travel Framework (ATF) Successor.

Over the coming year we will have an even greater focus on engagement with new 'Engagement Champions' sharing the progress of each workstream."

Lesley Macinnes – Public and Community Transport Lead



“We took part in the SPT Transport Summit concentrating on The Future of Buses in Glasgow and the West of Scotland where we emphasised the importance of accessibility issues around appropriate bus design and infrastructure needs.

We also participated in the Scottish Transport Summit, raising similar issues within constructive conversations. We were also pleased to learn from Mencap's presentation of a study into the barriers routinely experienced by people with a learning disability when using public transport across the UK, 'No Journey Left Behind'.”

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to read and reflect on our work. With sincere thanks from all of us on the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland.