



Scottish Disability Equality Forum

Accessible Travel Plan Engagement Events

Report of Findings

'Travel is a means to an end. Successful community engagement is the end, transport accessibility is the means'

Access Panel Member

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Introduction

The Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF) works to promote access, equality and inclusion across Scotland for disabled people. The organization seeks to achieve this through facilitating disabled people's engagement and participation on local and national disability issues. SDEF also works with national and government bodies and other third sector partners to ensure that the rights, views and wishes of disabled people are reflected in the decision-making processes which affect them.

Working with the Scottish Government, the transport community and disabled people through their organisations, Transport Scotland seek to improve accessible travel in Scotland through the development of a 10-year plan; the Accessible Travel Plan, due to be launched in September 2016.

As a result of close working with COSLA and other bodies Transport Summit held last year, Transport Scotland commissioned SDEF to deliver engagement events across Scotland in partnership with Access Panels. The aim of these events was to discuss with disabled people the draft Vision, Outcomes and Key Actions which will eventually take the form of their Accessible Travel Plan, due to launch later this year.

This work is of particular interest to those who both understand the need and wish to ensure that disabled people are involved in the planning from the outset. Transport Scotland have endeavored to make this process as inclusive and accessible as possible, seeking advice and guidance on all aspects of the development process with disabled people, disability organisations and other related groups and bodies involved in the process.

An inclusive approach is still badly needed in many areas of planning and decision-making in Scotland, where serious barriers to education, employment, housing and of course, travel affect disabled people's access to living a life of their choosing. True coproduction can be a lengthy process as one takes into account a range of needs and challenges; however, the benefits of working together and producing a genuinely accessible plan has the potential to yield far greater and long-lasting benefits for all.

The following report discusses the approach implemented by Transport Scotland and partners to have disabled people's view guide the planning process, and provides a summary of the discussions, concerns and recommendations of disabled people in the process of developing the Accessible Travel Plan, due to be launched later this year.

Executive Summary

A series of Engagement events were held across Scotland with a view to capturing the views and comments from disabled people on the Accessible Travel Plan, developed in partnership with Scottish Government bodies, the Transport Community and disabled people through their organisations with a view to improving access to transport for disabled people in Scotland over a 10-year period.

The event locations were Scotland-wide to maximize coverage of rural and urban, demographic and geographic factors. An average of 18 people attended across 9 events with 160 attending in total. Attendees were predominantly Access Panel members, disabled volunteers who work to improve access and equality in their own communities.

Overview

The feedback from attendees on the concept of the Accessible Travel Plan was on the whole, very positive. It was particularly welcomed that the Plan was felt to be realistic in its timescales and rather than promising much across many areas, focused instead on specific actions, with the progress of each being monitored in conjunction with disabled people through planned short surveys and progress evaluation groups.

Approvals and Recommendations

Recommendations made by attendees of the Accessible Travel Plan Engagement Events included the following:

Concerns

The potential risks to the successful execution of the plan, identified by the Steering Group were for the most part, reflected by disabled people across the events held. These included concerns around

- Continued gaps in knowledge and understanding through failure to achieve concordance with Transport Providers on the need
- Length of time taken to effect changes across larger stakeholders
- Staff lacking knowledge or authority to accommodate or make reasonable adjustment

- Failure to collaborate systematically
- Failure of accountability mechanisms

Next Steps

It is vital to ensure that disabled people feel included in, and informed of, the national picture of the Accessible Travel Plan as it develops. For this reason, Transport Scotland have commissioned SDEF to deliver two means of the

Accessible Travel Plan National Survey

Disabled people in Scotland will feel included in, and informed of, the national picture of accessible transport through survey participation and feedback. A national survey will be promoted across all media twice within the next funding year, targeted at disabled people across Scotland. Information from Transport Scotland around the general progress of the ATP will be disseminated and feedback sought. This survey will provide trend information on a national level, and will be combined with the information from the more specific longitudinal group. The survey will be used to gauge and improve outreach to, as well as response from, disabled people and it is intended that the process will provide useful guidance on national engagement with disabled people for other purposes.

Accessible Travel Plan Progress Evaluation Group (Longitudinal)

To ensure that disabled people have ongoing involvement in monitoring the progress of the Accessible Travel Plan development and implementation, SDEF will develop a long-term group of disabled individuals and representatives of disabled people's – and disability organisations. We will seek to appoint one person from each of the 'regional panel networks' (e.g., Glasgow and Clyde, Lothian and Borders, North East, South West, Forth Valley and Tayside, Western Isles and Highlands and Islands).

This group will be informed within timescales agreed by Transport Scotland to feed back on progress of the Travel Plan. This will be achieved through a combination of face-to-face discussion and where distance is an issue, through remote communication (e.g., Skype, telephone) and online survey. However, opportunities arising from other events in more remote areas will be maximised to ensure face-to-face discussions wherever possible.

The data from this group will be collated, analysed and reported to the Transport Scotland and will be disseminated through SDEF networks and accessible formats (including easy read) as required and approved by Transport Scotland.

Monitoring Progress

- Scottish Transport Statistics
- National Household Survey
- National Rail Passenger Survey
- National Bus Passenger Survey
- Scottish Crime and Justice Survey
- Transport provider data

Data Gathering

The aim of the data gathered from the events is to provide :

- a. an overview of disabled people's reactions to the draft Accessible Travel Plan Vision, Outcomes and Key Actions.
- b. specific insight through lived experience, into challenges and opportunities the plan may bring for disabled people and wider society

The information gathered has been sorted by item rather than geographical location to ensure a full overview of disabled people's comments, regardless of location. However, as it is important to record barriers/opportunities specific to areas (e.g., rural v urban) those issues raised which are particular to a locality have been noted under the heading 'Local Issues'. The worksheet used to gather this information is available in **Appendix A**.

The information which informs this report was gathered with the following methods:

1. Engagement Events
2. Online Survey
3. Printed and other alternative formats

Engagement Events

The Engagement Events were held as regional events across Scotland. The events were attended by a total of 160 people, comprising disabled people, Access Panel members and other local bodies.

Date	Partner Access Panel	Location	No. Attendees
28/4/16	W Dumbartonshire Access Panel	Dalmuir	23
11/5/16	Perth Centre for Inclusive Living	Perth	26
12/5/16	Disabilities Fife	Fife	8

17/5/16	Midlothian Access Panel	Edinburgh	20
24/5/16	Bon Accord Access Panel	Aberdeen	25
31/5/16	Inverness Access Panel	Inverness	24
1/6/16	Berwickshire Access Panel	Duns	6
7/6/16	Dumfries and Galloway Access Panel	Dumfries	18
8/6/16	Skye and Lochalsh Access Panel	Skye	10

Attendees considered the following during the event:

- Accessible Travel Plan Vision – summary of what the Plan aims to achieve
- Accessible Travel Plan Outcomes – 4 key outcomes to be met through the successful execution of the Key Actions
- Accessible Travel Plan Key Actions – pertaining to six key actions around accessible taxis, bus design, hate crime and safety, local authority engagement with disabled people, changing places toilets and disability equality training.

Attendees

The majority of participants were disabled people from a wide range of backgrounds and also those from a number of access and equality groups and bodies across Scotland.

People First
Capability Scotland
Badenoch and Strathspey Access Panel
Deaf Action
Guide Dogs Association
Enable
CVS Falkirk
Perth & Kinross Council
Deaf Links

Living Streets
Midlothian Council
Handicabs Lothian
Ability Borders
North Link Ferries
Dundee University
Dial A Bus, Dundee
National Health Service, Tayside
North Lanarkshire Council
PAMIS

Online Survey

The workshop content was also made available as an online survey as an alternative to attending events. This served to ensure that those who wish to comment in more detail could do so in their own time.

A copy of the Online Survey is available in **Appendix B**

Accessible Formats

The survey was made available in large print, audio, pdf and text only for readers. Individuals were also encouraged to call SDEF should they require someone to go through the questions with them over the phone after the event.

Agenda

To ensure a simple, straightforward day for all who attended, the schedule consisted of an introduction, a morning and afternoon session, with lunch and refreshments provided. Following the afternoon session, a round-up of key issues raised were discussed before closing.

During the morning and afternoon sessions, attendees worked through one document (see Appendix B) at their own pace, allowing groups to pause and reflect on issues of particular importance to them. There were a maximum of 5 people at each table, creating a small group environment which was more inclusive and accessible., e.g., for participants with a learning disability, hearing impairment or communication support needs.

Inclusive Approach and Accessibility

The venues were chosen through the recommendation of the access panels, ensuring that they were accessible, with accessible parking bays (or ample parking) and accessible toilet facilities.

Booking used a combination of formats which included online booking, by email and by phone. All used the same template to capture communication support needs (e.g., BSL, palantypist, etc.), requirement for accessible formats (e.g., large print, yellow paper, etc.) dietary requirements and access needs to ensure an inclusive event.

Papers were in Easy Read where appropriate (Agenda, etc.) Directions included all transport modes and contained a map.

The layout of the events used a 'cabaret layout' – circles of tables to allow for a small group of up to five people. This meant that individuals who were hard of hearing, or those who may not 'speak up' in a larger group could feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts.

Ideas and Suggestions

The events provided an excellent opportunity for participants to share ideas, and a brief outline of some of the creative thinking achieved at these events can be found in **Appendix C**, if only to demonstrate the value of such events in garnering the resourcefulness and solution-focused approach of many who are directly affected by challenges in access.

Accessible Travel Plan : Vision

Our vision for accessible transport in Scotland is where all disabled people have the same freedom, choice, dignity and control to travel as other citizens.

The feedback around the Accessible Travel Vision was generally very positive, with many participants feeling that the inclusive approach taken showed a genuine commitment to engaging with disabled people. The responses below are from individuals who completed the online survey, Appendix D.

‘This vision would improve disabled people’s transport experiences’

‘I think it is a great vision and covers everything that it should’

‘I feel it is a very ambitious vision, but if carried out, it would help disabled people greatly’

The ‘singling out’ of disabled people as opposed to a holistic approach of including everyone in the plan was raised at each event with many similar versions of a shortened, inclusive and non-disability specific vision suggested, e.g., ‘Our vision for transport in Scotland is that all people can travel independently’. However, it was understood that the Accessible Travel Plan needs to be closely identified with disability and access to retain political focus on improving these specific areas.

The wording ‘door-to-door’ was found to be confusing for some participants, as the definition of door-to-door was different, depending upon the mobility of the individual. For example, a person with limited mobility may require a taxi from their door, whereas someone with no physical disability may feel that door-to-door would mean a journey which began at a bus stop. However, as the term suggested a more complete journey and greater commitment to accessibility than ‘A-to-B’, it was felt generally that the term should remain.

Additional words recommended to be included in the Vision were:

Affordability – i.e. rural transport may not be accessible due to expense

Opportunity - this was recommended as a substitute for the word 'control'. Opportunity does not feature in the Vision, but it was considered to be fundamental to inclusive and accessible travel. 'Opportunity' alluded to the freedom and spontaneity of travel which non-disabled people may often overlook. Being able to travel at will, it was felt, would have a far greater impact on people's lives and includes that aspect of control over how and when one travels.

'Spontaneity is important and a part of independent life!'

Safety- whilst this word features within the Key Action around Hate Crime, it was felt that the word should be contained within key words used within the vision to reinforce the importance of feeling – and being – safe whilst travelling.

Importance of Transport in Society

There was also discussion around the way in which Transport is viewed and addressed by other bodies, providers and directorates, namely that the importance of Transport in daily life was overlooked and undervalued:

'Transport as a means of travel is too narrow. Transport is a means of participation in community & social life'

Some participants commented that the importance of travel for disabled people should be reflected in the vision to reinforce the need of partners to act from the outset.

'Travel is a means to an end. Successful community engagement is the end, transport accessibility is the means'

Some participants felt that a definition of disability would further enhance transport staff's understanding of who the plan is aimed at, and the barriers typically experienced through a lack of staff knowledge on disability when travelling.

There was concern from many that the Vision would fall short on account of the size and number of bodies needed to engage, and the slow processes involved in turning these bodies to measurable action.

It was also voiced that the Vision was still based on the concept of Independent Living which, whilst positive, did not, it was felt, focus enough on the neighbouring concepts of the citizenship model, which fosters equity, accountability and integration.

‘This is an old statement taken from the concept of Independent Living. We should have independence & integration. We can interact with everyone!’

Many participants felt that the word ‘control’ in the vision was ambiguous, meaning for some, control over how and when to book or how and when to travel and for others being more about having control during the journey, e.g., having access to support, accessible toilets, improved customer service, etc.

Financial Commitment to the Accessible Travel Plan

There was a level of skepticism around the availability of funding to address – or work towards addressing – these issues. Whilst it was explained that the Accessible Travel Plan is a long-term plan with an intended lifespan of 10 years, there was still concern that accessibility may not be of sufficient priority to the Scottish Government to warrant an adequate commitment to additional funding.

Thus, participants raised the need to formally recognise financial commitment to achieve this vision., e.g., increased funding for research, subsidised travel, improved equipment and investment in new technologies, to cover the significant timescale outlined. The need for the Scottish Government to commit financially to allow for transitioning between old and new processes, technologies and information was also raised. One participant remarked on a local issue which requires attention now:

‘...for example, In Edinburgh, we have a great audio visual system on the buses. However, many of the tracker poles which alert the bus to each stop are now sadly out of action, which means that bus drivers will often turn off the audio-visual system altogether. The vision needs to reflect a financial commitment to improvement now, ensuring that existing structures are maintained whilst new structures are developed.’

Recommendations

Participants were positive about the vision and on the whole, felt that it covered all that it should. Whilst there were many suggestions around shortening the vision, the weighting of similar comments produced only the recommendation that the word ‘Opportunity’ should be inserted into the

Accessible Travel Plan Vision

Our vision for accessible transport in Scotland is where all disabled people can travel with the same freedom, choice, dignity and opportunity as other citizens.

Outcome 1

More disabled people make successful door-to-door journeys, more often.

‘Accessible transport enables disabled people to better engage in all aspects of community and social life’.

There was much debate around the definitions of ‘successful’ and ‘door-to-door’. For some disabled people, success was a completed journey; for others, it was a journey completed on time, without intimidation, or compromise on desired destinations or connections. Understanding of door-to-door differed according to levels of mobility and distance from public transport.

‘What does door to door mean? Dropped kerbs are an issue, if you can’t cross a road, you can’t travel. No assistance to get on bus to use being able to do 98% of journey if you can’t do other 2%. No guarantee that if you get to your destination, you’ll get back again. If you’re going for the last bus of the night and a wheelchair is already onboard, what happens?’

Integration (transfer between modes) and accessible information featured heavily in the comments made by participants who felt that these were the marker of a ‘successful journey’

Another important point made throughout the events was that establishing a baseline to measure an increase in ‘successful’, ‘door-to-door’ journeys, ‘more often’ would require capturing data of those disabled people deterred from travelling and therefore not reached by transport providers, for example...

‘...fear of travel, danger, embarrassment; lack of income; inability to communicate adequately with drivers, guards etc.; fear of using push buttons/intercom etc. for alerting staff; poor knowledge of where to get assistance for bus travel; lack of information on accessibility measures

between transport modes... all of these were raised as potential reasons why a person may choose not to travel.

Participants felt strongly that working to remove barriers for those deterred from travelling would be a true mark of progress in inclusion and increased participation in society through travel.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

The vast majority of participants agreed felt that this outcome was satisfactory and did not require a change the wording.

Outcome 2

Disabled people are involved in the design, development and improvement of transport policies, services and infrastructure.

There were several discussions around the wording of 'policies, services and infra-structure' in terms of its accessibility. However, having found no suitable alternative, it was recommended that a short explanation be provided to describe what these terms mean. Many understood 'infra-structure' to mean 'structure' as in, transport buildings such as bus stations and it was noted that whilst terminologies were explained at the events, others would not have such an opportunity for clarification.

This outcome was largely welcomed with the majority in agreement on what it aims to achieve. Disabled people who attended the events reiterated strongly that disabled people need to be involved in the early stages (and all stages) of transport design and development:

'Consultation sometimes happens after the job's done. It has approval over the last few years. Feels like it's more about profit, like how many people can we fit in for a journey. Process is too slow – need to involve people with disabilities from the very start – access panels help bus design, but can't fix it when they're already built'

'[There] should be legal requirements for disabled people to be consulted (stakeholder engagement) from discussion, drawings, until completion for any transport. Also, long haul flights seats, toilets'

The 'rubber stamping' approach of engaging with disabled people at the end of the process was raised at every table in every event and is a common theme which is assumed to be the norm rather than the exemption.

'Rather than "what's the minimum we can do" – more "best practice"'

For this reason, it was suggested that the wording 'from the outset' be inserted into Outcome 2. It was felt that the wording fell short of the need to ensure that disabled people were involved at a point where their input could positively influence the level of accessibility of design, services and infra-structure.

Waverley Station was commonly cited by people from all areas as an example of what goes wrong when disabled people are not adequately or timeously involved in planning

However, positive changes were also noted across the events, as the good work of various transport providers was recognised by some groups. (note that this varied significantly between regions).

'Rail are increasingly trying to include disabled groups at start of planning process'.

'First Bus are doing a lot to improve customer service and engagement'

Many Access Panel members also fed back at discussions that they have good relationships with their local councils and were involved in early planning discussions on a regular basis (e.g., Skye, Aberdeenshire, Inverness, Renfrewshire, West Dumbartonshire, Perth, Badenoch & Strathspey and others)

There were varied views on the value of lived experience and professional advice when engaging with decision-makers.

'Only those with lived experience can truly understand what is - and what is not - accessible'

'Representation at planning stages should be from properly organised disabled persons organisations. Sometimes an individual will focus on their own disability and not others'.

The issue of 'hidden disabilities' was commonly raised as an area which many customer-facing staff were neither adequately informed of, or able to support.

'People with autism often cannot cope with change – also rerouting of bus services may not be properly thought through.'

‘Autistic individuals are vastly misunderstood and badly treated by staff and public alike. There needs to be greater awareness of those on the spectrum for all who travel and work in travel’

‘Addictions and related self-neglect conditions are a health condition that should command the same attentions as any other condition which may exclude people from access to transport and participation in community and social life.’

‘My deafness is a hidden disability and I have to declare it then instruct the ticket-person how to communicate with me every time I book a journey. Most are well-meaning and supportive, but some just look horrified and it’s clear that no training has been given. I’m just a normal person who happens to be deaf!’

With regard to policy, it was noted that there has to be an element of enforcement through consequence and accountability for it to affect change. It was suggested that revision of policies which affect disabled people should be more widely known to enable that sense of accountability.

Across the events, there were many experiences voiced of disabled people not having a platform to raise accessibility issues in their locality and so this outcome was welcomed as a means to improve engagement and achieve positive change.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

Outcome agreed, with the suggested rewording of Outcome 2 to clarify terminology, improve accessibility and emphasize timing.

Involve disabled people from the outset in the design, development and improvement of transport:

- Policies (definition)
- Services (definition)
- Infrastructure (definition)

Outcome 3

Everyone involved in delivering transport information, services and infrastructure can support disabled people to travel.

The aim and wording of this outcome was positively received by the vast majority of participants and many of the comments alluded to the need for balance between staff knowing how to assist appropriately whilst respecting the specific needs of the individual. This highlights a key issue for many disabled people who feel that their needs are often secondary to what staff believe is 'right for them'. Appropriate training in access, equality and inclusion is required to ensure that staff are informed in their approach and respectful in their delivery.

'Good outcome – not to the point where everyone has had training and tells people with disabilities how to travel – to assist only.'

'Staff delivering service must be properly trained and given knowledge. Should have information to hand'.

'There needs to be a national standard for training with individual bolt on modules for each type of public transport. Needs to be all levels of staff'

'Ensure mandatory training is in place. [We] Want people to just be considerate and kind in the first place'

Consistency in Customer Service

Consistency of approach with regard to customer service featured greatly in discussions, and it was largely agreed that a national standard in Disability Equality Training was necessary.

'Some (staff) are really good, some are bad – it makes travelling very uncertain as you don't know how you're going to be treated.'

Citizenship

There was discussion around personal accountability for the safety of others and the fact that a successful journey may not solely be about the approach of staff. Accepting to a degree the duty of care as a citizen to assist someone on the same journey, was felt to be a rapidly diminishing concept. It was suggested that awareness raising on transport through posters and other media may encourage the public to consider their responsibilities as citizens. Whilst there were mixed feelings around a fellow travelling individual putting him/herself in an uncomfortable or even potentially dangerous position, this debate did raise the issue of our increasingly insular approach to travelling and the need to embrace a more 'other aware' culture.

‘Citizenship! Need to educate people on their responsibilities as human beings. Lack of empathy –_disability awareness is necessary.’

Conclusion and Recommendations:

The outcome was agreed with no changes recommended.

It is recommended that training include access, inclusion and equality to ensure that staff are not only trained in understanding the practical aspects of access, but also appreciate the importance of respecting the needs of others through a flexible approach to individual need.

Outcome 4

Disabled people feel comfortable and safe using public transport, including by being free from hate crime, bullying and harassment.

Responses to Outcome 4 varied greatly, depending upon the participants’ locality. Many in rural areas felt that this was not a priority, whilst those in more urban areas, and particularly those with learning disabilities - welcomed the outcome, having relayed many instances of hate crime and crime incidents on public transport.

Some attendees voiced their concern that again, a commitment which would require the cooperation of so many bodies, may be difficult to achieve and may therefore require a sustained effort to keep the momentum going over the 10-year plan.

However, many also reported that actions on safety had already made a difference in their community:

‘Safety on buses by use of cameras makes travel safer. First Bus & Lothian Transport. Smaller companies not as good as the larger companies on security, but SPT should enforce this.’

‘Agree with this outcome. Staff should be trained in recognition of hate crime and who to report to. Signage on transport i.e. Hate crime awareness for passengers and who to report to will also help.’

‘Bus drivers seem to be getting training on what to do in such an event. It makes a difference for us passengers to see a driver respond firmly when someone acts up on a bus’

Language and Policy

On discussing the delivery of this outcome, an important point was raised that many staff do not have English as a first language and therefore, critical information and guidance should be made available in their native language. This would help to promote the message to front-facing staff more effectively and sustainably.

The effectiveness of ‘anti-smoking’ and mental health campaigns were highlighted as indicators that similar promotion on hate crime could improve transport safety, and that the use of strong imagery would be both effective and inclusive.

Recommendations

Participants agreed with the outcome, but did feel that the structure of this outcome could be improved by changing the structure of the sentence to make it more inclusive:

Disabled people feel comfortable and safe using public transport. This includes being free from hate crime, bullying and harassment.

Key Action 1: Accessible Taxis

Carry out research around current practice across local authorities for consulting with disabled people on accessible transport and for mapping supply, demand and specification of accessible taxis. This will help to give us a picture of what’s happening in each local authority area and allow us to plan what action needs to be taken.

As taxis, can often be the main - and sometimes, only - mode of transport available for disabled people, particularly in rural areas, there were many comments around this Key Action. Taking into account that 20% of Scotland’s people are disabled, the reported need for accessible taxis is seriously underestimated across most regions in Scotland.

In addition, it was raised that there are many areas in Scotland which have no taxis available, leaving many unable to leave their house without the support

of friends or family. This is a key cause of social isolation in rural areas and it was felt that there should be greater focus on taxi provision and the impact that a lack of provision can have on entire communities.

Feedback suggested that further exploration of what specification an 'accessible taxi' should have is required and a standard agreed around those specifications to ensure that taxi accessibility meets with disabled people's needs and expectations.

'Local Authorities/licensing board should take into account that 'no one size fits all'; some disabled people need taxis to be low saloon cars, whilst others need a taxi to be wheelchair accessible.'

Supply and Demand

In the main, 5 key issues were identified around demand, availability, unmet need and the measurement of these factors in determining quotas and licensing numbers.

1. Not all accessible taxis are actually accessible - lack of standard/definition
2. Of those that are deemed accessible, some drivers have an exemption certificate (e.g., dogs, moving and handling, etc.)
3. Of those which are accessible and do not have exemptions, many of these are not available between 8pm and 10am and 3pm and 5pm, due to school contracts.
4. Of those which are accessible, without exemptions or school contracts, many taxi drivers work part-time.
5. Many disabled people who would travel, do not, due to negative experiences of accessible taxis, a lack of income or difficulties with booking. These people are excluded from Local Authority data and from engaging on policy related discussions.

Participants agreed that these factors need to be taken into account when Local Authorities are assessing supply and demand, and unmet need.

'[This outcome] Seems sensible – also ask what current demand is and ask disabled people if they would make more use of the service if there were more accessible vehicles'

'Excuses are made by taxi drivers there is no demand. This is a misconception as disabled people do not request them as they know there are none.'

Public Service Contracts

Several participants asked what barriers existed to including certain requirements within public service contracts to ensure that all Taxi companies comply. This could be further explored through discussions with existing partners and interested parties.

100% WAV fleet

Whilst some areas operate with 100% wheelchair accessible vehicles (e.g. Clydebank), not all participants felt that this was a practical solution, due to the diverse range of support needs of disabled people not necessarily being met by a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle. The proposal of research was therefore warmly welcomed by the majority of participants who felt that Local Authorities require a better understanding of the transport needs of its disabled people.

‘Take licensing away from Local authorities and centralize, or ensure that supply and demand are monitored effectively. Some areas still do not provide accessible taxis. These should be both types of taxis for wheelchair users and ambulant disabled and reflect the needs of the area.’

In rural areas it was felt that there should be additional research into shared car schemes for community use, identifying case studies where variations on a car-sharing scheme work and encouraging local authorities to share knowledge. Availability of Demand Responsive Transport is critically low in many parts of Scotland, and in many others, non-existent. Research through genuine engagement with disabled people was felt to be the only way to accurately assess need in each Local Authority.

Research

Some concerns were raised around the methodology of the research, with a concern that dry and enforced data-gathering may result in a lost opportunity to promote best practice and extol the virtues of an inclusive service.

‘Incentivise engagement through positive promotion of equality in addition to research. Subsidise research/feedback – national budget for administration of surveys – we need to know what’s not working to know where to start.’

Further, it was agreed that research should be locally executed with local people. Consultants external to an area are unlikely to appreciate local (e.g., political, socio-economical, demographical) factors which may influence data.

It was felt strongly that a holistic approach to data-gathering was needed to capture more meaningful information on the personal needs of disabled people in their communities. This would mean adopting practices which empower individuals to participate in debates and decision-making processes which affect them, either through third parties or by improving routes to engagement by making them more inclusive.

Charging issues

Many participants were concerned about unfair charging of disabled people, often for loading and unloading (e.g., Taxi meter running whilst customer is being helped into the taxi). Further, participants commonly reported higher rates charged according to the specific needs of the client. This was requested to be included in the research with a view to influencing policy, aligned with the Equality Act 2010.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Participants agreed with this outcome, suggesting the following items to be included in research

1. Charging Policies around accessible taxis, controls and guidelines
2. Research methodology - local execution with review of draft data to be shared with relevant disability groups.
3. Engagement with Taxi companies to identify more accurate picture of accessible taxi availability on a day-to-day basis
4. Identify award process of each licensing board
5. Commit to sharing knowledge between LAs on policies, quotas and consultation
6. Explore how to reach potential/disengaged non-users of accessible taxis

Key Action 2: Disability Equality Training

Work with Transport Providers and disabled people to produce Training for staff across all transport modes which would meet a national standard for Disability Equality to ensure that all customers can expect an inclusive approach to customer service, regardless of disability, assistance required or mode of travel.

Staff Training: Disabled People's Involvement

The importance of positive and friendly customer service was raised at the tables of every event. It was generally felt by participants that customer service could quickly be improved through the delivery of effective and

consistent training in disability equality. A critical factor would be that disabled people participate in the delivery of this training, using lived experience to illustrate how staff attitude and awareness can fundamentally alter how a journey is experienced by a disabled person.

‘Decency should not be seen to be part of the job remit!’

[‘Transport Operators] should focus on putting drivers in the shoes of disabled people – that way there will be a greater understanding of the barriers we face on transport’

Hidden Disabilities

Within the context of delivering Disability Equality training, many participants explained that a lack of knowledge from staff led to daily situations which made travelling uncomfortable and upsetting.

‘...Funny looks from drivers when presenting your concession card because you don’t look disabled’

‘Seeing the driver look away when I try to mount the steps on the bus’

Staff Monitoring Tool

Discussions took place on how it might be possible to feed back - positively or negatively - on staff attitudes and reasonable adjustment. It was believed that a monitoring system where a positive and inclusive approach was recognised, and intolerance was reprimanded, would soon effect change in the attitudes of those who interact regularly with disabled people. Without monitoring, it was felt that a positive approach towards access and inclusion would continue to be a case of personal choice.

The level and frequency of training was also debated, as the national requirement of 35 hours of disability equality training over 5 years was felt to be far below what is needed to create a sustainable change in attitude, particularly when one considers the continued introduction of new technologies, aids and equipment. It was recommended that minimum training and refresher training timescales be reviewed.

Thistle Card Training

The Thistle Card is an effective, free and nationally available card which allows a disabled person to present information about their support needs to transport staff. It is a practical tool used by people across Scotland, but the lack of training/awareness of this card means that it is often not used properly in transport situations. It was recommended that training on this card (or other equivalent) be included in Disability Equality Training.

Basic BSL training

Including some key phrases in BSL and delivering deaf awareness training was considered by Deaf participants and wider members to be a mandatory component of the Disability Equality training. Simple phrases such as 'Please', 'Thank You', 'Sorry' 'Please take your ticket', 'The bus has broken down, etc.' would, it was felt, promote inclusion as well as being hugely beneficial for BSL users.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Participants felt that successful execution of this outcome would have the most profound effect on safe, successful and positive journeys for disabled people. Attitude was believed to be the key factor in acting to accommodate, particularly in challenging circumstances when a 'reasonable adjustment' was not possible. It was suggested that the term 'and consistent' be inserted after 'inclusive' within the context of this Key Action.

Work with Transport Providers and disabled people to produce Training for staff across all transport modes which would meet a national standard for Disability Equality to ensure that all customers can expect an inclusive and consistent approach to customer service, regardless of disability, assistance required or mode of travel.

Suggested to include the following in standardised Disability Equality Training:

- Basic BSL phrases
- Thistle Card Use
- Hidden Disabilities

Participants stated that an agreed standard timescale for refresher courses and inductions for staff were necessary to ensure sustainable learning.

Further the development of an interim Disability Equality/Awareness monitoring tool for staff would encourage good practice in the long-term.

Key Action 3: Safety/Hate Crime

Develop a Hate Crime Charter with transport providers and seek to centralise reporting of hate crimes and incidents with existing structures (i.e. Police Scotland). These measures will assist transport providers to ensure that customers can travel safely and free from harassment, whilst empowering staff and customers to recognise and report hate crime and hate incidents.

Participants were, across all events, very enthusiastic about the possibility of the centralising the reporting of hate crime across transport modes. Discussions over how to report a hate crime from a bus, train, etc. demonstrated the need to simplify the process, as most participants were unsure how they would report a crime in such a situation.

Awareness Raising

What was highlighted was that a central point contact was only part of the process; ensuring that disabled people were informed of contact information across all formats and available media was key to the centralisation being a success.

Connecting the dots: promotion, measuring and reporting

Many participants remarked that whilst there are many pockets of support available, they are not all well connected, meaning that there is no immediate call to action for someone who finds themselves in the position of being a hate crime victim. A move towards centralisation of support would improve accessibility for all.

Centralisation would also result in easier and more economical promotion, with one number, one leaflet, one poster disseminated across all transport operators.

Importantly, participants raised the fact that monitoring of reporting would be easier with one central point of contact. It was also suggested that a dedicated number., e.g. 102, with a small team providing 24-hour cover may be worth considering if budgets allowed.

Keep Safe areas

It was recommended that a Keep Safe venue map should be made available at transport hubs and online to ensure that people know where to go as they alight from a train/bus in a particular area. It was recommended that this map be included in the Keep Safe app, Traveline and other appropriate websites.

Keep Safe: 24-hour support

The time of day was raised as an issue which should be taken into consideration when looking at the spread of Keep Safe places and Hate Crime Reporting Centres. It was felt that a hate crime may be more likely to happen at night, and therefore access to reporting may be limited. Participants suggested seeking input from local communities in each area to find a 24 hour/late-hours location for a Keep Safe place or Reporting Centre.

Hate Crime Charter

Discussions which took place around the provision of a hate crime charter focused mainly on how the charter would be enforced. It was felt that transport operators would likely be reluctant to tie themselves to processes which could result in operational changes and additional costs. Therefore, a high level committee was required to achieve the commitment of RTPs and operators to explore implementation of such a charter.

The word 'Charter' was considered in terms of accessibility and relevance and whilst there were comments around it being a slightly old-fashioned term, most participants were in agreement that there was no other comparable term for the document.

A Hate Crime Charter, it was felt, could better explain the rights and responsibilities of staff and customers to promote accountability and clarify roles during a journey, e.g., what to do in the event of a hate crime occurring. However, there was concern that the likely event of staff being unable react according to the charter (e.g., a bus driver) may mean that the guidelines of the charter could not be enforced.

'I totally support this; how do we find the balance of 'reasonable action' or discipline an 'act of omission'. Such policies should not be created in isolation (i.e. only the transport company) or it will result in a suite of ineffective policies.'

'Most forms of transport already have signs saying that abuse of staff will not be tolerated, could sign be changed to include abuse of passengers?'

Conclusion and Recommendations

Both the centralisation of hate crime reporting and the introduction of a Hate Crime Charter were enthusiastically agreed by most as a positive way forward.

Centralise and contain Hate Crime reporting system to include one number, one URL and one place to include all hate crime reporting, Keep Safe and other hate crime initiatives and support.

Engage with transport providers to link in reporting with scheduled CCTV footage erasure which vary from region to region and may result in evidence being erased before a hate crime is reported.

Promote rights and responsibilities of both staff and travelling public through the Charter, using printed and online media, including accessible formats.

Create high level committee to take forward Hate Crime Charter with Transport Operators, guided and monitored by disabled people.

Key Action 4: PAMIS Changing Places Toilets

Encourage continued installation of Changing Places Toilet facilities and promote PAMIS' online map of Changing Places toilet facilities in Scotland across all relevant media to allow disabled people to plan their journeys.

PAMIS continue to work across Scotland with partner organisations to increase the number of Changing Places Toilets available in Scotland.

Changing Places toilet facilities are significantly larger than an ordinary toilet and can take two people to facilitate changing for an adult through the provision of hoists and other equipment.

Participants were unanimous in agreement of this key action, and felt that it should be more widely promoted across the Third, Private and Public Sector to encourage buy-in from public buildings and private businesses alike.

'We go out, we shop, we drink and go to the movies like anyone else. It makes sense for public places to provide facilities for those of us who need a Changing Places toilet.'

Funding for CP toilets was also discussed, and it was suggested that Local Authorities should be asked to show what funding, if any, is ring-fenced to ensure provision of CP toilets in each area.

The CP Map facility was equally well received, with many participants seeking the URL on their phones. Feedback on the Map was that it was easy to use, and provided enough information for the user to plan their journey.

‘The map would allow me to decide where I’m going, knowing that I can use these facilities. Even better if we could a map of all accessible toilets, opening hours and whether or not they use a RADAR key’

It was agreed between the majority of participants that the map should be published on online transport sites, such as Traveline, but also on other sites such as access and equality based organisations. This was also an action which could benefit from new technologies to make the information more accessible.

‘As I’m blind, the map doesn’t work for me in printed format. It would be good to have an app or audio facility to locate me and tell me where the nearest toilet is.’ *

An additional benefit explained by some participants who used them was that the they were generally kept in good working order:

‘The maintenance guidance that accompanies a CP toilet should be shared with other toilet maintenance providers. Too many are kept like storage cupboards, with the emergency cord tied up and out of reach, and closure for repairs sometimes lasting months.’

RADAR keys were a concern as it was felt that they are increasingly becoming a thing of the past in many accessible toilets. It was strongly felt that awareness raising on the necessity of retaining the RADAR key was needed to reinstate them as the standard locking mechanism for accessible toilets.

It was suggested that a discussion with PAMIS around both sharing good practice in maintenance and also promoting use of RADAR keys would be useful.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Action agreed. Greater publicity around CP toilets and Map.

Research on Local Authority commitment towards CP installation in public buildings

Discussion with PAMIS regarding awareness raising of continued and improved use of RADAR keys for accessible toilets

*SDEF have since been informed that such an app is due to be launched by PAMIS in the near future

Explore social/financial case for LAs paying rent to public houses so all people can use their facilities. This would reduce the need for LA to pay for the installation of a new toilet, be seen as a social investment by the business, increase footfall to the business, and promote inclusion.

Development of PAMIS sub-group to connect with retail businesses (e.g., with good will grants) and other private sector establishments to promote business case for installation of CP toilets.

Improved awareness raising of accessible toilet guidance taken from PAMIS guidance to remove barriers to use and safety for disabled people.

Key Action 5: Accessible Buses

Ask the Bus Stakeholder group to work with disabled people to carry out a review of current best practice in accessible designs for all sizes of buses, identifying gaps and developing recommendations to guide future work.

The development of standards in accessible design were raised at every event. There are huge variations across bus design, availability of assistive technologies and level of consultation with disabled people and disability organisations across Scotland.

Whilst prioritisation of certain modes of transport varied according to geography (e.g., ferries in the Highlands and Islands; trains in the Borders) the most consistent concerns lay with bus design and availability, probably as the most frequently used mode of transport for the greatest number of disabled people.

As the law states that all buses must be wheelchair accessible by 2017, a great deal of discussion centred upon the definition of 'accessible', and the challenges experienced by disabled people who do not use a wheelchair but who do need to use buses as their means of transport. Many people with limited mobility have difficulty using wheelchair accessible buses on account of the design of the vehicles altered to accommodate wheelchairs, and many with visual impairments or guide/assistance dogs find the buses problematic - or impossible to use.

The vast majority of participants believed that this key action, carried out fully, monitored and overseen closely with disabled people was critical to preventing years of poor access and isolation for disabled people ahead of 2017. Many new buses comply with legislation on being 'wheelchair accessible' but are not suitable for the majority of disabled ambulant. Participants recommended

that a 'Prototype Bus' be developed and taken around Scotland for testing by disabled people with a range of disabilities prior to a design being 'signed off'. This would be in conjunction with candid discussions on the business case for increasing footfall in public transport, and the wider social impact of improved accessibility in public transport for disabled people.

Comments below have been categorised by current access issues which deter disabled people from using buses, the need for commitment from transport providers to review these issues candidly, and to consult with disabled people using this transport to ensure that new bus designs will be accessible for more disabled people. These comments will hopefully speak for themselves without the need for a narrative.

Accessibility

'Having wheelchair space over wheel arch can be extremely uncomfortable when travelling in a wheelchair'

'We're lucky; we have good accessible buses, with a great deal of thought having gone into the design. They do exist' (Edinburgh)

'Buses easier with manual ramps there's little chance of something going wrong'

'Getting on buses is difficult for power chairs, sharp corners to get on, the space for chair isn't big enough and the bar is in the way'

'Ramps do not have handles for ambulant disabled'

'New bus, and still only one space for one disabled person; if my wheelchair user friend gets on the same bus on the stop before me, I can say goodbye to my doctor's appointment'

Accountability

'We recognise that we can't accommodate all access needs, but there needs to be a committed effort from Bus companies.'

'Bus operators have to be held accountable and show that they are willing to work with us!'

'This will be a great chance for us to be involved in designing something that works. Very exciting!'

Consultation

Many participants voiced that they felt more positive about the consultation process on account of past and current engagement from Transport Scotland.

‘It feels like we might be getting somewhere...disabled people around the table, Transport Scotland are listening to us, and some transport providers getting on board’

‘Show Access Panels disability groups etc. bus design plans before they go into productions’

‘Depends whether bus stakeholder group has any power to actually change anything’.

‘Need to take action now before designs are signed off!’

‘Every bus should be reviewed. Panels need “teeth” and know who to contact’

Many participants raised the possibility of a trial bus, having remarked that the model worked well with the Edinburgh Trams. It was felt that by ensuring that bus designers were closely involved with Bus Stakeholder Groups from the outset, a roaming prototype bus would provide genuine lived-experience of design accessibility.

‘Disabled people need to be advising bus manufacturers on design. Useless unless they are able to deliver, but a very good action if it can be achieved.’

Lastly, discussion was raised around the difference between coaches and buses, and the challenges faced by disabled people on these different modes of transport. It was suggested that further discussion around the issues from an access (individual) and commercial (operators) perspective would be beneficial.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Timely scrutiny and action on the issues around Accessible bus design were considered to be critical to access for disabled people, especially for an ageing population.

Scope for prototype bus to be trialed similar to Edinburgh Trams

Open channels for Access Panel involvement with existing groups

Explore equity, capacity and accountability of Bus Stakeholder Groups to ensure that they are as effective as they need to be to influence accessible design.

Explore likelihood of public buy-in from bus operators to guide wider strategy.

Key Action 6: Transport and Engagement

Set up new local groups, or strengthen the engagement of existing groups in the planning and operational stages to review and improve engagement practices between Local Authorities, Transport Operators, Government and disabled people. These user groups will review supply and demand of rural services, Demand Responsive Transport and Community Transport and other transport related services.

Accountability

With the Community Empowerment Act coming into effect in October this year, it was felt that communities being able to submit participation requests about decisions being made in their locality would heighten accountability. Further, by strengthening existing groups and making sure the right people were involved from the outset, it was thought that groups may become more valuable to decision-makers, being consulted more frequently without the need to request involvement.

‘The groups should monitor the outcomes for scrutiny and outcomes should be published for easy reading/access to encourage engagement and interest.’

‘Do we need new groups to do what current groups are already doing? We need groups that have teeth that can be the group that transport services are accountable to? It’s about looking at current resources and strengthen their resources. More accountability for every group to ensure that work is being done.’

Rural Areas

Concern was raised about the efficacy of these groups in rural areas where small or remote populations and a lack of accessible transport can have a negative effect on progress. It was suggested that a real push towards providing a set of remote engagement tools would ensure that isolated groups could still engage and influence local decisions.

Those in rural areas raised the lack of community transport, connectivity and its profound impact on disabled people. It was felt that a lack of current funding, legislation protecting routes and a growing ageing population in remote areas were issues not being discussed’

'I would be involved in such a group if I could get there. There needs to be a commitment to access, reasonable adjustment and regularity of meetings and venues to allow for travel, especially in rural areas'

'Community Transport must have a say in what happens, particularly in rural areas'

It was felt that providing a healthy ongoing dialogue between providers, public bodies and disabled people would likely reduce the 'stop/start' nature of some discussions which end with the meeting held, only revisited after an incident or change in policy.

Traveline Scotland

Traveline Scotland was commended by many for its services to disabled people, but it was felt that it had the potential to do far more than it currently does. Participants raised interactive modules, access to apps and maps, (e.g., PAMIS CP Toilets) and information dissemination on national (framework) progress as possible additions to improving Traveline. By reviewing and improving the public/political 'clout' of Stakeholder groups, participants felt that there would be a better platform from which to influence national assistance/initiatives and support mechanisms.

Influencing Engagement

Throughout the events, the responsibility of disabled people to engage in discussions to influence change, was discussed.

It was raised that often-disabled people do not engage in processes because they believe that they will not be heard or that there will be insufficient numbers affected by a change in a local area to warrant participation.

One participant offered that often, most changes which disabled people felt affected them negatively were generally only discussed informally between individuals. However, only when services were being cut, or premises closed, did many disabled people feel that there would be enough of a reaction to be heard.

By improving connections between stakeholder groups, access panels, local authorities and other groups, there may be a greater appetite for engagement and discussion before situations become critical.

Recommendations

Participants felt strongly that improved engagement – and monitoring of engagement – with local bodies and between disabled people and key decision-makers was vital to the long-term process of improving accessible transport. Solid structures with good accountability and clear pathways to local bodies and Scottish Government would help to effect change on a local and national level.

Conclusion

The Transport Scotland Accessible Travel Plan has been widely commended by disabled people who attended the engagement events or participated in the online survey.

There has been, justifiably, a wariness around the likelihood of success of the plan from disabled people; many stated that they have been experiencing the same challenges with access and equality for many years. There was also concern about the implementation of the plan with regard to buy-in from Transport Operators, Government funding and legislation. However, many participants did feel that the commitment to a 10-year plan, the level of engagement and publicity around the intentions of the plan heralded a positive message around the commitment of those taking it forward.

Whilst focus varied between buses, ferries, trains and training depending on the location of the event, the main discussions were around achieving a cultural shift in the attitudes of those who work in transport, from Providers to staff. It was felt that the proposed improvements in training, awareness and access generally would make it easier for staff to provide good support to the disabled travelling public.

Closely followed by this key issue was the need to improve the design of buses to make them more accessible to all. With legislation coming into place in 2017, it was felt that the definition of what makes a bus 'accessible' needs critical rethinking to address the growing disconnect between communities and effects of social isolation of an ageing community which cannot use existing services.

The proposed research outlined in this document to build a more accurate picture of services (e.g., training, accessible transport, community transport, information) and importantly, gaps in services were also felt to be critical, with Local Authorities being the key component of gathering community based data. There was great concern that 'harder to reach' disabled people were excluded from current statistics on demand and unmet need and

methodologies employed in data-gathering must consider these factors to produce a fair and accurate picture disabled people's needs.

Added Value

Disabled people and others who attended these events felt that the exercise provided an ideal opportunity for people of varying backgrounds, all sharing experience of, or interest in disability and access related issues.

The events themselves also served as a useful pilot for gathering Access Panels into regional 'clusters' with a view to reducing engagement costs.

By promoting the Events, disabled people have become more aware of the Accessible Travel Plan, resulting in an increase in enquiries around the plan and future involvement.

Lastly, the events have been used successfully as a membership/recruitment tool, resulting in increased engagement by disabled people with local panels and other groups who attended the events.

Appendix A: SDEF Online Survey

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important. Since the Transport Accessibility Summit held in Edinburgh in March 2015 Transport Scotland have been working in partnership with SDEF, disabled people, transport providers, local authority representatives and other disabled peoples organisations to create a plan which seeks to tackle issues raised by disabled people and which act as barriers to travel in Scotland. These issues cover all aspects of transport from accessible taxis, trains and buses, access to information and signage, hate crime, customer services and training, to accessible toilets and non- emergency transport. As a result of the issues raised key actions to begin this work of the plan have been identified and disabled people are now being given the opportunity to give their comments on some of these suggested actions. Some of the actions suggested at this stage will not immediately address the issues but will give a better understanding of how they might be tackled.

Thank you for your time - your opinions are appreciated!

Vision - Our vision for accessible transport in Scotland is where all disabled people have the same freedom, choice, dignity and control to travel as other citizens.

1. What do you think about this vision? Does it cover everything it should?

Outcomes - More disabled people make successful door-to-door journeys, more often.

Disabled people are involved in the design, development and improvement of transport policies, services and infrastructure.

Everyone involved in delivering transport information, services and infrastructure can support disabled people to travel.

Disabled people feel comfortable and safe using public transport, including by being free from hate crime, bullying and harassment.

2. What do you think of these outcomes? What, if any, changes would you make?

The following items are the key actions which have been agreed upon in co-production with Disabled People's Organisations, transport bodies and other groups. Please read the action and answer the questions below.

Action 1 - Taxis

Issue - Accommodate the different needs for an accessible taxi (for example, wheelchair user versus person with restricted mobility).

Action - Carry out research around current practice across local authorities for consulting with disabled people on accessible transport and for mapping supply, demand and specification of accessible taxis. This will help to give us a picture of what's happening in each local authority area and allow us to plan what action needs to be taken.

3. Do you agree with this action? If not, please explain

4. Do you think there is anything else which can be done to achieve this?

Action 2 - Disability Equality Training

Issue - Standardise, evaluate and make mandatory delivery of disability equality training across all transport bodies - enforce in service contracts?

Action - Transport Providers, Disabled Peoples organisations and disabled people should work together to produce Training for staff across all transport modes which would meet a national standard for Disability Equality to ensure that all customers can expect an inclusive approach to customer service, regardless of disability, assistance required or mode of travel.

5. Do you agree with this action? If not, please explain.

6. Is there anything else that can be done to address the action?

Action 3 - Hate Crime/Safety

Issue - Provide accessible information for disabled people to help them be safer on public transport.

Action - Develop a Hate Crime Charter with transport providers and seek to centralise reporting of hate crimes and incidents with existing structures (i.e. Police Scotland). These measures will assist transport providers to ensure that customers can travel safely and free from harassment, whilst empowering staff and customers to recognise and report hate crime and hate incidents.

7. Do you agree with this action? If not, please explain.

8. Do you think there is anything else which can be done to achieve this?

Action 4 - Accessible Toilet Facilities

Issue - Ensure appropriate toilet facilities near transport hubs: changing places toilets.

Action - Promote PAMIS' online map of Changing Places toilet facilities in Scotland and encourage major transport hubs to ensure that their toilet facilities are accessible.

9. Do you agree with this action? If not, please explain.

10. Do you think there is anything else which can be done to achieve this?

Action 5 - Accessible Bus Design

Issue - Consider how we influence design of buses/minibuses for people with different access/needs.

Action - Ask the Bus Stakeholder group to work with disabled people to carry out a review of current best practice in accessible designs for all sizes of buses, identifying gaps and developing recommendations to guide future work.

11. Do you agree with this action? If not, please explain.

12. Do you think there is anything else which can be done to achieve this?

Action 6 - Transport

Issue - Set up working reference groups involving public transport bodies, Regional Transport Partnerships, Disabled People Organisations and local groups to inform on priority connection issues.

Action - Set up new local groups, or strengthen the engagement of existing groups in the planning and operational stages to review and improve engagement practices between Local Authorities, Transport Operators, Government and disabled people. These user groups will review supply and demand of rural services, Demand Responsive Transport and Community Transport and other transport related services.

13. Do you agree with this action? If not, please explain.

14. Do you think there is anything else which can be done to achieve this?

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your views are important to us.

End of Survey

Appendix B: Ideas and suggestions from Participants

Below are some ideas raised by participants of the events which serve to demonstrate the value of open discussions around improving access in Scotland.

Colour-coding wheelchairs and other mobility aids

Participants raised the chronic issue of arranging appropriate transport for a wheelchair user, stating common barriers as being a lack of knowledge around size and specification of wheelchairs and vehicles with the 'best fit'. This extended to taxis, trains, toilets and lifts.

It was suggested that wheelchairs and scooters could be categorized by specification and coded, for example by colour. This would create a simple category banding which both wheelchair users and service providers could use with ease.

For example, a 'red' banding may be a wheelchair of up to a particular length and height, 'yellow' smaller and so on.

Participants felt that such a move would create a quick and easy way to assess the accessibility/suitability of particular areas or transport at the point of booking.

There were concerns from some participants that the categorisation of wheelchair size may generalize to assumptions made (e.g. Political, social)

Prototype bus roadshow.

As mentioned in the paper, the Trams of Edinburgh were highlighted as a good example of how physical representation of a model can help to improve accessibility of transport modes.

It was suggested that, following research into the range of features which an accessible bus would have, consultation with disabled people around the bus design, and prior to roll-out of new stock, a 'prototype bus' could be developed to allow for nation-wide trials via a 'roadshow'.

This would ensure that disabled people would have the opportunity to feed into the accessibility of the new design on a practical level.

CP Toilets – LA rental/concession Scheme

A rental scheme for CP toilets was suggested as a means of increasing the number of facilities in an area, using the business case of increased footfall for private businesses.

As restaurants, cafes and other other public venues become increasingly aware of the value of the 'Purple Pound' (value of public spending by disabled people and their wider networks) there is growing interest in improving access within their premises.

Local Authorities could introduce a scheme to offset some of the cost of installing a CP toilet on the premises by either paying a rental contribution for the toilet, or by offering a partial-charity based rates concession for their commitment to access and equality.

This would mean Local Authorities could sanction an increase in CP toilets development relative to the level of concession that they were able to facilitate within their budget. Such a move could be piloted to assess real benefit to businesses and used to encourage growth on a nation-wide level, if successful.

Appendix C: Local Issues Raised

Comments on the vision

No publicity of assistance policy for example.

- Aberdeen action on Disability are a third-party hate crime reporting centre. Quite low level of reporting. Unsure whether this is because there is very little hate crime or whether there is low reporting
- PAMIS facilities are not always open. e.g. Arbroath Visitors Centre is only open during tourist times
- Need for planners to listen to what they are told to avoid disasters like bus station/rail station/Union Square design
- Note – Roads dept Dundee doesn't liaise with Access Panels. (35 over 5 years – 5 hours).
- Lothian buses are great and engagement with disabled people is also really good.
- Perth bus drivers have been receiving training from Perth Centre for Inclusive Living and have reported that it's been really beneficial in better supporting their customers.
- West Lothian expensive fares. Does the LA demand that taxi provider join taxi club scheme & private hire.
- Aberdeen bus station is completely inaccessible. Can't get into the bus station – drop off at railway then long walk through Union Square.
- Shared car scheme – Highland Council, something similar for disabled people.
- People come out of the woodwork when services are taken away (e.g. Portree Hospital being closed)
- Accessible toilets – no accessible toilet on Kyle to Inverness train. No statutory requirement for local authority to have public toilets. Maps paid for by VisitScotland – perhaps same for toilet maps. Greater awareness of radar scheme for disabled people. Accessible toilet used as a store cupboard or stock cupboard. Accessible toilet so different from changing places – baby changing and accessible toilets should be unisex. No changing places toilets on the whole of Skye.

Access panels should engage with transport hubs to plan changing places toilets. promote the map through local council, local access panels, paneltown websites, facebook, twitter

- Accessible Bus Design – issue on Skye is with coaches. Traffic commissioner allows bus operators to use coaches on local bus services. Access certificate for coaches refer to DDA when transport was exempt. Use European legislation. Dropped kerbs important at bus stops. plan the stops so journeys can link up. Coaches are not accessible – this needs to be addressed
- Taxis – No taxis in Skye, only Private Hire. Very little accessible transport available. Very little community transport. Whole taxi issue is irrelevant because everything is private hire. Would require subsidy to enable introduction of accessible taxis. Should be free taxis etc. to enable the door to door component of the outcomes £56 per month. Very limited number of taxis on Skye that can take wheelchairs. Tend to use own transport rather than use local taxis. Connecting transport from Skye can be difficult.
- Not enough changing places toilets in Dumfries. E-database about how accessible buildings are in D&G – should be spread throughout Scotland.
- Good examples of Disability Equality Training : Royal Yacht Britannia – advertise to BIG 5 for training. MacBrayne Ferries are also very good.