

Get on Board 2020:

**Making the
economic case
for “levelling up”
inclusive transport**

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Inclusive transport would make careers and fulfilling work so much more accessible for disabled people, which would mean not just increased spending power, but also increased earning power.



Emma, Birmingham

About Leonard Cheshire

Leonard Cheshire supports individuals to live, learn and earn as independently as they choose, whatever their ability. Led by people with experience of disability, we are at the heart of local life – opening up opportunities, choice and support in communities around the globe.

About the research

Leonard Cheshire commissioned an economic research project from WPI Economics to capture the financial commitment required to fully implement the UK Government's target to achieve inclusive transport by 2030 in Britain, with a focus on making train stations step-free.¹ This analysis builds on our Get on Board campaign for accessible train travel in 2019 and also assesses the evidence on the social and economic benefits that meeting the target would bring.

Between 1 July 2020 – 10 November 2020, Leonard Cheshire conducted in-depth telephone interviews with 20 working age disabled people about their experiences of inaccessible transport, the impact on their personal finances and their engagement with employment.

1. Executive summary

Making transport inclusive for disabled people

Public transport is an essential tool that enables us to participate fully in various parts of our lives – in work, having active and connected social lives and engaging with the wider world. We know, however, that all too often disabled people are left out of the public transport offer. When interacting with the railway network in Britain, disabled people face patchy and inconsistent accessibility and our research shows that 41% of train stations do not have step-free access.² This lack of accessibility leaves many disabled people unable to participate fully in society. The impact of inaccessible transport is far-reaching – extending to every aspect of disabled people's lives. 22% of disabled people said that inaccessible transport made them feel isolated, 21% said it had a negative impact on their mental health, 18% said they were unable to keep active and 15% said they were unable to go out with family or friends.

In response, Leonard Cheshire launched its Get on Board campaign in December 2019, calling for the Government to enshrine in legislation its commitment to ensuring rail travel – and public transport more widely – is made fully accessible to all by 2030. Inclusive transport is a fundamental right for disabled people that enables people to have full and engaging lives. Accessing public transport

freely is a key mechanism in being able to participate and progress in the workplace. The UK Government must demonstrate real commitment in delivering on its promises – backed by investment and subject to an ongoing review of progress – so that disabled people can live as independently as they choose and seize valuable opportunities in every part of their lives.

The impact on the wider economy

Delivering equal access to public transport would be not only be transformative for the economic empowerment and social lives of many disabled people, but also offers tangible benefits to the UK economy. The new research that we present in this report examines the investment required from the UK Government to deliver a step-free rail network as well as indicating the substantial economic benefits involved. We analyse the impact of inaccessible public transport on employment. We also illustrate the barriers it creates, holding disabled people back from participating and progressing in the workplace.

Working with WPI Economics, we have developed an economic model that presents the estimated costs of accessibility improvements. We have found that the total cost of making the entire railway network step-free to platform level would be between £2bn and £6bn, with a central estimate of £4bn. We estimate that this would amount to just 1–3% of total transport capital investment between now and 2030. Compared to other rail infrastructure projects, e.g. High Speed 2 (HS2) and wider transport spending more generally, making train travel accessible involves a significantly lower financial commitment.³ Furthermore, our analysis shows a fully accessible rail system could:

- Help around 51,000 people with work-limiting disabilities into employment⁴ (24,000 of whom are actively seeking work and 27,000 of whom say they

would like to work), leading to benefits such as:

- Offering the Exchequer benefits of £450 million per year.⁵
- Delivering an economic output (GVA) boost of £1.3 billion.⁶
- Increase the well-being of those who gain employment.⁷
- Help around 85,000 employed people with work-limiting disabilities into a new job. As there are significant earnings and productivity benefits to employees gaining new jobs, it is reasonable to expect further positive outcomes in increased earnings and an additional economic boost.⁸
- Help a further 43,500 unemployed people and 115,000 employed people to attend an interview that may lead to a new job.

It is clear that the current funding framework of Access for All – the central source of government funding for accessibility improvements to train stations⁹ – is not sufficiently addressing disabled people's needs. Adapting the network to be physically accessible is taking too long; at the current rate of progress, disabled people will have to wait until 2070 for the railway network to have full step-free access in Britain.¹⁰ In this report we seek to improve understanding of the impact of inaccessible transport on disabled people's lives and their ability to participate fully in employment. It is unacceptable for disabled people to be expected to put their lives on hold; the UK Government must put in place a legally binding duty for all train journeys in Britain to be fully accessible by 2030, backed by sufficient funding and a clear implementation plan.

Unequal access to trains – and other forms of public transport – often denies disabled people the freedom to engage fully in work. Public transport that fails to be inclusive of disabled people's needs means that individuals can face additional delays to arriving at their destination

with considerable and wide-ranging impact on their access to the workplace. Contending with these obstacles often creates an overall deterrent to using the railway network. It causes stress and anxiety when worrying about what potential problems are likely to emerge on a journey.

We also know that disabled people can face obstacles in train travel that go beyond physical accessibility, and at every stage of their train journey. Alongside the economic research and analysis, we also present findings from 20 interviews undertaken by Leonard Cheshire in summer and autumn 2020 with a diverse group of disabled people – across working age and living in various regions in England, Scotland and Wales. Our interviews show that accessible methods of booking tickets, live information on route, audio-visual provision, sufficient staffing at stations and better staff training are clearly all-important elements that must also be put in place. It is essential that disabled people can have confidence that they will be treated equally and be able to access their rights when travelling.

“

As a disabled person, I know that the system doesn't go the way it's supposed to. I make sure to have info on my rights saved on my phone to refer to so that I can stand up for myself and tell people what I need.

”

Emma, Birmingham

Levelling up equally

Our research shows that the level of spending required to make train travel accessible is affordable for the UK Government and will generate economic benefits for individuals as well as significant dividends for the UK Exchequer.

We also demonstrate that inclusive transport is not just a rights issue but should be central to the UK's economic recovery. It has been the Prime Minister's stated aim to "unite and level up", to strengthen national infrastructure and better connect resource with economic opportunity. This commitment has been renewed in the context of the ongoing pandemic.¹¹ The UK Government has also announced a new £4bn "Levelling up" fund with the potential

for infrastructure investment. Along with the National Transport Strategy and a new £2bn funding pot for the rail industry announced in the Spending Review, these infrastructure programmes must establish meaningful progress on accessible train travel as a priority.¹² It is critically important that the UK Government addresses the needs of disabled people in their plans to level up economic opportunity across the country.

“

There shouldn't be a price tag on equality – we should all have access to the same services regardless of being disabled.

”

Danielle, North Ayrshire

The change we are calling for from the UK Government:

1. Put in place a legally binding duty for all train journeys in Britain to be fully accessible by 2030, backed by a sufficient funding and implementation plan.

- Adequate funds must be identified and allocated to ensure that all train stations are made step-free. The UK Government must introduce a sufficient funding package as well as a commitment for future spending until 2030.
- A comprehensive implementation plan and timeline must be established within one year of the new law being passed that sets out how the 2030 target will be achieved. Binding provisions should be secured by the end of the new parliament so that meaningful progress is made and the Government is accountable to its commitments.
- The implementation plan should identify the responsibilities held by each main component of the rail system to deliver the target, with a clear timeline. The plan should be fully aligned with the National Infrastructure Strategy and the “Levelling up” agenda.

2. Renew the Public Sector Equality Duty with a focus on affirming the rights of disabled people to live independently.

Principles of inclusive transport must be firmly established across Government and Train Operating Company standard practice, going beyond “accessibility” considerations to a whole system approach. This includes embedding better inclusive training of station staff and tackling negative attitudes from the wider public.

3. Design public transport services and their delivery based on the experiences of the people that they are intended to serve.

Comprehensive and continuous civic engagement with disabled people must be incorporated from the earliest stage when taking forward the findings of the Williams Rail Review.

4. Improve its data practices to better understand – and respond to – current barriers to using the transport network.

The research and analysis that we provide in this report presents indicative findings of the economic benefits of making the rail network fully accessible. The Government should develop this data to improve understanding of the additional costs related to being disabled and how public services should address this. This would involve:

- Publishing annual statistics on disabled passenger use of the rail network.
- An audit of train station accessibility based on the experiences of disabled people, ensuring that barriers beyond step-free access are captured.
- The Government’s National Strategy for Disabled People is expected to be released in 2021. This must build on our economic analysis of the links between inclusive transport and participation in employment for disabled people.

5. Ensure that disabled people are able to expect the same standards of treatment as everyone else on their journeys.

It is clear from our interviews that accessing the right to use public transport services can be a fraught process. Improving awareness of the rights of disabled people – and how rights are enforced – among passengers and staff is needed.

2. Reforming train travel in today's context

There is growing evidence to show that every aspect of disabled people's lives has been negatively affected by Covid-19. Our own research has recently shown the worrying impact that the pandemic is having on disabled people's employment and future career prospects: 71% of disabled people in the UK report that their work has been impacted. 24% have worked reduced hours and 20% have lost out on income. We have also identified a crisis in confidence in future employment expectations due to the pandemic. 44% of young disabled people feel that there will be a negative impact on their future career ambitions and 54% feel that their future earning potential will suffer.¹³ We must ensure that the disability employment gap and disability pay gap is not further entrenched in the decades to come.¹⁴ When linking up economic opportunity and infrastructure spending, the UK Government must not leave disabled people behind but rather use this opportunity to make our society fairer and widen access to economic opportunity into the future.

Grand-scale transfiguration of the railways is on the horizon with the highly anticipated Williams' Rail Review promising widespread root and branch reform. Successive UK Governments have acknowledged that the rail network's failing privatised model is the chief cause of poor service delivery. The Williams Review aims to tackle these systemic issues, prioritising improved accessibility, mechanisms of accountability, financial sustainability and system fragmentation.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic has already set into motion radical change in the railway architecture in Britain. Due to the impact on railway usage in the pandemic, the UK Government has effectively temporarily nationalised the entire system by suspending normal franchise agreements and transferring all revenue and cost risk to the Government for a limited period, initially six months.¹⁵ When the Williams Review reports it is likely that some of these large-scale changes will be embedded in the system for the long-term. Early indications are

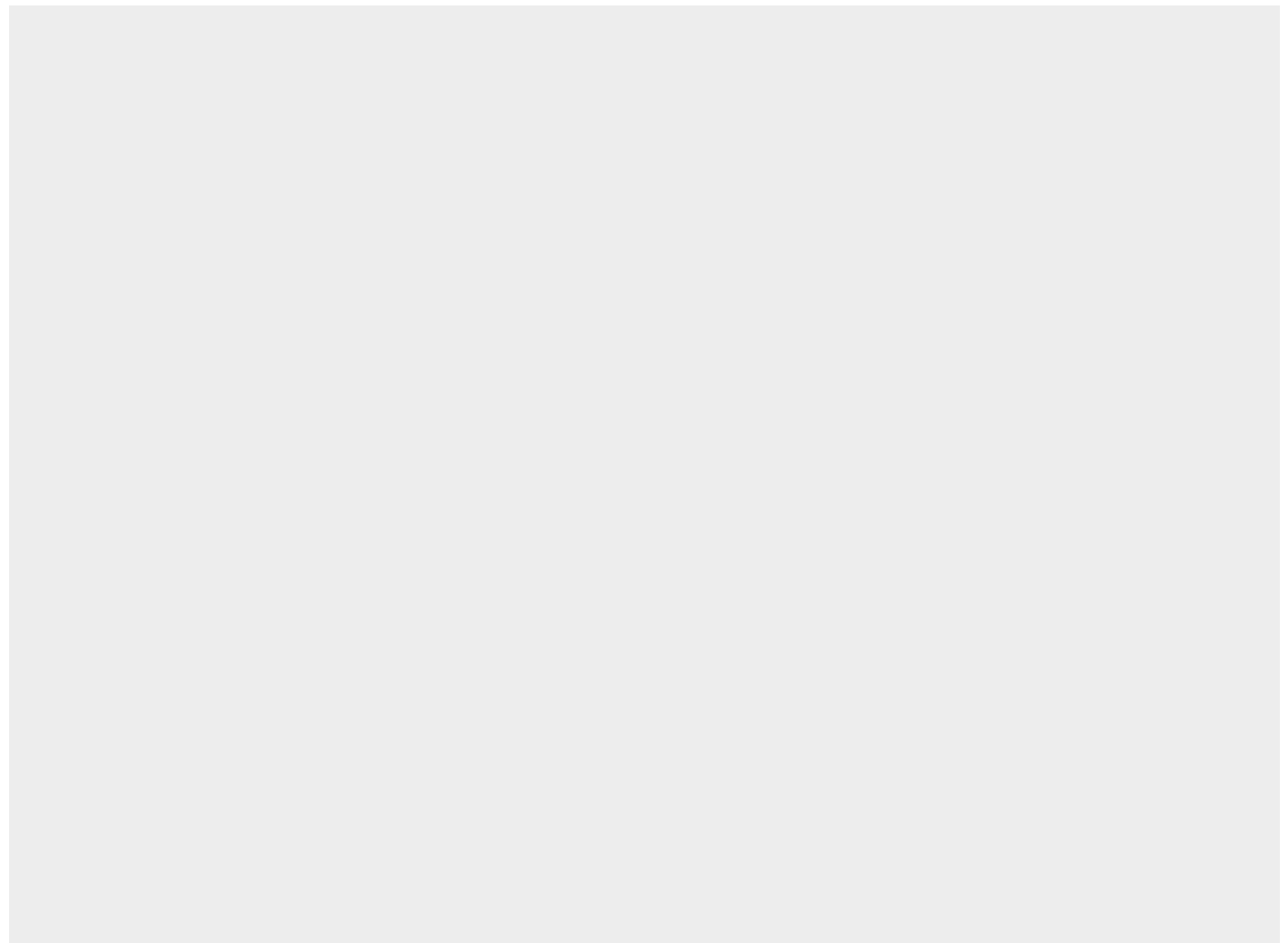
that bolstered devolved powers will be a central precept of the future direction of the train model in Britain, with profound consequences expected in the re-setting of rail responsibilities in Wales and Scotland.

As with the temporary nationalisation of the trains by the UK Government, the pandemic has already triggered seismic shifts in rail service delivery in Wales. The Welsh Government has taken rapid action to nationalise rail services from February 2021. This is set to be a decisive period in establishing responsibility and accountability with long-lasting effects on standards of service delivery in the railway system ringing through the decades to come. Governments in Scotland and Wales must also demonstrate commitments to delivering concrete outcomes in accessibility – in strategy, funding and implementation – from the earliest design stages so that new railway structures are fully inclusive of disabled people's needs from the outset.

The Equality Act is currently failing at delivering on the Public Sector Equality Duty. Our research shows that many disabled people face differential treatment due to inaccessible transport. The primary funding mechanism to provide accessibility changes, Access for All, despite providing some improvements to train stations, is not up to the challenge of making the widespread changes to station infrastructure that disabled people need. The UK Government has continued to call on rail operators to improve accessibility on trains in response to the failure to meet train carriage accessibility deadlines earlier this year.¹⁶ The Rail Delivery Group has been calling for new legislation to require all coaches to be PSVAR-compliant – a key obstacle in establishing accessible rail replacement services.¹⁷ A serious commitment accompanied by legislative change to

deliver proper scrutiny on progress on delivering at sufficient pace and scope is clearly needed. This is a crucial moment for ensuring that we have infrastructure in the UK that is fit for the people it should be serving.

The pandemic has caused the largest structural reform of the rail industry in this country since privatisation, creating a unique opportunity for large-scale reform. We know that the prevalence of disability has been growing: with predictions that the number living with disability will increase in the UK by 25%, from 2.25 million to 2.81 million.¹⁸ As we emerge from the pandemic there is an even greater imperative for system-wide accessibility improvements to be made quickly and efficiently, in order to remove the structural inequality currently embedded in the public transport offer.



3. The impact of inaccessible transport on disabled people

“It’s rare for me to travel by train as my local station is not accessible. I have been campaigning since 2008 to make it accessible and it has taken its toll on my health: lots of stress, false hopes, and empty promises.”

Alison Morgan, North Somerset

In order to fully explore the issues facing disabled people in accessing the railway network we conducted 20 wide-ranging interviews with people with lived experience of disability. We spoke to working age disabled people across various parts of England, Wales and Scotland to assess what particular issues are arising in all parts of Britain. We wanted to ensure that these interviews were representative of the wide range of obstacles currently facing disabled people. We found certain patterns and common issues restricting disabled people from considering themselves to be on an equal footing to non-disabled users of the railway network.

The barriers faced in England

We want rail travel to be accessible to everyone – from booking tickets to getting on the train and throughout the entire journey. Leonard Cheshire’s Get on Board research in 2019 found that 38.5% of stations in England did not have step-free access. In 2020, this has increased to 42% of train stations in England. We’re calling for a new law that guarantees all rail journeys in Britain will be fully accessible by 2030 and the funding to make this a reality. Our Get on Board campaign focusses on the benefits of delivering step-free access to train stations at platform level, as it is our contention that Government intervention in this area – from Westminster, Edinburgh and Cardiff – would deliver wholesale benefits to job outcomes, as well as greater independence, for disabled people. WPI Economics have estimated that it would cost £400 million per year to make the rail network in England fully step-free by 2030. This equates to 1.6% of annual transport spending in England.¹⁹

“Sometimes I think that the staff who book or provide the assistance don’t realise how important their role is in helping me get where I need to go.”

Sarah, East Midlands

£400 million

WPI Economics have estimated that it would cost £400 million per year to make the rail network in England fully step-free by 2030. This equates to 1.6% of annual transport spending in England.¹⁹

However, we also recognise that there are other barriers to an inclusive transport network that must be addressed. These include:

- Ensuring full accessibility on boarding and alighting from trains. Accessibility to platform level is no good if getting on and off the train is not straightforward. In theory, the policies should be in place to achieve this through the provision of ramps deployed by train staff. However, the assistance given by train companies can occasionally be of poor quality or entirely absent.
- Accessibility within train carriages such as accessible toilets, appropriate audio and visual communication and wheelchair spaces.
- Broader elements of accessibility at train stations including provision of information and fully trained staff.

Issues with the gaps in disability awareness among staff and standards of service delivery in assisting passengers were a common experience across all of the people that we spoke to in our research. The impact of negative attitudes from other passengers was also prevalent. Disabled people we spoke to referred to the stigma they faced from staff and fellow passengers and how it had put them off from using public transport.

Leonard Cheshire supported the recent campaign from the Department for Transport, “It’s everyone’s journey”. This campaign aimed to bring together those who want to improve public transport for disabled people and deliver real change in public understanding and attitudes.²⁰ It is clear that this work must continue and be extended to address the issues identified in the research we have carried out.

Impact on wellbeing

When speaking to disabled people, it was clear that barriers to accessing train services is causing a negative impact on wellbeing and increased levels of stress. Our research has uncovered an overwhelming expectation – built on a pattern of previous experience of failures in support – that things will go wrong. This often causes high levels of anxiety in advance of, during, or in the aftermath of a train journey. Many disabled people spoke of how these experiences had deterred them from travelling. Others spoke of feeling frustrated that they feel they always have to be prepared to fight for basic equal treatment, and about the impact that this had on their personal wellbeing. In our interviews, people spoke about the discrimination that they faced when refused services in contravention with the Equality Act.

“I suffer with anxiety and always worry if someone will be there to meet me at my stop. I avoid taking multiple changes to reduce how many points of the journey I will be anxious about. Once, on the last leg of my trip, I was told there was no service and told to get on the underground or get the taxi, but the taxi turned me away twice.”

Kathy, Ipswich

“The issues I’ve faced have made me really stressed. So much so that I literally couldn’t get on the train on one occasion. I went home and cried. I’d used all the correct channels to ask for help – ringing beforehand, get there early, have your little sheet of paper – but for the support not to be there.”

Anonymous

Many disabled people that we spoke to were exasperated at the differential treatment that underpinned support provision in train stations. The requirement to book support in advance was raised as a key barrier. Many disabled

people spoke of the wish to be able to travel flexibly and not to have to book assistance so far in advance. Frustration was common in the conditional equality that this establishes in comparison with the freedom and choice that non-disabled people can expect as standard.

“Sometimes it’s not possible to plan for every train before you travel. Even at busy stations with more staff, they expect me to book everything way in advance. They don’t realise that real life doesn’t happen around the train timetable. Train apps like Trainline don’t tell you whether a station is staffed. As I’m blind, you can’t access all these map sites that people use for information, they’re just not accessible.”

Simon Wilkes, Cambridgeshire

The interviews that we carried out uncovered severe gaps in understanding among station staff, across a wide range of support needs. One person who has Crohn’s disease had booked Passenger Assist to be able to reserve a seat beside a toilet on the train. She spoke of the profound anxiety caused by the failures in accessing support – both in staff understanding and operational gaps despite the passenger being required to book ahead.

“At the time I was having issue with urgency to need the loo and a lot of anxiety over even the thought of not being able to access it. Standing for a long time would be really painful and uncomfortable. When I got to the station, staff were confused. I had to explain publicly to three people – “Can you help me on to a seat by the loo?”. Even though the letter outlines that you won’t have to keep explaining it – which is of course the point.”

Anonymous

Impact on employment

We explored with interview participants the impact of not being able to access the railway system on all aspects of their lives, with particular focus on how inaccessible trains had held them back from seeking, securing and progressing in work.

“I’ve ended up being late for a job interview because of an issue with staff not knowing which stations were accessible, even though I’d been to the station before. It was so frustrating, because I was geared up and prepared and had put in the work to get the interview, and then I couldn’t get to the interview in time. Being a disabled person, you have to be an expert and research your route to make sure it’s something you can do. Transport staff should have the training to understand the research you’ve done.”

Emma, Birmingham

“I’ve had to turn down a job offer because inaccessible trains meant that it would be too difficult to get there. Making transport accessible would widen my net for jobs I can apply for. At the moment I’m restricted to looking for jobs in certain areas where I know the stations are accessible and I know I can reasonably get there.”

Emily Davison, London

“I’ve missed a job interview because of inaccessible trains. I was on my way to an interview and had to make a change at Woking. But the platform my train was meant to leave from had been changed and there were no visual announcements. I missed the train and was late for my interview. I apologised and explained what had happened, but I wasn’t able to sit the interview.”

William, Hampshire

Impact on personal finances

In our interviews with disabled people, additional costs related to inaccessible transport came through as a major issue. This can be dependent on the type of condition a person has: previous research from the Extra Cost Commission has found that someone with a neurological condition will spend on average almost £200 a week on costs related to their disability, while someone with a physical impairment will spend almost £300. Yet almost all disabled people reported high extra transport costs.²¹

“I can’t see my friends unless I take the bus, which is really uncomfortable for me, or a taxi which is expensive; it would be brilliant to take the train but it needs to be step-free for me to access the station.”

Emma Donaldson, Nottingham

“I do spend money on transport more than others would have to. I take taxis where someone may feel comfortable taking a bus, I have to take the train to my hospital appointments and that can cost anything from £50 a month to £100 depending on how ill I am and how much I’ve got going on. I know one month at the beginning of my diagnosis I was going to hospital weekly as well as doctor appointments and it really racked up so I had to ask for financial help from my family.”

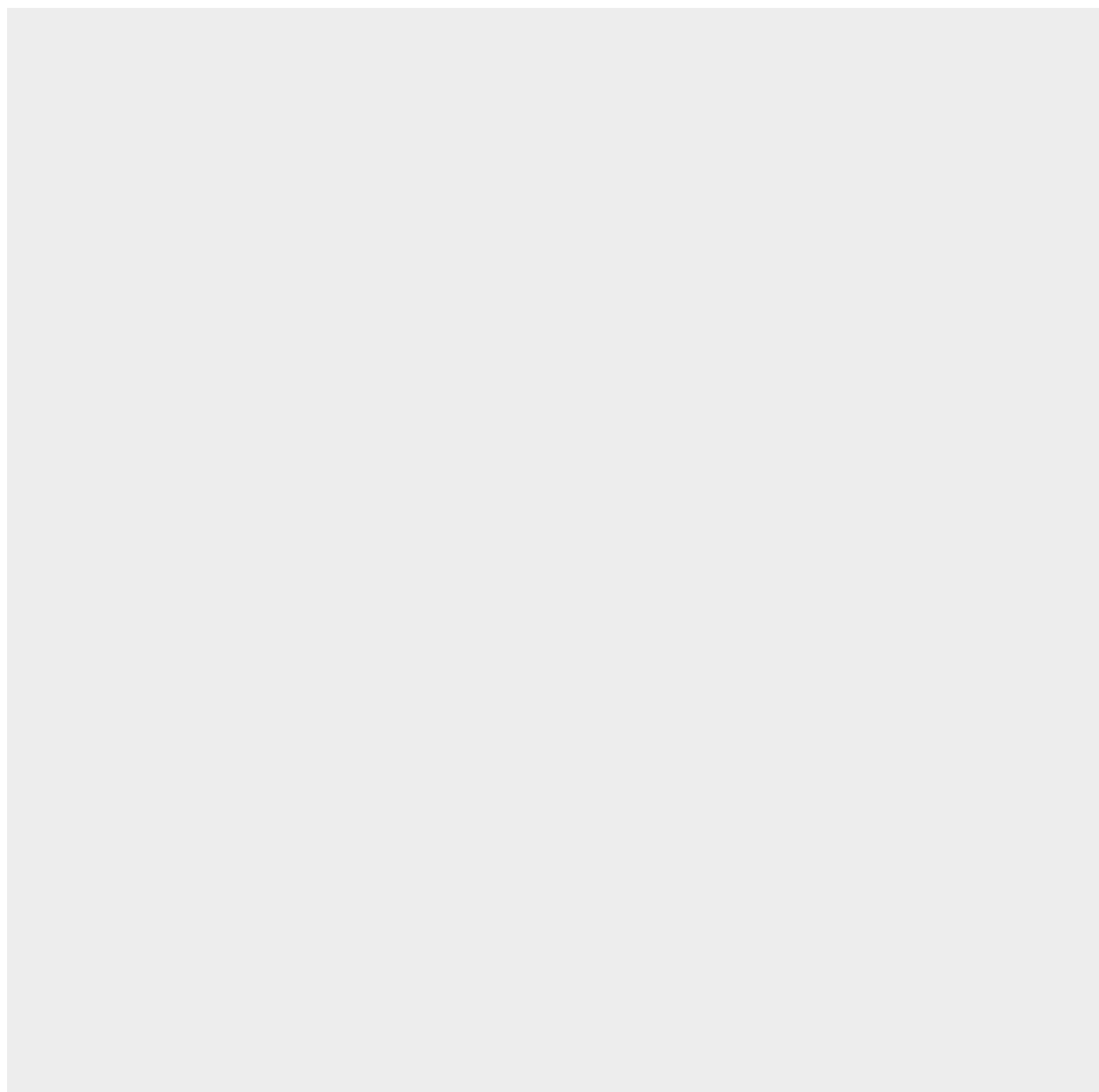
Anonymous

The impact of Covid-19 on accessibility

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the requirements to socially distance has the potential to cause further disruption and anxiety for many who already regularly experience fraught train journeys. One interview participant who is visually impaired spoke about their concern that the station layout will be different due to the pandemic and be unfamiliar to them, for example one-

way movement of passengers. For this same individual, wearing a mask totally removes the slight peripheral vision that she relies on.

There was a general feeling of uncertainty for many disabled people that we spoke to. People were unsure of what grounds an individual could insist on their entitlements to support given the need for distancing – both in a train station and from a taxi driver, given that this may be in direct conflict with Covid-19 restrictions.



Experience of rail replacement bus services

“Rail replacement bus services have been an absolute nightmare. Even when they drop you off you’re not in the station so it’s really difficult to get assistance from station staff. I wish they would listen to us but a lot of the time the staff just want you on the bus so that they don’t have to pay for a taxi. This just leaves me stuck outside the next station, with no idea where the entrance is.”

Simon Wilkes, Cambridgeshire

The legal duty we are calling for to make all rail journeys in Britain fully accessible by 2030 also extends to rail replacement services. Rail replacement services are a key part of making sure that disabled people’s needs are properly considered when there are planned or unplanned disruptions to the rail network. Currently there are not enough PSVAR-compliant coaches to run rail replacement services. Inaccessible coaches – that are very rarely wheelchair accessible – are frequently used to replace trains by Train Operating Companies (TOCs) in the case of network disruption.²² They also have steep steps up, no accessible bathroom, and no clear stopping information.

Where disabled people cannot use rail replacement services, TOCs are required to arrange taxi services for individuals. However, this provision in itself is often inaccessible for many given a wider shortage of wheelchair accessible taxis, particularly in rural areas. There should be stricter requirements for TOCs – and coaches – to provide accessible rail replacement services, especially where disruptive engineering works have been planned in advance.

- TOCs should introduce terms into contracts to encourage private hire vehicle operators to increase the number of accessible vehicles in their fleet.

- TOCs should provide better information in the event of disruption (both planned and unscheduled) so that they are accessible for people with audio/visual impairments.
- The Office for Rail and Road (ORR) has indicated that it is the responsibility of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to enforce PSVAR. There are welcome indications that Department for Transport are emphasising TOCs’ duty to uphold their legal commitment to providing accessible rail replacement services. However, there must be a joined-up approach from the Department for Transport, DVSA, ORR and other regulatory bodies to ensure compliance with the PSVAR.

Non-visible disabilities

People who we spoke to who had a non-visible disability told us about the isolation they experienced due to a lack of understanding among fellow passengers.²³

“I was sat in a disabled seat and a blind gentleman sat opposite me with his guide dog and I thought, “Oh God, people are looking at me thinking I’m taking up this seat for this guy”. There were enough seats for both of us but in my head I’m thinking – people will think I’m a selfish young person who won’t move.”

Anonymous

“Because I’m deaf, I won’t always hear the ticket inspectors. One time they got really angry with me because I didn’t respond. Staff need more awareness. If train operators were more aware about all disabilities and were more positive and welcoming, I’d definitely use trains more.”

William, Hampshire

The change we need from the UK Government

1. Put in place a legally binding duty for all train journeys in Britain to be fully accessible by 2030, backed by a sufficient funding and implementation plan.

- a. Adequate funds must be identified and allocated to ensure that all train stations are made step-free. The UK Government must introduce a sufficient funding package as well as a commitment for future spending until 2030.
- b. A comprehensive implementation plan and timeline must be established within one year of the new law being passed that sets out how the 2030 target will be achieved. Binding provisions should be secured by the end of the new parliament so that meaningful progress is made and the Government is accountable to its commitments.
- c. The implementation plan should identify the responsibilities held by each main component of the rail system to deliver the target, with a clear timeline. The plan should be fully aligned with the National Infrastructure Strategy and the “Levelling up” agenda.

2. Renew the Public Sector Equality Duty with a focus on affirming the rights of disabled people to live independently. Principles of inclusive transport must be firmly established across Government and Train Operating Company standard practice, going beyond “accessibility” considerations to a whole system approach. This includes embedding better inclusive training of station staff and tackling negative attitudes from the wider public.

3. Design public transport services and their delivery based on the experiences of the people that they are intended to serve. Comprehensive and continuous civic engagement with disabled people must be incorporated from the earliest stage when taking forward the findings of the Williams Rail Review.

4. Improve its data practices to better understand – and respond to – current barriers to using the transport network. The research and analysis that we provide in this report presents indicative findings of the economic benefits of making the rail network fully accessible. The Government should develop this data to improve understanding of the additional costs related to being disabled and how public services should address this. This would involve:

- a. Publishing annual statistics on disabled passenger use of the rail network.
- b. An audit of train station accessibility based on the experiences of disabled people, ensuring that barriers beyond step-free access are captured.
- c. The Government’s National Strategy for Disabled People is expected to be released in 2021. This must build on our economic analysis of the links between inclusive transport and participation in employment for disabled people.

5. Ensure that disabled people are able to expect the same standards of treatment as everyone else on their journeys. It is clear from our interviews that accessing the right to use public transport services can be a fraught process. Improving awareness of the rights of disabled people – and how rights are enforced – among passengers and staff is needed.

The barriers faced in Scotland

The current funding structure for delivering inclusive transport – Access for All – incorporates England, Scotland and Wales. However, the Scottish Government is responsible for the letting and management of the ScotRail franchise and for providing the strategic direction and funding for the maintenance, renewal and expansion of Network Rail owned rail infrastructure in Scotland.²⁴ Leonard Cheshire's Get on Board research in 2019 found that 47% of stations in Scotland do not have step-free access. In 2020, these figures have remained largely the same with 46% of train stations in Scotland lacking step-free access. WPI Economics have estimated that it would cost £78,100,000 per year to make the rail network in Scotland fully step-free by 2030. This equates to 2.2% of annual transport spending in Scotland.²⁵

In Scotland, the inclusive transport framework – the National Transport Strategy²⁶ and the Accessible Travel Framework – affirms the rights of disabled people to “travel with the same freedom, choice, dignity and opportunity as other citizens”. Priorities include reducing inequality by providing fair access, being easy to use and affordable for everyone. The Scottish Government also recognises that transport must help to deliver inclusive economic growth. Transport Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework, initially established in 2016 as a ten-year framework, recognises the need for improvements in train infrastructure to improve accessibility. However, it lacks the implementation plan that would secure meaningful progress.

As with interviews held in England and Wales, in Scotland there were issues with staffing levels, unstaffed stations and poor staff training.

“There have been a few incidents when no-one has been able to help me to get off the train. I've had to stay on board the train and get off at the next station. Then get a taxi back to my intended stop. Once a ticket inspector ignored me – they said they didn't hear me. On another occasion, a station assistant put me on the wrong train which was very stressful for me.”

Danielle, North Ayrshire

Access to employment and personal finances

In Scotland, there were clear connections with participating fully and equally in employment. As with disabled people in England and Wales, in Scotland inaccessible train stations can have a significant impact on personal finances. An increased reliance on taxis causes considerable additional expense for disabled people. Our interviews found, however, that taxi services are often themselves not accessible for disabled people.

“Delays due to inaccessible trains or staff not being available reflect badly in the eyes of an employer. It has meant that I've arrived at a meeting late or at the very last minute. If there are no staff to assist you onto the trains, then there is the chance that you won't make it on time. There shouldn't be a price tag on equality – we should all have access to the same services. It's quite common for “accessible” taxis to not accept me as a customer because they are too small or narrow to take bigger wheelchairs like mine.”

Danielle, North Ayrshire

The action we need from the Scottish Government

As with the rail system across Britain, in Scotland we are in a moment of large-scale transformation in the way that train services are delivered with potentially increased likelihood for stronger devolved powers in the future. The occurrence of disability and the disability employment gap is higher in Scotland than in other parts of the UK.²⁷ It is clear that delivering meaningful progress on accessible transport would provide significant improvements to the quality of life of disabled people in Scotland.

- Given the responsibilities and duties regarding rail funding, any legal duty and accompanying implementation plan must apply to the Scottish

Government as well as to the UK Government. Transport Scotland should be subject to a legal duty and comprehensive implementation plan so that disabled people in Scotland are able to expect the same standards of equality in public services, regardless of their disability.

- The Scottish Government's National Transport Strategy (NTS) recognises the need for inclusive economic growth and that it is dependent on a transport system that everyone can use, regardless of disability. It is clear that the NTS delivery plan that is currently being developed by the Scottish Government must include the needs of disabled people, particularly given our evidence that disabled people's employment outcomes are being significantly negatively impacted.

The barriers faced in Wales

In Wales, there is a palpable appetite for change to the current and future delivery of train services. Changes in October 2018 prompted greater control of franchising processes by the Welsh Government²⁸ who promised a “ground-breaking transformation of transport across the country”.²⁹ However, these changes have been hastened by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Welsh Government has effectively underwritten Transport for Wales’ (TfW) losses from October due to Covid-19. The TfW rail service is set to be nationalised and brought under Welsh Government control from February 2021 in a moment of radical change in the structure and responsibilities of train services in Wales. Our analysis shows that 21% of stations in Wales are not step-free with no change in the past year. WPI Economics have estimated that it would cost £21,800,000 per year to make the rail network in Wales fully step-free by 2030. This equates to 1.8% of annual transport spending in Wales.³⁰

21%

Our analysis shows that 21% of stations in Wales are not step-free with no change in the past year.

WPI Economics have estimated that it would cost £21,800,000 per year to make the rail network in Wales fully step-free by 2030.

Impact on wellbeing

In Wales, we held extensive interviews with disabled people on the impact of inaccessible transport on various aspects of their lives and to capture lived experience of public transport in Wales. In these interviews, disabled people told us about the impact on anxiety levels of not being able to be confident that the support that had been requested will be put in place for a journey.

“I don’t use trains that much because you’ve always got to find somebody to ask to put the ramps down to get on the train. Sometimes it’s not all that easy finding someone and there’s not always people there. This makes the trip more stressful than it would be if I was able to get on and off easier, especially for spontaneous trips.”

Anonymous, Swansea Valley

“It’s horrible having to cross the tracks to get to a platform. I have a disability called osteogenesis imperfecta which means my bones break really easily and any bumps when crossing could cause a break. The station in Abergavenny is quite difficult to negotiate and even though I love Abergavenny and it’s close to my dad, I try to avoid using that station. If they fixed it, it would mean I could see him more than I do currently.”

Kat, Swansea

“There is a stigma having labelled areas for people with disabilities such as specifically designated areas for disabled people on trains and buses. It can be degrading. I think they should reconfigure the trains so disabled people can have an experience just like non-disabled people. Some train stations have lifts but at mine they don’t, instead they open a gate and disabled people have to go across the train tracks.”

Kylie

Extra costs of inaccessible public transport

We also heard about the financial impact of inaccessible public transport and increased taxi use.

“I find it easier for an accessible taxi to take me places rather than struggling with the transport situation. But it is more expensive. This means that I don’t go out as often as I would if public transport was accessible, because I have to pay for taxis.”

Anonymous, Swansea Valley

Attitudes from fellow passengers

The issues related to non-visible disabilities and the lack of understanding from fellow passengers also emerged from the interviews we undertook in Wales.

“Pre-Covid-19, I was on the bus to college and I was asked to move seats for an older woman. Even though I’m disabled, I gave up my seat and stood up, but I heard horrible things being said about me like “they don’t listen, they don’t give up seats for the old people”. Because I’m a young person and my disability isn’t visible, my rights aren’t always recognised.”

Kylie

The action we need from the Welsh Government

The Welsh Government’s recent intervention to introduce nationalised train services in Wales is an important opportunity to extend equality in developing public transport that is inclusive of disabled people’s needs. The barriers faced by disabled people must be addressed at the earliest stage in development of the new railway services framework.

- It is essential that, alongside the UK and Scottish Governments, the Welsh Government adopts our call for a legislative duty and commits to an implementation plan so that by 2030 all train stations are fully accessible in Wales.
- Key questions on the future of accessibility provisions must be urgently addressed in light of the recent, accelerated developments regarding the nationalisation of Welsh rail travel.
- Previous commitments in Wales to extend accessibility and inclusive provisions and accountability mechanisms must, as a first step, be recognised. These include:
 - Commitments made by Transport for Wales to upgrade rolling stock.
 - Establishing an Accessibility Steering Group and Accessibility Panel to directly involve the voices of disabled people.

4. Levelling up train infrastructure equally

We commissioned WPI Economics to conduct modelling to identify what it would cost to make train travel fully accessible and to identify the benefits to the wider economy that accessibility would provide. Our research model indicates that the total cost of making the entire railway network step-free to platform level would cost between £2bn-£6bn, with a central estimate of £4bn.³¹ We have made an estimated assessment that providing fully step-free access to stations across Britain would amount to just 1-3% of total transport capital investment. Compared to other rail infrastructure projects, e.g. High Speed 2 (HS2), and wider transport spending more generally, making train travel accessible involves a significantly lower financial commitment.³²

Figure 1: WPI modelling of the costs of making every station step-free

£2.3bn

Low scenario

£4.3bn

Mid scenario

£5.6bn

High scenario

Figure 2: Required increase in annual funding, set in context of expected total capital spending on transport between 2020-2030

Funding per year required to provide full step-free access to platform level by 2030: £0.5bn

Current committed Access for All funding (until 2024): £0.06bn



Improving other aspects of accessibility

To provide a fully accessible rail system a range of other areas need to be improved too, as the interviews we held with disabled people identified. These include:

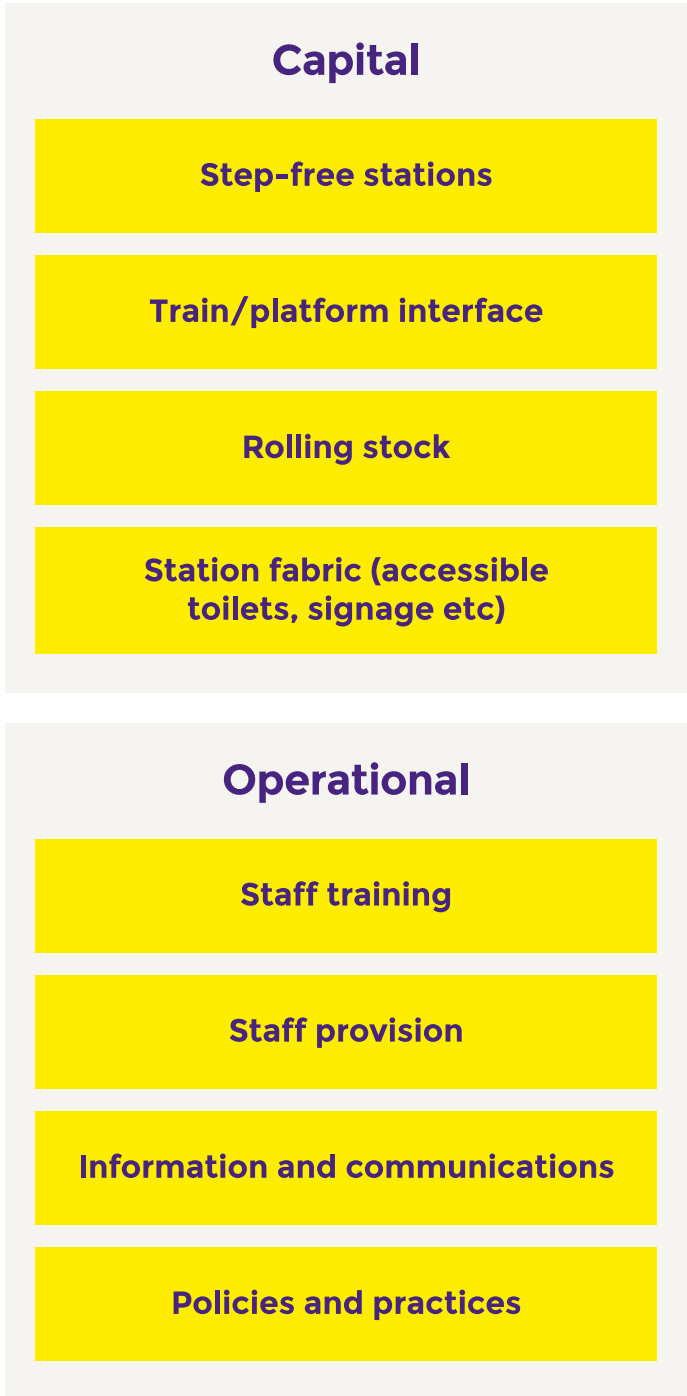
- **The platform-train interface:** There are capital improvements that can make it easier for people to get on and off trains, including rebuilding platforms and train carriages with retractable steps or “gap filler” ramps.
- **Accessibility on train carriages:** All rolling stock was supposed to comply to the PRM-TSI accessibility standard by the beginning of 2020, but dispensations had to be made for certain non-compliant carriages.³³
- **Other capital investment:** Minor improvement works include addressing audio-visual access needs such as induction loops, appropriate signage as well as tactile paving, accessible toilets, onward travel and interchange facilities.
- **Operational changes:** Operational concerns such as the provision of staff, systems for passenger assistance and communication will continue to be essential for the accessibility of the railway, no matter how much is invested in capital improvements.

Access for All

Access for All is the major source of Government funding for improvements to railway stations, with the objective to improve access to – and within – stations, as well as to all platforms.³⁴ The Government has committed to providing Access for All funding until “at least” 2024.³⁵ Instead of this fragmented approach, a continuous line of progression is needed with appropriate forward planning.³⁶

We have demonstrated that there is an urgent need for a consistent funding package instead of a piecemeal Access for All funding mechanism, as currently exists. Providing this estimated spending package will bring us very close to the target of making all rail journeys accessible by 2030, but it will take more to meet this goal than a single spending commitment.

Figure 3: Capital and operational improvements needed to make all rail journeys fully accessible by 2030



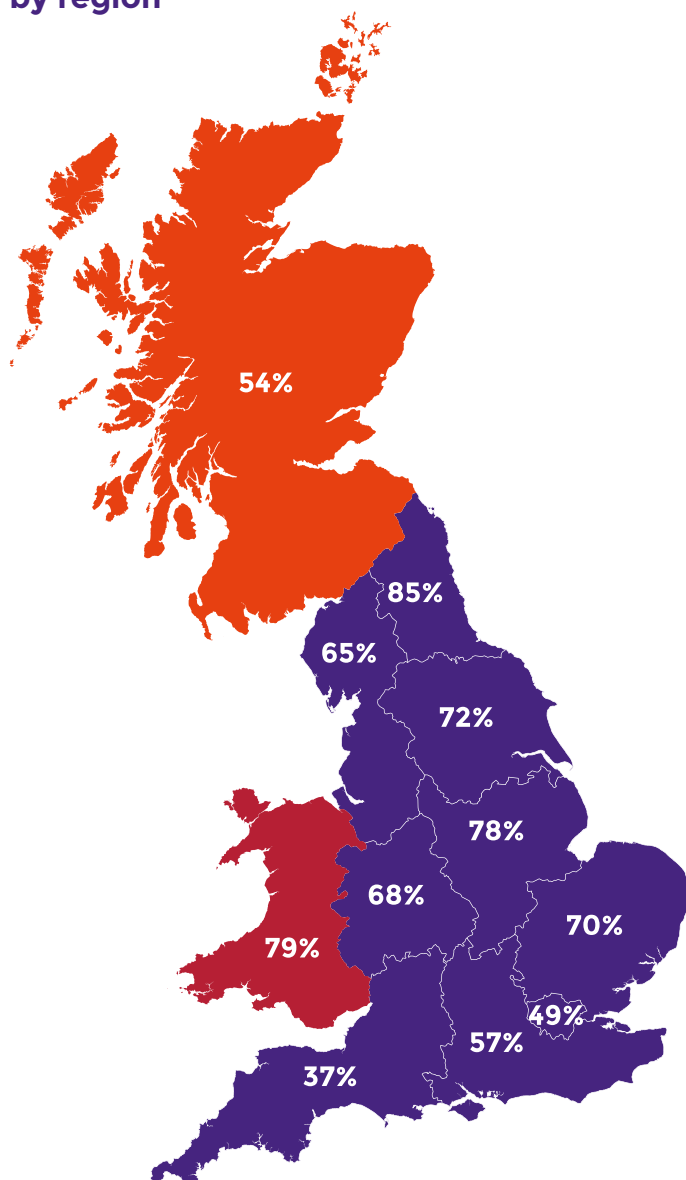
Our report focuses on the capital improvements needed, but it is important not to neglect the necessity for operational changes in order to provide full accessibility.³⁷ As highlighted by the rail regulator, the ORR, in their input to the Williams Rail Review, operational and capital spending must go hand-in-hand in a “whole-system” approach to accessibility improvements.³⁸ Disabled people who participated in our interviews illustrated the need for staffing levels to be maintained and developed. The interviews we held with disabled people show how poor staff awareness of disabled people’s access needs can negatively impact individuals’ personal wellbeing. Some people spoke about the anxiety that was caused by not having the right support from station staff and how this had acted as a disincentive to using public transport.

Making rail travel accessible is affordable and pays dividends to the Exchequer when more disabled people are able to move into work, including increased tax revenues. But it is also an issue of fairness and equality. The interviews that we have undertaken uncovered the links between direct and indirect discrimination that disabled people face due to inaccessible public transport. They show that the Equality Act is currently failing at delivering on the Public Sector Equality Duty. They also show the wider impact on individuals, from personal wellbeing to financial security, when disabled people’s needs are written out of the UK Government’s public spending commitments and left out of the public transport offer.

The focus of this research is the calculation of the cost of making stations step-free from the street to platform level, as this is the area where the most significant capital cost is likely to be incurred. However, it is important to stress the need to address other forms of access needs beyond making platforms step-free. This also reflects the findings from the interviews we carried out. Accessibility to platform level will not benefit passengers if getting on and off the train is not straightforward, and full accessibility on boarding and alighting from trains is needed. We have heard of the impact on individuals when support is of poor quality or even entirely absent due to unstaffed stations. Accessibility within train carriages such as accessible toilets, appropriate audio and visual communication and wheelchair spaces must also be addressed. Broader elements of accessibility at train stations are also central to the experiences of disabled people’s journeys, including provision of information and fully trained staff.

“Levelling up” inclusive transport in all regions in Britain

Figure 4: Proportion of step-free stations by region



85%

85% of stations in the North East are step-free.

Figure 4 shows the lack of consistency across regions with regards to accessibility. The Government’s stated ambition to “unite and level up” to strengthen national infrastructure and better connect resource with economic opportunity must place disabled needs at its heart.

- 85% of stations in the North East are step-free, but this is true of only 37% of stations in the South West.
- There appears to be little relationship between the density of use of the railway in a region and the degree to which the stations in that region have step-free access. Both the North East and South West have relatively low rail usage yet sit at opposite ends of the scale for step-free access.
- London, the region most dependent on rail, has 49% of its mainline stations (excluding Underground, DLR and tram) step-free.
- Typically, operators of intercity routes such as LNER on the East Coast Main Line (92%) and Avanti on the West Coast Main Line (94%) operate a higher proportion of step-free stations than operators of networks with large rural and/or suburban elements, such as GWR (35%) or Southern Western Railway (43%).

49%

London, the region most dependent on rail, has 49% of its mainline stations (excluding Underground, DLR and tram) step-free.



5. The links between inclusive transport and economic participation

From our analysis of the impact of inaccessible transport on disabled people's lives, inclusive transport is clearly a central foundation to living independently and accessing the workplace. Our research – and the direct experience captured in our interviews – suggests the widespread benefits that a fully inclusive rail network would have on securing employment for disabled people who are seeking employment by improving their access to the labour market. However, our assessment shows that the benefits would extend far beyond this understanding towards a more fulsome manifestation of “good work” and equality of opportunity for disabled people.³⁹

We have developed projections of how inclusive transport would impact job quality and career progression for many disabled people who are currently employed. The ability to access “good work”, job satisfaction and the opportunity to progress is clearly a major factor in people's health and wellbeing – and brings extensive wider benefits to wider society. Social mobility, career

progression and the aspiration of fulfilling work should be available to everyone, regardless of disability.⁴⁰ In addition, our research incorporates the experiences of the proportion of disabled people who, despite not currently actively seeking employment, may still want to work but have been discouraged by a range of factors which could include poor public transport accessibility.⁴¹

There has been substantial recognition of the links between economic participation and improved accessibility in transport from UK Government. The Department for Transport has recognised the benefits of improving transport accessibility on increased access to the labour market and in engagement with the local and national economy, increased access to public services, education, improved health and reduced boarding times for all passengers.⁴² The Department for Work and Pensions has similarly acknowledged the role of transport in employment outcomes – for the individual as well supporting employers to tap into all available talent.

Our estimations of the number of disabled people whose employment outcomes could be improved are based on a review of the evidence on public transport accessibility and employment. Difficulty with transport is the second most common barrier to employment, as identified by 31% of adults with mobility impairments.⁴³ This causes a clear disincentive to using the rail network: 47% of disabled passengers and carers who use rail at all said that they use it less frequently than once a month.⁴⁴

The analysis that WPI Economics has provided revisits Leonard Cheshire's own previous research on the incidence of disabled people being forced to turn down a job offer or missing an interview due to public transport that did not accommodate their disability.⁴⁵ This framework breaks down these figures by working status, revealing the extent to which accessibility issues present a barrier to disabled people who wish to participate in work.⁴⁶

In this way we have developed a wider understanding of how inaccessible transport is affecting disabled people's ability to secure successful job outcomes. We find that a fully accessible rail system could help 51,000 people with work-limiting disabilities who say that they

have turned down a job because of public transport that did not accommodate their disability to get into work (24,000 of whom are actively seeking work and 27,000 of whom say they would like to work). There are clear benefits to doing this:

- As individuals moving into work would see their incomes rise, making the train network fully accessible would bring significant positive outcomes in the wellbeing of disabled people. This would have important implications for tackling poverty in the UK too. Nearly half (48%) of people in poverty – totalling 6.8 million people – live in a family where someone is disabled.⁴⁷
- We have assessed that the Exchequer would benefit by around £450million from reduced benefit spend and increased taxes if just half of those currently restricted from working by the transport system moved into work. This would increase to £900million if all of the 51,000 found work.⁴⁸ The economy would see an output (GVA) boost of £1.3billion, increasing to £2.5billion if all of the 51,000 found work.
- There are also potential benefits for those already in work. Improved accessibility could help around 85,000 employed people with work-limiting disabilities who have turned down jobs because of poor rail accessibility into a new and better job. Research has shown the significant earnings and productivity benefits from employees gaining new jobs. It is therefore likely that this would lead to increased earnings and another subsequent economic boost.⁴⁹
- A fully accessible railway could also help a further 43,500 unemployed people and 115,000 employed people to attend an interview that may lead to a new job.

Table 1: Estimated impact of poor public transport accessibility on labour market engagement of people with a work-limiting disability aged 16–64⁵⁰

	In employment	Seeking work	Not seeking but want work
Number of people with a work-limiting disability (Jan–Mar 2020)	3,200,000	360,000	770,000
Forecast number of people in employment / unemployed	2,870,000	690,000	770,000
Proportion of people who say they had to turn down a job because of public transport that did not accommodate their disability	6%	7%	7%
Estimated number of people who had to turn down a job because of public transport that did not accommodate their disability	170,000	48,000	54,000
Proportion of people who say they missed a job interview because of public transport that did not accommodate their disability	8%	6%	6%
Estimated number of people who had to turn down a job because of public transport that did not accommodate their disability	230,000	41,000	46,000

Source: WPI calculations

Table 2: The number of people with work-limiting disabilities who could benefit from improved rail accessibility

	Employed	Unemployed
Turned down a job	85,000	51,000
Missed an interview	115,000	43,500

Source: WPI calculations

Figure 5: How poor public transport accessibility could affect labour market engagement for those with work-limiting health problems or disabilities (Jan–Mar 2020, with forecast adjustments for the economic impact of Covid-19)



The business case for step-free access

Introducing step-free access across Britain would bring benefits to train operating companies as well as disabled individuals, and wider society as a whole. Investment in accessibility measures would help to bring an increase in revenue for train operating companies.

- Providing step-free access to platforms can increase the patronage of a station by 20%.⁵²
- A more accessible railway has the potential to generate £1.3 billion GVA for the economy.

Case study: Merseyrail

Merseyrail is the commuter/metro network serving the Liverpool City Region. It is currently undertaking an ambitious upgrade worth £460 million, with the goal of securing Merseyrail's status as the most accessible railway in the UK. This demonstrates how with a single vision, co-ordination and funding, there can be transformational changes in accessibility.⁵³ Merseyrail will provide a level of accessibility that far exceeds current legal requirements, including space on trains,⁵⁴ platform-train interface⁵⁵ and matching Access for All funding to install lifts in stations.⁵⁶

6. Conclusion

With wholesale reform of the railway system on the horizon in the upcoming Williams Rail Review, we are presented with a unique opportunity to address structural barriers that many disabled people face on a daily basis, touching on every aspect of their lives. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has built an appetite across society to harness this moment of potential transformation with considerable collective social benefits. We must seize the opportunity to affirm our commitment in the UK to treat disabled people equally.

We have found that, as standard, the needs of disabled people are often omitted or de-prioritised in the UK's Government's capital funding projects. This is all the more worrying given the evidence that, without intervention from Governments across Britain, hard-fought progress for disabled people over recent decades is at grave risk due to the pandemic. Our research has shown, however, that a comprehensive funding mechanism and delivery plan is a realistic and reasonable expectation. Furthermore, these provisions are consistent with legal responsibilities held in the Equality Act. At this time of economic insecurity due to the impact of Covid-19, there is a strong case for renewing the UK Government's commitment to providing inclusive transport by 2030 given the extensive dividends involved in economic inclusion, increased levels of employment and opportunity for disabled people, as well as higher revenues for rail operators.

Introducing legislation to implement progress to achieve the 2030 target would mean that the transport system would be made fit-for-purpose in accommodating disabled people's needs. The gaps in step-free access illustrate that Equality Act powers are not currently providing equal treatment or equal access for disabled people when travelling by train. A legal change would make Governments in Westminster, Holyrood and Cardiff accountable to the commitment to reach the 2030 target.

Furthermore, with the UK Government's "levelling up" agenda now taking shape, it is essential that a sufficiently ambitious plan to achieve positive change for disabled people is included through better infrastructure, education and science. This must involve a renewed commitment to the equality principle at the foundations of public transport services, and reflect the needs of disabled people so that they can live independently and have access to financial security and good and fulfilling work.⁵⁷

Our recommendations

1. Governments across the UK, Wales and Scotland must put in place a legally binding duty for all train journeys in Britain to be fully accessible by 2030, backed by a sufficient funding and implementation plan.

- a. Adequate funds must be identified and allocated to ensure that all train stations are made step-free. The next Comprehensive Spending Review must include a sufficient funding package as well as a commitment for future spending until 2030.
- b. A comprehensive implementation plan and timeline must be established within one year of the new law being passed that sets out how the 2030 target will be achieved. Binding provisions should be secured by the end of the new parliament so that meaningful progress is made and the government is accountable to its commitments.
- c. The implementation plan should identify the responsibilities held by each main component of the rail system to deliver the target, with a clear timeline. The plan should ensure that other related Government strategies are aligned with it, e.g. National Infrastructure Strategy.

2. Renew the Public Sector Equality Duty with a focus on affirming the rights of disabled people to live independently.

Principles of inclusive transport must be firmly established across Government and Train Operating Company standard practice, going beyond “accessibility” considerations to a whole system approach. This includes embedding better inclusive training of station staff and tackling negative attitudes from the wider public.

3. Design public transport services and their delivery based on the experiences of the people that they are intended to serve. Comprehensive and continuous civic engagement with disabled people must be incorporated from the earliest stage when taking forward the findings of the Williams Rail Review.

4. The UK Government must improve its data practices to better understand – and respond to – current barriers to using the transport network. The research and analysis that we provide in this report presents indicative findings of the economic benefits of making the rail network fully accessible. The Government should develop this data to improve understanding of the additional costs related to being disabled and how public services should address this. This would involve:

- a. Publishing annual statistics on disabled passenger use of the rail network.
- b. An audit of train station accessibility based on the experiences of disabled people, ensuring that barriers beyond step-free access are captured.

c. The Government's National Strategy for Disabled People is expected to be released in 2021. This must build on our economic analysis of the links between inclusive transport and participation in employment for disabled people.

5. Disabled people should be able to expect the same standards of treatment as everyone else on their journeys. It is clear from our interviews that accessing the right to use public transport services can be a fraught process. Improving awareness of the rights of disabled people – and how rights are enforced – among passengers and staff is needed.

Contact

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7. Endnotes

1. The scope of our research data only extends to Britain to reflect the rail structures of Network Rail and so Northern Ireland is not included.
2. Our data analysis of the provision of step-free access in train stations in Britain was compiled using information on the National Rail website as of October 2020.
3. The most recent cost projection of the HS2 project is between £80.7 billion and £88.7 billion. Source: Oakervee Review of HS2 (2019) www.gov.uk/government/publications/oakervee-review-of-hs2
4. The term “work-limiting disability” is based on how the Office for National Statistics refers to their calculation of the number of people who have a long-term disability which affects the kind or amount of work they might do. This phrasing does not follow the social model of disability, as it does not acknowledge that it is the societal barriers that limit the work disabled people can do, not their disability.
5. e.g. Government spending on benefits claims and reduced tax revenue.
6. Gross Value Added, i.e. the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area.
7. Harvard Business Review “Does work make you happy? Evidence from the World Happiness Report”. Available at: hbr.org/2017/03/does-work-make-you-happy-evidence-from-the-world-happiness-report
8. ONS evidence about the pay of people moving jobs. Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/compendium/economicreview/april2019/analysisofjobchangersandstayers#:~:text=Job%20changers%20moving%20between%20firms,similar%20growth%20to%20each%20other
9. The central objective of Access for All is to improve access to – and within – stations, as well as to all platforms.
10. In the previous phase of the Get on Board campaign in December 2019, we illustrated that it would take until 2070 for Access for All to deliver inclusive train travel. This year’s analysis shows no demonstrative change to this rate and our indicative approximate date remains 2070. For more information on the method we have used see Leonard Cheshire’s Get on Board campaign policy briefing (December 2019). Available at: www.leonardcheshire.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/Get-On-board-policy-briefing.docx
11. See the PM’s New Deal for Britain speech on 30 June 2020 (“We are going to double down on levelling up”). Available at: www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-economy-speech-30-june-2020
12. UK Government, National Infrastructure Strategy, 25 November 2020. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-infrastructure-strategy
13. Leonard Cheshire, Locked out of the Labour Market: The impact of Covid-19 on disabled adults in accessing good work (November 2020). Available at: www.leonardcheshire.org/get-involved/campaign-us/employment

14. Prior to the pandemic, disabled people faced a disability employment gap of 28.1% (Office for National Statistics, Labour Market Bulletin, Table A08 (April – June) 2020) and a disability pay gap of 15%. That equates to £1.65 per hour and £3,000 per year on average, as of 2019 reporting. For more info see TUC’s Disability Pay Gap Day, www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/disability-employment-and-pay-gaps-2019
15. Infrastructure Intelligence (2020), Government steps in to save rail industry as Covid-19 gathers pace. Available at: www.infrastructure-intelligence.com/article/mar-2020/government-steps-save-rail-industry-covid-19-gathers-pace
16. Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris’ letter to owners and operators of non-compliant vehicles which will remain in service during 2020, December 2019. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/heavy-rail-fleet-accessibility-compliance-time-limited-dispensations
17. Duties related to making coaches registered before 2000 accessible in the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000 came into force in January 2020. Alongside legislative provisions, RDG is calling for a longer extension aligned to the deadline for compliance in any such legislation – a minimum of at least eight years. For more information see Rail Delivery Group, Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations Rail Replacement Vehicles – a pathway to regulatory compliance (March 2020).
18. The Lancet Public Health, Guzman-Castillo, Ahmadi-Abhari et al, Forecasted trends in disability and life expectancy in England and Wales up to 2025: a modelling study (2017). Available at: [www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(17\)30091-9/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(17)30091-9/fulltext)
19. This is the mid-level estimate provided by WPI Economics. They have also made low (£207 million or 0.8%) and high (£529 million or 2.2%) assessments of funding requirements in England.
20. For more information see everyonesjourney.campaign.gov.uk
21. Extra Costs Commission: Interim report, March 2015.
22. There are only 2,200 PSVAR-compliant coaches, of about 50,000 coaches in total. To note: from January 2020, coaches used in the operation of scheduled public or local services must comply with PSVAR. Buses have had to comply since 2015.
23. Non-visible disabilities do not have obvious physical outward signs e.g. audiovisual impairments, fibromyalgia, lupus and chronic fatigue syndrome.
24. Transport Scotland acts on behalf of Scottish Ministers to let and manage the ScotRail franchise. The current ScotRail franchise agreement with Abellio, governing the operation of the ScotRail franchise, is due to expire on 31 March 2022 with the option to run until 2022.
25. This is the mid-level estimate provided by WPI Economics. They have also made low (£50,400,00 or 1.4%) and high (£103,300,000 or 3%) assessments of funding requirements in Scotland.
26. Published February 2020. Available at: www.transport.gov.scot/publication/national-transport-strategy-2

27. In 2017, the Scottish Health Survey (SHeS) estimated that 45% of adults (and 17% of children) had a long term condition or illness, and that 32% of adults (and 10% of children) had long-term conditions that were also limiting (see Figure 1.1). In this context, 32% of the adult population would be considered 'disabled', while 68% would be considered 'not disabled'. Disabled people are more likely to be economically inactive than non-disabled people. The disability employment gap in Scotland is estimated as 35.5% (pre-Covid).
28. The Welsh Government set up Transport for Wales in 2018, a wholly owned, not-for-profit company to provide support and expertise to the Government in connection to transport projects in Wales.
29. The Welsh Government has powers to invest in rail, however responsibility for rail infrastructure in England and Wales sits with the UK Government. This contrasts with arrangements in Scotland where rail infrastructure responsibilities are devolved. In the recent past WG has criticised Network Rail for its performance in Wales. Shaw Report (2016) has called for better coordination between Welsh and UK Governments and Silk Commission (2014) has recommended further Welsh devolution on rail.
30. This is the mid-level estimate provided by WPI Economics. They have also made low (£14,100,000 or 1.2%) and high (£28,800, 000 or 2.4%) assessments for funding requirements in Wales.
31. Our cost model of the railway network combines estimated costs of accessibility improvements with information on the stations that are not yet fully accessible. Our model suggests the total cost of making the entire railway network step-free to platform level would be around £4bn. However, there is significant uncertainty around this figure due to the limited publicly available information on the cost of accessibility improvements. We have also tested alternative assumptions and are reasonably confident that the true cost lays somewhere in the range £2.3bn to £5.6bn.
32. The most recent cost projection of HS2 project is between £80.7 billion and £88.7 billion. Source: Oakervee Review of HS2 (2019) www.gov.uk/government/publications/oakervee-review-of-hs2
33. The revised Technical Specifications for Interoperability for Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRM-TSI) is an EU legislative directive requiring improvements to the accessibility of their rail system for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility. It entered into force on 1 January 2015.
34. Access for All is the main funding mechanism for making improvements to railway stations to make them more accessible. Launched in 2006 to address the issues faced by disabled passengers and passengers facing mobility issues when using railway stations in Britain, Access for All has been supported by all governments since then. The funding is used to create a step-free, accessible route from the station entrance to the platform and can include providing lifts or ramps.
35. Inclusive Transport Strategy (2018).
36. A smaller portion of the funding would be made available to small schemes at less busy or rural stations where small improvements could go a long way to improving access.

37. In considering what is required to make the rail network fully accessible by 2030, this chapter classifies the necessary changes as either “capital” or “operational”. Capital improvements are one-off investments made today that will allow the railway to be accessible for many years to come, whereas operational changes are alterations and improvements in the way the railway is run that are needed for it to be accessible.
38. ORR (2019) ORR’s advice to the Williams Rail Review, Annex D – Accessibility evidence and analysis. Available at: orr.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/41428/orr-advice-to-the-williams-rail-review-july-2019-annex-d.pdf
39. “Good work” is based on the premise of fairness so that everyone, particularly those people on lower incomes, have routes to progress in work and are treated with respect and decency at work. For further information see Good Work: The Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices (2017).
40. Disability can interlock with class to act as a barrier to social mobility: 21% of disabled people from working class backgrounds enter the highest occupations in comparison with 43% of people with disabilities from professional backgrounds. However, individuals with disabilities from more privileged backgrounds still face a huge disadvantage. They are 30% less likely to enter professional occupations in comparison to their non-disabled peers. (Source: Social Mobility Commission, State of the Nation 2018–2019, Social Mobility in Great Britain).
41. People with mobility impairments travel a lot less overall than people without, travelling around 3,500 miles per year compared to 7,500 for those without mobility impairments. Research by Transport for London finds over 70% of Londoners with mental health conditions, mobility impairments and long-term illnesses say they would travel more if they did not experience barriers such as access or cost constraints. Source: Transport for London (2019), Travel in London: Understanding our diverse communities 2019. Available at: content.tfl.gov.uk/travel-in-london-understanding-our-diverse-communities-2019.pdf
42. Department for Transport (2015), The Impact of a Person’s Impairment when Accessing Transport and the Social and Economic Losses as a Result of Restricted Access: Rapid Evidence Review. Available at: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/868063/rapid-evidence-review.pdf
43. Sayce/DWP (2011), Getting in, staying in and getting on. Disability employment support fit for the future. Available at: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49779/sayce-report.pdf
44. Office for Rail and Road survey on passenger awareness, 2017. Available at: webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20180605095147/http://orr.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/25982/research-into-passenger-awareness-of-assisted-travel-services-april-2017.pdf
45. Leonard Cheshire/ComRes Disabled Adult Survey 2018 showed that 5% of all respondents had to turn down a job and 5% missed a job interview due to inaccessible transport. For those who were employed, this increased to 6% and 8% respectively. For those who were not working but seeking work this was 7% and 6% respectively.

46. This framework uses evidence from Leonard Cheshire/ComRes Disabled Adult Survey 2018 and the most recent labour force engagement statistics, assuming the proportion of disabled people turning down jobs or missing interviews has remained broadly stable.
47. Social Metrics Commissions Annual Report (2019). Available at: socialmetricscommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/SMC_measuring-poverty-201908_full-report.pdf
48. We have used a methodology developed by the Department for Work and Pensions to provide evidence for their disability employment strategy, DWP (2018): Work, Health and Disability Green Paper Data Pack. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/work-health-and-disability-green-paper-data-pack>
49. ONS evidence about the pay of people moving jobs. Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/compendium/economicreview/april2019/analysisofjobchangersandstayers#:~:text=Job%20changers%20moving%20between%20firms,similar%20growth%20to%20each%20other
50. These calculations relate to all public transport, not just rail. The latest National Travel Survey statistics finds that 6% of distance travelled by people with mobility impairments in England is by surface rail, and another 6% of distance travelled by people with mobility impairments is by bus. The modes are used about equally for commuting purposes across the country as a whole. Therefore, we assume that around half of the figures above would be due to accessibility on the rail system and can estimate the number of disabled people improved rail accessibility will help to access the labour market.
51. The scale of these negative impacts will worsen due to the impact of Covid-19, as many more people are becoming unemployed across the economy – the latest forecasts predict that the national unemployment rate is set to roughly double from 3.8% to 7.3%. We have adjusted our estimated populations of those employed and seeking work in figure 5 in line with the overall increase in unemployment rate to take account of the economic circumstances. This may well be an underestimate.
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