

# News story: More service stations to become fully accessible as government fund opens

- motorway service stations invited to apply for a share of £2 million in funding for fully accessible toilets
- Department for Transport partnering with Muscular Dystrophy UK to fund new facilities, making travel easier on the roads for disabled people
- investment is a key commitment in the government's Inclusive Transport Strategy

More service stations in England are to become fully accessible for disabled passengers with the launch of a £2 million government fund.

The Department for Transport is partnering with Muscular Dystrophy UK (MDUK) to award the money for Changing Places toilets, which are expected to be ready by the early 2020s.

More than a quarter of a million people across the UK cannot use standard accessible toilets, meaning that they are forced to go for long journeys without a bathroom break, be changed by their carers on toilet floors, or have to stay at home.

By providing more space and specialised equipment, including adult-sized changing benches and hoists, Changing Places facilities allow people with conditions like muscular dystrophy and cerebral palsy to use the bathroom safely and comfortably, removing some of the difficulties faced by disabled people travelling on the roads.

Transport Accessibility Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

Today marks the next step towards our ambition of delivering a fully inclusive transport network.

It is unacceptable that, despite welcome investment in some areas, our roadside services are not more accessible for over a quarter of a million people, and I am determined to do more.

Our partnership with MDUK will help ensure that everyone, disabled or not, can use our roads and I encourage as many operators as possible to apply for funding.

MDUK will work with DfT to allocate funding based on detailed proposals by the operators of motorway services areas which will set out how they propose to fulfil the eligibility criteria. This includes the equipment provided within the Changing Places toilet, the total budget, and the individual

operator's broader accessibility measures, such as disabled parking spaces and other accessible facilities within the service station.

The department's [partnership with MDUK was announced last November](#) to bring Changing Places toilets to the majority of motorway service areas, as part of the government's [Inclusive Transport Strategy](#) which aims to provide equal access to the transport network by 2030.

Catherine Woodhead, Chief Executive of Muscular Dystrophy UK, said:

Individuals and families living with a disability often tell us that travelling by car is the easiest way for them to get from A to B.

Building Changing Places toilets at motorway service stations will make it easier for more than a quarter of a million people and their families to visit friends, go on holiday, or simply enjoy a day out somewhere – activities the rest of us take for granted.

We're delighted the Department for Transport has recognised this need, and look forward to working together on delivering this transformational project.

The Inclusive Transport Strategy set out key commitments to improve disabled people's access across all modes of transport by 2030, which included:

- £300 million to make railway stations more accessible through the [Access for All](#) scheme
- £2 million for audio and visual equipment on buses, so that passengers know where and when to alight
- a £2 million passenger awareness campaign to increase disability awareness and reduce hate crime on our network
- an accreditation scheme for transport operators to receive formal recognition for positive work to improve disabled passengers' experiences, such as training frontline staff and senior management on disability awareness
- measures to ensure future technology is designed inclusively from the outset, with opportunities sought to harness innovation

The Changing Places application portal will be open for 3 months with successful applicants announced in September.