

News story: Next steps towards a fully inclusive transport network

- new measures will help to make transport fully accessible for all passengers by 2030
- up to £300 million made available for improvements to the network
- part of a government drive to build a society that works for all

New measures, backed by hundreds of million pounds, will help ensure all disabled people can travel confidently and easily.

The Department for Transport has today (25 July 2018) set out its [Inclusive Transport Strategy](#), which will improve accessibility across all types of travel for those with both visible and less visible disabilities.

The strategy includes investment in rail accessibility infrastructure, commitments to produce league tables which highlight operators that are delivering the best service for disabled people, and funding for Changing Places accessible toilets at motorway service stations.

The government will put up to £300 million of funding into extending the Access for All programme, making railway stations more accessible, including through step-free access.

Transport Accessibility Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

Transport is at the heart of how we live our lives. It helps us get to work, stay in touch with friends and family, and access vital services like healthcare and education.

But for our ageing population and the fifth of people who are disabled, access to transport can be far from straightforward.

This Inclusive Transport Strategy is the first step in achieving a genuinely inclusive transport network, which meets the needs of all people, regardless of whether they are disabled or not.

Government acknowledges there is a lot of work to do to make the transport system fully accessible by 2030. The physical infrastructure that will be required to achieve this will take time to build. However, we are committed to working at pace on those areas where we can make an immediate and important difference, such as training and assistance.

Other measures announced today include supporting the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) to improve and simplify Passenger Assist – the system disabled passengers use to book assistance on the rail network.

Train operators will be held to account for delivering on this service, ensuring they compensate passengers if the booked assistance is not provided.

Other measures announced today include:

- £2 million to install Changing Places toilets at motorway service stations, supporting disabled people to travel easily and comfortably on the road network
- £2 million for audio and visual equipment on buses, so that passengers on almost every bus will 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
- ensuring future technology is designed inclusively from the outset, with opportunities sought to harness innovation

This work comes ahead of the government's Aviation Strategy, which will set out further measures to improve the airport and flying experience for disabled people.

This could include working with industry to provide better staff training, offering improved on-board facilities and exploring possible changes to aircraft design.

Keith Richards, Chair of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, said:

DPTAC welcomes the publication of the ITS and the government's commitments to better meeting the needs of disabled people. Our role, as independent statutory advisor, is to offer our advice as the ITS is delivered. As a 'critical friend' we will hold the government to account for delivering the strategy and for securing good outcomes for disabled people.

It follows an announcement in May, when the Prime Minister [said she wanted people to enjoy an extra 5 years of healthy and independent living by 2035](#), while also narrowing the gap between the richest and poorest.

Central to making this a reality will be supporting people to remain active and connected to their families and communities – and transport has a significant role to play.

Nic Bungay, Director of Campaigns, Care and Information at Muscular Dystrophy UK, said:

Muscular Dystrophy UK welcomes the Department for Transport's plans to make public transport more accessible for everyone and is

encouraged to see investment in this area. Our campaigners have worked hard over the years to push for improvements and, while we know there is still a long way to go until people with disabilities have full accessibility, this announcement shows we are heading in the right direction.

As the co-chairs of the Changing Places Consortium, we are also pleased that funding has been committed to installing these fully accessible facilities at motorway service stations across the country, and we look forward to working with DfT as these are put in place.

Mark Lever, Chief Executive at the National Autistic Society, said:

The strategy launched today is a step forward, particularly the passenger awareness campaign and accreditation scheme for transport providers. We now need to make sure these measures aimed at all disabled people, fully reflect the experiences and needs of autistic people and their families.

We and our supporters have been calling for the government to listen to autistic people and make sure public transport is accessible for all.

There are around 700,000 autistic people in the UK who rely on trains and buses to go to school, work and to visit family. But many autistic people can feel so anxious about getting on public transport that they are unable to leave the house at all. It's not just the worry about potential delays, cancellations and large crowds. It's also the tuts and stares from other passengers who see someone acting differently, but don't recognise that it's because they're autistic.

At the National Autistic Society, we won't accept a world where autistic people are shut away. Increasing understanding of autism among transport staff and the wider public has to be at the heart of what needs to change. Today's announcement has the potential to help create a public transport system that works for autistic people.

Mark Atkinson, Chief Executive at disability charity Scope, said:

It's positive to see this commitment from the government. There is a lot of work to do to bring our transport system up to scratch.

Disabled people face unnecessary difficulties using all parts of the transport network every day.

Scope's research shows forty percent of disabled people experience

problems using trains. From airports to buses we've heard too many horror stories of disabled people let down by poor infrastructure, bad service, or being treated as an afterthought . This urgently needs to change.

A genuinely inclusive transport network will make it much easier for disabled people to get to work, see family, and be part of their community.

The Inclusive Transport Strategy also includes raising awareness and enforcement of passengers' rights, staff training and improvements to accessible information. This will support the Future of Mobility Grand challenge, at the heart of which is a transport system that works for everyone.

It follows the [Accessibility Action Plan consultation](#) which received over 1,000 responses.