



Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

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Depairtment fur

Infrastructure

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework

Consultation Document

About this consultation

Getting around safely and independently is something many of us take for granted. Whether travelling to work, school, healthcare appointments, the shops, or to spend time with family and friends, accessible transport helps people stay connected, independent and involved in their communities.

The Department for Infrastructure has developed *Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework* to help create a transport system and built environment that works better for everyone, particularly older people and d/Deaf and disabled people who can face additional barriers when travelling.

While important progress has been made in recent years, we know that many people still experience challenges. These can include inaccessible infrastructure, difficulties accessing information, and barriers that affect confidence and independence.

The Framework sets out a shared vision for the future where everyone, regardless of age, disability or personal circumstances, can travel safely, confidently, independently and with dignity. It outlines practical actions to improve accessibility across transport services, streets, footways, public spaces and the wider built environment, while ensuring that the voices and experiences of people with lived experience help shape future decisions.

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The preferred method of response is via the Department's Citizen Space consultation hub, where you can complete the consultation questionnaire online. Using Citizen Space allows responses to be submitted securely and helps ensure that feedback is captured and analysed consistently.

Email or postal responses

If you are unable to respond online, you may submit your response by email or post.

Email:

inclusive.mobility@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Post:

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2–4 Cromac Avenue
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BT7 2JA

Please clearly mark all correspondence with the title: **Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework Consultation**

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Consultation period

The consultation will run for eight weeks, closing at **5:00pm on 23 December 2026**.

Responses received after this date may not be considered.

Impact Assessments

Government bodies are required to screen the impact of new policies and legislation against a wide range of criteria, including equality and human rights.

The following impact assessments are available:

- Equality Impact Assessment Screening
- Rural Needs Impact Assessment
- Human Rights Impact Assessment

The Department welcomes views and comments on these assessments.

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Data Protection Act 2018

General Data Protection Regulations 2018

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI)

Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR)

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- Sex
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- your Internet Protocol (IP) address, and details of which version of web browser you used
- information on how you used the site, provided by cookies and page tagging techniques

We collect your personal data as part of the consultation process for statistical data, for example the types of individuals and groups participating, and to inform the *Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework* and the Department's equality impact assessment.

For information you submit online via the Consultation Hub:

- the Department for Infrastructure is the data controller.
- The Department of Finance, operating as Citizen Space, is the data processor.

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Once the survey has closed, your data will be held within the Department's secure network and premises in line with the Department's [retention and disposal schedule](#). We will only retain your data for as long as necessary. After this period your personal data will be archived and then deleted.

When analysing responses, the Department will remove any identifying personal data from any responses received from its own records and delete the response from CitizenSpace.

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If you are unhappy with any aspect of this privacy notice, or how your personal information is being processed, please contact the Departmental Data Protection Officer at:

Data Protection Officer:	DfI Data Protection Officer
Address:	James House 2 - 4 Cromac Avenue Belfast BT7 2JA
Telephone:	028 9054 0806
Email:	dfigdpr@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

If you are still not happy, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):

Address:	Information Commissioner's Office Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF
Telephone:	0303 123 1113
Email:	casework@ico.org.uk
Web:	https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/

Next Steps

Once the consultation closes, all responses will be carefully reviewed and considered by the Department. A consultation report summarising the feedback received will be published, and the findings will help inform the final version of *Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework*.

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Ministerial Foreword

Transport plays a fundamental role in all our lives. It connects people to employment, education, healthcare, public services, family, friends and community activities. The ability to travel safely, confidently and independently is essential to participation in society and to living a full and independent life.

Through Transport Strategy 2035, the Department set out its vision for a safe, sustainable, inclusive and efficient transport system. Recognising that older, d/Deaf and disabled people can continue to face barriers when travelling, the Strategy committed the Department to developing a dedicated inclusive transport strategy focused primarily on improving accessibility, removing barriers to travel and supporting safe, confident and independent mobility. This Framework fulfils that commitment.

While significant progress has been made in recent years through investment in accessible public transport, concessionary travel, community transport, Shopmobility services, passenger information and inclusive design, we recognise that barriers remain. A journey can still be affected by physical, organisational, communication or attitudinal obstacles that limit independence and participation in everyday life. As our population ages and the number of people living with disabilities and long-term health conditions grows, addressing these challenges becomes increasingly important.

This Framework sets out how the Department will place accessibility and inclusion at the heart of transport policy, planning, investment and service delivery. While it aims to address the challenges and barriers identified by our stakeholders, it is not solely about infrastructure or transport services. It is about creating opportunities, reducing isolation, supporting independence and enabling people to participate fully in society. By working together, we can create a transport system and built environment that is more accessible, more inclusive and better able to meet the needs of current and future generations.

I look forward to working with all those involved in its delivery to make our society a place where everyone can travel safely, confidently, independently and with dignity.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Liz King', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Introduction

- 1.1. The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has a wide spectrum of responsibilities that touch almost every aspect of daily life in Northern Ireland. It builds and maintains our transport network of roads, footways, footpaths, and cycle lanes, funds and oversees the provision of public transport and supports community transport and Shopmobility services. The Department also oversees the planning system, manages water and drainage services and inland waterways, and is responsible for a range of regulatory and licensing functions to ensure that people can travel safely, efficiently, and sustainably. Given the breadth of its responsibilities and the essential nature of the services it delivers, DfI has a duty to ensure that everyone can access, use, and benefit from its services on an equal basis, removing barriers wherever possible and promoting inclusion, accessibility, and fairness in all aspects of its work.
- 1.2. The development of *Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework* fulfils a commitment contained within Transport Strategy 2035 to develop an inclusive transport strategy focused primarily on the needs of older, d/Deaf and disabled people. This document provides the framework through which the Department will improve accessibility, remove barriers to travel and support safe, confident and independent mobility. It translates the high-level ambitions of Transport Strategy 2035 into a coordinated programme of actions across transport services, infrastructure, planning, investment and policy development.
- 1.3. The overarching purpose of this Framework is to put people at the heart of what we do by promoting inclusion. Within this context, inclusive transport means a transport system and built environment that can be accessed, understood, and used by the widest possible range of people. Our vision is that everyone, regardless of age, disability, or personal circumstance, can travel safely, confidently, independently, and with dignity to the opportunities, services, and communities that matter most to them.
- 1.4. While existing legislation and regulations establish important minimum standards and protections, this Framework seeks to go further by embedding accessibility and inclusion within decision-making processes, investment planning, service delivery and organisational culture. It introduces a stronger emphasis on lived experience, inclusive design, end-to-end journeys, continuous monitoring, staff awareness and early stakeholder engagement. In doing so, the Framework aims not simply to achieve compliance but to improve people's day-to-day experiences of travelling and accessing the built environment.
- 1.5. The Framework aims to build upon existing progress and set out the Department's approach to planning, policy making, project design and implementation, and resource and capital investment decisions which have potential to impact upon the ability of older, d/Deaf, and disabled people to move around independently using transport systems and through the built environment.

- 1.6. We recognise that other groups, including women and girls, children and young people, and people of racial and ethnic minorities, can also experience barriers to travel, and some people can fall into multiple groups which can result in more complex challenges. While the Framework focuses specifically on addressing challenges identified by older, d/Deaf, and disabled people, measures which improve the accessibility, safety, and usability of transport systems for these groups can also benefit others in our society.
- 1.7. This Framework recognises both the progress that has been made and the challenges that remain. It provides a structure for continuous improvement, ensuring that accessibility and inclusion are embedded across the Department's responsibilities and that future investment and decision-making contribute to a more inclusive transport system.
- 1.8. Throughout this Framework, references to disabled people include people with physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual, neurological, mental health, and hidden impairments, unless the context requires otherwise.

2. Progress to date

- 2.1. Over recent years, the Department and its delivery partners have taken significant steps to improve accessibility and inclusion across transport services, infrastructure, policy development, and engagement processes. These improvements have helped remove barriers, increase independence, and improve travel experiences for many people. Examples include investment in accessible public transport fleets and infrastructure, including the introduction of dual-wheelchair accessible vehicles; improvements to passenger information and assistance arrangements, such as the NaviLens system in Belfast Grand Central Station; enhancements to walking and wheeling infrastructure; and the increasing application of inclusive design principles across departmental programmes and projects.
- 2.2. The Department has also continued to support independent mobility through the provision of concessionary travel, community transport, Shopmobility services, and the Blue Badge scheme. These interventions play an important role in reducing transport barriers, promoting social inclusion, and enabling older and disabled people to access healthcare, education, employment, shopping, leisure activities and community life. For many people, particularly those who are unable to use conventional transport services or who face mobility challenges, these services provide an essential means of maintaining independence, wellbeing and participation in society.
- 2.3. While the above measures have delivered important benefits, evidence from stakeholders and transport users demonstrates that significant barriers remain. Demographic change, evolving expectations, technological developments, and continuing accessibility challenges mean that further action is required. This

Framework therefore seeks to build on the progress already achieved and provide a more coordinated approach for delivering continuous improvement across the transport system and built environment.

3. The need for an Inclusive Mobility Framework

- 3.1. According to Census 2021¹, around one in five people (21%) in Northern Ireland reported a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities, while the Health Survey (NI) 2023/24² reported that 34% of adults aged 16 and over had a longstanding physical or mental health condition that reduced their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.
- 3.2. Additionally, our population continues to age with Census 2021³ figures revealing that the number of people aged 65+ increased by around 63,000 people (24%) between 2011 and 2021, representing the largest increase of any broad age group. Looking ahead, 2024-based projections from NISRA⁴ suggest that the population aged 65 and over will increase by a further 44.7% over the next 25 years, while the population aged 85 and over is expected to more than double (126.1% increase). By 2027, there are projected to be more people aged 65 and over than children aged 0 to 15 in Northern Ireland.
- 3.3. As people age, the prevalence of long-term health difficulties and disabilities increase. UK disability statistics⁵ report that 24% of working-age adults report a disability compared with 45% of adults over State Pension Age and just under two thirds (64%) of people aged 85 or over. These demographic trends demonstrate the growing importance of ensuring that our transport systems, infrastructure, and services are designed to accommodate the needs of the widest possible range of users.
- 3.4. Accessible transport is a fundamental enabler of participation in society. The ability to travel safely, independently, and with confidence affects access to employment, education, healthcare, public services, shopping, leisure activities, and community life. However, many older, d/Deaf, and disabled people continue to encounter barriers that can make everyday journeys difficult, stressful, or, in some cases, impossible.
- 3.5. These barriers can take many forms. Physical barriers may include uneven footways, obstructed pavements, inaccessible bus stops, inadequate crossing facilities, poor links between transport modes, or a lack of step-free access. Other barriers may be organisational, communication-related, or attitudinal, such

¹ [CT0051 Long-term health problem or disability, age-standardised proportions \(Census 2021, Census 2011\) | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#)

² [Health Survey \(NI\): First Results 2023/24 | Department of Health](#)

³ [Census 2021 Population and household estimates for Northern Ireland Statistical bulletin](#)

⁴ [Northern Ireland population projected to peak at 1.94 million in 2031 before declining | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#)

⁵ [UK disability statistics: Prevalence and life experiences - House of Commons Library](#)

as inaccessible information, difficulties using ticketing systems, poor communication during service disruption, or a lack of understanding of accessibility needs.

- 3.6. The Department also recognises that not all disabilities are visible. People with hidden disabilities, including learning disabilities, mental health conditions, dementia, acquired brain injuries, neurological conditions, and some sensory impairments, may experience significant challenges when travelling, as can neurodivergent people. These can include difficulties navigating complex transport environments, understanding information, coping with unexpected changes, or accessing assistance when required. Because such barriers are not always immediately apparent, the needs of people with hidden disabilities and neurodivergent people can sometimes be overlooked when policies, services, and infrastructure are designed.
- 3.7. Given the scale of current need, combined with projected demographic change, there is a clear rationale for an Inclusive Mobility Framework. While wider disability strategies and transport strategies both consider accessibility, this Framework provides a specific focus on the intersection between transport, mobility, and inclusion. It seeks to ensure that the needs and experiences of older, d/Deaf, and disabled people are consistently considered in transport planning, infrastructure investment, service delivery, and policy development.
- 3.8. By facilitating a more inclusive society, we ensure that everyone can fully engage in community life, access essential services, and enjoy equal opportunities. This not only enhances the quality of life for individuals but also strengthens our communities, promoting a sense of belonging and mutual respect.
- 3.9. The benefits of improved accessibility extend far beyond those directly affected by disability, supporting older people, families with young children, people with temporary injuries, visitors unfamiliar with local systems, and many others. By designing transport systems and services that are accessible and welcoming to all, we can create more connected, resilient, and sustainable communities, support economic participation, and enhance independence, equality, and quality of life for everyone.

4. Policy context

- 4.1. This Inclusive Mobility Framework sits within a wider framework of international, national, regional, and departmental policies which seek to promote equality, inclusion, accessibility, and independent living. The Framework is intended to complement these by providing a specific focus on the transport and mobility needs of older, d/Deaf, and disabled people, recognising that accessible transport is a key enabler of participation in education, employment, healthcare, social activities, and community life.

- 4.2. The Framework builds on a substantial body of existing legislation, regulation and standards which already govern accessibility across transport services, vehicles, infrastructure and the built environment. These include the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and associated duties on transport providers, Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations governing vehicle accessibility, rail technical specifications and standards, and planning policies. Together, these frameworks establish requirements relating to access to transport services, vehicle design, passenger information, the built environment and the elimination of discrimination. The Framework does not replace these requirements; rather, it seeks to drive continuous improvement beyond minimum compliance by promoting inclusive design, early engagement, and a stronger focus on user experience across the transport system.
- 4.3. The Department recognises its responsibilities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which places a statutory duty on public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations. The Framework supports the Department's Equality Scheme and associated Disability Action Plan in meeting these statutory obligations by ensuring that the needs of older, d/Deaf, and disabled people are considered throughout the development and delivery of policies, programmes, and services. It also complements existing equality, disability, and rural needs assessment processes by promoting meaningful engagement and early consideration of accessibility and inclusion.
- 4.4. The Framework is informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)⁶ which, similar to the DDA, recognises the right of disabled people to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of society. In particular, the Framework reflects the principles contained within Articles 3, 4, and 5 relating to equality, non-discrimination, and accessibility, as well as Articles 9 and 20 which specifically address accessibility and personal mobility. Accessible and inclusive transport also supports the realisation of a range of other rights contained within the Convention, including access to information, education, employment, healthcare, cultural activities, and participation in public life.
- 4.5. The Framework has been developed in the context of the Northern Ireland Executive's ongoing work to develop a new Disability Strategy. While the Executive Disability Strategy considers a broad range of issues affecting disabled people across society, this Inclusive Mobility Framework provides a dedicated focus on those aspects that fall within DfI's remit. The two strategies are intended to be complementary and mutually reinforcing, contributing towards the shared objective of reducing barriers and promoting greater independence and inclusion.

⁶ [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities | OHCHR](#)

- 4.6. The Framework also supports the objectives of the Northern Ireland Executive's Autism Strategy, which seeks to improve outcomes, participation and quality of life for autistic people. Many autistic people can experience barriers when travelling, including navigating complex transport environments, accessing information, coping with unexpected changes to journeys and accessing support when required. By promoting accessible information, inclusive design, staff awareness and consideration of hidden disabilities, this Framework contributes to creating a transport system that is more accessible and welcoming for autistic people.
- 4.7. The Framework further recognises the importance of the Sign Language Act (Northern Ireland) 2025 and its aim of promoting and facilitating the use of British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL). Accessible communication is a key component of inclusive transport. The Department is committed to improving the accessibility of travel information, consultation materials and customer communications, and to considering the needs of d/Deaf people in the design and delivery of transport services and infrastructure. This Framework supports the wider objective of enabling d/Deaf people to access information, services and opportunities on an equal basis with others.
- 4.8. The Framework also aligns with the Department's wider transport and infrastructure objectives, including the development of Transport Strategy 2035 and the associated family of Transport Plans. The Transport Strategy 2035 establishes the Department's long-term vision for a safe, sustainable, inclusive and efficient transport system and contains a specific commitment to develop an inclusive transport strategy focused primarily on the needs of older, d/Deaf and disabled people. This Framework is therefore a key delivery mechanism for Transport Strategy 2035. It provides a structure for improving accessibility, removing barriers to travel and supporting safe, confident and independent mobility. The objectives and actions contained within this document should be considered alongside Transport Strategy 2035 and the emerging suite of Transport Plans that will guide investment and delivery across Northern Ireland.
- 4.9. The Framework is further informed by a range of policy areas that influence how people move around and access services, including active travel, road safety, planning, placemaking, climate change, decarbonisation, public transport reform, and community transport provision. The Department recognises that actions in these areas can present both opportunities and challenges for older, d/Deaf, and disabled people and that inclusion must therefore be considered as a core principle rather than an add-on.

5. Role of IMTAC

- 5.1. The Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) plays a vital role in supporting the Department's efforts to create a more inclusive transport system and built environment. Funded by the Department, IMTAC comprises volunteers with a range of lived experiences who seek to represent the views of

older, d/Deaf, and disabled transport users, including those who have caring responsibilities.

5.2. The Department recognises the value of lived experience in identifying barriers, informing policy development, improving project design, and ensuring that investment decisions reflect the needs of the widest possible range of transport users. IMTAC provides an important source of expertise, insight, and challenge, helping to ensure that accessibility and inclusion are considered throughout the development and delivery of transport policies, programmes, services, and infrastructure.

5.3. The Department regards IMTAC as its principal strategic advisory body on inclusive transport matters, providing independent advice and constructive challenge based on the experiences of transport users. IMTAC's advice will sit alongside evidence gathered through public consultation, engagement with representative organisations, community and voluntary sector bodies, Section 75 groups, transport operators, local councils, rural stakeholders, and other relevant partners.

5.4. In support of this Framework, IMTAC will have four key roles:

1. Strategic Advice

IMTAC will provide advice to the Department on matters relating to accessibility, inclusion, and independent mobility. This will include advising on emerging issues, identifying barriers to travel, and helping to shape future policy development.

2. Engagement and Consultation

The Department will engage with IMTAC on policies, programmes, projects, and investment decisions that have the potential to impact significantly on older, d/Deaf, and disabled people. IMTAC will provide a mechanism through which lived experience can inform decision-making at an early stage, helping to identify potential issues and opportunities before proposals are finalised.

3. Inclusive Design and Delivery

IMTAC will be involved, where appropriate, in the development and review of transport plans, infrastructure schemes, public realm projects, design guidance, and service improvements. The Department will seek to engage IMTAC as early as practicable in relevant processes to help ensure that accessibility and inclusive design considerations are embedded from the outset rather than addressed retrospectively.

4. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

IMTAC will support the implementation of this Framework by providing ongoing feedback on progress, identifying emerging issues, and highlighting areas where further action may be required. The Department will maintain

regular engagement with IMTAC to review progress against the Framework's objectives and to promote a culture of continuous improvement.

- 5.5. The Department recognises, however, that no single organisation can represent the full diversity of lived experience across Northern Ireland. In implementing this Framework, the Department will therefore continue to engage with a broad range of stakeholders and communities to ensure that policy development and service improvement are informed by a wide range of perspectives and evidence.

6. Approach to developing the Inclusive Mobility Framework

- 6.1. This Framework is informed by the social model of disability. This recognises that people with impairments can be disabled by physical, organisational, communication, and attitudinal barriers within society. It does not minimise an individual's impairment or personal experience. Instead, it places responsibility on organisations to identify and remove avoidable barriers and to design environments, services and systems that are accessible from the outset. This will enable everyone, regardless of age, disability, or personal circumstances, to travel safely, confidently, independently, and with dignity, to the opportunities, services, and communities that matter most to them, which is the vision underpinning this Framework. This vision has informed the principles, strategic objectives, and actions contained within this document.
- 6.2. In 2022, IMTAC published a position paper entitled *A New Approach to Travel, Our Streets, and Our Places*⁷, which identified a number of high-level principles considered essential to creating more inclusive transport systems, streets, and places. The four principles contained within that document have been adopted as the foundation of this Framework and provide the structure through which the Department will work towards embedding accessibility, inclusion, and lived experience within decision-making, investment, service delivery, and policy development.
- 6.3. As part of the first phase of developing this Framework, a Task and Finish Group was established to identify the principal barriers to inclusion and transport challenges experienced by older, d/Deaf, and disabled people, and to consider how these barriers might be addressed. The Group engaged with a broad range of organisations and stakeholders across the wider sector through a survey, receiving responses from representative organisations across the disability, older people's, transport, and community sectors on the travel and transport issues that have the greatest impact on their members' ability to get around. The issues identified through this engagement process are summarised in Appendix 1.
- 6.4. Drawing on this evidence base, this Framework identifies a series of strategic objectives and supporting actions which will contribute towards realising the four

⁷ [A new approach to travel, our streets and our places | The Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee \(IMTAC\)](#)

key principles adopted and address the specific issues identified through this focussed engagement. The strategic objectives describe the long-term changes the Department wishes to achieve in pursuit of its vision, while the actions set out the practical measures that will contribute towards delivering those outcomes.

7. Vision

- 7.1. Everyone, regardless of age, disability, or personal circumstance, can travel safely, confidently, independently, and with dignity to the opportunities, services, and communities that matter most to them.

8. Principles

- 8.1. The following principles provide the foundation for the Department's approach to improving accessibility and inclusion across the wide range of services, infrastructure, and policies for which it is responsible. Together, they establish the values and aspirations that will guide decision-making, investment, service delivery, and engagement throughout the Department. Each principle is supported by a set of desired outcomes which describe the changes the Department aims to achieve over time. These outcomes will help inform future actions, support the monitoring of progress, and provide a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the Framework.

Principle 1: We will put disabled, d/Deaf, and older people at the centre of decision-making.

- 8.2. Older, d/Deaf, and disabled people are experts in their own experiences and are often best placed to identify the barriers that affect their ability to travel safely, independently, and with confidence. Decisions that are informed by lived experience are more likely to result in services, policies, and infrastructure that are accessible, practical, and effective in meeting people's needs. By engaging meaningfully with those who are directly affected by transport decisions, the Department can better understand the real-world impact of its actions, identify potential issues at an early stage, and deliver solutions that work for the widest possible range of users. This principle seeks to embed the voices and experiences of older, d/Deaf, and disabled people throughout policy development, planning, investment, and service delivery.

Desired Outcomes:

- Older, d/Deaf, and disabled people see that their views are considered in decision-making.
- Policies and projects are informed by lived experience at an early stage.

Principle 2: We will create a culture that seeks to be aware of, understand, and recognise the needs of older, d/Deaf and disabled people.

- 8.3. Creating a more inclusive transport system requires more than physical improvements to infrastructure and services. It also depends upon organisational

culture, awareness, knowledge, and understanding. Accessibility and inclusion should be considered as a routine part of everyday decision-making rather than as an additional consideration introduced late in a process. By increasing awareness of the barriers experienced by older, d/Deaf, and disabled people, and promoting a culture of continuous learning and improvement, the Department can ensure that accessibility considerations become embedded across all areas of its work. This principle aims to build capability, confidence, and accountability throughout the organisation so that inclusion becomes everyone's responsibility.

Desired Outcomes:

- Staff have greater awareness of accessibility and inclusion.
- Accessibility considerations become embedded in everyday decision-making.

Principle 3: We will seek to ensure that public sector investment contributes to a more accessible and inclusive society.

8.4. The Department makes significant investment decisions that influence how people travel, access services, and participate in community life. These decisions present important opportunities to improve accessibility and reduce barriers to independent mobility. Considering accessibility from the outset helps ensure that investment delivers maximum benefit for the widest possible range of users and reduces the need for costly retrofitting or corrective action in the future. This principle seeks to ensure that accessibility and inclusion are considered as an integral part of investment planning, appraisal, prioritisation, and delivery so that public resources contribute to creating a more equitable and inclusive transport system and built environment.

Desired Outcomes:

- Accessibility considerations are embedded in investment decisions.
- Public funding supports inclusive design and service delivery.

Principle 4: We will work towards ensuring end-to-end journeys are as straightforward, safe and accessible as practicable.

8.5. The accessibility of a journey depends on every stage working together effectively. A journey may become inaccessible if barriers are encountered at any point, whether on the footway leading to a bus stop, when accessing travel information, while using public transport, or when moving through the built environment at the destination. For many people, particularly older, d/Deaf, and disabled people, a single barrier can prevent an entire journey from taking place. This principle recognises the importance of considering journeys from the perspective of the user and taking a coordinated approach across infrastructure, services, information, and operations. The aim is to reduce physical, communication, organisational, and attitudinal barriers so that people can travel safely, independently, and with confidence from their starting point to their destination.

Desired Outcomes:

- Journeys are easier and safer to complete.
- Physical and operational barriers are reduced.
- Public transport and related infrastructure become increasingly accessible.

9. Strategic objectives and supporting actions

9.1. The strategic objectives and supporting actions represent the means by which the Department will deliver the vision and principles set out in this Framework. The objectives are intended to address the barriers and challenges identified through engagement with older, d/Deaf, and disabled people and their representative organisations, while promoting a more accessible and inclusive approach across the Department's wider activities.

9.2. Each objective is supported by a series of actions designed to drive continuous improvement in policy development, infrastructure planning, service delivery, investment decisions, engagement, and organisational culture. Some actions build upon existing programmes of work, while others introduce new commitments intended to address identified gaps and emerging challenges.

9.3. Recognising that accessibility and inclusion are shared responsibilities, some actions apply across the Department as a whole, while others relate to specific business areas, programmes, or delivery partners. Together, these actions are intended to contribute to the desired outcomes identified under each principle and support the achievement of the Framework's overarching vision of enabling everyone to travel safely, confidently, and independently.

9.4. Timescales and owners will be added to the actions below prior to publication of the final Framework.

Principle 1: We will put disabled, d/Deaf, and older people at the centre of decision-making.
Strategic Objective 1.1: We will continue to fund and support a dedicated advisory body made up of, and representative of, older, d/Deaf, and disabled people to provide the Department and other key stakeholders with specialist guidance and advice based on lived experience.
Action 1.1.1
Support the work of IMTAC through the Transport Programme for People with Disabilities fund and continue to liaise with the Committee and monitor its work programme.
Strategic Objective 1.2: We will seek to engage with this advisory body and, where necessary, other representative groups at the earliest practicable stage in the development of transport policies, transport plans, infrastructure schemes, public realm projects, and design guidance where there is potential impact upon older, d/Deaf, and disabled people.
Action 1.2.1
Develop a defined policy for engagement on issues which are likely to impact upon older, d/Deaf and disabled people to ensure a consistency of approach across the Department.
Strategic Objective 1.3: We will improve the evidence base relating to inclusive transport.
Action 1.3.1
Develop processes for: • collecting accessibility data; • monitoring user experiences through an annual survey; • analysing complaints; • identifying trends affecting older, d/Deaf, and disabled people.
Principle 2: We will create a culture that seeks to be aware of, understand, and recognise the needs of older, d/Deaf and disabled people.
Strategic Objective 2.1: We will ensure that senior decision-makers and staff directly involved in delivering policy and projects which have potential to impact upon disabled, d/Deaf, and older people undertake disability equality training (DET).
Action 2.1.1
Deliver four DET sessions per annum which include half-day guided experiences and classroom learning.
Strategic Objective 2.2: We will establish a network of volunteer "Inclusion Advocates" throughout the Department with a view to further improving understanding of the challenges faced by older, d/Deaf, and disabled people and advocating for their needs within their Branch or Division.
Action 2.2.1
Establish a departmental Inclusion Advocates Network with representation from all Groups within the Department and hold at least two network events annually.

Strategic Objective 2.3: We will work to ensure that planning and land-use policies are representative of the needs of everyone in society.
Action 2.3.1
Continue to ensure principles of inclusivity are embedded into Council Local Development Plans.
Strategic Objective 2.4: We will seek to embed a road users' hierarchy prioritising walking and wheeling within legislation, policy-development, and project design.
Action 2.4.1
Conduct a policy review to consider the principle of a formal hierarchy of road users, then update the Highway Code if appropriate.
Action 2.4.2
Through the publication of updated active travel design guidance, we will ensure that projects reflect the hierarchy in practice with walkers and wheelers given priority over cyclists who, in turn, have appropriate priority over motor vehicles.
Strategic Objective 2.5: We will seek to ensure that the decarbonisation of the transport sector is conducted in a manner that does not disproportionately impact upon older, d/Deaf, and disabled people.
Action 2.5.1
Continue to engage with IMTAC around specific issues related to the Department's approach to transport decarbonisation and seek to ensure that future developments take account of potential impacts on older, d/Deaf, and disabled people.
Strategic Objective 2.6: We will seek to ensure that Departmental communications are accessible to the widest range of the public possible and we will encourage arms' length bodies and other partner organisations to do the same. Accessible communication should include plain language, Easy Read, accessible digital formats and, where appropriate, child-friendly information.
Action 2.6.1
Continue to audit our website against WCAG 2.1 guidance and will continue to make improvements wherever required to become compliant.
Action 2.6.2
Continue to develop communications materials which are compatible with commonly used assistive technology and endeavour to address deficiencies.
Action 2.6.3
Conduct an annual review of the Department's Guide to Making Information Accessible and circulate to all staff to ensure communication materials are available in a range of alternative / accessible formats including Easy Read.
Action 2.6.4
Subject wider existing Departmental communications, including social media, to appropriate external accessibility review.
Action 2.6.5
Encourage all staff producing external communications to undertake appropriate accessibility training.
Principle 3: We will seek to ensure that public sector investment contributes to a more accessible and inclusive society.
Strategic Objective 3.1: We will seek to adhere to "universal design" principles as a basis for infrastructure projects which include investment of public money.

Action 3.1.1
Deliver the accessibility ambitions of the Draft Transport Strategy 2035 by embedding accessibility considerations in the appraisal, design and delivery of transport investments and by seeking to apply best practice design standards, including <i>Inclusive Mobility</i> , alongside statutory and technical requirements.
Action 3.1.2
Apply the Place & Movement Framework to the suite of Transport Plans in development in order to connect communities through an accessible, inclusive, sustainable and efficient transport network.
Strategic Objective 3.2: We will seek to ensure that accessibility and inclusive design are appropriately reflected in relevant funding agreements, grant conditions and assurance arrangements.
Action 3.2.1
Review relevant funding and grant agreements, including the Public Service Agreement with Translink, to identify proportionate and enforceable provisions that support accessibility and inclusive design. Any proposed changes will be subject to legal, financial and policy advice and will include appropriate monitoring arrangements.
Principle 4: We will work towards ensuring end-to-end journeys are as straightforward, safe and accessible as practicable.
Strategic Objective 4.1: We will seek to ensure that those aspects of the wider built environment over which the Department has influence will accommodate the needs of older, d/Deaf, and disabled transport users.
Action 4.1.1
Consider a mechanism to facilitate simple reporting of accessibility issues on footways, footpaths, and roads.
Action 4.1.2
Review the extent to which relevant inclusive policies and associated procedures are being implemented and having a positive impact.
Action 4.1.3
Work with utilities, contractors and representative disability groups to promote compliance with existing reinstatement standards and accessibility requirements, and use stakeholder feedback to identify recurring issues and opportunities for continuous improvement in third-party works affecting pedestrian infrastructure.
Strategic Objective 4.2: We will work to make footways and footpaths passable to the widest range of users possible and as obstruction-free as is practicable.
Action 4.2.1
Introduce legislation designed to address inconsiderate pavement parking that will prohibit vehicles parking wholly on footpaths and parking over dropped kerbs.
Action 4.2.2
Consider what further measures might be taken to address inconsiderate pavement parking.
Action 4.2.3

Review responsibility for, and mechanisms designed to, address pavement clutter (such as seating areas, advertising boards, etc.) on footways, footpaths, and other traffic-free spaces and consider whether present provisions for reporting and enforcement are adequate.
Strategic Objective 4.3: We will seek to ensure that future revisions to all design guidance acknowledge the needs of everyone in society.
Action 4.3.1
As existing design guidance is revised or new guidance is developed, we will seek to ensure that these reflect the principles of universal design and we will consult with IMTAC and other stakeholders in manner which is consistent with 1.2.1 above.
Strategic Objective 4.4: We will seek to ensure that public transport considers the needs of everyone in society and will promote public transport use amongst older, d/Deaf, and disabled people wherever possible.
Action 4.4.1
Establish an Accessibility Advisory Group, comprising representatives from Translink, IMTAC, the Consumer Council and Department in order to provide a recognised and empowered mechanism for identifying issues of concern to older, d/Deaf and disabled passengers and improving their travel experience and access to services.
Action 4.4.2
Work with Translink to ensure that accessibility requirements, agreed inclusive design standards and the Department's wider accessibility ambition are reflected in vehicle, rolling stock and infrastructure specifications, approval processes and long-term investment planning, including progression towards increased provision of step-free and low-floor services where operationally and financially feasible.
Action 4.4.3
Work with Translink to increase the provision of dual wheelchair capable vehicles across appropriate bus services through future fleet replacement and procurement programmes, taking account of operational, technical and financial considerations.
Action 4.4.4
Support Translink accessibility audits of stops and halts and consider any necessary work as budget permits.
Action 4.4.5
Update bus-stop design guidance to ensure that new bus stops and refurbishment of existing bus stops is undertaken according to current accessibility best practice.
Action 4.4.6
Develop a social media campaign to promote positive interactions with disabled people in order to ensure a supportive travelling experience and reduce instances of disability related hate crime on transport.
Strategic Objective 4.5: We will seek to ensure that alternative methods of transport are available to older, d/Deaf, and disabled people who may find it difficult to access public transport.
Action 4.5.1
Complete the reviews of taxi legislation and provision of wheelchair accessible taxis and seek to identify measures to address public concerns around cost and availability.
Action 4.5.2

Complete the review of community transport provision and consider measures to improve the ongoing provision of transport services to those who find it difficult to access public transport.		
Action 4.5.3		
Undertake a review of Shopmobility services as resources permit.		

10. Monitoring

- 10.1. The Department is committed to ensuring that this Framework delivers meaningful improvements in accessibility, inclusion, and independent mobility for older, d/Deaf, and disabled people. Progress will therefore be monitored on an bi-annual basis to assess whether the Framework is contributing towards the achievement of its vision, principles, desired outcomes, and strategic objectives.
- 10.2. Responsibility for delivery of individual actions will sit with the relevant business areas identified within the Action Plan. Leads will be responsible for monitoring progress against agreed timescales and reporting on implementation as required.
- 10.3. The Department will develop and maintain a monitoring framework to support implementation of the Framework. Indicators may include measures relating to stakeholder engagement, staff training, accessible communications, accessibility of infrastructure and public transport, customer feedback, and progress against specific actions set out within this Framework.
- 10.4. The Department will communicate progress to stakeholders on a regular basis through appropriate reporting and engagement mechanisms.
- 10.5. As the Department's principal strategic advisory body on inclusive transport matters, IMTAC will play an important role in monitoring and continuous improvement. The Department will engage regularly with IMTAC to review progress, consider feedback from transport users, identify emerging barriers, and discuss opportunities for further action. This will help ensure that lived experience continues to inform implementation of the Framework and supports a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1. Delivering an inclusive transport system is a shared responsibility. Through collaboration with transport users, IMTAC, Translink, delivery partners, including community transport operators and Shopmobility, local government, and wider stakeholders, the Department will work to remove barriers and create a transport system and built environment that enables everyone to participate fully in society. By embedding accessibility and inclusion into decision-making, investment, and service delivery, we can ensure that Northern Ireland becomes a place where everyone can travel safely, confidently, independently, and with dignity.

Appendix 1 – Issues raised during engagement with stakeholders

- Availability of accessible taxis
- Problematic pavement parking
- Translink vehicle procurement: facilitating dual wheelchair access
- Eliminating high-floor coaches from the Translink fleet
- Bus stop design – both standard and floating
- Regional transport plans
- Just transition to net zero
- Continuing efforts to seek full concession for Half Fare SmartPass
- Ensuring charging infrastructure is accessible
- Pavement maintenance - opportunities to improve rather than just maintain existing roads, footways, and footpaths
- Addressing poor quality of third-party repair / reinstatement
- Accessibility of public realm schemes
- Active travel schemes
- Poor quality of links between transport infrastructure
- Lack of safe and accessible walking routes
- Inadequate street lighting
- Limited availability of community transport options due to funding levels
- Greater need for strategic planning within public transport network (including community transport services)
- Relative lack of public transport options and low frequency in rural areas
- Distance to public transport nodes (particularly in rural areas)
- Lack of accessible public transport options in smaller towns
- Accessibility of audio/visual communications, in stations and on public transport, and online
- Lack of support staff to assist at transport nodes

Appendix 2 – Consultation Questions

Vision

Q1. To what extent do you agree with the proposed vision?

"Everyone, regardless of age, disability, or personal circumstance, can travel safely, confidently, independently, and with dignity to the opportunities, services, and communities that matter most to them."

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Q2. Do you have any comments on the proposed vision?

Principles

Q3. To what extent do you agree with Principle 1?

We will put disabled, d/Deaf, and older people at the centre of decision-making

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Q4. To what extent do you agree with Principle 2?

We will create a culture that seeks to be aware of, understand, and recognise the needs of older, d/Deaf and disabled people

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Q5. To what extent do you agree with Principle 3?

We will seek to ensure that public sector investment contributes to a more accessible and inclusive society

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Q6. To what extent do you agree with Principle 4?

We will work towards ensuring end-to-end journeys are as straightforward, safe and accessible as practicable

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Q7. Do you believe these four principles cover all the key issues affecting accessible and inclusive mobility?

- ☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

Q8. Do you have any comments on the proposed principles?

Actions

Q9. To what extent do you agree that the proposed actions will address the main barriers to accessible travel?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

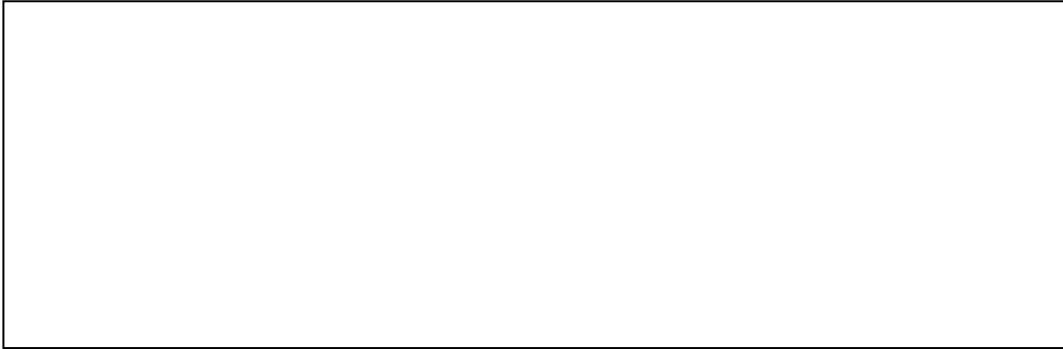
☐ Neither agree nor disagree

☐ Disagree

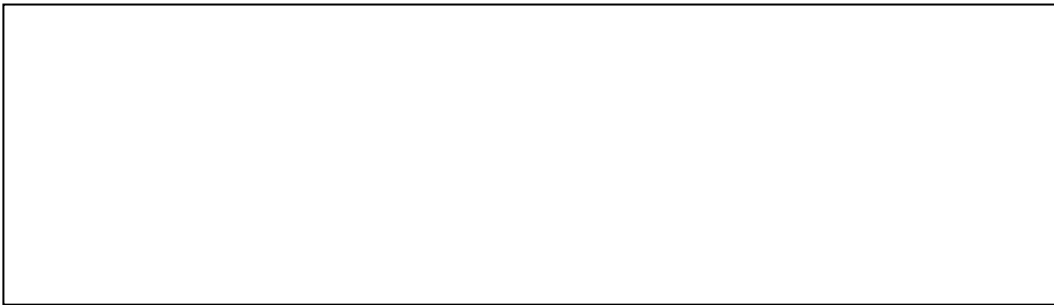
☐ Strongly disagree

**Q10. Which proposed actions do you consider to be the highest priority?
Please explain why.**

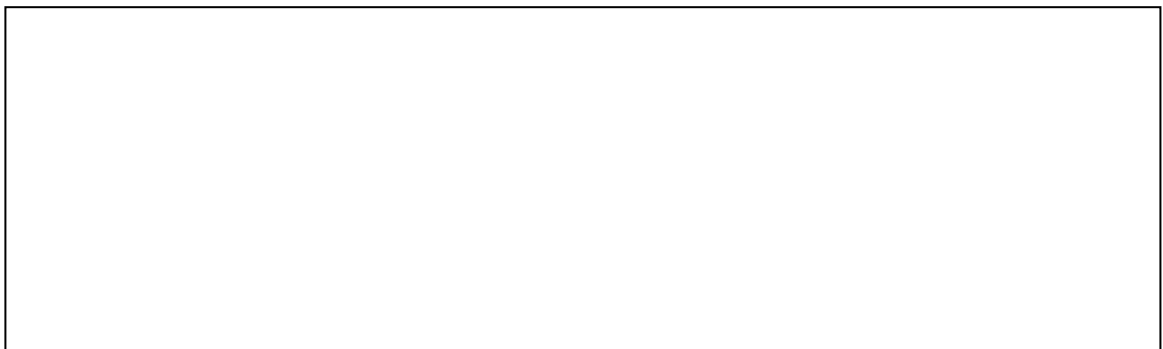
Q11. Are there any proposed actions that you believe should be strengthened, amended or removed? Please explain your reasons.

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Q12. Are there any additional actions that the Department should consider including in the final Framework?

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Q13. Are there any examples of good accessibility and inclusion within Northern Ireland's transport system that the Department should consider when implementing this Strategy? Please provide details.

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Final Comments

Q14. Overall, to what extent do you support the draft Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework?

- ☐ Strongly support
- ☐ Support
- ☐ Neither support nor oppose
- ☐ Oppose
- ☐ Strongly oppose

Q15. Please provide any additional comments on the draft Moving Together: An Inclusive Mobility Framework.

Q16. Please provide any comments you have on the impact assessments for the draft Framework.

About You

Q17. Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- ☐ Individual
- ☐ Organisation

Q.18 If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please provide the name of your organisation below

Information to help us analyse your response (individual responses only)

The Department for Infrastructure is committed to ensuring that our policies, services, and practices are fair, free from discrimination and meet the needs of everyone in our community. To help us to do this, if you are replying to this consultation as an individual, we would be grateful if you could answer the questions below. You are under no obligation to answer any of these questions, but it would help us greatly if you do so.

Q19. Please indicate where you live from the options provided below.

- ☐ Belfast or Derry / Londonderry
- ☐ Other town (over 5,000 people)
- ☐ Rural (countryside or town or village below 5,000)

Q20. How would you describe your gender?

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe

Q21. Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

- ☐ Heterosexual or Straight
- ☐ Gay or Lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe

Q22. Please indicate what ethnic group you belong to.

- ☐ White
- ☐ Irish Traveller
- ☐ Roma
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Filipino
- ☐ Pakistani
- ☐ Arab
- ☐ Other Asian
- ☐ Black African
- ☐ Black Other
- ☐ Mixed
- ☐ Other ethnic group

Q23. Do you have caring responsibilities for any of the following? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Primary carer of a child/children (under 18)
- ☐ Primary carer of a disabled child/children
- ☐ Primary carer of an older person (65+)

- ☐ Primary carer of an adult with a long-term illness or disability
- ☐ Secondary or backup carer
- ☐ No caring responsibilities
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q24. What is your age?

- ☐ 16 to 24
- ☐ 25 to 34
- ☐ 35 to 44
- ☐ 45 to 54
- ☐ 55 to 64
- ☐ 65 to 74
- ☐ 75 to 84
- ☐ 85 plus

Q25. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses that have lasted, or are likely to last, for 12 months or more?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q26. If you have answered yes to Question 20, please tick the definitions that best describe your condition? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Physical or mobility impairment
- ☐ Learning disability / difficulty
- ☐ Sensory impairment
- ☐ Mental health condition
- ☐ Long standing illness or health condition
- ☐ Neurodivergent
- ☐ Neurological condition (e.g., epilepsy, brain injury)
- ☐ Other

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Q27. What mode of transport do you use most frequently?

- ☐ Car (as a driver)
- ☐ Car (as a passenger)
- ☐ Bus
- ☐ Train
- ☐ Cycle
- ☐ Walk
- ☐ Wheel
- ☐ Taxi
- ☐ Community transport

Q28. Which of the following barriers have the greatest impact on your ability to travel independently? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Pavement parking
- ☐ Obstructions on footways
- ☐ Poor quality footway maintenance
- ☐ Difficulties accessing the bus stop or train station due to inaccessible infrastructure (e.g., no pavement, obstructions on pavement, etc.)
- ☐ Accessibility of public transport vehicles
- ☐ Accessibility of public transport stations, stops, and halts
- ☐ Public transport services are too far from home to walk or wheel
- ☐ Public transport affordability
- ☐ Accessing passenger information
- ☐ Accessing information on the accessibility of services, vehicles, stops or stations
- ☐ Feeling unsafe while travelling
- ☐ Availability of community transport services
- ☐ Availability of accessible taxis

Q29. Which barrier has the greatest impact on your ability to travel safely, confidently and independently? (Select one answer)

- ☐ Pavement parking
- ☐ Obstructions on footways
- ☐ Poor quality footway maintenance
- ☐ Difficulties accessing the bus stop or train station due to inaccessible infrastructure (e.g., no pavement, obstructions on pavement, etc.)
- ☐ Accessibility of public transport vehicles
- ☐ Accessibility of public transport stations, stops, and halts
- ☐ Public transport services are too far from home to walk or wheel
- ☐ Public transport affordability
- ☐ Accessing passenger information
- ☐ Accessing information on the accessibility of services, vehicles, stops or stations
- ☐ Feeling unsafe while travelling
- ☐ Availability of community transport services
- ☐ Availability of accessible taxis

Q30. Are there any other barriers impact on your ability to travel safely, confidently and independently?

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