

# Disabled Citizens' Inquiry

## Helping disabled people have a say in walking and wheeling



**Easy read booklet**

**8 February 2023**

# Who we are and what this booklet is about



We are a **charity** called **Sustrans**. We make it easier for people to walk and cycle.



A **charity** is an organisation that helps people in need.



We work with a group of disabled people called **Transport for All**. They help make transport better for disabled people.



This booklet tells you how we helped disabled people have a say in walking and wheeling. It also tells you what they said.

# About the Disabled Citizens' Inquiry



We think everyone should be able to easily go to the end of their street, get about in their area and get to where they want to go.



The **Disabled Citizens' Inquiry** let disabled people have their say in making walking and wheeling more **inclusive**.



An **inquiry** is a way of talking to people to find out more about about something.

**Inclusive** means no one is left out.



The charity **Motability** paid for the **Disabled Citizens' Inquiry** to happen.



We talked to lots of disabled people who have **mental** or **physical impairments** or **long-term health conditions** during this inquiry.



**Mental impairments** are problems that affect your mood, thinking and behavior.

**Physical impairments** are problems that affect your movement.



**Long-term health conditions** are problems that affect you for a year or more.



The Inquiry had four 2-day meetings with 43 disabled people. Disabled people shared their **experiences** and problems and worked together to plan **solutions**.



**Experiences** are things you have done or that have happened in your life.

**Solutions** are ideas to help stop or make problems better.



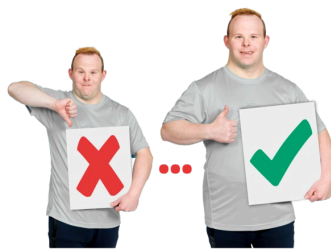
People who work in transport and disability organisations tested and improved these solutions.



We sent a survey to 1,183 disabled to ask them what they thought about these solutions.



The people who ran meetings and many of the people who worked on the inquiry were disabled people.



We hope the solutions in this inquiry help the **government** make streets better for disabled people. The **government** runs the country.



Some people who use wheeled mobility aids like wheelchairs or mobility scooters like the word **wheeling** instead of walking. We use both words in this booklet.

# Fair for everyone



The government uses the **social model of disability**. This says people are disabled by problems around them, not by their disability or differences.



This means streets and public spaces like parks should be made so that disabled people do not have problems using them.



A law called the **Equality Act 2010** says the government must make sure disabled people can use their services. This includes walking and wheeling on the street.



However, many disabled people still have many problems using streets and public spaces.

# The Transport Accessibility Gap



Disabled people take less trips than non-disabled people. This is called the **transport accessibility gap**.



This is because our streets can be difficult or unsafe for disabled people to use.



This means disabled people can't always get to the things they need like food, healthcare, work and education.



If the **transport accessibility gap** is lowered the government and local businesses will make more money.

# Barriers faced by disabled people



Nearly half of disabled people said they face **barriers** when walking or wheeling.



**Barriers** are problems that stop you doing something or make it less likely you will do it.



It's not just physical barriers. Over 1 out of 3 disabled people said they are afraid other people will say bad things about their disability when they are out.



Many disabled people can't get the right **mobility aid** to get about. **Mobility aids** are things like wheelchairs and electric scooters.

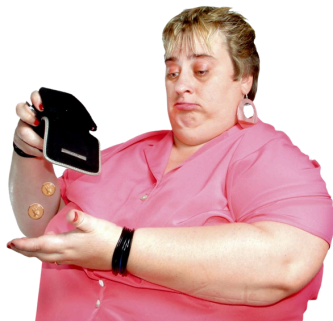




The **cost-of-living crisis** is making these barriers worse for disabled people.



A **cost-of-living crisis** is when lots of people have less money to spend, and things are more expensive to buy.



Disabled people are more likely to not work and have less money. This means the cost-of-living crisis is worse for disabled people.



Over half of disabled people said they travel less because of the cost-of-living crisis. Even when a trip is important.

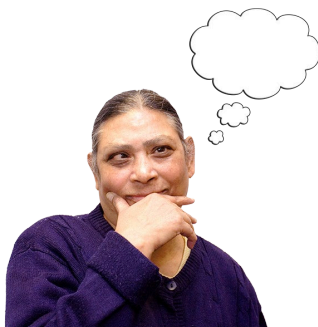


Over 7 out of 10 disabled people said the government should do more and spend more to help people walk or wheel more.

# Solutions thought of by disabled people




The 43 disabled people who took part in the **Disabled Citizens' Inquiry** thought of 9 solutions to make walking and wheeling better.



We tell you these solutions on the next 9 pages of this booklet.

**Solution 1: Make sure disabled people have a say in plans about walking and wheeling**



Disabled people need to have a say in

- plans about walking and wheeling.
- how money is spent.

**Needs**

The things disabled people need to walk and wheel easily must be understood and given.

**Recommendations**

- Make sure the government and councils pay disabled people for advice and listen to what they say.
- Listen to disabled people when plans for walking and wheeling are made.
- Make sure more disabled people work in transport and planning.

We tell you our **recommendations** for each solution.



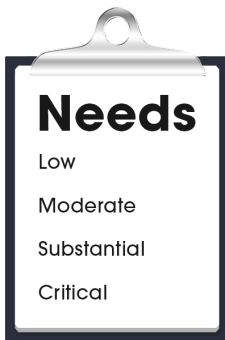
**Recommendations** are suggestions and advice about how to make solutions work.

# Solution 1: Make sure disabled people have a say in plans about walking and wheeling



Disabled people need to have a say in

- plans about walking and wheeling.
- how money is spent.



The government and people who help make our streets better must understand and know about the things disabled people need to walk and wheel more easily.



## Recommendations

- Make sure the government and councils pay disabled people for advice and listen to what they say.
- Listen to disabled people when plans for walking and wheeling are made.
- Make sure more disabled people work in transport and planning.



## Solution 2: Have money to make pavements better



The government often ignores walking and wheeling on pavements over other types of transport like cars and roads.



Pavements are often cracked and uneven and they do not get gritted in winter. This makes disabled people feel unsafe.



### Recommendations

- Have money that is only used to fix and make pavements better.
- Make pavements better when low traffic neighbourhoods are made.
- Make pavements that are better for disabled people.
- Make sure pavements can still be used by disabled people when roads are being fixed.



## Solution 3: Stop pavement parking and clutter



When people park on the pavement it means disabled people might have to go onto the road to get past. This is dangerous.



There is more pavement **clutter** on our streets. **Clutter** is things like tables outside restaurants or electric vehicle chargers on pavements.



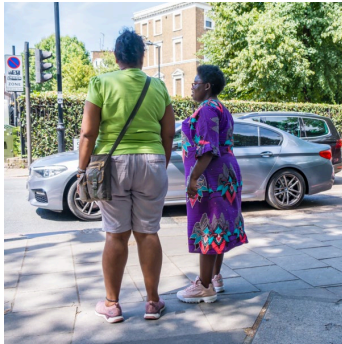
Pavement parking and clutter can trip disabled people or mean that they can't get past.



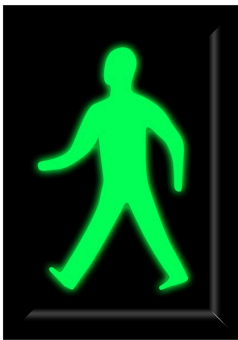
### Recommendations

- Don't let people park on the pavement.
- Make sure pavement clutter does not stop disabled people using the streets.

## Solution 4: Make walking and wheeling across roads and cycle paths better



Crossing the road can be hard and feel unsafe for disabled people. Some disabled people go out of their way to cross where they feel safer.



There needs to be more crossings and they need to be better. There could be more zebra or signal crossings. More could have dropped curbs.



### Recommendations

- Make sure all the crossings we have now can be used by disabled people and are safe.
- Do tests to see if zebra markings on side roads make it easier for disabled people to cross.
- Make crossings on cycle paths better.



# Solution 5: Make wayfinding and journey planning tools work for disabled people



**Wayfinding** helps people know where they are and where they are going. It is things like road signs and maps. At the moment wayfinding can be confusing for disabled people.



**Journey planning tools** are things like apps and websites that help people plan how they will get somewhere. At the moment journey planning tools can be hard to use for disabled people.



An app or website where disabled people can tell others about good or bad trips would help disabled people walk and wheel more.



## Recommendations

- Have the same type of wayfinding in all areas.
- Have online journey planning tools that work for people with different types of disabilities.

# Solution 6: Make sure disabled people can live within walking or wheeling distance of amenities and services



**Amenities and services** are things people need or use, like shops, doctors and libraries.



When people live within a 20 minute return walk of amenities and services they get to things more easily.



However, it can take longer for disabled people to walk or wheel. Sometimes the best or only way for a disabled person is a longer way.

## Recommendations

- Make sure new homes are built close to amenities and services.
- Think about how long it might take disabled people to walk or wheel when new homes and areas are planned.





## Solution 7: Make it easier to get the right mobility aids



**Mobility aids** are things like wheelchairs and mobility scooters.



It's important for disabled people to have the right mobility aid for walking or wheeling.



Some disabled people can't get the right mobility aid, it takes too long to get it, or it costs too much.



### Recommendations

- Look at why disabled people can't get the right mobility aids.
- Make sure cycles are seen as mobility aids by law and help more disabled people get them.

## Solution 8: Make off-road routes better for disabled people



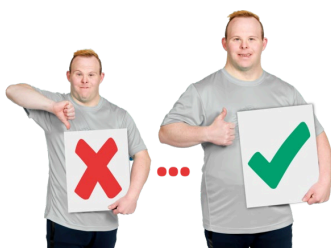
**Off-road routes** are things like paths through parks, along rivers and canals and some walking and cycling paths.



Removing physical barriers on these paths like steps and narrow gates will make it easier for disabled people to use them.



**Sustrans** looks after the **National Cycle Network** and are working to remove physical barriers on these paths already.



### Recommendations

- Make plans and rules so off-road routes are better for disabled people.
- Spend money to make off-road routes better for disabled people.

# Solution 9: Make walking and wheeling easier when using public transport



Most disabled people see walking and wheeling as an important part of traveling by bus or train. Walking and wheeling is at the start and end of all trips.



Public transport should be more accessible to disabled people.



Most disabled people said the government should spend more money to make public transport better for them.

## Recommendations

- Make public transport better for disabled people.
- Make sure disabled people can walk and wheel to, from, and when using public transport.



# What happens next



The **Disabled Citizens' Inquiry** gives people who make decisions a chance to think about and listen to disabled people when they make plans and spend money.



Walking and wheeling should be safe and comfortable for everyone.

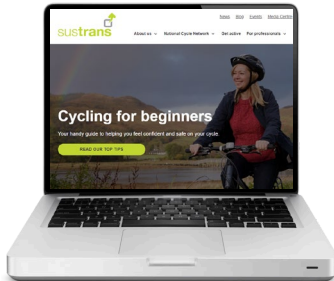


The government, councils and businesses should work together to make walking and wheeling better.

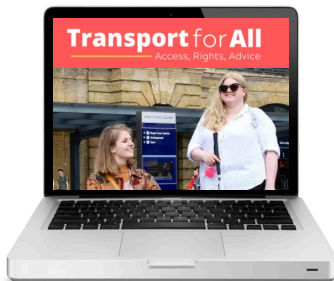


We want the government and organisations to improve places and transport so that people can walk and wheel more.

# Useful websites



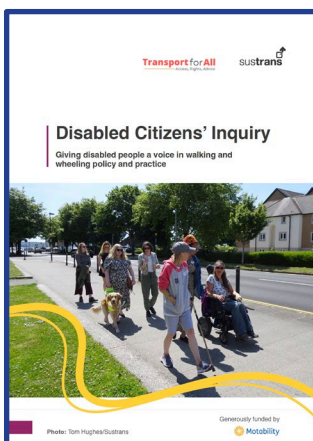
Our **Sustrans** website is  
[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)



The **Transport for All** website is  
[www.transportforall.org.uk](http://www.transportforall.org.uk)



The **Motability** website is  
[www.motability.org.uk](http://www.motability.org.uk)



Thank you to A2i for the words  
[www.a2i.co.uk](http://www.a2i.co.uk) (reference 36392a)

The full version of this document is called  
**Disabled Citizens' Inquiry**  
**Giving disabled people a voice in walking and**  
**wheeling policy and practice**