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Design Opportunity 8 of 8

Identifying and sharing inclusive transport practices

***ncat**
national
centre for
accessible
transport





Design Opportunity 8 of 8

Identifying and sharing inclusive transport practices

This is one of eight design opportunities developed from ncat's extensive research with disabled passengers across the UK.

For those who wish to explore the full evidence base, detailed findings can be found in the accompanying research report.

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Barriers

Across the UK's transport system, disabled passengers consistently face avoidable barriers, not always because solutions don't exist, but because they aren't consistently implemented. In one station or region, a clear tactile path or helpful signage might work brilliantly; in another, similar needs are overlooked entirely. Similarly, a good, accessible design for one type of bus or stop can disappear in the next town.

Rather than starting from scratch, there's a growing opportunity and responsibility to learn from what already works. From platform markings to app functionality, signage placement to quiet waiting spaces, there are pockets of thoughtful, inclusive design across the UK, but these are often shared informally, discovered by chance, or remain undocumented.

To reduce fragmentation and accelerate change, we must identify, document, and share these practices not just as case studies, but as replicable, adaptable design principles.

Local authorities, designers, and transport providers need accessible tools and guidance to apply proven solutions confidently and consistently.



Identifying and sharing inclusive transport practices

How might we identify, document, and share inclusive design practices in public transport so that what works well in one place becomes standard practice everywhere?



Objectives: **Visibility of non-visible disabilities**

What if every great accessible design had a platform and became a reference point for others?

- ▶ **How might we capture examples of well-designed, inclusive features (for example, clearly marked seating zones, intuitive wayfinding, tactile paths)?**
- ▶ **Could we document not only physical design but also digital tools, policies, and service models that support disabled passengers?**
- ▶ **What criteria define “good” or “inclusive” in different contexts and how do we reflect user experiences, not just technical specs?**



Objectives: **Make guidance practicable and actionable**

What if design guidance came with concrete examples, showing how principles work in real places, not just diagrams?

- ▶ **How might we move from general accessibility standards to locally usable design templates?**
- ▶ **Could we develop a living catalogue of design precedents for stations, stops, interiors, signage, or app interfaces?**
- ▶ **What level of detail is helpful for practitioners, and how do we make guidance adaptable for different budgets or contexts?**
- ▶ **How might we bring to life real inclusive design case studies for different transport vehicles, environments and service solutions to increase the chance of replication and success?**



Objectives: Connect places through shared practices and networks

What if transport authorities and practitioners had an easy way to share and discover inclusive practices from across the UK, and build on them together?

- ▶ **How might we build a living directory of local authorities, designers, or operators tackling similar accessibility challenges?**
- ▶ **Could we create an interactive network, forum, or toolkit for sharing ideas, including visuals, specs, and lessons learned?**
- ▶ **What evidence, formats, or peer examples would help decision-makers “make the case” to adopt inclusive practices developed elsewhere?**

Objectives: Standardise what can be standardised, and flag what needs flexibility

What if guidance clearly showed which features should be consistent and which can vary to meet local needs?

- How might we differentiate between universal principles (for example, kerb height, signage contrast) and context-specific choices (for example, climate sheltering, boarding layout)?**
- Could we frame best practice around outcomes (for example, safe boarding for wheelchair users) rather than fixed features with examples of how that's achieved in different settings?**
- How do we balance innovation and consistency/familiarity?**



Objectives: Co-create and validate guidance with disabled people

What if inclusive transport guidance wasn't just designed for disabled people, but shaped and validated by them, ensuring it reflects real-world needs?

- ▶ **How might we involve disabled people in evaluating, reviewing, and rating what “works well”, so guidance reflects what’s actually usable and effective?**
- ▶ **Could expert passenger panels or story-based reviews become part of the design guidance process to help decision-makers better understand the impact of their choices?**
- ▶ **How can we show that good design is not only about compliance but about dignity, autonomy, and trust?**



Target users

While the design outcomes are rooted in the needs of disabled passengers, particularly those with mobility, sensory, cognitive, or neurodivergent access needs, the guidance developed from this opportunity is intended to support those in decision-making and implementation roles to apply best practices confidently, consistently, and with real-world relevance.

This opportunity is primarily intended for the following stakeholders:

- ▶ **Transport operators and service providers**, who are responsible for delivering consistent, accessible experiences across the network
- ▶ **Local and regional authorities**, who commission and oversee infrastructure and public realm improvements
- ▶ **Design practitioners and consultants** involved in planning, designing, or refurbishing transport environments
- ▶ **Infrastructure and vehicles manufacturers** who develop transport product across modes and domains (for example, stations, stops, vehicles, services and digital tools)
- ▶ **Policy makers and regulators**, who develop standards and set expectations for inclusive transport provision.

Design scope and constraints

In scope:

This opportunity focuses on identifying, documenting, and disseminating real-world examples of inclusive transport design to encourage wider adoption across the UK.

In-scope activities and solutions may include:

- ▶ Collecting and curating examples of accessible physical, digital, or service design from across transport modes
- ▶ Developing guidance tools, templates, or case studies to show how best practices can be implemented in varied contexts
- ▶ Creating resources that support replication, adaptation, and local delivery of proven solutions
- ▶ Facilitating knowledge-sharing between practitioners, authorities, and disabled people
- ▶ Co-creating design criteria or evaluation frameworks grounded in lived experience
- ▶ Clarifying which elements should be standardised and which should be context-responsive.

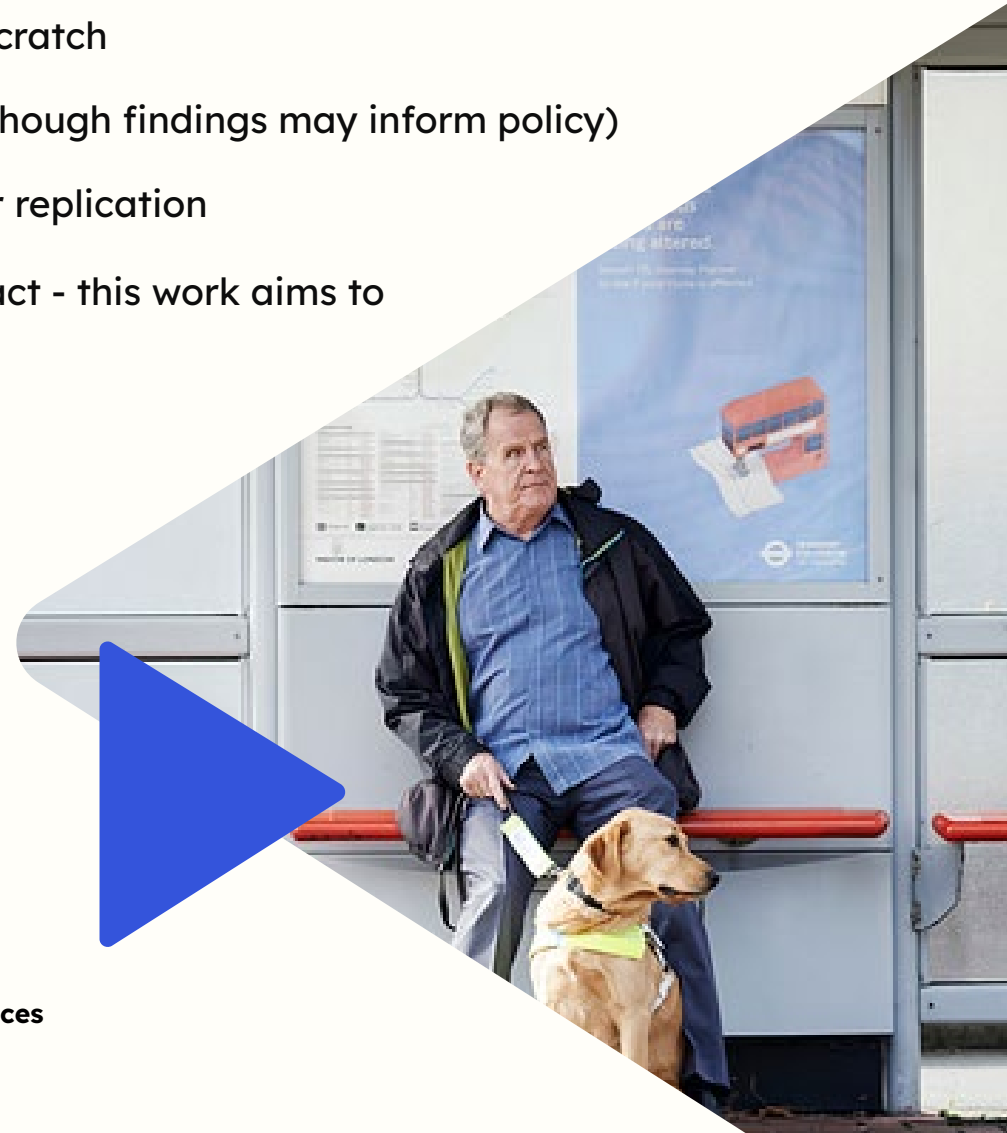


Design scope and constraints

Out of scope:

This opportunity does not cover:

- ▶ Designing new transport infrastructure or services from scratch
- ▶ Developing new accessibility policies at a national level (though findings may inform policy)
- ▶ Promoting isolated one-off solutions without guidance for replication
- ▶ Replacing existing regulatory standards with proven impact - this work aims to complement, not duplicate, formal codes and guidance.



Stakeholders

- ▶ **Disabled people and advocacy groups**
- ▶ **Local authorities and transport commissioners**
- ▶ **Transport operators**
- ▶ **Urban designers, architects, and access consultants**
- ▶ **Technology developers, working on apps, signage, or assistive tools**
- ▶ **National bodies and regulators (for example, Department for Transport or Transport Scotland)**
- ▶ **Professional networks and knowledge-sharing forums.**

Next Steps

Visit the [Translating research into design opportunities project page](#) to find links to the full report, along with a shorter ‘highlights’ version that is also translated into easy-read and BSL.

The main project page also has direct links to the 8 individual design opportunities as below:

- 1 Bus stop accessibility**
- 2 Bus interior flexibility and accessibility**
- 3 Personalising ‘live’ travel information**
- 4 Train station accessibility**
- 5 Awareness of diverse travel needs**
- 6 Clarifying operator-passenger commitments**
- 7 Improving existing assistance services**
- 8 Identifying and sharing inclusive transport practices (vehicle, infrastructure, service, etc.)**

Contact Us

Design Opportunity **8 of 8** Identifying and sharing inclusive transport practices



ncat website: www.ncat.uk



LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/ncat-uk



Email: info@ncat.uk



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