

EN ROUTE TO INCLUSIVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

Institution of
**MECHANICAL
ENGINEERS**



How can the UK get from A to B?

Everyone in the UK has the right to access public transport. However, despite tireless campaigning by interest groups and some real progress in certain areas, millions of people remain poorly served by the existing network.

This report asks how we can get from our current state—of patchy accessibility and numerous obstacles—to a more open, fair and seamless transport system that makes travel easier for all of society.

Now is an opportune moment to explore this topic. The UK's transport sector is going through a period of great change. The forthcoming launch of Great British Railways (a new state-owned company that will operate rail infrastructure in Great Britain) and plans to adapt large swathes of the UK's roads, rail and public buildings to a changing climate, means we have a golden opportunity to rethink accessibility throughout the transport system.

This report is intended to help engineers, transport planners, policymakers and anyone else involved in the country's transport network to understand:

- **The needs of disadvantaged groups:** We explain who is affected by inaccessible public transport and how it impacts their social and economic situations.
- **The obstacles different groups face:** We outline some of the common barriers that disadvantaged groups face when it comes to using the network—from physical obstacles like step-free access to poor communication or infrastructure design.
- **The negative consequences of inaccessible transport:** We present evidence of the negative economic, social and healthcare impacts on society as a whole.

The report also provides a number of examples of good practice from the UK and around the world, showing how certain cities, regions or transport networks are making efforts to improve accessibility in specific areas—and how the country can learn from these examples.

We do, however, recognise that improving accessibility is not always easy. There are many major challenges, including limited funding, the sheer complexity of the country's disjointed network, a lack of expertise, and the simple fact that what works for one person or region, doesn't necessarily work for another.

Drawing on our analysis, the IMechE has developed a number of recommendations for how the sector can be made more accessible and inclusive through a whole system approach.

We invite you to read this report in depth and to reflect on what it means for your practice. Whether you design bus stops, build train carriages, plan urban transport systems or set regional mobility policy, this report can help inform your approach and work to make the UK's transport network truly accessible to all.

Recommendations:

Data enabled outcomes

1. Single data platform for operators and infrastructure owners

A government-owned platform for network data that integrates accessibility features and measurements.

2. Link accessibility standards to measurable impacts

Take a national approach to tie standards to unified and consistent metrics to measure improvement.

Reform existing systems

3. Expand and streamline funding programmes

A single, targeted and ring-fenced funding programme for accessibility across modes, covering any accessibility improvement required.

4. Reform incentives for innovation

Government should review and reform incentives for innovative solutions to be widely used.

Upskill and partner to build expertise

5. Embed inclusive design into education and professional development for engineers

Reflect inclusive design principles through Continuing Professional Development for professionally registered engineers, teaching materials and curricula, and training.

6. Prioritise co-production for better designs at lower cost

Prioritise meaningful engagement with disadvantaged groups throughout project lifetimes championed by local political leaders through commitment to the Accessible Transport Charter.

