

Disabled People

Key findings

- Eleven per cent of Londoners say they are disabled – mobility disability is the most frequently mentioned disability
- Disabled people travel less frequently than non-disabled people
- Disabled people are less likely to mention overcrowded services, cost of tickets and unreliable services than non-disabled Londoners, however, they are more likely to mention concern over anti-social behaviour and fear of crime in general
- Concerns over safety and security are similar between disabled and non-disabled people
- Many disabled Londoners claim that a greater (or more obvious) provision of accessible travel information would encourage them to use public transport more

Summary

Eleven per cent of Londoners consider themselves to be disabled. Estimates of the proportion of Londoners who are disabled range up to 24% though 11% is taken from the LTDS and is used here for consistency with other data shown. Disability increases with age: 36% of disabled people in London are aged 65+, compared with 6% of non-disabled people. Due to the longer life expectancies of women, a higher proportion of disabled people are women (54%) compared to non-disabled people (51%). Disabled people are also more likely to be retired and on lower household incomes than non-disabled people. Disabled Londoners of working-age are less likely to be employed, and those that are, are more likely to be working part-time than non-disabled people [2].

Sixty-two per cent of all disabled Londoners say they are mobility impaired (compared to 7% of all Londoners). Disabled people have a variety of impairments, some of which include mental health conditions and visual/hearing impairments, and some of which are as a result of long-term illnesses. In some cases, disabled people have multiple impairments. The vast majority (93%) of disabled people say their impairments limit their ability to travel and get about [2].

Transport use

Disabled Londoners travel less frequently than non-disabled Londoners. The main transport modes used by disabled people are the same as non-disabled people – namely walking, the bus, and the car (both as a driver and a passenger). However, lower proportions of disabled people use each of these modes at least once a week [2].

- Lower proportions of disabled people travel by bike, National Rail and Tube compared to non-disabled people[2]

- Disabled Londoners are most likely to use public transport for the purposes of shopping, personal business and leisure. They are considerably less likely to commute than non-disabled Londoners due to lower rates of employment (partly due to the older age profile of disabled people) [2]
- Members of Dial-a-Ride (DaR) tend to be older than the average disabled Londoner – 81% of DaR members are 65 or over, compared to 39% of all disabled Londoners [25]

Barriers

The barriers to increased public transport use faced by disabled people depend somewhat on their particular impairment. For many, physical accessibility is an important driver of public transport use [55]. Issues of physical accessibility are often exacerbated at peak travel times when passenger numbers are higher. Overcrowding is therefore the second most frequently mentioned barrier by disabled people[14].

- Since 45% of disabled Londoners own a pass or card which gives them reduced fares/free travel [2], cost is mentioned by a smaller proportion (26%) of disabled people as a barrier, compared to non-disabled people (47%) [14]
- Disabled Londoners are also less likely to mention the potential barriers of unreliable services and slow journey times since they are less likely to commute than non-disabled Londoners [14]
- Instead, barriers to increased use of public transport which affect a greater proportion of disabled people include prompted concerns over anti-social behaviour (54% of disabled people vs. 38% of non-disabled people), concern over knife crime (40% of disabled people mention this vs. 26% of non-disabled people), fear of crime getting to the bus/train (40% of disabled people vs. 28% of non-disabled people), fear of crime on the bus/train (39% of disabled people vs. 27% of non-disabled people) and risk of accidents (17% vs. 8%) [14]
- However, in general, fears over personal security do not affect disabled people to a greater extent than non-disabled people. 14% of disabled Londoners say nothing makes them worry about their personal security on public transport (in line with 13% of non-disabled Londoners[14].
- The attitudes and behaviour of staff and fellow passengers can affect the journey experience for disabled people. Helpful and supportive staff contribute positively to the journey experience though it is acknowledged that impairments can be 'hidden' and not immediately obviously to staff and other passengers [55]

Information seeking

Also important in improving the travel experience of disabled passengers is accessibility of information. For both pre-journey planning and journey completion, it seems information sources are under-used.

- Even amongst Londoners with access to the internet, disabled people are less likely to use the TfL website (46% do so) compared to non-disabled people (81%). They also visit the website less frequently than non-disabled people. This may result from the older age profile of disabled Londoners (with older people engaging less with online technology compared to younger people) [10]
- As of 2007, eight per cent of all Londoners have looked for or used travel information in an alternative format (the most common being electronic and large print) [56]
- 2002 research revealed 40% of disabled Londoners felt they would use public transport more often if it were easier to obtain travel information – 13% said they did not find it easy to obtain information on travel services [57]
- Awareness of London Underground information products (specifically designed to help disabled people) tends to be low though these products are well received [8]

The ease of accessing information at bus stops, on platforms and using maps and signs as part of the Legible London scheme depends on the type of impairment. Disabled people acknowledge the difficulty of positioning information and ensuring it is legible across a diverse spectrum of impairments [58]