

Transport

Key facts from the Life Opportunities Survey - Wave one results, 2009/11(1)

The Life Opportunities Survey (LOS) is a large-scale longitudinal survey of disability in Great Britain. Results from the full first wave of the survey were published on the 8th December 2011 and the information below presents some of the key findings from this report. The report and the key findings below update the interim findings that were published in December 2010 based on the first half of wave one interviews.

In addition to these results, presented in boxes are some of the previously published findings from the qualitative research that was commissioned to complement the statistics provided by the LOS(2).

The information below explores the different modes of transport that adults, aged 16 and over, used. It also explores the modes of transport they were not able to use as much as they would have liked and the main barriers to using them. The modes of transport included are motor vehicles (car, van, motorcycle or moped), local buses, long distance buses, the underground, local trains, long distance trains and taxis/minicabs.

Modes of transport

As shown in Table 1, adults with impairment(3) were less likely to use all modes of transport as much as they would like to when compared with adults without impairment. For example, 63 per cent of adults with impairment used motor vehicles “as much as they would like” compared with 76 per cent of adults without impairment.

The findings were similar when using the Equality Act definition of disability (EA).

Transport was reported by 64 per cent of all adults as a life area in which they experienced a participation restriction (75 per cent of adults with impairment compared with 60 per cent of adults without impairment). Respondents to the survey were asked about their usage of a range of different modes of transport.

1 http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/los/index.php?page=los_wor

2 <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/disability-statistics-and-research/life-opportunities-survey.php>

3 Please refer to the Introduction of the Life Opportunities Survey Wave one report, 2009/11, for the definitions of impairment status and Equality Act disability status.

Table 1: Modes of transport and desired frequency of use by impairment status, 2009/11

Mode of transport	Percentage of adults who used mode of transport			
	As much as they would like		Less than they would like	
	Adults without impairment	Adults with impairment	Adults without impairment	Adults with impairment
Motor vehicle	76	63	12	25
Local buses	73	66	12	18
Long distance buses	82	76	9	15
Underground	81	74	7	11
Local trains	84	75	10	17
Long distance trains	84	76	11	18
Taxis/minicabs	81	71	5	10

Source: Life Opportunities Survey Wave One Results, 2009/11

Barriers to using transport

Lack of regular, accessible and direct public transport was often mentioned as a barrier affecting participation in all areas of life by adults with impairment who took part in the qualitative research.

“Better transport would open up more doors.”

A common barrier experienced by all adults using all modes of transport was cost. This was experienced fairly equally by adults with and without impairment.

The cost of transport was also identified as a key barrier by adults with impairment who took part in the qualitative research. While buses and coaches were considered more affordable, many said they could not afford to travel by train or buy and use a car. For example, one adult with impairment explained:

“Well, I got the train once, I didn’t even manage to get a seat. That’s three hours on a train standing up and I’d just paid £45 for it.”

While many were aware of and using the discounts available (e.g. free bus passes or taxi schemes), these were usually not enough to overcome the combination of barriers (relating to cost, accessibility, reliability and convenience) that adults with impairment faced when accessing public transport.

The two main barriers to using motor vehicles were:

- cost - identified by 51 per cent for adults with impairment and 49 per cent of adults without impairment, and
- parking problems - identified by 14 per cent of adults with impairment and 12 per cent of adults without impairment.

The two main barriers to using local buses were:

- transport unavailable - identified by 22 per cent for adults with impairment and 37 per cent of adults without impairment, and
- cost - identified by 21 per cent of adults with impairment and 28 per cent of adults without impairment.

The two main barriers to using long distance trains were:

- cost - identified by 48 per cent for adults with impairment and 65 per cent of adults without impairment, and
- difficulty getting to stop or station - identified by 11 per cent of adults with impairment and seven per cent of adults without impairment.

For all modes of transport, adults with impairment were more likely than adults without impairment to experience difficulty getting in and out of transport as a barrier. For example, adults with impairment were significantly more likely than adults without impairment to experience difficulty getting in and out of:

- local buses (18 per cent and 3 per cent respectively)
- local trains (10 per cent and 2 per cent respectively)
- long distance buses (9 per cent and 2 per cent respectively)

The qualitative research identified the types of difficulty experienced by adults with impairment when using local buses. These included:

- lack of seating at bus stops
- lack of seating on the bus
- wheelchair spaces being used by prams or luggage
- bus drivers not lowering the bus to enable entry and exit from the bus

The carer of an adult with impairment explained how she could not take him out as often as he would like because she could not get his wheelchair on the bus, where he could travel for free, and instead had to take a taxi into the nearest town which cost £7.