



**Partnership
for Young
London**

**Full report,
February 2018**

Transport, disability, and opportunity

Understanding the role of transport in the lives of
young disabled Londoners seeking employmeny or
opportunities

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Transport, disability, and opportunity

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Context

Of all young people, those with disabilities are found to face the most marginalisation and poverty, with less access to education and opportunity than their peers (UN, 2011). This is no less true in the UK, which lags behind Europe in the disability employment gap, coming in the bottom third, with a gap of 32%, with only 49% of disabled people in employment (Work and Pensions Committee, 2017), and where disabled people are four times more likely to be out of work as non-disabled people (Burchart, 2005). The impact of unemployment can be devastating, and not just for the individual, with research suggesting that halving the disability employment gap would boost the economy by £13 billion (Evans 2007). Yet there continues to be a history of research that details the negative impact a disability can have on an individual's employment, especially in times of economic downturn (Gross et al, 2000; Barnes, 1992; Lunt et al, 1994; TUC, 2016).

London's advantage

While London has several advantages, in terms of education (Department of Education, 2016) and infrastructure, it suffers from a distorted graduate market (London Assembly 2016) and the lowest take up of apprenticeships in the country (Centre for Cities, 2016). Youth unemployment in London is also consistently higher than the rest of the country (Aldridge, Bushe, Kenway, & MacInnes 2013), and Berthoud (2011) identified a strong correlation between the employment rate gap of disabled people and the overall level of employment in a given area.

Even the labour markets that have been traditionally better at offering opportunity to those with a disability have also changed in recent years. In 2013, disabled people still made up 13% of the public sector workforce, compared to 11% of the private sector (Office of Disability Issues 2013). However, London's public sector has been cut in recent years, with job losses reaching 1 million nationally since 2010 (ONS, 2016). This has contributed to the recent decline seen in disabled people entering public sector organisations, where it has been traditionally easier to find work (Meager 2011).

Young and disabled

Disabled young people also face the added disadvantages and negative outcomes encountered by their age group. In the UK, the youth unemployment rate has consistently remained over double the national average, at 12.3% (House of Commons Library 2017), and young people are facing some of the greatest challenges related to the housing market and their personal finance (PYL, 2016). These challenges can also cause a decline in aspirations, as young people are prone to form a pessimistic understanding of the world and what they perceive to be possible (Gutman and Akerman 2008). Disabled young people face a far bigger employment gap compared to their non-disabled peers (LFS Quarter 2 2012, Appendix Table 40.3), and are less likely to continue on to higher education (ODI Indicator A8), or take an apprenticeship (DWP, 2016). This results in the combination of being young, and disabled, as greatly increasing the risk of long term unemployment, social exclusion, and the lifelong 'scarring' impacts on their wellbeing (Daly and Delaney, 2013).

Literature review

Transport and cultural capital

The lack of access to transport, or difficulty in accessing transport, often faced by disabled young people can exclude them from getting involved into the opportunities the capital has to offer. Research has shown how disabled adults are less likely to participate in cultural activities, go to a museum or a place of historical interest (ODI Indicator E3, LOS Wave 1 2009/11). As such, social exclusion is created due to difficulties in accessing opportunities, rather than a lack of them, as 'capability deprivation' is a form of exclusion (Sen, 2000).

Transport and employment

There is already a large body of research detailing the relationship between social exclusion and employment, such as the positive impact employment can have on social integration (Gunther and Gazier, 2002), or the social exclusion of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) (Bynner and Parsons 2002). It has been observed that physical mobility, and the absence of adequate transport services, is a major contributor to the social and economic inequality in the US (Wachs and Kumagai, 1973) while a number of studies in the UK have shown the negative impact poor access to transport has on employment opportunities (Banister and Hall 1981, Hine and Mitchell 2001, Audit Commission 1999). quite a long sentence This challenge is particularly acute for young people from poorer backgrounds, as those receiving free school means have been seen to be less likely to travel to study that their peers, and is likely the case with employment opportunities (Social Mobility Commission, 2015).

Transport and social exclusion

While there are many barriers to opportunity and employment for young disabled people, it is not as clear what the impact is of transport in London is on disabled youth. It has been well researched that transport is a key factor in social exclusion, which Levitas et al. (2007) defined as:

'... the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole.'

Along the framework of this definition, researchers have explored a range of links between transport and social exclusion, finding a direct relationship (Church et al., 2000; Hine and Mitchell, 2001; Lucas et al., 2001; Kenyon et al., 2002; Lucas, 2004; Lucas, 2012; Cass et al., 2005; Gray et al., 2006; Preston and Rajé, 2007 ; Stanley et al., 2011). However, research on transport and social exclusion in the UK has tended to focus on accessibility problems of people living in rural areas rather than London (Nutley and Thomas, 1995). Add some detail about what relationship was found from the various studies possibly? as following info makes it seem like an expansion of this section.

Borough level data

We also wanted to investigate the borough level data, to understand the characteristics of boroughs with a higher proportions of disabled people. We examined four key datasets, which were broken down to borough level:

- Working age population that has a disability and Employment, unemployment, economic activity and inactivity rates by disability (2004-16, ONS)
- Number of trips, distribution of trips by mode and average travel time from home to work, 2007/2008 to 2009/10 (3-year moving average)
- Public Transport Accessibility Levels (2014, Opinion Research and General Statistics)

		Employment rate aged 16-64 - EA core or work-limiting disabled	Unemployment rate aged 16-64 - EA core or work-limiting disabled	Average home to work travel time (minutes)	Average Public Transport Accessibility score, 2014	% aged 16-64 who are EA core or work-limiting disabled
Employment rate aged 16-64 - EA core or work-limiting disabled	Pearson Correlation	1	.267	.817**	-.545**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.133	.000	.001	.000
	N	33	33	33	33	33
Unemployment rate aged 16-64 - EA core or work-limiting disabled	Pearson Correlation	.267	1	.212	.099	.269
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.133		.236	.585	.130
	N	33	33	33	33	33
Average home to work travel time (minutes)	Pearson Correlation	.817**	.212	1	-.672**	.817**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.236		.000	.000
	N	33	33	33	33	33
Average Public Transport Accessibility score, 2014	Pearson Correlation	-.545**	.099	-.672**	1	-.543**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.585	.000		.001
	N	33	33	33	33	33
% aged 16-64 who are EA core or work-limiting disabled	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	.269	.817**	-.543**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.130	.000	.001	
	N	33	33	33	33	33

Our analyses found:

1. Boroughs with a higher average home to work travel time have a higher proportion of 16-64 year olds who are EA core or work-limiting disabled.
2. Boroughs with a higher average public transport accessibility score have a lower proportion of 16-64 year olds who are EA core or work-limiting disabled.

This shows us that the boroughs which have higher proportions of disabled people, have a lower average public transport accessibility score, and a higher average home to work time.

Transport and disability

Disability and transport

The relationship between social exclusion and unemployment, with transport disadvantage, puts disabled young people at real risk as they are experiencing some of their greatest transport barriers. Firstly they are often facing harder circumstances in terms of being more likely to be restricted in housing choices, and twice as likely to live in a house with no heating, or in social housing (Emerson and Hatton 2007). The most commonly reported barrier among adults with impairment was difficulty in moving around the building (LOS Wave 1 2009/11, Appendix Table 21). Secondly, they may be forced to travel for opportunity, as disabled people are significantly more likely to live in households with no internet access (British Social Attitudes Survey 2011). Lastly, disabled young people are more likely to live in families in relative poverty (Family Resources Survey 2011 to 2012). Disabled people are facing more barriers to travel than simply the impact of the medical aspect of their condition or impairment (Trotter, 2013), and both monetary and temporal costs (Bottomley et al., 1997).

Barriers when travelling

It is clear that disabled people face more challenges in accessing transport (ODI Indicator F2), and that difficulty with transport is routinely reported more by those with an impairment than without (LOS Wave 1, 2009/11, Appendix Table 26.2). More than simply a matter of access though, the barriers arise from the entire journey as a whole, with disabled people three times more likely to cite poor connections as an obstacle (Jolly et al. 2006), while one in ten disabled people in the UK face difficulties getting to a rail, bus, coach station, or stop, and getting off the transport system (DWP and ODI, 2015). The form of transport to most likely cause participant restriction for adults with an impairment was with long distance buses, and the least were taxis (LOS Wave 1, 2009/11), which are conversely the cheapest and most expensive forms respectively.

Crime when travelling

It is also understood that disabled people are significantly more likely to be victims of crime than non-disabled people, with the largest gap being amongst 16-34 year olds (British Crime Survey, 2010/2011). Young people are also more likely to be victims of crime compared to other age groups (ONS, 2015). It has been reported that anxiety, and fear of crime are issues for those with impairment (LOS Wave 1, 2009/11) and that experiencing crime can seriously affect a disabled person's confidence, as well as increase their sense of vulnerability and fear (Nocon et al. 2011).

Transport and disability

The cost of transport

Increasingly, disabled people are facing insecurity in their own finances, with an estimated 650,000 disabled people now expected to seek work or risk losing their benefits since 2008's reforms (Scope analysis of DWP 2013) and at least 120,000 having been sanctioned in 2012 in the benefits system. (Scope analysis of DWP data on JSA). Coupled with London's transport costs, amongst the highest in the world (Jowell, 2016), has led to disabled people feeling 'trapped', with cuts to concessionary fares leaving some isolated (JCHR, 2012). This is leading to a situation where disabled people are confronted by low wages and part-time work, which they are more likely to be, travel to work costs are making employment an uneconomic option (McGregor et al. 1998). Even when seeking work, it was found in an evaluation of a Job Finders Grant, that nearly 30% of those who received a grant used it to pay for travel costs (Dickson and Broome, 1998). The cost of transport, rather than the access, was the most commonly reported issue for those with impairment (LOS Wave 1 2009/11).

London's transport spaces

London's transport system does have comparably good disabled access compared to the rest of the world, and the country, with close to 50% of stations having step free access, and all buses being wheelchair accessible (TfL, 2012). However it is not necessarily transport disadvantage that results in transport-related social exclusions (Currie and Delbosc, 2010), but the nature of individual 'fear' by disabled groups, which strongly influences how transport facilities are used (Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, 2000). Attitudinal or psychological barriers can prevent or discourage disabled people, with fears of crime, abuse, or attack that can occur on the transport system (SATA, 2015). Imrie (1996) asserts the dominance of 'able-bodied' people in spaces, with through their dominance of state policy, and architectural and planning practice creating environments that exclude disabled people. This segregation of the disabled, in schooling and housing, often extends to public transport (Oliver, 1996). The necessity to utilise separate spaces, on the tube, or a different entrance on the bus, can be a socially excluding factor in transport systems that offer good access.

Methodology

We wanted to talk to a range of young people to see how experience varied in different parts of the capital, or with different levels of need. As such, we decided to use focus groups to draw out how young disabled people felt about transport.

Focus groups

A focus group has been chosen as the best method to gain information from participants. Defined by Morgan (1996) as a “technique that collects data through group interaction” it is probably best suited given the topics and participants. A maximum of six participants per group was applied with the lower end of Morgan’s (1988) recommendation of between six and eight chosen due to the additional challenges when facilitating groups with learning difficulties (Gates and Wright, 2007).

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Previously focus groups have been found effective for health research in general, of which topics may stray into (Wilkinson, 1998). Given the topic of disability, it is vital that conversations into the topic are led by those with the experience. Conducting a focus group will give us the best opportunity to pick up on certain cultural values associated with being a young disabled Londoner.

Secondly, a focus group is suitable due to it being, as defined by Morgan (1998), a “technique that collects data through group interaction”. Unlike an interview, it can provide the opportunity to observe the co-construction of meaning as participants question each other, and explain themselves.

Lastly, a focus group provides a dynamic which is dictated by the participants themselves, due to their egalitarian nature, especially when dealing with young people (Trakas, 2009). They can take an active role in setting the agenda, and exploring issues that are unexpected, those which are important to them. Additionally group interaction has been found to enhance openness (Kitzinger, 1996; Wilkinson, 1998), which is vital when dealing with participants with learning difficulties.

Methodology

- **We first conducted a workshop session with over 35 young disabled people.**

We first ran an initial session at a youth centre in East London, with over 35 young disabled people. It was intended as a sounding board for our research questions, but also helped guide our later interviews and focus group research.

- **We then conducted three focus groups, with 19 young disabled people.**

The three focus groups were recruited via local authorities, the voluntary sector, and a college. Good access to large networks allowed to be very selective in our purposive sample, as well as get representation from young disabled people in three contexts; trying to find a job, on the cusp of leaving education, and as part of a community group.

- **Participants purposively sampled for disability type and location**

A purposive sample was used, to ensure that a wide range of common disabilities were represented, as well as a good range of boroughs. The groups included representation from all main forms of disability, except hearing impairment. Participants also lived in over 15 different boroughs, in different parts of London - however, there was a noticeable absence of participants from West London.

- **Word association and scenario based exercises were employed.**

The focus group format was kept consistent between the three groups. This included a word association game, and an exercise including different hypothetical scenarios. This helped encourage participation from all, in a way that open discussion was not able to.

- **Refreshments were provided, and audio was recorded for transcription**

Participants were given easy access to refreshments for breaks between exercises (Gates and Wright, 2007). Thematic analysis allows us to identify, analyse, and report patterns within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006), ultimately producing a thematic network that summarises the full set of data. Careful listening, and re-listening of the recording has provided a basis for the identification of themes, which serve as categories for later analysis, to be populated by the transcript (Fereday and Cochrane, 2006). into the shared cultural values (Kitzinger, 1995).

Emerging Themes

Difficulties travelling alone

Firstly, it was found that travelling around was heavily dependent on the social structures around the young person such as family or friends. This is due to the varying degrees of difficulty that young people with disabilities find in travelling on their own, even with travel training support.

“Basic, with the whole thing, with travel training, is just too much for me. Not being funny, but it is just too much for me.”

“I would go to central London with my Mum sometimes, but it would be hard to go alone”

It was also clear that of those young people who were capable of travelling alone, the support and time required to learn a new route was, on average, significant. A few participants felt confident that they could learn it in a few days, while others would cite weeks, months, and a year, as the time it takes to learn a new route.

“It would take about three days, to plan how to get there if I was going myself”

“It takes me a good year”

As a result, many young people are dependent on the availability of family, with being driven by family one of the most common forms of transport across all groups. Often this can be difficult, especially in unforeseen circumstances, due to parents having work or previous appointments.

“I used to get the school bus, but it wasn’t easy because I let it wait every day, and one day it drove without me and my Dad didn’t want to take me”

When faced with the prospect of travelling alone, many young people expressed that they feel more vulnerable than other people. Words like “stressed”, “nervous”, and “scared” would be used to describe the experience.

Emerging Themes

Strangers and other people

The key cause of anxiety and fear when travelling seemed to arise from having to interact with other people, strangers on the bus and trains. This was particularly the case during busy times, in which a sense of claustrophobia could amplify existing anxieties. For example, we asked what they did not like about travelling in London, responses included:

“People that you don’t know, on the bus”
“Strangers, especially into work, when it’s late”
“Strangers.”
“All the new people.”

When asked if they felt more vulnerable than other people when travelling, the majority of participants would agree. Partly, this vulnerability fed into a fear that the young people had about violence, either against them, or around them.

“I’m not sure, I wouldn’t even want to go by myself, like what if there’s a fight on the bus, and it would make me feel very anxious.”
“Guy got angry on the bus with him, and the bus driver screamed in my face, they don’t know how to deal with autism.”
“It (crime) bothers me.”

This sense of vulnerability also heightened the anxiety felt from the actions of other passengers, such as shouting or being verbally abusive. When discussing concerns about transport, this was one of the most common fears:

“Someone shouting, raving or whatever, using dirty words, and I don’t like that. Rudeness.”
“If someone is rude to me, I will just be rude back.”
“But you might get hurt?”
“If someone upsets me then I just start crying a lot, if people are rude to me.”
“Also sometimes the tones of voices.”
“It’s like when like, people are really rude to you when they want you to like move.”

When the topic of other people on transport was raised, words such as “danger”, “scared”, “frightened”, and “scariness” were used more commonly. It was clear that many of these views were defined by the past experiences participants had of such abuse. Ultimately, one participant simply concluded that “You have to be careful”.

Practioner perspective

We spoke to teachers and lecturers about the role that transport plays in their students getting to college everyday. The following account comes from a **supported learning lecturers in London based colleges**, who work with young disabled people.

Freedom passes

The most common complaint by those working with young disabled people was regarding the process for applying for a freedom pass.

“Freedom passes are distributed differently in between boroughs. The people you would have thought would get one don’t and vice versa.

It took one of our students applying 4 times to get one. The excuse given was that he could walk in a straight line, as he is very autistic but able bodied.

One other student had a pass and it was taken away, and her needs were even greater as she had left college. She was looking to do some volunteering but couldn’t afford to do it.

It takes a long time to get a freedom pass. I think all students with Disabled Learning Allowance should have a pass automatically. It should be given at birth as their needs are not going to go away – they are lifelong, so why the delay?

Challenges on the bus

Those practioners who had experience with taking young disabled people around London via public transport echoed the anxieties faced by students.

“There’s not enough seats downstairs on the bus. Many students will not go upstairs as it is difficult for them to get up there. They like to see the driver and know who to go to if they have a problem.

Many times our students have been asked to move out of seats by the elderly, but they both have mobility problems - so who gets the seat? Students with Down Syndrome have been told to move. The syndrome presents itself first physically so there should be no reason why they should be asked to stand. I can understand why other seemingly heathy young people have been asked but not someone with Downs Syndrome.”

Emerging Themes

Navigating rush hour

While some had more directly negative experiences with a few passengers, the overwhelming majority had negative experiences of crowds in general, especially during rush hour.

“Too many people.”

“Getting crowded.”

“There’s too many crowds of people.”

“When it is packed on the buses”

A dislike of crowds is partly because it makes it easier to get lost, or separated from the person you’re travelling with.

“There were so many people I couldn’t see where David was and I panicked.”

“When I’m scared I get panicky, just basically I feel scared”

“I feel a bit claustrophobic and I don’t know where I’m going.”

But often the noise that comes with crowds, especially on buses, add to the sense of confusion by making it difficult for young people to hear the announcements that they need to navigate transport. It can also make it harder to hear instructions from those travelling with them.

“I can’t hear what my Dad is saying, when people are shouting, I can’t hear what he’s talking about.”

“The overground is a lot more noisy than the tube. I need to hear those announcements.”

“I can’t hear the lady speaking (announcements) when it is busy.”

However, for many young people, crowds were just negative because of the claustrophobic feeling that they would create, and the invasion of personal space that it would entail.

“I just need that little space, no people bumping into me.”

“I don’t like when it’s so much other people and really crowded when I’m at work.”

Many young people would speak of the ways in which they would avoid crowds, many waiting for the next bus if it is too busy, with one participant waiting for three buses until there was one that empty enough to travel on.

“I sometimes wait for the next bus if it is busy.”

Emerging Themes

Unexpected/changes of travel

The most common difficulty when travelling was dealing with the unexpected, such as a bus terminating, changing route, or a station being closed. The training given to young people to travel certain routes alone does not adequately prepare young people for this challenge. We firstly asked participants what they would do if there was an unexpected change in their journey:

“I would find it difficult, they would do that on the train, get on and they change”

“I would probably panic.”

“Sometimes when the bus goes on diversion they don’t notify you, they just turn. I’ve been in a couple of buses like that and the driver just doesn’t say anything.”

Only a few of the young people, who were trained in independent travel, could speak about the process of finding an alternative route to get home. Unexpected changes to travel can pose a serious safety risk to the young people, who can become lost or quickly out of an area that they know.

“So if there’s going to be a problem, like, there were a lot of police around Stratford and then I had to go elsewhere to get a bus, and then get a tube”

“I would just get off and wait for the next one.”

Young people seemed especially able to navigate change if it took place in their immediate local area, of which many had better knowledge of. However, young people seemed to not know how they would deal with an unexpected change, with many citing the help of their accompanying parent in finding out an alternative and guiding them.

“That happened before, with the engineering, and it was off for ages, and then my Mum found the replacement bus service.”

Those more able to travel alone would also find difficulties in unexpected changes, as it would require them to interact with strangers, such as drivers, or people in the station.

“It would change destination, and then tell you to get a ticket from the driver”

“I’m a bit shy and nervous (to ask for help).”

The majority of young people did not believe that transport staff were trained to look out for people with disabilities, but do feel like they try to help. Furthermore, young people in both groups displayed an awareness of cuts to staff at stations, while others were aware of a reduction in staff, many echoing that “It used to be better before the cuts.”

Practitioner perspective

Travel training

The key challenge for practitioners, both in education and local authorities was the standard of travel training, and the level of understanding regarding travel training. What was clear is that no single approach to travel training can meet the vastly different needs of disabled young people.

“There is no person centred travel training course for our students. You may get six weeks of route training to college given on an adhoc basis by the council and it is not thorough enough. Six weeks is not long enough for most students.

Travel training is broken down into many small stages, i.e. walking as a group and crossing the roads safely, walking to and from a destination in small groups being shadowed by staff, then in a small group by themselves, then by themselves again being shadowed, and then on their own .

It’s the same with public transport and travel confidence: large group , small group being shadowed on public transport , route training (coming to college and going home) - on a bus again with all the stages as mentioned before , route training on other transport.

When someone is travel trained you are basically saying that they can decide which way to get to their destination, which mode of transport they should take. They would know what to do in an emergency. However, there are many pitfalls for our students .

Many staff in social services /freedom pass departments are unaware of the complexities of travel training for our students and how fundamental it is for the students wellbeing and job /volunteering prospects.

It opens up a new world of opportunity for them once they begin travelling on their own. Travelling safely on public transport is a huge life skill to achieve and it does give you independence and freedom.”

Emerging Themes

Technology as a solution for some

One emerging solution to transport challenges that emerged was the varied use of technology as an aid. While every single participant had a smartphone, only a small minority actively used it on their own to aid them travelling around London.

“I’ll just use my iPad!”

“Find it on my phone, but if you’ve never been before, you’d always be nervous”

“I check the buses on my iPad.”

The use of technology was varied, with multiple apps cited, as well as different methodologies for use, such as googling, or voice command searches. Furthermore one participant would make use of a specialised travel app, Wayfindr, produced by the Royal Association of the Blind.

“I’d like, find like, something on the bus stop or,”

“I’d go on TfL.”

“Probably use the internet, then maps on my phone.”

“I use google maps to know the direction. Sometimes I check on TFL for any engineering works, delays or cancellations.”

Among young people, there seemed to be more use of google maps than the TfL website or app. However, a large proportion of young people still rely on traditional means, such as maps at bus stops, announcements, and help from staff.

“I’d just go check the train in the station, on the overhead. I don’t really use TfL”

“I’d like, find like, something on the bus stop or,”

“Or if you want, ask a guy in the uniform.”

Emerging Themes

Transport is a barrier to work

It was clear that transport was one of the most significant barriers for participants, not just for employment, but also for education. Many participants simply did not have much experience or understanding of navigating London, especially outside the borough in which they resided.

“I’ve been sent out of the city for a lot of jobs. Taxing to getting there, but then just happy to be there because the journey is over.”

“I think it’s easier if there’s a bus station, or uhm, train station nearby.”

“I think it was easier but certain cuts have made it much harder”

Interestingly young people would say that contract length is the most important factor, however this was also partly a reflection on the time it takes to learn a new route to a job. Given a job with a longer contract length, but in-work travelling, participants were no longer keen

During the scenario based work, participants demonstrated a clear preference for work which had a short route to work, or longer contract length. A preference for the latter when explored indicated that prioritising of contract length was mainly motivated by fear of having to learn another route, for another job.

“I would prefer to be one place.”

“Yeah, just one route.”

“Yeah, I don’t want to look for a job again.”

“I think if it was too short I wouldn’t really been keen on it.”

When an opportunity was a ten minute walk away, the majority of participants were keen, regardless of the pay, contract length, or work.

“It’s important to have it because otherwise I would just been sitting at home.”

Discussion

While London has many successes as a transport capital for these young people, the majority remained with a largely negative experience. There exists a reliance of young disabled people on the transport supported provided by parents. This creates a serious risk of social exclusion, especially for those who have busy family members, or have no close family at all.

Fear and transport

Previous research focuses on the extent of which transport can act as a barrier to young disabled people, and the difficulties they have, however what resonated from our findings was the extent that this derived itself from feelings of fear, anxiety and danger. Young disabled people can quickly feel overwhelmed, especially at rush hour, and displayed a strong association between fear and transport. On many occasions, young disabled people would hold only anxiety for the route to work rather than the work itself. However, fear would not completely dissipate with experience, due to an underlying fear of abuse and strangers. Feelings of social isolation, claustrophobia, and danger were present in the minds of young disabled people considering transport during rush hour. Strangers perceived as rude, inconsiderate, and physically intrusive, lead to young people having a complete aversion to rush hour travel. A lack of flexible work and travelling times experienced by participants speak to a lack of understanding by employers and programmes about the extent of discomfort experienced by young disabled people in rush hour traffic. Many participants were willing to wait for over an hour, at a bus stop, or at a station, to avoid rush hour, causing worry to parents.

Staffing concerns

This research also highlighted the heavy reliance that young people can have on the staff that operates the buses and stations, a resource that was noticed as having been reduced. Two key concerns emerged in regards to staff; the adequacy of current staff training when dealing with young people with learning difficulties, and the accessibility of staff or support for young people in the transport system. Interactions with staff could be a good experience when talking to those with physical disabilities, or negative ones with those with learning difficulties. A reduction of staff also reduces the availability at busier periods for the one to one support that is necessary for certain young people to travel comfortably. However, while staff is key to providing navigational support to these young people, key concerns around staff came from negative experiences usually on buses.

A key concern that arose was staff ability to deal with abuse, and with ensure prevention of abuse of young people. Research already shows that young disabled people are more likely to suffer abuse, and be victims of crime. In particular, concerns would be largely focused on buses than any other form of transport. Concerns arose from drivers, isolated in the front cabin, failing to inform passengers of route diversions, and raising their voices with the young person. One key case of route diversion led to a disabled young person sitting on a bus until the end of the stop, until told to get off; unfortunately the driver did not identify the risk, and intervene with the lost young person.

Discussion

Transport spaces

Furthermore, we can look to Imrie's (1996) theory of space being dominated by 'able-bodied' people in the way in which young people experienced the underground. Young people's inability to navigate the underground pointed to a lack of clarity or frequency of signs adequate to their needs. Many expressed familiarity with using maps, and acknowledged usefulness for them; however this was often undermined by their ability to find them. The underground in particular, always ranked the least favourite among young people's estimations, with the most common reason being how busy it can be. However, while busy and crowded journeys were a common fear on all forms of transport, it held particular resonance for the tube. Young people often expressed a preference for national rail, simply because you can see the outside world, greenery, and nature. This is likely in part in opposition to their dislike of the spaces of the underground; winding, disorientating grey tunnels, all similar in design. From this perspective, it is easier to understand the young people getting lost in the underground.

Structure of travel training programmes

Travel training is an essential part of any programme getting young disabled people into working opportunities, with the majority of participants having had training. Yet further examination needs to be made of the structure of travel training programmes across London, and whether content is preparing young disabled people for the realities of travelling in London. Typically young people would be trained in a single route, for a work or study programme, and were unable to identify solutions to common challenges such as an unexpected route change, stations being closed, or a change in destination. While some young people had been taught methods for dealing with the unexpected, answers often varied from group to group, with no universal course of action from the young people. This not only pointed to a lack of a clear single solution for the unexpected, but also an absence of any clear solution that transport staff could be trained to pick up on.

The impact of the unexpected

While previous literature is clear on the social exclusion that can be caused by transport, it remains unclear the extent to which the unexpected and reliability of transport services contributes to this. Months of travel training can be undone by a single route change, with one young person becoming lost, and subsequently being prohibited from future independent travel by a fearful parent. Furthermore, many young people can take weeks or months to learn a single transport route, and find it difficult when tasked with the unexpected. With every group, dealing with unexpected change was the single biggest challenge to their ability to travel, with a single incident having a wide reaching impact on the ability of a young person to arrive safely at a destination. A large extent of the anxiety and fear of transport could be directly derived from experiences by the young people of having to deal with unexpected change, and is a significant barrier to a young person feeling truly confident in the route they have learned.

Discussion

The use of technology

Interestingly, the use of technology seemed to be an area that is ill explored in its capacity to seemingly provide solutions, and confidence to young disabled people. Several young people, with different abilities, would display a learned familiarity with tools on their mobile phones or tablet devices which enabled them to navigate London. Use of such devices for travel would never arise from taught travel training programmes, but from parents or siblings. However, while Google Maps and some custom applications were mentioned, the Transport for London journey planner was never used, either due to a lack of knowledge of its existence, or because of frustration with its ease of use. The exact utility of technology is hard to ascertain and the likelihood that it could, in the current availability of applications, provide a means for young disabled people to navigate alone without much notice is low. Yet what was clear from the findings was the confidence that a familiarity with technology provided the young person, reducing the anxiety of travel, and getting lost. Unfortunately, with young disabled people also more likely to live in a household without internet, technology is not a clear solution to these issues.

Transport is the biggest barrier to work

What is most clear from the findings is that barrier is the biggest barrier to young disabled people seeking employment. The opportunities that were most likely to be taken up and sustained were universally within walking distance, and it was rare to find a young disabled person with experience of work a twenty minute journey away. Most unemployed young disabled people we spoke to failed to gain employment due to a lack of being able to get to the workplace, or attend the interview on a short notice, rather than a lack of opportunity itself. Many aspects were not considered by employers, like interviews on short notice, or rush hour morning starts, or complex journeys with multiple changes. The time taken and level of support needed to get the young person safely to the destination is likely to be underestimated and present issues with an employer.

Recommendations

- **Travel training needs to be better understood, and practice needs to be shared and developed to meet the needs of the young disabled people it is for**

What was clear throughout this research was the extent to which transport can be a barrier to opportunity or employment. The work itself, and on the job training, was less of a concern for those we spoke to than how they would get there.

Furthermore, the varying needs of young disabled people are complex and wide ranging. One participant might take two weeks to learn a single route, while another might take a month. As such, we found that travel training provision was commonly a single set amount of time, and often not adequate.

- **An independent disability advisory youth group should be established to capture their unique experiences of transport in London**

Similar to the IDAG, A advisory youth group should be set up, made up of young disabled Londoners. The experiences of young disabled people is vital to improving services, as the challenges they face are unique to them.

- **Transport for London staff need to be better equipped to deal with young disabled people, especially in the case of unexpected changes and delays**

The biggest challenge to independent travel of young disabled people is learning how to deal with unexpected changes to their journey. Staff at stations, and bus drivers, need to be better equipped to support young disabled people when changes occur.

Furthermore, many of the young people we spoke to had negative experiences with bus drivers, who were not sensitive to their needs. However, feedback from station staff remained positive, especially for those with physical disabilities.

- **Understanding needs to be developed with businesses and employers about the transport needs of any young disabled people**

The level of support that young disabled people may need to travel to work needs to be understood better by businesses and employers. Good practice around travel training and how to enable young disabled people in the workplace needs to be disseminated.

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- Wave 2 2010/12:

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