

Transport

Key facts from the Life Opportunities Survey interim results, 2009/10

The Life Opportunities Survey (LOS) is a new large scale longitudinal survey of disability in Great Britain. Interim results from the first year of the two year baseline survey were published on the 9th December 2010(1) and the information below presents some of the key facts from this report. In addition to these results, presented in boxes are some of the findings from the qualitative research that was commissioned to complement the statistics provided by the LOS(1).

The information below explores the different modes of transport that adults(2) 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

- Disabled adults, as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)(3), were less likely to use all modes of transport as much as they would like to when compared with non-disabled adults. This was particularly marked for some modes of transport, notably local trains, the underground, long distance trains and motor vehicles.
- The findings are the same when using the impairment based definition of disability(3), and are shown in Table 1.

1 See <http://www.odi.gov.uk/disability-statistics-and-research/life-opportunities-survey.php> for more information.

2 Results presented are from adults (those aged 16 and over) who were interviewed as part of the LOS between June 2009 and March 2010.

3 Please refer to the definition of DDA disability and adults with impairments included in Chapter 1 of the LOS Interim Report, 2009/10.

Table 1: Modes of transport used by adults with impairments, 2009/10

	Percentage of adults who used mode of transport			
	As much as they would like		Less than they would like/ not at all	
	Adults without impairments	Adults with impairments	Adults without impairments	Adults with impairments
	%	%	%	%
Motor vehicle	73	61	14	27
Local buses	44	37	47	53
Long distance buses	13	12	85	87
Underground	33	18	62	78
Local trains	43	26	54	71
Long distance trains	26	14	72	85
Taxis/minicabs	50	39	41	50

Source: Office for National Statistics

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 impairments who took part in the qualitative research.

“Better transport would open up more doors.”

- The most common barrier experienced by all adults using all modes of transport was cost. This was experienced fairly equally by adults with and without impairments.

The cost of transport was also identified as a key barrier by adults with impairments 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 participant with impairments 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 (eg 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 participants with impairments faced when accessing public transport.

- For all modes of transport, adults with impairments were more likely than adults without impairments to experience difficulty getting in and out of transport as a barrier. For example, adults with impairments were six times as likely to experience difficulty getting in and out of local buses compared with adults without impairments (19 per cent and 3 per cent respectively) and five times as likely to experience difficulties getting in and out of local trains (11 per cent and 2 per cent respectively).

The qualitative research identified the types of difficulty experienced by adults with impairments 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 and bus drivers not lowering the bus to enable entry and exit from the bus.

For example, one participant's carer 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.