



Motability Foundation – Research and Innovation

In 2019, disabled people made 38 per cent fewer journeys than non-disabled people. Our research and innovation work helps Motability Foundation to understand the evolving transport needs of disabled people, using that insight to scope and develop new ways to make transport inclusive and accessible.

In August 2023, Motability Foundation carried out a review to understand what the biggest current issues are in accessible transport and highlight what we should be addressing through our expanding innovation work.

The review was informed by insight from disabled people (including key contributions from an expert by experience panel), a major evidence review conducted by Thinks Insight & Strategy; interviews with key stakeholders and extensive internal engagement with employees and governors.

Following this review, the Motability Foundation's two innovation priority areas for 2023 to 2026 are:

- Finding solutions to improve existing transport in the areas of greatest opportunity.
- Ensuring accessibility is a key part of future transport modes and technology.

Key projects

National Centre for Accessible Transport (ncat):

Motability Foundation launched the National Centre for Accessible Transport (ncat) with the aim of closing the transport accessibility gap. We are funding ncat with £20 million over seven years. We appointed a consortium of disability, transport and research experts to run the Centre, which is led by Coventry University, in collaboration with charities RiDC and Designability and organisations Connected Places Catapult, Policy Connect and WSP. The consortium is led by Professor Paul Herriotts of Coventry University, based at the National Transport Design Centre (NTDC).

The Centre works with disabled people, disabled people's organisations, transport providers and policy makers to develop solutions which will make transport accessible for all. ncat aims to transform the sector's understanding of disabled peoples' experiences of transport, highlighting issues and opportunities to better serve the inclusive transport market and convene disabled people and decision makers to drive systems level change.

The Centre has recently launched the Community of Accessible Transport panel, for disabled people, people with lived experience, or people who work in the transport or disability sector to share their transport experiences. The panel will be involved in shaping the future of transport for disabled people, share ideas, learn from others and find solutions that work and receive incentives for taking part in the research.

More information about ncat can be found [on our website](#).

Accessible EV Charging

We commissioned research on the accessibility of public electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints, which found that infrastructure is not being designed with disabled people in mind. In response to this we partnered with UK Government to co-sponsor the world-leading BSI PAS 1899 accessible charging standard.

The standard provides industry with a clear specification of how to provide accessible chargepoints.

We also partnered with the charity Designability to create freely available design guidance for chargepoint manufacturers, providers and designers, to help translate what is a complex technical standard into clear guidance.

We are continuing to support the uptake of the PAS 1899 standard and ensure it is being as widely as possible implemented to make public EV charging accessible to all. From our engagement with industry, we know that providers and manufacturers are keen to have a way of checking if their chargepoints conform with PAS 1899.

In response to this we have decided to provide an endorsement to the assessment schemes that we determine to be the best in checking whether a chargepoint, site, or network complies with PAS 1899 requirements.

Working with an assessment scheme will allow procurers and providers of public charging to demonstrate their commitment to accessibility, and ensure that disabled people can make more informed choices about where to charge as we transition to EVs.

More information about our EV charging work can be found [on our website](#).

Research Reports:

We carry out research to better understand disabled people's experience of using transport and work with disabled experts, partners and policy makers to explore ways to make transport more accessible.

Our research is published and free to access because we believe that the findings are important for a wide range of people and organisations who care about the same things that we do.

You can access our research reports [on our website](#).

PhD Scholarships

Motability Foundation are collaborating with Coventry University to recruit and sponsor a number of doctoral candidates, with lived experience of disability, to undertake research into accessible transport at the university's National Transport Design Centre (NTDC).

The fully funded scholarships aim to give disabled people or those with lived experience of disability, the opportunity to train in the specialised area of transport design accessibility research, so they can in future bring both technical knowledge coupled with a lived experience to future transport policy and practice.

Three doctoral students have recruited so far, with their research areas including aviation and rail travel. The students are being supervised by Professor Paul Herriotts and Professor Stewart Birrell from the NTDC, which sits in the university's Institute for Future Transport and Cities.

Community car clubs

We've established a pilot community car club initiative for the benefit of disabled people. The aim of the project is to provide those with disabilities, in rural and semi-rural communities, with access to affordable shared transport, which will allow them to access services and social activities independently and improve their general wellbeing.

User Research Grants

We've establishing a user research grants programme which has funded research on transport carried out by a number of different charities and disabled people's organisations.

Research published to date includes a report on improving the accessibility of taxis from Leonard Cheshire, an inclusive journeys report from the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and a disabled citizen's inquiry on transport accessibility in local communities conducted by Sustrans.