

Annual Report

July 2026



About us

The Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (Imtac) is a committee of disabled people and older people as well as others including carers and key transport professionals. Its role is to advise Government and others in Northern Ireland on issues that affect the mobility of Deaf people, disabled people and older people.

The aim of Imtac is to ensure that Deaf people, disabled people and older people have the same opportunities as everyone else to travel when and where they want.

Imtac receives support from the Department for Infrastructure (herein after referred to as the Department).

About this report

Under our agreements with the Department, Imtac is required to submit an annual report to the Minister for Infrastructure. This report includes details of our achievements over the previous year and plans for the coming year. It also identifies and details key issues the Committee would advise the Minister to consider in the coming year.

Imtac's response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Status at June 2026)

Imtac recognises that for many older people and disabled people the risks from the COVID-19 pandemic are not over. We are committed to taking steps to ensure we minimise risks for our members and others participating in our work, including ensuring that our meetings include the option attend remotely.

Chairperson's Message – 2026 (20th Report)

Writing this Foreword, my first as IMTAC Chair, I was reflecting on the immense efforts by committee members to represent the best interests of Deaf, Disabled and older people which they willingly do on a voluntary basis. We all believe that equal access to transport is a fundamental right and one which must be at the heart of all decisions around transport.

I recognise progress made this year demonstrating the value of our good working relationship with Minister Kimmins and officials from the Department for Infrastructure. The proposed introduction of changes to parking legislation to help alleviate inconsiderate pavement parking is a welcome first step towards an outright ban on pavement parking. I also welcome the Minister's commitment to explore equality of full concessionary fare with the rest of the UK and Ireland and look forward to contributing further on this. This year also saw the introduction of the first buses with two spaces for wheelchair users.

It has been another busy year for the Committee. We have developed papers on Motability, Blue Badge use in Belfast City centre and responded to the draft Anti-Poverty strategy and draft Transport Strategy to name a few. The last year also saw the revival of our People Streets and Places and the Translink Accessibility Working Groups.

Throughout the Covid pandemic IMTAC co-chaired the Disability Strategy Co-design Group. The long-awaited draft Strategy, published during the past year, proved to be a major disappointment. Our comprehensive response to the consultation reflected this disappointment. In its present form the Disability Strategy will lead to no significant improvement to the lives of disabled people in Northern Ireland.

I want to conclude by acknowledging the commitment of committee members. I also want to recognize the that work of the committee would not be possible without our Secretariat. Michael and Angela work furiously behind the scenes to organise our work and coordinate activities. My thanks go to all who have contributed to the work of Imtac over the past twelve months.

Terry McCorry

July 2026

Our Achievements 2025 / 26

Our Work Programme for April 2025 / March 2026¹ set out a series of tasks and priorities based around the four principles set out in our New Approach paper². These principles are:

1. Ensuring a shift in our cultures
2. Ensuring public and private investment contributes to an accessible and inclusive society
3. Ensuring end to end journeys are straightforward and accessible
4. Putting Deaf people, disabled people, and older people at the centre of every stage of decision making

We have recorded our achievements below under each of these headings.

Ensuring a shift in our cultures

Key to ensuring the change to inclusive and accessible travel and places is a shift in cultures, challenging and changing the traditional approaches to accessibility and inclusion as well as the current and past approaches to how we design travel, our streets and our places.

As part of this shift in culture Imtac promotes Disability Equality Training (DET) to anyone involved in the design or provision of transport and the built environment. The training is designed and delivered by Disabled people and is based around the social model of disability. This year we continued our partnership with Inclusion London, delivering training sessions to officials from across the business areas of the Department for Infrastructure.

¹ <https://www.imtac.org.uk/imtac-work-programme-2025-2026>

² <https://www.imtac.org.uk/new-approach-travel-our-streets-and-our-places>

The Committee seeks to influence culture change through our responses to key consultations. This year we saw the publication of two draft Executive Social Inclusion Strategies – the Anti-Poverty Strategy and the Disability Strategy. Our responses to both consultations reflected widespread disappointment that neither strategy represented the change in approach needed to address key barriers and inequalities experienced by Deaf, Disabled, older people and others. We have set out our recommendations which if adopted will result in the required change of culture.

The Committee also contributed to consultations about long-term strategy and plans for improving travel and places. This included response to the draft Transport Strategy for Northern Ireland and the emerging local and regional Transport Plans. It is essential that both the final Strategy and emerging Transport Plans recognise and address the barriers currently experienced by Deaf, Disabled and older people. As future plans for travel will be heavily influenced by how we respond to climate breakdown, the Committee has also prioritised responding to consultation around a Climate Action Plan. We have also engaged with the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs about ensuring Deaf, Disabled and older people involved in a just transition to Net Zero.

This year also saw proposals for a Members Bill at Stormont around promoting the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). Imtac welcomed the debate the proposals for the Bill created about how we realise our rights. We took a leading role in this debate, including running an online workshop with the Bill's sponsor, Danny Donnelly MLA.

Ensuring public and private investment contributes to an accessible and inclusive society

For Imtac it is essential the highest inclusive design standards are adopted when investing in travel, our streets and our places if we are going to achieve the change that is needed for a more accessible and inclusive society.

We continue to work closely with the Department and Translink to ensure that investment in public transport delivers for Deaf, Disabled and older people. This year we continued to advise on the development of Grand Central Station and several other key infrastructure projects. We continue to work on improving bus procurement, resulting in the introduction of the first buses with two wheelchair user spaces this year. We also inputted to the ongoing development of new bus stop design guidance which will ensure we maximise the benefits of our investment in new vehicles. Towards the end of the year, we co-ordinated the start of the engagement which will inform the design of the new Enterprise rolling stock. We welcome the announcement that the new rolling stock will meet a key recommendation from Imtac, offering level boarding from platform to train.

Imtac continues to work with local councils and the Department for Communities to ensure that investment in public realm deliver inclusive and accessible places. This year we inputted into the design of schemes in Hillsborough, Strabane and Belfast. We also took part in engagement about early proposals for signature project on Derry's riverfront.

We have also sought to ensure that investment in active travel schemes (promoting walking, wheeling and cycling journeys) deliver for Deaf, Disabled and older people. We advised on several proposed schemes and have started a discussion with the Department about a proposed Active Travel Design Guide. With increased investment, active travel will be a major aspect of our work going forward. Within this context our inclusion on a new Departmental Active Travel Stakeholder Group is welcome.

With Government policy now encouraging more people to switch to electric vehicles, the provision of accessible and inclusive charging infrastructure is an increasing focus of our work. This year we have continued to work with the Consumer Council and the Department around cross pavement charging options for households without a driveway. We have also participated in a UK wide working group looking at standards for accessible charging infrastructure considering the development of European Union standards.

Ensuring end to end journeys are straightforward and accessible

Nearly every journey we take involves using more than one mode and it is essential that we make each part of end-to-end journeys straightforward and accessible.

Obstructions on footways and across crossings create unacceptable barriers to making end to end journeys. Parking on the pavement and crossings is a constant barrier encountered by Deaf, disabled, older people and others. Progress has been made this year following our discussions with Minister Kimmins and officials. The announcement of a proposed ban on parking with all four wheels on the footway and across dropped kerbs will address some of the barriers experienced people walking and wheeling but stops short of the outright ban on pavement parking promoted by the Committee.

Cars and other private vehicles will remain an essential mode of travel for some disabled and older people. The Committee continues to stress this in our advice to the Minister, to the Department and to others. This year we undertook a survey of Blue Badge use in Belfast City Centre and published a report which we will use to inform our response to emerging proposals in the Eastern Transport Plan. We were concerned about the impact of tax changes around the Motability Scheme announced by the UK Government and subsequent changes announced by Motability. We have developed a statement in response to these developments.

Micromobility continues to grow as a way of making end to end journeys including the growing use of E-scooters. This year Imtac was part of a UK wide research project looking at the feasibility of a micromobility scheme designed to benefit Disabled people. The Committee also recognises the importance of powered mobility aids and equipment for many Disabled and older people in making everyday journeys. Although restricted to England and Wales the Committee did participate in the consultation process proposing much needed modernisation of legislation and regulation about the use of mobility aids and equipment.

We recognise the importance of affordability as a barrier to travel. This year we identified major issues arising from proposals in the UK Government Green Paper to reform welfare. We submitted a comprehensive response to the consultation on the proposals opposing what would have resulted in a substantial cut to the income of many Disabled people and the loss of passporting rights to travel related benefits including Motability, the Blue Badge Scheme and concessionary travel.

The Committee is very much aware of the importance to Deaf, Disabled and older people of taxis and services provided by community transport in rural and urban areas. We continued to raise the need for reform to both these important modes of transport to improve access for Deaf, Disabled and older people with Minister Kimmins and officials throughout the year. Although reviews of both are ongoing, members are frustrated by the pace of change.

We continue to work with the Consumer Council to improve access to air and sea travel. Our members chair forums at all three local airports and this year we participated in a visit to and trip on a Stenaline ferry from Belfast.

Putting Deaf people, disabled people, and older people at the centre of every stage of decision making

The core principle that guides our work and advice is that Deaf, disabled and older people are the experts about the barriers society creates, and consequently we should be involved in decision making from the earliest stage. The Committee seeks to embed wider participation from Deaf, disabled and older people across our communities in our work. Involving carers is a key part of this engagement.

This year we undertook a major reorganisation of our working groups, prioritising the voices of more Deaf, Disabled and older people as members as well as inviting key organisations to attend meetings. Both our Translink Accessibility and People, Streets and Places working groups have met regularly throughout the year.

The Committee actively seeks to involve Deaf, disabled and older people in site visits to provide feedback on developments in infrastructure and

services. This year we worked with Translink to provide feedback about toilet provision and NaviLens at Grand Central Station. We organised a feedback session about new bus designs and produced a report with recommendations. We also helped to organise an engagement event with local Disabled people in Derry about public realm proposals for the riverfront.

We also seek to involve Deaf, Disabled and older people in consultations undertaken by Government and others. This year we organised online workshops about the Disability Strategy, the Transport Strategy and proposals for a Members Bill on CRPD. We also assisted officials from the Department to organise an Inclusion Conference, prioritising the participation of Deaf, Disabled and older people.

At the start of the year, we hosted workshops to discuss the findings of our research into accessing transport and health services. Although progress on implementing this task has been delayed, we hope to use the findings of these workshops to develop a report with recommendations in the coming year.

Imtac continues to work with other Deaf, Disabled and older people from across these islands including with our counterpart advisory committees in England and Wales³ and Scotland¹³ through the Accessibility Four Nations Liaison Group which meets biannually. We hosted the December 2025 meeting. Imtac has also engaged in several projects supported by the National Centre for Accessible Transport (NCAT) including contributing to and speaking at the launch into a report into accessible transport policy across the regions of the UK.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disabled-persons-transport-advisory-committee> ¹³ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/accessible-transport/mobility-and-access-committee-for-scotland-macs/>

Our plans for 2026 / 2027

The Committee has agreed an interim Work Programme for April 2026 / April 2027 with the Department, and this will be published later. We will continue to work with Executive Ministers, the Assembly and officials to progress long standing priorities. These include:

- The publication of a Disability Strategy that will genuinely improve Deaf and Disabled people's lives
- Addressing inequalities of travel concessions between older people and Disabled people
- Improving access to taxi and community transport services
- Tackling inconsiderate parking on the pavement

The tasks and priorities in the work programme are grouped under the 4 key principles set out in New Approach. Our work will reflect other factors that continue to impact on the lives of Deaf, disabled and older people. These are:

- Ongoing impacts from austerity and cuts to services and support
- Ongoing impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Ongoing impacts from the cost-of-living crisis
- Ongoing impacts from climate breakdown and a transition to Net Zero

The Committee has summarised below the tasks it plans to undertake in the next 12 months.

Cross cutting tasks

We plan to complete the task looking at barriers experienced by Deaf, disabled and older people travelling to access health services. This will include the publication of a report with recommendations to address current barriers to accessing services.

Putting Deaf people, disabled people, older people and carers at the centre of every stage of decision making

This year we plan to undertake comprehensive engagement with Deaf, Disabled and older people about whether travel and places have become more accessible. We will use a survey and public meetings to do this and will publish a report on our findings, assessing progress since a similar report was published in 2019.

We will continue involve broader groups of Deaf, Disabled, and older people in our work and activities and encourage Government, Councils and others to consult early with these groups and individuals when developing or implementing policy or services. We will continue to involve more Deaf, Disabled and older people and their organisations in our two working groups.

Ensuring a shift in our cultures

We will continue to promote a social model of disability⁴ approach, challenging and changing cultures and attitudes across Government, service providers and wider society. We will do this by continuing to support the roll out of Disability Equality Training and working with the Department, Translink and others to identify and implement awareness raising measures.

We will seek to ensure that the Disability Strategy delivers positive improvements for Disabled people. We will work with the Department to ensure that the new Transport Strategy and Transport Plans deliver positive improvements for Deaf, Disabled people and older people. We will continue to promote just transition principles across Executive Departments as they respond to climate breakdown. We also plan to look at data collection and make recommendations for improvement.

⁴ <https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/about-us/disability-in-london/social-model/the-social-model-ofdisability-and-the-cultural-model-of-deafness/>

Ensuring public and private investment contributes to an accessible and inclusive society

We will build on progress made to date and continue to support the Department, Translink and others to ensure that investment in our travel, streets and places maximises benefits for everyone including Deaf, Disabled and older people. This means using the highest possible inclusive design standards when investing in new stations and bus stops, new buses and trains as well as investment in new ticketing and onboard and offboard information systems. The same principle will be applied to proposed investment in our streets and places through public realm schemes and increased investment in active travel schemes.

This year we will focus on key signature projects including the completion of Grand Central Station, the procurement of new rolling stock for the Enterprise service and the development of phase two of Belfast Rapid Transport (BRT).

Continuous feedback is an essential element of improving design processes and standards so post project engagement is important. Where improvements have been made, such as the introduction of buses, the opening of a new station or completion of an active travel scheme, the Committee will engage and support engagement with Deaf, Disabled and older people to gain feedback.

Ensuring end to end journeys are straightforward and accessible

The Committee will continue to focus on ensuring all aspects of journeys are straightforward and accessible for Deaf, Disabled and older people. This includes ensuring that walking, wheeling and cycling is an accessible and safe mode of making journeys and connecting with other modes of travel. It includes options for making short journeys including access to suitable and accessible parking, access to appropriate taxis and access to alternative services such as community transport. It includes removing barriers such as a lack of information or unnecessary legislation or regulations.

This year we will support the Department introduce changes to increase enforcement of pavement parking and parking across dropped kerbs. We will look specifically at connectivity to our airports. We also plan to raise awareness of how modernising the current legislation around mobility equipment used by many Disabled people could make everyday travel easier.

Our advice to the Infrastructure Minister

Imtac members welcome the positive engagement with Minister Kimmins and her officials over the past twelve months. We also very much welcome positive developments during the last year that demonstrate the value of this engagement as well as the commitment of both the Minister and officials to making changes required to make transport and places accessible to everyone. These positive changes include the introduction of new buses with two spaces for wheelchair users and proposed legislation to tackle inconsiderate parking.

The Committee recognises that this is the last year of the current Assembly mandate and that there is limited time in which to progress some of the priorities highlighted earlier in this report. We do believe, however, that there is an opportunity in the coming year for the Minister to leave a legacy by completing or initiating progress in the following areas:

- Supporting the calls of Imtac and others for Minister Lyons to re-engage with Deaf and Disabled people to ensure that the Disability Strategy will genuinely improve the lives of Disabled people.
- Linked to the above, work with Imtac and others to ensure that commitments and actions from the Department for Infrastructure in the final Disability Strategy will make a meaningful difference to our lives.
- Initiate the development of a mechanism to ensure that the high-level commitments around accessibility and inclusion made in the new Transport Strategy can be implemented – Imtac has recommended a mechanism such as an inclusion strategy, framework or charter.
- Equalise the travel concessions available to Deaf people, disabled people and older people in Northern Ireland.
- Prioritise and progress a review of Class B (wheelchair accessible) taxis in Northern Ireland.

- Ensure that the future procurement framework for inter-urban bus services in Northern Ireland prioritises accessibility and precludes the further purchase of high floor coaches.
- Ensure that the voices of Deaf, Disabled and older people are fully reflected in the final recommendations of the review of community transport services in Northern Ireland.
- Publish an updated Bus Stop Design Guide which ensures infrastructure supports the operation of more accessible buses.
- Initiate a review of the legislation and regulation of powered mobility equipment in Northern Ireland.
- Ensure accessibility is a requirement in any electric vehicle charging infrastructure funded in part or in whole by the Department.



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