



Shaping the future of Step-Free access on the Tube

Summary of the Consultation Report
November 2022

MAYOR OF LONDON



**TRANSPORT
FOR LONDON**
EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

Introduction

This document is a summary of the full consultation report for the consultation held about Step-Free Access at Tube stations between Tuesday 2nd November 2021 and Thursday 10th February 2022 (running for just over 14 weeks in total). The consultation was open to all and, therefore, respondents were self-selecting. The full report can be accessed on our [website](#).

A total of 5583 responses were received, of which 31 were from stakeholders. The survey included both closed questions (i.e., selecting answers from a provided list) and open questions (i.e., allowing respondents to provide free text comments). A total of 2406 members of the public provided a free text comment about step-free access and facilities and these comments have been grouped into themes for analysis purposes.

Impact of no step-free access at Tube stations

"I used to use the Tube all the time, but when I became a wheelchair user, I realised how inaccessible the system currently is for me. I haven't used it for several years now, and this impacts my social and work life in a big way." (Respondent rarely/never uses the Tube; and has a mobility impairment, limiting long-term illness, and mental health condition)

In their written comments, 46 per cent of public respondents raised the impact of having no step-free access and facilities at Tube stations and how it affected their travel. Non-accessible stations were felt to particularly affect:

- Disabled people and those with health issues (18 per cent)
- Young families and those travelling with prams/pushchairs (14 per cent)
- Older people (10 per cent)
- Those travelling with luggage and other items (eight per cent)

The most frequently mentioned impacts included:

Distressing: The lack of step-free access and facilities at Tube stations can be distressing and impact on the mental wellbeing on travellers (discussed by eight per cent of those who commented), with some expressing concerns about becoming stranded during their journey due to the lack of step-free access across the Tube network

Health and safety: Six per cent of those who commented discussed how they had health and safety concerns accessing and navigating Tube stations that did not have step-free access, with the main concerns being falling while using steps/stairs or falling where there is a gap between the train and platform

Limited opportunities: As a result of their being a lack of step-free access at Tube stations used by respondents, seven per cent of public respondents who

commented felt that the lack of step-free access limits the freedom and travel opportunities for some, causing some to travel via alternative routes and modes or deciding not to travel at all

"I would like more central London stations to offer step-free access. I appreciate these are often the more difficult stations to provide step-free access at, but they do make a huge difference to work, leisure and social opportunities." (Respondent is an infrequent Tube user with a mobility impairment)

"I would only use a stations with step-free access, but this would enable me to travel on the Tube and get out and about, which is currently too difficult." (Respondent rarely/never uses the Tube; and is an older person)

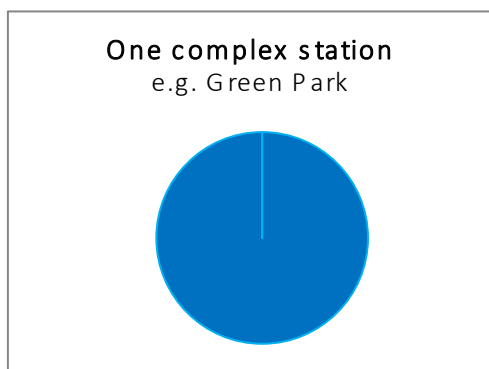
How to prioritise Tube stations for step-free access

Criteria for prioritising Tube stations for step-free access

Respondents were asked how TfL should prioritise which Tube stations are made step-free, and most public respondents felt that stations that interchange with other Tube lines or modes of public transport (including trains and buses) should be prioritised, as well as prioritising stations that are within easy reach of a hospital or healthcare services.

Prioritising Tube stations for lifts

When asked which type and size of stations should be prioritised for installing lifts (four options presented below), 69 per cent of public respondents felt that it would be best to install lifts at a combination of some smaller and medium Tube stations and part of a complex station.



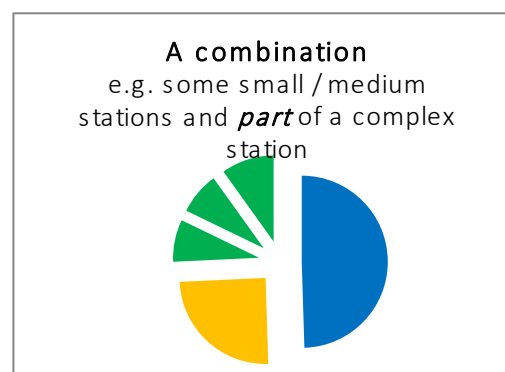
9 per cent



10 per cent



13 per cent



69 per cent

The proportions of public respondents that selected each option are shown below each option.

Preferred approach for making Tube stations step-free

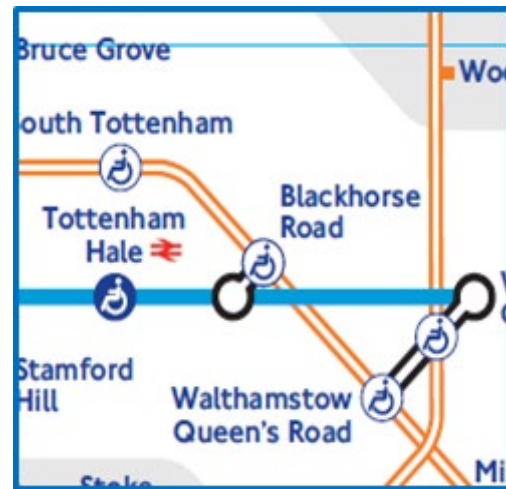
Sixty-three per cent of public respondents also felt that the priority for making stations step-free should be those in a specific area or line where there are stations with minimal access (i.e., Option A below - to 'plug a gap' in the Tube network rather than to 'create a hub' of step-free stations). Twelve per cent of public respondents instead felt that TfL should prioritise areas where there were already some accessible stations (i.e., Option B below – to 'create a hub'). Twenty-five per cent of public respondents said they had no preference.

A. Where there are minimal accessible stations in a specific area or on a specific line ('plug a gap')



63 per cent

B. Where there are already some accessible stations ('create a hub' e.g. by making Blackhorse Rd step-free)



12 per cent

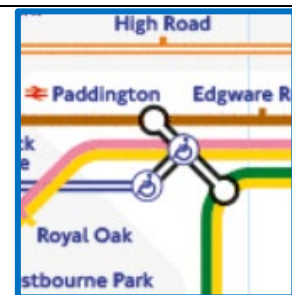
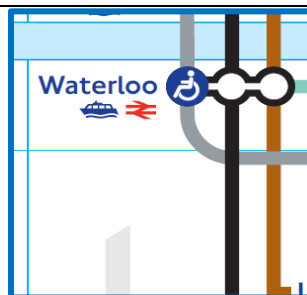
Forty-eight per cent of public respondents felt that making a smaller number of stations step-free to all Tube lines should be the priority (Option A below) rather than making a greater number of stations partially step-free (Option B below - 33 per cent). Twenty per cent of public respondents said they had no preference.

A. Making a smaller number of stations step-free to all lines



48 Per cent

B. Making a greater number of stations partially step-free, e.g. to one line



33 Per cent

Manual boarding ramps

Sixty-three per cent of public respondents said they do not need to use manual boarding ramps. Of those who have a mobility impairment, 37 per cent of public respondents said they only use manual boarding ramps as a last resort.

*"We avoid manual ramps. The reason being that communication between stations had been poor in the past, and we would be stressed when no one was there to help."
(Respondent is a frequent Tube user; and a parent or carer for a disabled person)*

Five per cent of public respondents who commented said they had issues and concerns with using manual boarding ramps, with some discussing how ramps are sometimes either not available or staff have not prepared the ramps ahead of the respondent arriving at the station.

*"Manual boarding ramps typically add 10 minutes to the journey, because you have to find a member of staff, then wait for them to be available to go to the platform. It is extremely stressful knowing that you are to arrive at a station with a manual boarding ramp because you have to worry about whether the message got through or not."
(Respondent rarely/never uses the Tube; and has a mobility impairment, limiting long-term illness and mental health condition)*

Toilet facilities and changing places toilets

Seventy-nine per cent of public respondents said that having access to toilets at Tube stations was either fairly important or extremely important, and 39 per cent said that having access to changing places toilets was fairly or extremely important.

"Given it takes longer to travel with accessibility needs, and many accessibility needs also come with an increased need for toilet/changing facilities, this is extremely important, more so than for the average traveller." (Respondent rarely/never uses the Tube; has a mobility impairment and a limiting long-term illness)

"I would love to see more toilets in particular on the Tube as I am diabetic and can often get "caught short". (Respondent rarely/never uses Tube; has a limiting long-term illness, a visual impairment, a mental health condition and is neurodivergent)

Other themes raised that would improve accessibility of Tube Stations

In their written responses, some public respondents commented about other aspects related to the accessibility of Tube stations that were outside the primary subject of the consultation (i.e., manual boarding ramps and toilet facilities). The table below highlights the themes that were raised most frequently.

	Theme	Summary
Infrastructure	More or better lifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More lift facilities needed at stations across the Tube network • Improving the design and layout of lifts to improve usability and accessibility
	Lift maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to ensure lifts are maintained and remain in service and usable to those who need them • Need to regularly clean and maintain lift facilities
	More or better escalators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More escalator facilities needed at stations across the Tube network
	Access between Tube and platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to and from the train to the platform • Many requested that the height of platforms is increased to be level with the train • Improving accessibility would reduce reliance on staff assistance and other travellers and would reduce health and safety concerns
	Location and layout of step-free facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design and layout of step-free access and facilities is important as it can make accessibility issues worse if not implemented correctly • Some respondents with disabilities feel they have to travel further than those without disabilities due to step-free facilities not being located nearby one another, particularly lifts
Assistance	Availability and training of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More staff with sufficient training to be available at Tube stations to help and assist those with accessibility needs, particularly if stations are not fully step-free • Some respondents discussed how they had concerns about whether staff would be available to assist and chose not to travel because of this • Some respondents felt that better awareness was needed from both staff and other travellers at Tube stations about all forms of disability including invisible disabilities

Theme		Summary
Signage and information	Signage and information about facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better signage required at Tube stations to help travellers navigate them • More and better information and signage needed about facilities at stations, such as the locations of toilets, lifts, escalators, and other facilities and whether they are in service or not
	Journey planning information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need up-to-date maps and information about which stations have step-free access and what facilities they have to help with planning journeys in advance, particular those who use wheelchairs or have other mobility impairments • Maps and information need to clearly identify which stations only have partial step-free access rather than being completely step-free

In summary, almost all respondents felt providing step-free access to stations across the Tube network was important and, if implemented correctly, it can enable more people to access stations and travel on the Tube, as well as generally encouraging people to travel more often and improving the travel experience for them.

As well as providing step-free access and facilities at more stations across the Tube network, respondents highlighted other aspects that can be addressed to improve the accessibility of stations and traveller confidence with making journeys, such as improved signage at stations, information provision at stations and to assist with journey planning, and better awareness in general from both staff and other travellers at stations about all forms of disability including invisible disabilities.

“It’s so important to make public transport accessible to all, not only for climate change, but to give people access to facilities, give independence, agency and equality.”
(Respondent is a frequent Tube user with a limiting long-term illness and is a parent or carer for a disabled person)

“Should be a top priority for TfL. Disabled people deserve access to everything that able-bodied people already have access to. It is rather shameful that step-free access on the Tube, as well as other accessibility infrastructure, is so lacking and unreliable and sporadic. London is for everyone.” *(Respondent is a frequent Tube user; has a mental health condition and is neurodivergent)*

Use of the Tube

Respondents were asked about their current use of the Tube and how this compared to before the Coronavirus pandemic:

- **Respondents' use of the Tube has decreased** since the Coronavirus pandemic. Sixty per cent of public respondents now use the Tube less than they did before the Coronavirus pandemic, with 13 per cent previously using the Tube daily but only three per cent now doing so
- **Sixty-six per cent of public respondents said they would use the Tube more if there were more step-free stations on the Tube network**, including 86 per cent of respondents who have a mobility impairment and 80 per cent with a chronic illness
- **Eighty per cent of respondents that do not currently use the Tube said they would use it if it was more accessible to them**
- **If the three most important Tube stations to public respondents were made step-free**, they said the biggest change to their daily lives would be that their:
 - Journeys would be made easier (68 per cent)
 - Journeys would be less stressful (64 per cent)
 - Usage of the Tube network would expand (52 per cent)

"Having lifts at stations would literally change my life and mean I could actually go out in the city I live in for work or social activities." (Respondent rarely/never uses the Tube; is mobility impaired, has a limiting long-term illness, a mental health condition and is neurodivergent)

Next steps

Through the consultation, respondents made it very clear that they want more step-free stations. We are now assessing how we would select and prioritise the best stations in line with your feedback. We are combining the results of the consultation with our existing transport modelling data to tell us which stations would be good candidates for future step-free access work.

While our funding situation has affected progress of step-free projects since the pandemic, we continue to deliver step-free access projects at Knightsbridge and Paddington (Bakerloo line only) as well as the step-free access benefits of the Bank station upgrade as well as, The Elizabeth Line with 41 Step-free stations to the platform. The current proposed designs for the High Speed 2 project also provide step-free improvements to Euston and Euston Square Tube and rail stations in the future. Our plans for other future step-free schemes will be considered as part of our business planning process, with a new Business Plan planned for publication later in 2022.

Working in partnership with developers and local authorities has been an important part of the delivery of recent step-free access success stories. We will continue to maximise the financial opportunities open to us by working with third parties to

deliver step-free access, as well as continuing to work with the Department for Transport and Network Rail on opportunities for Step-Free Access at London stations managed by other train operating companies as part of the Access for All programme.

Work is already underway on a range of projects to address many of the wider accessibility issues raised in the consultation. These are outlined in our 'Responses to Issues raised' table in the full consultation report available on our [website](#). This include initiatives to improve signage, real time lift availability information, toilets and our provision of manual boarding ramps. To address issues in the longer term, we are looking to develop an accessibility programme that will deliver improvements in a holistic, co-ordinated and accountable way, dependent on long-term funding.

The responses we received to the consultation have also given us valuable information on other improvements besides step-free access that could make our services more accessible and convenient. Toilets, manual boarding ramps, staff training, information provision and signage are all areas where you have suggested improvements.

Making the Tube easier to use for all our customers remains a top priority for both the Mayor and Transport for London.