

# Policy Brief

## A Public Inconvenience: Better Toilets for Inclusive Travel

*A Human Rights-based, co-production project*

**“Completely dark ...**

**I don't feel comfortable here**

**Had to fumble for light switch**

**Floor filthy**

**Do not feel safe”**

### Key Messages:

- Many public toilets on common travel routes are not fit for use
- The failure to provide adequate public toilets disregards Human Rights and prevents participation as a fellow citizen in everyday life
- Standards and Regulations have the power to bring about change but often don't reflect the **Real Needs** or **Everyday Challenges** faced by people with impairments who have a need for Safety, Dignity and to not feel Distress.
- There is substantial overlap in the needs of people with different impairments but there are a few unique requirements for specific disabilities that need attention.

### Summary of Project

Everyone needs to go to the toilet but the lack of access to well-designed toilets is a major issue for people with different impairments. This becomes critical when out and about travelling. The private and sensitive nature of the topic means that it is not widely spoken about. The result is that many people are not enabled to enjoy activities that most of us take for granted. This is frustrating, incites anger, sadness and feelings of exclusion.

A key difficulty with public toilets is that people with different conditions find them hard to use for different reasons. The range of needs makes it tricky for transport planners and providers to meet diverse, and sometimes conflicting, demands. This co-production project followed a research design based on Human Rights. It involved disabled people including people living with dementia and people with profound and complex needs and their family carers. They worked with academics and experts in participatory and community action to tackle the problem of toilets when travelling.

### Recommendations from the Research

Vital need to develop a well-planned brief for toilet provision when travelling.

Lay down common standards (subject to regulation) that are reviewed and sanctioned by people who represent the full range of access issues.

**Difficulty with Finding and Using the Toilet = Distress**