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**The Future of Accessible Transport, Driven by Evidence**

ncat Strategy 2025 - 2027



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## What is ncat?

ncat provides high-quality, human-centred evidence and insights across the entire transport system, building a robust evidence base that enables transport and policy professionals to design an accessible system that works for everyone.

The National Centre for Accessible Transport (ncat) brings together high quality, human-centred evidence and insights across the whole transport system, creating an evidence base that supports others to develop an accessible transport system that works for everyone.

ncat follows the social model of disability and works to recognise and address the barriers that prevent disabled people from travelling when, where and how they want to. Removing these barriers provides an equitable transport system. ncat is delivered, in partnership, by Coventry University, Connected Places Catapult, Designability, Policy Connect, Research Institute for Disabled Consumers and WSP UK.

ncat is funded by the Motability Foundation, with the aim of providing the evidence base to support the closure of the transport accessibility gap.

## The Power of Evidence

Transport that isn’t accessible means disabled people make fewer journeys, and those journeys take longer. 92% of Disabled people report experiencing barrier(s) when travelling on at least one mode of transport.[[1]](#footnote-2)

Disabled people tell us transport isn’t accessible and most say they do not think that this will change in the next 10 years.[[2]](#footnote-3) Our research shows that transport barriers affect how often disabled people travel. These barriers to travelling create inequalities between disabled people and non-disabled people. 79% of disabled people experience longer journey times due to these transport barriers.[[3]](#footnote-4)

In other research, transport professionals have identified a lack of clear policy and design guidance about making transport accessible and there is also a lack of understanding of the economic benefits and social value of investing in transport accessibility.[[4]](#footnote-5)

The power of ncat is in bringing together key stakeholders from Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs), charities, industry partners and policy makers, and amplifying the voices of disabled people through our Community of Accessible Transport (CAT) panel. We know that research needs to translate into tangible change for disabled people and ncat seeks to act as a convener to enable this.

To support the collation of key evidence in one place, ncat has produced an open access Resource Collection which brings together resources including published research, strategies, guidance and policy related documents related to accessible transport, that have been published over recent years.[[5]](#footnote-6) This collection is being added to and will build over time.

## Vision, Mission and Values

### Our Vision:

Be the convener and commissioner of high-quality evidence that enables decision making in UK government, industry and society, to inform future disability and transport strategy policy and practice creating a barrier-free transport system.

### Our Mission:

To create a barrier-free transport system, through commissioning robust evidence and actively listening to the voices and expertise of disabled people. Combining deep subject matter expertise and research credibility with a genuine respect for the lived experiences of disabled people.

### Our Core Values:

* Inclusion: our work starts and ends with disabled people, and we amplify disabled people’s voices in all decision-making; valuing their insights and experiences is essential to our mission.
* Innovation: Our research is unique and innovative, seeking to avoid duplication of previous efforts and focusing on new, impactful solutions.
* Evidence Led: We are committed to being led by robust evidence, ensuring our findings and recommendations are grounded in thorough and rigorous research.
* Impact: We will translate our research into tangible change, effectively disseminating our findings to drive actionable solutions to remove barriers for disabled people.

## Theory of Change

ncat’s [Theory of Change (ToC)](https://www.ncat.uk/about-us/our-theory-of-change/) highlights how we will generate evidence through research, and work with partners to support outcomes that enhance transport accessibility.

The theory of change covers:

1. ncat’s inputs: A high-level summary of inputs needed to deliver ncat effectively.
2. Activities: Activities undertaken to deliver ncat’s anticipated outcomes and impact.
3. Outcomes and impact: What ncat aims to achieve during the period it is funded by the Motability Foundation (7 years).

## Outcomes and Targets

Outcome 1: Increased public understanding of the need for accessible transport.

Targets for Outcome 1:

* Grow social media followers by 20% over 12 months
* 20% increase in website traffic
* 10% increase in event attendance.

Outcome 2: Changes in legislation and policy.

Targets for Outcome 2:

* Increasing signatories, through the Policy Commission, to the Accessible Transport Charter by 20% each year.
* Respond to appropriate government inquiries on accessibility and transport
* Engaging with policy makers in the four nations at least once a year.

Outcome 3: Translating the evidence generated into meaningful call to action for transport professionals.

Target for Outcome 3: Increase engagement with transport professionals through relationships/events with trade organisations/publications and/or professional bodies.

Outcome 4: Reduction in disparities between the experiences of disabled and non-disabled people.

Target for Outcome 4: ncat will review the disparities between disabled and non-disabled travellers and raise awareness of the need to create accessible transport by publishing a report every year on the status of the transport accessibility gap and work undertaken by ncat to support reducing it.

Outcome 5: Increase stakeholder satisfaction.

Target for Outcome 5: Achieve 70% satisfaction rating amongst stakeholders for their work and its impact to create change in accessible transport.

## Strategic Objectives

Identifying, understanding and applying the realities of the lived experience of disabled people as evidence is vital.

### Strategic Objective 1: Generate

This relates to the planning, collecting and reporting of real-world accessible transport-based evidence. We will meet this objective by continuing to undertake meaningful research, embedding human-centred approaches ensuring the transport issues faced by disabled people are heard.

We will create and validate insights and evidence through human-centred research.

Outcome from Strategic Objective 1: Disabled People have a voice, generate evidence and solutions.

### Strategic Objective 2: Translate

This relates to translating evidence into results, products and service applications that directly benefit disabled people. We will meet this objective through a human- centred design focus and collaborative working/co-production with disabled people, industry and policy makers to deliver new transport solutions.

We will translate new and existing evidence into accessible policy and practice.

Outcome from Strategic Objective 2: Amplify the voice of disabled people to co-create solutions.

### Strategic Objective 3: Adopt

This relates to the adoption of evidence, innovative practices and solutions and policy to influence change for disabled people and the transport system. We will meet this objective with the consistent take-up of evidence-based practices, solutions and policy amongst disabled people and transport operators, policy makers, planners, designers and other stakeholders.

We will promote, support, and inspire the adoption of evidence-based practices and policies.

Outcome from Strategic Objective 2: Influence transport stakeholders to adopt changes.

## ncat Roadmap

### Introduction

The ncat Roadmap is a strategic plan defining the goals and desired outcomes of the programme. It outlines the major steps and milestones to achieve these goals and serves as a communication tool to articulate the strategic thinking behind both the goals and the plan for reaching them.

### Roadmap Structure

The roadmap spans from 2023, when ncat was launched, through the seven-year duration of the programme to 2029. It is divided into two main sections: the initial scoping period (2023-2025) and the second delivery period (2025-2029). Most activities align with the Generate, Translate, Adopt model as described:

* Generate (Orange): Planning, collecting, and reporting real-world accessible transport-based evidence.
* Translate (Blue): Converting evidence into results, products, and services that benefit disabled people.
* Adopt (Green): Adoption of evidence, innovative practices, and policies to influence change.

### Generate Activity

* Launch second round of applied research projects in 2025, with subsequent rounds across the remaining years.
* Grow the CAT panel and update the Barriers to Accessing Transport database.
* Periodic updates to the research and resource collection databases.

### Translate Activity

* Host Applied Transport Summits in 2024, 2026, 2027, and 2029.
* Run the Policy Commission continuously to connect researchers, industry, and government.
* Accelerate knowledge transfer activities starting in the second half of 2025.

### Adopt Activity

* Support external organisations in developing commercial solutions to improve accessibility through funding three phases of Scaling Innovation from 2024 -2027.
* Collaborate with DPOs, businesses, policy makers, transport operators, councils, and funders to actively engage with our research to drive meaningful change.

### Sustainability of ncat

* Develop a future Business Plan in late 2028 to sustain ncat activities beyond the initial funding period, ensuring continued momentum and addressing ongoing challenges in the transport sector.

## ncat Roadmap Narrative

### Introduction

The ncat Roadmap is a strategic plan that defines the goals or desired outcomes from the programme. It includes the major steps and milestones which will be undertaken to reach these goals. It also serves as a communication tool; that helps articulate strategic thinking - the why - behind both the goal and the plan for getting there.

### Roadmap structure

The roadmap is presented in a single page, with a timeline running from left to right, from 2023 when ncat was launched, through the seven-year duration of the programme to 2029. The programme timeline is divided into two main sections, each representing the activities which will be undertaken to deliver the strategic plan. This includes the current period, for which the existing Strategic Plan spans 2023 to 2025. The second period extends from 2025 to 2029, for which an update of the Strategic Plan will be carried out in the first six months of 2025.

The majority of the activities described on the roadmap are aligned to the Generate, Translate, Adopt model which is described in the existing 2023 to 2025 Strategy.

Generate activities are colour coded orange. These relate to the planning, collecting, and reporting of real-world accessible transport-based evidence. We will meet this objective by embedding human-centred approaches and ensure transport issues faced by disabled people are heard.

Translate activities are colour coded blue. These relate to translating evidence into results, products and service applications that directly benefit disabled people. We will meet this objective through a human- centred design focus and collaborative working/co-creating to deliver new transport solutions.

Adopt activities are colour coded green. These relate to the adoption of evidence, innovative practices and solutions and policy to influence change for disabled people and stakeholders. We will meet this objective with the consistent take-up of evidence-based practices, solutions and policy amongst disabled people and transport operators, policy makers and stakeholders.

### Roadmap Phases

The first period of the roadmap, covering the two years from launch to approximately the end of 2024, represents the activities needed to launch ncat. Prior to the launch of ncat, the six consortium partners had not worked together, so significant effort was required to establish an operational model.

As the Generate – Translate – Adopt model implicitly requires research to be carried out in order to generate evidence before this can be translated and adopted, a sequential approach was necessary for the first phase of ncat. The applied research projects were used as vehicles to initiate evidence generation before ‘translate’ activities can take place as planned. The roadmap shows the first Applied transport Summit taking place in late 2024, with inputs from the applied research projects. These projects also informed the scope for the call for the first funding round of Scaling Innovation, which received its applications late 2024.

### Launch Phase Activities

Activities included in this launch phase from 2023 to 2024 are:

* Establishing ncat systems, processes and governance
* Recruiting board and expert advisory panel members
* Launch the first round of applied research projects. These are projects carried out by the six consortium members and intended to generate evidence and knowledge. Applied research projects carried out in this period include:
	+ Barriers to Streetscapes Access
	+ Barriers to Accessing Transport (producing a searchable database)
	+ Resource Collection Database
	+ Transport Design Decision Making
	+ Working Together for Accessible Transport (stakeholder readiness)
	+ Local Authority Roles & Responsibilities
	+ Public Attitudes
	+ Policy and Regulation Roadmap
	+ Transport and Mobility Accessibility Dataset
	+ Translating Foundation Work (human centred design)
* Translating Foundation Work will continue throughout 2025, but all other projects will be completed by Q1 2025.
* Establishing the CAT panel
* Planning and holding the first Accessible Transport Summit
* Defining and scoping the Scaling Innovation funding programme
* Launch of the Policy Commission

### Ongoing and Expanding Activities

The second period for ncat extends from 2025 to 2029, where a deliberative approach is taken and the consortium will concurrently maintain evidence generation, but accelerate translation and adoption activities by working more with organisations outside the ncat consortium.

ncat activity will continue throughout the transition from phase 1 to phase 2, experience and learnings from the launch phase will be implemented through a change programme into ncat operating processes. This is intended to ensure the best possible outcomes throughout the full programme lifecycle. From 2025, evidence generation will follow two main paths, led by the six consortium partners.

### ncat Expert Panel

The Expert Panel will be fully established in the early part of 2025 and connect with the consortium members and the ncat board, to ensure that the voice of Disabled Peoples Organisations is heard and can influence decision making in regard to research priorities for ncat. The Expert Panel is an important part of ncat, representing the views of organisations and helping to avoid duplication of activity in ncat, but at the same time identifying ways where we can work together to amplify our shared ambitions.

### Generate Activity

A second round of applied research projects informed by previous evidence generated and from the 2024 Summit will be approved by the ncat board and launched in the first half of 2025. Third and fourth rounds of applied research will run in 2026 to 2027 and 2028 to 2029 respectively, each informed by previous evidence generated and outcome of the Accessible Transport Summits.

In parallel, the consortium partners will lead a core programme of research insights and evidence gathering by:

* Growing the CAT panel and building the community of practice to update the Barriers to Accessing Transport database.
* Periodic updates to the research database.
* Ongoing updates to the resource collection.

### Translate Activity

Translate activity is fundamental to the ncat evidence centre facilitating improvements and outcomes relating to accessibility. The Applied Transport Summits form the spine of ncat, with the roadmap showing a series of four Summits in 2024, 2026, 2027 and 2029. Each Summit receives inputs from Applied Research and Scaling Innovation programmes and will deliver outputs which shall influence the next phase of ncat. The connection of these activities with the Summits are shown on the roadmap via a series of connecting arrows.

The second significant translate activity is via the Policy Commission, which is now established and will run continuously through to the end of the ncat programme, connecting policy makers and government.

A new activity relating to knowledge translation is shown on the roadmap, starting in the second half of 2025, where knowledge transfer activity will be accelerated via working groups, industry champions and events intended to raise awareness. A strategic communications plan is being developed as part of the improvement planning process, which will outline the activities and messaging relating to this activity. Information generated through these activities will feed into the Summits.

### Adopt Activity

Adopt activities are shown on the roadmap, starting with the three phases of funding for Scaling Innovation, running from 2024 through to 2027. The scope of the calls which are funded by ncat will be influenced by evidence gathered from applied research and outcomes of the Summits. Businesses and other organisations external to the ncat consortium will be supported to develop commercial solutions to improve the accessibility gap, based on the evidence presented.

A second line of Solution Adoption is shown on the roadmap, including initiatives with 3rd parties such as DPOs, business, policy makers, transport operators, councils and funders. It is anticipated that the Translate work of the Policy Commission and other Knowledge Transfer activities will directly lead on to actions and initiatives to close the accessibility gap, without the need for direct funded by ncat.

### Sustainability of ncat

The final part of the ncat roadmap relates to sustainability beyond the funding from Motability Foundation. It is anticipated that by 2029, a great deal of benefit will have been delivered because of ncat and the external initiatives it helps facilitate via provision of evidence. However, it is unrealistic to expect that the job will be done, and the continual changing landscape of the transport sector will present ongoing challenges. Therefore, there is a need to plan for continuing the activity beyond the ncat funded programme to avoid loss of momentum. The roadmap shows a new activity starting in late 2028, to develop a Business Plan to sustain ncat activities into the 2030s.

## How will we know we are making a difference

When our applied research activity amplifies the voices of disabled people to make an improvement in the accessibility of transport.

We will know we have made a difference when:

* We are delivering applied research projects that have meaningful involvement from disabled people.
* We are delivering applied research projects that are unique and have clear tangible benefits for disabled people.
* The research we deliver is pan-disability, multi-modal and national in reach.
* ncat’s research informs policy change to improve accessibility in transport.
* ncat’s research findings are translated into practical applications, products or services.
* The transport systems, industry and community adopt ncat’s recommendations and/or solutions.

## ncat Stakeholders

The strength of ncat is its diverse stakeholders working together to achieve the required step change.

### [ncat Board](https://www.ncat.uk/about-us/our-board/)

The Board comprises of 12 members, six are independent external experts in transport accessibility, each bringing a lived experience of disability, and six are senior members from the partner organisations. Led by an independent chair, the Board provides strategic oversight and direction of ncat’s work.

### [ncat Community of Accessible Transport (CAT) Panel](https://www.ncat.uk/get-involved/join-our-panel/)

Our CAT panel is made up of thousands of disabled people, families and/or carers and transport professionals. The panel gets involved in sharing their lived experiences and shaping our research priorities.

### [ncat Expert Panel](https://www.ncat.uk/about-us/our-expert-panel/)

The Expert Panel comprises of leading Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs), charities and access and inclusion specialists who each focus specifically on transport. The panel brings insights, knowledge and specialisms to inform ncat’s work.

### [Scaling Innovation](https://www.ncat.uk/projects/scaling-innovation/)

The Scaling Innovation project provides funding to industry partners to test and develop improvements to transport. It offers the opportunity for disabled people to be at the heart of defining and designing research, service and product development initiatives that address their specific transport needs.

### [Accessible Transport Policy Commission](https://www.ncat.uk/what-we-do/accessible-transport-policy-commission/)

The Policy Commission is a cross-party group of Commissioners from both Houses of Parliament. The Commission brings together disabled people, transport professionals and policymakers to forge a new and more inclusive consensus about the future of the transport system.

### [Motability Foundation](https://www.ncat.uk/about-us/motability-foundation/)

ncat is funded by the Motability Foundation, with the aim of providing the evidence base to close the transport accessibility gap.

1. ncat (2024). ‘Understanding and identifying barriers to accessing transport’. Available at [www.ncat.uk](http://www.ncat.uk) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. ncat (2024). ‘Understanding and identifying barriers to accessing transport’. Available at [www.ncat.uk](http://www.ncat.uk) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. ncat (2024). ‘Understanding and identifying barriers to accessing transport’. Available at [www.ncat.uk](http://www.ncat.uk) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. ncat (2024). ‘Working together for accessible transport’. Available at [www.ncat.uk](http://www.ncat.uk) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. ncat (2024). ‘Resource Collection’. Available at [www.ncat.uk](http://www.ncat.uk) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)