



Getting about well? Better infrastructure for healthier longer lives

The challenge

Access to safe, affordable, reliable, accessible transport and infrastructure to support walking and cycling is vital to leading happy, healthy lives – without it nothing else works. But current infrastructure is not fit for purpose leaving too many reliant on cars, damaging the environment, and trapping those on lower incomes or who cannot drive, unable to access the things they need to live well.

What we know

Travel isn't just about getting from A to B – with the right infrastructure it can be a pleasure in itself. Yet our current transport infrastructure is built around a narrow focus on getting workers to workplaces, rather than enabling citizens to live good lives, travelling for work, leisure and pleasure.

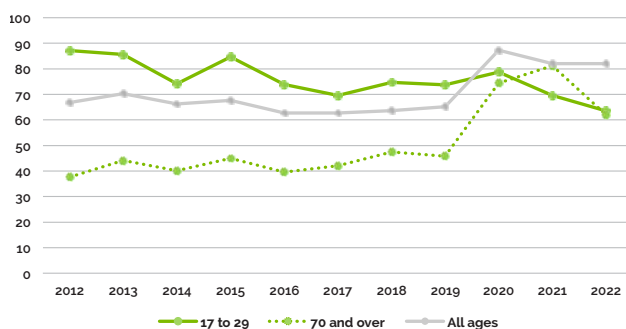
England's transport infrastructure has been crumbling over decades and is now threatened by changing travel patterns post-pandemic. According to the Campaign for Better Transport, 27% of bus services have disappeared in a decade, while the number of services on official registers in England dropped from almost 17,000 in March 2012 to just over 12,000 in March 2021. Despite the increase in people over 65, there has been an over 50% decrease in the number of concessionary bus journeys by older and disabled people over the last decade. By 2040, it's anticipated that over 17 million people in the UK will be over age 65, with a significant portion residing in rural or suburban areas where public transport options are limited.

While some areas are experimenting with creating "15-minute neighbourhoods" – where citizens are guaranteed access to key amenities within a 15-minute walk – and other places are taking action to reduce traffic and encourage walking and cycling, the needs of people with reduced mobility are not always factored into these developments. A lack of "last mile" solutions mean that even where public transport concessions are available transport networks are inaccessible.

Initiatives to support active travel using e-bikes and other micro-mobility vehicles have been taken up in numbers by older people – and could transform the lives of people with disabilities. Almost 4 in every 10 people in the UK (38.88%) would cycle more if they had an electric bike and better, and safer, cycle routes and cycle lanes and more storage options will further encourage their use. A study in Norway found that people who bought an e-bike increased their bicycle use from 2.1 to 9.2 km per day on average, representing a change in bike use as a share of all transport from 17 to 49 per cent.

New evidence

Walks over a mile 2012 to 2022



National Travel Survey 2022, Average number of trips, stages and distance travelled by sex, age and mode: England, 2012 to 2022



Over-70s walk more often and further than a decade ago - on average walking 223 trips in 2022 compared to 155 trips in 2012, with 63% more trips of over a mile.

People aged 17 to 29 walk less often and for shorter distances - on average walking 197 trips in 2022 compared to 233 trips in 2012, with 36% fewer trips of over a mile.

**We know we can do better than this.
Do you have a sustainable solution for longer lives?**

Please email your solution to info@ilcuk.org.uk

The ILC Longevity White Paper is supported by:

