

Cross Party Group on Learning Disability



Notes from the 15th meeting on Wednesday 10 December 2025.



The meeting was online on Zoom.

About this document



This is an Easy Read version. The words and their meaning are easy to read and understand.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. They have been explained in a box below the word. You can see what all the words in blue mean on **page 24**.



People who came to the meeting:

Sioned Williams MS – Member of the Senedd, Chair

Sam Williams – Learning Disability Wales, co-Secretary

Sara Pickard – Mencap Cymru, co-Secretary

Adele Rose-Morgan – Parent

Angharad Griffiths – Senedd

Beth Rees – Learning Disability Wales

Beth Thomas – Swansea Council

Claire Hathway – Monmouthshire Children's Services

Daniel Bray

Danielle Richards – Swansea Council

Gerraint Jones-Griffiths – Learning Disability Wales

Gillian Eastwood – Cartref Ni Ltd

Ivan Walker – Company

James Dash – Pembrokeshire People First

Joe Powell – All Wales People First

Josh Law – All Wales Forum

Kai Jones – Learning Disability Wales

Katherine Baker – Dosh

Kelly Stuart – All Wales People First

Ken Skates – Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales

Lucy O’Leary – Learning Disability Wales
Marg McNeil – See Around Britain
Rachel Martin – Dal Dwylo
Richard Redmond – Conwy Connect
Ritchie Wood – Principality Care Ltd
Sally Thomas – Parent
Sarah Washbrook – Parent
Sion Jones – Mencap Cymru
Sophie Hinksman – All Wales People First
Stephen Jones – Welsh Government
Tracy Thomas – Pembrokeshire People First
Victoria Waller – Gig Buddies Cymru
Wayne Crocker – Mencap Cymru
Zoe Richards – Learning Disability Wales



People who said they could not come to the meeting:

Nobody.

1. Welcome and introductions



Sioned Williams is a Member of the Senedd and **Chair** of the Cross Party Group.



The **Chair** of the group is the person in charge of the meetings.



Sioned welcomed everyone to the meeting, including the speakers and Ken Skates. Ken Skates is a Member of the Senedd. He is the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales.

2. Presentation about bus passes and train problems



Joe Powell and Sophie Hinksman of All Wales People First talked about some of the problems people with a learning disability have when using buses and trains.



Some disabled people had their free bus passes stopped when their **PIP** changed.

PIP is Personal Independence Payment. It is money some disabled people get from the government for extra support.



If someone's **PIP** changed, their bus pass might stop working without warning.



The rules about **companion bus passes** are not clear.



A **companion bus pass** lets someone travel with you to support you.



Applying for a bus pass can be very hard. And it can take up to 7 weeks to get a reply.



Some people with learning disabilities and autism found it harder to get a bus pass because you cannot see their disabilities easily.



Doctors charge over £30 to write a medical letter. These letters are often needed to prove someone needs a bus pass.



There are fewer bus services, especially in rural areas like Powys or Pembrokeshire.



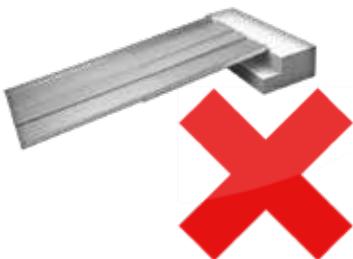
Taxis cost too much money.



There are not enough bus stops. And the information at bus stops is often missing, wrong, or hard to understand.



Buses do not always stop close enough to the pavement. This makes getting on and off hard.



Some drivers do not use the ramps for wheelchair users and people with walkers.



Buses can be too full. There is sometimes bad behaviour and bullying on buses.



Travel information can be wrong or hard to understand. Travel apps are hard to use.



Buses and trains are sometimes cancelled with no warning.

3. State of the Nation report



Sara Pickard and Sion Jones from Mencap Cymru shared a report by Mencap Cymru called the State of the Nation.



For the report, a survey asked people with a learning disability and their families questions. The survey had over 40 questions. Over 400 people answered. Over 200 answers were used in the report.

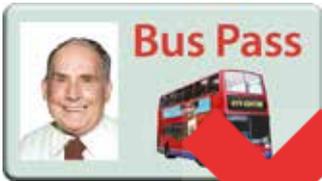


The report is about health, social care, communities, relationships and transport.

What the report says about transport:



Nearly 1 in 3 people do not use public transport.



3 out of 10 people do not have a bus pass. Low **PIP** scores often stop people being able to get a bus pass.



About half of people do not have a **companion bus pass**.



3 out of 10 people could not use cash to buy tickets, food or drinks on public transport.



The report will be shared with political parties and Members of the Senedd before the 2026 Senedd election.



Sara and Sion also showed a video. The video was from the No Journey Left Behind survey by the Motability Foundation, who support disabled people with transport.

4. Passenger Assist



Sally Thomas spoke again about her son Danny and **Passenger Assist**.

Passenger Assist is support from staff when travelling by train.



The group watched a video where Danny talked about using **Passenger Assist**.



Danny is a member of Hijinx Theatre and wants to be an actor. He started a drama course in Cardiff but needs help to travel there from Swansea.



Sally said that **Passenger Assist** worked well at Swansea train station but not at Cardiff. Danny was once left alone at Cardiff Central Station at night. This was unsafe.



Many journeys were not properly supported but were marked on the system as successful.



Sally asked for better staff training and planning. And for train companies to listen to people who face problems when using their services.



Sally wants **Passenger Assist** to work every time, be safe, and include everyone.

5. Accessible transport



Accessible means something is easy for everyone to use, including disabled people.



Adele-Rose Morgan spoke about her son Rhys. Rhys has a learning disability. He is also physically disabled and uses a wheelchair.



Rhys wanted to travel by bus to school and college. But the buses were unreliable and did not arrive when they were supposed to.



A driver told Rhys that he could not get on the bus because the only wheelchair space was being used by a buggy. Another passenger had to tell the driver that Rhys had a right to use the wheelchair space.



Road crossings near the college had no sound signals, the buttons were too small, and there were no dropped kerbs.



Dropped kerbs help wheelchair users and people with walking aids get on and off the pavement.



Rhys and his friends travelled to Cardiff by train. All his friends are autistic. Swansea station helped well, but Cardiff station did not.



On the Great Western train, the only wheelchair space was in first class. This meant friends and parents could not sit together. Staff were rude when Adele asked for help.



2 of Rhys's friends were very upset. They are now scared to travel by train again.



Buses to get to Rhys's new work placement are either too early or too late. No taxis or community transport are available to take him there. This means his parents have to take him and bring him home.

Because transport is unreliable and hard to use:



- Rhys is scared of being late or left behind.
- He cannot do things he needs or wants to do.



Adele said everything takes extra effort and planning. She said systems must be designed to include everyone.

6. Response from Ken Skates



Sioned asked Ken Skates to respond to the presentations. Ken Skates thanked everyone who spoke and said lived experience is important.



The Welsh Government has a plan called Transport for All. They want transport to be regular, safe and reliable.

Transport for Wales staff will get training about the social model of disability. This means:



- The problem is not the person.
- The problem is barriers.
- Barriers must be removed so people can live their lives.



Staff must do this training.

Plans to make transport better:



27 thousand bus stops across Wales are being checked. Many need new dropped kerbs, textured paving and digital timetables. This will help to meet the needs of people who use them.



Buses will have space for wheelchairs. And more **accessible** buses and trains will be bought.



If a train has a conductor, cash can be used to buy tickets. Cash cannot be used to buy food or drink on a train, but staff can sometimes give free drinks if someone cannot pay by card.



Some councils have had problems getting through all the bus pass applications in their area. So they are trying to get more staff to go through the applications faster.



People with long-term disabilities who get **PIP** now only need to renew their bus pass every 10 years instead of 3 years.



Transport for Wales are looking at removing the expiry date on bus passes for this group of people in future.



Passenger Assist must work properly at all stations for everyone who needs this service. More people are using this service but when it goes wrong it can be very upsetting. This is something Ken Skates will look into.



Transport for Wales gets advice from disabled people as part of their Access and Inclusion Panel. Some members of the panel also check how accessible transport services are and if changes are needed.



There is a new £1 bus fare scheme for young people in Wales. But this only works if buses run at the right times and go where people need them to go.



Welsh Government are updating the guidance on learner travel to help children and young people get to school or college.

7. Questions and answers



Sioned thanked Ken Skates and asked the group if they had any questions.



Victoria said that there is no Wi-Fi on some buses and poor Wi-fi on trains. This is a problem because sometimes ticket apps do not work without a signal.



Ken Skates said the Welsh Government cannot force companies to provide Wi-Fi at the moment. But in future, any bus company funded by Welsh Government will be asked to provide Wi-Fi.



Daniel said some areas of Neath have had no bus service for 6 years. He also said all buses should have announcements.



Ken Skates said the Welsh Government wants more buses in areas where there are not many services.



The next Welsh Government will need to decide how much money to spend on local bus services. He also agreed announcements should be on all buses.



Wayne asked how new companies will provide the bus services people need under the Bus Bill. The Bus Bill is a new law being planned for Wales.



Ken Skates said Wales has the oldest buses in Britain. Next year £29 million will be used to buy new buses and places where buses are kept.



The Welsh Government will work with bus companies to set good standards for bus services across Wales.

8. Any other business



Sioned asked Ken Skates to reply to the group in a letter after the meeting explaining the points he made today.



His letter will then be shared with members of the group.



Sioned thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and sharing their ideas.

9. Next meeting



The next meeting will take place on:

Wednesday 4 March 2026 at 12:00 to 1:00pm.

Online on Zoom.



This meeting will also be the Annual General Meeting.



Anyone with ideas for the meeting should email:

Sam Williams: Samantha.Williams@ldw.org.uk or

Sara Pickard: SaraE.Pickard@mencap.org.uk.



You can find all the Easy Read agendas and notes of the Cross Party Group here:

www.ldw.org.uk/project/cross-party-group-on-learning-disability/

Hard words

Accessible

Accessible means something is easy for everyone to use, including disabled people.

Chair

The Chair of the group is the person in charge of the meetings.

Companion bus pass

A companion bus pass lets someone travel with you to support you.

Passenger Assist

Passenger Assist is support from staff when travelling by train.

PIP

PIP is Personal Independence Payment. It is money some disabled people get from the government for extra support.