

Transport Accessibility Monitoring Study: Report on Phase 1 Pilot

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# Table of Contents

[Executive Summary 4](#_Toc517441781)

[Summary of Methodological Approach 6](#_Toc517441782)

[Key Findings from Research and Piloting of Tools 19](#_Toc517441783)

[4.1 The Self-Assessment Questionnaire 20](#_Toc517441784)

[4.2 Direct Performance Measurement Survey 20](#_Toc517441785)

[4.3 Customer Service Survey 22](#_Toc517441786)

[4.4 Mystery Shopper Survey 24](#_Toc517441787)

[5.3 Application of the monitoring tools 26](#_Toc517441788)

[5.5 Conclusion 29](#_Toc517441789)

# Executive Summary

The National Disability Authority (NDA) was established to provide independent and evidence informed advice to the Minister on matters of policy and practice relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities and was given added functions to operate a Centre for Excellence in Universal Design from 2007.

The statutory Centre for Excellence in Universal Design is an integral part of the NDA and has a remit to promote the design of the built environment, products, services and information and communications technologies, so that they can be accessed, understood and used independently to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

The NDA’s remit covers a very wide range of policy areas, government departments and public sector remits that includes research, advice, guidelines and facilitated sharing of information as well as inputting to standards. The NDA produces Codes of Practice as requested by the Minister and monitors their implementation.

The NDA’s functions cover persons with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities, as well as persons with autism and those with mental health difficulties.

In 2006, the NDA produced the **Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies.** This Code of Practice provided public bodies with detailed advice on how to achieve compliance with:

* Sections 26, 27 and 28, of the Disability Act 2005 that detail the obligations public bodies have to ensure that their services and any information they provide must be accessible to people with disabilities

The NDA has a function to monitor compliance with the Code of Practice and to report to the Minister as appropriate.

The NDA conducted surveys in 2008 and 2010 on how public bodies were complying with the Code of Practice. There was a low response rate to both surveys however the data that was gathered revealed that there was no consistent approach throughout the public sector regarding gathering data on whether public bodies were meeting their obligations with this Code. There was also no consistent approach in place to monitor the progress public bodies were making regarding complying with this Code of Practice.

The NDA decided that a monitoring mechanism consisting of appropriate processes and tools therefore needed to be developed, piloted and implemented to

* Determine if public bodies were complying with this Code of Practice
* Capture any progress they were making in meeting their obligations under this Code
* Support them to increase their compliance with the Code of Practice

The Code of Practice covers all public services which is a very broad and diverse range of services. The NDA consulted with relevant stakeholders, including the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, the National Transport Authority (NTA) and the disability sector, and it was decided that it would be more effective and efficient to develop and pilot monitoring tools in one public service area. If the monitoring tools were effective in one area they could be rolled out to other public service areas.

It was decided that the monitoring tools would be developed and piloted in the area of public transport. Transport was chosen as this service plays a crucial role in the lives of people with disabilities. In the **Comprehensive Employment Strategy 2015 – 2024** and the **National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017 – 2021**, transport is highlighted as one of the key services that helps people with disabilities to participate in everyday life and to obtain employment.

Developing and implementing tools that can effectively monitor the accessibility of public transport services; identify gaps in service provision and provide possible solutions to bridging these gaps, is an essential part in helping progress accessible services.

The NDA commissioned research to support the identification and testing of suitable monitoring mechanisms for the public transport sector. The primary objective of this research was is to develop and pilot effective monitoring approaches and data gathering tools for public transport service providers in Ireland so that they can capture and analyse data on the accessibility of their services.

Pending consideration of same the NDA will consider a national monitoring and evaluation exercise and the potential of using the proposed monitoring approaches and tools that have emerged from the research.

Once monitoring approaches and tools have been embedded in practice by the service providers, the NDA in consultation with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, the National Transport Agency (NTA) and other relevant stakeholders can examine how a consistent approach to monitoring the accessibility of public transport service can be developed and implemented more widely and regularly in all services.

This report outlines the key findings and key recommendations of the research phase of work.

## Summary of Methodological Approach

The research entailed:

1. Conducting a literature review
2. Engaging with stakeholders
3. Piloting the monitoring tools

###  Literature Review

A literature review of Irish and international best practice was undertaken to inform the development of the most appropriate monitoring **approaches and data gathering tools**.

**1.1 Lack of consistent approach to collecting data**

As part of the literature review, the public service contracts for Bus Éireann Dublin Bus, Iarnród Éireann and the Luas were examined. One of the key findings from this review was that these contracts do not have a standardised and consistent approach whereby service providers can collect detailed data and provide evidence based reports on the accessibility of their services.

**Guidance in Ireland**

There is however a considerable level of guidance and advice in Ireland on producing accessible public transport services. Some of the key publications that were reviewed included:

* **Towards Best Practice in the Provision of Transport Services for People with Disabilities in Ireland (2004).** The NDA commissioned this study to provide baseline evidence on the existing range of transport services for people with disabilities in Ireland and how these compared against international transport services in the US, the UK and in the European Union
* **The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets** **(2013)** produced by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport that contained standards and dimensions for accessible footpaths, building access, etc.
* **Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach (2012)** published by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design which is part of the NDA.
* **Best Practice Access Guidelines for Designing Accessible Environments (2014)** produced by the Irish Wheelchair Association
* Guidelines on **Procurement and Accessibility** (2014) produced by the NDA to help public bodies to procure accessible products and services
* AsIAm’sguide on making public transport services more autism friendly - **AsYouCan – Public Transport. Small Steps to becoming more Autism Friendly (2015)**

**International Guidance and Standards**

A number of international guidance and standards on providing and monitoring accessible transport services were also reviewed including:

* The **European Transport Standard EN13816 (2002)** that provides public transport companies with guidance on the specific service criteria that need to be measured; how to set standards and how to monitor the services they provide against these criteria and standards
* **Improving Transport Accessibility for All: Guide to Good Practice**, **(2006)** produced by the European Conference of Ministers of Transport
* **The European Railway Agency Interoperability Unit (2008)** produced a list of standards relating to persons with disabilities using railways.
* The **ISO/IEC Guide 71 (2014)** that provides advice on standards of accessibility for systems (i.e. products, services and built environments) used by people. It presents a summary of terminology relating to accessibility as well as issues to consider in the standards development process.

**International projects on the accessibility of public transport**

The European Union and the European Commission have funded a number of projects that focused on measuring, assessing and improving the accessibility of public transport across different countries in the European Union. The researchers reviewed the following projects:

* **MEDIATE (Methodology for Describing the Accessibility of Transport in Europe) Project**

The MEDIATE Project was co-funded by the European Commission within the Seventh Framework Program for Research and Technological Development (FP7). The FP7 was an EU program that funded projects for research and technological development from 2007 – 2013. The project ran from 2008 – 2011. The objective of MEDIATE Project was to contribute to the development of inclusive urban transport systems with better access for all citizens by establishing a common European methodology for measuring accessibility to transport. The project researched and reviewed models of good practice in providing accessibility transport services; and initiatives and methodologies that focused on describing and measuring accessible urban transport services in several countries including: Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK.

Three reports produced by the MEDIATE project were reviewed by the researchers:

* **Indicators Describing the Accessibility of Urban Public Transport (2010).** This report presented a set of common European Indicators for measuring accessibility of urban public transport and allowing for a common understanding between different stakeholders, at European and local level
* **A Self-Assessment Tool Manual (2010**). This document was designed to help public service transport providers to assess strengths and weaknesses of the transport system and to define appropriate actions
* **A Good Practice Guide (2010)**. This guide presented examples of good practice regarding the provision of accessible public transport services across different European countries
* **QUEST (Quality management tool for Urban Energy efficient Sustainable Transport)** **Project**

The QUEST Project was funded by the European Commission to develop an audit tool that evaluates a city's urban mobility policies. The project ran from 2011- 2013. The aim of the QUEST project was to develop an audit tool/Quality Management System to support cities in their efforts of developing more sustainable accessible urban mobility systems. Around fifty cities across thirteen countries were involved in this project and formed the project’s consortium. The countries that were participated in this project were Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, the Netherlands and the UK.

The following reports produced by the QUEST project were reviewed for this project:

* **State of the Art of Urban Mobility Assessment (2011).** This report detailed the process by which an audit tool/Quality Management System could be developed to assess the accessibility and mobility of public transports across 13 member states.
* **QUEST Practitioners Guide for Consortium Auditors (2012).** This guide was produced for the 13 member states or the consortium that were involved in this project to help them implement the audit tool in their respective countries.
* **QUEST Action Plan for Milton Keynes (2013).** This report detailed how the Quality Management System/ audit tool was used to assess the accessibility of public transport in Milton Keynes in the UK.
* **The ISEMOA (Improving seamless energy-efficient mobility chains for all), Project**

This project was funded by the European Union and focused on creating a Quality Management System/audit tool that provides municipalities, cities and regions in Europe with a structured framework to assess the level of accessibility of public space and public transport in their area, and to develop strategies and measures for improving the current situation. The Quality Management System/audit tool and the structured framework focus on the whole mobility chain or end to end journey of the passenger from when they are planning their trip, taking their trip and providing feedback on their trip. This project ran from 2010-2013. Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden and the UK were involved in developing and testing this Quality Management System/audit tool.

As part of the literature review, the researchers examined the following questionnaire and audit tool/Quality Management System produced by this project

* **Self-Assessment Questionnaire for Municipalities and Cities (2013**)
* **Quality Management System for Improving Accessibility in Municipalities and Cities. (2013)**

The researchers also reviewed the report **Accessibility - Why We Need It (2013)** produced by the ISEOMA project. This report presented the case for investing in universally designed public transport services that were accessible to everyone, regardless of age, size, ability and disability as an effective contribution to a sustainable economy and society.

Across Europe there are more than 200 qualified ISEMOA auditors trained to support and guide local and regional stakeholders with the implementation of the ISEMOA Quality Management System.

* **METPEX (Measurement Tool to determine the quality of Passenger Experience) project**

The METPEX project ran from 2012 – 2015 and was also funded by the EU 7th Framework Programme. The focus of this project was to develop and evaluate a standardised tool to measure passenger experience across their end to end journey from planning their trip to providing feedback on their trip to the public transport service providers The outcomes of the project would be used to inform policy makers in providing inclusive, passenger-oriented integrated transport systems that are accessible by all citizens. Belgium, Greece, Lithuania, Ireland, Italy, Portugal Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK were part of the consortium that worked on this project.

**Reports and presentations were published to the METPEX website on:**

* **The identification of quality and whole journey variables.**
* **Development of METPEX measurement instruments.**
* **Trials of tools in demonstration sites.**
* **Development of benchmarks and performance indicators**
* **Assessment of wider socio economic and land use issues.**

**These reports were reviewed for this project.**

### ****Key findings****

One of the key findings from the literature review is that although some of these international standards and guidance have been in place for over a decade there is very little evidence that they have been used to develop and implement a consistent and effective approach to monitoring public transport services in different countries. Similarly, a number of international projects have developed tools and approaches to monitor the accessibility of public transport across several countries. However, there is no evidence that these tools have been used as part of a consistent monitoring approach.

#### 1.2 Top-down and bottom-up monitoring approach

The literature review examined different monitoring approaches and tools. The main conclusion from this review was that **in order to effectively monitor** compliance with the Code of Practice **that a top-down and a bottom-up approach would be necessary**. Therefore monitoring approaches and tools would need to be developed to capture data on service providers’ views of the services they provide. Separate monitoring approaches and tools would need to be developed to obtain service users’ views on transport services.

#### 1.3 Analysing data

As part of the literature review, a search was conducted for effective methods that could be used to analyse data at local and national levels to determine how well service providers were performing in terms of delivering services in Phase 2 of this project.

One method that emerged from the review that could be used to analyse and monitor data is the Total Quality Management Approach.[[1]](#footnote-1) [[2]](#footnote-2) [[3]](#footnote-3) This approach is based on the following four Levels of Development to analyse the performance of the service provider:

* Level 1: Does not meet acceptable standard. This level indicates that there are serious errors, omissions or misconceptions
* Level 2: Meets Acceptable Standard. This level should indicate minimal competencies and practices. Performance and achievement are emerging or developing but there are some errors
* Level 3: Approaching Standard of Excellence. Descriptions should indicate some aspects of performance demonstrate solid achievement
* Level 4: Meets the Standard of Excellence level. Descriptions should indicate that all aspects of performance show exemplary achievement

These different levels capture the difference between an acceptable level of performance and an excellent level of performance.

In the context of this project, it was considered that these Levels of Development could be used as Levels of Compliance to capture and determine service providers’ compliance with the NDA’s Code of Practice. These Levels could be applied as follows:

* Level 1 of Compliance: The measure is not in place/the measure is in place but is not practised or is not working
* Level 2 of Compliance: The measure is in place and is practised/working some of the time
* Level 3 of Compliance The measure is in place and is practised/working most of the time
* Level 4 of Compliance: The measure is in place and is embedded in the organisation’s culture

Once the Level of Compliance has been determined, the Total Quality Management Approach also uses a cyclical process to monitor service providers’ compliance on an ongoing basis. This cyclical process contains the following steps:

* Collection of data to assess current levels of performance
* Identification of areas for improved performance
* Development of actions for achieving improvements identified
* Implementation of improvements in performance
* Collection of data to establish revised levels of performance.

This cyclical process could also be used not only to monitor service providers’ performance, it also has the potential to provide service providers such as Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, Iarnród Éireann and Luas with:

* A baseline assessment of their compliance
* A way to identify problem areas and set priorities for improvement
* A process for increasing their compliance level with the Code of Practice

When conducting the literature review, no evidence was found of how this cyclical process was embedded in practice. However, this process could be piloted in Phase 2 of this project to determine if it could be an effective method to monitor and measure service providers’ level of compliance with the Code of Practice over a period of time.

### Engagement with Stakeholders

Consultation sessions were held with key stakeholders on the development of these monitoring tools. The stakeholders were as follows:

* 4 public transport service providers: Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, Iarnród Éireann (Irish Rail) and Luas. Each of these service providers have user groups that include people with disabilities. Representatives from those groups were also invited to the consultation sessions
* Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, National Transport Authority (NTA), Transdev, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Louth County Council
* Disability sector and disability service providers: DeafHear, Irish Wheelchair Association, Cork City Partnership, and St. John of God.

Each of the 4 public service providers have user groups that include people with disabilities. These members were invited to participate in the consultation process and to test the monitoring mechanisms.

At a final session with the stakeholders’ group, the results from the piloting exercise were presented to capture stakeholders’ feedback and recommendations regarding each of the monitoring tools.

### Piloting of Monitoring Tools

The following four tools were piloted based on the findings from the literature review and the consultations. These tools were adapted for the Irish public transport service providers and for Irish service users:

* A Self-Assessment Questionnaire that focused on service providers
* Direct Performance Measurement Survey that focused on service providers
* Customer Satisfaction Survey carried out with service users with disabilities
* Mystery Shopper Survey carried out by service users with disabilities

The four monitoring tools used a questionnaire-type format. The wording of each question, and the scoring systems used in each tool were designed to capture data that would demonstrate if each of the public service transport providers were complying with the NDA’s Code of Practice and therefore focused on gathering information in relation to:

* Provision of accessible services to people with disabilities, as detailed under Section 26 of the Disability Act 2005
* Procurement of services by public bodies which must be accessible to people with disabilities, as detailed under Section 27 of the Disability Act 2005
* All public information should be provided in accessible formats to people with disabilities, as detailed under Section 28 of the Disability Act 2005

All the questionnaires used for the piloting exercise are in the appendices to the report.

### 3.1 A Self-Assessment Questionnaire

This questionnaire was given to the 4 public service transport providers and contained 58 questions that covered several key areas, including: complaints handling, integrated services, integrated access to services etc.

Each of the 58 questions had a number of statements covering the different levels of compliance. A draft set of “scores” was developed in consultation with the stakeholders and allocated to each statement, for each of the 58 questions. This draft scoring system was used to provide a means of quantifying service providers’ views as to levels of compliance with the Code of Practice and to provide a visual representation of the results.

A flexible, discrete scoring system from 0 to 10 was suggested by the stakeholders. A score of 10 indicated maximum compliance with the Code of Practice on a given issue, and a score of 0 indicated no compliance. Scores ranging from 1 to 9 were allocated to all responses indicating partial compliance with the Code of Practice, for example, the first question of the Self-Assessment Questionnaire related to complaints procedures:

“Having a complaints procedure which enables the service provider to improve services”

One of the statements under this question was as follows: “There isn’t a complaints/customer feedback system”. A service provider could give this statement a score of 0 to indicate that the service is not compliant with the Code of Practice.

A service provider could allocate the score of 10 to the statement below if they felt it demonstrated full compliance with the Code of Practice.

“Gathering and processing customer feedback is an important part of assessing performance.”

### 3.2 Direct Performance Measurement Survey

The Direct Performance Measurement Survey allows the performance of the service to be monitored against defined scales and it can be used as an auditing tool. Data is collected by the service provider, or an external contractor who is employed by the service provider, at different locations where the service is delivered. The researchers carried out the Direct Performance Measurement Survey for the pilot, as they are also contracted by service providers to conduct a series of audits for a number of transport operators on an ongoing bases.

Twelve locations were assessed during the pilot, including bus stops, bus terminuses, train stations and Luas stops. These locations consisted of a mixture of urban, suburban and rural areas across Dublin and Wicklow.

The Direct Performance Measurement Survey had 47 different sections with multiple choice questions in each section.

A comprehensive list of items was drafted for each of the four transport modes, covering the following areas:

* Approach to a station or a bus/Luas stop
* Approach within station boundaries
* Within the station or at a bus/ Luas stop

An example of the features that were assessed for each mode of transport are outlined below in figure 3.2.1

**Figure 3.2.1 .Activities and features assessed in each location**

| Area/Activity assessed | Features assessed |
| --- | --- |
| Accessible route to station/stop | Footpath  |
| Pedestrian facilities |
| Access to station/stop | Station/stop approach |
| Access ramps |
| Doorways |
| Steps and/or stairs |
| Lifts |
| Escalators |
| Signage | Directional Signage, local area maps available |
| Appropriate directional information and warning signage including braille maps and signs |
| At bus and train stations and Luas stops presence of the ramp clearly indicated by use of signs, colour contrast and lighting |
| At bus and train stations and Luas stops Wheelchair accessible entrance sign displayed |
| In bus and train stations, top and bottom landings of steps are clearly indicated by use of signs, colour contrast, lighting and/or tactile markers |
| Information on accessible lifts in bus and train stations is provided in different forms e.g. text information, braille button labels, voice announcements, audible warning bleeps, etc. |
| Accessible toilet facilities available, clearly signposted a clear opening width of800/900mm |
| Waiting for the service | Platforms |
| Shelters |
| Seating |
| Ticketing |
| Safety |
| Service information |
| Comfort |
| WC Facilities |

Features were rated according to the following three categories:

* 2: Present and Correct
* 1: Present but not of an ideal design or not suitable for all users
* 0: Absent or not working or not fit for purpose or not accessible

### 3.3 Customer Satisfaction Surveys

The Customer Satisfaction Survey was developed for service users. The researchers worked with stakeholders’ group to identify volunteers to test the survey and give feedback. 41 service users with different disabilities participated in the survey.

#### Profile of service users

* 18 had a mobility impairment
* 10 had a serious long-term or chronic illness
* 7 had a visual impairment
* 4 had an intellectual disability
* 1 had a psychological or emotional problem
* 1 had Autism Spectrum Disorder

Participants came from both urban and rural areas

* 13 lived in Dublin
* 14 lived in Leinster (outside Dublin)
* 10 lived in Munster
* 2 lived in Ulster
* 2 lived in Connaught

This survey had 143 questions and was developed using the “journey chain” approach that takes the respondent through a typical journey from door to door using Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann, Iarnród Éireann and the Luas.

The survey covered the following areas of a journey using services provided by Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann, Iarnród Éireann and Luas

* Planning the journey
* Getting to the initial mode of transport
* Waiting for the initial mode of transport
* Boarding the initial mode of transport
* Travelling and alighting from the initial mode of transport
* Getting to the next mode of transport/interchange experience
* Waiting for the next mode of transport

Service users could use a five point scale from Very Dissatisfied (1 on the five-point scale) to Very Satisfied (5 on the five-point scale) to respond to each question.

### 3.4 Mystery Shopping Survey

The Mystery Shopping Survey was designed for service users. The researchers worked with stakeholders’ group to identify volunteers to participate in this survey. 8 participants with different disabilities, including people with intellectual disabilities and people with physical and sensory disabilities, participated in this survey.

Prior to completing the survey, participants received training that explained the objective of the survey. Participants also received training in how to complete the online survey form that they would be completing while they were completing their journey.

Some of the participants downloaded a copy of the online survey to their smartphones before they started on their mystery shopping tour, so that they could complete their survey while traveling to and from their destinations. Some of the participants did not have smartphones so they were given a hard copy of the survey to complete when they were travelling to and from their destination.

There were 74 sections in the survey. Each section had a series of multi choice questions.

The first part of the survey was on the Pre-Trip Information where service users were asked to rate their experiences regarding:

* Planning the journey
* Obtaining information
* Booking assistance

Service users were asked to rate their experiences for each of the four service providers using a three-point rating scale, for example:

* Easy to use
* OK
* Difficult

Figure 3.4.1. gives an example of the types of questions services users were asked to answer using this scale.

**Figure 3.4.1. Example of a question from the Mystery Shopping Survey that uses this a three-point rating scale. This particular question asked service users to rate how their experiences using apps provided by different service providers**

**N/A □**

 **If not applicable tick**

|  | **Easy to use** | **OK** | **Difficult** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dublin Bus App | □ | □ | □ |
| Iarnród Éireann App | □ | □ | □ |
| Luas App | □ | □ | □ |
| Transport for Ireland App  | □ | □ | □ |

The second part of the survey focused on the following elements of the service users’ journey via Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann, Iarnród Éireann and the Luas:

* Travelling from home to the first means of transport
* At the stop / Boarding
* On board / Getting off
* Getting to the next means of transport or interchange
* The next means of transport

Service providers had to rate their experiences with each service provider using the following scale:

* Present and fit for purpose
* Present but with some issues
* Not present

Figure 3.4.2. gives an example of the type of questions service users were asked to answer using this scale.

**Figure 3.4.2. This is an example of a question from the Mystery Shopper Survey that uses this type of scale. Participants were asked to tick the number of features listed below that were at a Dublin Bus stop.**

|  | **Present, fit for purpose** | **Present, but with some issues** | **Not present** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tactile kerb at front edge of stop | □ | □ | □ |
| Kerb at suitable height for boarding vehicle | □ | □ | □ |
| Identifiable bus pole | □ | □ | □ |
| Clear bus stop number | □ | □ | □ |
| Shelter | □ | □ | □ |
| Seats | □ | □ | □ |
| Lighting | □ | □ | □ |
| Pavement/Hard Standing | □ | □ | □ |

# Key Findings from Research and Piloting of Tools

The objective of the research was to review good practice in monitoring transport services and to develop and pilot monitoring tools to evaluate the accessibility of public transport services. The research conducted was limited but four tools were identified that further to engagement with stakeholders were adapted for testing in Ireland. These tools were:

* A Self-Assessment Questionnaire that focused on service providers
* Direct Performance Measurement Survey that focused on service providers
* Customer Satisfaction Survey carried out by service users with disabilities
* Mystery Shopper Survey carried out by service users with disabilities

These tools were piloted to determine their effectiveness for capturing data and monitoring the accessibility of public transport services. A number of key findings have emerged regarding each of these tools during the piloting exercise. These findings are detailed in this section.

## 4.1 The Self-Assessment Questionnaire

The Self-Assessment Questionnaire was completed by all four of the public transport providers.

### Feedback from Stakeholders

There was no negative feedback about the questionnaire as a monitoring tool. However, an issue was raised by the stakeholders’ group regarding getting responses to the questions on procurement. The point was made that some participants would be unable to answer the question because they were not responsible for procurement in their organisation. In the public sector, different employees with different roles are responsible for Procurement, for example, some tender documents are written by a Procurement Officer, while others are drafted by a manager with direct responsibility for the item or service being procured. For the purposes of the pilot it was decided that an amendment should be made to the Self-Assessment Questionnaire to give the respondent the option of skipping the “Procurement” section. However, in any rollout it would be expected that all relevant officials input to the questionnaire as appropriate.

## 4.2 Direct Performance Measurement Survey

This monitoring tool was piloted at twelve locations that included urban, suburban and rural areas across Dublin and Wicklow. While this is small sample, therefore the pilot showed that this tool was capable of capturing a considerable level of detail. See the example below in 4.2.1.

4.2.1 Example of rating assessment data: “Service information at bus station”

| **Service Information at Bus Station** | **Score** |
| --- | --- |
| Is there an Induction Loop System present  | 2 Present and Correct |
| Spot check of induction loop using induction loop testing kit | Unable to check because there was no induction loop testing kit available |
| Up to date service information for all services using the station including fare schedules posted in at least one highly visible location | 2 Present and Correct |
| Wall-mounted information panel in large print and good colour contrast centred around 1400mm from the ground (bottom edge not less than 900mm from the ground and top edge up to 1800mm from the ground) | 0 Absent |
| Comprehensive up to date service information for all services using the station provided in embossed characters, Braille or by audible ‘talking signs’ transmitter for people with visual or audible impairments | 1 Present but not of an ideal design (Large Digital Board high up) |
| Changes in services, cancellations or replacement information, platform allocations and changes announced and displayed as early as possible and regularly repeated | 2 Present and Correct |
| Display stands containing Bus route schedules etc., are visible and reachable by people with impairments | 2 Present and Correct |
| Large print/easy to read information available on request at the information desk (pick up) | 2 Present and Correct |

This table shows that in the location surveyed, five of the eight factors measured were present and correct. One was present but not of an ideal design and one was absent.

The researchers reported no problems in using this tool. Public transport staff encountered during the process were helpful and cooperative.

### Feedback from Stakeholders

At the final session with the stakeholders, there were a number of recommendations made to improve the functionality of this tool.

* It was suggested that there would be 5 categories to determine accessibility instead of 3. They would be:
* Present and correct
* Present, but not of an ideal design – not suitable to all users
* Not fit for purpose or not accessible
* Not working
* Absent
* An induction loop testing kit should be acquired for use in future audits. Training in using the testing kit might be required
* “Accessible Route to the Stop” can vary widely between rural and urban areas. For this reason, it might be better to present results for rural and urban areas separately
* Presenting results on a county by county basis may be a better means of prompting local and county councils into action, or of forming a priority list for where funds should be focused
* A list of standards should be provided so that the auditors can use to benchmark how accessible transport services are, for example that on all transport audio and visual announcements work properly and that in bus and train stations that all accessible lifts work
* The stakeholders also noted that service providers using this tool should acknowledge if their service is not 100% accessible; state the reasons why the service was not completely accessible and detail the future measures the service providers’ plans on implementing to increase the accessibility of their services

Only a small sample of locations was used for the purpose of piloting the Direct Performance Management Survey. The next stage of rolling out this survey would require that a larger sample of locations be used to get more data on the accessibility level of public transport services.

## 4.3 Customer Service Survey

This survey was conducted online during the pilot phase of this project to test its feasibility as a monitoring tool. 41 service users completed the survey and did not report any difficulty in using the survey. In addition to filling out the survey service users were also asked to add comments if they wished to provide additional information on their experience.

Some of the comments service users made included the following:

“In bright areas the website on my phone or apps are difficult/impossible to read. Bus numbers are not clear until bus is on top of me. Time displays are unclear and difficult to read. Cannot see details of departure gates, check in desks etc.”

“I was trying to get info on travel times to/from Dublin and get the journey fare for the same route to request permission to travel but the website was very messy, it took me an hour to get this info.”

“I think it's disgraceful that I cannot take a journey without so much prior notice and then am tied to specific times so cannot do anything spur of the moment.”

These comments provide a much needed insight into the service users’ experience, in addition to providing practical examples of gaps in terms of service provision.

The objective of the pilot phase was to test the feasibility of the Customer Survey as a monitoring tool and it was tested by a small sample of service users.

It is recommended that this survey would be disseminated to a larger sample of service users in the future, including those that did not have access to online facilities. The survey would therefore be available in both online and print versions. The stakeholders’ group that includes the four transport service providers would play an essential role in promoting and disseminating this survey to service users and encouraging them to complete the surveys within an agreed timeframe.

### Feedback from Stakeholders

 At the final session, the stakeholders had the following suggestions regarding the survey:

* Ratings could be presented in a report produced by the NDA to reflect the level of accessibility for different users, for example, whether a station is accessible in terms of level access, or for people with a visual impairment, or for people with a hearing impairment. The absence of a ramp or lift, for instance, in a rural town station may not prevent a person with a visual impairment from using a service.
* Surveys could distinguish between factors that are critical for accessibility, in order to incrementally increase the accessibility of public transport on a consistent basis. This might be the best way to ensure that finances are directed where the need is greatest. This will help to increase travel by public transport by people with a disability.
* The booking process is an important issue for service users with a disability, and questions on this issue should be included in the survey.

## 4.4 Mystery Shopper Survey

Eight people with different disabilities participated in the mystery shopping survey and received training in how to complete the survey. This is a small sample but it was sufficient to determine if this type of survey could be used as a monitoring tool. The service users completed their journeys and the surveys without any difficulties.

Service users also had the opportunity to provide comments on their experience:

“The Bus Éireann stop at the railway station is immediately outside the door of the station. The bus was unable to pull into the kerb due to cars parked near the door.”

“No sign at station for assistive hearing system - no induction loop present. Microphone and small speaker at ticket counter, but proper induction loop system not present. From discussion with staff, I suspect loop system and signage was present, but fell into disuse.”

“I did not have to use Assistive Technology in this exercise as my hearing aids are paired up to my mobile and land line and phone conversations are streamed directly into my hearing aids.’

Overall the services users who participated in this exercise found it to be a positive experience. Comments included:

“X enjoyed the experience and felt her contribution would be of value.”

“There are many people who have had issues with services, and this gives us an opportunity to find the gaps, and hopefully improve things”.

However there are some potential issues regarding using this tool for monitoring purposes. During the pilot phase, difficulties were experienced recruiting service users.

There are resource implications regarding the personnel and time that need to be allocated to providing service users with training in how to complete the survey.

### Feedback from Stakeholders

Stakeholders raised concerns regarding the safety of service users travelling on a route and/or using a mode of transport that they were unfamiliar with. The stakeholders stated that there were a number of risks involved in this process. For example, service users travelling by train to a destination they were unfamiliar with could be left stranded on a platform if the lifts to the exit were not working and the station had no staff in place to help the service users exit the station. The service users would then be unable to complete their journey and may experience considerable challenges in returning home.

Service users were given the option of choosing a familiar route and mode of transport to survey.

However in future, a larger sample of different routes using different modes of transport would have to be included in the survey, so it may not be possible for all the service users to be able to survey familiar routes. This is a significant risk that needs to be considered and reviewed regarding whether it is feasible to use this type of survey as a monitoring tool in the future.

**Key Recommendations**

**5.1 The Monitoring Tools**

The four monitoring tools were reviewed in terms of how they could effectively be used for a future phase of the project - i.e. to carry out an actual full-scale monitoring and evaluation exercise of the four main public transport service providers - Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, Iarnród Éireann and the Luas.

Three key factors were considered when reviewing the potential methodologies and tools for an actual monitoring and evaluation exercise

* What tools would be the most effective for collecting data and facilitating an analysis of service providers’ level of compliance with the Code of Practice?
* How could these tools be used to help public transport service providers’ increase their levels of compliance with the Code of Practice?
* How these monitoring tools could be replicated/applied to other public sector services?

It is therefore suggested that the following three monitoring tools are used for a future phase of this project:

* Self-Assessment Questionnaire for service providers
* Direct Performance Measurement Survey for service providers
* Customer Satisfaction Surveys for service users

It is proposed that using the Mystery Shopping Survey would need to be reconsidered, due to the impracticality of scheduling a large panel of Mystery Shoppers with disabilities. Resource requirements could be prohibitive, as well as the cost associated with hiring and training Mystery Shoppers. However, existing Mystery Shopping surveys are carried out periodically by some service providers. It is suggested that a workshop could be held to consider whether the Mystery Shopping Survey would be included in any future rollout of a monitoring exercise. It is recognised that NDA will need to consider the most effective way to implement monitoring tools in the future rollout and how data and analysis will be presented in reports that will emerge from this rollout.

**5.2 Getting relevant and accurate data**

Each of the suggested monitoring tools contain numerous detailed questions. The Self-Assessment Questionnaire alone has 58 questions. Each of these questions has approximately 5 statements that require scoring. During the pilot phase, this level of detail was necessary to test the feasibility of each of the tools as a monitoring mechanism for the Code of Practice. However, it is recommended that the questions in each monitoring tool are reviewed and streamlined to ensure that relevant and accurate data is obtained for any future rollout. This process will also ensure that these monitoring tools are user friendly. It is suggested that issues could be teased out further in a workshop with stakeholders to guide on the rollout.

## 5.3 Application of the monitoring tools

### Self-Assessment Questionnaire

It is suggested that the Self-Assessment Questionnaire will be used by the four service providers: Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann, Iarnród Éireann and Luas. It is also suggested that in a revised questionnaire that the service providers will be asked to give additional documentary evidence of policies and processes they have in place to provide accessible public services. For example, they could be asked to give evidence of disability awareness training that is being provided for all employees, procurement rules for new services etc.

**The Direct Performance Measurement Survey**

It is suggested that the four service providers use this tool to audit their services on a national level to get a more robust view of the levels of accessibility regarding their services. The Direct Performance Measurement Survey will be used to capture objective data. Discussions will need to be had in terms of:

* The departments and the personnel in each of their organisations who will conduct these audits
* The type of training these personnel will require in order to conduct this audit correctly. when these audits will be completed
* Realistic timeframes for completing the audits.

### The Customer Satisfaction Survey

It is suggested that a national Customer Satisfaction Survey will be used to capture subjective data from the customers’/service users’ perspective, regarding services provided by Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann, Iarnród Éireann and Luas. It would need to be available in both accessible online and print formats. This survey would be used to identify areas of a service that are working and areas that require improvement. A key element of this survey is that service users will have the opportunity to make recommendations regarding how a provider can improve their service. Stakeholders’ support will be needed to recruit service users to complete the survey.

**5.4 Analysis of compliance with the Code of Practice**

It is suggested that the following two approaches are considered to analyse the data collected from the 3 monitoring tools:

* Aggregating the overall scores
* Using the Total Quality Management Approach as detailed in section 1.3 of this Executive Summary

#### Aggregating overall scores

In this process each element of the Code of Practice will have an overall compliance score from each of the monitoring tools, for example, Access to Services will have three scores as it will be measured using data collected from the Self-Assessment Questionnaire, Direct Performance and Customer Survey. These scores are then combined or averaged to give an overall score for Access to Services. See the bar chart below.



**Example of how data collected using different tools can be combined**

The bar chart shows the individual scores derived using each monitoring method, for the six main areas of the Code of Practice. For the purposes of this illustration, the scores for each area have been converted to a percentage so they can be presented on the same graph.

Each score represents a figure from 0 to 100, where “100” represents full compliance with the Code of Practice. The values shown in this graph are purely for illustrative purposes.

The scores illustrated in the bar chart might be further combined, to arrive at a single score for each of the six areas of the Code of Practice, as shown in the diagram below.



**Example of Combined Results from each tool**

The bar chart above shows the combined scores from the three monitoring tools, for the six main areas of the Code of Practice. The maximum “score” using this index would be 300. This would provide an overall assessment of the extent to which public transport complies with the Code of Practice, using an index from 0 to 300.

In this example these 6 scores could be averaged to give one overall score of 180

It will be possible also to arrive at individual scores for public transport service provider.

Each service provider would be given access to their own results and their performance levels compared to other service providers, prior to any report being published by the NDA.

## 5.5 Conclusion

The literature review and the pilot assisted with identifying monitoring tools and approaches and the means of aggregating and reporting data. At a service level the findings should inform action plans for improvements. The monitoring tools may require some revisions before being rolled out with the four transport service providers. Further considerations may also be required for the reports produced by the NDA.

1. Mediate Project (2010) **Self-Assessment Tool – Manual.** Brussels: European Commission [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ISEMOA Project (2013) **Self-Assessment Questionnaire for Municipalities and Cities**. Brussels: European Commission <http://www.isemoa.eu/index.php?ID1=7&id=7> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. QUEST Project (2011) **State of the Art of Urban Mobility Assessment.** Brussels: European Commission [↑](#footnote-ref-3)