



**Anything is possible if  
you put your mind to it**



# GETTING OUT AND ABOUT



## NIN MEMBER'S EXPERIENCES OF TRAVEL

Report from National Involvement Network  
Meeting in Glasgow on 29th June 2023

**“Anything is possible if you put  
your mind to it”**

QUOTE FROM NIN MEMBER



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# KEY MESSAGES

NIN members shared the wide range of things that they would like to get out and about to do, including: getting involved in sports; socialising; travel; pursuing and taking up new hobbies, activities and interests.

## Challenges NIN members face getting out and about:

- reliability of public transport
- behaviour of other passengers
- cuts in services
- unhelpful drivers
- anxiety
- accessibility of the transport system.



## Barriers to getting out about

- worries and lack of confidence
- difficulty getting the right support
- having access to toilets
- availability of public transport
- being able to afford it
- access to services and facilities
- behaviour of other people.



## What would help

NIN members believe there are changes that need to happen so they can fully take part in society and the community and access the same services and facilities as everyone else.

Most important is having the right support and having services, including public transport, accessible to them.



“What’s important to me is getting out and about without always having to rely on others”

QUOTE FROM NIN MEMBER



# INTRODUCTION<sub>e</sub>

## **About the NIN**

NIN is short for National Involvement Network. At the NIN we are working to make the Charter for Involvement a reality. We think everyone should have a voice and be heard. The Charter for Involvement sets out how people want to be involved in the support that they get, in the organisations that provide their services and in the wider community.

## **Background to the meeting in Glasgow**

Getting out and about is a topic that NIN members have been talking about a lot in their local networks. In order to live independently and be involved in the community, people need to be able to move around freely. Some people need support to get out and about and transport needs to be accessible to all. We wanted to hear people's experiences of getting out and about. This report shows what NIN members said at the NIN meeting in Glasgow on 29th June 2023.

This meeting was chaired by Lynnette Linton. There were 55 people at the meeting in total.



# ABOUT THIS REPORT



This report is about the NIN meeting in Glasgow on 29th June 2023. The Theme was Getting Out and About. This links to **Charter Statement 2 - we have a right to live our lives independently** and **Charter Statement 3 - we must be involved in our communities.**



# TOM'S STORY

Tom Mitchell, Chair of Ayrshire Involvement Network, did a presentation about what people have been saying about transport in Ayrshire.



“We rely on public transport to get to the places we want. There are some places we can’t get to on public transport, so we have to get a lift in a car. If there is no one free we can’t go. Some people rely on paid workers with cars to get their shopping.”

“Bus and train services have been cut. A bus journey takes twice as long as in a car. The bus from Glasgow to Kilbirnie takes 1 hour. The last bus is at 5.15. If you want to go home later, you can get 3 buses which takes 2 ½ hours.”





The main problems in Ayrshire are:

- getting help and support
- not enough services
- attitude of drivers
- other passengers
- getting bus passes
- dealing with things that go wrong



Ideas from Ayrshire that might help:

- ask someone for help
- have a travel plan
- arrange to meet someone
- phone someone when you arrive
- find a travel buddy
- get help to learn a new route
- write to the bus company
- awareness training for drivers
- awareness campaign
- make posters



# WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE WHEN GETTING OUT AND ABOUT?

We discussed the challenges getting out and about in groups. These were the main issues:

**Reliability** “Bus companies change routes and don’t tell us. They say look up the website but some of us can’t do that.”  
“Buses keep changing, I get confused”  
“Buses don’t turn up; I have to contact my mum to let her know as she’ll be worried if I don’t come back on time”



**Other passengers** “I got harassed on a train due to football. Staff did nothing about it.”  
“People don’t move for me on buses. It shouldn’t be up to my support to have to ask them. It’s not nice”  
“Someone thought I was drunk, they assumed it, as I had trouble walking. I don’t even drink alcohol. It was embarrassing”

**Cuts in services** “McGill 's have cut a lot of services”  
“The bus drove away without me because it was full”  
“I couldn't find a seat on the bus. It can be very squeezed”

**Drivers** “Bus drivers should understand how we feel getting on a bus. Sometimes buses don’t put the ramp out.”

“Some buses are allowed 2 wheelchairs, but drivers think it's too much hard work”

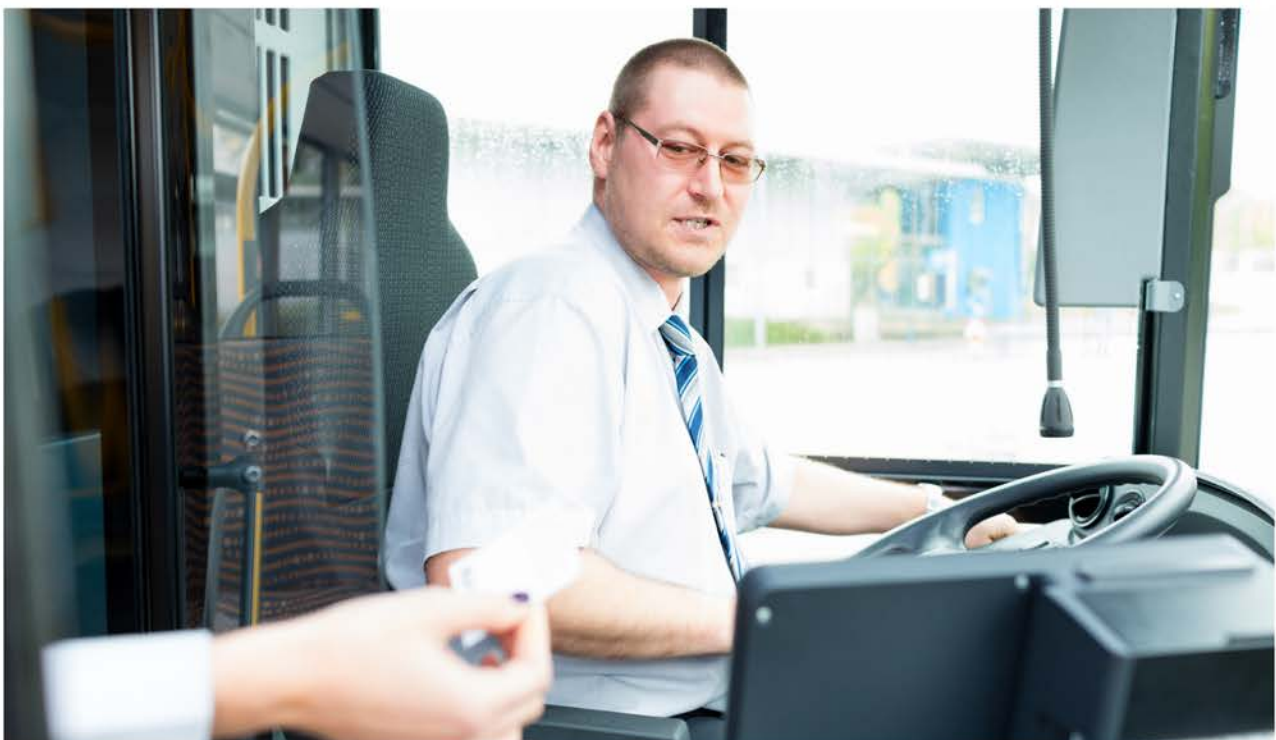
“I got asked to show my bag. I was embarrassed as it had things for my bladder in.”

“Bus drivers pull away too fast. They break too fast. If you can’t see right, you need to be aware.”

**Anxiety** “I'm shy meeting people I'm not confident I'm unsure on my own and don't know the people on the bus.”

“I get stressed on buses when someone random sits beside me I don’t know. I don’t like when buses are busy, I have autism”

“Sometimes when I get on a crowded bus or train I can get very anxious and can have panic attacks”



**Accessibility** “The taxi was too low to get in”

“The new bus layout on stagecoach is not good, difficult for my wheelchair to manoeuvre”

“Underground is not good for wheelchairs. No access for wheelchairs at Buchanan Street”

“If you’re dyslexic and don’t read it’s difficult at bus stations.”

“I can’t get my mobility scooter on the bus, it’s too big. It means I can’t get out of Dundee without someone supporting me.”



# WHAT'S STOPPING PEOPLE GETTING AROUND AND WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

People went into groups to discuss 3 questions. This is what they said.

**QUESTION 1: WHAT DO YOU LIKE DOING AND WHAT PLACES WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO?**

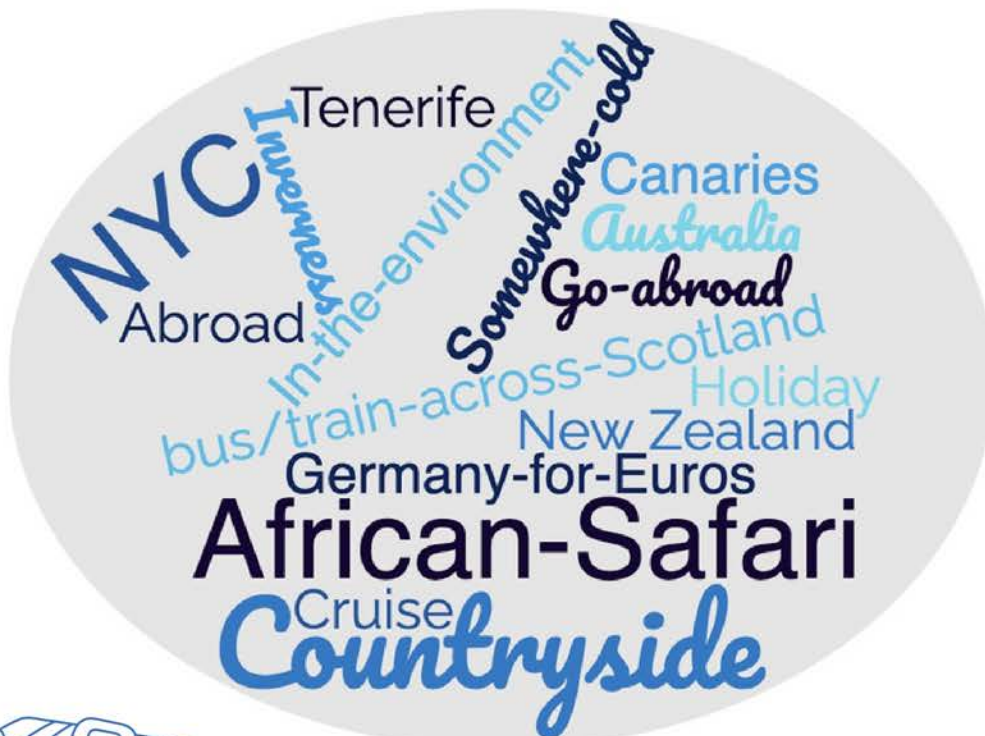


sports





**socialising**



**travel**



**hobbies**



**other**



**QUESTION 2: WHAT BARRIERS WOULD YOU FACE GETTING THERE?**



Lack-of-confidence  
 Dislike-public-transport  
 Getting-on-my-scooter  
 Motivation  
 out-on-my-scooter  
 Change-in-routine  
 Anxiety  
 Never-flown-before  
 Fear-of-flying



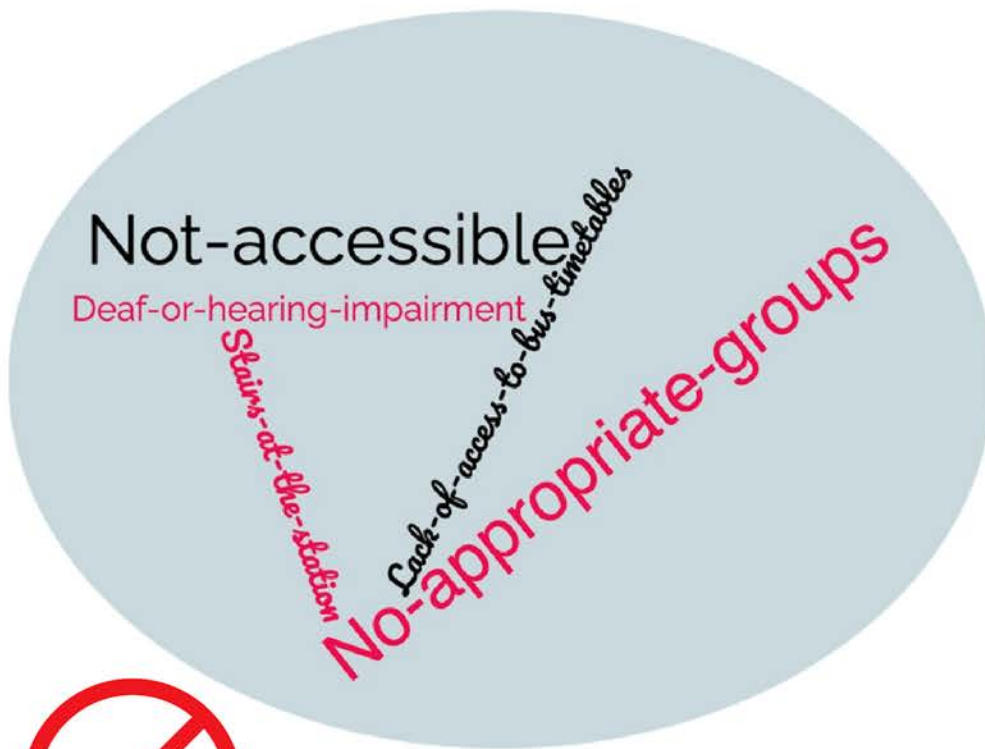
**worries**

Toilets  
 Cleanliness of toilets  
 Disabled toilets on transport  
 No changing places

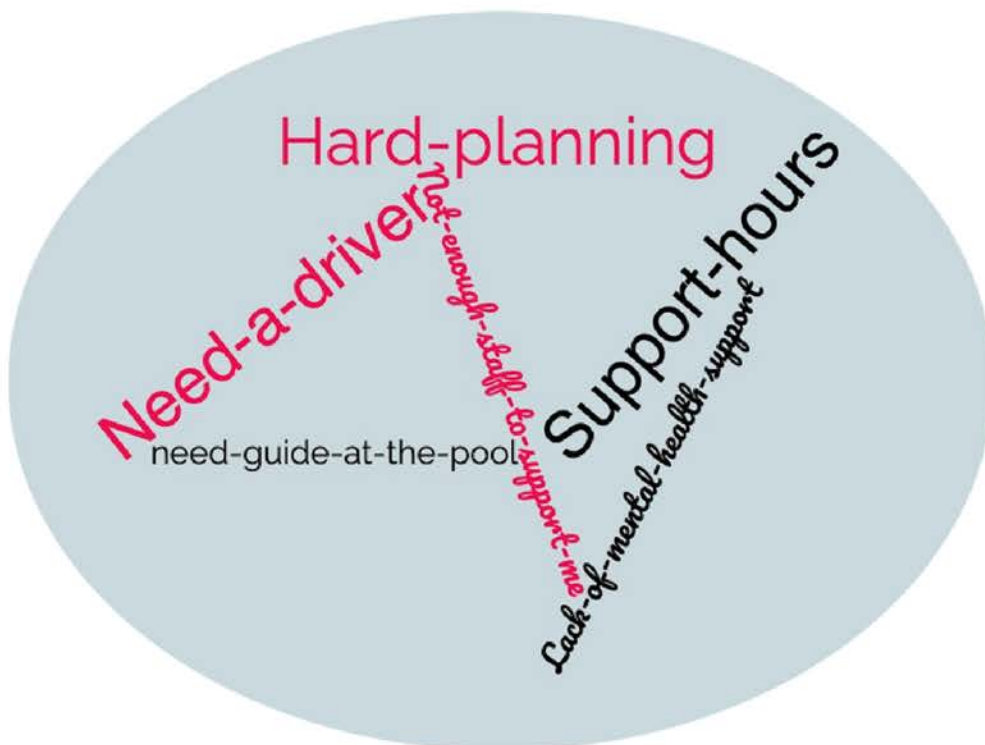
Cost  
 Football-season-tickets-too-expensive  
 Money

**lack of facilities and expense**

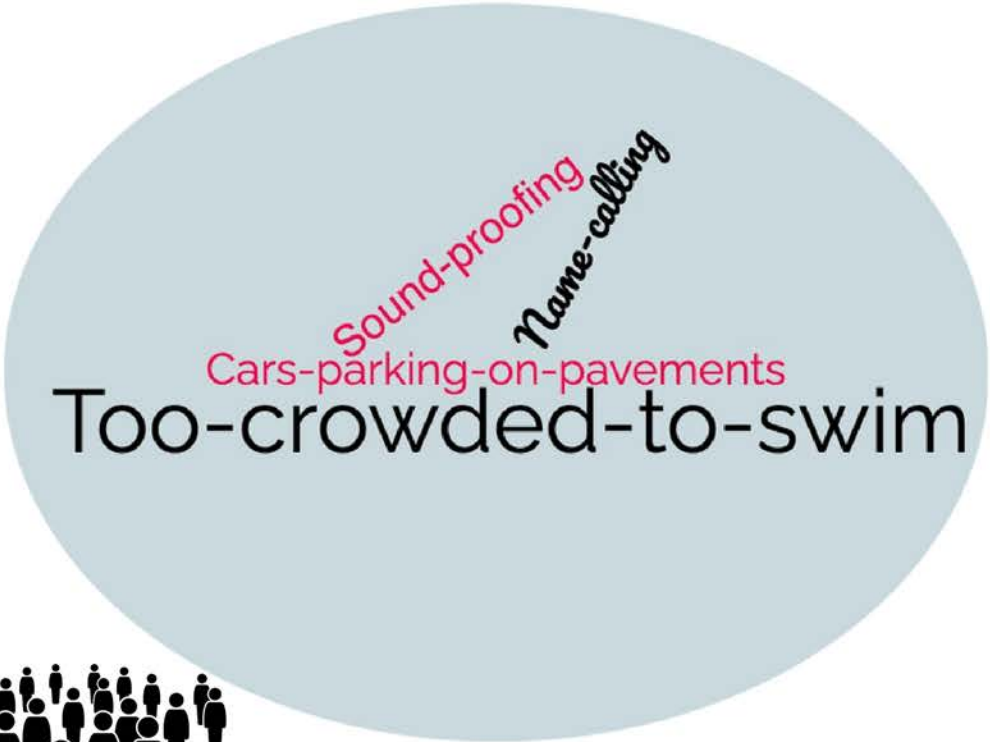




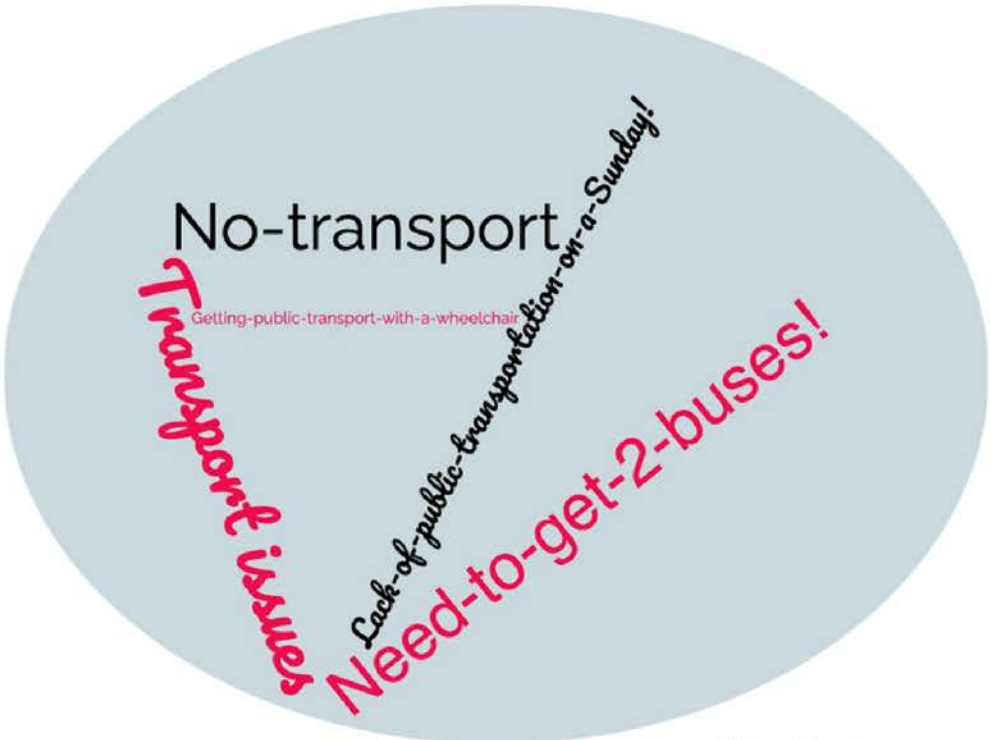
**no access**



**no support**



other people



transport not available



**QUESTION 3: WHAT CAN YOU OR OTHER PEOPLE DO TO HELP?**



*Get-the-community-involved*

**Peer-support**  
Get-support-from-friends-&-families

*Teamwork*  
*Involve-local-charities*



**involve others**

**More-support-staff**

*train-staff*  
*More-changing-places*

*More-transport-for-wheelchairs*

*cleaner-toilets*

**Better-accessibility**



**changes that would help**



**things you might try to do**



**things you might try to develop**

# YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY STAGECOACH

Alison McCluskie from Stagecoach was invited. Alison is Operations Director for the West of Scotland.



Stagecoach is a very big company. Across the UK, they have 8,000 buses and 24,000 staff. In the West of Scotland, they have 900 staff. 600 are drivers. All drivers must have a Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC). After they have done CPC drivers do customer care training, which includes awareness of disabled passenger's needs.

On the next 2 pages is the information Alison gave the NIN in response to questions. We hope it is helpful for you.

- Services reduced after lots of people stopped using buses because of Covid.
- For people worried about missing their stop, many new buses have audible announcements and visual displays.
- If the kerb is too high or too low, you should contact the council.
- Stagecoach could tell ARC Scotland when they change timetables. Then ARC could tell NIN members.
- If there is a pram or someone in the wheelchair space the driver should ask them to move. They can't make them move. If there isn't another bus soon the driver can phone the depot. They can get you a taxi.
- Some journeys get cancelled because there is a shortage of drivers. If you have Twitter, you can check there. You can also track the bus on the Stagecoach app.
- You can't take a bike on a bus. If it's in a bike bag you can take it on a longer journey.
- Stagecoach expects drivers to treat customers correctly. We always want to know if they don't. Complain, let us know, we WANT to correct it. Go to our website to complain.



- You can get a Thistle Card to show if you need extra help. This might make you less anxious and help drivers understand your issues.
- Buses can be busy. This is good for us but can cause anxiety. Buses are legally registered for a certain number standing and seated. Drivers cannot let more on.
- Buses should never be early. They can be late. You can use the app or tracker to see.
- Some buses are reduced because there weren't enough people.
- Tell your driver if you are worried about how other people on the bus are behaving.
- You can take a mobility scooter on the bus. You go to the bus depot and practice getting on and off the bus. We check that the turning circle fits. We will then give you a card saying you can take your scooter on the bus.



# NEXT STEPS

Everyone wrote down one first step they are going to take to help them get out and about more. Here are a few examples:

“Speak up more”

“Plan the journey and meet up with neighbourhood networks group.”

“Campaign about amenities at Glasgow Stations.”

“Come to NIN group meetings.”

## What could you do?



**Fiona Dawson**  
**NIN Co-Chair**

“I want to encourage people to take part in the NIN, it's there for everyone”



**Michael Connolly**  
**NIN Co-Chair**

“The NIN has changed my life for the better, I would like to see more people getting involved”



“I want to try new experiences and believe in myself and be adventurous and meet new people”

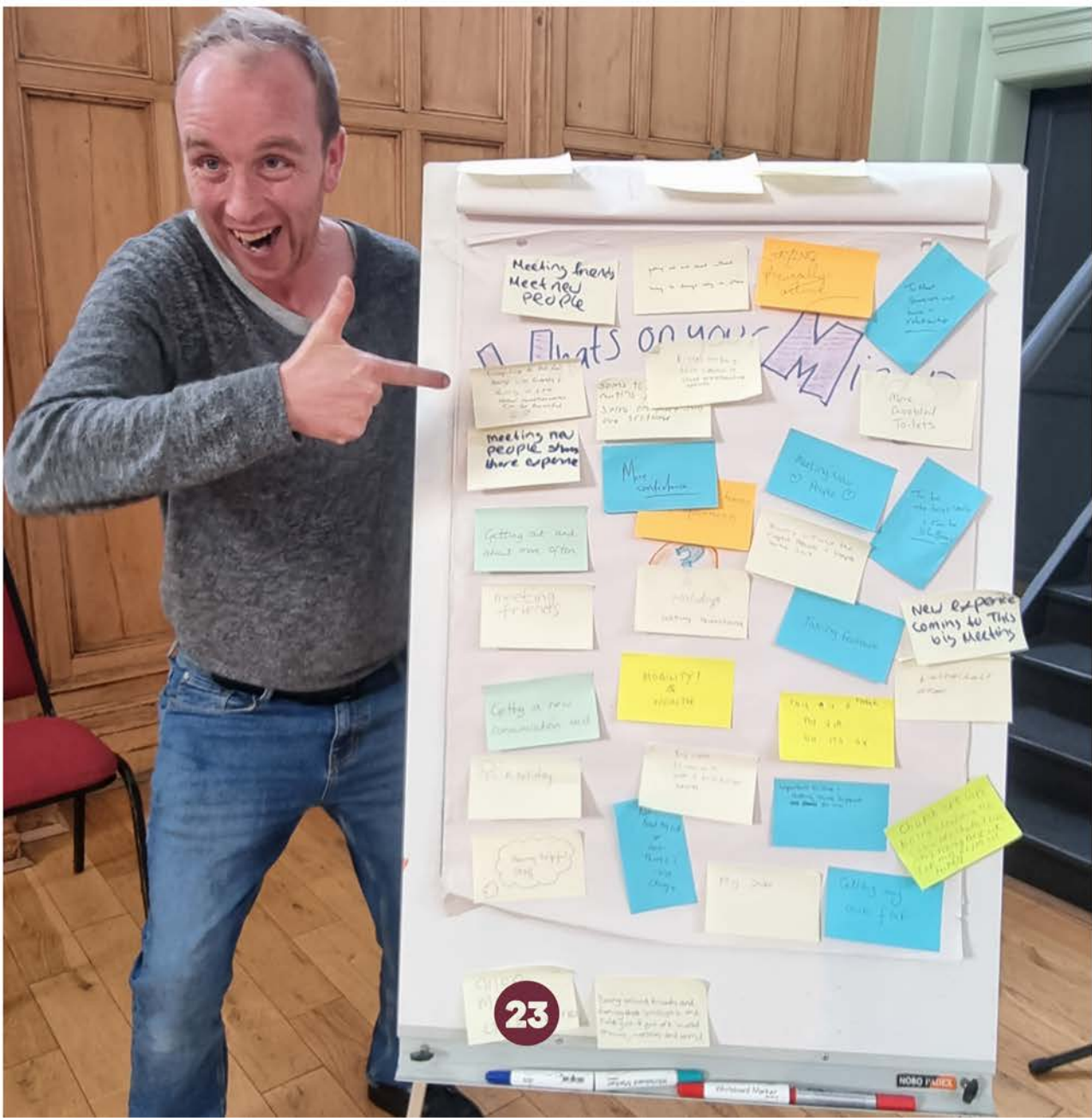
QUOTE FROM NIN MEMBER



# WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

We wanted to make sure the NIN is really reflecting the views of all its members and talking about the hot topics. At the end of the meeting everyone wrote down what feels important to them at the moment.

ARC Scotland will use this information to keep track of what really matters to NIN members. The NIN planning group will use it to help decide the right topics for meetings.



# USEFUL INFORMATION

**The Accessible Travel Hub** is a place for you to find information, articles and guidance about accessible travel in Scotland. <https://accessibletravel.scot/>

**Traveline Scotland** <https://www.travelinescotland.com/>

**Stagecoach app** <https://www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/national/stagecoachbusapp>

## **Stagecoach complaints**

Phone 0345 241 8000

Or fill in a form on the website:

<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/help-and-contact/faqs/im-not-happy-how-do-i-make-a-complaint>

## **McGill's Buses**

Information and timetables: <https://www.mcgillsbuses.co.uk/>

## **Thistle Assistance Card and app**

Go to this website for all the information on how to get the card or app: <https://www.thistleassistance.com/>

You can get the Card from:

Highlands and Islands (HITRANS) Phone: 01463 719002

Aberdeen (Nestrans) Phone: 01224 346680

Edinburgh (SEStran) Phone: 0131 524 5150

Glasgow (SPT) Phone: 0141 332 6811

Dumfries (SWestrans) Phone: 01387 260383

Perth (Tactran) Phone: 01738 475775

Shetland (ZetTrans) Phone: 01595 744 868

## **The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with**

**Disabilities** is an agreement that says what countries must do to make sure disabled people have the same rights as everybody else. It has 12 parts called Articles. Article 9 is about Accessibility. It says we must find out what stops people from fully taking part and make access easier for everyone. This includes being able to get out and about and to use transport on an equal basis.

**The Equality Act 2010** says transport operators must make reasonable adjustments for disabled passengers. There are different rules for different types of transport:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rights-of-disabled-passengers-on-transport#buses-and-coaches>

**The Accessible Travel Framework for Scotland** was written in 2016 by the Scottish Government. It finishes in 2026. It aims to do 4 things:

- 1: More disabled people travel successfully – they can use the transport system when they want and as often as they want to.
- 2: Disabled people are more involved in the design, development and improvement in transport and say what works for them.
- 3: People working in transport help disabled people to travel – they understand people with different support needs.
- 4: Disabled people feel comfortable and safe using public transport – they don't feel worried to travel and aren't treated badly by others.

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/accessible-transport/>

# FIND OUT MORE

Go to our website to find out more and sign up to join the NIN:  
<https://arcscotland.org.uk/involvement/>

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