

Assessing the extent of transport social exclusion among the elderly

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Abstract

" Social exclusion" is a concept that has become increasingly prominent in the UK and elsewhere in the last ten years. Social exclusion occurs as a result of a series of problems that prevent people from being able to participate in activities that are considered normal in their society. Some of these problems are related to issues of accessibility. This paper outlines work carried out in the context of the AUNT-SUE (Accessibility and User Needs in Transport in Sustainable Urban Environments) project to develop and model an appropriate set of accessibility benchmarks for older people. It is confirmed that the travel patterns of older people are very different from those of the general population in the UK and that it was necessary to tailor accessibility benchmarks to the characteristics of this group. A set of benchmarks was developed based on ability to undertake different types of activities. These benchmarks are currently being incorporated into AMELIA, a GIS-based tool for assessing the effect of different policy actions on accessibility. Issues that have arisen include how to account for a myriad micro-level circumstances that affect the mobility of older people. Some initial results have shown that these details can make a substantial difference to the assessment of the accessibility of a destination. Examples are drawn from St Albans in Hertfordshire, UK.

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