

**Door-to-door  
application  
process**

**07217**

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## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

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Research conducted by Steer Davies Gleave

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### ***Background***

Door to door services, which include Dial a Ride, Taxicard, and Capital Call are being reorganised in order to deliver a fairer and more consistent door to door service across London. A key element of the review is to move towards the social model of disability rather than the medical model.

Under the medical model, disability is viewed as the result of an impairment or medical condition and the problem is located within the individual. Under the social model, people who have impairments or medical conditions are disabled by physical and social barriers that limit their ability to participate in day to day life and in the community on an equal basis. The social problem is located in the environment and can be addressed by society removing its barriers. TfL is therefore focused on identifying and removing barriers that people with disabilities face when trying to access the transport system.

### ***Objectives of this Research***

The pilot tests were required to evaluate, and provide guidance on, ways to improve the practical implementation of the revised application process for door to door services. This involves an applicant completing an application form and then attending an assessment interview with a trained assessor.

The pilot tests involved the entire process; however, a key aspect was to monitor the dynamics and effectiveness of the interview.

### ***The Sample***

The specified sample of 49 was based on both age and impairment. The sample was designed to cover a variety of impairment groups experiencing different levels of barriers in the transport environment. The sample included people with a range of mobility, vision, hearing, mental, and learning impairments and was drawn mainly from people attending day centres or living in sheltered housing.

### ***The Pilot Test Methodology***

Participants were recruited from a range of sources, and were invited to complete the application form unassisted by the project team. They were able to have assistance from a friend / carer / signer / someone they knew, and many did do this.

The interviews were undertaken in a number of locations including care homes, day centres, and offices in central London. The interviews were undertaken by three independent interviewers recruited and trained by TfL. Three qualitative research professionals, including two disabled people provided by Steer Davies Gleave, observed the process, both 'live' and afterwards, by reviewing video and audio recordings.

It should be noted that whilst the pilots sought to replicate the application process as closely as possible, it was necessary to recruit applicants rather than have them apply for door to door services, which may well be regarded as a quite valuable benefit. This does mean that the way

they responded to the questions in the pilots may not entirely reflect the way they would respond in a real situation. This having been said, from the analysis it would not appear that this was a major issue and does not appear to have unduly affected the findings.

### ***Application Form Findings***

The pilot tests indicate that the application form was generally well received; however the pilots have identified areas that should be reviewed:

- some of the language used is more complicated than it needs to be and it is recommended that it be simplified where possible;
- the requirement to provide information regarding the size and dimensions of wheelchairs is causing distress to some applicants; and
- consideration should be given to providing an opportunity for applicants to express themselves qualitatively. It would be welcomed by the applicants, and provide valuable background and lifestyle information that will assist the interviewers in making their assessments.

### ***The Assessment Interview***

Overall, the assessment interviews worked well and the interviewers were confident in their decisions.

The pilot tests have revealed that the following aspects of the interview need to be more clearly defined:

- the complementary roles of the computer based assessment instrument and the interviewer; and
- the role of the interviewer in engaging with the applicant and focusing the assessment questions in the context of their circumstances.

The assessment instrument has an important role to play, but we must be clear, the interview is between the interviewer and the interviewee. The instrument is there to help manage and standardise the process, the interviewer's task is to frame the assessment questions, and ask additional questions as required, so as to secure the information required to make an assessment.

The interviewers therefore need to equip themselves with sufficient background information that will enable them to tailor the questions to the individual applicant. This was done in most of the pilot interviews, but the process lacked structure.

The interviewer needs to actively engage with the applicant. This means asking them questions about them as an individual, their circumstances, and the barriers they face in their everyday journeys. This will come from the background questions described above, and the dialogue throughout the interview process. In order to do this they need a wide range of skills relating to transport barriers, and equally important, a thorough understanding of medical matters, the social model of disability, and transport service provision in London.

It was observed that there were a number of instances when the data on the application form was inaccurate. This meant that the Excel assessment instrument was unable, in those instances, to focus on the most relevant questions for those individuals.

## Outcomes

The following table summarises the top-line recommendations made at both the application form and assessment stages.

### OVERALL: RECOMMENDATIONS / DECISIONS

	Likely Door to Door	Likely Other Services Required	No Action Required (Application & Interview)	Error	Total
Application Form No's	16	15	16	2	49
Application Form %	33%	31%	33%	4%	100%
Interview Decision No's	27	8	14	N/A	49
Interview Decision %	55%	16%	29%	N/A	100%

The data clearly illustrates that there is a marked difference in outcomes between the 'likely outcome' at the application form stage and following the assessment interview:

- with those likely to be suitable for door to door services increasing from just under a third (33%) of applicants to just over a half (55%);
- those likely to be recommended for other services halving from 31% of applicants to 16%; and
- those not judged likely to be eligible for services falling slightly (33% down to 29%).

This study also included applicants who are automatically eligible for benefits under the current application and assessment process.

### AUTOMATIC ELIGIBILITY: OUTCOMES

	No Assessment	Door To Door	Other Services	No Action	Total
Application Interview	N/A	61%	28%	11%	100%

This element of the pilot study indicates that only 61% of 'automatically eligible' applicants qualify for door to door services using the process tested in this pilot study. This is only 6% higher than the 'overall sample'.

A further 28% of applicants in this group did however qualify for other services (this figure is markedly higher than the overall sample, where the comparable figure is 16%).

It should however be noted that the proposed new model will retain an automatically eligible element.

## ***Main Recommendations***

### *Application Form*

- Applicants need to be informed about the application process when they apply. They need to be advised about whether or not they should have someone to help them complete the form, whether or not that person should attend the interview, and general guidelines on how to answer the questions. It is therefore recommended that when the application form is sent out to applicants there is accompanying literature that addresses these issues.
- The language in the application form should be simplified where possible.
- Consideration should be given to whether or not to ask the questions regarding wheelchair dimensions. If it is retained, assistance should be offered to help them find the information.

### *The Excel Assessment Instrument*

- The assessment instrument is there to help manage and standardise the process and that is particularly important at the beginning of the interview. The instrument therefore needs to be expanded to provide a 'structure' that the interviewer follows, from the beginning to end of the interview.
- The preliminary stage of the assessment instrument should capture background, lifestyle, and travel horizons information. This can be used by the interviewer to help 'focus' questions and make them relevant to the applicant.
- The interviewer needs to be able to make changes to the information that has been provided at the application form stage. This should be done at the beginning of the interview. At the moment this is possible, but not really practical.
- The application form summary sheet should include any freehand comments included in the application form. If this is not practical, the application form needs to be provided to the interviewer to read before and during the interview.
- The instrument has to record the decision and the rationale from the interviewer.
- Each step in the process needs to require an affirmative action. It is suggested that interviewers are given the discretion not to ask some questions, but it should be a conscious decision that the interviewer can justify, if required.

### *The interviewer*

- The interviewer is required to 'translate' the questions asked by the assessment instrument into terms that the applicant can answer. This means that they should equip themselves with information about the applicant, their circumstances, and the journeys they do and do not make.
- To achieve this, the interviewer should engage with the applicant, using a wide range of interviewing techniques, in order to gather the necessary information and insight.
- Entering the data in the computer must not be allowed to disrupt the flow of the interview. This means that care needs to be taken in setting up the interview and ensuring that as many of the questions as possible can be answered using the YES NO choices in the assessment instrument.
- The interviewer needs to focus the questions in order to be able to ask the YES NO questions required by the instrument, supplemented by appropriate supporting comments where appropriate.
- The interviewer decision check has revealed that different decisions can be made in marginal situations. This reinforces the requirement to thoroughly train interviewers and monitor decisions on an ongoing basis.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Background

- 1.1 Door to door services, which include Dial a Ride, Taxicard, and Capital Call, are being reorganised in order to deliver a fair and consistent door to door service across London. A key element of the review is to move away from the medical model of disability towards the social model.
- 1.2 Under the medical model, disability is viewed as the result of an impairment or medical condition and the problem is located within the individual. Under the social model, people who have impairments or medical conditions are disabled by physical and social barriers that limit their ability to participate in day to day life and in the community on an equal basis. The social problem is located in the environment and can be addressed by society removing its barriers. TfL is therefore focused on identifying and removing barriers that people with disabilities face when trying to access the transport system.
- 1.3 In the context of this study, the adoption of the social model imposes very real difficulties in identifying people who are eligible for the scheme. For all its faults, the 'medical' approach was relatively straightforward to administer: people either had a qualifying disability or they did not.
- 1.4 Qualification under the social model is far less easily defined. Applicants will have to demonstrate, both on the application form, and if necessary at the interview stage, that public transport presents barriers that prohibit its use.
- 1.5 Clearly, the application process will need to make an informed judgement on an individual's impairments and establish the extent to which the door to door service can improve an individual's mobility.
- 1.6 By its very nature this is a far more subjective process, and errors of judgement must be viewed as a hazard. It is therefore important that the application form is very carefully constructed and the interviewers are thoroughly trained and aware of the applicant's sensitivities, as well as their impairments.

### The Research Requirement

- 1.7 Pilot tests were required to evaluate, and provide guidance on ways to improve, the practical implementation of the revised application process for TfL's door to door services. This involved the entire process. However, the emphasis was specified as monitoring the dynamics and effectiveness of the interview process.

*With regard to the application form:*

- Evaluation of the overall process: if the overall perception of the questionnaire was positive / neutral we did not probe too deeply. If perceptions were negative we probed:
  - areas of difficulty / concern; and
  - how to improve / clarify.

*With regard to the interview process we evaluated:*

- the consistency of the process; and
- the perceived fairness / thoroughness / intrusiveness of the process.

1.8 It was originally intended to include the appeals procedure. This was not made available for evaluation.

***The interview process***

1.9 Each interview was required to be evaluated on a number of dimensions. Copies of the observer guidelines and discussion guides can be found in Appendix A. The key themes of the analysis may, however, be summarised as:

- a review of how the questionnaire worked in practice;
- analysis of the interviewer's style and behaviour;
- analysis of the post interview discussion with the applicant;
- analysis of the post interview discussion with the interviewer; and
- analysis of the outputs (combination of Excel spreadsheet and the above analysis).

***The report structure***

1.10 This report is set out according to the following structure:

- a detailed description of the pilot test design;
- a detailed description of the interview implementation and process;
- a review of the application stage;
- a review of the excel assessment instrument;
- a detailed discussion on the interview process;
- an examination of interviewer style and the dynamics of the interview situation;
- consideration of how well the process worked;
- analysis of the outcomes from the interview; and
- a final section brings together all the conclusions from the previous chapters and makes a number of specific recommendations.

## **2. PILOT TEST DESIGN**

### **Background**

- 2.1 In designing this pilot study the emphasis has been on developing a robust and transparent methodology that would enable the pilot to be thoroughly monitored in terms of the following:
- participant feedback (at both the application form and interview stage);
  - observation of the application process (including video recording where permitted); and
  - interviewer feedback (post interview stage).
- 2.2 Participants were welcome to / encouraged to have someone with them for both the application form and interview stages (this could be a friend, family member, someone from their community, care home/day centre).
- 2.3 In those situations where the participant was unable to answer the questions, the carer was able to answer on their behalf.
- 2.4 Participants were invited to complete the application form unassisted by the project team. They were able to have assistance from a friend / carer / signer / someone they knew, and approximately 50% did do this.
- 2.5 Prior to the assessment interviews participants were interviewed regarding the application form as part of this research.

### **Assessment Interviews**

- 2.6 The interviews were undertaken in a number of locations:
- care homes;
  - day centres; and
  - offices in central London.
- 2.7 The assessment interviews were undertaken by three independent interviewers recruited and trained by TfL for the purpose of these pilot tests. Three qualitative research professionals, including two disabled people, provided by Steer Davies Gleave, observed the process, both 'live' and afterwards, by watching video<sup>1</sup> and audio recordings.
- 2.8 Following each assessment interview, participants were interviewed by an observer using a detailed checklist (this can be seen in Appendix A).
- 2.9 Following the participant interview, the observer then interviewed the assessor using a

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<sup>1</sup> Permission was sought, and obtained in all instances. All gave agreement for the proceedings to be videoed for research purposes; however not all interviewees gave their explicit permission for the videos to be used for training purposes.

detailed checklist (this can be found in Appendix A).

### Sample

- 2.10 The sample was drawn from three sources: residential and care homes, day centres, and the London Travel Demand Survey (LTDS). The original intention was to recruit 28 (58%) of the sample from a combination of day centres and care homes, with the remaining 20 (42%) from the LTDS sample. However, the study encountered significant difficulties with the LTDS sample and this was subsequently reduced to 9 (18%) with additional participants being recruited through stakeholder organisations who introduced us to day centres where the interviews were in fact held.

**TABLE 2.1 SAMPLE**

	Living in institution		Living in the Community	
	Residential Care Home	Day Centre	LTDS Sample	
Sample	28 (58%)		20 (42%)	
Actual	12 (25%)	28 (57%)	9 (18%)	

- 2.11 The key statistic is that 25% of the sample are living in residential or care homes and 75% are living in the community. The impact of this change is that, if anything, more people have been recruited who are living in the community than was in the original proposal. It should therefore be noted that the sample is less representative of people who do not access day centres than was originally intended.
- 2.12 The original plan for the LTDS sample was for the interviews to take place in two central London locations, one north of the river and one south. This was cut back to a single location in central London once the difficulties with this sample were realised and the number of interviews undertaken via this method was reduced.
- 2.13 The sample of 49 was based on both age and impairment. The sample was designed to cover a variety of impairment groups experiencing different levels of barriers in the transport environment.
- 2.14 The following sections provide a breakdown of the samples achieved in the pilot tests.

### Age

- 2.15 It was important that the sample was representative of different age groups. The pilot therefore targeted as wide an age range as possible:

**TABLE 2.2 AGE SAMPLE**

Age Range	Target	Achieved
Under 60	40%	58%
60 – 74	30%	20%
74+	30%	22%

- 2.16 The concern at the outset of this study was that we would recruit an age biased

sample. The sample achieved is younger than anticipated.

***Ethnicity***

2.17 Participants were asked their ethnicity as part of the application form (question 9 equalities monitoring).

**TABLE 2.3 ETHNICITY**

<b>Ethnic Grouping</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
White British	27	56%
White Irish	2	4%
White and Asian	1	2%
Indian	6	12%
Caribbean	4	8%
African	3	6%
Other	4	8%
Unspecified	2	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100%</b>

2.18 The target was for approximately a third of the sample to come from non-white communities. In the event, we achieved 39%.

***Disability Sample***

2.19 The sample was designed to cover a variety of impairment groups experiencing different levels of barriers in the transport environment. The following tables show the target and achieved samples

**TABLE 2.4 DISABILITY GROUP (MEDICAL MODEL)**

<b>Declared Impairment</b>	<b>Sub groups</b>	<b>Target Sample</b>	<b>Achieved Sample</b>
<b>Mobility Impaired</b>	Wheel chair users	2	4
	Walking with aid (stick or frame), limited ability to walk any distance	2	2
	Mild walking impairment, difficulty with balance or steps	2	2
	Other mobility impairments (not related to walking)	2	2

Disability	Sub groups	Target Sample	Achieved Sample
Vision Impaired	No vision, totally dependent on others or a dog	2	2
	No vision but capable of independent travel	2	3
	Partially sighted, but dependent on others or a dog	2	2
	Partially sighted, but capable of independent travel	2	1
Disability	Sub groups	Target Sample	Achieved Sample
Hearing Impaired	Profoundly deaf or severely deaf (including 1+ needing a signer)	2	2
	Impaired hearing (mild or moderate)	2	3
Disability	Sub groups	Target Sample	Achieved Sample
Learning Difficulties	Severe (to be defined, but possibly with carer)	2	4
	Moderate	3	2
	Mild (to be defined, but possibly without a carer)	2	2
Disability	Sub groups	Target Sample	Achieved Sample
Mental Health Conditions	Severe	2	5
	Moderate	3	2
	Mild	2	2
Serious Long Term Condition	Various (inc. MS, Chronic respiratory disease)	6	5
Older people	Older people who cannot, or find it difficult to, use transport such as those who are frail	4	3
Control Group (applicants who are known not to be eligible)	Short term/temporary impairment but find it difficult or impossible to access public transport	2	2
	Long term impairment but don't find it difficult or impossible to access public transport	2	0

### ***Sampling issues***

- 2.20 The target sample was 48, and the actual number of individuals interviewed was 49.
- 2.21 It was believed important not to be over reliant on a sample that was ‘institutionalised’ (this was taken to mean people living in residential homes or with high dependency support). Consequently, a significant proportion of the sample had to be recruited by contacting people living in the community. It should be noted that this pilot study did face significant difficulties recruiting potential applicants through non-institutional / stakeholder groups, particularly amongst the following groups:
- individuals living at home (in various impairment groups) and contacted via the London Travel Demand Survey (LTDS) sample base;
  - those with learning difficulties or mental health conditions; and
  - those with communication difficulties.
- 2.22 We also faced problems recruiting people with only slight difficulties in the control group. It is believed that the reason for this is that they did not perceive the services were relevant to them.

### **Limitations of the Methodology**

- 2.23 This research has been undertaken with participants from a wide range of backgrounds, and whilst it sought to replicate the application process as closely as possible, a limitation of the approach is that participants did not self select themselves to apply for the service, which would occur in practice.
- 2.24 The approach that was adopted does have limitations:
- there may not have been the same ‘commitment’ to the process that a person actually applying for the service might have;
  - participants did, in a number of instances, attempt to minimise the barriers they faced; and
  - they may have been confused or needed support.
- 2.25 These factors are discussed further below.
- 2.26 The sample was a ‘quota sample’, i.e. it set out to achieve specific numbers of people with different impairments. This enabled the research to gather data from individuals facing a range of different barriers. Other approaches were considered but discounted:
- a random sample would be more representative of the overall impaired community; however it would be unlikely to be representative of the broad range of barriers being faced by people with a range of impairments; and
  - a sample of existing dial a ride users would have been easier to recruit; however it would only include people who currently qualify for dial a ride services.

### ***Commitment***

- 2.27 Discussions with both the interviewers and observers indicate that whilst many of the participants were conscious of the fact that this was ‘only a piece of research’ they were, with very few exceptions, eager to participate.

### ***Minimise Barriers***

- 2.28 It was noted in the interviews that a significant proportion of participants attempted to minimise their disabilities / the barriers they faced. This was particularly noticeable in the application forms (and has led to a recommendation that this be reviewed at the beginning of the interview). Given that there was nothing at stake, i.e. it was research; this could have led them to be less open than in a ‘real’ interview which would determine their access to transport services. On balance this is not believed to be a major factor as the interview process is a relatively long one (20-40 minutes on average) and people tend not to be able to ‘hide’ their true selves over this period of time. This is therefore not believed to have unduly affected the effectiveness of the pilots.

### ***Confusion and support***

- 2.29 Most of the older and more severely impaired participants would in reality have had a carer with them at a real interview. Whilst all those who needed support in the interview had someone, this was often a day centre or care home worker, not necessarily the person who would assist in an important interview. This may have had an impact on a small number of the interviews.

### ***Appropriateness for interview***

- 2.30 Just over a third of participants would not, in reality, have been required to have been interviewed. These people cross all the disability groups, but are disproportionately found in the sight and hearing groups. Detailed findings are reported in chapter eight but the following table shows the ‘top line’ finding.

**TABLE 2.5 AUTOMATIC AND NOT AUTOMATIC ELIGIBILITY: OUTCOMES**

	<b>Door To Door</b>	<b>Other Services</b>	<b>No Action</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Sample</b>
Automatically eligible	61%	28%	11%	100%	18
Non automatically eligible	55%	10%	35%	100%	31

- 2.31 There are differences, and this group have therefore been analysed separately and findings reported in chapter eight.

### ***Impact of Methodology on the Validity of the Pilot Study***

- 2.32 The key question is whether the various factors affecting the dimensions that are different will have had a material impact on the overall value of the study.

### *Sample*

- 2.33 In discussing the sample it is important to note that many of the participants had multiple impairments and that under representation in a particular group does not mean that people with that impairment are not included elsewhere.
- 2.34 The achieved sample is slightly different from that originally specified:
- it is slightly younger;
  - it over represents people in wheelchairs;
  - it over represents people with severe impairments;
  - it is slightly under represented amongst the old and frail group; and
  - it does not include the long term conditions quota who can travel using public transport.
- 2.35 It is not believed that the age profile presents a problem as the concern was to avoid having the sample dominated by the elderly and this has not happened. The sample is balanced and contains a good representation of all the key age groups.
- 2.36 The over representation of people in wheelchairs has not been at the expense of the other major disability groups. The representation of other types of mobility impaired groups is on target.
- 2.37 Whilst the representation in the old and frail group is below target, old and frail people are found in other groups, with those over 70 accounting for almost 30% of the sample. This older peoples group, many of whom are frail, are therefore well covered by the overall pilot study.
- 2.38 For people with long term conditions, but without mobility problems, the quota has not been achieved. Whilst this is a concern, the study has identified 29% of participants for whom no action was required, with this rising to 38% (on a sample of 8) amongst people in the older people and ill categories. In consequence, it is believed that this group has been covered by other sample groups within the overall study.

### *Automatically eligible*

- 2.39 Overall a third of applicants were automatically eligible for assistance. Some of this group were included in the sample by reason of the quota requirements. This includes the severely disabled in most of the categories (8 participants, 16% of the sample). This having been said, some other applicants also fell into this classification and they account for a further eight participants, or 16% of the sample.
- 2.40 Chapter nine deals with this as an issue and reports these findings separately from the main findings.

### *Methodology*

- 2.41 This pilot study was a piece of research; however, almost all participants were clearly willing to participate fully and in an interview of this length people are (and were) drawn into the process and the interviewers and observers only expressed concerns



### 3. INTERVIEW SET UP AND PROCESS

#### Introduction

- 3.1 Prior to the interview, key sections of the application form were entered into an Excel spreadsheet questionnaire (the questionnaire) to be used in the assessment interview. The following table summarises the sections entered.

**TABLE 3.1 APPLICATION FORM DATA ENTERED INTO QUESTIONNAIRE**

Section	Description
1	Personal Details
3	Benefits / Pensions / Other
4	Travel Experience
5	Transport Services Received
6	Information about Travel Needs & ability to use
7	Ability to communicate

- 3.2 While the current questionnaire is delivered using the Microsoft Excel spread sheet, it is understood that when the new system is introduced, the application programme will be on a more user friendly data base platform.

#### Application Form

- 3.3 The application form was given / sent to pilot test participants before the interview. The actual time period between supplying the application form and receiving it back (for data entry) generally varied between a few days and two weeks. It was felt that any longer than this would leave too long a period between completing the form and the interview and could lead to potential applicants:

- forgetting about attending the interview; and
- forgetting what they had said.

- 3.4 In the event difficulties were encountered with this stage of the pilot:

- approximately 40% of those recruited from the LTDS sample (i.e. people without the support of care homes or day centres) failed to attend their interview; and
- a number of applicants did not remember what they had said (or what their carer had said).

#### Data Entry

- 3.5 Whenever possible the data entry was undertaken prior to the interview. The process took approximately twenty minutes.
- 3.6 In a relatively small proportion of the interviews, approximately five out of the forty nine interviews (10%), the data entry took place immediately prior to the interview. This was mainly due to application forms 'getting lost in the post' or last minute recruitment, a result of the recruitment issues identified above.

- 3.7 This was not ideal, and as soon as it was realised that this was happening, steps were taken to stop it happening. However, the interviewers did not complain, and it was generally accepted by applicants, although in one instance this was commented on by an applicant.
- 3.8 In those instances where the application form was completed just prior to the interview there was less time than usual for the interviewer to read the notes beforehand. This did lead to some operational difficulties, though these were overcome.

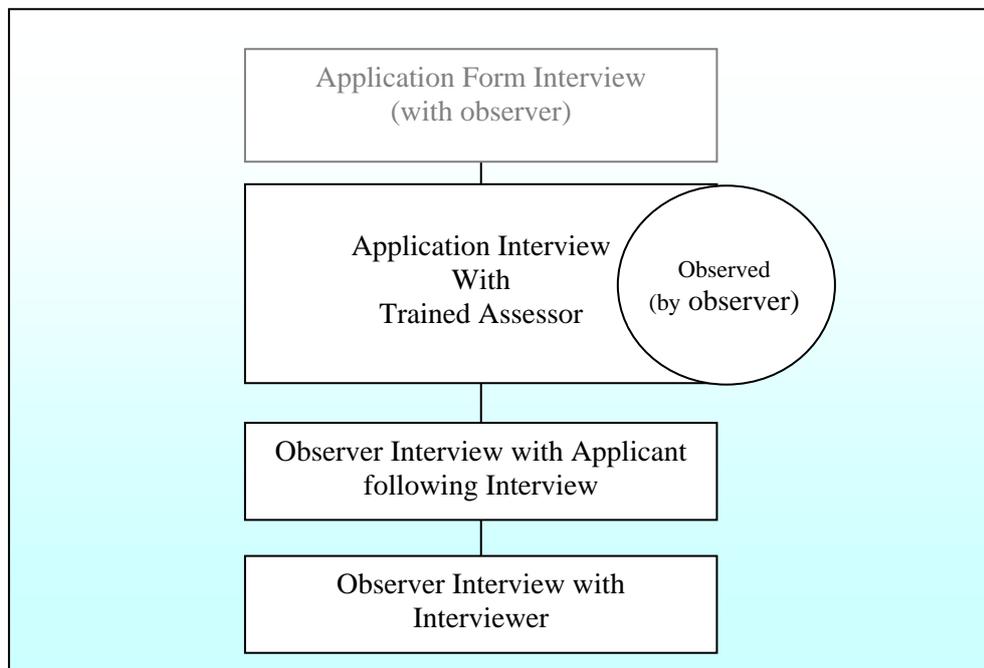
#### **Pilot Interview Set up**

- 3.9 Each pilot test involved at least four people, and often more. The list of participants and potential participants includes:
- the applicant;
  - the interviewer;
  - the observer;
  - host / hostess and camera operator;
  - their carer; (in some instances only);
  - data entering person (in some instances only); and
  - a third party observer.
- 3.10 Almost two thirds (61%) of interview session had an additional third party observer present (i.e. in addition to the formal observer) and in a small number of cases this person also acted as 'scribe' to the interviewer.
- 3.11 Care was taken to ensure that as far as possible the observer(s) were not in the line of sight of the applicant. Observers reported that the presence of the additional people did not appear to pose any difficulties for the participants.
- 3.12 It should be noted that in reality there would usually only be the applicant, possibly a carer, and the interviewer. However in some circumstances it is envisaged that a person to enter data into the assessment instrument may be necessary.

## Process

- 3.13 The observed assessment session and interview process is illustrated in the following Figure:

**FIGURE 3.1 OBSERVED ASSESSMENT SESSION PROCESS**



## Video Recording

- 3.14 All the assessment interview related interviews were video recorded and we confirm that all the participants gave their informed consent to be recorded.
- 3.15 All applicants gave their informed consent for their interviews to be used for training purposes.

## Operational Issues

- 3.16 It should be noted that some of the early interviews did encounter problems with the Excel assessment tool resulting in not all the questions being asked. These problems were rectified during the course of the fieldwork.
- 3.17 The Excel assessment instrument also has a problem adding up the scores on the summary score sheet. This led to decisions on whom to interview being incorrect. This has impacted the pilot studies' ability to compare the Excel assessment tool's assessments (at application stage) against final decisions<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.18 In the recommendations section we suggest that both the interviewers and observers are involved with the programme development team to help address this issue.

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<sup>2</sup> TfL were advised of this during the course of the fieldwork

## 4. THE APPLICATION FORM

### Introduction

4.1 The application form was made available in two formats:

- standard; and
- easy read.

4.2 Both formats addressed the same issues, the differences being the language used, the layout of the questions, and the use of graphics in the easy read version.

4.3 The ‘standard’ application form is conventional in approach, was printed in black and white for the pilot<sup>3</sup>, and extends to ten pages. An example can be found in Appendix B.

4.4 The ‘easy read’ application form makes extensive use of pictograms, is printed in colour, and extends to thirty four pages.

### Distribution

4.5 The easy read version is intended only for use by people with learning difficulties. However, in the first half of the study, it was offered to participants in other disability groups. As soon as this was realised, this was stopped.

4.6 Given that the easy read version of the application form was made available to applicants, the choice of form has been analysed.

**TABLE 4.1 APPLICATION FORM PREFERENCE (WHEN GIVEN A CHOICE)**

<b>Format</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Standard	7	30
Easy read	17	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>

4.7 When a choice was provided, the overwhelming preference was for the ‘easy read’ version. However, this decision was based on ‘first impressions’ and the fact that it was in colour and included pictures seems likely to have been the reason for this choice.

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<sup>3</sup> Note: the colour scheme for the form in reality will be in shades of purple

## **Analysis**

### ***Introduction***

4.8 This analysis relates to the standard application form and will be under the following headings:

- applicant feedback;
- presentation;
- language;
- how the form was completed;
- length of time to complete;
- types of information asked for;
- types of answers required;
- current travel patterns; and
- conclusions and recommendations.

### **Applicant Feedback**

4.9 Applicants were generally positive about the standard application form and the immediate response was almost always positive:

*“Yes, yes. Did myself, easy to understand, quite clear to myself”*

*“That lady done it for me, easy to understand and straight forward”*

*“Someone helped; it was OK lots of questions, lots of people using buses”*

4.10 However there were a small number of applicants (one in five interviews) who did not remember filling out the form, or were just saying what they thought they should say:

*‘Don’t remember [LOOKED CONFUSED] ‘Don’t remember. No, no problems’*

*‘Yes Yes, took me five minutes to fill out’ [CLEARLY NOT POSSIBLE]*

4.11 Further questioning revealed that there were some concerns regarding completion of the application form and these can be considered under the following headings:

- the length of time it took to fill out;
- concerns regarding specific questions;
- some concerns over the scale system used (only one person);
- language used; and
- legibility.

All of these issues are discussed in the following sections.

## **Presentation**

- 4.12 The standard form elicited very little comment regarding its presentation.
- 4.13 Given that it is a 'form', the single colour printing did not appear to be a problem, and was possibly an advantage for the visually impaired (and a number of visually impaired participants did complete it themselves). It should be noted that there were both positive and negative comments with regard to a larger print version. One applicant would want it in a larger print version, whilst another would not.

*'I don't like large print: the documents are too big, A3, too big to handle'*

- 4.14 Overall, however, the presentation of the standard form was relatively well received:

*'If it's relatively OK ... and well laid out that is ok'*

## **Language**

### *Standard Form*

- 4.15 The language in the standard form came in for some criticism. Comments from the observers centred mainly on the extensive use of relatively 'formal' language. The following extracts illustrate the point:

Currently people are **automatically eligible for assisted transport** if they fall into one of a number of groups

Can you please tick the **appropriate** box below only if you are in one or more of the following groups and have documentary evidence (e.g. your original certificate of entitlement)?

We would like to **understand your travel experience** to help **identify** if you should be **eligible for using an assisted transport service**

Do you have a **permanent impairment or medical condition** and **face barriers** (or difficulties) in **accessing** public transport?

Please tick an **option** for each of the following statements.

- 4.16 It is clear from the discussions that despite these issues, people managed to complete the form, either by themselves or with assistance, without too many difficulties.

*"No difficulties, filled in myself, no difficulties, took about a day, on and off, not easy to understand the questions".*

*“Got to think about what you say, yes, the questions were relevant, [IMPLICATION WAS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND] but as I say you have got to understand your own circumstances, you should know your own circumstances”.*

4.17 Language is however important, particularly with older applicants. However the observers have commented that they believe that this was also an issue for people whose first language is not English and those not accustomed to filling in forms.

**Buses**

4.18 There was some confusion over the use of the word ‘bus’. Some of the older, and some other, applicants took this to refer to the demand response services they currently use (for example, a care centre minibus). It is therefore suggested that on the first occasion ‘bus’ is referred to, it be made clear that the reference is to ‘public buses’.

**How the Form was completed**

4.19 The research design called for the questionnaire to be completed and submitted prior to the interview. For this reason, no observers were planned to be present to assess ‘how’ they were completed. In the event, almost 80% of the interviews were organised in this way but in the remaining interviews the applicant filled them in just before the interview, and in some instances observers were able to observe the process.

4.20 Given that the application form did not ask who completed it, it is not possible to be definitive on the numbers completed by other carers / others. Analysis of the forms and from the interviews indicates that approximately half appear to have been completed by someone other than the applicant.

**TABLE 4.2 APPLICATION FORM ANALYSIS RESULTS OF ‘WHO COMPLETED’**

	Self Completion	Assisted Completion	Data not available / clear
Number	17	18	14
Valid %	48%	52%	

4.21 The sample is too small to meaningfully present proportions by disability type, but as might be expected:

- the mobility impaired group were evenly split;
- vision and hearing impaired had approximately twice as many assisted completion as self completion;
- the ratio was approximately 2:1 for learning disabilities;
- all of those with serious long term conditions were completed by someone else; and
- all those in the control sample completed the form themselves.

### **Length of Time to Complete**

4.22 Reported completion times varied significantly. There were a small number of instances where a time period of ‘ten minutes’ is reported. Others indicated about half an hour and a few reported a longer time.

4.23 However, these reported timings should be treated with caution. The analysis has found that there were a number of instances where the applicant had :

- very little recollection of completing the form; and
- the applicant could be described as ‘confused’ over what actually happened.

*“Don’t remember [LOOKED CONFUSED] ‘Don’t remember. No, no problems”*

*“Yes yes, took me five minutes to fill out”*

4.24 Observation of those application forms completed whilst the observers were present, (this was five instances, 10% of the sample) indicates that it takes between twenty and thirty minutes to complete, depending on a range of factors. However this excludes the need to provide documentary evidence of benefits.

4.25 Estimates given in the applicant interviews varied more considerably. Excluding the comment above about it taking five minutes, most responses varied between about 20 minutes to an hour, or an hour and a half, and, for one, it was claimed to have taken ‘a day’ (albeit doing other things as well).

### **Types of Information Asked For**

4.26 Generally, most participants in the study were happy with the content of the application forms, many reporting that they were pleased with its ‘thoroughness’ and ‘relevance’.

*“About sixty questions, double sided, took me a good hour to fill in, maybe more, say an hour and a half”*

4.27 There are, however, two areas of the application form that were specifically queried:

- personal information, particularly benefits; and
- information regarding wheelchairs.

### **Personal information**

#### **Benefits**

4.28 There was some criticism from a small number of applicants regarding the amount of personal information required. These comments related to the benefits section.

*“Not sure why you’re asking about benefits, why are you doing that quite honestly, how is that related ... don’t want to give information about my benefit”.*

*“Am I filling a benefits assessment form, what has this got to do with how I use public transport”.*

4.29 This is an instance where the fact that we were conducting research may well have impacted this particular applicant’s attitude towards the pilot. If the ‘participant’ really had been an ‘applicant’ then their attitude to providing the information may have been more compliant.

4.30 Other concerns with this personal information fall into two categories:

- the need to provide documentary evidence; and
- the positioning of this section so early in the application form.

4.31 Comments mainly related to the need to be sensitive to their situation and the difficulty of providing the information

*“I find it difficult to do proof of identity, like driving licence, I can’t see..” [DRIVING LICENCE ONE OF THE OPTIONS SUGGESTED]*

*“Got a rent book but in my husband’s name, but council told me to keep quiet or I might be thrown out, I shouldn’t be where I am, That’s why I kept quiet, but I am paying the rent.”*

*“I am not one of those people who files things nicely, I find it difficult to find proof of identity.”*

4.32 As illustrated at the beginning of this section, some applicants pointed out that this was a questionnaire on their transport needs, not their benefits. Given that this information is required, two suggestions were put forward by the observers:

- the section needs far more explanation as to why the information is required; and
- it may be better at the end of the questionnaire (where it might form less of a barrier).

#### *Wheelchairs and Scooters*

4.33 Section six asks for considerable information on wheelchairs. Questions relating to the ‘make’, ‘model’, or ‘height’, ‘width’, and ‘weight’, and ‘qualify as a road vehicle’ caused concerns

4.34 Two of the four wheelchair user interviews commented explicitly.

*‘A problem with make and model of wheelchairs [QUESTION], I am concerned, I don’t know why you are asking this question; nowadays all taxis are accessible’.*

*‘Why do you need that .... I don’t know ...[INCOHERENT]*

4.35 As it stands, this question is posing a significant barrier to people with wheelchairs /

scooters completing the application form.

***Information not asked***

4.36 Both applicants and interviewers commented on the fact that the application form did not collect data in relation to:

- their personal circumstances;
- the journeys they make;
- their disabilities; and
- who took part / completed the application form.

4.37 Interviewers reported that whilst the questionnaire gave them a considerable amount of information to work with, until they met the applicant, and in many cases, well into the interview, they did not have a 'picture' of the person, or their circumstances, including their travel horizons.

*Personal Circumstances*

4.38 Whilst the application form does capture information with regard to travelling with a companion (section 6) and the use of other transport services (section 5), the application form gathers almost no information about how the applicant travels or their personal circumstances:

- family circumstances (particularly access to carers); and
- actual travel patterns and all modes used (providing indications about their travel horizons).

4.39 Whilst neither of these two data types is strictly necessary for the application form, both provide information that interviewers believe they would find helpful in conducting the interview. This issue is discussed further with regard to the interview.

4.40 **Note:** There were comments regarding the fact that neither the application form, nor the questionnaire, captured information relating to participants' current use of private hire, taxis, and private cars (other than their access to it in section 5 of the application form). These modes appear to be being used extensively. However because neither the application form nor the interview asks structured questions about them, the interviewer does not know how important they are nor how much access applicants have to them.

*Current travel patterns*

4.41 It was felt by the interviewers that beginning the interview with almost no knowledge of an applicant's current travel patterns, and the reason they face the barriers that they do, made their job harder than it needs to be.

4.42 One option would be to capture some background data in the application form. An alternative would be to develop a preliminary 'stage' as part of the formal interview. This is discussed further elsewhere in this report.

*Who took part / completed the application form*

- 4.43 An issue that arose during the pilots was ‘inaccuracies’, ‘mistakes’, or possibly ‘differences of perspective’ with regard to answers on the application form and answers provided during the interviews.
- 4.44 It is the view of both the interviewers and the observers that there is some linkage between someone else completing the form and the apparent inaccuracies in completing it.

*Barriers*

- 4.45 As already stated, the application form was generally well received. Barriers have, in large part, already been discussed; however they may be summarised as:
- format and language (as discussed above);
  - questions that require forms / certificates / measurements (as discussed above); and
  - completing the full form (see below).
- 4.46 The form is relatively long and our findings do not include the need to source documentary evidence and information on wheelchairs.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 4.47 This analysis has found that the application form was generally well received. However some concerns were expressed with regard to:
- the length of time it took to complete;
  - concerns with regard to some of the language used;
  - lack of clarity of what was meant by ‘bus’;
  - the requirement to provide information and proof of benefits received;
  - the requirement to provide information regarding wheelchairs;
  - interviewers being able to understand who completed the form: and
  - lack of opportunity for applicants to tell you about them.

**Recommendations**

- 4.48 This chapter has identified a number of areas where consideration should be given to making changes:

**Accessibility**

- 4.49 The analysis in this chapter leads to the conclusion that the application form needs to be made ‘accessible’ by making changes that will:
- provide more of an explanation of what the application form is for;
  - explain the process that it will lead to; and
  - indicate why information is being requested.

- 4.50 This information could be included in the form, or TfL may wish to consider developing accompanying literature that could be sent out with the application form (i.e. an introduction and guide on how to complete the form). This would avoid the need to over complicate the form, yet provide the information that will help reduce barriers to its completion.

### **Questions**

- 4.51 It is difficult to see how the concerns reported regarding the benefits questions can be addressed, other than by providing more of an explanation as to why it is required (see above). However consideration should also be given to changing its position in the form, moving it to section 8, linking it more closely to proof of identity and residence.
- 4.52 There should be a review of whether the information on wheelchairs is really required. If it is, consideration should be given to how to how best assist applicants to find the required information.

### **Language**

- 4.53 The observers report that there are a number of questions where the standard application form would be more easily understood by many of the applicants if the language were simplified.
- 4.54 What is meant by the word 'bus' this needs to be made clear.

### **Design**

- 4.55 The form is currently a very 'standard form'. This elicited very little criticism but it would certainly benefit from being designed to improve its presentation and readability, particularly for those with limited vision.
- 4.56 Consideration should also be given to making it available in a 'larger print' version.

### **Understanding how the application form was completed**

- 4.57 Consideration should be given to establishing who helped to complete the form.

### **Letting people tell you about them**

- 4.58 Whilst not wishing to increase the length of the application form, there were comments that applicants felt that in completing the form they were unable to 'tell you about them' and particularly about the journeys they make and how. The current form does not provide an opportunity for them to do this. A 'freehand' section would enable them to do this. Possible wording might be: '*Can you think of anything else it would be helpful for us to know about you and how you travel at the moment?*'

## 5. APPLICATION INTERVIEW - CONTENT

### Introduction

5.1 This chapter is divided into the following sections:

- Excel assessment instrument structure;
- engaging with and understanding the applicant;
- confirming and clarifying;
- yes / no – but;
- travel horizons;
- disability and mobility;
- safe and confident;
- explanations and language;
- duplication and repetition; and
- conclusions and recommendations.

### Excel Assessment Instrument Structure

5.2 This largely descriptive section provides a detailed review of the Excel based questionnaire. This section is included so as to provide the basis for considering the issues discussed in the subsequent sections.

5.3 The questionnaire divides into three broad sections:

- pre – interview;
- assessment questions; and
- assessment summary sheet.

### *Pre-interview*

5.4 Data is entered into the pre-interview section prior to the interview and the instrument provides preliminary guidance as to whether the applicant qualifies automatically for assistance, will be required to attend an interview, or does not appear to be eligible for assistance.

5.5 This section of the programme is divided into three sub-sections:

- personal profile (input);
- s1a application questions (input); and
- s1b profile summary sheet (output).

### *Personal profile*

5.6 The personal profile questions (from the questionnaire) are input into the programme prior to the interview. This includes:

- name and address;
- social ‘benefits’ received;

- transport services used (including travel concessions / benefits);
- use of travel aids (sticks, wheelchairs, etc.);
- ability to use minibuses / people movers (with or without assistance); and
- language and communication requirements.

*S1a application questions*

5.7 This section is completed prior to the interview and includes data relating to applicants' accessibility and ability to use public transport. This includes:

- accessibility (distance) to public transport modes;
- the level of difficulty faced getting to bus stop / train, tram, tube;
- knowledge of 'how to get' somewhere by public transport;
- recognising which 'public transport' to use;
- ease of getting on / off 'public transport';
- naming or describing destinations to others;
- safety and confidence in the daytime;
- receiving help from others; and
- how 'easy' it is to get to final destination from public transport.

*S1b profiles summary sheet*

5.8 This output section provides:

- a summary of personal details (name and address);
- a preliminary eligibility assessment based on benefits received / age;
- any communications requirements;
- details of travel requirements; and
- a transport barriers profile.

5.9 This section serves three purposes:

- it provides guidance to TfL on whether the applicant is automatically eligible, in which case the applicant moves out of the assessment process;
- it provides recommendations on what type of assistance the applicant is likely to require, based on their application form; and
- it provides the initial 'briefing' to the assessment interviewer prior to interviewing the applicant.

5.10 The data input from the questionnaire, and summarised here, clearly 'drives' what questions are asked, and not asked, in the interview.

***Assessment questions***

5.11 The questions that are asked are driven by the original application form. The full range of question areas is:

- S2 General Barriers - general information & communication issues;

- S3 Physical Barriers - mainly steps and ramps;
- S4 Barriers Assessment (other) - questions relating to a recent journey;
- S5 Barriers Assessment (other) - comfort talking to staff / other passengers;
- S6 Barriers Assessment (perceptions) – mainly ‘safe’ and ‘confident’;
- S7 Barriers Assessment (comms) – questions re audio / visual communications; and
- S8 Affordability - focusing on the freedom pass and reduced rate tickets.

5.12 The current Excel questionnaire displays whether or not to ask a section at the top of the page. This causes process issues that impact on the interview process.

5.13 Most questions are multiple choice, with options varying as appropriate:

- YES / NO;
- YES / NO / DON'T KNOW; and
- YES / NO / OTHER.

5.14 There is also scope for the interviewer to add comments on all assessment work sheets.

***Assessment summary sheet***

5.15 The assessment summary sheet groups information to support informed decision-making by skilled interviewers with regard to:

- general barriers to travel in London;
- barriers that are more applicable to door to door services;
- barriers that are more applicable to other services (e.g. travel assistance); and
- affordability.

The following sections deal with issues flowing from observation of the assessment interviews and the interviews with both the applicant and the interviewers. As far as possible the issues have been structured to follow the order of the questionnaire.

## Engaging with and understanding the applicant

### Beginning the engagement

- 5.16 With the current Excel based questionnaire it is not clear where the interview is supposed to begin. In the pilots, the screen that the interviewer almost invariably had open when the applicant entered the room was the profiles summary sheet.
- 5.17 Whilst this does provide valuable insights into access to transport and modes, this is somewhat divorced from real life experiences (see Figure 5.1 below).

**FIGURE 5.1 PROFILES SUMMARY SHEET: EXAMPLE**

33	<b>The Applicant...</b>				
34	IS within a 10-minute journey from a BUS STOP				
35	IS within a 10-minute journey from a TRAIN STATION				
36	is NOT within a 10-minute journey from a TRAM STOP				
37	IS within a 10-minute journey from a UNDERGROUND STATION				
38					
39	<b>Base barriers</b>				
40	<b>The Applicant...</b>				
41	finds getting to where they want to go by BUS:	SOMETIMES A PROBLEM			
42	finds getting to where they want to go by TRAIN:	SOMETIMES A PROBLEM			
43	finds getting to where they want to go by TRAM:	SOMETIMES A PROBLEM			
44	finds getting to where they want to go by TUBE:	SOMETIMES A PROBLEM			
45	SOME OF THE TIME knows how to get where they want to go by PT				
46					
47	<b>Barriers more applicable to Door to Door</b>				
48	Getting to my bus stop / train, tram, tube station:	SOMETIMES A PROBLEM			
49	Getting on or off the bus, train, tram or tube is:	SOMETIMES A PROBLEM			
50	To get to my destination from where I get off the bus, train, tram or underground, I find it:	SOMETIMES A PROBLEM			
51					
52	<b>Barriers more applicable to other services (e.g. Travel Assistance)</b>				
53	Recognising which bus, train, tram or tube I need to use is:	DIFFICULT			
54	Telling other people where I need to go in Greater London is:	SOMETIMES A PROBLEM			
55	During the day, I feel safe and confident on the bus, train, tram or tube or at the station:	OFTEN			
56	I receive support from staff when there is a problem or change to my journey:	SOME OF THE TIME			
57					

- 5.18 Interviewers therefore needed to begin the interview without assistance from the programme. How they managed this is discussed in Chapter Six.
- 5.19 One of the main findings from this pilot study is that the Excel assessment tool does not currently guide the interviewer through:
- welcoming and putting the applicant at ease;
  - explaining the interview ‘process’;
  - answering any questions the applicant might have; and
  - asking some preliminary ‘contextual’ questions.
- 5.20 The interviewers were provided with an ‘introduction and notes<sup>4</sup>’ from TfL. However analysis indicates that this was not generally followed ‘to the letter’, interviewers developing their own style and adapting to the circumstances as they saw appropriate.

<sup>4</sup> This has been included as Appendix A

- 5.21 Interviewers, and observers<sup>5</sup>, were asked how structured they believed this preliminary section should be and they were clear that the Excel assessment instrument should structure this section of the interview and include ‘headings’ that the interviewer should be required to talk to, not a formal script.

### **Understanding the Applicant**

- 5.22 As already discussed, both the interviewers and observers had some concerns with regard to the interview gathering data that would help them to ‘understand’ the applicant:

- as an individual;
- their personal circumstances; and
- their travel horizons.

- 5.23 These questions do not need to be a part of the formal assessment, but they would ‘lubricate the process’, addressing a need for the applicant to ‘explain themselves’, and enable the interviewer to build an understanding of the person they are interviewing and the life they lead.

### **Confirming and clarifying**

- 5.24 One of the major difficulties the interviewers faced in some interviews was that, as the interview progressed, the answers that had been provided on the application form were sometimes contradictory:

- things that were a barrier in the application form were not a barrier in the interview; and
- things that were not a barrier in the application form were a barrier in the interview.

- 5.25 The real problem that this posed was that the assessment instrument directed the interviewer to ask either too many or too few questions. Both of these are undesirable, as too many questions leads to an overly long, and often repetitious interview, while too few questions mean that the applicant’s barriers may not be being probed.

- 5.26 Whilst the interviewers in the pilot study were able to over-ride the instrument; this is something that should be avoided where possible as it can lead to a lack of consistency in the process.

- 5.27 Discussions with the interviewers have indicated that it is important, as part of the interview process, to review key responses given in the application form to confirm that the answers given are accurate.

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<sup>5</sup> All the observers are experienced qualitative research professionals with extensive experience of running focus groups and depth interviews and experienced with developing rapport with those being interviewed.

5.28 The implication, in terms of assessment instrument design, is that the interviewer needs to be able to review key inputs and make changes as appropriate and this is almost certainly best done at the beginning of the interview as a structured part of an introductory section.

#### **Yes No – But**

5.29 The assessment instrument has to balance the need for detail against the practicalities of a time constrained interview situation. At the moment this is achieved by extensive use of the YES NO question supplemented either by ‘DON’T KNOW’ or ‘OTHER’ responses.

5.30 In the pilots it was particularly noticeable that the ‘other’ option (not YES / NO i.e. a freehand response not taken into account by the programme) is posing problems.

5.31 When a YES / NO answer could not be given immediately, the interviewer could probe in more detail, and then make a judgment to give a YES / NO response (which would give the instrument data that can be fed back to the interviewer on the assessment summary at the end of the interview. The alternative is to enter a free hand response.

#### **Travel Horizons**

5.32 The application form asks about journeys generically, and many participants interpret this with regard to current behaviour (which is often very limited). There are no questions specifically asking about potential behaviour, and the ‘recent journey’ question (S4) is not really appropriate for this purpose.

5.33 In the pilot tests the interviewers were able to explore in some cases ‘occasional’ or ‘potential’ journeys, and in these instances the questions did provide insights into very limited horizons.

5.34 The following examples illustrate this issue:

*S2: Is the information about WHERE to catch the (MODE) clear to you?*

5.35 Many participants answered ‘yes’ to this question, but their response (we know from other sources) related to the journeys they make regularly and in many instances for journeys they make with another person (who does the ‘navigation’).

5.36 The point that has emerged from the pilots is that the interviewer really does need to explore these questions in relation to various scenarios, these could include:

- A regular journey;
- An occasional journey; and
- A journey they would like to make.

*S4: Previous Journey*

5.37 This module asks detailed questions about a previous journey the applicant has already made. This fails to capture data from those people who either do not travel or those

with very limited horizons.

### **Disability and Mobility**

- 5.38 Whilst the barrier questions address a wide range of types of barriers, the perception of both the observers and the interviewers is that the emphasis is seen to lie on mobility based barriers.
- 5.39 The barriers encountered by those with vision, hearing, mental, and learning impairments are covered in the questions (e.g. 'could you see, could you hear, is it clear, do you feel safe, do you feel confident'). However these were spread out through the questionnaire, and are not as focused as the mobility questions 'does walking ..., does climbing, does standing, does walking up / down slopes'.
- 5.40 The following example illustrates another point, the very diverse range of impairments, and how important it is for the interviewer to be able to explore the nature of an impairment, if they are to understand the person.
- 5.41 One participant experienced barriers that were not related to his mobility. This applicant was presented to the team as someone who had hearing difficulties. However, as the interview progressed and with sensitive questioning on the part of the interviewer, it became apparent that his hearing issues were not that he was '*hard of hearing*', but rather, that he experienced auditory hallucinations in the form of music which he could hear in his ear (but others could not hear).
- 5.42 This would occur at times when he felt stressed or out of control. Waiting for transport which did not turn up at the time expected was a prime example of one of the situations when the respondent would feel a loss of control. His means of trying to cope with these auditory hallucinations was to meditate:
- "I have a burden, as far as my head is concerned... A nice gift. It is so heavy. I have to meditate every day to put it back in my feet. From my head to my feet."*
- 5.43 This solution was not always feasible and so these experiences were limiting the number of travel opportunities open to this respondent.
- 5.44 It is clearly difficult for relatively simple questions to pick this up as an issue. So whilst the interviewers were able to establish the nature of the disability, this would have been facilitated if they were already equipped with an understanding of the applicant.

## Explanations and Language

- 5.45 Whilst generally the instructions provided in both the support material and Excel assessment instrument are good, it is very difficult for them to be read ‘verbatim’ and for them to sound ‘natural’. The following examples illustrate this point.

*Introductory notes:*

### **Introduction and Notes for Interviewers:**

#### **Script:**

Thank you for coming in today to answer some questions for us. As you might now know from our letter and/or from filling in the application form, we are carrying out research on behalf of Transport for London to help improve accessible transport.

I'll just introduce you to my colleague (observer/s name/s) who will be taking some notes and to (scribe's name) who will be typing in your answers. You don't have to worry about them – they are here to help us record things for our research.

I am going to ask some questions that explore in a little more detail, some of the answers you have given on the application form.

#### **Guide:**

**Show the participant their completed application form and then also the excel spreadsheet on the computer. It might be worth reviewing a few of the answers on the application form with them to remind them of their answers and to refresh their memory about the form.**

#### **Script:**

The questions will mainly be about how easy it is for you to travel around London. I will explain the questions before I ask them but if you are unsure of anything please let me know.

The questions have a number of possible answers so I will let you know what the different options are when I ask each question. I also have some answer cards so that you can see these more easily. If you do want to add anything more to your answer please feel free to do that.

### *Excel Assessment Tool*

**EXPLAIN TO THE APPLICANT:** In this section of the interview I will be asking you some questions on any physical barriers (like steps and ramps) that you might experience when you use public transport. I am asking these questions because on your application form you said that getting to your stop, or getting on or off public transport and getting to your destination can be difficult. We want to find out a little more about this.

- 5.46 Whether or not it was intended, interviewers did try to read these statements verbatim.

However this quickly stopped and the words adapted to the situation.

- 5.47 The view of both the interviewers and observers is that neither of these approaches is ideal, and as discussed elsewhere, training on what to say should be provided and the Excel assessment instrument should manage this process to ensure consistency. However it should not be written in such a way as to provide precise wording.

### ***Language***

#### ***'Official Speak'***

- 5.48 The following illustrates how the use of over formal language led to problems of interpretation:

#### *Receive*

- 5.49 '*Are you aware it may be possible to receive reduced rate tickets*' was frequently not understood and either needed to be re-phrased e.g. as '*did you know you can get cheaper fares*' or related to his/her own travel behaviour.
- 5.50 In the case of one applicant with a long term mental health condition, the question was completely misunderstood and taken to mean that he might 'receive' some kind of prize. 'Receive' and 'reduced rate' are not commonly used in everyday English speech and therefore liable to be misinterpreted, particularly by those with more limited understanding or for whom English is not their first language. 'Receive' also appears in 'I receive support from staff'.

#### *Communicate*

- 5.51 'Communication' and 'Communicate face-to-face' were both difficult for some applicants to understand. While they are both in common parlance among younger generations and those working in a business environment, older people and those who grew up before the growth of IT are less familiar with the phrases.
- 5.52 There were numerous examples of elderly and frail respondents and those with some learning difficulties who looked baffled and needed help understanding these expressions. In most cases, simply using the words 'talk' or 'speak' would be more appropriate.

#### *Call Centre Staff*

- 5.53 'Call centre staff' is a further example of a contemporary phrases which was often not understood by older people and the interviewer frequently needed to explain that this was 'the people you talk to when you phone up or press the help button'.

#### *Minicom*

- 5.54 'Minicom' was not understood by many applicants and was frequently omitted by interviewers once they realised this was the case. It appears to be such an infrequently used (or available) medium in the UK as to be unworthy of mention.

*Essential Carer*

- 5.55 'Essential carer or companion' was largely understood but, again, sounds like 'official speak' and could be re-phrased to sound less formal e.g. 'usual companion' or 'someone you feel you must have with you in order to travel'.

*Mobility Aid*

- 5.56 'Mobility aid' was so infrequently understood that interviewers often pre-empted the phrase by specifying the aid which they knew the applicant to use e.g. wheelchair or frame or stick. Where this was not known, they would give these as examples of what they meant if the interviewee looked confused or asked for clarification.

**Duplication and repetition**

- 5.57 The pilot studies did encounter a number of situations where the applicant was asked essentially very similar questions in sequence. Section S2 asks a total of 16 questions about (WHICH, WHERE TO GET ON OFF, HOW TO BUY TICKET) for four modes, bus, train, tram, and tube.

Is the information about WHERE to catch the bus, train, tram, tube clear to you?	
the bus?	NO
the train?	NO
the tram?	NO
the tube?	NO

- 5.58 This section was obviously difficult for the interviewer to manage and caused considerable frustration with applicants.

**General Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 5.59 This conclusion section discusses findings in this chapter under the following headings:

- checking information;
- understanding the applicant; and
- the programme interface.

*Checking information*

- 5.60 A significant problem was identified with data on the application form being inaccurate. There is therefore a requirement to build a 'data checking' stage into the early stages of the interview, and enabling the interviewer to change the 'worksheets' / question areas asked. It is worth noting that, for audit trail purposes, this will need to be saved as a separate file, available in the event of an appeal.

*Understanding the applicant*

- 5.61 Given the complexity of the subject, the questions do need to be relatively simple. The focus is on 'barriers' and the application process stands or falls on its ability to develop questions that identify potential barriers and establish whether they are in

reality impacting on the applicant.

- 5.62 The difficulty the assessment instrument faces is asking the questions that are relevant to the applicant and in sufficient detail to enable them to answer the questions in a way that is meaningful and relevant to them and meets the information requirements of the application process.
- 5.63 It may be possible to develop a set of questions that are so detailed that a question can be put that is relevant to their individual circumstances. However, the questionnaire would be so long and tedious that it would be all but impossible to administer.
- 5.64 Equally, an assessment instrument could be developed to incorporate more detailed sub-questions (expanding the drop down boxes). It is anticipated that this would need to be developed on the basis of experience and would enable the questions in the questionnaire to be more focused. This may be possible, but would require considerable additional development time and questionnaire redesign. At this stage this is not recommended, but it is a possible refinement of the process at some future date.
- 5.65 The alternative is to equip the interviewers with sufficient 'background' information that will enable them to tailor the questions to the individual applicant.
- 5.66 The recommendation, therefore, is to develop a preliminary stage to the programme that captures a wide range of background, lifestyle, and travel horizons information, but does not use this data in the assessment scoring process. Instead, the programme should record this data (for quality assurance purposes) which would be used by the interviewer to 'focus' questions and make them relevant to the applicant.
- 5.67 Consideration should also be given to expanding the questions in S4, relating to a recent journey, to enable the assessor to gain a better understanding of occasional journeys, or journeys that the applicant is now unable to make.

#### *The instrument interface*

- 5.68 The Excel assessment instrument at the moment is not 'user friendly'. The next chapter deals with the process issues this raises. However from a 'questionnaire' perspective it does need to manage the process and provide signposts **for the interviewer**, such as:
- Introductions;
  - purpose of interview;
  - housekeeping issues;
  - personal circumstances;
  - application form 'check' and 'correct';
  - travel horizons;
  - MAIN INTERVIEW; and
  - close and next steps.

- 5.69 Section S2 includes a number of questions about using buses, trains, trams, and tubes which proved to be very repetitious. Consideration should be given to finding some way of reducing the repetition, possibly by screening questions, or the use of 'autofill'. An alternative might be training interviewers to enable them to complete some of these questions, without actually asking the questions. This however does pose its own problems and would need to be accompanied by extensive training of the interviewers.
- 5.70 The role of the interviewer, which is discussed in detail in the next chapter, is to work within this structure and to focus the questions to secure the information required to make a decision.

## 6. APPLICATION INTERVIEW - PROCESS

### Introduction

6.1 This section of the report is analysed under the following headings:

- working with the applicant and the Excel assessment instrument;
- getting started and explanations;
- spatial relationships; and
- use of the assessment instrument.

### Working with the Applicant and the Assessment Instrument

6.2 Analysis indicates that the process 'success' or 'failure' of an individual interview is dependent on the interviewer's ability to engage with the applicant and work with them to gather the information required by the assessment instrument to make an assessment.

6.3 As discussed in the previous chapter, it is clear that whilst the information required to make that assessment is collected by the questions asked by the instrument, it is vital that the interviewer is able to gather the information and this does require them to empathise with the applicant, understand their personal circumstances and the journeys they currently do and do not make. It must be stressed that this is not something new since this data **is already being gathered** in the pilot interviews. However, it is being done piecemeal and 'off script'.

### Getting Started and Explanations

6.4 The instrument currently does not include an introductions section and the pilots illustrate a wide range of approaches to opening the interview process.

6.5 Analysis indicates that many of the interviews opened in a relatively unstructured way. This was, at least in part, driven by the requirement to undertake the application form interview before the main interview. However, the main finding is that the Excel assessment instrument does need to include a briefing and explanatory section. This will better manage the process and provide consistency.

6.6 In the pilots, the interviews did not always provide a clear explanation of:

- the purpose and structure of the interview;
- the range of possible outcomes;
- the process that will be followed; and
- a 'getting to know you' section – important contextual information.

6.7 Given the variations seen in the pilot interviews, this very important preliminary stage needs to be built into the interview process, and the best way to do that is for it to be '*managed*' by the instrument but '*executed*' by the interviewer – in their own style, but within specified guidelines.

## Spatial Relationships

- 6.8 The three key elements to the interview are:
- the applicant (and possibly carer);
  - the interviewer; and
  - the computer.
- 6.9 The pilots were complicated by the presence of observers, a camera operator, and sometimes scribes and others. These have been discounted from the following analysis.
- 6.10 The study reveals that there is a strong correlation between the relationship of the three<sup>6</sup> main participants and ‘process success’<sup>7</sup>. It is important that all three work together for the process to work, and this means that the instrument must not be allowed to ‘dominate’ or ‘interrupt’ the relationship between the interviewer and the applicant. However neither can it be ‘pushed to one side’.
- 6.11 Interview situations tended to be with the interviewer sitting tangentially to the applicant and there was usually the corner of a table or desk separating them. Overall this worked well. There were a few situations where the interviewer sat directly opposite the applicant and, while this usually worked adequately, we would suggest this be avoided if possible since it has the potential to engender an over formal ‘feel’ to the process which could be intimidating for some applicants. In some situations the interviewer and applicant sat in low chairs, with a low table. Whilst this worked it would be better to maintain consistency with the table at ‘normal’ desk height.
- 6.12 Many of the most successful interviews appeared to be where the interviewer and interviewee were seated physically ‘closer’, minimising space between them, and enabling both the interviewer, and the interviewee – if they wanted to - to see the computer screen.
- 6.13 This ‘distance’ and ‘separation’ issue was particularly noticeable, but not limited to, situations where the applicant was in a wheelchair.
- 6.14 What did not appear to work well was the computer being on the ‘other side’ of the interviewer. This led to considerable head movements by the interviewer (like a spectator watching a tennis match). In these situations the applicant often began to exhibit signs of frustration or disengagement (see below).
- 6.15 A far better situation was where the computer was placed between the interviewer and the applicant, so that both the interviewer and the applicant could see the computer (if they wished to) but the interviewer did not need to move their head in order to see the guidance / next question on the screen.

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<sup>6</sup> Or four if a carer or other intermediary was present.

<sup>7</sup> The technical success of the interview as a piece of communication.

## Use of the Assessment Instrument

6.16 The assessment instrument is central to the ‘process’. In some of the interviews it was operated by a ‘scribe’.

6.17 This section is analysed under the following two headings

- structuring the interview; and
- role in the engagement and asking questions.

### *Structuring the interview*

6.18 For the interviews to work consistently they need to be structured. The programme already structures the main information gathering stages and whilst there were a number of issues related to clarification, question detail, and repetition (discussed elsewhere), the structure of the main sections of the interview worked well.

6.19 The same cannot be said of other aspects of the interview: the interviews lacked structure and consistency during the introduction, the gathering of background information (discussed elsewhere), and at the close.

### *Role in the engagement and asking questions*

6.20 This section addresses a fundamental question in relation to the interview questionnaire. The instrument asks simple, essentially YES / NO questions that address complicated issues.

6.21 The difficulty that the interviewers faced was that the questions were very often not able to be meaningfully answered by the applicant without them being tailored to the individual. There is therefore a very heavy duty on the interviewer to take the basic questions in the instrument and re-phrase them to make them appropriate to each individual.

6.22 Figure 6.1 illustrates the problem the questionnaire poses.

**FIGURE 6.1 INTERVIEW FORM QUESTION EXAMPLE**

Is the information about WHERE to catch the bus, train, tram, tube clear to you?	
the bus?	<input type="checkbox"/>
the train?	<input type="checkbox"/>
the tram?	<input type="checkbox"/>
the tube?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:	

6.23 In the pilots the interviewers tended just to ask this question ‘verbatim’. This frequently led to looks of confusion from the applicants, which can be interpreted as:

- what sort of information?
- what sort of journeys?
- when I am alone or when I am with someone?
- at what stage of the journey? (some people thought it meant the signage at the bus stop or at the station).

6.24 The questions were then expanded upon and clarified. This report has already established that the assessment instrument needs to be helped. The proposal is that the interviewer needs to take this question and phrase it in such a way as to be meaningful to the applicant. How this is phrased should be based on the knowledge of the person gained in the introduction section, discussed earlier, and in accordance with guidelines or scenarios that TfL should develop, but something along the lines of:

- if you wanted to make a journey by bus that you have not made before, do you know where you would find out what you need to know?
- if you wanted to see your sister in Wimbledon, do you know where you would find out information about how to get there using the tram?

6.25 As is clear from the above examples, these are questions that can be answered by a simple YES or NO. This will enable the instrument to operate as intended.

### **General Conclusions and Recommendations**

6.26 This summary section deals with the main ‘strategic issues’ identified in this chapter:

- working with the applicant and the Excel assessment instrument;
- getting started and explanations;
- spatial relationships; and
- use of the assessment instrument;

#### *Working with the applicant and the Excel assessment instrument*

6.27 The interviewer has to equip themselves with as much relevant knowledge of the applicant, their circumstances, the journeys they make (and do not make) at the beginning, and during the course of the interview. This knowledge can then be used to focus the assessment instrument’s questions.

#### *Getting started and explanations*

6.28 The assessment instrument needs to manage and provide consistency to the process from the beginning. This means prompting all the stages, including introductions and background questions. In order to ensure that this process is followed, it is suggested that the interviewer needs to confirm a stage has been completed, before moving on to the next stage.

#### *Managing the interview set up*

6.29 The assessment instrument needs to manage the set up in order to ensure consistency:

- the purpose and structure of the interview;
- the range of possible outcomes;
- the process that will be followed; and
- a ‘getting to know you’ section.

### *Spatial relationships*

- 6.30 The interview set up needs to be free from distractions and the spatial relationship between the interviewer, the applicant, and the computer should be managed to facilitate the process. It is recommended that the interviewer should aim to sit tangentially to the applicant, and be as close as feels appropriate.

### *Use of the assessment instrument*

- 6.31 The assessment instrument has an important role to play, but we must be clear: the interview is between the interviewer and the interviewee. The instrument is there to help manage and standardise the process; the role of the interviewer (in this context) is to frame the questions in such a way as to secure the answers that the instrument requires.
- 6.32 Interviewers need to follow the structure of the interview as directed by the instrument, not only in the main information gathering stages, but also at the beginning and end of the process.
- 6.33 The interviewer needs to take the basic questions (or more accurately 'information requirements') and translate them into questions that the applicant can answer.

## **7. INTERVIEWER SKILL SET AND APPLICANT RESPONSE**

7.1 This section of the report is analysed under the following headings

- interviewer skill set;
- medical and transport knowledge;
- interviewer styles;
- outcomes by interviewer;
- applicant engagement; and
- applicant feedback.

### **Interview Skill Set**

7.2 All the interviewers used in this pilot study were very accomplished professionals and good communicators. They all had an understanding of both the medical and social model, as well as having applied the social model to their own professions. One interviewer was a doctor, academic and disability consultant, who is a disabled person. Two interviewers were occupational therapists who understand the social model and incorporate social barriers in their day to day work.

7.3 Interviewees varied. There were a number of people who were good communicators and lucid. However, many, particularly some of the older applicants, people with learning difficulties, and those with communications impairments, posed greater challenges.

7.4 The job of the interviewer is quickly to assess the applicant and adopt a style that is appropriate to securing the most fruitful communication with that person. Any interview is an interaction between two individuals and involves a combination of:

- listening;
- asking questions; and
- clarifying.

7.5 However the interviewer needs to adapt their style to the individual and that is done through a number of means including:

- watching;
- processing; and
- adapting.

7.6 Analysis of the interviewers indicates that whilst styles differed they used similar techniques:

- positioning the interview;
- working with the applicant to help them through the interview;
- techniques:
  - empathising;
  - ignoring slights;
  - echoing; and

- positive feedback.

7.7 The following sections consider each of these techniques:

#### ***Positioning the interview***

7.8 The beginning of many of the interviews was relatively unstructured and this has already been discussed. This was in part a result of the focus on the pilot process, rather than engaging with the applicant and explaining about the interview. This led to some applicants becoming agitated and disengaged at this point.

7.9 The lesson from this experience is that any ‘housekeeping issues’ do need to be undertaken outside of the interview situation and if at all possible done by someone else. Once the applicant meets the interviewer the focus needs to be on explaining the interview and application process and positioning the role of the interviewer in that process. As discussed elsewhere, to ensure consistency, this needs to be managed by the instrument.

7.10 Whilst personal styles were different, all three interviewers tended to position their role in the interview as ‘helping the applicant through the process’. Given the role of the Excel assessment instrument this is an effective strategy and places the interviewer, in the eyes of the applicant, as an ‘intermediary’. This is a positive, non-confrontational, position to be in for the remainder of the interview.

#### ***Working with the applicant to help them through the interview***

7.11 Analysis of the interviews indicates that the interviewers worked hard to explain questions and probe responses. However, this was done in a very ad-hoc way and in reality will lead to variations in out-turns. As discussed elsewhere, the interviewers need to equip themselves with knowledge about the applicant, and then phrase questions in a manner that is relevant to them so as to enable a YES NO response.

#### ***Techniques***

7.12 This section discusses a number of interviewing techniques used by the interviewers. The main issue, however, is that the interviewers used a range of recognised interviewing techniques that enabled them to engage in a structured discussion with the applicants to gain the information they required.

7.13 As discussed elsewhere, this is not a simple question and answer interview. The answers have to be simple, the questions need to be focused, and this requires the interviewer both to have some understanding of the applicant and engage with them to secure answers that accurately fulfil the information requirement. The following techniques are therefore important tools that enable them to achieve that goal.

#### ***Empathising***

7.14 The interviewers undertook a considerable amount of empathising, showing concern for the barriers applicants faced. This worked very effectively and needs to be an important interview technique that interviewers are trained in and encouraged to use.

### *Echoing*

- 7.15 Most of the interviews showed use of the ‘echoing’ technique, repeating for clarification what the applicant had said. This technique worked well, encouraging applicants to add further detail and better informing the interviewer of the point being made.

### *Positive feedback*

- 7.16 One of the interviewers in particular made extensive use of positive feedback ‘yes, yes’. This worked well for her. Other interviewers should be encouraged to use their own positive feedback techniques as this encourages applicants to ‘open up’.

### *Ignoring slights*

- 7.17 Many of the applicants made comments that were either uncomplimentary of TfL, to dial a ride, or other members of the community. All interviewers were extremely adept at sidestepping these and ‘moving on’.

## **Medical, social model, and transport knowledge**

### *Medical Knowledge*

- 7.18 This observation and analysis of the interviews is not really competent to comment on medical knowledge of the interviewers. However the interviewers were all healthcare professionals with an understanding of the social model and the discussions with them at the end of the interviews indicated that they had frequently needed to employ their medical knowledge in their assessments.
- 7.19 Analysis of the interviewer responses to whether or not their medical knowledge was useful indicates that in the 47 interviews for which we have relevant data, on 16 occasions (34%) the interviewer reported that medical knowledge played a role in the decision making process.

### *Transport knowledge*

- 7.20 The analysis indicates that there was limited knowledge of the transport networks in the relevant locations. On a few occasions interviewers showed their lack of local knowledge by asking about trams in West or East London and the availability of ‘talking buses’ and where they were available.

## **Individual interviewer styles**

### ***Stephen***

- 7.21 Because Stephen had had time to become very familiar with the Excel assessment instrument, he was able to make the verbal links between sections without losing eye contact with the participant. This undoubtedly helped with the engagement of the interviewee.
- 7.22 Stephen used positive feedback and echoing at times and also used his knowledge of the sequence and wording of the instrument to re-frame questions to suit the needs of

the applicant.

- 7.23 Stephen did not use body language, facial expressions or hand gestures for emphasis.
- 7.24 In those interviews where someone was acting as scribe, Stephen was able to maintain almost continuous eye contact with the participant. This was obviously less easy when he was inputting the data himself (with the laptop on his lap) but this did not appear to interrupt either the flow or the level of eye contact unduly.

### ***Lynley***

- 7.25 Lynley managed to combine maintaining strong eye contact and entering the data on the computer without seemingly losing the concentration of the participant.
- 7.26 Throughout all of the sessions she used affirmation ('yep', 'ok', 'that's good') and echoing to give feedback yet kept a neutral stance in terms of her body language. Despite the fact that in most of the sessions she had both the computer and desk between herself and the applicant, there was no lack of engagement and, in most cases the participants appeared involved and interested in the process.
- 7.27 Even when talking to someone with a learning difficulty the computer did not appear to be a barrier. To a large extent, Lynley achieved this with very positive and warm facial expressions (smiling and nodding a lot) and by explaining the role of the computer and re-iterating the need to enter data at appropriate moments (e.g. when additional comments needed to be made, she would say 'I'm just going to type in what you've said').

### ***Nikki***

- 7.28 Nikki had a somewhat different interview style from Stephen and Lynley. She found inputting the information onto the computer very distracting and preferred to maintain eye contact with the interviewee and engage them in conversation to get the information she needed. She frequently used positive verbal feedback : ('well done', 'that's great', 'OK lovely', 'wonderful') and echoing (e.g. 'so that's OK , you don't mind'), used a lot of facial expressions and hand movements to emphasise her meaning when asking questions and bent over the edge of the desk so that her face was close to that of the participant. This meant that when she did need to enter data on the computer she had to turn away from the applicant.
- 7.29 Her style developed through the interview process and on the second interviewing occasion she clearly had a much better feeling for what questions were included and which ones were coming up. This meant she engaged the respondent in a conversation which covered the relevant areas. She then filled in parts of the questionnaire when there was an appropriate moment in the interview.
- 7.30 She reported that her preferred way of doing the interview would be to take handwritten notes and then complete the form afterwards.
- 7.31 The effect on the applicant of this interviewing approach depended very much on the personality and the communication skills of the individual being interviewed. The majority of those interviewed by Nikki had learning difficulties and the strong eye contact and use of empathy on the part of the interviewer worked well. However, the

## Outcomes by Interviewer

**TABLE 7.1 OUTOMES BY INTERVIEWER**

	No. of Interviews	Door to Door Services	Other Services	Not Deemed Suitable for D2D Services
Stephen	9	33%	33%	33%
Lynley	33	64%	12%	24%
Nikki	7	43%	14%	43%

Note: variation between interviewers in interview sample

- 7.32 There is considerable variation in the recommendations made. However the samples for each interviewer were very different, both in terms of size and the nature of the disabilities. The following table therefore compares the final recommendations with the preliminary assessment made by the Excel assessment tool on the basis of the application form.

**TABLE 7.2 VARIATION TO APPLICATION FORM PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT**

	No. of Interviews	More Assistance Than Application Form	Less Assistance Than Application Form	Same Level Of Assistance As Application Form
Stephen	9	11%	33%	56%
Lynley	33	36%	6%	45%
Nikki	7	43%	14%	43%

Note: variation between interviewers in interview sample

- 7.33 This analysis shows that approximately half of the decisions being made are the same as the initial assessment.
- 7.34 Given the size and very different composition of the samples for each interviewer, it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions from this analysis.

## Outcomes Comparison

- 7.35 Three interviews were analysed by a second interviewer to compare the decisions made. These interviews were chosen because they were marginal.
- 7.36 Two out of the three interviews came up with the same decision, however the third

one came up with a different decision (the difference being between offering someone travel assistance or not).

## Applicant Engagement

7.37 This short section considers:

- ‘comfort’ (participants’ use of body language, engagement, interest in the process);
- ‘comprehension’ (the degree to which they understood the process and the questions);
- ‘responses’ the way in which participants responded to the interviewer (whether they gave open / closed answers, and the extent to which they were able to provide meaningful answers); and

### *Comfort*

7.38 It was noticeable in a number of interviews that applicants were displaying signs of frustration and sometimes disengagement in the process. Tell-tale signs of this included excessive fidgeting, eyes wandering around the room, and short closed answers to questions.

7.39 Comments in the notes from the observers include:

*“Respondent looked quite nervous (finger in mouth) but interviewer very reassuring (saying ‘if you can’t answer it doesn’t matter’ ‘can you hear all right’ etc.) and gradually he relaxed.”*

*“Looks confused”*

*“Which train to catch....which tram.....which tube.....all slightly uncomfortable for him as he cannot read”*

*“Got very agitated at times, holding back frustration”.*

7.40 Clearly the nature of the impairment is an important factor, and on the basis of the pilots, some applicants would be unlikely to cope with any questionnaire, and would need to be accompanied. However analysis indicates that the situation is not helped by:

- the unfocused way in which many of the questions were asked;
- extended pauses whilst the interviewer refers to the computer;
- the interviewer looking away, to look at the computer; and
- repetition of questions.

7.41 All of these issues have been discussed elsewhere; the point to be made here is that on the basis of the pilots, the process needs to focus on the individual as this will minimise any loss of engagement.

### *Comprehension*

7.42 Some of the more elderly and a few of those with learning difficulties had difficulty comprehending some of the questions.

7.43 Comments from the observer notes include:

*“Interviewer needed to re-phrase questions so that he could understand by personalising trips ‘if your sister wasn’t with you went shopping would you know how to find the right bus?’ ‘Does your sister have to be with you when you travel on a bus?’ ‘When you travel with your sister on the bus and it’s crowded.....’ etc”.*

*“Walking more than 5 minutes – didn’t seem to understand; interpreted it as ‘with a wheelchair’”*

*“XXXX doesn’t look convinced”*

*“Said he was confident travelling, but looked unsure how to answer”*

*“Seemed not to understand the difference between safe and confident”*

*“Not sure he understood questions about buying a ticket : e.g. how and where”*

*“Mobility equipment’ not understood”*

*“Didn’t understand communicate or call centre”*

*“She understood bus to mean minibus”*

*“She understood comfortable for confident”*

*“Didn’t really understand questions about asking for help”*

*“Reduced rate tickets not understood”.*

7.44 This problem is to at least some extent driven by the general nature of the questions, as already discussed. By addressing this issue, the comprehension problem will be reduced.

7.45 However, the pilots do indicate there are likely to be some applicants for whom the nature of their impairment means that there is very little that could be done to improve the situation by changes to the questions / way they are asked. In these circumstances it is vital that a carer is present to answer on the applicant’s behalf.

#### *Responses*

7.46 The problems with the general nature of the questions, combined with the interviewer having to enter data into the assessment instrument, appears to have led to a small number of applicants disengaging and providing relatively short ‘closed’ responses.

7.47 In a very small number of instances responses were not forthcoming and the interviewer found it necessary to ‘put answers into their mouths’. In many cases this can be attributed to the nature of the impairment. However in others it appeared to be more to do with a relatively negative ‘mind set’ that some applicants had got into as a result of:

- the process issues - already discussed; and
- the lack of interest that the assessment instrument shows in them as an individual.

7.48 Examples from observer notes include:

*'Interviewer sometimes put words into applicant's mouth e.g. 'travelling on your own is impossible?' in order to be able to use the scale'*

*'But sometimes misunderstood questions and answered in his own way'*

*'This respondent ... had problems understanding questions – when stairs questions were asked he talked about stairs at home'*

7.49 It is believed that the recommendation in previous chapters will go a long way to address these issues.

### **Applicant Feedback**

7.50 All the applicants were interviewed by the observer at the end of their interview and almost all were generally very positive:

*"Found it enjoyable. Not the kind of person to complain. Enjoying the chat. No complaints. Something to break the boredom of being at the home."* [OBSERVER COMMENT]

*"It was OK, some of the questions were easy to understand but I had to ask again because sometimes I don't understand fully"*

*"Said he was comfortable with interview. Felt his answers were helpful. Reported that he did not feel confused."* [OBSERVER COMMENT]

*"Felt all was clear. No problems with any part. .Could answer all questions and felt he answered them fully. Patient and comfortable."*[OBSERVER COMMENT]

7.51 However some other quotes and comments from the observers include:

*"Reached his limit during this interview. He had had enough. Getting a little distressed / tired. Stopped speaking. Simply saying 'Yes'."* [OBSERVER COMMENT]

*"If I were running this project I would make it easier for people to understand"*

*"Some were a bit complicated to answer".*

### **General Conclusions and Recommendations**

7.52 This summary section deals with the main 'strategic issues' identified in this chapter  
*Interviewer skill set*

7.53 The interviewers need the skills to engage with the applicant and this requires them to

use a number of standard interviewing skills to ensure this happens.

- 7.54 The interviewer needs the skills to explain the interview and guide the applicant through the process.
- 7.55 Interviewers need to adapt their style and approach to the needs of the person they are dealing with.
- 7.56 The set up of the interview is important and the interviewer needs to take care to position the applicant, and the computer, so as to minimise distractions and maximise 'engagement'.

*Medical and transport knowledge*

- 7.57 The interviewers clearly used their medical knowledge in approximately a third of the interviews; interviewers therefore need to have medical training and knowledge.
- 7.58 Interviewers need to be thoroughly briefed on the public transport provision, particularly with regard to the area in which they are working.

*Decisions*

- 7.59 The fact that in the control test one of the decisions made was different to the original interview is of concern. However it highlights the point that in borderline cases different decisions will be made on occasion. This must be minimised and monitored
- 7.60 It is therefore vital that the interviewers receive thorough training and that both interviews and decisions must be subject to ongoing quality audits.

## 8. HOW WELL DID THE INTERVIEW PROCESS WORK

*This chapter considers the ability of the interview process to make an accurate assessment of the applicant's need for door to door services or advice and assistance with public transport.*

8.1 A key element of the post-interview discussion with the interviewer was an evaluation of the outcome:

- how the interviewer made their decision;
- how easy it was to make the eligibility assessment based on the interview;
- how confident the interviewer was with their decision;
- how comfortable the interviewer was with the checks and balances made during the interview; and
- whether they relied on any other observational or interpretative tools to make the decision and whether medical knowledge had been required to make the decision.

8.2 At the end of the process the interviewer was either confident or very confident in their decision. However there was considerable variation in the degree to which the questionnaire alone was sufficient for a decision to be made, whether or not the interviewer regarded the decision as 'straightforward', and the degree to which they had felt 'confident' in its accuracy.

8.3 In a number of instances the interviewer needed to employ additional judgement and/or questioning in order to make a satisfactory decision. In a small number of cases, around five percent of the interviews, the interviewer was not confident about the outcome.

### *'Straightforward' outcomes*

8.4 In a small number of instances, notably where the barriers fell clearly into one or two categories (e.g. inability to climb steps or stairs or a fear of crowded places) and the applicant was straightforward and direct in their response to the relevant questions, the decision was clear cut and perceived by the interviewer to be accurate.

8.5 For example, in the case of one care home resident with a long term respiratory illness, the main barriers highlighted by the interview were those related to climbing steps and stairs which resulted in a relatively high score and recommended assisted travel. In fact, the interviewer also used her medical knowledge and some additional questioning about his confidence (not generated by the questionnaire) about his confidence to check on the decision and provide further weight to the decision. The interviewer was confident, though, that an appropriate recommendation would be made without any of these additional 'tools'.

8.6 In another case, where the applicant had a short term mental health problem, there were clearly no physical barriers and, because her answers to the safety and confidence barriers questions indicated that she had found a way round them, no door to door or travel assistance was recommended.

*"She said no problems so that was a big factor. Only barriers were overcrowding but she avoided that ... very easy and straightforward to make the decision that she didn't need any help"*

#### *Less clear cut outcomes*

- 8.7 There were cases, though, which were much less clear cut and where additional questioning (*usually to establish current travel patterns and build up the 'bigger picture'*) and some medical insight into the applicant were needed in order to make a safe assessment.
- 8.8 In one instance, this was because the application form had been completed by the applicant's companion/carer from the point of view of the applicant travelling with the companion but worded as if the applicant were travelling alone. This meant that, in this instance, the applicant seemed more competent and capable than the interviewer believed to be the case, based on her questioning of him and having established that he would always travel accompanied. More importantly, because the application form had been answered by the carer, the assessment instrument did not ask the relevant questions in the assessment interview. This was only resolved by the interviewer questioning outside of the questionnaire and eventually asking the applicant to answer the questions 'as if' he were 'really' travelling on his own.

*"There was not enough information to make a decision, so a hard one to make. (I was) inclined to say he needs help but the assessment would not have said that".*

#### *Misleading outcomes*

- 8.9 There were other cases where it was fairly clear to the interviewer from an early stage in the interview that the applicant should be achieving a high score (i.e. did need assisted travel) but where taking their answers at face value could have given a misleading impression and resulted in a low score. This was the case with one applicant with a vision impairment who was generally coping fairly well. The interviewer needed to use additional background knowledge of the applicant to be confident of her decision.

*'When the summary box came up there were barriers more inclined to mentoring and barriers more inclined to door-to-door service and there didn't seem to be a lean towards one or the other perhaps because some of her problems were related to confidence: not willing to ask other people questions and some of the barriers were physical things like not being able to read the information or not being able to see things at night time. So it was a borderline decision but it leans more towards door to door services and mentoring wouldn't help her because she's getting around already'.*

## Recommendations

8.10 Recommendations, which are consistent with other chapters of this report, are that:

- Preliminary background questioning is necessary with the interviewer to establish current travel patterns, including usual presence of a carer/guide, mobility aid etc. and the modes used.
- If travel is usually conducted with a guide/carer to help overcome physical and psychological barriers then the interview should take this into account and ask the applicant to answer as if he/she is travelling without the carer.
- If a carer/companion is usually present for safety or communication purposes (e.g. in the case of someone with learning difficulties or a severe learning or vision impairment) then the carer should be actively encouraged to be present at the interview.
- If an applicant answers questions in a way which the interviewer judges does not accurately reflect the situation (e.g. because the applicant is very compliant or wants to appear more capable and independent than he/she really is) the interviewer should be able either to ask additional questions to ensure that the applicant understands what is required or invite a carer or key worker to be present at the interview. However it must be recognised that there may be differences between the carer and the individual view.
- Equally, if an applicant 'over-eggs' a response, implying greater need than the interviewer believes to be the case, then the interviewer not only needs to explore concerns by further questioning, but they will need to employ additional analysis based on available evidence (e.g. observation of the applicant).

## 9. OUTCOMES AND DECISIONS

### Overview

*This chapter discusses the recommendations made both as a result of completing the application form, and by the assessor following the interview.*

- 9.1 A total of 50 interviews were undertaken. However there was one instance where the same person was interviewed twice (with the agreement of the TfL representative present). The first interview has been excluded from this analysis. The analysis in this chapter is therefore based on the 'valid' 49.
- 9.2 It should be noted in the following tables that the proportion eligible for services may be influenced by a sampling bias towards those with more severe impairments.
- 9.3 The rest of this chapter will consider the outcomes under the following headings:
- headline findings;
  - not automatically eligible;
  - automatically eligible;
  - medical model segmentation; and
  - conclusions.

### Headline Findings

- 9.4 The following table summarises the main findings from the two stages of the application process:
- the application form; and
  - interview stage.
- 9.5 Where appropriate the following tables do include a 'programming error' and a 'no comment possible' column. These do not include large numbers of applications, but are necessary to account for the small number of instances where data was not available from the pilot.

## Application Form and Assessment Recommendations

9.6 The following table summarises the top-line recommendations made at both the application form and assessment stages.

**TABLE 9.1 OVERALL: RECOMMENDATIONS / DECISIONS**

	Likely Door to Door	Likely Other Services Required	No Action Required (Application & Interview)	Error	Total
Application Form No's	16	15	16	2	49
Application Form %	33%	31%	33%	4%	100%
Interview Decision No's	27	8	14	N/A	49
Interview Decision %	55%	16%	29%	N/A	100%

9.7 The data clearly illustrates that there is a marked difference in outcomes between the 'likely outcome' at the application form stage and following the 'assessment':

- with those likely to be suitable for door to door services increasing from just under a third (33%) of applicants to just over a half (55%);
- those likely to be recommended for other services halving from 31% of applicants to 16%; and
- those not judged likely to be eligible falling slightly (33% down to 29%).

9.8 As might be expected, the deeper questioning that is possible in the interviews has led to a greater understanding of the applicant, and in consequence decisions have changed.

9.9 The following table looks at how individual decisions have changed between the two application stages.

**TABLE 9.2 DECISIONS: ALL INTERVIEWS**

	Less assistance than recommended in application form	The Same recommendation at both stages	More assistance than recommended in application form
Interviews	13%	53%	33%

Note: percentages exclude applicants where analysis was not possible (8% of sample)

9.10 This table confirms that in just over half of the interviews (53%) the decision was to provide the same amount of support as anticipated at the application form stage with just under a third (33%) recommending more assistance.

### Those Not Automatically Eligible

9.11 Just under two thirds of applicants (63%, 31 interviews) were not automatically

eligible for door to door services.

9.12 The following table summarises the recommendations made at both the application form and assessment stages.

**TABLE 9.3 NOT AUTOMATICALLY ELIGIBLE: RECOMMENDATIONS / DECISIONS**

	Likely Door to Door	Likely Other Services Required	No Action Required (Application & Interview)	Error	Total
Application Form No's	5	11	14	1	31
Application Form %	17%	37%	47%	3%	100%
Interview Decision No's	16	3	12		31
Interview Decision %	52%	10%	39%		100%

9.13 There are differences between the two stages, and against the overall sample

- Amongst this group of applicants only 17% of the recommendations at the application form stage were for door to door services. However this increases to 52% following the interview.
- This is counterbalanced by the 'other services' recommendations / decisions with 37% of the recommendations at the application form stage falling to 10% after the interview.
- At the application form stage, almost half of applicants (47%) were considered likely for no intervention. This does fall following the interview, but only to 39%.

9.14 The following table looks at how individual decisions have changed between the two application stages.

**TABLE 9.4 DECISIONS: NOT AUTOMATICALLY ELIGIBLE**

	Less assistance than recommended in application form	The Same recommendation at both stages	More assistance than recommended in application form
Interviews	10%	41%	45%

Note: percentages exclude applicants where analysis was not possible (6% of sample)

9.15 Amongst this group of applicants, 45% are assessed as being in need of more assistance than the assessment instrument indicates likely on the basis of the application form.

#### **Automatic Eligibility**

9.16 18 interviews, just over a third of the sample, were 'automatically eligible'. To a certain extent this was inevitable as the quotas included people with a number of severe conditions that almost inevitably result in them being in receipt of benefits that

make them automatically eligible:

- higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance;
- higher rate attendance allowance;
- war pension mobility supplement;
- registered as blind or severely sight impaired; and
- aged 85 years or over.

9.17 The following table shows ‘likely’ outcomes following the application form, and the decision made by the assessor following the interview.

**TABLE 9.5 AUTOMATICALLY ELIGIBLE: RECOMMENDATIONS / DECISIONS**

	Likely Door to Door	Likely Other Services Required	No Action Required (Application & Interview)	Error	Total
Application Form No's	11	4	2	1	18
Application Form %	61%	22%	11%	6%	100%
Interview Decision No's	11	5	2	N/A	18
Interview Decision %	61%	28%	11%	N/A	100%

9.18 Only 61% of ‘automatically eligible’ applicants qualify for door to door services using the process tested in this pilot study. The comparable figure amongst those not automatically eligible is 52%.

9.19 A further 28% of applicants in this group did however qualify for other services. The comparable figure amongst those not automatically eligible is 10%.

9.20 Following the interview, 19% are thought not to be not eligible for any assistance. The comparable figure amongst those not automatically eligible is 39%.

9.21 The following table looks at how individual decisions have changed between the two application stages.

**TABLE 9.6 DECISIONS: AUTOMATICALLY ELIGIBLE**

	Less assistance than recommended in application form	The Same recommendation at both stages	More assistance than recommended in application form
	45%	41%	10%

Note: Percentage figures use ‘valid percent’

### ***Automatic eligibility by impairment type***

9.22 For analysis and comparison purposes the sample has been simplified into the following groups:

- mobility;
- elderly and ill;
- sight and vision; and
- learning disabilities and mental health conditions.

9.23 The elderly and ill also includes the control group.

9.24 These analysis groups provide reasonable sample bases on which to view outcomes and compare findings. However with all data of this type, it must be recalled that these are small sample sizes, the numbers quoted are ‘numeric’ rather than ‘quantitative’, and should be considered as ‘indicative’ rather than ‘definitive’.

9.25 The following table reviews the proportion of the various samples that were automatically eligible.

**TABLE 9.7 AUTOMATIC ELIGIBILITY**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Mobility</b>	<b>Elderly and Ill</b>	<b>Hearing and Vision</b>	<b>Learning and Mental disabilities</b>
Total Sample	49	11	8	13	16
No. Automatically Eligible	18	4	2	9	3
% Automatically Eligible	36%	36%	25%	69%	19%

9.26 This table demonstrates that automatic eligibility is particularly high amongst those with hearing or vision difficulties. However it should be noted how low the figure is for people with learning or mental disabilities.

### ***Automatic Eligibility and Outcomes***

9.27 Analysis of the automatically eligible group is useful to the extent that it reveals that a number of individuals would not qualify for the assisted services on the basis of the social model. The following table shows the outcomes of the interviews with people who would not normally have to go through the interview process.

**TABLE 9.8 AUTOMATIC ELIGIBILITY: ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW OUTCOMES**

	<b>No Assessment</b>	<b>Door To Door</b>	<b>Other Services</b>	<b>No Action</b>	<b>Total</b>
Assessment Interview	N/A	59%	29%	12%	100%

## Outcome by Type of Impairment

**TABLE 9.9 OVERALL: RECOMMENDATIONS / DECISIONS**

	Sample Size	Door to Door	Other Services Required	No Action Required	Total
Total Sample	49	55%	16%	29%	100%
Mobility	11	64%	9%	27%	100%
Elderly and Ill	8	63%	0%	38%	101%
Hearing and Vision	13	62%	31%	8%	101%
Learning and Mental	16	44%	19%	38%	101%

9.28 There are clear disparities amongst the groups with those with learning and mental difficulties not requiring the same level of assistance as those in other groups. However, the sample sizes are very small and care should be taken in interpreting these findings.

### Outcomes by Interviewer

9.29 Outcome by interviewer was discussed in Chapter Seven. However it is appropriate to consider the findings by interviewer in this section.

9.30 The following table compares the decisions made by each interviewer.

**TABLE 9.10 OUTOMES BY INTERVIEWER**

	No. of Interviews	Door to Door Services	Other Services	No Action Required
Interviewer 1	9	33%	33%	33%
Interviewer 2	33	64%	12%	24%
Interviewer 3	7	43%	14%	43%

Note: variation between interviewers in interview sample

9.31 It is clear that there is considerable variation in the recommendations made. However the samples for each interviewer were very different, both in terms of size and the nature of the disabilities. The following table therefore compares the final recommendations with the preliminary assessment made by the Excel assessment instrument on the basis of the application form.

**TABLE 9.11 VARIATION TO APPLICATION FORM PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT**

	No. of Interviews	More Assistance Than Application Form	Less Assistance Than Application Form	Same Level Of Assistance As Application Form
Interviewer 1	9	11%	33%	56%
Interviewer 2	33	36%	6%	45%
Interviewer 3	7	43%	14%	43%

Note: variation between interviewers in interview sample

- 9.32 This analysis shows that approximately half of the decisions being made are the same as the initial assessment.

### **Conclusions from this Chapter**

- 9.33 On the basis of this relatively small sample, just over half of applicants (55%) qualify for door to door services using this application of the social model. If those automatically eligible are excluded, the figure falls to 52%.
- 9.34 A further 16% qualify for other services. If those who are automatically eligible are excluded, the figure falls to 10%.
- 9.35 However 29% would receive no assistance. This increases to 39% amongst those not automatically eligible.
- 9.36 Whilst automatic eligibility will be retained, amongst this sample, the research has found that just 61% of those applicants who qualify automatically for door to door services qualify for door to door services via the interview process. However a further 28% would qualify for other services.
- 9.37 The comparative analysis of the different interviewers should be treated with caution. The samples were very different and the samples too small to draw any firm conclusions.

## **10. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusions**

#### ***Overview***

- 10.1 In a significant proportion of interviews the questions in the assessment instrument needed to be augmented by the interviewer. This is to be expected. However, the process was ad-hoc and therefore lacked consistency. In order for the interviews to be consistent, it is important that that the 'ad-hoc' questioning is minimised.
- 10.2 Many of the YES NO questions asked by the assessment instrument were not able to be answered directly. In consequence, the instrument was unable to provide all the guidance to the interviewer that is intended.
- 10.3 However, a combination of the assessment instrument questions and those asked by the interviewers were able to provide enough confidence for the interviewers to make an assessment in all but a handful (5%) of cases.
- 10.4 A key requirement, therefore, is to find a way of enabling the interviewer to provide the answers required by the instrument. This means being able to take the questions and 'frame' them in such a way as to provide the YES NO answers that the instrument requires.
- 10.5 The pilot study has found that all the elements are in place to make the instrument fulfil its functions with some relatively minor changes to the application form, the questionnaire, and the interview process.

### **The Standard Application Form**

#### ***Overview***

- 10.6 The main (general) observation of the standard application form was the tendency to use more complicated language than is necessary. This should be reviewed and simplified where possible.

#### ***Barriers to completing the form***

- 10.7 The only real barrier identified in the application form is the requirement for additional information. The main concern amongst those with wheelchairs was the requirement to provide information about their wheelchairs. A more general concern was the benefits section (section 3) which some reported would pose difficulties.
- 10.8 Given the importance of this information, omitting this is not believed to be a realistic option. However, it was suggested that it could be moved to the end of the form (perhaps linking it with section eight, the proof of identity and residence questions).

#### ***Omissions in the form***

- 10.9 The application form provides very little opportunity for applicants to tell YOU about THEM. The suggestion is that a short free hand section about 'their journeys' would

address this issue, and provide some insights into the applicant's 'travel horizons'.

### **Application Interview Questionnaire – Managing the Content**

10.10 Findings can be considered under the following headings:

- checking information;
- understanding the applicant; and
- the programme interface.

#### ***Checking information***

10.11 A problem was identified with data on the application form being inaccurate. There is therefore a requirement to build a 'data checking' stage into the early stages of the interview, enabling the interviewer to change data entered as appropriate.

#### ***Understanding the applicant***

10.12 The interview is 'process driven': it has to be to ensure that all the relevant questions are asked in as consistent a way as possible. Given the complexity of the subject, the questions do need to be relatively simple. The focus is on 'barriers' and the application process stands or falls on its ability to develop questions that identify potential barriers and establish whether they are in reality impacting on the applicant.

10.13 The difficulty the questionnaire faces is asking the questions in a way that makes them relevant to the applicant and meets the information requirements of the application process. The interview therefore needs to have a structure to help capture background, lifestyle, and travel horizons information which can be used by the interviewer to 'focus' the assessment questions and make them relevant to the applicant.

#### ***The assessment instrument interface***

10.14 The assessment instrument interface at the moment is not 'user friendly'. The main finding is that the instrument needs to manage the process and provide signposts for the interviewer to use in managing the interview:

- Introductions;
- purpose of interview;
- housekeeping issues;
- application form 'check' and 'correct';
- personal circumstances;
- travel horizons;
- MAIN INTERVIEW; and
- close and next steps

### **Application Interview – Managing the Process**

10.15 The assessment instrument changes discussed above will go a long way to addressing the main process issues identified in the pilots. However, this needs to be supplemented by:

- controlling the interview set up;
- being clear about the roles of the computer and the interviewer;
- engaging with the applicant; and
- focusing the questions on their circumstances.

***Controlling the interview set up***

10.16 The interview set up needs to be free from distractions and the spatial relationship between the interviewer, the applicant, and the computer managed. The interviewer needs to sit tangentially to the applicant, and be as close as feels appropriate.

***Role of the assessment instrument and the interviewer***

10.17 The assessment instrument has an important role to play, but we must be clear, the interview is between the interviewer and the interviewee. The instrument is there to standardise and help manage the process; the interviewer frames the questions in such a way as to secure the answers that the instrument requires.

***Engaging with the client***

10.18 The interviewer needs to actively engage with the applicant, this means asking them questions about:

- them as an individual;
- their circumstances; and
- the barriers they face.

10.19 Only by asking questions about themselves and their circumstances will applicants engage with the interviewer and be able to explain why they face the barriers that they do.

10.20 The interviewer also needs to:

- show genuine interest in the person;
- have an understanding of their circumstances; and
- appreciate the barriers they face.

10.21 By doing this they will maintain '*engagement*', which the pilots have identified as an issue, and be able to fully understand the '*person*' and thereby better make a decision.

***Focusing the questions***

10.22 The interviewer's role is to ask the questions in a way that is relevant to the applicant. This means linking the questions in the questionnaire to experiences and the lifestyle of the applicant (ascertained during the course of the interview).

## **Recommendations**

### ***Application Form***

- Applicants need to be informed about the application process when they apply. They need to be advised about whether or not they should have someone to help them complete the form, whether or not that person should attend the interview, and general guidelines on how to answer the questions.
- The language in the application form should be simplified where possible.
- Consideration should be given to whether or not to ask the questions regarding wheelchair dimensions. If they are retained, assistance should be offered to help them find the information.
- Consideration should be given to moving the benefits received section towards the end of the form.

### ***The Excel assessment instrument***

- The assessment instrument is there to standardise and help manage the process and that is particularly important at the beginning of the interview. The instrument therefore needs to be expanded to provide a 'structure' for the interviewer to follow, from the beginning to end of the interview.
- The interviewer needs to be able to make changes to the information that has been provided at the application form stage. This should be done at the beginning of the interview. At the moment, this is possible but not really practical.
- The application form summary sheet needs to include freehand comments included in the application form. If this is not practical, the application form needs to be provided to the interviewer to read before and during the interview.
- The instrument has to record the decision and the rationale from the interviewer.
- Each step in the process needs to require an affirmative action. Interviewers should not be able to progress to the next stage of the interview without having made an affirmative 'input'.

### ***The interviewer***

- The interviewer needs to ensure that they interview the applicant, not just to ask the questions asked by the assessment instrument.
- The interviewer is required to 'translate' the YES NO questions asked by the assessment instrument into terms that the applicant can answer. This means that they have to equip themselves with information about the applicant, their circumstances, and the journeys they do and do not make.
- The interviewer therefore has to engage with the applicant, using a wide range of interviewing techniques, in order to gather the necessary information.
- Entering the data in the computer must not be allowed to disrupt the flow of the interview. Amongst other things, this means minimising non YES NO answers.

### ***The Overall Process***

- The small interviewer consistency check did reveal that in marginal cases interviewers will come up with different decisions. It is therefore vital that a process for monitoring the consistency of the process is designed into the

application assessment process.

## **Recommendations for Undertaking Future Research**

- 10.23 This project has also provided a number of learning experiences in relation to future research of this nature. This includes:
- recruitment of sample for studies of this nature; and
  - working with third party contractors.
- 10.24 The decision to secure participants from the community, using the London Travel Demand database proved to be a significant problem. This was mainly, we believe, because these people are not being recruited from within a structured environment and in consequence there were difficulties establishing contact with them and ensuring they attended the research at agreed times.
- 10.25 Undertaking future research of this nature would be more effectively achieved by working through stakeholder organisations or day centres. However, working through such organisations also raises issues with respect to the lack of detailed control over the sample.
- 10.26 Difficulties were also experienced with this research in working with third party contractors. In this case the interviewer cancellations and rearrangements of two interviewer sessions (approx 17% of the interviews) led to consequences for programming and project costs

**APPENDIX A**  
**OBSERVER GUIDELINES AND INTERVIEWER NOTES**

## **A1. DE-BRIEF WITH APPLICANT/CARER AFTER COMPLETING APPLICATION FORM**

Note: respondents will be given some headed paper indicating that they should write any issues/notes about the questionnaire as they complete it.

- How did you find the self-completion form? Did you have any issues completing it? (**No prompting but give respondent(s) time to think about their response and encourage them to give a view – whether positive or negative**)
- Who completed it?
  - If not the applicant, establish why not (**tactfully**)
  - Were there particular parts of the form that the applicant would have had difficulty with

**(If anything other than an entirely positive response. Try to establish what the problem was. If necessary, probe thoroughly on:**

- Length of questionnaire
  - Time it took the applicant to complete
  - How easy was it to understand the questions asked? Was anything unclear?
- Type of information asked for
  - Did they need to look up information/find documents
    - How easy would it have been for you to have actually provided the evidence asked for (refer to p2 & 8 of questionnaire)
  - Did they need to ask for help from anyone else
  - Did they have difficulties understanding what information was actually needed
- Did you find any of the questions particularly difficult to answer?
  - **Which** ones (If necessary, go through the questions one by one)
  - **What** was the problem – probe to determine whether it was clarity of the question or access to the required information which was the problem
- Did you feel uncomfortable answering any of the questions?
- Did you understand why particular questions were being asked?
- Do you have any suggestions as to how we could improve the questionnaire to make it easier for the people completing it?
- Are there any questions that you think it should have asked?

After conversation note any other issues which are relevant:

## De-briefing interview with applicant/carer after formal application interview

### (TO BE DONE BEFORE INTERVIEWER DEBRIEF)

- How did they find the interview? (**No prompting at this stage**)
  - probe for details depending on response
- Was it better or worse than they expected?
  - in what way
  - what would have made it better
- What did they feel about the **type** of questions that were asked
  - were there any particular questions they did not like
  - why
- Were there any questions that made them feel uncomfortable or embarrassed
  - if so, which and why was that
- Were there any that they found difficult to understand or where they felt they needed more explanation to be sure they knew what information was needed
  - if so, which and what was the difficulty
- Were there any questions which they understood but which they found difficult to answer
  - if so, which
  - why were they difficult to answer
- Did the interview flow well (i.e. did the order of questions seem natural )
  - were there any questions which didn't seem to fit or have a point
  - if so, which
- What about the manner of the interviewer? Do they have any comments on their :
  - professionalism
  - knowledge about disability, did they understand what you were saying
  - attitude (e.g. did they come across as : caring, patient, empathic)
  - sensitivity to the applicant's needs (e.g. making sure they were comfortable, not getting tired etc.)
- **Questions about observation points:**
  - Refer to any point not mentioned so far and say "You seemed a little X when X was being asked. Why was that?"
  - "What would have been better?" (better way of asking, not asking at all etc)
- Do they have any thoughts about how we might change the interviews to make it easier for you to be interviewed?
- Was there anything that you think should have been asked but wasn't, any other info you would have like to have given

## **De-brief with interviewer**

### **Overall**

- How did they feel the interview went? (unprompted)
- Were there any aspects of it that they felt unhappy with for any reason
- What would they have liked to have gone differently
- Was there enough time to complete the interview?

### **The applicant**

- How did the applicant seem throughout? (unprompted)
- Did they have any particular concerns about how the applicant was coping with the interview in general
  - How did those concerns arise (e.g. from body language, things said etc.)
  - How did they deal with them at the time
  - Would they be likely to deal with them differently another time
  - Did they sense that the way the questions were answered were affected by how the applicant was feeling
  - Did they feel that the participant was getting tired or need a break
- Did they feel the applicant was affected (either adversely or positively) by the interview being shown on the computer – if so, in what way
  - What, if anything, could have been done to make the procedure better for the applicant

### **The questionnaire**

- Did the questionnaire flow well
  - Were there any questions which seemed out of place or inappropriate
  - If so, which
  - How would they improve on the order
- Were there any particular sections/questions that the participant didn't seem to understand?
  - Which ones
  - Comments – including participant's body language and response
  - Any suggestions for how the section/questions might be improved?
- Were there any sections/questions that the participant found hard to answer?
  - Which ones
  - Why was this?
  - Any suggestions for how the section/questions might be improved?
- Were there any particular sections/questions that seemed to make the participant uncomfortable/distressed etc?
  - Which ones
  - How so
  - Any suggestions for how the section/questions might be improved?

- Were there enough options on the likert scale to accommodate the participant's response?
- Were there any questions that you thought were unnecessary and did not help you to make your assessment
- Were there any questions that they think should have been included which would have helped them make their assessment?
- Was there any additional resources they thought would have been useful – e.g. interpreter, participant's companion
- How could the interview have been made easier for the participant
- Do they have any other comments about the participant and how they responded to the interview?
- Can you recommend any changes that would make the interview easier from the interviewer's point of view?

### **The outcome**

- How did you make your decision?
- How easy or difficult was it to make your eligibility assessment based on this interview?
- Were you confident with the decision you made regarding eligibility?
- Do you feel comfortable with the checks and balances during the interview to make a decision?
- Did you rely on any other tool to get you to that decision?
  - If so what? Observational, interpretation of examples the respondent provided, medical knowledge etc?
  - Do you think that medical knowledge or medical evidence is required to arrive at a decision?

## **Introduction and Notes for Interviewers:**

### **Script:**

Thank you for coming in today to answer some questions for us. As you might now know from our letter and/or from filling in the application form, we are carrying out research on behalf of Transport for London to help improve accessible transport.

I'll just introduce you to my colleague (observer/s name/s) who will be taking some notes and to (scribe's name) who will be typing in your answers. You don't have to worry about them – they are here to help us record things for our research.

I am going to ask some questions that explore in a little more detail, some of the answers you have given on the application form.

### **Guide:**

**Show the participant their completed application form and then also the excel spreadsheet on the computer. It might be worth reviewing a few of the answers on the application form with them to remind them of their answers and to refresh their memory about the form.**

### **Script:**

The questions will mainly be about how easy it is for you to travel around London. I will explain the questions before I ask them but if you are unsure of anything please let me know.

The questions have a number of possible answers so I will let you know what the different options are when I ask each question. I also have some answer cards so that you can see these more easily. If you do want to add anything more to your answer please feel free to do that.

### **Guide:**

**Suggest to the participant that they advise you if:**

- **they have difficulty understanding any of the questions**
- **they need a break or would like to stop**
- **they need anything else to assist them answering the questions**

**Script:**

Just so you know, any information you do give us today or have given to us on the form will only be used for the purposes of this research and we will keep this information completely confidential. So please answer the questions as freely as possible.

**Guide:**

**It might be worth asking the applicant if they are comfortable/happy to start and if they have any questions.**

**Script:**

- Did you have a good journey in today? (ask for details if they experienced difficulties)
- How did you travel here?
- Is that how you usually travel?

**Guide:**

**At this point, run through some of the transport barriers or difficulties identified on the application form and confirm this with the participant.**

**Note that some applicants may over or under estimate the level of barriers and difficulty experienced in the transport environment on application form and/or in the face to face interview. During the face to face interview the Interviewer should ask the applicant for an example every so often and consider the descriptive illustration in relation to the degree of difficulty or inconvenience experienced as a result of the barriers. This should be asked of barriers that applicants find difficult or impossible as well as those they find manageable.**

**The Interviewer should be aware that while the interview is mostly scripted, there are a range of factors that may change a disabled or older person's experience of barriers in the transport environment and may change their answers to some of the questions. Where appropriate, the Interviewer should probe the applicant to see how much their answer would change if various factors were present or absent.**

**This includes:**

- good weather / bad weather
- travelling with / without a companion
- travelling on a familiar / unfamiliar route
- travelling with/without shopping or luggage
- etc

**Further instructions and explanations are provided on the spreadsheet.**

**APPENDIX B**  
**STANDARD APPLICATION FORM**

**B1.**

**APPENDIX C**  
**BARRIERS**

## C1. BARRIERS RELATED TO DOOR TO DOOR SERVICES

C1.1 This short chapter records the barriers identified by questions answered in the assessment instrument and ranks them (on the basis of the overall sample).

### BARRIERS RELATED TO DOOR TO DOOR SERVICES

<b>Barriers more applicable to door to door</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Hearing impaired</b>	<b>Mental Health</b>	<b>Mob. Impaired</b>	<b>Older &amp; Frail</b>	<b>Learning difficulties</b>	<b>Vision Impairment</b>	<b>Serious Long Term Illness</b>
Applicant requires a mobility aid or handrail to walk up or down steep slopes	25	2	6	6	1	4	2	4
If the slope is particularly steep, applicant may need a mobility aid or handrail	25	1	8	4	1	4	3	4
Need to climb up or down steps / stairs stops applicant from travelling:	24	1	7	3	1	3	4	5
Applicant finds it difficult to use a bus / train / tram / tube if travelling on their own	23	2	5	4	2	3	3	4
Climbing stairs / steps stops applicant from using bus / train / tram / tube	22	1	3	6	1	4	2	5
Walking more than five minutes stops applicant from using bus / train / tram / tube	20	2	5	6	1	2	1	3
Applicant CANNOT climb 3+ stairs	20	2	5	4	1	3	0	5
If stairs are particularly steep, this impacts the number of stairs the applicant can climb/descend	18	0	5	2	1	3	2	5
Applicant can't use train, tram, tube station if it doesn't have a lift / ramp	17	2	4	2	0	2	6	1
Standing on a moving bus / train / tram / tube stops applicant from using public transport	16	2	4	4	0	0	4	2
Applicant CAN climb 3+ stairs	14	0	3	2	0	3	6	0
Walking up or down slopes stops applicant from using public transport	12	1	2	4	0	1	1	3
Travelling without assistance stops applicant from using a bus / train / tram /tube	11	1	2	0	1	2	3	2
Applicant answered a question regarding ASSISTANCE as 'Other'. Please see comments box in Section 3	6	0	2	2	0	0	2	0
Applicant answered one or more questions regarding STANDING/MOVING ON VEHICLE as 'Other'. Please see comments box in Section 3	6	0	2	1	0	1	0	2
Applicant answered one or more questions regarding walking UP / DOWN SLOPES as 'Other'. Please see comments box in Section 3	5	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Applicant answered one or more questions regarding STAIRS / STEPS as 'Other'. Please see comments box in Section 3	4	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
Applicant is NOT confident travelling on their own	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
Applicant answered question regarding LIFTS / RAMPS as 'Other'. Please see comments box in Section 3.	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Applicant answered question regarding WALKING FOR >5 MIN. as 'Other'. Please see comments box in Section 3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

## **General Barriers**

### **BARRIERS RELATED TO OTHER SERVICES**

<b>Barriers more applicable to other services (e.g. Travel Assistance)</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Hearing impaired</b>	<b>Mental Health</b>	<b>Mob. Impaired</b>	<b>Older &amp; Frail</b>	<b>Learning difficulties</b>	<b>Vision Impairment</b>	<b>Serious Long Term Illness</b>
Applicant answered one or more questions regarding SAFETY and CONFIDENCE as 'Other'. Please see comments box in section 6.	15	1	2	4	1	2	4	1
Applicant has never used the Travel Information Line	14	0	3	2	1	4	2	2
Applicant does not feel confident travelling on an overcrowded bus, train, tram or tube	14	1	3	5	1	3	1	0
Applicant answered one or more questions regarding 'COMMUNICATION' as 'Other'. Please see Comments box in Section 5.	13	0	2	2	1	3	3	2
Applicant is not aware of the Travel Information Line	12	0	3	1	1	4	1	2
Applicant answered one or more questions regarding SEEING THE VEHICLE as 'Other', please see comments box in Section 4.	10	2	0	1	1	2	4	0
Applicant answered one or more questions regarding COMMUNICATION or INFORMATION as 'Other'. Please see comments box in section 7.	10	1	1	3	0	3	2	0
Applicant does NOT feel confident when travelling without a companion	9	2	1	3	1	1	0	1
Bus/Train timetable information is not clear to applicant.	9	0	1	3	0	2	2	1
Applicant can NOT see or hear the announcements in order to understand what to do	9	1	1	2	0	2	2	1
Applicant always travels with an essential carer or companion	8	1	1	3	1	1	0	1
Applicant does not feel confident travelling by public transport if there are no public toilets available on the train or at the station	8	0	1	2	2	1	1	1
Applicant does not feel safe going to or waiting at the station or stop	8	1	1	2	0	1	3	0
Applicant does not feel comfortable naming/describing their destination if it is unfamiliar to them	7	0	3	0	1	2	0	1
Applicant is not confident asking other passengers for help	6	0	2	1	1	1	1	0
Applicant does not feel confident asking drivers/members of staff questions during their journey	6	0	2	1	1	0	1	1
Applicant could NOT see approaching vehicle on their last journey	6	0	0	3	1	0	2	0
Applicant identified the bus, train, tram or tube they needed to use by size, shape or colour	6	0	0	2	1	1	1	1
Timetable information was not in a clear format for applicant, please see comments box in section 4.	5	0	0	2	0	0	1	2
Applicant answered the question regarding TIMETABLES as 'Other', please see comments in section	5	0	1	0	1	1	2	0
Applicant does not feel confident asking other passengers questions during their journey	5	0	1	0	1	2	1	0
Passengers do not listen when applicant asks them a question	5	0	1	1	1	2	0	0
The number/destination of the vehicle was NOT clear to the applicant	5	0	0	1	0	0	4	0
Applicant does not feel comfortable naming/describing their destination if they need to change train/bus during their journey	5	0	2	1	1	1	0	0
Applicant does not feel confident making the journey if they have to change buses / trains	5	0	1	3	0	0	1	0
Applicant does not feel safe on the bus, train, tram or tube	5	0	1	2	0	0	2	0
It is not clear to the applicant when/where they need to get off the bus, train, tram or tube	4	0	1	2	0	0	1	0
Applicant does not feel confident going to or waiting at the station stop	4	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Applicant is not confident that they will take the correct bus, train, tram or tube	4	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
Applicant is not confident in asking other passengers for assistance	3	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
Applicant is not confident in asking a member of staff or other passengers for assistance	3	1	1	0	0	1	0	0

**APPENDIX D**  
**TRAINING**

## **D1. TRAINING**

### ***Introduction***

- D1.1 Findings from this pilot study can help focus the interviewer training programme. Training requirements that flow from this research are discussed below:

### ***Developing Support Material***

- D1.2 For applicants and interviewers, to be used as guidance at the initiation of the interview.

### ***Use of the Application Form***

- D1.3 The interviewer needs to have read the applicant details transcribed from the application form and recorded onto the Excel assessment instrument before the interview (this includes spreadsheets 1, 2, and 3 in the current Excel workbook). Importantly, this information should be expanded to include any free hand comments where they have been provided.

- D1.4 Interviewers should be required to at least take this information into account in framing their questions at the beginning of the interview.

### ***Medical, Social Model, and Transport Knowledge***

- D1.5 This research has established that medical knowledge is an important factor in making assessments in approximately a third of interviews. Interviewers therefore need to be trained in how to apply this knowledge in a consistent way and to relate it to the requirements of the social model.

- D1.6 Assessors need to be fully trained in all relevant aspects of the social model

- D1.7 Assessors need to be well briefed on transport provision both across London generally and in detail in those parts of the city where applicants live.

### ***The Role of the Interviewer and the Assessment Instrument***

- D1.8 Interviewers should be given very clear instructions on the role of the computer / Excel assessment instrument and themselves. The instrument is there to standardise and manage the process and to record responses. The interviewer is there to facilitate the process, focus the questions and interpret the answers. Whilst the process needs to be constant, some flexibility can be allowed with regard to interviewer style, within agreed guidelines.

### ***The Interview Set Up***

- D1.9 The start of the interview is a critical stage. It needs to be closely controlled and guidance needs to be given on suitable locations, room set up, furniture, and positioning of themselves, the computer, and the applicant.

### ***Use of the Computer***

- D1.10 The assessment instrument is not managing the interview, the interviewer is. The assessment instrument is there to control and record the process. The computer therefore should not be allowed to dominate the interview. Time will be required to input the answers to the questions, however as many as possible should be the YES NO ones, as this will be quicker than inputting text and will enable the instrument to help in the assessment decision