



**To:** Place Directorate

**From:** Adrian Davis

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**Subject:** Essential Evidence on a page: No 141: Transport & Poverty

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Top line: Use of the transport system to meet basic needs should not place undue burden on people in terms of their monetary and time budgets, their physical and mental capabilities, and anxiety levels. Any negative environmental or societal impacts of such a system should be minimal, and should not be unfairly distributed to those worst off.

A review of transport and poverty has reported that most evidence on the impact of poverty on mobility and the relationship between transport and poverty relates to disadvantaged groups and those vulnerable to social exclusion rather than individuals or households living in poverty per se.<sup>1</sup> Access (or lack thereof) to employment and education opportunities and to essential services and facilities required to fulfil basic needs is a dominant theme in all the theories which link poverty and social disadvantage with transport. There is no universally accepted definition of transport poverty but the term generally is used to refer to the situation where households or individuals are struggling or unable to make the journeys they need. It is of note that many on low incomes have access to a car whilst some on higher incomes who do not have access to a car may be transport poor due to the poor quality of public transport. In some cases, eg use of concessionary travel passes by older people, car access is the critical factor rather than income per se.

Affordability of transport is important but other aspects such as time and the physical and mental capabilities required to make use of different transport options also need to be considered. The limited frequency and timetable constraints of public transport can make it difficult for people to coordinate work, childcare and other activities. There is evidence that those on low incomes, living in deprived neighbourhoods, are more adversely affected by the impacts of transport than those living in more affluent neighbourhoods. These differences include an increased risk of road traffic injury, increased concerns about personal security, and higher exposure rates to air pollution. People without cars, those with disabilities, the elderly and school children are the most severely affected by severance. This combination of problems can exacerbate poverty by reducing access to key services such as employment, education and healthcare, lead to social isolation and reduce physical and mental well-being.

Recommendation include that in infrastructure planning & services, equity criteria need to be developed and implemented so that the needs of the poor are met. This could lead to a more inclusive provision of means of connectivity to currently marginal areas and populations, affecting particularly local infrastructure and complementary transport services. Sustained travel assistance for job seekers is also needed as this is likely to make a significant difference to obtaining work and reducing benefit dependence. In addition, multiagency partnerships should focus on environmental change to reduce the speed and volume of motor traffic, tackle poor parking and address anti-social driving behaviour. The authors noted that there has been very little work to evaluate transport schemes to see how effective they are in addressing issues of poverty, partly because schemes are rarely set up specifically for this purpose. More effective monitoring and evaluation of such schemes is needed.

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<sup>1</sup> Titheridge, H., et al, 2014 Transport & Poverty. A review of the evidence. London: UCL  
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/transport-institute/pdfs/transport-poverty> accessed 11th December 2015.