

## **Why develop The Wayfinding Centre?**

Despite positive developments in improving the accessibility of public transport for the 643,131 people living with a disability in Ireland, NCBI is acutely aware that 55,000 blind and vision impaired people across the country continue to be challenged and tested in safely and effectively accessing public transport and our streetscapes. People who are blind or vision impaired usually cannot drive, and therefore, public transport can often be their only means of transport for school, college, work, healthcare or leisure activities.

These challenges are not unique to those with blindness or vision impairment. People with an access need, disability or reduced mobility can also find it difficult to take advantage of public transport options. In fact, less than 6% of people with disabilities utilise the public transport system every day to attend school or work (CSO, 2016).

Accessible public transport is critical for any individual with an access need to participate fully in community life. The Wayfinding Centre will provide an opportunity to familiarise users to acquire public transport skills, whilst informing policy development on future public transport design by co-designing solutions to the challenges encountered by all members of society using our public transport system and built environment today.

### **The Wayfinding Centre will offer:**

- On-site comprehensive instruction designed to enable people with an access need, disability or reduced mobility acquire the skills to travel safely and independently.
- Familiarisation and testing programmes for new transport models and related technology.
- Information and awareness training for frontline and managerial staff of transport operators in understanding the needs of people with physical, mental, cognitive or sensory impairments.
- A research and development testbed that will draw on the expertise of all stakeholders who have a role to play in shaping how and where we move.

### **Why was this location chosen?**

The location has been specifically chosen with accessibility in mind. A Dublin Bus stop is located immediately outside the front perimeter. It is 1.3km away from the Luas and Drumcondra Train Station, a 10 min drive from the M50 and 20mins from the airport. Additional support will be in place for individuals that are not confident or safe using public transport so they can access the services while they are training. Accessible parking will be available onsite and journey planning support for regional users will be available upon request.

### **Who will potentially use this centre?**

The Wayfinding Centre is aiming to deliver bold and life-changing innovations designed for and by people with a disability, connecting community in a collaborative space with transport operators, local authority, academics, industry and social organisations, ultimately informing future research and policy development.

For these reasons, the Wayfinding Centre is predominantly aimed at people who are less able or less inclined to travel independently. This includes (but is not limited to) people with reduced mobility, physical and learning difficulties, sensory impairment, young adults and those older adults who have lost confidence in navigating their way through public transport.

Potential users at The Wayfinding Centre might also include:

- Any person or group who has an interest in addressing the inequities that exist across the public transport network or built environment
- Primary/Secondary school students
- Higher/Further education institutions
- HSE, Day services and Disability Service Providers

The Wayfinding Centre will also work with professional transport staff, urban planners, transport designers and architects to inform their work in line with universal design.

### **Is there a charge to use The Wayfinding Centre?**

There is no charge to users availing of the services of The Wayfinding Centre. Referrals can be made by people on their own accord, through a parent / support person or through other organisations, by contacting The Wayfinding Centre directly.

### **How will the Centre be governed?**

NCBI intends on recruiting a Management Advisory Committee which will oversee the project in terms of operations and finance. In addition, an Inclusive Access Advisory Group (IAAG) and a Built Environment and Transport Advisory Group (BETAG) will be established. The members of the IAAG will be tasked with feeding into the design, build and workstream of the project as well as defining the priorities in the initial workplan. While the purpose of the BETAG will be to enhance collaboration between the principal transport operators and The Wayfinding Centre to maximise opportunities for research, innovation and education.

### **Is funding from other transport initiatives to make the transport system more accessible been cut to fund the Wayfinding Centre?**

No, the funding used for The Wayfinding Centre is separate funding from other transport initiatives. NCBI have been assured by the National Transport Authority that funding for other successful and important initiatives like the Travel Assistance Programme will be continued. The Wayfinding Centre is intended to be complementary to existing access programmes, such as the Travel Assistance Programme.

### **What key stakeholders have been consulted?**

Given the nature of the project, the consultation process will always be ongoing and live. Consultation events to date include:

- Presentation to the Department of Transport Accessibility Consultative Committee

- Engagement with Transport Operators e.g. Irish Rail etc.
- Focus Groups with some potential users of The Wayfinding Centre.
- A call for submissions seeking feedback on the proposed Wayfinding Centre.
- Actively encouraging interested parties to put their candidacy forward as potential representatives on the Inclusion Access Advisory Group who will be tasked with highlighting accessibility challenges and seeking improvements to promote a barrier-free public transport system.

### **When will The Wayfinding Centre be open?**

It is expected The Wayfinding Centre will open in late Spring 2023.

### **Is there a free transport service provided to The Wayfinding Centre?**

There is currently no free transport provided to The Wayfinding Centre.

### **Is there a website for The Wayfinding Centre?**

A dedicated website will be developed offering information on its services and an online booking facility once it is open. However, in the interim all information on The Wayfinding Centre can be found at [www.ncbi.ie/wayfindingcentre](http://www.ncbi.ie/wayfindingcentre). The website will be updated regularly with all relevant information.

### **How can I contact The Wayfinding Centre?**

Please send any queries, expressions of interest or questions to [admin@thewayfindingcentre.ie](mailto:admin@thewayfindingcentre.ie)