

RAA Member Panel

Motorised Wheelchair Survey

In February 2019 RAA conducted an online survey regarding the needs of current and future motorised wheelchair users. The survey was distributed via email, with responses collected from 12th-26th February 2019. The sample size was 1,125 individuals based on the total number of responses received.

User behaviour

Most ride their motorised wheelchair 1-2 days per week (48%), with 20% relying solely on their motorised wheelchair for mobility. More than 66% combine riding their scooter with a car/private vehicle and 26% use taxi services.

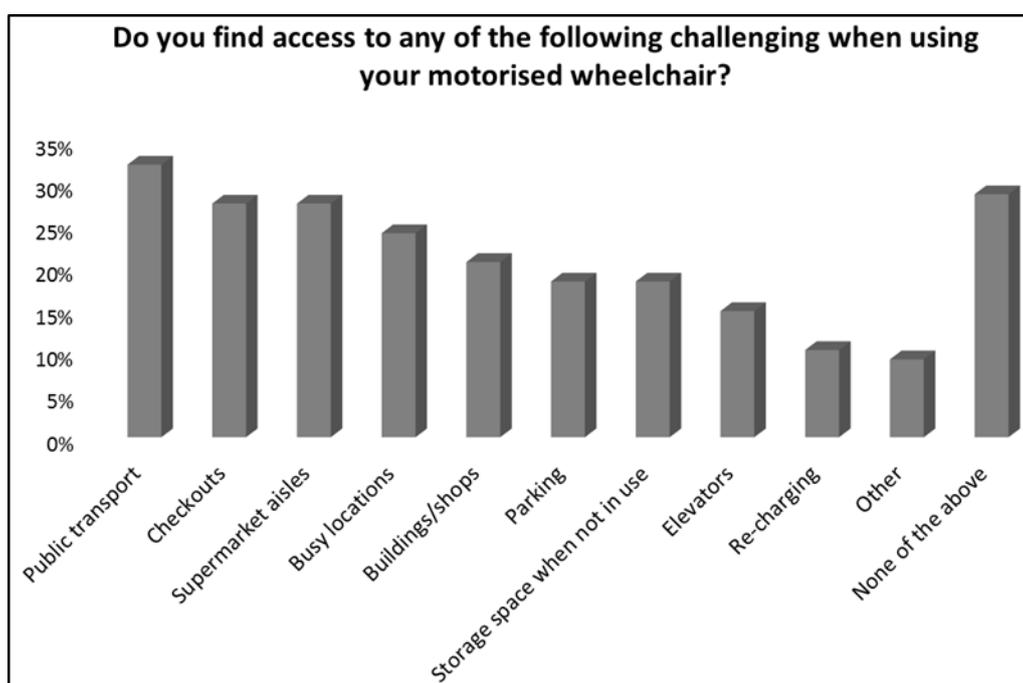
The main activities for which people ride their motorised wheelchair are shopping (68%), attending appointments (47%), just going for a ride (38%), health care (32%), visiting friends and family (16%), collecting mail (15%) and walking the dog (15%).

The majority of current users initially started riding a motorised wheelchair due to an inability to or difficulty walking (60%). Other reasons for using a motorised wheelchair include driving cessation (16%) and poor health or serious injury (14%).

Challenges

When asked which situations users of motorised wheelchairs find challenging, a number of respondents indicated that accessing public transport can be difficult (32%) and 28% find checkouts and/or supermarket aisles challenging. The least selected situations were elevators (15%) and re-charging locations (10%), suggesting that most users do not find these situations difficult.

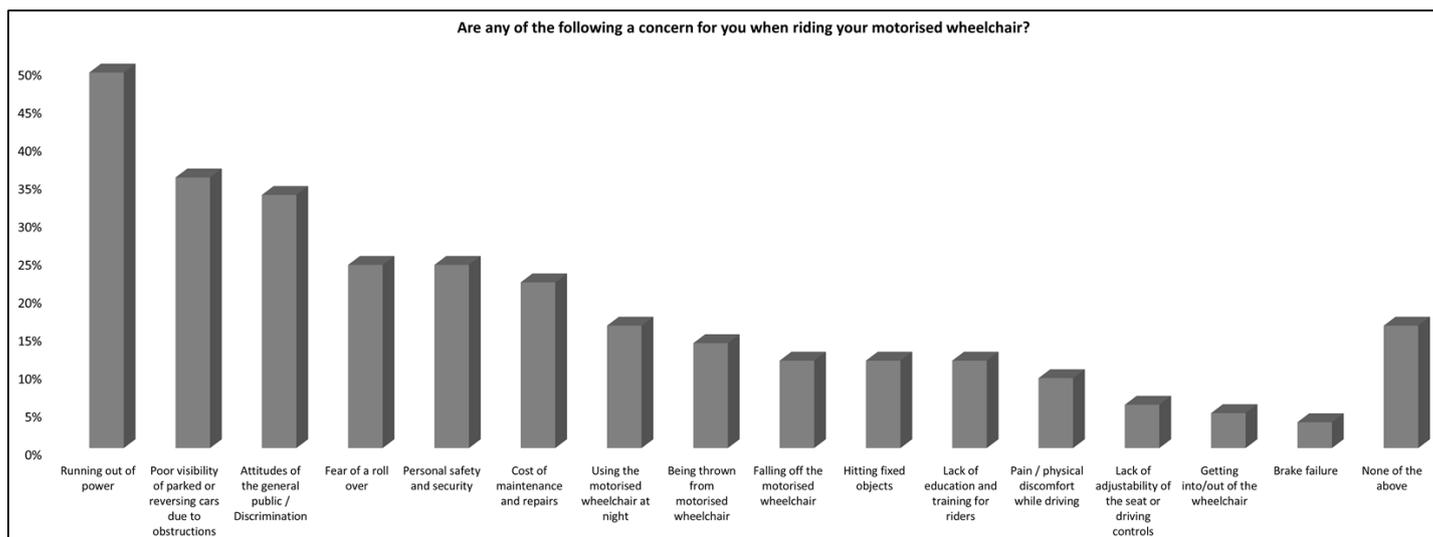
In regards to challenging on-road situations, the most difficult for users of motorised wheelchairs to navigate are uneven footpaths (85%), followed by a lack of ramps between pathways and roads (65%) and the availability of and access to footpaths (61%). The situations least likely to pose a challenge include unfamiliar roads/areas (9%), peak hour (7%), school pick up times (6%) and interactions with other motorised wheelchair users (2%).



Training and safe operation

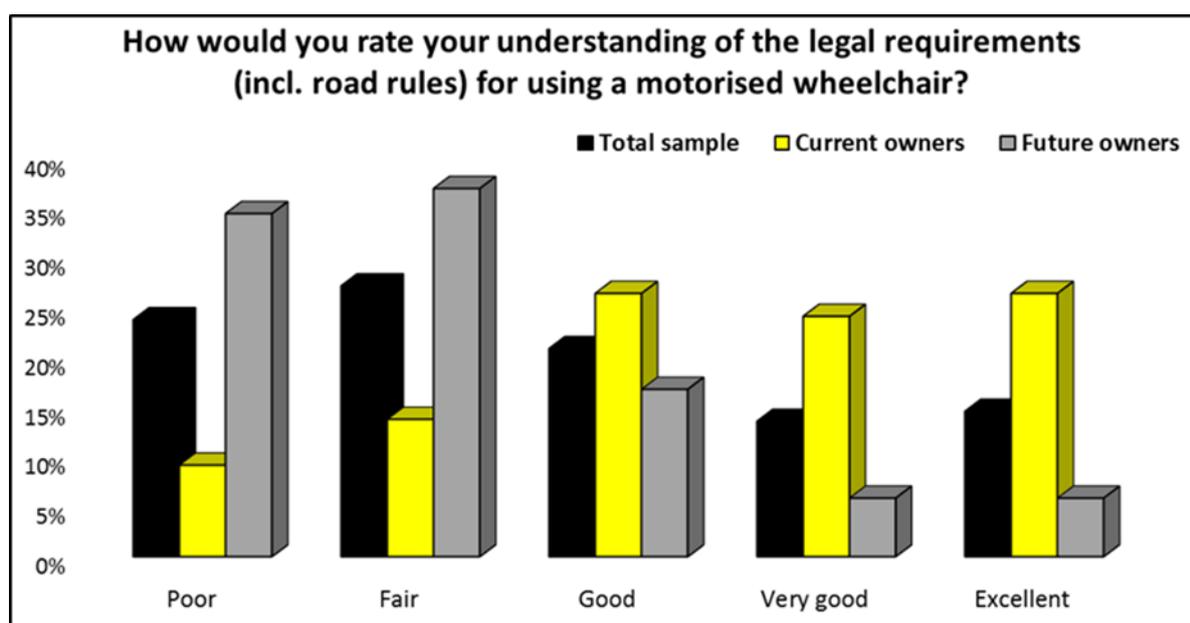
Current owners of motorised wheelchairs were asked whether they had received any training on the safe operation of their device prior to purchase, to which 54% reported receiving training. This indicates that almost half of all users have not received any training on the safe use of their device.

When asked if they had any concerns while riding their motorised wheelchair, 49% indicated they are concerned about running out of power, 36% worry about poor visibility of parked or reversing cars due to obstructions such as high fencing or trees, and 33% are worried about discrimination and the attitudes of the general public towards motorised wheelchair users.

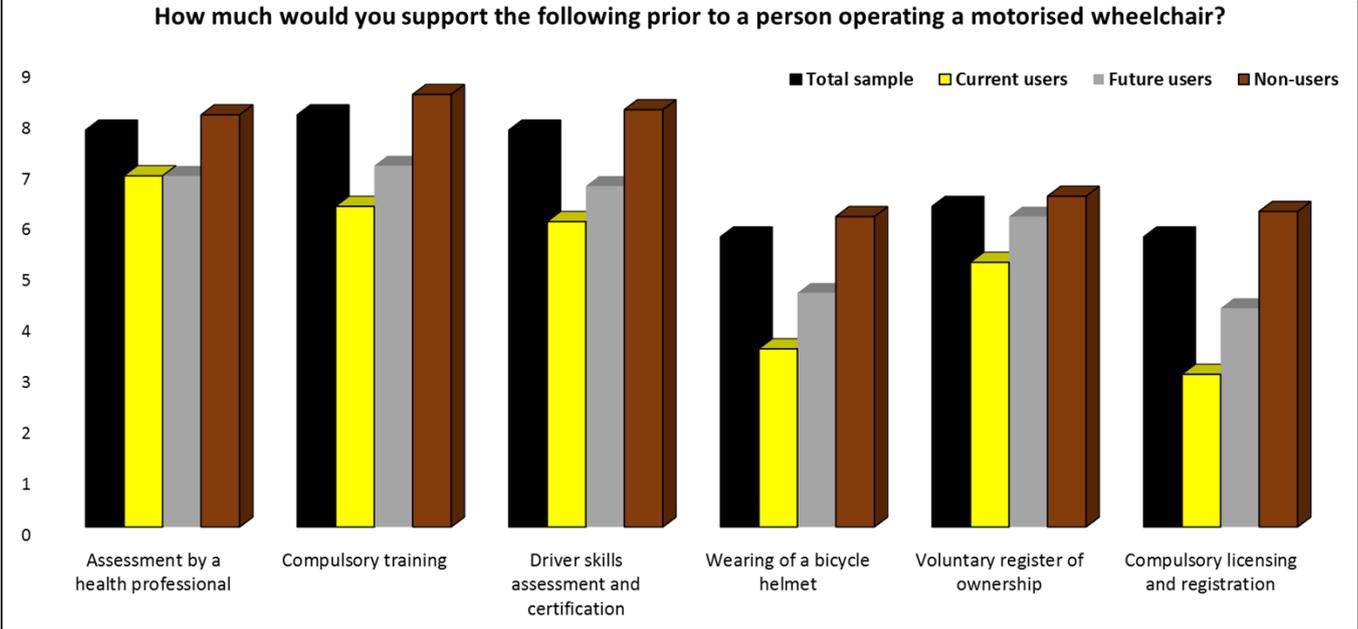


Legislation

Current and future motorised wheelchair users were asked to rate their level of understanding of the legal requirements (including road rules) for using a motorised wheelchair. The results indicate that while current users rated their knowledge higher overall than future users, the percentage of those with a very good (24%) or excellent (26%) understanding was relatively low.



All respondents (including those who have no plans to use a motorised wheelchair) were asked their opinion on safety and legislative strategies which could be introduced prior to using a motorised wheelchair*. The most supported of these was compulsory training (8.1 out of 10), followed by assessment by a health professional (7.8 out of 10). The least supported strategies were wearing a bicycle helmet and compulsory licensing and registration (both scoring 5.6 out of 10).



*Values shown are the average rating out of 10 (where 1 = Strongly oppose and 10 = Strongly support).