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‘Left behind’ neighbourhoods have poor public transport links.

People living in ‘left behind’ neighbourhoods are disconnected from town and city centres because of poor public transport links, according to a new report.

The report – Connecting communities: improving transport to get ‘left behind’ neighbourhoods back on track – produced by Campaign for Better Transport with data from the Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OCSI) for the All-Party Parliamentary Group for ‘left behind’ neighbourhoods, highlights how people living in these areas, are reliant on public transport but have less access to it, compared to other places across England.

The report found ‘left behind’ areas with the poorest connectivity are predominantly located in coastal areas and on the outskirts of post-industrial towns and cities in the North and the Midlands.

As a result of continuing bus and rail service decline, people living in ‘left behind’ communities face greater difficulties in accessing essential services.

The report found people these areas must travel 2km further to A&E hospitals than those living in other deprived areas.

In addition, the report examines the impact of the Beeching cuts in the 1960’s and shows that 50% of all rail stations in ‘left behind’ neighbourhoods were closed following the landmark report. 74% have no railway station at all now, compared to 60% pre-1960s.

Despite lower levels of car ownership overall, people living in ‘left behind’ neighbourhoods in employment are more likely to travel to work by private car or van, with 67% doing so, compared to 59% in other deprived areas and 63% across England.

By contrast, a lower proportion of people travel to work by public transport in ‘left behind’ neighbourhoods (16%) than across other deprived areas (19%) and England (17%), suggesting the lack of public transport connectivity is affecting the employment prospects of people with no access to a car.

‘As this report shows, it’s hard to overstate the importance of good public transport,’ said the Campaign for Better Transport’s head of policy, research, and projects, Silviya Barrett.

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