



**Improving Me Transport Collaboration
Getting women and children
on the right track !
Baby Week 14-20 November 2025**

Improving Me, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside's Women's Health and Maternity (WhaM) programme is building on an ongoing regional transport collaboration to open up access to railway travel for women and children this Baby Week (14-20 November 2025).

The collaboration consists of local and regional transport partners and was formed in 2021 to support women and children with free travel to events taking place during Baby Week. The initiative aims to encourage more women to use public transport whilst providing those services with valuable insight into the barriers they face to help inform future planning.

During this year's campaign, Improving Me will be working with Liverpool Combined Authority, Northern Rail and Mersey Rail to support families to access Baby Week events, which have a strong focus on promoting women's health throughout the life course and the importance of a best start for all babies.

In Liverpool this includes a special Baby Week initiative with Mersey Ferries and Eureka! Science + Discovery at Seacombe. Eureka will provide over 250 free Eureka Family Golden Tickets to access a unique world-class family attraction right on the Mersey, all made possible by an iconic free family ferry trip across the Mersey.

Transport planning has historically focused on men's travel habits, which are often longer, single-purpose commutes into city centres. This design often ignores women's more complex travel needs and creates barriers to their mobility. It also prevents men from being more hands-on with care too.

Well-planned and inclusive public transport contributes to the health and wellbeing of communities. It promotes environmental and economic wellbeing too. Accessible and reliable mass transport allows people to get to work, deliver care and access essential services – and it does this without the high cost and commitment that comes with a private car. It is the backbone of an equal opportunity society where everyone benefits.

Catherine McClennan, Improving Me's Women's Health and Maternity Director said,

'We are immensely proud to be playing a small but important role in supporting transport chiefs 'transform the railways for good'. This is of particular importance for the NHS because women make up the bulk of our workforce (75%). It is therefore probably not much of a surprise to learn that in 2023 the proportion of NHS workers juggling their jobs with an unpaid caring role for an older, disabled or seriously ill relative or friend remains high, with the latest survey's findings showing nearly one in three (31%) NHS employees have unpaid caring responsibilities.

'So, if we can help improve the design of transport systems and remove barriers to women's mobility, everyone wins. The more women engage with rail travel the more it will reflect their rail travel needs, and hopefully more women will also want to work in the sector and be able to inform change from within.'

The ongoing Department for Transport review of transport infrastructure creates a big opportunity to make things right or, at the very least, make things better. The Baby Week transport collaboration is working hard to ensure transport planning decisions take into account women and children's needs, and that all decisions are backed by a better understanding of the needs of all travellers.

Richard Isaac, Northern Rail's Community Manager said,

'Transport systems and services are dominated by the need to move customers quickly and efficiently around. Moving forward we are becoming much more focused on the customer experience, which involves being more interested in the needs of women and their children in order to turn them into passengers.

'We know women are less likely to use rail because of the preserved cost, which we are working hard to address via responsive ticketing offers, ongoing engagement work and accessibility measures through station improvements. By making off-peak rail more accessible and understanding these users more, we will better meet their needs, and it opens the door to attracting more women into the industry too.'

Richard adds, 'As the second largest train operating company in the UK, we recognise our position in supporting women and children in the communities we serve in the North. What is good for women is good for all our customers.'

By also working with wider museum and cultural partners, Improving Me will be mobilising women and children to access Baby Week events across the North of England too, promoting information sharing and highlighting sources of support.

Altogether, this collaborative effort represents a key investment in health by empowering and mobilising women to make informed decisions about their own and family health and wellbeing.

To find out more about the events and activities taking place this week, visit:

<https://improvingme.org.uk/community/baby-week-2025/>

Notes to the editors

Improving Me is NHS Cheshire and Merseyside's Women's Health and Maternity programme. We aim to improve the experiences of all women and babies. We work tirelessly to reduce unwarranted variations in outcomes for women and babies by working together with local NHS, public and third-sector partners. We are committed to enriching women's experiences of care through effective leadership, recruitment, retention and the training and development of staff to ensure their continuous development.

Web: <https://improvingme.org.uk/about-us/>

Baby Week Cheshire and Merseyside:

<https://improvingme.org.uk/community/baby-week-2025/>

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With thanks to:





Cheshire and Merseyside



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