

Nine in ten call for more funding for public toilets ahead of Autumn Budget, say results of BTA survey

3 months ago



As the Chancellor prepares to deliver the Autumn Budget, a new nationwide survey reveals that 92 per cent of the British public is calling for increased government funding for public toilets.

The survey, led by the [British Toilet Association](#) (BTA), has published the results on World Toilet Day as part of its ongoing 'Legalise Loos' campaign.

The BTA is urging the Chancellor to ringfence funding for public toilet provision, arguing that clean, accessible facilities are essential for economic participation, public health, and social inclusion.

Providing public toilets is essential to supporting local businesses and stimulating economic growth. Research shows that pedestrian-friendly investment generates 30 per cent more footfall in town centres and high streets. For instance, in Soho, a lack of public loos costs £4.9m every year in lost revenue.

The BTA is also calling for public toilet provision to become a statutory duty for local councils, ensuring long-term accountability and access. Currently, local authorities have the choice whether or not to provide any public toilets. As it is not a duty, they can opt out completely. In an era of public spending cuts, the number of public toilets has reduced by a staggering 40 per cent since 2000, impacting both people's wellbeing and the health of our economy.

The BTA warns that without urgent action, the UK risks further isolating vulnerable groups, undermining local economies, and worsening public health outcomes.

Raymond Martin, Managing Director of the BTA, said: "Toilets are not a privilege, they are a fundamental human right. This survey should be the vote of confidence that the Chancellor needs to make this essential community infrastructure part of the UK's growth agenda. By spending a penny now, we can safeguard facilities for the future – benefiting local communities and local economies in the long term."

Notably, 80 per cent of survey respondents did not identify as disabled, highlighting how a lack of public toilets is a universal issue. The impact is felt across society, from older people and parents with young children, to those with chronic health conditions, menstruating individuals, people with hidden disabilities, and those simply out and about day-to-day.

Respondents shared stark examples of how they change their behaviours to deal with a lack of facilities:

"I restrict my water and food intake when I'm out. I actively starve myself on days when I know I'm in an area with limited loos."

"I suffer from IBS and sometimes my bowel movements are unpredictable. I therefore plan activities around being able to find a loo."

"I don't go to the shopping centre because the loos are closed. It pushes me to shop online."

Other key findings from the survey include:

- 93 per cent believe access to clean public toilets should be a legal right and a statutory duty for councils
- 71 per cent are seriously concerned about the decreasing number of public toilets
- 65 per cent say the lack of toilets affects how long they spend outdoors, shopping, or socialising
- 65 per cent spend less money in their local area as a result of a lack of facilities.