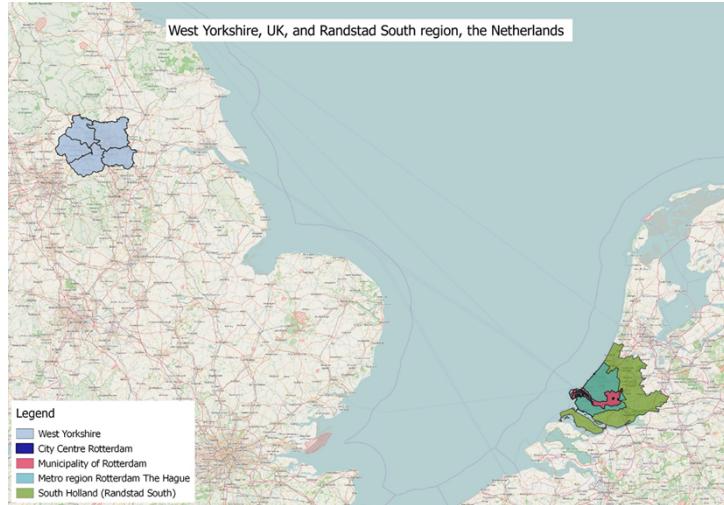


## YOUTH MOBILITY AND ACCESS TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

### Research aims

This 3 year study aims to explore the extent to which young people's poor employment outcomes in the UK and mainland Europe are partially caused by poor job accessibility and adverse conditions associated with deprived neighbourhoods - with a comparative study of West Yorkshire (UK) and the Rotterdam-Randstad region (Netherlands).

The research will add to the empirical evidence base in a highly relevant but relatively unexplored area.



The research is part of the study programme of Jeroen Bastiaanssen, who is a PhD research candidate at the Institute for Transport Studies. The findings will be used to inform public transport policies in West Yorkshire and the Randstad region through close collaboration with local policy stakeholders. The research commenced in 2017 and is on-going.

### Background

In recent years, young people have experienced significant increases in both unemployment and underemployment, in particular in the UK and the Netherlands. Whilst their poor employment outcomes to a large extent result from changes in the macroeconomic context and labour market reforms, they may also be partially caused by poor public transport accessibility to jobs. Prior UK studies found that poor public transport accessibility, both in terms of travel times and costs, significantly decreases young people's access to employment and training opportunities. Public transport services are mainly concentrated in the city centres of West Yorkshire and the Rotterdam-Randstad region, with often very poor connections between (deprived) peripheral residential areas and jobs locations such as business plots, especially outside of peak operating hours.

Both regions have recently adopted a new (public) transport strategy, in which they clearly emphasise the importance of transport services as a precondition for access to employment opportunities and, thus, the social inclusion of local residents - However, in both regions, little is known about potential accessibility to jobs and the (transport) problems of young people, or how to better tailor transport and land-use policy strategies that could improve their employment outcomes.

The main focus of the collaboration (placement periods) will be on the assessment and analysis of national and local transport datasets held by the two local authorities. The research will be a partly iterative process, as we develop an understanding of information needs and the analytical potential of the available datasets.

As well as informing future policies and investment by WYCA and Rotterdam Transport Authority in public transport, the project will also provide a better understanding of the value of national and local transport data in this kind of analytical setting, providing an indication of how local data collection and systems can be further developed to meet requirements.

The subjects of the research are young people 16-24 years old who are actively looking for work, including those of 16-18 years who are allowed to be employed as 'young workers' or engage in apprenticeships, as they are likely to be dependent on public transport for access to jobs.

### Research questions

This research explores the hypothesis that young people's poor employment outcomes in the UK and mainland Europe, are partially caused by land use and transportation supply mismatches, as well as the adverse conditions associated with deprived neighbourhoods (e.g. low employment opportunities and low and unsuitable skills and educational levels).

This translates into the following research question:

**'To what extent are young people's poor employment outcomes partially caused by poor job accessibility and adverse conditions associated with deprived neighbourhoods?'**

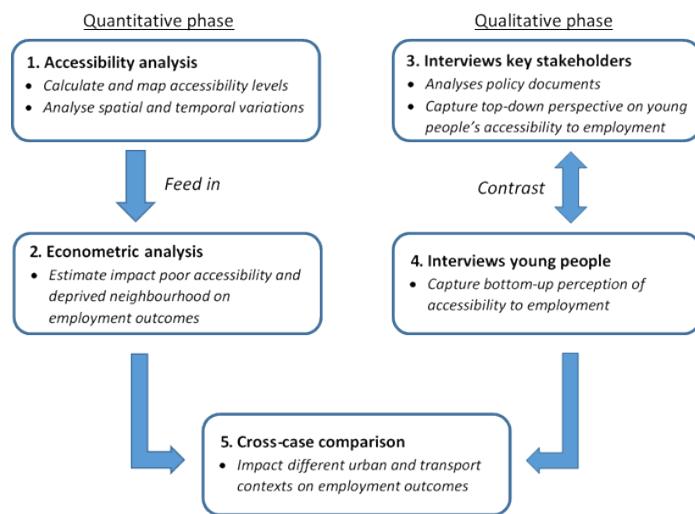
The main research question is addressed by the following four sub questions:

1. To what extent does poor accessibility limit young people's employment opportunities?
2. What is the impact of poor accessibility and deprived neighbourhoods on young people's employment outcomes?
3. Are young people's perceptions of employment opportunities affected by poor accessibility and deprived neighbourhoods?
4. How do the different urban and transport contexts of West Yorkshire and the Randstad region affect employment outcomes of young people?

### Methodology

There are four key elements which are linked to the four research sub questions.

The research adopts a mixed methods approach and a sequential explanatory survey design, consisting of a quantitative phase primarily based on desk-based analysis of national and local secondary datasets at the micro scale, followed by a qualitative phase of in-depth interviews with key policy stakeholders in the transport and employment sectors and young jobseekers to gain an understanding of their accessibility to jobs and potential transport problems



- (1) **Accessibility analysis** - To measure and visualise young people's accessibility to employment opportunities in the two regions, and examine spatial and temporal variations using exploratory (spatial) data analyses. An understanding of levels of job accessibility helps identifying neighbourhoods where land use and transportation supply mismatches may limit young people's ability to reach and obtain better quality jobs;
- (2) **Econometric analysis** - To estimate a set of spatial regression models using the accessibility data and labour market microdata to examine the strength of the associations between young people's employment outcomes and their levels of accessibility and exposure to deprived neighbourhoods in both regions;

- (3 & 4) Interviews with key stakeholders and young people** - Informant interviews with key policy stakeholders from the transport and employment sectors in the two regions to capture the top-down (policymakers) perspective on youth unemployment, after which in-depth interviews with young job seekers in West Yorkshire will be conducted to gain their bottom-up perception of accessibility to employment, and the extent to which both perspectives match;
- (5) Cross-case comparison** of the findings in West Yorkshire and the Randstad region will be conducted to understand and explain how different urban and transport contexts affect young people's employment outcomes, and how to better tailor transport and land-use policy strategies to their specific contexts to improve the employment outcomes of young people.

Intended original scientific contributions:

- Understanding of the causal relationship between transport and employment outcomes;
- Understanding combined impact of poor job accessibility and deprived neighbourhoods on employment outcomes of young people, within the context of underemployment.
- Understanding of how young people's perceptions of employment opportunities are affected by poor accessibility and deprived neighbourhoods.
- Understanding of how different urban and transport contexts affect young people's employment outcomes.
- Extending the existing (predominantly US-based) knowledge in two relatively unexplored countries, i.e. Britain and the Netherlands.

Intended societal impact:

- Collaboration with local policy makers to enhance the understanding of accessibility on young people, and the effectiveness of public transport and employment policies.
- Research output as a basis to identify transport and land use strategies, and a practical roadmap for socially inclusive transport policy and projects.