

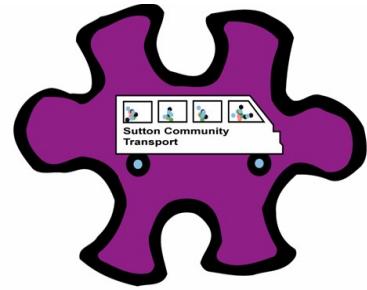
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Sutton Community Transport (SCT)

Independent Travel Training

What is Travel training?

Travel Training is a term used to describe anything from general travel awareness, to looking up timetables or planning a journey. But it does cover more: pedestrian awareness e.g. crossing roads; social awareness; knowing what to do if things go wrong.

Many of us will start to learn to travel out and about in an informal way, and pick up the basics of getting around through an informal learning process. Something most of us take for granted, many of us learn these core skills informally. However, if you think about the steps involved there are lots of rules and decisions to be made, each with a specific set of checks and assessments. It is easy for most of us to remember these steps automatically, many of us don't give it a thought; we rely on an "autopilot" facility. Travel Training starts to mean something more specific when someone finds it difficult to remember all the steps, or sequences of steps. Some people may experience difficulties; perhaps due to a learning disability; or because they suffer from anxiety; and may find remembering or knowing what to do for each stage of these processes challenging.

They may need 'rules' to govern what they should do or to help them cope. They may also find changes to routine challenging in the extreme, and need to build up to changes gradually over time. Or to prepare for some changes that can realistically happen during day-to-day travel. Other difficulties may include:

- social difficulties – inability to cope with crowds or interpret social situations;
- inability to read, write or interpret numbers or the time;
- difficulty judging time and distance;
- sensory difficulties/overload in some situations;
- lack of experience, confidence or anxiety;
- physical barriers in addition to a learning disability;
- general memory difficulties or difficulties with carrying out tasks others take for granted.

Travel Training starts to mean something even more specific when we start to focus on individuals with the kinds of needs outlined above. These individuals may need a longer period of focussed, one-to-one, support to become independent. They may need help to gain the right skills to cope with changes; or to remember all the steps involved in getting from A to B. Or may just need help to build their confidence. We call this Independent Travel Training.

Why do SCT think getting from A to B is so important?

Accessing affordable transport is at the core of an individual's ability to get out and live independently, as well as partake in social/leisure, education, volunteering and employment opportunities. SCT have developed this project strand due to the impact of limited access to organised transport when young people transition to adulthood especially after the age of 25. The need is especially apparent in those who may have been taken to/from school/college in statutory/organised transport throughout childhood/adolescence. SCT feel this leaves young people ill equipped to access affordable transport at time when

they need to look at their future and other opportunities for education, employment, and leisure as adults. *[See case studies].*

Evidence of need

SCT has been in discussion with individuals/their carers, as well as organisations supporting young people/adults with learning disabilities locally. These discussions have highlighted:

1. A lack of resources/access to one-to-one travel training to meet peoples' needs/aspirations to travel independently.
2. Carers express concern about the process, feel they lack the skills to help or that their relationship to the person is such that they don't feel they are the right people to provide the support.
3. People/carers lack a means to find others who want to travel independently or share ideas/coping strategies.
4. Misconception about what level of support is required to help some individuals become independent on chosen route(s).
5. Misunderstanding of what the term 'independent traveller' means for the target group.
6. Statutory help, in relation to transport, drops significantly for many disabled people when they reach a certain age/stage in life. This is especially true for those who have the ability/skill sets to benefit most from the type of training we aim to deliver.

Key project outputs

Sutton Community Transport do not currently receive funding for Travel Training but we invest from our core resources to maintain a small scale Travel Training Project working in partnership with a small number of special needs sixth form students each year. We also offer self-funded Travel Training services.

Key project outcomes

- Increase: skills, knowledge, build confidence, choice and control for the group supported and their carers.
- Help people stay safe and reduce crime/fear of crime.

There is strong evidence that following travel training other areas of the individual's life are positively impacted.