

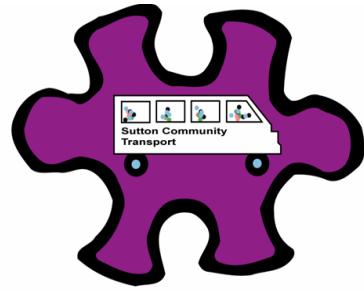
## Sutton Community Transport Ltd

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# Sutton Community Transport (SCT)

## Who we are and what we do

# **Who are Sutton Community Transport (SCT)?**

Sutton Community Transport (SCT) is a local transport charity (formed in 1998). Our mission to help combat social isolation by providing transport solutions/services.

Accessing affordable transport is at the core of a person's ability to get out and live independently or access services.

## **Who do we work with?**

We have links with and support the work of many mainstream/special needs schools/colleges/facilities and other organisations supporting a wide range of disability/ special interest/community groups in Sutton and neighbouring areas. We also work with other organisations, this is called partnership working.

## **What do we do?**

- **Provide Transport** – SCT's main charitable activity
- **Travel Training** – Bus Days and Independent Travel Training

## **How do we fund our work?**

We undertake paid (or contract) work and this is used to maintain our fleet or vehicles and help us run our other charitable projects. We also receive donations from individuals/groups and apply for any funding available to help us continue our work.

SCT run with a small team of paid staff and rely on volunteers from its Board of Trustees (these are people who give their time for free and oversee the charity) on a daily basis. This structure ensures that all the resources that are built up through our contract work and other efforts go towards maintaining/renewing our vehicles and providing charitable projects.

## **What is SCT's impact in Sutton?**

The type of support we offer is often called social value or social impact. Both these terms are used in various instances to express how much difference it makes to the local community and what support would cost if the charitable were no longer able to provide the help.

The social value/impact of SCT's work in the London Borough of Sutton in the year to 31 March 2016 was in the region of £88,000.

## SCT's charitable activities

### ➤ Transport provision – SCT's main activity

We maintain a number (fleet) of vehicles and make them available to community groups/individuals to access at a considerably reduced hire costs. This is called subsidised hire and without our support lots of community groups would not be able to plan activities due to the higher cost of commercial (unsubsidised) vehicle hire rates. We also provide accessible transport directly for specific purposes such as weekly shopping at supermarkets. Accessible transport means minibuses or cars with a lift or ramp to help people get on without needing to use steps; these vehicles are useful for people who use walking sticks/frames/wheelchairs and find it difficult to get in/out of a car or using steps. SCT recruit and make available a small number of volunteer minibus drivers which we pair with community groups wherever possible. We also provide training to community group volunteer drivers so they can drive our vehicles. Access to vehicles also helps with youth volunteering in the community by groups such as the Police Cadets.

As already explained, this type of support is often called social value or social impact, they mean how much different it makes to the local community and what support would cost if the charities were no longer able to provide the help.

#### **The benefits of this part of our work**

- Through access to transport we deliver on our core mission to help people avoid isolation due to a lack of transport.
- Older clients using our 'accessible shopping service' benefit from remaining independent and doing their own shopping when they can't get on a public transport bus or drive a car anymore.
- Various opportunities are made available to improve quality of life (going on outings/visits/residential trips/having fun) and social inclusion (meeting and socialising with others).

### ➤ Travel Training – SCT's other charitable activity

#### **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: how to cross roads safely (pedestrian safety); how to behave/interact with people and knowing what to do if things go wrong (personal safety).

#### **SCT support Travel Training in two ways:**

- Sutton Bus Day Training
- Independent Travel Training

## ➤ Sutton Bus Day Training

This is group travel training which aims to help people gain or regain confidence or knowledge/skills to help them travel safely. The training happens on a bus and aims to help overcome barriers faced by disability groups or to help people stay safe whilst travelling. Barrier is a term used to mean things that stop someone doing something (so if you can't climb steps, they are your personal barrier to getting to an activity on the other side of the steps). The training sessions include:

- personal/pedestrian safety/transport specific (e.g. crossing roads; how to ask for help; what to do if things go wrong; security cameras);
- acted 'scenarios' to demonstrate/advise how to deal with various situations;
- specific guidance for those with mobility (problems moving about)/sensory (sight/hearing) difficulties e.g. positioning of wheelchairs/mobility equipment, use of bus ramps, access to middle doors.

## Who can attend the Bus Day in Sutton?

Bus Days are open to anyone who needs them e.g. people with disabilities/difficulties or simply lacking confidence around travel perhaps due to bad experiences; newly acquired difficulties; or even new to travelling on their own like children in year 6 onwards. It is also open to those supporting people in need of this kind of training. This valuable resource for the residents of Sutton has been made possible thanks to partnership working (SCT working with other organisations as a team) and currently provided free of charge. Our partners are:

- The Metropolitan Police's Safer Transport Team in Sutton
- Transport for London (TfL) Travel Mentoring Team
- GoAhead Bus Company

## Who uses the Bus Day training and how do they benefit?

- **Adults/Older with disabilities** – have reported fear of physical barriers/overcoming them in real-life situations especially following a decline in mobility (physically moving around)/health (perhaps breathing problems or getting very tired). They use Bus Days to help regain confidence and practice.
- **Young people with various disabilities** - teachers/key workers report difficulty testing reactions to various situations or aspects of travel with this group and attend Bus Days to help them with these areas of support/learning.
- **Mainstream schools** (year 6 upwards) – following test sessions with this group we noticed that some children were potentially exposing themselves to risk from other passengers/strangers/situations. They also demonstrated a lack of pedestrian safety skills when crossing roads. Several schools now build Bus Day Training into their year 6 activities to help young people learn the skills to stay safe in the future.

## ➤ Independent Travel Training

Many of us will start learn the basics of getting around from our parents or older brothers/sisters. However, if you think about the steps involved there are lots of rules and decisions to be made. Where is the best place to cross a road? When is it safe to cross? Each step has a set of checks/decisions to be made. It is easy for most of us to remember these steps. Travel Training starts to mean something important when someone finds it difficult to remember these steps. They may need 'rules' to help them know what they should do or to help them cope. Some may also find changes to routine hard to cope with, and need to build up to changes gradually or to prepare for changes that can happen during day-to-day travel. Other difficulties may include:

- Inability to read, write, understand numbers or tell the time - often called a learning disability (when someone finds it hard to read, write or tell the time it is often called a learning difficulty);
- sensory difficulties (e.g. sensitive to sounds/lights/smells/crowds);
- lack of experience/confidence or worry (often called anxiety);

Travel Training starts to mean something more specific when we start to focus on people with the kinds of difficulties shown above. Having difficulties doesn't mean someone won't easily learn how to travel on their own many do learn. But some people will need help (one-to-one training or advice) to start to travel on their own, and we call this Independent Travel Training.

### Why do we provide this support?

As we have said, accessing affordable transport is important, without it, a person's ability to get out and live their life is difficult and limits access to all sorts of things. SCT support this activity because we work with young people with disabilities, and we are aware of young people who are taken to/from school on organised transport during their time at school. After these young people leave school or sixth form, they are often no longer given this kind of help. SCT think this leaves some young people badly prepared for their future. SCT has also asked parents/carers, as well as organisations locally, for their opinion and concerns, they highlighted:

- A lack of access to one-to-one travel training.
- People/carers said it was hard to find others who faced the same difficulties in order to share ideas or know how to support this activity themselves.
- Help in relation to transport stops, sometimes very suddenly, for some disabled people when they reach a certain age/stage in life. This is especially true for those who have the ability to benefit most from this type of training.

### Who can access Independent Travel Training?

Like so many charities SCT looks for funding of its activities and sometimes we get an amount of money to spend on an activity for a group of people. We have had some funding in the past but not at the moment. However, because we think the work is very important, we have continued to invest from our limited resources to

train a small number of young people each year. We work with two main partner organisations to learn about potential students and make sure we find young people who will benefit as quickly as possible from this work. Some people also pay for this training if they have access to funding.

### **Benefits to the people we train**

- People learn new skills, build confidence, and are able to become more independent. It helps people stay safe and reduces fear of crime.
- There is strong evidence that following travel training on one route people are more willing/able to learn new routes and that other areas of a person's life are improved such as coping with changes or meeting new people.

### **A case study – Independent Travel Training**

A young person with reading, number skills as well as ability to use mobile phone, and use money. This person had no ability to tell the time or judge time going by. They also experienced high levels of anxiety in relation to travel on public transport and changes to routines as well as being sensitive to noise and crowds. They had experience of travelling on foot in their local area but no experience of using buses without someone going with them. They were at the point at which we met them supported to access sports/leisure facilities due to high levels of anxiety experienced.

This individual was not eligible for transport to/from college after leaving secondary school as they did not go onto a specific disability sixth form or college placement but instead chose to do a different type of course. They were funded for course costs and a freedom pass (similar to a young persons' oyster card). SCT were referred to this person by an outreach team as the family were paying for taxis out of their limited finances which caused them difficulty. The family paid for taxis because of the difficulties experienced by this young person which stopped them using public transport on their own. The family felt they had no choice but to pay for taxis.

Since training this person has gone on to travel on their own to/from college. SCT's travel trainer had also looked at the journey and included extra work to include the journey to sports facilities which were covered as part of the training. The family report that the young person now feels much more confident and can adapt their journey times (previously very difficult as it is a change to their routine) and meet up socially with other students (previously something that did not happen). They have also invited new friends home for the first time. This person has now also branched out onto the other journey trained and is now accessing leisure/sports facilities that they could only previously access with one-to-one support.

This illustrates many of the changes and benefits for just one person.

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information and learn about the work of Sutton Community Transport.**