

Expanding Horizons – Independent Travel For Life

Contribution to sustainable travel - Organisation

Teaching learning disabled children and young people to use public transport is having a knock on effect for more than just travel. At Sheffield City Council we are using Independent Travel Training as a spring board for better life chances, and opportunities as our learning disabled young people progress into adulthood, and it's working really well. Many of us take for granted the ability to be able to travel using public transport, whether it's travelling on the bus, train or tram. Being able to do this allows people to gain new experiences, have a greater participation in employment, access to key services, enjoy leisure activities and become part of the local community. However, for many of our learning disabled young people travelling on public transport would be their worst nightmare as they never have been given the chance to learn these important life skills, before we started the Independent Travel Training project at Sheffield City Council.

Local Authority

Sheffield City Council Jill Siddall Floor 7, West Wing Moorfoot Building Sheffield S1 4PL

Who Was Involved

The Travel Assessment & Training Team in Sheffield City Council's, Peoples Services have been offering travel training for the past 6 years. For the past 5 months the team have been building and growing relationships with new external partners, such as the Job Centre, Princes Trust and Sheffield Futures. Building these relationships helps young people in different arenas.

Budgeting

The Travel Team has been funded by the Sustainable Travel Access Fund and previously Local Sustainable Transport Fund. Last year the funding was reduced to 100k, shared between ourselves and the Adult Travel Training Team. This year the funding is the same

Project Development

Six years ago, very few young learning disabled people learnt to travel to school and college by themselves, due to the expectation that the authority would always provide transport, and also that individuals were either too scared to travel alone, or felt they did not have the capacity to learn to travel independently. When young people left school or college they either stayed at home, or tried to find work which for many left them totally isolated, lonely and no purpose in life. As many young people got older their options became more limited, and the only thing left available to them was to attend a day centre, but this was something that left them demotivated, de-skilled and couldn't provide the progression into adulthood that they really needed. The life

skills of being able to travel independently were not there! Therefore an Independent Travel Training Team was set up to try and help these young people have a better future.

What Was The Outcome

Over 300 learning disabled young people have been travel trained to use public transport. More and more young people with learning disabilities enter adulthood as self-travelers. This means they can start increase their social circle, make use of what Sheffield has to offer, look for training opportunities and work, and most importantly have higher expectations of themselves. Young people enter adult services already travel trained, so only require a small amount of support and are more able to access opportunities. We are now working in partnership with the Princes Trust, Sheffield Futures and the Job Centre, to look at targeting young people who may not have been identified as needing our support whilst at school. Many of these young people will now be part of the NEETS cohort. We are now looking at working in partnership with Autism Plus in Sheffield who run 'First Routes', which is a specialist employment service that helps people with Autism & Aspergers Syndrome.

How Does This Project Meet The Criteria

Travel Training is offered in other local authorities, but what is innovative and creative, is that Sheffield City Council build on Travel Training to make sure learning disabled young people keep moving forward into adulthood, and retain their high expectations by building on this with employment and volunteering opportunities, and by working with those young people who may not have and Education Health & Care Plan. The target group, learning disabled young people have shown engagement by asking more from our teams. In addition we work closely with the bus, train and tram companies in Sheffield. This enables us to address accessibility issues directly with our public transport partners. We also work with external partners such as South Yorkshire Police, the Job Centre and the Princes Trust to enable us to engage with a wider audience and increasing the qualifying characteristics of the cohort of young people we work with.