

Supporting your child to travel independently:

A guide to travel training in South Gloucestershire



This guide is for parents of young people with disabilities and special educational needs. It covers:

- how travel training may be able to help your child build the skills and confidence to travel independently. This could mean using the bus, walking or cycling to get to school, college, work or leisure activities
- how it works and what's included to support and reassure you and your child
- how to find out more or arrange a first meeting.



This guide may also be useful to anyone else who can refer a young person to be considered for travel training, schools, social workers, Family & Young People Support (FYPS) and other practitioners or lead professionals working with children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs.

How travel training can help your child

Feedback from local young people who have completed South Gloucestershire's travel training shows it makes a big difference to their lives and their future outlook and horizons.

Because travelling independently can result in lifelong positive changes in life skills and behaviour, South Gloucestershire's travel training scheme focuses on supporting children from local special schools and resource bases within mainstream schools as early as possible (typically from year 9 and above).

Travel training has proven benefits in helping young people to get equal access to education, employment, healthcare, social and leisure activities, without transport being a barrier.

“
I like being
on the bus
”

“
I like being
independent
”

“
I feel happy
”

Children and young people say that travel training:

- Builds their confidence, self-esteem and feelings of true independence
- Encourages them to **exercise** and focus on their health and wellbeing, improving their **quality of life**
- Helps make them **feel integrated** and a part of their local community
- Builds **skills for life** through feeling in control and broadening opportunities such as greater access to education, training, jobs, leisure and social networks.

“
I want to be like other people my age
”

“
I feel very grown up
”

“
I like travelling on my own
”

Along with their parents and teachers, we also see the following changes in the young people we travel train:

- Taking responsibility for themselves and learning life skills such as handling money, paying fares, telling the time and understanding real-time information displays and timetables
- Understanding consequences and how to resolve problems: using coping strategies and handling emergencies
- Taking advice on how to behave on public transport and deal with other people's behaviour
- Improved communication and social interaction
- Using technology such as smartphones or mobile phones to help them travel
- Improved concentration, when travelling and in education – national studies have highlighted enhanced education performance and a reduced likelihood of developing behavioural problems.

How other parents, carers and schools feel about travel training:

Travel training can feel daunting at first if you're used to having transport arranged by the council to get your child to school or college.

The parents and carers whose children we have worked with all admit to feeling a degree of anxiety when their child is first considered for travel training.

Here are some of the things they've told us after going through the experience:

“ My daughter is enjoying the bit of independence it gives her. For my part I manage the hour between 3 and 4 at work concerned about her but confident she knows what she's doing! ”

“ Knowing that you were willing to support my son gave me hope and the confidence to 'let go' and entrust his wellbeing to someone else. Until I met you I was not sure how to achieve this. ”

“ My son has become independent and confident, your service is invaluable! ”

“ ... you do a sterling job building the confidence of young people and parents alike. ”

“ My daughter was excited about starting college but daunted and overwhelmed by the idea of getting the bus. You were fantastic with her, building her trust and confidence, she looked forward to your sessions and is so pleased that she can now be more independent.

”

“ Travel training gave my son independence, thank you.

”

“ As a parent I really appreciated the holistic approach you gave to this and to my son.

”

The benefits of travel training to parents and carers include:

- a reduction in care responsibilities and greater opportunities for employment, education and leisure activities
- the independence to go about your life knowing your child is getting on with theirs
- reassurance that your child has learnt skills for life including road safety
- seeing future possibilities for your child to make choices, take control and feel included.



How travel training works and what's included to support and reassure you and your child

Either you or the following people can refer (or ask your child to be considered) for travel training: schools, social workers, Family & Young People Support (FYPS) and other practitioners or lead professionals working with children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs.

We would then arrange to meet with you and your child to talk through how travel training could help them and assess whether it's the right thing for them.

You will be given detailed information about the service and we can answer any questions you may have.

South Gloucestershire's travel training includes:

- 1-1 bespoke sessions to meet the individual needs of the young person
- training is practical, real time and in the community: walking, crossing roads and using public transport (buses or trains as needed)
- there is no pass or fail, it is a travel experience with an outcome we discuss and agree with you
- we travel train on a specific route from home to school/ college/work
- parents are encouraged to contact us at any point. You are welcome to take part in the travel training if you wish and we will keep you informed of the progress your child is making and consult you at each stage.

- learning to use resources to help independent travel such as:
 - their **mobile phone** to demonstrate that they are confident and able to use it should something go wrong
 - an **orange wallet** - every young person is offered a wallet that contains information about their travel route, bus numbers and times, telephone numbers, speaking cards and anything they feel will support them to travel with confidence
- when your child feels confident to travel alone, we will still be around to support you if you need us.

How to find out more or arrange a first meeting

Contact us to find out more about how we can support you and your child to travel independently:

Call us on **01454 866808**

Or email **traveltraining@southglos.gov.uk**





If you need this information in another format or language, please contact: 01454 868008 or email: traveltraining@southglos.gov.uk