

Travel Training Discussion Document and Strategy Outline



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Government Strategy

The Government is keen for all users of transport to have equality of access and independence. It is also committed to improving the life chances of disabled people. The cross-Government Independent Living Strategy was published in early 2008 and this sets out a series of commitments that the Government and disabled people are now implementing.

The aims of the Independent Living Strategy are that:

- disabled people (including older disabled people) who need support to go about their daily lives will have greater choice and control over how support is provided;
- disabled people (including older disabled people) will have greater access to housing, education, employment, leisure and transport opportunities and to participation in family and community life.

This discussion document sets out the Department for Transport's (DfT) plans for taking forward work on travel training. Travel training is a way of explaining and giving practical and tailored help to people in how to use public transport. It can make a real difference to people's lives, including disabled people, older people, and others who, for whatever reason, need help to overcome perceived and real barriers to using public transport.

Department Strategy

The DfT's aim is transport that works for everyone. The Department's role is to set overall strategy and policy and to manage relationships with local, regional and private partners that deliver the strategy.

The Department often works in partnership, funding provision and maintenance of infrastructure, subsidising services and fares, setting regulatory standards and providing guidance, in particular, for safety, accessibility and environmental impact.



We have four strategic objectives:

- to sustain economic growth and productivity through reliable and efficient transport networks;
 - to improve the environmental performance of transport;
 - to strengthen the safety and security of transport; and
- to enhance access to jobs, services and social networks, including for the most disadvantaged.

In July 2008, the Department published on its web-site a summary of the analysis and work that has been carried out so far to develop its work programme over the next two decades. The summary highlighted five steps on which the Department will concentrate its efforts towards achieving a sustainable transport system. One of these is to use transport improvements to help equality of opportunity, giving access to jobs, services and social networks.

Department Research

In 2007, the Department commissioned research to study 139 travel training schemes and to examine which areas and groups are using them. It also evaluated their effectiveness and identified barriers. The report is available on the Department's website.

The report concluded that travel training is an effective way of providing assistance with:

- getting on and off buses and trains;
- fares, how to pay them and handling money;
- using and getting in and out of taxis;
- understanding information sources such as timetables and destination displays;
- using technology and existing infrastructure.



How Does Travel Training Support Wider Strategies?

The Department is keen for all users of public transport to have equality of access and independence, not just disabled people. Many travel training schemes can be offered to and result in similar benefits for other people, for example, older people, ethnic minorities and long-term unemployed people.

The transport network is changing. There are more accessible buses, trains and trams available. A wide range of technological improvements have been introduced like smart ticketing, visual displays, and real time information boards. The improvements are making it easier for many people to travel. But they can also present challenges for other users of the network, especially for those who are not regular users of public transport. Travel information can often be available in different formats and places and people can sometimes need help in finding the information they need in the most appropriate format.

Travel training can help to overcome these and other challenges and gives people greater access to jobs, services and social networks by improving their knowledge of and their ability to use public transport. Learners who undergo travel training can also improve their general life skills, especially if they are trained at a young age or at key points in their life, for example, when moving schools and colleges or when leaving school or college to start working.

Travel training has been shown to give people greater control in their lives, empowering them to make decisions and enabling them to take advantage of opportunities in their own and wider communities. Training in the use and function of transport can remove many of the perceived barriers to travel or low travel horizons that people can often have.

This is why it is important, when developing travel training schemes and when taking forward this strategy, to broaden the focus of efforts and link to other strategic areas. Schemes are not only about travel and transport. Transport is a means to an end and being able to travel and make best use of the network opens up access to many opportunities in a variety of areas, such as work, education and recreation.

Local authorities and other delivery organisations can link up to other service providers and organisations to develop and implement a holistic approach that can greatly enhance the quality of life and opportunities for those who need it.



What Are The Benefits?

Travel training can take many different forms, ranging from one-to-one training, 'buddy schemes' and classroom sessions. During the training, travel options can be explained, and practical and tailored help can be given in how to use public transport.

Where travel training has been offered to people, the results and benefits have been numerous. The local transport system becomes easier to reach, to use and to understand for many people. Barriers that prevented the use of transport can be removed.



Other benefits of schemes include:

- increased independence, confidence and personal mobility;
- increased access to education opportunities at colleges and universities, local services and leisure activities;
- reduced burden on Local Authority specialist service provision;
- reduced need for home visits and reliance on carers;
- increased public transport patronage;
- improvement in life skills, such as handling money, personal and road safety skills.

Some excellent schemes have been implemented around the country, and the Department is keen to see this good work spread further. Schemes currently in operation cover a wide range of beneficiaries, for example;

- Halton Borough Council offer training to 14-19 year olds enabling independent travel to school and social activities. The scheme covers a range of topics and provides an individually tailored travel plan;
- Worcestershire county council operate a scheme for anyone interested in receiving travel training from school children to elderly residents. The service is open to anyone resident in the county and is applicable to all modes of transport. The scheme covers getting to school, shopping, access to healthcare and getting to work;
- the London Borough of Hounslow employs 'travel buddies' to assist those with learning difficulties to use transport. The Borough intensively trains adults with mild learning disabilities or difficulties as travel buddies.



Future Strategy

The Department is keen to do what we can to support the development and roll-out of travel training schemes to all the potential beneficiaries, as we recognise the importance of greater independence and improved access to jobs, services and social networks. The Department's role in this work will be to encourage and facilitate those who are able to develop and deliver schemes on the ground by, for example, offering advice, information and good practice guidance, improving access where possible to existing funding mechanisms, creating and facilitation networking between all those involved in travel training, and developing a nationally recognised accreditation system for those who provide travel training and for the people who benefit from it.

In more detail, the Department intends to:

- develop a travel training **web-site** that will provide up to date guidance and advice on travel training, latest news and links to other Government departments that offer assistance. We would also like to encourage opportunities for networking. The Department would like to include details for advisory contact points, that is, people who have experience in the field and can help and advise others who want to get involved. The website is planned for mid-2009 and will be available via the Department's web-site and through Direct.gov;

What sort of information would you like to see on the website?

- develop and issue **guidance** for local authorities and other potential delivery organisations on how to set up, target, implement, maintain and monitor locally travel training schemes. This project will include good practice advice, standard templates and 'how to' guides;
- at the same time, develop and issue detailed advice for local authorities (primarily, but including other delivery organisations where possible) on potential **funding** sources for travel training, how to un-lock it, and how to bring in matched funding. The project will include guidance on developing business cases and how to calculate and present cost/benefit information.
- the Department will commission this work by the end of 2008, consultants will begin work at the beginning of 2009 and it should be completed by summer 2009;

What issues and subjects should the guidance cover?



- once the guidance and good practice is in place, the Department will develop a **communications and marketing strategy** to promote the benefits of travel training to all those who could be involved. We will link up with other national initiatives on training, local transport and accessibility planning, independent living, education and skills, and health. This project could include the development of design materials that would be made available and used by local authorities and other organisations;

What would be the most useful way of communicating with those who might be able to set up and deliver schemes?

- in spring 2009, the Department will commission work to establish effective criteria for **monitoring** and evaluating the success of schemes at a national level and the various approaches to travel training;

How should we measure the success of travel training schemes at a national and local level?

- the Department has commissioned GoSkills, the sector skills council for road transport, to develop and implement **national occupational standards** for those travel trainers who would like to receive nationally accredited training. This project will begin in autumn 2008 with a large scoping exercise to develop the body of knowledge on travel training and to define in more detail the outcomes that are needed from this project. The project will also explore how we can give greater recognition to learners who are travel trained, and how we can provide greater support and information to the many people are voluntarily involved in travel training, for example, family members and carers.

How can we give greater recognition where needed or desired for travel trainers and for learners?

The Department will continue to work closely with other Government departments to ensure the **links** are made at the national level to help support the development and implementation of this strategy.

We are keen to work closely with local authorities and other interested parties. We would welcome your input into this valuable work, your ideas on areas for further discussion and any comments that you may have on the strategy and work programme.



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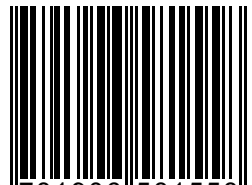
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