



Independent Travel Training



**An Information Guide for
Parents / Carers**



RHONDDA CYNON TAF



1. INTRODUCTION

What is Travel Training?

Travel training aims to help those who need extra assistance and support to make journeys safely on their own.

Travel training tends to be delivered on a one to one or group basis, in order to meet the needs and abilities of each trainee.

Travel training can include a wide range of support by:

- Providing short term training to familiarise people with how public transport works in their area and giving them the confidence to use it; or
- Providing longer term, regular, intensive one-to-one training to also learn important road safety and personal awareness skills.

Who is it aimed at helping?

Travel training can assist people of all ages, abilities and needs, who suffer from a lack of road safety awareness and knowledge of how to travel by public transport. Travel training is particularly beneficial to individuals who have Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

Such individuals are often transported by arranged taxi until they leave school. Access to further education, work placements, training and other life opportunities can then become very daunting because they have no prior experience in preparing and planning journeys independently. Many will be unfamiliar with where to find the information or advice or even the skills to make journeys themselves.

Travel training can also be useful for individuals who are having difficulties getting around due to a recent disability or illness.

Note: Individuals who are partially sighted or blind will require specialist navigation and orientation skills which are not covered in the realm of travel training. However, there are specialist mobility officers who can provide assistance.

As taxi transport for learners aged between 16 to 19 years is provided only under exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that the Gatekeeping Panel will agree to such transport without any engagement with the Youth Engagement and Participation Service or the Transition Team. Travel Training is provided over a minimum of 6 weeks and is fully risk assessed, any concerns you have can be discussed with the Key Worker so there should not be any reason why travel training is refused on safety grounds. The purpose of travel training is to improve confidence and resilience for individuals to be more independent.



2. AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS

Once the trainee has successfully reached independence and can travel alone, arranged transport / taxis will stop and be replaced with *bus / train passes. These passes can be used to travel to and from school, college, training, day centre and work placements, thus making full use of the new skills and the opportunities to become more independent.

*Please note that bus passes will only be issued in line with the eligibility for free transport (i.e. based on the transport policy). Some trainees may be entitled to a companion or disabled pass to travel free on all public bus services in Wales. For further details please contact the **Public Transport Unit 01443 425001**.

Independent Travel Training

Objectives

- To engage with schools to promote a sustainable culture of independence across Rhondda Cynon Taf by making relevant curriculum links.
- To motivate young people to want to travel independently and encourage the long term development of life skills.
- To train and support individuals with ALN in the field of independent travel, an essential skill of independent living.
- To provide a safe learning environment where individuals can gain independence and knowledge.
- To encourage the use of public transport.

Benefits For Individuals

- Greater independence, resilience and self esteem.
- Personal safety awareness.
- Social inclusion, choice and equity.
- Ability to enjoy travelling on their own or with friends around Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- Health and wellbeing – walking and bus use promote active living and exercise.
- Improved quality of life, social and personal development – breaking barriers.
- Access to further education, work, training and other life opportunities, irrespective of ability.
- A smooth transition into adulthood.
- Key skills gained will be wide ranging and transferable – handling money, understanding time, interacting with other people, dealing with new situations and the unexpected, planning and preparing for journeys.





Benefits for Parents/Carers

- The trainee is being trained by a Key Worker or worker who they already know and trust.
- Travel training is delivered on a one to one or group basis, taking into account the trainee's personal needs, confidence and skill level.
- Travel training is offered for a minimum of 6 weeks but is dependent on the development of the trainee, making it stress free and enjoyable.
- The trainee will be trained to a high standard, understanding key skills and tasks that will enable them to walk and use public transport safely.
- The trainee will be able to make the most of their adult life in an independent capacity.
- More personal independence for parents/carers, as trainees become more confident and able to travel independently.

Parents / carers will be involved from the start. The Key Worker will consult with you at all stages of the process, so that you have a full understanding about what the training involves and how it is progressing.

If you have any questions or concerns throughout the process please do not hesitate to contact your Key Worker or the lead person identified within each school / college / establishment. Contact details will be listed at the back of this guide.

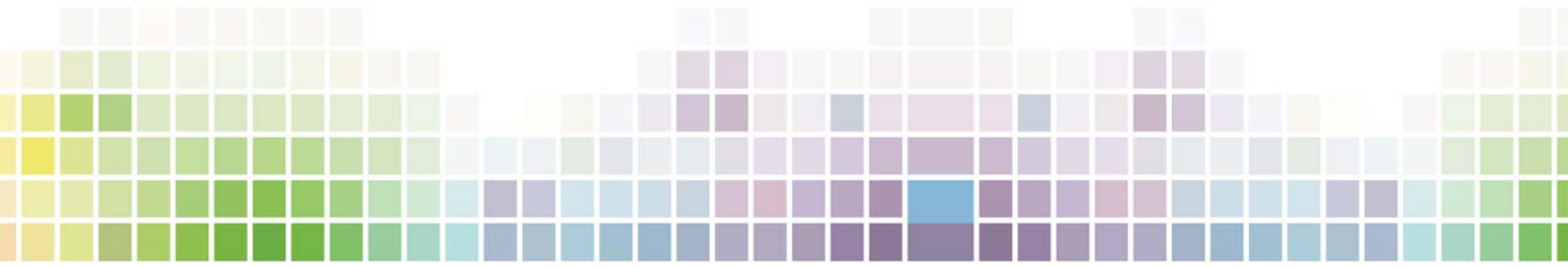
3. WHAT IS INVOLVED WITH PRACTICAL TRAVEL TRAINING?

Classroom

Targets: Before practical training starts, trainers will establish some goals with each trainee. These include areas which at first they may not feel comfortable, such as understanding time, raising confidence, resilience, improving communication skills.

Travel Behaviour: Every trainee will be asked to identify clearly what they think is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relation to walking, bus use, and communication and interaction with members of the public.

Travel Plan: An individual travel plan detailing each trainee's return route will be prepared by the Key Worker and the trainee. Each trainee and their Key Worker will discuss how to prepare for a journey, taking into account the route and mode to be taken, as well as considering what footwear and clothing to wear in certain weather and at times of the day. The Key Worker and trainee will also plan the journey to be taken together, looking at how to obtain information about the journey, how to decide the most appropriate mode of travel, time management, reading bus timetables and maps, dealing with the unexpected, and communication skills.



Practical – Step by step instruction

The practical training will follow the three stages below, but the detail and time spent at each level will be individually set to fit each trainee, in line with parental / carer's agreement.

1. Accompany: The initial stage of travel training involves the Key Worker accompanying the individual or group to and from a destination. This is from their home address or agreed meeting point, where responsibility transfers from the parent / carer or responsible adult to the Key Worker. The Key Worker accompanies the trainee to and from the destination, and once back at the home address or agreed meeting point, responsibility reverts to the parent / carer or responsible adult until the next accompanied journey.

2. Shadow: The second stage involves the Key Worker shadowing the trainee's journey from a safe distance, in order to assess their skill level and capabilities – crossing roads safely, the green cross code, getting on and off the bus, and communicating with the bus driver.

During the shadow stage, the Key Worker will meet the trainee at their home address or agreed meeting point and make sure they are confident and prepared for the journey. The Key Worker will shadow the trainee throughout the journey until the destination is reached, where responsibility transfers to a responsible adult. For the return journey, the trainee and the Key Worker will meet to discuss the route. Again, the Key Worker will shadow the trainee throughout the journey and will hand over responsibility to the parent / carer or responsible adult at the home address or agreed meeting point

3. Meet and Greet: At the third stage, the Key Worker will meet the trainee at their home address or agreed meeting point and make sure they feel safe and confident to travel the route. The trainee will then independently travel the entire route to the destination and will be met at the destination before entering the establishment. The parent / carer or responsible adult will be informed that the individual has arrived safely by the Key Worker.

Trainees will not be left to travel alone until the Key Worker feels they are capable of travelling without becoming lost or late. Trainees will have been shadowed along this route several times before undertaking it alone.





4. GETTING THERE SAFELY

It is very important that trainees are trained in a safe environment, gradually becoming accustomed to being out and about in the community, using public modes of transport and moving toward independent travel.

The three stages of practical training detailed above aim to gradually improve the skill level and self esteem of individuals by training them to make a regular journey to and from their destination independently.

Each trainee's progress is monitored on a regular basis. When the Key Worker believes the trainee is ready to continue to the next stage of training, this will be agreed with the trainee and parent / carer before moving forward. Regular contact with parents / carers will ensure everyone knows what is happening on a regular basis, avoiding confusion and unnecessary worry.

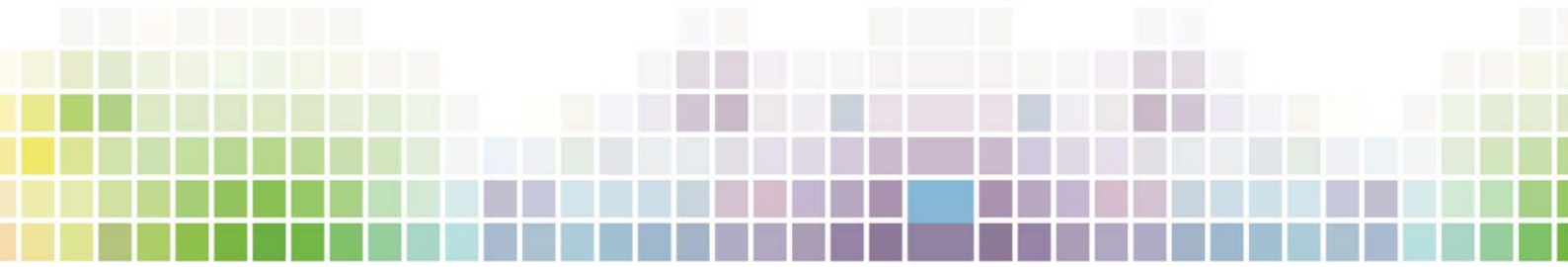
Risk Assessments

An overarching risk assessment has been prepared to evaluate any possible risks to the Key Workers, trainees, members of the public and / or bus operators during the travel training process. Practical measures have been put in place to control and reduce the risk rating.

Once a route to and from the destination has been identified for each trainee, it is essential that the Key Worker and where appropriate, members of the Road Safety Team, undertake an individual risk assessment before training can start. Normally the most direct route will be identified but it is important to ensure that this route is the safest. The Council's approved risk assessment template is used for this purpose.

Safety Accessories

To facilitate travel, specific accessories can be provided to the Key Worker and trainee, such as:

- Bus pass;
 - Extra care card (orange wallet) – created individually for each trainee, detailing contact numbers for the Key Worker, School, College, Day Centre, Work Placement, Home. Details of how to obtain travel information will also be shown i.e. Traveline Cymru and local bus (Stagecoach, Edwards, NAT) or train operator.
 - Travel plan - detailing times, bus information, and map with landmark recognition;
 - Reflective arm bands, where necessary;
 - Personal safety alarm, where necessary.
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Lateness, Sickness and Emergencies

In the event of the Key Worker or trainee being late, sick or in the event of an emergency, a number of emergency procedures have been put in place. These are designed for all parties to follow and will help to avoid confusion and unnecessary panic. Specific information, such as the start and finishing times of the training, will be dependent on the trainee and route. This will be agreed and signed by all parties.

Before training can commence, parents / carers will be asked to complete the emergency contact form or equivalent. Up to three different contact persons should be listed, where practicable. Please note that you are responsible for updating the Key Worker of any changes.

Any medical information / conditions will also be detailed on the emergency contact form or equivalent. Again we ask for parents/carers to update the Key Worker with any changes to this information as soon as practicable.

The Key Worker will have undertaken basic first aid training and be able to deal with any minor falls etc but has been advised that with the more serious falls or in the case of a medical emergency to directly contact the emergency services.

Responsibility for each trainee on the journey

Trainees who are permitted to begin travel training will become the responsibility of the Key Worker, for the journey to and from their establishment. To avoid any dispute on where responsibility ends for the parent / carer and begins for the Key Worker, the one to one training will always run from the trainee's home address or agreed meeting point to their establishment and back again. In the event of a parent / carer not being present, a responsibility handover procedure has been put in place.

Incidents

In the event of an accident (trips, slips, minor injuries etc) the Key Workers are required to complete an incident and prevention form. This will detail the incident and make suggestions on how to avoid this in the future. Training processes and procedures will be reviewed and altered accordingly, as will each risk assessment.

Parents / carers will be advised of any incidents and agreement sought for travel training to continue.





5. PARENT AND CARER INVOLVEMENT

As previously stated, travel training will not be a success unless parents / carers are fully on board. The Key Workers will be working extremely hard to ensure that parents / carers are kept up to date throughout the training. This will help parents / carers to see the potential end results and life changing benefits that can be gained. All decisions will require your agreement and we will appreciate and take on board opinions and suggestions. Where there is no engagement to take travel training forward, school or college transport may be withdrawn, passing responsibility to the parent /carer.

6. MONITORING AND AFTERCARE SERVICE

A monitoring and aftercare service (for trainees and their families) will be developed as part of the training programme. This will help to ensure that independent travellers continue to travel in a confident and safe manner once their training is complete.

Monitoring will involve consulting with trainees and their families from time to time to check how things are progressing and to identify whether further training needs to be provided. It will also involve sporadically checking to see that individuals are travelling safely and securely on their regular routes to and from the school / college or establishment.

If at any time there are genuine concerns (from the trainees, parents / carers or placement) over an individual travelling independently, alternative transport can be reinstated in the short term until the problems are overcome, in accordance with transport policy / criteria.

The monitoring and aftercare service will be developed in conjunction with participating schools, day service, parents / carers and trainees. It is essential that any support services put in place reflect the ideas and needs of residents and the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

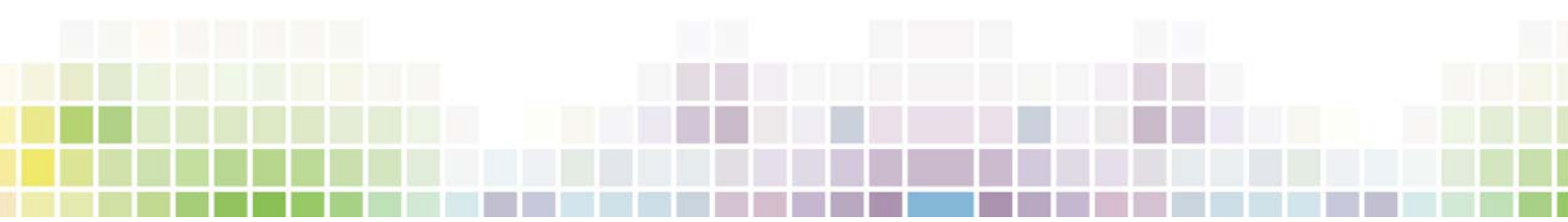
7. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What will independent travel training cost?

The independent travel training is available free of charge for all trainees who have ALN.

Q. Who undergoes travel training?

Each participating school or day centre will make appropriate referrals. Identification and offers of participation will be based on appropriate criteria and may include the trainee's age, medical needs and personal circumstances. This aims to make sure that the training is not offered to those who are unlikely to reach independence, thereby building up hopes unnecessarily.





Q. What will happen if my son / daughter tries travelling independently but is unable to cope?

Don't worry; if your son / daughter is eligible for free transport due to their ALN (or in line with council policy / criteria) they can be reinstated with Council funded, arranged transport until they are confident to try again.

Q. Will I lose any associated benefits if my son / daughter becomes independent?

Travel training tends to focus on assisting trainees to make one particular journey. Other elements of independent living may still require assistance or attract benefits. For expert advice contact the Council's One for All Centres.

Q. What if we refuse for my son / daughter to undergo travel training?

Where there is no engagement to take travel training forward, school or college transport may be withdrawn, passing responsibility to you.

Q. Who takes responsibility for my son / daughter if the Key Worker is taken ill?

If the Key Worker is taken ill, an alternative Key Worker may take over responsibility and undertake the training that day, or alternative transport will be organised to transport the trainee to and from their destination. See emergency procedure forms or equivalent.

Q. Will my son / daughter be expected to be unaccompanied to the bus stop?

The Key Worker will pick up your son / daughter from their home address or agreed meeting point, as the training includes travelling the entire journey (to and from the school / college / training / day centre / work placement). The Key Worker will be assessing how the individual copes and must be confident that they can get to and from their destination independently.


During the accompanying and the shadowing stages the Key Worker will meet each trainee at their home address or agreed meeting point. Trainees will not be left to travel alone until they have travelled the route several times, the Key Worker has assessed their capabilities and this risk is low.

Q. What happens if my son / daughter mis-behaves?

The Key Worker will be giving your son / daughter clear instructions as a pedestrian and a bus user, which they are expected to follow. If trainees mis-behave they will be given a warning. We expect each trainee to be motivated to begin the training and hope not to have any compliance problems.

Q. What if my son / daughter is taken ill and unable to attend their placement – who do I inform and by what time?

Before training can begin your son / daughter's Key Worker will create a travel plan for the journey. This will detail the time needed to leave. In the case of sickness, we ask that you inform the Key Worker an hour before the training is due to start.



Q. Is this training just for those who could travel by bus or is there also a walking scheme for trainees who live close enough to walk to their school, college or establishment

The training is aimed at helping any individual with ALN, who currently receives free transport to travel independently. Once a trainee leaves school, the aftercare service can provide a number of hours of training (bus and / or pedestrian skills) to assist individuals travelling to a new facility / work place / training / college, etc to sustain their independence.

Q. Should my son / daughter try this training and this doesn't work out for them, will transport be made available to them?

If during training it is agreed by the Key Worker, school, day centre and parent that the trainee will not reach independence or is not happy with the progress being made, their arranged transport can be reinstated.

If training is completed and independence is reached but down the line there is a genuine reason for the individual have to cease travelling independently, the use of arranged transport can be reconsidered, as long as that individual is still eligible for free transport.

Q. Will the Key Workers working with my son / daughter have background checks?

Yes, Council staff working directly with trainees will have undergone an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS).

8. PROJECT CONTACTS

- Andrea Hughes, Direct Services, Transition Team
Work Tel: 01443 841235 • Work Mobile: 07919823648
- Nicola Murphy, Team Leader, Youth Engagement & Participation Service
Work Tel: 01443 281436 • Work Mobile: 07799132121
- Key Worker: _____
Work Tel:01443 _____ Work Mobile: _____

In the event of the above being unavailable, please contact the;

Integrated Transport Unit • Office Tel: 01443 494824

**Integrated Transport Unit
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council**

**Online: www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schooltransport
E-mail: communitycaretransport@rctcbc.gov.uk • Phone: 01443 425001**