

WEST LONDON ALLIANCE TRANSPORT EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL STRATEGY Nov 2012

Independent travel provision for children, young people and adults

1. Why independent travel is a good idea

1.1. A clear, concise, coherent approach to providing independent travel will support and emphasise the promotion of independence. This will help enable young people to achieve their full potential and it will more generally help improve the life experiences of the more vulnerable people in society. It will also help to change the traditional and institutionalised culture of transporting vulnerable adults, children and young people.

1.2. The benefits of developing an independent travel strategy are;

- Opens opportunities both for learning, social and job prospects
- Increases independence and use of own initiative
- Provides greater freedom – less reliant on the council, friends and family
- Raises self confidence
- Develops social skills
- Releases resource and creates efficiencies

It will also potentially release resources which can be redirected, reapportioned or reinvested elsewhere. Passenger transport services and the needs / requirements of the vulnerable people in receipt of such services are, as with many local authority delivered services, in a flux of constant change. The drive for greater efficiency, the move to more tailored and personalised services, including personal budgets, have created an opportunity to move away from the traditional passenger transport models used by many local authorities. In the place of the institutionalised service offer there is an opportunity to migrate towards a more dynamic and customer centric offer which supports national and local priorities of individually designed accessible services. Identifying independent modes and methods of transport for all passenger transport service users is a core component of the wider WLA transport programme and as such independent travel provision is an integral and fundamentally important part of the Transport Efficiency Programme.

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2.0 Proposed approach for future independent travel provision in participating boroughs

2.1 The WLA transport programme recognises the importance of developing a consistent approach to defining what an Independent Travel Strategy is, as well as developing a common approach to how such a service might be offered to clients across the member Boroughs. It forms an integral part of the overall transport strategy for the WLA and has obvious synergies with initiatives to develop regionally agreed and applied eligibility criteria and assessment for travel assistance.

2.2 An early part of the Working Group activity has been to establish what is already in place across the Boroughs. Each Borough has provided details of what provision is being delivered and the key conclusions from the survey indicate the following;

- There are some very good, if somewhat isolated, independent travel schemes / projects in place.¹
- There is an inconsistency and lack of fully-developed/implemented Independent Travel solutions - pointing to need for co-ordinated action by participating Boroughs against an agreed Strategy.²

For the purposes of this document, the definition of Independent Travel is a term which promotes a move away from local authority provided transport³ and focuses on the provision of travel training, enabling clients to travel independently.

All councils in West London wish to develop their independent travel programmes

3.0 Principles of the agreed approach

3.1 West London councils within the Transport programme are Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Harrow and Hounslow. They are all committed to;

¹ London Borough of Ealing partnership with Ealing MENCAP and activities currently being delivered by Children's Services in London Boroughs of Harrow and Brent.

² There are established independent travel schemes delivering significant benefits and improvements across the UK and internationally. Both the locally delivered independent schemes and those being offered across the UK will inform the WLA approach.

³ Traditional local authority branded wheelchair accessible buses/minibus transporting clients to SEN schools or ASC centres.

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- Developing a common and collaborative approach to the provision of Independent Travel arrangements for clients who would otherwise be eligible for the direct provision of transport.
- Establishing a progressive programme to extend the application of Independent Travel provision which has the potential to deliver long term savings.⁴

3.2 West London councils are wishing to implement an approach to providing travel assistance which reflects local conditions and which provides clarity for the following areas;

- An agreed approach which is consistent with Eligibility Policy & Processes for Adult's and Children's Services
- A clear statement on the approach for payment of mileage allowance (where payment is shown to represent an appropriate and cost-effective independent to council-provided transport)
- A common policy for travel support for parents/carers (where payment is shown to represent an appropriate and cost-effective independent to council-provided transport)
- A policy which supports the promotion of independence
- A statement which emphasises that the successful completion of any Independent Travel Training (ITT) may result in independent travel in line with council policy
- An approach that if assisted transport is provided then this will be reviewed on at least an annual basis
- An approach which is implemented in partnership with parents an carers
- An approach which allows for a right of appeal through to an independent process

Independent Travel Training (ITT)

3.3 WLA councils have identified ITT as a core element of providing independent travel assistance. It recognises that the current capability within Boroughs will need to be enhanced and supported.

⁴ The full benefit of these savings will be realised as clients progress through transition.

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3.4 Councils have agreed additional ITT resource could be procured as a 'train the trainer package' or delivered as a package directly with clients and each individual council will consider the most flexible and cost effective method of delivering the training.

3.5 An agreed 'standard' approach to assessment, training and sign-off for ITT might be beneficial including the provision of;

- Capability and suitability assessment
- Risk assessment
- Awareness training
- Accompanied travel Including buddying
- Supervised travel
- Independent travel

West London councils are developing a consistent approach and liaising on this work to produce appropriate proposals.

4.0 Our Approach to Independent travel

4.1 The following client groups have been identified as the main groups to benefit across the WLA;

- a. Children / students with moderate learning disabilities attending SEN schools / centres and colleges
- b. Children / students attending main stream schools / colleges, who have a disability which is a significant barrier to their learning and development
- c. Those clients in receipt of transport who are approaching key transition points i.e. Year 7 and Post 16
- d. Any other clients in receipt of transport who have been identified as having the potential / capability to undertake ITT

4.3 All identification is linked to the common eligibility processes for Children's and Adults Services. Once it has been decided that, in line with the eligibility process, a client is eligible for assisted travel, the following question should be posed;

"Is this client capable of learning to travel independently and would ITT enable the client to achieve his/her full potential?"

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4.4 If the client is identified as suitable for ITT, then an assessment will take place⁵. The assessment will consider;

- e. The specific needs of the client
- f. Any other specific circumstance relevant to the client or their family
- g. Journey complexity
- h. Journey length
- i. Environmental risks⁶
- j. Client capability

Once the client has been assessed as suitable for training, a training package will be established either through internally trained staff or by external providers.

5.0 Some examples of regional good practice

6.1 Brent

Pre the SEN funded independent travel training programmes through the use of Teaching Assistants during 2010-2011 (April-March) a total of 11 pupils were travel trained successfully. Outcomes are :

- Total of 39 pupils have been travel training
- 8 have already been successfully travel trained
- A further 15 are undergoing the training & most should be travel trained by the end of the 2011/12 academic year
- Additionally, 8 pupils with moderate learning disabilities have been successfully travel trained to now attend Alperton Community School
- Another 8 pupils from Year 11 are currently being trained for attending their college as they leave Woodfield this term
- The target for the I.T.T.A. was 15 pupils per year. It is hoped that the performance of the first year will greatly exceed this. The I.T.T.A. has also trained a total of 35 pupils from Years 7 & 8 in road safety as part of the PSHE lessons

⁵ This could be a joint assessment by Borough / school staff and an ITT practitioner

⁶ Roads, alley ways, rivers etc

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Adults

Work within Brent has previously identified over 10% of those people with a learning disability attending day care centres could travel independently

6.2 Ealing

Ealing Council currently employs Mencap to deliver travel training and travel buddy programmes in the borough. This funds a part time manager, travel trainers and sessional staff. The project is working very well locally and has the opportunity to recruit sessional workers from the broader community including students from the University of West London (approximately 200 students signed up to a request for volunteers and sessional workers during an open day event).

In 2009/10 academic year, three travel trainers enabled 35 students to travel independently.. Between January 2011 and July 2011, thirty five students had travel training - all of these students completed the programme and are now travelling independently to school. The travel training project has had a success rate of over 85%⁷ in 2010/11 academic year.

Most importantly, these children who travel independently gain independent skills which improve their outcomes, quality of life and skills they will need in their adult lives.

In the 2011/12 academic year, 123 students received input from the travel training project. This was delivered by 5 travel trainers and includes travel training placements teaching route independence, shadowing, follow up work, assessments, and day work with students who will start independent travel training in the near future. This training enabled 45 students to travel independently in the 11/12 academic year.

The Travel Training project has moved its focus over the last 3 years away from working with older transition aged students, to working with younger students. In particular the project has concentrated on working with year six pupils in one SEN primary school. The project works with this year group delivering workshops and then choosing the most able students to start travel training whilst they are still in year 6. The project supports these students to learn to travel their journey to their secondary school so that they are ready to travel independently in September and therefore start secondary school as independent travellers and not requiring transport. This maximises independence whilst at school as they will have a full 5 years of secondary school without transport.

⁷ Over 85% Of those children selected for independent travel training have been able to travel independently.

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7.0 Other national examples of good practice

7.1 TITAN

Titan train teaching assistants to provide travel training, which includes information packs for trainers, students, parents and carers, an initial briefing and a telephone support service. TITAN were established by Norfolk County Council and are working in Greenwich and Doncaster. They claim significant outcomes taking 261 children off transport in Norfolk. The WLA have recommended the purchase of their package and the piloting in at least one WLA council. Therefore a Barnet special school has purchased the TITAN independent travel training package on a trial basis. Its use will be monitored and reviewed to establish outcomes. The approach seems to be similar to the Brent approach but utilises teaching assistants.

7.2 Personal Budgets

Children services

Although personal budgets for children services is still under development the working group has considered work in other places such as Newcastle City Council where the principle of allocating a personal budgets to those children qualifying for transport. This could be lower than current costs (on average set at half of the current cost). The budget could allow carers and parents to put in place independent arrangements for travel to school.

Adult services

Personal budgets are provided to cover transport costs within Adult services in Harrow and Ealing. Brent does not include transport costs within personal budgets.

Use of existing staff

There is potential to make better use of those staff are already trained in ITT within councils such as staff within day centres in Adult Social care who are not used in Children services where there is a clear identified need. In Brent there are staff within Strathcona day centre who are trained in ITT and a clear need to work within transitions on travel training. There is the existence of a very good buddies schemes within Adult Social care day services in Hounslow –could they be used by SEN. Barnet Adults also have staff in day centres who are trained in ITT ?.

West London Alliance Independent Travel Strategy Matrix

Councils will take into account the following factors in order to reach decisions on the production of travel training :

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<u>Identified Group</u>	<u>Stage/ Process</u>	<u>Supporting Documents</u>
<p>Who Can be trained? Who can benefit?</p>	<p>High Level Scanning of ADULT SOCIAL CARE & SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS Clients</p>	<p>ADULT SOCIAL CARE & SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS Eligibility Policies</p> <p>ADULT SOCIAL CARE & SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS Databases</p>
<p>Which clients have the “capability” to independently travel?</p>	<p>Assessment of “capacity”</p>	<p>Assessment Tool</p> <p>Jointly scored by Borough Staff & ITT assessor</p>
<p>Who will be able to independently travel & prioritised for travel training?</p>	<p>Training of clients in ITT</p>	<p>ITT package & Travel Training Units</p>
<p>Who is successfully trained to be independent?</p>	<p>Final Evaluation / Sign Off & release to independent travel</p> <p>& RE-ASSESSMENT CHECK AFTER TRAINING</p>	<p>ITT package & Training Units & Final Risk Assessment</p>

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11.0 Conclusions and recommendations

11.1. There are good examples of independent travel training (ITT) programmes within West London councils. These show evidence of improving outcomes and promoting the independence of children and young people.

11.2. Development of ITT is needed across all WLA councils but in particular within Hounslow and Barnet Children and young people services.

11.3. ITT programmes may help manage demand for transport services.

11.4. ITT programmes promote independence and change lives.

11.5 ITT programmes save money although these may be relatively modest amounts unless boroughs can link the programmes to changes within the provision of existing services. Savings made within Children services could continue into Adult services.

11.6. ITT requires an initial investment within boroughs particularly Barnet, Hounslow and Harrow.

11.7 Development of ITT has close links to the application of regional eligibility policies and the timelines for both will be co-ordinated.

11.8 ITT could be developed on a regional basis.

12.0 Recommendations

12.1. ITT programmes are developed within each borough and co-ordinated on a regional basis.

12.2. Independent travel should be developed through applying the following approaches within boroughs;

- Independent travel training provided by external providers (such as Mencap in Ealing)
- Independent travel training directly provided by council staff
- The use of Parents and carers as champions

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In practice the exact approach may be a mixture of all of the above and will need to be determined by each borough in consultation with parents and carers.

Independent Travel Working Group

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