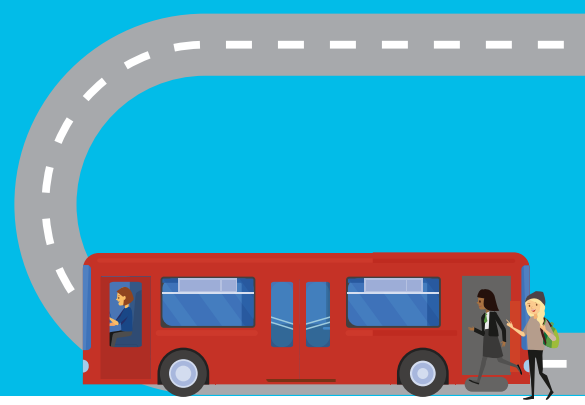


NEXT STEPS

Independent Travel Training Newsletter

2023/2024 EDITION



Since October 2022, 47 young people have been independently travel trained across Warwickshire who now travel independently to their place of education or work.

Progress so far...

Independent Travel Training is a free service and has been in-house within Warwickshire County Council since October 2022.

The team has worked hard to develop it and has created an ever-expanding network of contacts. We have built strong relationships with education establishments and our internal processes are becoming more robust as we constantly review the service, based upon the feedback of young people and their parents.

We want to continue to improve the service to make it bigger and better. So, this year, we have raised our presence at various events across Warwickshire, promoting Independent Travel Training and meeting potential young people and their families/carers across the county:

Since September 2024, we have attended:

- 13 different specialist establishments for career/future fair/conference events – we loved attending and meeting the young people.
- 6 specialist establishments to deliver classroom sessions and workshops or attend assemblies. These sessions are a chance to work closely with young people, pass on key information and to inspire them to want to be independent.

If your setting is holding an event that could benefit from us attending, or you would like to learn more about the classroom sessions we can offer, please get in touch at tt@warwickshire.gov.uk

The Numbers

Independent Travel Training equips young people around Warwickshire with additional needs, who are eligible, with the skills to travel independently. Over the last two academic years (2022/23 and 2023/24) we trained 22 and 25 young people respectively.

This means these young people with special education needs have learnt new skills, built confidence, self-esteem and gained independence. This free training opens doors for young people when looking at colleges, attending work, improving their social lives and getting about in general life scenarios. Parents are not relied upon and are free to work or go on their own social outings, knowing that their child is safe and competent.

Meet the team

We currently have three Travel Trainers and a Team Manager in Warwickshire.

They are...

**Hello
I'm Liz**



I have been one of the Travel Trainers here at Warwickshire County Council for just under six years. I mostly cover South Warwickshire which includes Warwick, Leamington and Kenilworth but, really, I can be anywhere that's located in Warwickshire. What I most enjoy about my role is seeing young people thrive and gain confidence whilst gaining individual skills to carry out a journey to school, college or work placement independently.

**Hello
I'm
Georgia**



I joined the team in November 2022 and have supported 11 young people to independently travel on public transport.

I find the job extremely rewarding and love to see the young people I work with grow in confidence and self-belief. I believe this service is important in allowing young people to gain their own independence and open doors that may have been closed for them before. It is a privilege to help them along their journey and I look forward to training many more young people in the future.

**Hello
I'm Tom**



I have been the team manager for the team for 18 months now and it's been great to see how much the service has grown. The team is passionate about helping young people around Warwickshire, so please reach out if you think it would benefit any young people in your lives.

We want to grow the service without losing any of the quality. I have loved getting out with the team to watch as the young people learn the skills they will use throughout their lives, in education or work.



**Hello
I'm
Nicola**



I have worked as a Travel Trainer for the last three years. I enjoy seeing the young people's confidence and self-esteem grow as they progress through the stages of travel training. The role is rewarding, and no two days are the same.



Independence here I come!

WB has been using specialist transport to get from home to school every day for several years. Now he has learnt to travel independently using public transport via Warwickshire County Council's free travel training service.

This is WB and he attends a school in Warwickshire. He enjoys attending Explores and going on camping trips. He lives with his parents and pet dogs. His aim is to go to college after finishing school.



on these, he was able to work his way through from accompanied training to close shadow to eventually distant shadow (traveling completely independently). Each stage of the training is recorded with progress tracked and new targets set.

WB is now using a public bus service in his local area to travel independently to and from school using his concessionary travel pass. The training has given him a real sense of independence and he has learnt skills to potentially travel to work and meet friends at the weekends in his local area. He travels to Explores independently each week rather than having to rely on his parents for lifts.

Previous travel arrangements

WB used to use the specialist transport bus operated by Warwickshire County Council to and from school. He got picked up at home and taken straight to the school with a passenger assistant on board.

The travel training journey

WB had a positive start to travel training. He was keen and enthusiastic. He gained skills in road safety, reading timetables, using the bus app and planning a journey. We talked about 'What if' situations, so he knows what to do if the bus is late or he lost his bus pass. Safety is paramount when traveling independently and always a concern for parents. We spend time talking about different scenarios that could happen and what to do to keep yourself and belongings safe.

Using money to buy a bus ticket is also covered in our training. Over the weeks, WB gained confidence using a bus and judging traffic. He worked on these skills with his Travel Trainer each week when they met. After several sessions focusing



"I really enjoyed travel training with Nicola. She talked through everything I needed to know and encouraged me when I was doing something for the first time and felt a bit nervous. I love traveling on the bus and can't wait to do more activities with my friends at the weekends and school holidays. My Concessionary Bus Pass is great because I can use it to go to school and at weekends!"

Case study 2

Getting the bus is so much more fun!

AJ was referred to our Travel Training programme as he wanted to get to school independently. He used to get driven every day - to and from - but wanted to take more control of his life by making his own decisions, to become more independent and not so reliant on other people. AJ felt that he lacked the necessary skills to undertake this by himself and asked for our help to support him with the journey from his house to school.



The Travel Trainer worked with AJ and his family to plan the route and look at bus times to create an individual programme which would allow him to progress at his own pace at each stage of the journey. His route involved catching two separate buses and using pedestrian and road crossing skills.

AJ began travelling with his trainer to become familiar with the route from his home to school and practising the return journey. As AJ gained confidence, the trainer started to withdraw their support, initially walking behind him to encourage him to make his own decisions and to observe and then, later, allowing him to complete parts of the journey independently.

When AJ was confident in his ability to complete the journey by himself, the Travel Trainer arranged to meet him at school so that he would travel the entire route independently. This was completed over a few sessions together with his return journey from school to home. AJ was then signed off as being safe to travel independently.

Now that AJ is signed off and safe to travel independently the Travel Trainer contacts the family one month then three then six months afterwards, following up to see how well AJ is carrying the journey out and if he requires any ongoing support. AJ hopes to attend college next year. A detailed evaluation document is sent out to the family and AJ, outlining his progress and development throughout the travel training programme.

Case study 3

Success for AV as he completes his travel training

AV loves being outdoors and riding his bike. He currently attends a school in Warwickshire and was ready to take his independence to the next level.

AV was using the specialist transport bus to school and back but, now, he has learnt to travel independently on public transport, by using the free Travel Training service.

AV was eager to start and was very attentive during his training. We worked together through the summer holidays, so he was ready to get on the bus as soon as school started in September. We discussed and practised buying tickets, the walking route to and from the bus stop, and boarding and exiting the bus at the correct destinations. We even tried out different times and different buses to see which worked best

After nine sessions of working together, AV successfully got signed off to travel independently and has been using the bus ever since.

AV says **“Georgia helped me to get off school transport, she showed me the timetables at the bus stops and also showed me how to use the bus app.”**

Well done for all your hard work, AV.

Feedback from the young people/parents/carers in the 2023/24 cohort:



Did you find the Travel Trainer helpful and patient?

“My Travel Trainer helped me when I was stuck and she gave me confidence.”



How did your Travel Trainer update you on your progress?

“Each week helped with communicating how I was progressing with travel training.”



What did you enjoy?

“Not being in my taxi and being able to get the bus and walk to school.”



What was helpful about it?

“Now, I am more confident and I know how to cross the road safely.”



How useful do you think the travel training was for the young person?

The Travel Trainer “has helped my son grow so much in being confident and independent. I thank her so much for everything and for being part of my son’s journey. She has been so supportive every step of the way.”

The Travel Trainer “was so fantastic, patient and calm, but also with a great sense of humour. She was really flexible (around) rearranging sessions. It would be great if this could be offered to all young people not just those with SEN needs.”



The WCC Travel Training Journey:

FINISH

10 Start travelling independently



09 Receive a concessionary or commercial bus pass



07 Distant Shadow travel training



08 Independent travel training complete



06 Close shadow travel training



05 Accompanied travel training



03 Route check is good



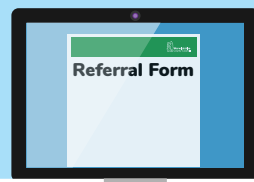
04 Initial assessment/ Meet and greet completed



02 Student meets eligibility criteria



01 Referral made and assessed



START

Concessionary bus pass

As part of the travel training programme, we encourage and support families and carers with the application for a **concessionary bus pass**

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/free-bus-travel-older-people-people-disabilities-1/2-free-bus-travel-applying-disabled-persons-pass

This bus pass has many benefits, and the good news is the scheme to extend weekday travel before 9am is extended to 2027.

Read more about this news here...

Disabled people to benefit from two-year extension of free weekday travel before 9am – Warwickshire County Council

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5307/disabled-people-to-benefit-from-two-year-extension-of-free-weekday-travel-before-9am

The future is bright - what are our plans?

As mentioned, we want to get bigger and better so we can quickly reach more young people. Next academic year (2024/2025), we want to attend more classrooms and events to talk about Travel Training and inspire your young people, parents and professionals about what we are doing here.

As mentioned earlier, please do get in touch about any of the following via tt@warwickshire.gov.uk

- Classroom sessions/ workshops/assemblies
- Careers/Transition/Parent/Carer events
- Speaking with fellow professionals (eg EHCP Coordinators, SENDcos, SEND and Inclusion services)

...or to just help us improve our service

We are proud to have received referrals from the following establishments

Aylesford School

Brooke School

Evergreen School

Hereward College

Leamington Lamp

Lillington Learning Hub

North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College

Oakwood School

President Kennedy School

Quest Academy

Stratford Upon Avon College

Warwickshire College Group

How to make a referral

To see our criteria and join the waiting list please refer a young person on the following link:

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/school-transport/school-transport-special-educational-needs-disabilities-send/4