Travel training provides additional support to young people who face barriers to being able to travel on their own including learning disabilities, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or levels of vulnerability.

Independent travel training is about much more than learning which bus to get on. It can cover anything that the young person needs to learn to be able to travel safely on their own. This includes appropriate behaviour, personal safety, problem solving and road safety. Each training programme is tailored to the individual person to cover any aspect of travelling that they need support with.

It is not possible to eliminate all risks associated with your child travelling on their own, but it is possible to reduce that risk to the same level everybody faces whilst travelling.

The benefits to an individual being able to travel independently by public transport extend far beyond the practical ‘being able to get from A to B’. Being able to travel independently, provides greater opportunities such as - choice of further education and work placements and developing social skills and increased confidence. Being able to travel independently can play an integral part in a young person’s future.

This pack has been developed to allow you as a parent/carer to be able to support your child to start working towards independent travel. They might not be ready to travel a whole journey on their own, but by taking a small step towards independent travel like walking to a local shop or relative’s house, you can help prepare your child for their future. If your child is ready to start thinking about a longer journey or bus travel then the pack will also support this.
Next Stop, Independence

One of the most important parts of travelling independently is to make sure they are travelling the safest route available. We have put down some things to think about on the journey to see if it is safe. Look at the different options/routes to get from A-B and make a decision about which is most appropriate. The safest route won’t always be the shortest route.

As a first step you can use online journey planners but it’s important to travel the route yourself as well.

Use the Route Assessment to help you think about what will minimise risks. Make this as detailed as you can and include any useful info such as landmarks and emergency contact points.

Use the quiz How safe are you? to test your child’s understanding of potential dangers.

Other things to consider
⇒ what is their experience?
⇒ mobility issues
⇒ vulnerability
⇒ have they travelled on this mode of transport before?
⇒ are they able to walk far enough?
⇒ is there anything on that route that is a risk?

Once you have identified the safest route for your child, you are ready to start the travel training process. You can find more tips on how to do this in How it works!
Things to think about on the bus

Is the stop in well lit area?
Is the stop in populated area?
What is the frequency of their mode of transport?
What would do if misses stop/station?
What are the clearly identifiable landmarks?

**Personal safety**
Sit near driver or in busy area.

Sit near window on road side/station side so can clearly see.
Do not talk to strangers.
Have mobile phone switched on but do not use whilst travelling.
Ensure emergency contact details are entered in phone.
Ensure they know how to contact the police.
Do not carry valuables or hold anything of value.
Look confident.
Things to think about while walking

Is the walking distance of the journey reasonable?
How long will your client have to wait at the bus stop/metro stop?
What is the volume of pedestrians in the area?
What is the volume of traffic to and from the employer, quiet/busy?
Do these volumes increase/decrease at certain times of the day?
Is the area mostly industrial/residential/commercial?
Are there areas of the route to work that pass under bridges/overpasses?
Are these areas well lit?
Are there any quiet side streets, disused buildings?
Are there any large areas of open unused/derelict spaces?
Are there any CCTV cameras - which will alert you to possible high crime activities?
Are there any businesses open, in case they need to alert someone?

Personal safety
Cross roads at set crossings.
Stay on the pavements.
If possible walk with friends.
Only walk in well lit areas.
Stay in the crowds.
Look confident as possible, face forward.
Cross the road to avoid any potential trouble.
Keep to the busiest side of the street.
Use strap on bag diagonally across the body.
Do not talk to strangers.
Have mobile phone switched on but do not use whilst walking.
Ensure emergency contact details are entered in phone.
Ensure they know how to contact the police.
Do not carry valuables or hold anything of value.
Teach your child to recognise safe spots.
# Route Assessment

**Route Start**
**Route Finish**
**Transport Method** - including bus/train number

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journey Steps</th>
<th>Landmarks, Risks and control measures</th>
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## How safe are you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I turn off any music while crossing roads</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I keep my mobile phone in my pocket or bag</td>
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<tr>
<td>I wait for the road to be clear before crossing</td>
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<td>I cross at pedestrian crossings where there is one</td>
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<td>I put my mobile phone away while travelling</td>
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<td>I stay sat down on the bus throughout my journey</td>
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<td>I talk quietly when travelling on the bus</td>
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<td>I only send texts/make phone calls in an emergency</td>
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<tr>
<td>I make sure I don’t swear when talking to my friends on the bus</td>
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<tr>
<td>I remember not to smoke on the bus or in the bus shelter</td>
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<tr>
<td>I always sit downstairs on the bus, as close to the driver as possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>I carry my emergency I.D. card</td>
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<tr>
<td>I keep my bag close to me at all times</td>
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<tr>
<td>I carry money in case I lose my bus pass</td>
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<tr>
<td>I keep my bus pass safe (in bag/pocket) throughout journey</td>
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How it works!

Step 1
Parent to accompany young person on journey, showing them the route and talking them through the process of travelling the journey. Parent will show the young person how to scan their bus pass. Parent will sit with the young person on the bus, pointing out landmarks, including a suitable landmark close to where they need to get off. Discuss how (and when) to stop the bus. On leaving the bus the parent will walk alongside the young person to their destination, noting appropriate places to cross the road and discussing safety issues.

Step 2
Parent will ask the young person to show them the way to the bus stop, ensuring the young person leads. The parent will discuss using a bus pass. The parent will observe the young person using their bus pass. Parent will sit close to, but not next to, the young person on the bus and allow them to decide when to get off, providing a verbal reminder if necessary. When getting off the bus the parent will ask the young person to lead them to their destination, walking close, but not necessarily alongside. During this stage, the parent will discuss personal safety, where to sit, socially acceptable behaviour and what to do in an emergency as/when these issues occur. You can find more tips about this under What to do if...
How it works!

Step 3
Parent to arrange for the young person to walk to the bus stop on their own, meeting them there. The young person will use their bus pass to board the bus. They will get on the bus independently and the parent will sit away from them. The parent will allow them to decide when to get off (no verbal reminder and if necessary carry on beyond the stop and see how the young person copes). The parent will ask the young person to lead them to their destination, keeping a reasonable distance so that the young person can make their own decisions. At this stage, always walk behind the young person, leaving as much distance as is safe.

Step 4
The young person will travel the whole route independently. The parent will ‘shadow’ the young person (without them knowing) throughout the journey - only intervening in an emergency. Different ways of doing this are:
Get a friend/family member to shadow the young person for you.
Follow from a distance/follow the bus in your car
Use mobile phones to stay in contact throughout the journey
Speak to a travel trainer at Pure to shadow young person for you.
This step should be completed successfully on at least 3 occasions.
What to do if...

You have an accident How bad is it? Ask for help or use your phone.

You feel unwell How badly? If at school/college go and speak to a member of staff. If not, call your parents and return home.

You lose something How important is it? If at school/college Does it stop you going? If yes, should you return home for it?

You have something stolen Report it immediately, either to bus driver, or at college.

The bus is late This is not your fault, wait, and call school/college/parents to let them know.

You miss your stop Speak to the bus driver. Stay on bus until next stop, then either walk back, or cross over road and get bus back to correct stop, or remain on bus (if circular route)

You get on the wrong bus Ask bus driver for help, explaining where you want to go. Get off bus, cross over road and return to original bus stop.

A road is too busy to cross Walk to a pelican/zebra crossing, traffic island. (This might mean walking in the opposite direction). If this is not possible, ask for help.

You lose your way Ask for help from bus driver, person in shop, police officer, traffic warden, street warden. Ring parents/carers for help and to let them know where you are.

You cannot find anyone to ask Use your phone, keep walking towards busy, well lit area until you find someone you can ask.

People cannot understand you Show them an emergency ID card. Call parents/carers for help.

You are frightened by something Can you cope on your own? If not, ask for help from bus driver, person in shop, police officer etc. Make sure you tell your parents/carers when get home or call them.

You are approached by a stranger If they ask you something, try to answer and then walk away. Never go off with someone you don’t know.
Checklist before leaving!

Have I got plenty of time for my journey?
Have I told parents/carers where I am going?
Am I wearing the right clothes/shoes for the weather?
Does my mobile have battery and credit?

Do I have my

Bus Pass ✓
Money/Spare change ✓
Mobile Phone ✓
Prompt Cards ✓
Emergency ID Card ✓
Keys ✓
Top tips

Personal Safety
⇒ Ensure your child always carries a mobile phone. The benefits of this far outweigh the risks. Good communication is essential for independent travel. It will also stop you panicking if your child’s journey is delayed.
⇒ Show them who it is safe to talk to in an emergency and practise to build their confidence.
⇒ Make sure they only carry what they need and are able to cope with carrying anything they have by themselves.
⇒ Remove any distractions such as an iPod
⇒ Get a practical bag with pockets to zip phone and bus pass in safely.
⇒ Use real life situations i.e. if somebody talks to you, use this to talk about stranger danger.
⇒ Discuss appropriate behaviour on a bus.
⇒ Shadow them when they think they are travelling on their own. This will allow you to check if they follow all personal safety guidance when they are travelling independently.

Road Safety
⇒ Look all around at every road, rather than left and right. This covers all roads at junctions.
⇒ Make sure the young person is actually looking.
⇒ Stand with them between you and the road. This allows you to look at the traffic as well as the young person and ensures you can see them if they try to cross the road when it is unsafe.
⇒ Stand back to allow them to make decisions for themselves about when it is safe to cross. Make sure you are close enough to step in an emergency.
⇒ If they struggle with judging speed/distances, teach young person to wait until it is completely clear.
⇒ Always use crossings where possible.
⇒ Try to avoid using lollipop crossings. These are only there at certain times of the day. It is important to see that young person can cross roads on their own.
⇒ Encourage young person to wear light-coloured clothing and high-visibility jackets, tabards or arm bands. Reflective high-visibility materials can be seen by drivers using headlights up to three times as far away as non-reflective materials.
Top tips

Weather
⇒ Leave longer for the journey in bad conditions i.e. snow, heavy rain. There will be more traffic, you might have to walk slower.
⇒ Check with school/college that they are opening before your child sets off.
⇒ Be aware of the weather worsening during the day i.e. do they need to leave school/college early?
⇒ Check with bus companies that services are running normally.
⇒ Make sure your child is wearing appropriate clothing/footwear (e.g. coat, wellington boots, light colours, reflective high-visibility materials)
⇒ If it is unsafe to travel—avoid it!

Communication
⇒ Always check mobile phone is fully charged and has credit.
⇒ Ensure only useful numbers are stored in the phone.
⇒ Set your emergency contact number as last dialled - this makes it easier to ring in an emergency
⇒ Teach your child to always tell somebody where they are going and when they will be travelling back.
⇒ Discuss what to do if there is a change to routine i.e. ring if you are going to be late.
⇒ Make sure phone is set to loud so young person is able to answer it in an emergency
⇒ Provide an emergency contact card and keep this in a safe place
⇒ Store an ‘ICE’ number in the phone (In Case of an Emergency)
⇒ Explain who it safe to speak to in an emergency such as police officer, bus driver or teacher.
⇒ Make sure they knows their own contact details or make a contact card.

Training Tips
⇒ Pin a checklist up by your front door as a prompt before every journey.
⇒ Take a book on the bus to help you avoid eye contact - even a look can provide a prompt.
⇒ Always ask young person to do something - don’t do it for them.
⇒ Always walk behind young person so you can see them.
⇒ Get on and off the bus after young person.
⇒ Try not to sit with your child on the bus or talk to them during the journey. It is important for them to get used to travelling on their own and not to get used to your company.
⇒ Let them find a bus seat first. This helps them make their own decisions.
⇒ If something dangerous happens, ensure they understand the severe consequences of their actions. This will help them learn to make decisions for themselves rather than following rules.
“Micha was taken everywhere before she started travel training. Now she travels to college on her own. We have seen her confidence grow in leaps and bounds and we have more confidence in her abilities. She now wants more freedom with everything not just travelling.”

Micha’s Mum
“The training has given him confidence. Seeing his friends at the bus stop allows him to join in and expand his horizons.

I wouldn’t have dared to let Josh travel on his own. This has proved to me what Josh is capable of doing.

Josh’s Mum
You can find out more information on our website and hear from young people how we have helped them.

www.pureinnovations.co.uk

Or you can speak to us directly

Call 0161 804 4400

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