

Getting out and about in Dorset.



A Dorset People First report about transport and travel in Dorset (2009).

What is this report about?



This is a report about how people with learning difficulties in Dorset get to where they need, and want, to go. It is about the things that make travel difficult, and what could be done to make it better and easier.



The people who worked on this research project were:



Kerry Martin



Helen Nicolson



Sally Scott

The whole team worked together on this research. This is called inclusive research.

What did we want to find out?



We wanted to know how people with learning difficulties get around now.

We wanted to know what the problems are.

We wanted to have ideas that would make travel easier.

We wanted to find out what is already being done, in Dorset and the rest of the country.

What did we do?



- We thought about who we would need to talk to, and what we needed to ask.



- We arranged 7 meetings for people with learning difficulties. 59 people with learning difficulties took part.



- We also had meetings in Dorset with:



Social workers



An Occupational Therapist (OT)



Day Centre Staff



Parent carers



Bus service providers.



People who work for Dorset County Council and have jobs about travel and transport.



A travel consultant

Some other things we did.



- We put a message on the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities Choice Forum, asking other people what was good about travel in their area.



- We met with members of the South West Forum for People with Learning Difficulties.



- We looked on the internet to get good information.



- Kerry did 'action research' and started to travel independently by bus.



- We organised ourselves so that our Forum representatives could use public transport more.



- We went to a Dorset conference about transport.

What did we find out?

What people with learning difficulties told us



Most people like to travel independently whenever possible. The main things that stop them are:



The attitudes and knowledge of carers and staff.



Being able to get on and off the buses.

Access issues for people who use walkers and wheelchairs .



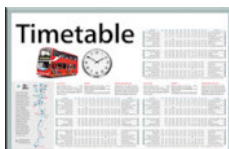
Not being able to get travel training, when they need it.



The changes in bus pass rules.



Fear of harassment.



Changes to bus routes and bus numbers can be confusing.

Lots of people do travel independently. We met people who walk, use buses, taxis, coaches and trains, cycle and drive.



There are people with learning difficulties who know a lot about the transport links in their areas, and can share that information with others.



Some people share taxis and lifts.

Some people prefer to travel with a friend, because they feel more confident.



Some people with learning difficulties will always need to have specialist transport .

Some people with learning difficulties will always need support when they travel.



Being able to sort out travel plans and get to places themselves, builds people's confidence and sense of independence.

What other people told us.



Social workers have to spend time taking people places for regular appointments . This is not good use of their time and it doesn't help develop the person's independence.



More people could travel independently to their day centres. In some of the outreach centres most people could.



Travel skills that people learned at schools and college, don't become part of how they live as adults.

There is a Local Travel Plan. People with learning difficulties should be consulted when it is written.



There are journey sharing schemes in Dorset, funded by Dorset County Council.



Mobility cars can be used as part of journey sharing schemes.



People do travel training differently all over Dorset.



Dorset County Council paid for a report about Travel Training called Green for Go.



Most paid workers do not know about public transport.



If there isn't a County transport bus free, people often can't get out from their Day Centre.

Access to County transport varies between day centres. It restricts what people can do.



Changing county transport is difficult. Sometimes unnecessary journeys happen because it is not flexible.



Lots of good schemes to help people get around are working in other parts of rural England.

What do we think should happen?



We think that when people with learning difficulties can travel in the same ways as the rest of their community they should be encouraged and supported to do so.



We think this should mean there is more money to help people with high support needs to get out and about.



We think lots of people have a role to play in making this possible.

What we will do.



We will plan and run sessions for family carers. We will talk about why travelling is so important. We will include people's stories and Kerry's experience.



We will write to the Council, and ask for yellow lines to be painted by drop kerbs. We want this to be in the Local Transport Plan.



We will work with Council staff to encourage people to use the journey sharing schemes.



We hope to run a poster campaign about hate crime, and being considerate and helpful on buses.



We will run a travel challenge day. Celebrating people with learning difficulties, and their support staff, using public and community transport.

What should Dorset County Council to do?



Make information about journey sharing, community transport and responsive bus services to be in easy read.



Make information about accessible buses and taxis to be available on the Dorset for You website, in Tourist Information Offices, Libraries and Citizen's Advice Bureaus.

Keep pressure on bus companies to do the things that the Disability Discrimination Act says they should do, as soon as possible.



We want the Council to consider the Green for Go findings.



We would like travel training to be available all over Dorset. We think it needs to:

Be done by local travel coordinators who are not managed by Learning Disability Day Services.

They could be voluntary sector, or part of the Council's transport team.

The coordinators should work closely with people with learning difficulties as travel champions.



We think the coordinators should develop local travel buddy schemes, where people with learning difficulties support each other to travel.



This role could be combined with other support roles as part of 'Transforming Social Care'. They could help people find out what there is to do and how to get there.



Make it easier to change transport arrangements.



Make it possible to use bus passes before 9.30am, across the whole of Dorset so people can travel to work and day activities.

**For more information about this research project
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