

# Transport Guidance:

supporting access to positive activities  
- a version for young people



This document was written in consultation with members of the Young NCB

## About this leaflet

In 2007, the government announced its plan for ensuring all young people aged 13 to 19 are able to take part in free-time **positive activities\*** in their local area. A 'positive activity' could include: sports, youth clubs and groups, going to the theatre or to art galleries, or volunteering in the local community.

We realised that a lack of **public transport** can make it difficult for many young people to actually get to these activities. So, we have written advice for **local authority Children's Trusts** and **transport planners** to help them to make sure young people can use public transport to get to lots of different positive activities.

This leaflet is a summary of that guidance. It tells you a bit about the problems experienced by young people using public transport. Then, it gives you a rundown of the advice that's given to Children's Trust and transport planners. We've also included examples of some of the things being done around the country to improve public transport for young people. We hope that these examples will inspire you to work with local leaders to come up with ideas for your own areas.

\* You can find out the meaning of the blue words at the end of the leaflet.



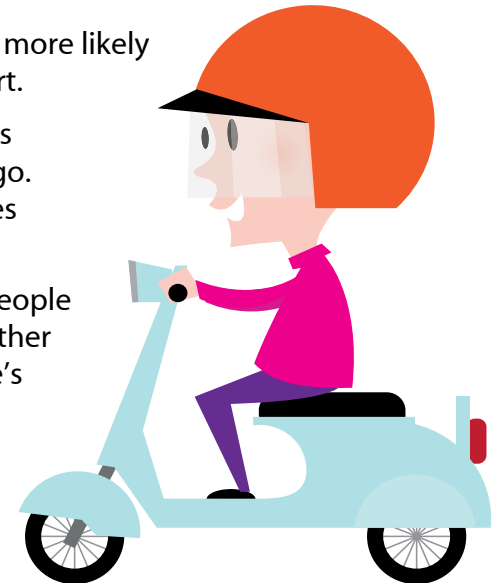
## Why do positive activities matter?

We know that participation in positive activities gives young people the chance to enjoy themselves, learn new skills and feel more confident. This means they are less likely to get into trouble, to have problems at school or experience problems in later life. It's therefore really important that young people can reach these facilities and activities.

## What transport problems do young people face?

A number of factors make it difficult for young people to use public transport.

- **Cost:** The cost of travelling by public transport, for example bus or train fares.
- **Availability:** Some young people find that there just aren't the buses or trains to take them where they want to go and when they want to go, especially in the evenings and weekends.
- **Accessibility:** This can be a real problem for disabled young people, who sometimes find that they can't get on and off buses and trains or that there is not enough room for them to travel with friends.
- **Safety:** Young people are worried about their safety when waiting for and using public transport. They can feel threatened by bullying or abuse from other passengers.
- **Living in a rural area:** Young people living in rural areas are more likely to have problems with the cost and availability of public transport.
- **A need for more travel information:** Travel information is not always given alongside details of things to do and places to go. Disabled young people also need better information about routes and vehicles that they can use more easily.
- **Attitudes of transport staff and other users:** Young people are concerned about the attitudes of public transport staff and other passengers towards them. At the same time, some young people's own behaviour when travelling can make other passengers (including other young people) feel intimidated.



## What do local authorities already have to do to meet young people's transport needs?

Most of the things that local authorities have to do for young people relate to their education. They have to give free school transport to some children and young people. They also have to write a plan for making sure children get to school in a way that improves their health and the environment (like walking, cycling or using the bus or train).

Local authorities have to consult members of the public on their transport plans, and this should include young people. They also have to carry out 'accessibility planning' where they make sure that all members of the community – including old people, young people and people with disabilities – can use the buses, trains, trams and other forms of transport.

Local authorities have recently been given bigger powers over private bus companies. So, they should be able to make sure that buses are available at the right cost, at the right time of day and as often as needed.



## What else should Children's Trusts and transport planners be doing?

The guidance includes 7 tips for Children's Trusts and transport planners to help them make sure young people can use public transport to get to positive activities:

- Involve young people in transport planning.
- Children's services, transport planners and companies and others should work together.
- Offer young people reduced fares.
- Give young people good quality and easy-to-understand travel information.
- Try out travel training and travel buddy schemes.
- Don't forget about attitudes and behaviour.
- Be creative – mopeds, minibuses and mobile positive activities.



In this leaflet, you can find more information, and examples of how these have been achieved in different areas. We hope these will inspire you to come up with ideas for your own area.

### **Tip number 1: Involve young people in transport planning...**

Local authorities should regularly check the needs and views of local young people, and make changes to their transport plans where needed. They may not be able to act on all recommendations made by young people, but they should always offer feedback and explain the reasons for their decisions.

#### **For example...**

The Young People's Scrutiny Forum in Leeds carried out a review of their local bus services, finding out the views of young people, children's services and local transport planners. Their report, called 'Catching the Bus', made ten recommendations including: reduced fares for young people; a system for making complaints and comments by text message; and a review of school travel.

A year later, bus companies in Leeds agreed to a new 'get around for a pound' scheme for 11-16s over the summer holidays, and the council had started a school transport review. Not all recommendations were taken forward, but the whole activity helped build better relations between young people and the bus companies.

### **Tip number 2: Children's services, transport planners, transport companies and others should work together.**

Transport planners can help to 'transport-proof' positive activities on offer to make sure that young people can get to them easily and safely. Working with voluntary organisations, youth services and Connexions can also help to ensure that information about positive activities and transport reaches as many young people as possible. One way of ensuring different organisations work together is by writing a shared plan of action (or 'strategy') for young people's transport.

#### **For example...**

Metro is the organisation responsible for public transport across all of West Yorkshire. It has a single 'Strategy for Young People' which sets out its plans for improving transport for young people. Their priorities for young people include:

- Getting to leisure activities and facilities and volunteering opportunities.
- Getting to education and training.
- Bullying and personal safety.
- Involving young people in transport planning.

### **Tip number 3: Offer young people reduced fares...**

Local authorities don't have to give young people cheaper transport fares (or 'concessionary fares'). But, some find that it helps to get more people using public transport and gives young people a bigger choice of school or college. Sometimes concessionary fares are linked with other discounts, for example at leisure centres or shops. Reduced fares can be covered by the local authority, the private bus or train company, or they share it.

#### **For example...**

All 14-18 year-olds living in Derbyshire can get a b-line concession card which gives them half price bus and train fares. The b-line card also acts as a library card and can be used to get discounts at shops and leisure centres. 11-13 year-olds, who already have half-price fares, are encouraged to have the card as proof of their age. The cards are funded by the local councils.

### **Tip number 4: Give young people good quality and easy-to-understand travel information...**

Travel information should be given to young people along with details about positive activities in the area. However, not many local areas have young people-friendly travel information, or involve young people in designing information sheets or websites.

#### **For example...**

Metro, the organisation in charge of public transport in West Yorkshire, has a young people's website – [www.generationM.co.uk](http://www.generationM.co.uk). This includes information on public transport, school travel, things to do and places to go. It even has a journey planner!



### **Tip number 5: Try out travel training and travel buddy schemes...**

Travel training gives young people advice and support on how to travel safely and independently. It could cover walking, cycling and using public transport. A travel buddy is someone who travels with a young person, helping him or her to feel more confident about getting around.

#### **For example...**

Kingston Travel Training and Buddy Scheme works with 8 to 12 year-olds who have extra travel needs (for example a disability). A buddy will travel with a young person until they feel confident enough to make the journey on their own. The buddy meets with their young person a couple of times each month, and has a budget to spend on activities.

### **Tip number 6: Don't forget about attitudes and behaviour...**

And we mean the attitudes and behaviour of transport staff and young people. Often, young people feel unwelcome on public transport. They are concerned about the negative views that staff and other passengers have of them. Some young people do take part in anti-social or nuisance behaviour on trains or buses, but this is certainly not the case for all. Relationships between young people, other members of the public and transport staff can be improved by bringing the different groups together. Young people can also be offered training and support to stop them getting involved in anti-social behaviour or vandalism.

#### **For example...**

The Young People's Scrutiny Forum in Leeds suggested that young people help train bus drivers, as one way of improving the relationships between them. Metro, the organisation responsible for West Yorkshire transport, took up this idea. In the training session, young people and bus drivers shared views on the condition of buses and staff and passenger behaviour. They found that there was not much difference between their views, and they made a shared plan for improving the way they treat each other.

### **Tip number 7: Be creative...**

It's not all about buses, trains and bicycles. There are other ways to for young people to get around, and to make sure they can take part in positive activities.

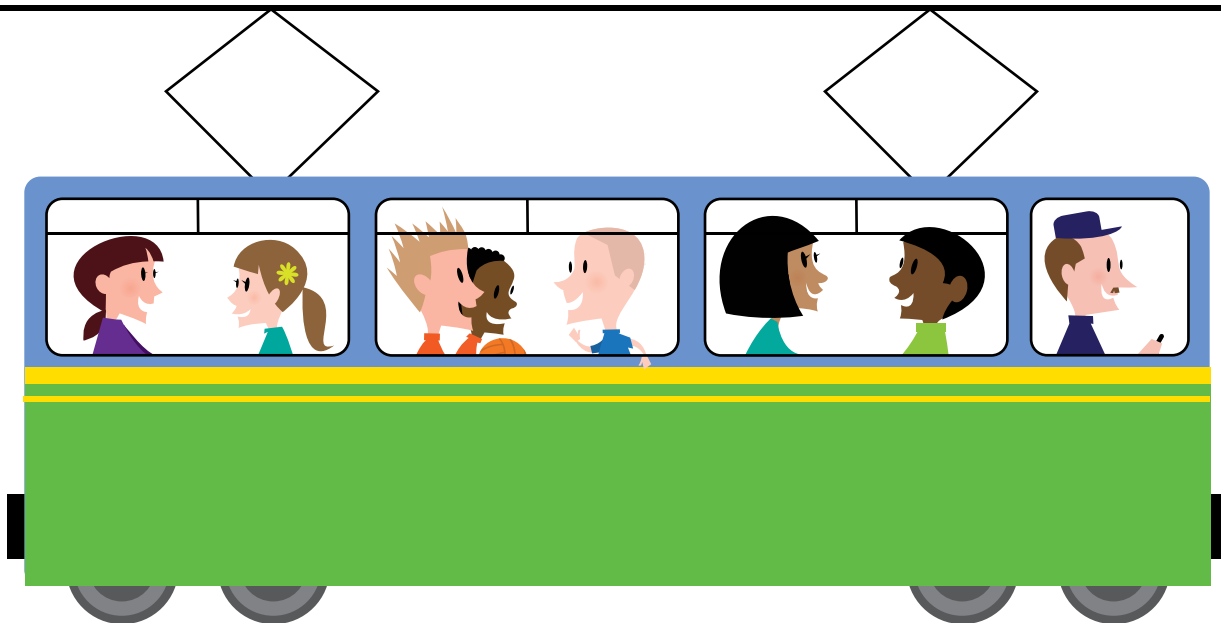
#### **For example...**

- **mobile positive activities:** This is about taking the activity to the young person, rather than the other way round. A bus with TV, DVD player, computers, internet access and sports equipment could travel to different areas where young people live. For example... Devon Youth Service
- **minibuses:** Some organisations buy a minibus to get young people to and from their facilities. If other services own a minibus but only use it on weekdays, the positive activity organiser can use it in the evenings and at weekends. For example...Suffolk Youth Service
- **scooter and moped loan schemes:** These schemes are usually for young people who have problems getting to work or education. But they can use their mopeds for social and positive activities as well! For example...West Midlands Wheels to Work (W2W)
- **taxi schemes:** Taxis are often too expensive for many young people. So, some local authorities give them vouchers to pay part of the fare. For example...East Surrey Taxibus
- **travel on-demand:** Similar to a taxi, this usually comes in the form of a minibus. It works in areas where there may not be enough passengers to fill a regular bus service. Travellers can book the service, which usually runs door-to-door. For example...Slinky Bus service in Somerset
- **community transport:** Community transport is run by voluntary organisations and the local community. Unlike private transport companies, community transport organisations don't try to make a profit. A lot of people think community transport is just for older people, but in some areas community vehicles are made available to young people. For example... Ealing Community Transport.

## What you can do?

We hope that this guidance has given you some ideas for how public transport can be made more young person-friendly. Think about how you can use this knowledge to influence local transport planning in your area. You could:

- Contact your local council and find out how you can get involved in transport planning in your area.
- Write to your local councillor, Director of Children's Services or Member of Youth Parliament to find out what your local council is doing to help young people use public transport.
- If you think they could do more, suggest that they consider some of the solutions given in this guidance.





## Glossary

**Children’s Trust** – the group of local authority leaders who work together and are responsible for children and young people’s services, including schools, social services, youth services, health and the youth justice system.

**Concessionary fares** – reduced fares on buses, trains or trams. These are often given to a certain group of society, for example young, old or disabled people.

**Local authority** – The local authority is responsible for running services in the area. For example, it will deal with schools, parks, rubbish collection, transport, libraries, social services, keeping the streets clean etc. It will also work with health services and the police to make sure that people living in the area are healthy and safe.

**Positive activities** – free-time recreation activities that help young people develop new skills, confidence and have fun. For example, sports, volunteering or theatre.

**Public transport** – basically any form of transport that the public use together, like bus, train, tram, minibus and taxi.

**Rural** – the way to describe areas in the countryside, or in villages and small towns, where the population is usually quite spread out. The opposite is ‘urban’ which describes large towns and cities.

**Transport planners** – responsible for transport in a local authority area, including: public transport, roads, walking and cycling paths etc.







## More information:

The full version of the guidance can be found here:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/publications/documents/laetransportguidesupportaccesstopositiveactivities/>

A young person's version of the positive activities strategy can

be found here: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/Youth/aiminghigh/aiminghigh/>

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