



Glasgow City Council

Education, Skills and Early Years City Policy Committee

Report by Executive Director of Education Services

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ASL HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

Purpose of Report:

This report provides an update on progress and outcomes of initiatives within ASL transport.

Recommendations:

Committee is asked to:
Note the progress to date

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

1. BACKGROUND

In response to the challenges of rising transport costs and insufficient supply of transport, an ASL working group was setup to review our transport policy and procedures to identify any improvements that could be made to reduce our demand and improve the service for users. In 2023 a paper “Proposals for Home to School travel assistance” was presented to Education Directorate and the recommendations and proposals outlined in the paper were approved.

1.1 The Drivers for Change outlined in the paper were

- Budgetary pressures
- Glasgow City Council's vision for a sustainable transport future in Glasgow by 2030. Education's use of transport needs to support the Council's commitment to a successful transition to a net zero, clean and sustainable city.
- Phase 2 of the City Centre Low Emission Zone which came into force in June 2023.
- Demand exceeds available supply of transport.
- Accountability & ownership – there was no formal review process in place for transport.
- Difficulty recruiting escorts.
- Pupil needs. The recognition that developing skills to travel as independently as possible should become an integral part of an inclusive curriculum.
- Life skills and Sustainability – linking with GCC Grand challenge 3 and drive towards Net zero.

1.2 In summary the recommendations approved were

- Introduction of a travel assistance application process for ASL transport in Academic Session 23/24.
- Investigate feasibility of replacing taxi runs in Abercorn Secondary, Hollybrook Academy and Parkhill with contracted buses via the SPT Agency agreement.
- Development and implementation of an independent travel skills pilot programme for pupils in 5 ASL Secondary schools. The programme would be designed and delivered in partnership with Enable Works
- Promotion of taxi consolidation across ASL schools and units to increase average passenger numbers and reduce runs.

2. TRAVEL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1 Prior to the introduction of the new process any pupil attending an ASL establishment was automatically granted home to school transport irrespective of distance and /or additional support need.

2.1.1 A change was introduced in April 2023 which required parent/carers of ASL pupils transitioning to P1 or S1 in August to apply for home to school transport either on qualifying distance or ASL need.

2.1.2 The communications team put a detailed communication plan in place to ensure all stakeholders were fully informed

2.1.3 Results from the initial pilot were as follows:

STAGE	ASL Placement	Transport not required	% Transport not required	Total Applications	Eligible	Not Approved	Successful Appeal	Not Approved (post appeal)	% Pupils ineligible	% Pupils Eligible
TOTAL	286	33	11.5%	253	223	30	6	24	8.4%	80.1%

2.1.4 Following this pilot and feedback from parents and schools, the online forms were simplified. In addition to the process continuing for annual transitions, a formal review process was also rolled out for P4 and S3, with schools required to complete transport applications with parents at the pupil's annual review.

2.1.5 The outcome for applications received for August 24 transitions and P3/S4 reviews are summarised below.

STAGE	ASL Placement	Transport not required	% Transport not required	Total Applications	Eligible	Not approved	% Pupils ineligible	% Pupils Eligible
P4	132	1	80.0%	131	128	3	2.2%	97.0%
P3	182	5	2.7%	177	166	11	6.0%	91.2%
N5 to P1	95	16	16.8%	79	76	3	3.2%	80.0%
P7 to S1	188	24	12.8%	164	159	5	2.7%	84.6%
TOTAL	597	46	7.7%	551	529	22	3.7%	88.6%

2.1.6 The salient points from the results above are:

- Most of those pupils were eligible on distance criteria, given the distribution of our ASL schools across the city this was expected.
- A larger proportion of Secondary aged children did not qualify on need, than Primary aged children.
- Overall 88.6% of applicants were eligible for transport for Academic session 24/25.
- At transition stages more parents opted out of the process as transport was not required, with a higher proportion of N5 to P1 opting out.
- The numbers of pupils not granted transport was 8.4% of those transitioning to Primary and Secondary school in 23/24 and 2.8% of those transitioning to Primary and Secondary school in 24/25.

2.2 Independent Travel Skills Pilot

2.2.1 During academic session 23/24, Education Services in partnership with Enable have developed a travel skills training programme for delivery across five of our ASL Secondary schools. The programme is a 16-week comprehensive training programme run by a dedicated Enable Support worker across the 5 schools. Appendix 1 provides full details of the programme content.

2.2.2 The travel training programme is not a “one size” fits all approach, the needs of everyone are completely different; travel training is about working with each young person in the way that works best for them. A dedicated support worker delivers the programme with small groups of pupils of between 5 – 7 young people in each pilot school.

2.2.3 Each school had parent engagement sessions to explain the objectives of the programme and the benefits to their child.

2.2.4 Fifty-five young people have participated across two cohorts. The first cohort May to September has completed.

2.2.5 Both parents and pupils taking part are asked to complete a short online survey, the purpose of the survey was to understand confidence levels and barriers to independent travel.

2.2.6 Results from Cohort 1 Pupil Survey (26 responses) were: -

- 96% agreed/strongly agreed that travel training would increase opportunities after leaving school.
- 96% agreed/strongly agreed that travel training would help them be more independent.
- 88%% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that they wanted to travel independently.
- 85% agreed/strongly agreed that travel training would improve their confidence.

2.2.7 Main barriers to independent travel identified by pupils responding to the survey were ability to plan journeys, safety concerns, lack of confidence.

2.2.8 Fourteen responses to the Parent Survey were received from parents of pupils in Cohort 1, results were:

- 100% agreed/strongly agreed that independent travel training would help their child's wellbeing
- 93% of respondents agreed/strongly aged that the ability to travel independently was an important life skill for their child
- 93% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that travel training would benefit their child when transitioning from Education

2.2.9 Main barriers to independent travel identified by parents were concern for their child's safety and lack of confidence in their child's ability to travel independently.

2.2.10 The programme for the first cohort of thirty-one pupils ran from May 2024 to end of September 2024, and the second cohort of 24 pupils from October to March the table below provides a breakdown across the five schools.

School	Cohort 1 Participants	Cohort 2 Participants
Abercorn Secondary	7	5
Cardinal Winning	7	3
Hollybrook Academy	7	5
Parkhill Secondary	3	6
St Oswald's Secondary	7	5
TOTAL	31	24

2.2.11 As at end January 2025 thirty young people had completed the programme and 21 of these young people are now independent travellers.

2.2.12 Fifteen pupils are no longer being transported by taxi to school because of the programme, with the breakdown across year groups as follows S4 five pupils, S5 six pupils, S6 four pupils. Ten pupils were able to travel independently from home to school at start of school session in August 2024, a further 5 have been travelling from home to school since end of January.

2.2.13 The programme has been extended for 6 young people from cohort 1 who required additional time to gain the necessary skills and confidence to travel independently.

2.2.14 Lessons learned from the first programme have been used to improve aspects of the programme for cohort 2 including parental communication and "buy in", and the young people's experience by reducing the duration of classroom work at the beginning of the programme and increasing practical experience.

2.2.15 Formal survey feedback has still to be gathered from stakeholders' parents, young people and schools, but informal feedback has been positive, an example is the text received from a parent

"I have been telling everyone how great you guys are. I'm so happy and proud of him, its lovely to see him become more independent and loving life and that's thanks to you too"

2.2.16 Very positive feedback has been received from participating schools with the following themes emerging:

- ✓ Pupils are having a positive experience so far working with Enable and have developed good relationships with the travel skills co-ordinator.

- ✓ The travel skills coordinator is very supportive with our young people and families.
- ✓ Parental communication has been excellent as it has developed relationships and put at ease any parental doubt or anxiety.
- ✓ An improvement in participant's confidence, independence, and general wellbeing.

2.2.17 The pilot schools involved have reported that pupils participating in the travel training course are benefitting from several different experiences that extend beyond the initial programme to develop travel skills between home and school. The skills learned have allowed pupils to widen their horizons outwith school allowing them to gain new skills and improving their confidence and general wellbeing. Examples to date are

- Travelling to clubs that take place in the evening or at weekends.
- Travelling independently to and from a part time jobs or volunteering opportunity.

Using skills to plan family holidays and trips

- A number of pupils have been travelling to and from events that Enable offer during the school holidays – this has built their social skills as well as built on their ability to work to a schedule.

Several pupils have started planning their routes and times so they can travel together.

2.2.18 In relation to progress in learning, while we require more specific data on the impact, the schools report that some young people are using the programme to support a recognised qualification including the SQA bronze, silver, and gold transition awards and SQA N2 Units Working with Others and Retail with Customer Service

2.2.19 The Enable worker is also supporting other wider learning within the schools with a focus on increasing independence skills in Health & Well-being, Personal Development Award within BGE lessons.

2.2.20 Overall the feedback indicates that the programme of support has the built in flexibility and responsiveness needed to ensure our learners can thrive and grow in their independence.

2.2.21 Estimated cost reductions from successful independent travellers to date are:

- 10 young people have been travelling independently since August, assuming an average cost of transport of £136.92 per week (23/24 rate) and applying this from August to end of term (39 weeks), the projected saving from cohort 1 in 24/25 is £53k.
- Cost reduction for 5 pupils who have been travel independently since January to end of term 20 weeks is £14k

2.2.22 Estimated future cost reduction for the pupils who are currently traveling independently are £85k - six pupils are now in S5 and will continue to travel in Academic session 25/26 whilst in S6, and five pupils are now in S4 and will continue to travel for the next two Academic years

2.3 Replacement of taxis with dedicated buses in ASL Secondary Schools

2.3.1 Most of the bus provision for ASL transport is provided by NRS, however a programme had been running in Cardinal winning Secondary since 2019 where 64 Senior phase pupils were transported to school by minibuses procured via SPT Agency agreement.

2.3.2 Education Support Services worked with Abercorn Secondary to identify pupils for whom it would be suitable to be transported by dedicated bus. The target group was S3 upwards with the shift from taxi to a dedicated bus. The bus would pick up pupils at designated stops rather than their home, being the first step in their independent travel journey.

2.3.3 55 pupils were nominated by the school and a tender exercise for 3 buses commencing in August 2023 was carried out by SPT as our agents.

2.3.4 The impact of the introduction of dedicated buses on taxi usage for Abercorn Secondary is summarised in the table below:

YEAR	COST £	Avg Booking £	Bookings	Passengers	Avg Passenger £	Avg Miles	CO2g
AUG 22 - JUN 23	£324,210.66	£30.86	10506	159	£2,039.06	23.1	25,382,978
AUG 23 - JUN 24	£290,024.63	£36.00	8056	108	£2,685.41	13.0	20,502,073
DIFFERENCE	-£34,186.03	£5.14	-2,450	-51	£646.35	-10	-4,880,904

% Change	-10.5%	16.7%	-23.3%	-32.1%	31.7%	-43.9%	-19.2%
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2.3.5 Taxi usage in 23/24 reduced by 23% and overall taxi spend reduced by 10.5%, this was despite an increase in the average cost as evidenced by an increase of 16.6% in the average booking cost and total average passenger cost increase of 31.7 %.

2.3.6 There was also a corresponding positive impact on emissions with the average journey distance reducing by 43% and a 19% reduction in CO2

2.3.7 Other benefits to note are:

- Service levels have increased with pupils experiencing less transport delays and disruption to their Education
- A more efficient transport operation for the school including less congestion and a reduction in staff time for transport arrangements.
- The daily walk to the bus stop has increased young people’s independence and confidence and is the first phase of independent travel for the young people
- Improved allocation of escorts required to transport pupils e.g. a 16-seater bus requires 1 escort but 16 pupils using 5 taxis would require 5 escorts

2.3.8 As a result of the successful Abercorn Secondary pilot, the arrangement continued at the school in session 24/25 and this transport option has been extended to include Hollybrook Academy. From August 24, 4 buses will transport 41 pupils from Hollybrook Academy as an alternative to taxis.

2.3.9 Results for the first term of Hollybrook taxi replacement are as follows

HOLLYBROOK ACADEMY

PERIOD	COST £	Avg Booking £	Bookings	Pax	Avg Pax £	Avg Miles	CO2g
AUG 23 to 13 Oct 23	£58,127.92	£29.99	1938	105	£553.60	71.8	4280216
AUG 24 to 12 Oct 24	£34,816.32	£36.92	943	32	£1,088.01	10.3	2104530
DIFFERENCE	-£23,311.60	£6.93	-995	-73	£534.41	-61	-2,175,686
% Change	-40.1%	23.1%	-51.3%	-69.5%	96.5%	-85.6%	-50.8%

2.3.10 When comparing start of session figures for Academic year 23 to start of session figures for Academic year 2024 for Hollybrook Academy, there has also been a significant reduction in costs, booking and passenger numbers, and the school is experiencing similar benefits as Abercorn Secondary.

2.3.11 It should be noted for both schools that most savings identified will be attributable to the dedicated bus programme, but other initiatives like taxi consolidation, parent payment and independent travel will also be having an impact.

2.3.12 Parkhill Secondary will adopt this transport model for some pupils in their school from August 2025. The next stage will be to review whether this transport model could be applicable for the Secondary ASN units.

2.4 Taxi Consolidation

2.4.1 We have actively encouraged schools to reduce the number of taxis runs by encouraging a higher number of passengers per run wherever possible.

2.4.2 The average number of passengers in a home to school run at start of session 25/26 was 3. this has increased from 2.87 at the start of session 24/25.

2.4.3 Whilst overall average number of passengers has not increased substantially, it should be noted that 44% of schools have an average above 3 passengers.

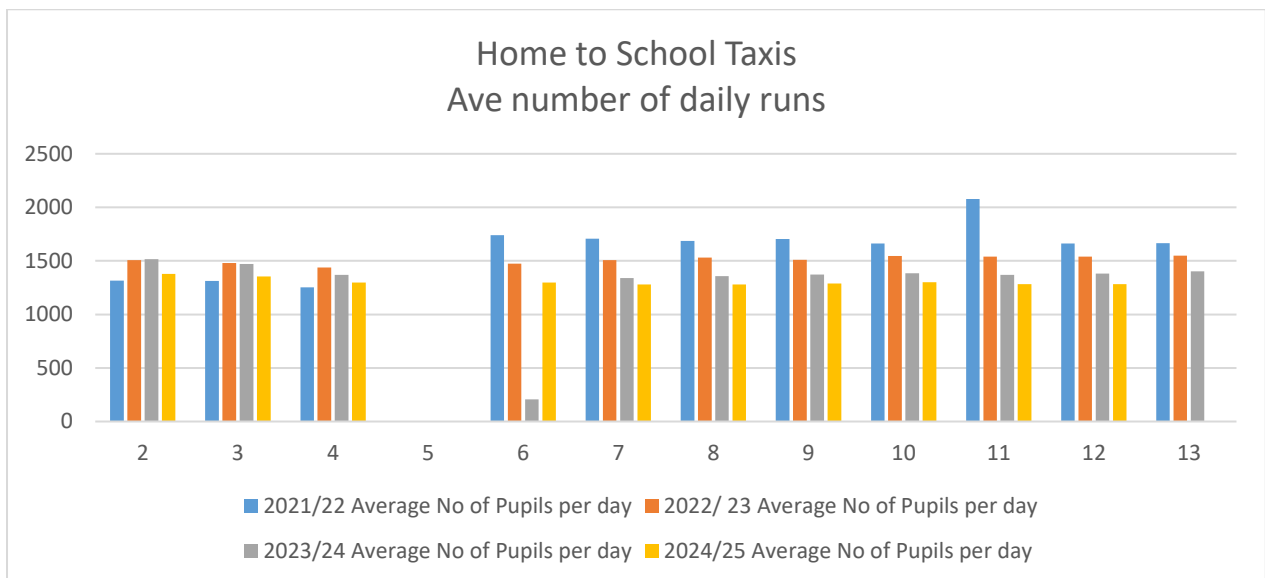
2.4.4 Further improvements in taxi consolidation could be achieved if routing software was available for use by CITU and NRS.

3. TAXI DEMAND IMPACT

To identify whether the above initiatives are making a positive impact on overall taxi demand, an analysis of taxi and pupil volumes was undertaken.

3.1 Comparison by Financial Periods

The graph below compares the average number of Home to School taxi runs over financial periods 1 to 13 for financial year 21/22, 22/23 and 23/24.

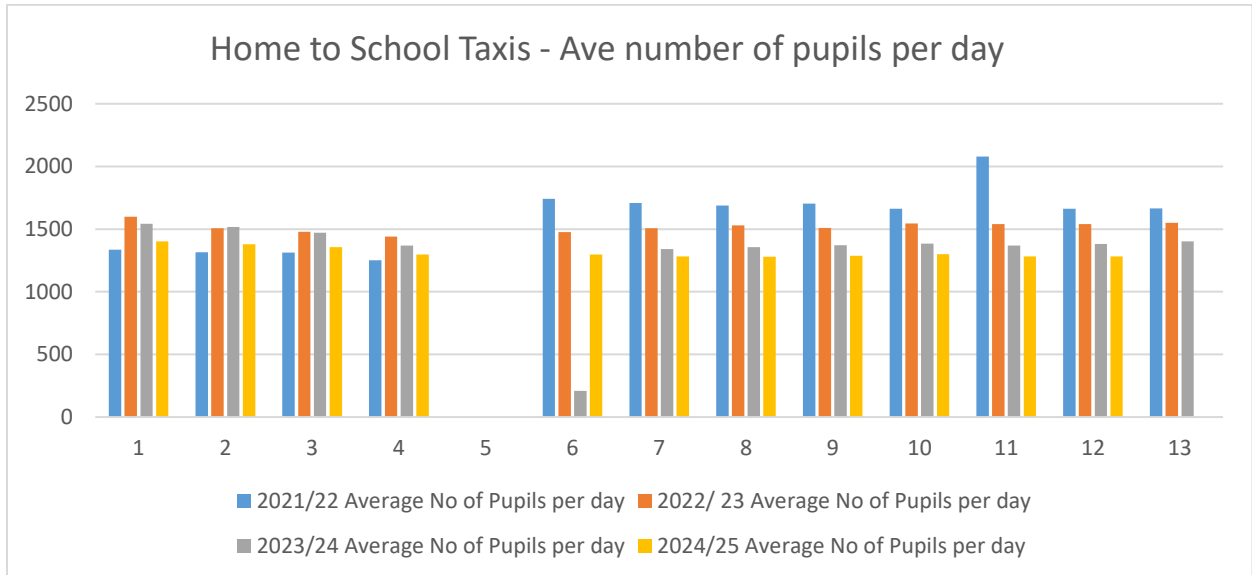


The graph illustrates that:

There has been a steady decline in number of daily runs since 2021/22.

- The highest average number of daily runs in any period for each year is as follow 21/22 827, 22/23 793, 23/24 743 and 24/25 693.
- The lowest average number of daily runs in any period for each year is 21/22 698 22/23 690, 23/24 645 and 24/25 614.

3.1.2 The graph below compares the average number of pupils per day transported in Home to School taxi runs over financial periods 1 to 13 for financial year 21/22, 22/23, 23/24 and 24/25.



Salient points to note are:

- There has been a steady decline in the average number of pupils being transported by taxi per day
- the daily average number of pupils per day is lower in 24/25 than in 21/22 in every period except period 1 to 4
- The highest daily average number of pupils in any period for each year is as follows 21/22 2079, 22/23 1598, 23/24 1543 and 24/25
- The lowest daily average number of pupils in any period for each year is 21/22 1340, 22/23 1439 and 23/24 1340

3.2 The table below compares booking data with Glasgow Taxis for Home to School runs between Academic Years 22/23 and 23/4. Although total cost had increased by 4%, there has been a 6% drop in bookings, a 6.5% drop in passengers and a 30% reduction in average journey length.

There has also been a corresponding 20% reduction in emissions.

	Total Cost	Avg Booking £	Bookings	Passengers *	Avg Passenger £	Avg Miles	CO2g
Aug 23 - June 24	£5,928,742.37	£34.00	174365	2743	£2,161.41	23.0	400M
Aug 22 - June 23	£5,702,652.20	£31.00	186137	2934	£1,943.64	30.0	500M
DIFFERENCE	£226,090.17	£3.00	-11,772	-191	£217.76	-7	-100

* Total Individual Passengers (Escorts and Pupils)

4. BUDGET IMPACT

4.1 Transport costs continue to rise across all forms of transport, the table below compares ASL transport costs between financial year 22/23 and 23/24 with overall costs increasing by 5.2%. Note during this period taxi contract rates increased by 9%, however the actual increase in overall taxi costs was 3.9% indicating that the initiatives outlined above are having a positive impact on spend and mitigating the impact of cost increases on budget.

TRANSPORT	22/23	23/24	Increase	% Increase
ASL Taxis	£6,495,383	£6,746,447	£251,064	3.9%
ASL Contract Bus	£123,346	£284,326	£160,980	130.5%
NRS/EV	£4,889,158	£5,075,246	£186,088	3.8%
TOTAL	£11,507,887	£12,106,019	£598,132	5.2%

4.2 The table below compares the average pupil cost of transport between financial year 22/23 and 23/24 and shows an overall increase of 12.7%. Key points to note:

- Average taxi cost increased by 20% despite average pupil numbers decreasing by 13.4%
- ASL contract bus has the lowest average pupil cost and demonstrates that using contract buses as an alternative to taxis for certain pupils, can make a significant impact both on cost and pupil's life skills.

TRANSPORT	Ave pupil numbers			Ave pupil cost		
	22/23	23/24	% change	22/23	23/24	% increase
ASL Taxis	1512	1309	-13.4%	£4,296	£5,154	20.0%
ASL Contract Bus	64	119	85.9%	£1,927	£2,389	24.0%
GCC Buses and Electric Cars	853	839	-1.6%	£5,732	£6,049	5.5%
TOTAL	2429	2267	-6.7%	£4,738	£5,340	12.7%

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Glasgow City Council are committed to delivering sustainable transport and becoming a net zero carbon city by 2030, to support these commitments Education services require to align their home to school transport strategy to these commitments.

5.2 ASL Home to school transport continues to face challenges with the supply of transport to meet the demands of service users and increasing transport costs continue to create budgetary pressures.

- 5.3 We require to work in partnership with our transport providers and schools to try and allocate the resources available in the most efficient way possible whilst ensuring pupil needs are met. Education Services also need to implement practices which reflect our transport policy and support our young people with the appropriate transport to meet their age, stage and needs as they progress and develop.
- 5.4 Progress has been made by implementing the initiatives outlined in this report and have assisted us in achieving these objectives.
- 5.5 Several of our senior pupils have taken part in videos to explain what the independent travel skills pilot has meant to them – watch at <https://youtu.be/MM91inrAYc4>, <https://youtu.be/CtIm4567jHQ> and https://youtu.be/a58GHCj_tvQ

6. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: All revenue costs will be met within Education Services revenue budget.

Legal: N/A

Personnel: N/A

Procurement: N/A

Council Strategic Plan: Grand Challenge 1, Mission 2 Meet the learning and care needs of children and their families through school.

Grand Challenge 3, Mission 2 Become a net zero carbon city by 2030.

Grand Challenge 4, Mission 3 Enable staff to deliver a sustainable and innovative Council structure that delivers value for money.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify. Outcome 14, continue to improve outcomes in relation to attainment and achievement for children and young people.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

Positive impact.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

It will improve the life skills of young people with additional support needs.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

To become a net zero carbon city by 2030.

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

Reduction in CO² emissions.

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

Yes.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report
Y/N

N/A

If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out

N/A

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that Committee:

Note the progress to date

APPENDIX 1 – INDEPENDENT TRAVEL SKILLS PROGRAMME OUTLINE

Week	CONTENT	GOALS
Week 1 – Getting to Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice breaker activities. • Completion of Paperwork • Set up emails/bank accounts/National Insurance Numbers/Bus passes/ID/ 	<p>Pupils build relationships with coordinator and other participants.</p> <p>All administration for programme is completed</p>
Week 2 – Introduction to Travel Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to travel • Importance of being a self-traveller • What to think about and why we travel • Our current experience (mind map) - what to think about and why we travel. • Worries of self-travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils feel they understand why they are learning to travel. • Addressing concerns and sharing this as they may be similar. <p>Introducing to the idea of self-travel</p>
Week 3 – Travel Training and Safety (Personal and Road)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying safe when travelling • Understanding how to stay safe on the bus and when travelling on your own • Understanding how to stay safe when managing roads. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential problems that may arise. • Know how to stay safe when crossing roads etc. • Know how to problem solve potential problems. • Know how to stay safe when travelling.
Week 4 – Apps and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology session around apps • Print outs of timetables and teach how to use a timetable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling confident to use the Enable me app. • Understanding bus timetables and how to read them • .

<p>Week 5 – Deciding & planning a journey.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning a journey • Have a journey plan for each person. • Problem solving; http://schooltravelplanning.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2z_trainer-book.pdf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel confident planning new routes. • Feel confident using apps to plan routes. • Practically showing a pupil self-travel • Confidence building on public transport.
<p>Week 6 – Practical Delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chance for young people to apply all the knowledge they gained over the first 5 weeks. • Chance for the YP to show they can plan a journey and know which bus stop to go to. • Start developing their practical skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ finding a bus stop ○ reading a bus stop ○ buying a ticket ○ knowing how and when to press the button on the bus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show employment coordinator how you can apply the skills and knowledge learnt over previous weeks. • Tell the driver what type of ticket you want. • Tell the driver where you are going or ask if you are on the right bus to go to... • Have correct money or bus pass and know what to do with this. <p>Find your seat/ wheelchair space if relevant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landmarks you are looking for along the way for your stop. • When to press the button • Getting off the bus safely and crossing the road safely • Crossing roads safely
<p>Week 7 – 13 – Travel Training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each learner travelling to tailored routes, determined by their individual action plans. • Each learner will have the opportunity to access buses, trains, and underground routes to boost their confidence around all independent travel routes. • Learners can lead last few trips, with support gradually reducing from Enable worker. • <u>FUN ACTIVITIES</u> - plan a group trip together during school holidays, led by learners in their local community. 	<p>Learners can apply travel skills learnt in weeks 1 to 6</p>

<p>Week 14 – Week 15 Personal Training Booklet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the previous activities conducted and complete a travel training booklet with YP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YP has a comprehensive record of travel training and development of skills.
<p>Week 16 – Completion & certification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YP will be issued with a certificate of completion of the programme. 	<p>Evidence can be used for accreditation</p>