BRADFORD COMMUNITY ALLIANCE CIC

PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

TRAVEL CONFIDENCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN BRADFORD

May 2026



Prepared by Polly Newall, Roots to Change CIC, with support from Dr Wafaa Nawaz, Founder CEO of Bradford Community Alliance CIC

West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

Healthy Working Life

Funded by UK Government

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements 3

Introduction 5

Executive summary 8

About the project 15

Overview of training participants 22

Aim and methodology 27

Scope and limitations 31

Evaluation findings
- Strengths and impact 35
- Challenges 51
- Recommendations 54

Annex 59

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Roots to Change CIC would like to thank Bradford Community Alliance CIC and West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) for their cooperation in this evaluation. Without their support and help to access data and other key information, this evaluation would not have been possible.

We would also like to thank all individuals who took part in the project. We would like to extend our thanks to those who took part in a one-to-one interview or took time to fill in the pre- and post-training questionnaires and share their experiences.

Their insights and perspectives were invaluable in shaping the findings and recommendations of this evaluation.

I love the way this was all determined and how it has helped me build my confidence and I have been to places I haven't been.

Before I didn't travel at night. Before I was scared to go outside at night. Now I can travel by bus and train at night as well without any fear.

INTRODUCTION

Bradford Community Alliance CIC commissioned Roots to Change CIC to undertake an independent evaluation of the Travel Confidence for Young People in Bradford project. This reflects Bradford Community Alliance's commitment to continuous learning and improvement and to supporting young people across Bradford to reach their full potential.

The evaluation involved a review and analysis of a range of primary and secondary data sources, including:

- Request to Quote, issued by West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA)
- WYCA Work and Health Plan
- Proposal submitted by Bradford Community Alliance
- Available data from Office for National Statistics, Department for Work and Pensions, WYCA, Bradford Council and other sources
- Participant database, including demographic and relevant background data
- Travel Training Assessment Forms
- Pre- and post- training questionnaires
- Anonymised transcripts from one-to-one interviews with participating young people conducted by Bradford Council

This evaluation report includes the following sections:

- Executive Summary
- About the Project
- Overview of the training participants
- Aim and methodology of the evaluation
- Scope and limitations
- Evaluation findings

The evaluation findings section includes key strengths of the project and the positive impact it has had on the participants; challenges faced; and a set of recommendations based on lessons-learned that can be used by Bradford Community Alliance CIC and West Yorkshire Combined Authority moving forward.





The course has affected me really positively and I feel more confident in leaving the house and more confident to travel.

The experience was really fun and memorable- a good learning experience as well as enjoyable.

The experience was really educational and I would recommend it to people who struggle to take public transport.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The independent evaluation of the Travel Confidence for Young People in Bradford project was carried out by Roots to Change CIC in April 2026.

It consisted of a review and analysis of a range of primary and secondary data sources.

Key findings

Strengths and Positive Impact of the Project

The key strengths of the project include:

- Alignment to policy
- Relevant to target groups
- Delivered to time and budget
- Delivery capacity and community relationships
- Wide reach
- Participant retention
- Sensitive to participants' needs
- Improved confidence, skills and independence, specifically in:
    - Using public transport
    - Planning journeys
    - Reading timetables
    - Asking for help
    - Travelling independently
    - Handling disruptions

- Improved health and wellbeing outcomes
- Supported progression of selected participants
- Development of a cohort of travel trainers
- Improved data and evidence
- Cost-effectiveness and value for money

Challenges

Challenges included:

- Compressed delivery timescales
- Participant engagement, retention and completion
- Constraints on depth and duration of support
- Measuring longer-term impact
- Limited formal integration with wider employability support



Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed to strengthen delivery, support sustainability and maximise impact moving forward.

It is recommended that **Bradford Community Alliance**:

- Work together with West Yorkshire Combined Authority and other partners to develop a longer-term delivery model (for example, at least 12 months) that would allow more time for recruitment, deeper engagement and a greater opportunity for participants to translate increased confidence and independence into progression towards employment

- Continue to leverage trusted community networks, while expanding referral routes through employment, health and other services to further increase reach and ensure consistent engagement

- Continue to incorporate simple, light-touch follow-up support points (e.g. check-ins or refresher sessions) to help sustain confidence, reinforce learning and capture progression, strengthening understanding of longer-term outcomes and impact

- Further strengthen links with employment and skills development providers, including structured signposting and embedding “next steps” planning within the training to support participants in accessing opportunities

- Continue to strengthen the role of lived experience within programme design and delivery. This could include continuing to capture participant feedback, involving past participants in shaping future delivery and exploring peer support or ambassador-style roles

- Formalise and document the delivery model and key success factors to support replication and position Bradford Community Alliance as a key delivery partners in future programme delivery

It is recommended that **West Yorkshire Combined Authority:**

- Work in partnership with Bradford Community Alliance to support the development and commissioning of a longer-term delivery model (for example, at least 12 months), recognising that an extended timeframe would enable deeper engagement, more sustainable outcomes and greater opportunity to translate increased confidence and independence into progression towards employment

- Facilitate stronger integration between travel confidence training and wider employment, health and other service provision to help ensure that participants are able to move more seamlessly into further support following completion

- Support the expansion and diversification of referral pathways by working with local partners to increase reach and ensure a consistent flow of participants

- Encourage and support the inclusion of follow-up and light-touch longitudinal tracking within programme design to better understand longer-term outcomes and strengthen the overall evidence base

- Recognise and build on the effectiveness of Bradford Community Alliance delivery model by supporting its continued role as a key delivery partner, including exploring opportunities for replication and scaling across other areas of West Yorkshire

- Promote and embed the use of lived experience within programme design, commissioning and evaluation. This could include encouraging co-production approaches, incorporating participant voice into service improvement and supporting mechanisms for ongoing feedback

- Continue to align travel confidence interventions with wider strategic priorities, including addressing structural barriers to transport where possible to ensure that increased confidence is matched by access to opportunities

Case Story: SK

SK participated in travel training to improve her understanding of how to use public transport and to build confidence travelling independently. Prior to the programme, she experienced significant anxiety, particularly around using buses, due to lack of knowledge about routes, stops and journey planning.

Before the training, SK relied on others to accompany her when travelling, including for essential journeys such as visiting the job centre or going into town. She described uncertainty about key aspects of travel, including selecting the right bus, identifying stops and knowing when to get off.

Following the training, SK reported a marked increase in both knowledge and confidence. Practical experience, including travelling between cities and navigating interchanges, helped her develop essential skills.

“I got a lot of information and confidence about travelling… how I can go interchange, get onto my platform and travel to another city.”

As a result, she now feels able to travel independently and has begun to walk to local destinations such as shops and services.

“I feel I’m confident to walk alone. I can go out of the house.”

This represents a significant shift from previous behaviour, where fear limited her independence and mobility.

Despite these improvements, SK noted that some anxiety remains when travelling to unfamiliar places.

“When I have to explore a new town or city… I still have a fear.”

She suggested that additional training sessions or more group travel opportunities would help to further build confidence in new environments.

The programme also had a positive impact on SK's wellbeing. She highlighted the importance of group-based learning, noting that travelling and socialising with peers helped her feel more relaxed and supported.

"We were really relaxed… that was really good for our wellbeing and mental health."

Financial support was another key benefit. Access to an MCard significantly reduced the cost of travel, which had previously been a barrier.

"That was financially really beneficial… we can travel without thinking of financial issues."

Overall, the training has improved SK's independence, confidence and ability to access essential services and social opportunities, including joining a BCA training course. Family members have also recognised these positive changes, particularly her increased confidence travelling locally and to nearby cities such as Leeds.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Definition of "Economic Inactivity"
Individuals who are not in employment, have not actively sought work within the last four weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next two weeks are classed by the Department for Work and Pensions as economically inactive.

Background

Economic inactivity rates in West Yorkshire stand at 26.3% of the working age population (over 280,000 people, excluding students), significantly higher than the national average of 21.6%.

Evidence suggests that for young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), the risks are particularly acute. Evidence shows that prolonged economic inactivity at a young age can lead to long-term "scarring" effects, including reduced lifetime earnings, poorer employment prospects and ongoing reliance on public services. This naturally creates sustained pressure across multiple systems, including but not limited to:

- Welfare and benefits systems through increased claims and longer-term dependency
- Health services, particularly mental health provision, due to the negative impacts of unemployment and social isolation
- Skills and employment services, requiring repeated interventions to re-engage individuals
- Criminal justice and community safety systems, where disengagement can increase the risk of anti-social behaviour

A 2023 WYCA study noted that the direct cost to the public sector per NEET young person is £56,500, with the wider resource cost to the economy estimated at £104,300. The lost taxes, additional public service costs, and associated impacts such as youth crime and poor health is estimated to cost Britain in excess of £77 billion a year.

To help address some of these challenges, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) that brings together the local authorities of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield developed the Work and Health Plan. This plan outlines Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin's vision to reduce economic inactivity and tackle health and socio-economic inequalities.

To support the implementation of this plan, West Yorkshire was selected as one of eight Economic Inactivity Trailblazer areas in England, receiving government funding to test new, innovative and localised approaches to support economically inactive residents.

Economic inactivity is often shaped by a combination of factors, including physical and mental health conditions, language and communication challenges, uncertain immigration status and physical distance from the job market.

A consultation exercise undertaken in June 2025 with residents and employment advisors in West Yorkshire identified transport as a major barrier to accessing work and other opportunities. Specific barriers included lack of confidence in using public transport systems, limited understanding of transport options and anxiety around travelling independently.


09:34
Plat 3
Expt 09:37
Manchester Vic
has 2 carriages.
4
3







The project

The *Travel Confidence for Young People in Bradford* project was delivered by Bradford Community Alliance CIC and funded by WYCA through the DWP Economic Inactivity Trailblazer programme. The project was designed to help address transport-related barriers by supporting young people to develop the confidence and skills needed to travel safely and independently.

The project primarily targeted young people aged 16-25 who were not in education, employment or training and were living in Bradford. It combined structured training with practical support to enable participants to safely and confidently use public transport.

Bradford Community Alliance leveraged their existing networks and worked closely with Skills House, Department for Work and Pensions, Voluntary Community Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations, colleges, Primary Care Networks (PCNs), Maximus, Step 2 and mosques, which all formed an important part of the referral pathway into the project.

The intended outputs of the project as defined by the original Request to Quote were:

- 50 economically inactive residents (with a particular focus on NEET young people) trained and supported to travel independently (training to be completed by 31 March 2026).
- Webinar for staff and volunteers from local authorities and VCSE partners on how to support economically inactive residents, including NEET young people, and improve their travel confidence. This webinar should be hosted on an accessible platform (e.g. YouTube) and must be delivered by 31 March 2026.

- Independent travel guide containing basic travel support and information that can be used by residents across West Yorkshire. The guide must be produced in consultation with WYCA and meet the WYCA brand guidelines (guidance to be issued to the appointed supplier). The guide should be submitted in an editable format (e.g. Word) and PDF by 31 March 2026.
- A final evaluation report capturing lessons learned and good practices (to be delivered within three weeks of activity concluding). The final report must be submitted in both PDF and Word format via email.

The intended outcomes were:

- More people with improved health and wellbeing
- More people using public transport to access employment, employment support, training, education and/or health and wellbeing services
- More people with increased confidence in using public transport

Between January and March 2026, the project delivered five cohorts of in-person group training sessions. Due to time constraints, two cohorts received a condensed one-day training session. In addition, one-to-one support was provided to a participant with a disability and high mental health needs requiring additional assistance. Of the 50 participants enrolled and assessed as eligible for the training, 40 successfully completed the training.

Training sessions covered:

- Travel training fundamentals
- Reading timetables and planning routes
- Downloading, setting up and using the MCard
- Safety and accessibility awareness
- Practical, supervised travel using bus and train routes

Participants who successfully completed the application process were offered a free MCard funded by WYCA as part of the DWP Economic Inactivity Trailblazer. This incentive supported participant retention.

Of the 40 participants who successfully completed the programme:

- 36 successfully activated at least one MCard, providing free transport across West Yorkshire for one month
- Of these, seven received access to an MCard for two months. (It is worth noting that all participants could have received access for two months; however, only these seven created and activated their accounts on time)
- Three did not provide the correct email address on their application form, meaning that WYCA were unable to locate their MCard accounts (despite prompts from BCA to the participants to confirm their details)
- One participant received an MCard but did not activate it

Bradford Community Alliance also produced two webinars covering all sessions to complement the training and enable others to access it online.

It has affected my wellbeing positively.

If the course was extended for others it would be brilliant.

I feel more confident to travel with my children and not be scared I can get lost.

I was unable to travel independently but now I can.

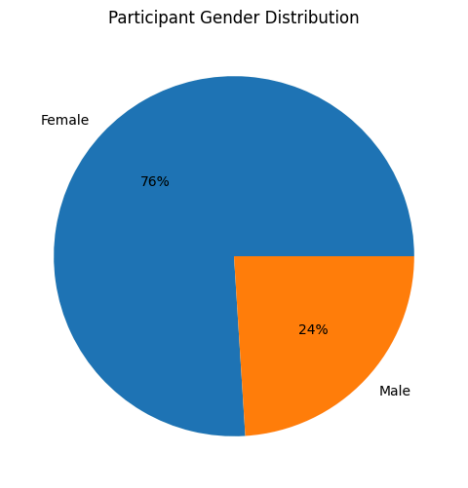
It was a very good experience which helped me gain more confidence, which I think I didn't have.

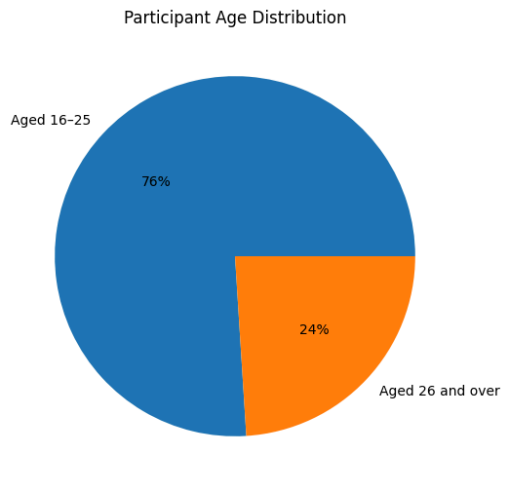
TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

This overview of the demographics of the training participants highlights that the project successfully reached young people facing multiple forms of disadvantage that can present barriers to accessing the employment market that go well beyond transport challenges.

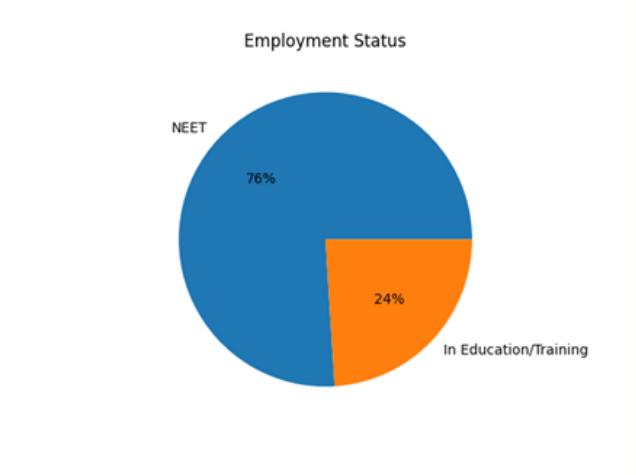
Based on postcode data, 88% of participants were living in neighbourhoods that fall within the 10% most deprived areas in England.

In terms of gender, 76% of participants identified as female and 24% as male. The majority of participants (76%) were aged between 16 and 25. None reported previous involvement with the criminal justice system.

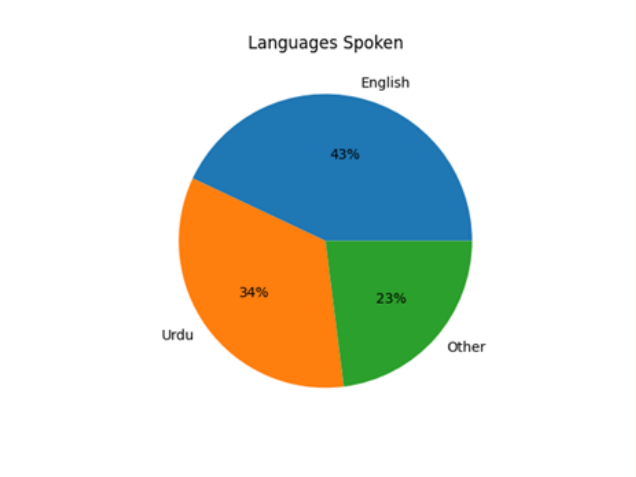




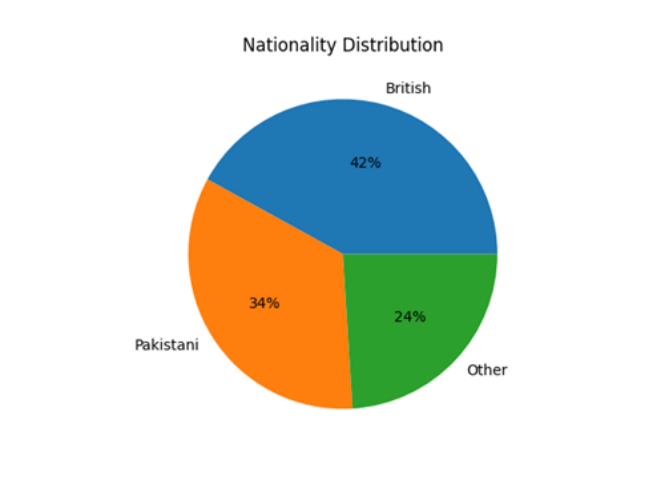
A significant proportion (76%) were not in education, employment or training. Among the remaining participants, most were engaged in part-time education or apprenticeships. None of the participants had received previous travel training. The primary source of household income for most participants was Universal Credit.



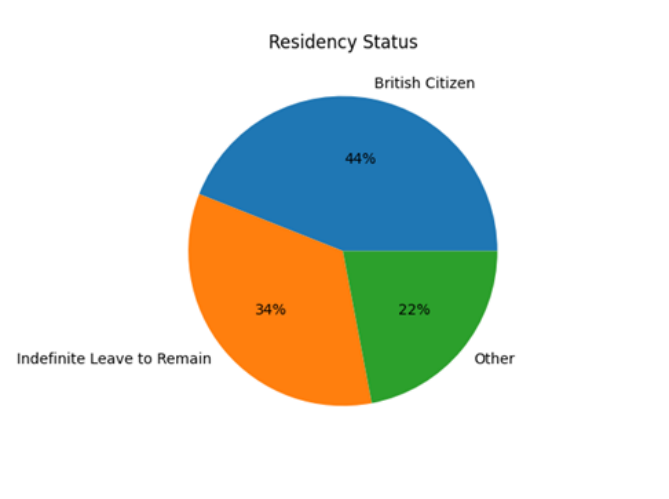
The participant group was linguistically diverse. While not necessarily as a first language, English was the most commonly spoken language (43%). A substantial proportion spoke Urdu (34%), alongside other languages including Pashto, Punjabi Amharic, Slovak, Czech, Arabic and French. Preferred languages were English (60%) and Urdu (28%).



Participants also represented a range of ethnic and national backgrounds. The largest group identified as Pakistani (34%), British Pakistani (14%) and South Asian (10%). In terms of nationality, 42% were British and 34% were Pakistani. Other nationalities included Bangladeshi, Czech, Slovakian, Chadian, Moroccan, Sudanese and Ethiopian.



Residency status varied across the cohort. While 44% were British citizens, others had Indefinite Leave to Remain (34%), spouse visas, residence permits or were seeking asylum.



Participants also reported a range of health-related challenges. Around 12% identified as having a physical disability or health condition, over 30% of the participants reported a history of mental health conditions (mainly anxiety and depression) and 12% identified as having a learning disability. Only two participants had had access to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

12% had a physical disability

30% had a history of mental health condition

12% had a learning disability

Four participants reported experiencing an adverse childhood experience (ACE). Five participants currently have or have had social services involvement in the past. The majority of participants were living with parents or family members.





It has boosted my confidence.

I can now travel by bus to Leeds City Centre on my own.

I feel less nervous about asking for help.

It has given me confidence to travel in a positive way.

I now take the bus to college.

AIM AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of the independent evaluation was to:

- Assess the relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project
- Identify what went well and challenges faced during the project
- Determine whether the intended programme outcomes were met
- Provide a set of actionable recommendations to inform ongoing development and future decision-making

The evaluation involved a review and analysis of a range of primary and secondary data sources, including:

- Request to Quote, issued by West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA)
- WYCA Work and Health Plan
- Proposal submitted by Bradford Community Alliance
- Available data from Office for National Statistics, Department for Work and Pensions, WYCA, Bradford Council and other sources
- Participant database, including demographic and relevant background data
- Travel Training Assessment Forms
- Pre and post training questionnaires
- Anonymised transcripts from one-to-one interviews with participating young people

Data was collected at multiple stages of the project, including prior to delivery, during implementation and following completion of the project. This enabled an assessment of changes in participant confidence, skills and experiences over the course of the project.

All data sources were systematically reviewed and analysed to identify key themes, patterns and areas of convergence across the evidence base. Both quantitative and qualitative data were used to triangulate findings and strengthen the overall robustness of the evaluation.

The findings from this analysis were then synthesised into this report, which sets out key insights, identifies strengths and challenges and provides a clear set of actionable recommendations for relevant stakeholders.

The report was reviewed and agreed with Bradford Community Alliance CIC prior to being shared with West Yorkshire Combined Authority for input before being finalised.

Case Story: ZN

ZN, an apprentice, participated in travel training to address the high cost and inefficiency of relying on taxis for long-distance commuting. Prior to the programme, his travel expenses had become “out of hand”, prompting him to seek a more sustainable and affordable alternative.

Before the training, ZN had had limited experience using public transport for short, familiar journeys. At that point, he rated his confidence at 5 out of 10. Following the training, he reported a notable increase in confidence, particularly in planning more complex journeys.

“It’s made life a lot simpler.. it’s helped me plan out a route.”

Access to journey planning apps and digital tools played a key role in this improvement, enabling him to better understand and navigate the transport network. As a result, ZN now views public transport as a convenient and practical option.

“Public transport is convenient... you just have to know how to utilise it.”

The training has also encouraged more walking between stops and destinations, which has helped him realise that distances are often more manageable than expected.

“It’s not usually as far as I think it’s going to be.”

A major outcome of the project has been significant financial savings. Transitioning away from taxis to buses and trains has reduced daily travel costs substantially.

“I have made some enormous savings.”

These savings have had a positive impact on ZN’s overall wellbeing, contributing to improved mood and reduced financial stress.

While some barriers remain such as occasional delays or opting for a taxi in poor weather or when running late, these do not significantly limit his use of public transport for everyday journeys.

“For day-to-day stuff, it’s just amazing.”

In addition to practical and financial benefits, ZN highlighted an increased appreciation of his surroundings when travelling. Unlike taxi journeys, public transport has allowed him to engage more with the environment around him.

“You look around, you see the scenery… sometimes take the scenic route.”

Looking ahead, ZN suggested that additional tools or resources such as apps highlighting local places to visit, could further encourage travel and exploration.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The evaluation drew primarily on self-reported data collected by the Bradford Community Alliance project team, alongside input from Bradford Council through the interviews they conducted with selected participants. Data was gathered at multiple stages during the project cycle including before, during and after delivery. This included pre- and post-training questionnaires, as well as one-to-one interviews, conducted by Bradford Council with selected participants.

While this approach provided very valuable insights into the experiences of the participants and in this case provided a strong indication of positive short-term impact and useful foundation, there are some limitations to consider when interpreting the findings.

Although Bradford Community Alliance plans to follow up with participants six and twelve months after the project to assess longer-term impacts, due to the timeframe of the project and evaluation, it has obviously not been possible to assess these at this stage. This includes but is not limited to understanding whether improvements in confidence and independence are sustained over time or translate into progression into long term and continual employment, education or training.

I really enjoyed the experience; I learned new things, met new people and it helped me to build my confidence.

I went to Leeds on a bus, I would have never travelled that far before.

I would have never taken the train before, as I didn't know how to get a train ticket but now I have the MCard app which has the ticket, I'm less nervous.

My skills have improved and now I'm able to plan journeys and have the confidence to speak up and ask for help if I'm unsure.

Case Story: HS

Beyond the financial support offered by the project, HS reported that using public transport more regularly had contributed to increased confidence and social engagement. She described how travelling enabled her to interact with others and become familiar with different places.

The group-based nature of the training was also highlighted as an important aspect of the experience. Shared activities, including a trip to Leeds, provided opportunities for social connection and peer support. This was particularly meaningful as it coincided with Ramadan, during which the participants shared food together.

“We went there and shared the food together.. it was a great experience.”

In addition to increased use of public transport, HS noted that the project encouraged more walking, particularly in good weather. This reflects a broader shift towards more active travel behaviours.

Some concerns about public transport remain, particularly around reliability. Delays and cancellations during busy periods were identified as a challenge but did not appear to prevent continued use.

“The only barrier is the timing.. it gets late or cancels.”

Participation in the training also supported improvements in wellbeing through increased social interaction and community engagement. HS emphasised the value of meeting others and being involved in group activities.

Reduced travel costs and increased mobility also enabled more frequent visits to family members, strengthening those social connections.

Looking ahead, continued access to subsidised travel was identified as a key factor that would support ongoing and increased use of public transport, emphasising cost as a key barrier.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

STRENGTHS AND POSITIVE IMPACT

The evaluation highlighted a number of strengths in the design and delivery of the project, alongside clear evidence of positive short-term, intermediary outcomes for participants that present important precursors to labour market engagement. These are summarised below.

Policy Alignment

The project directly supports the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Work and Health Plan, which aims to reduce economic inactivity and tackle health and socio-economic inequalities. It also forms an important part of the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer programme, contributing to the testing of new, innovative and localised approaches to supporting economically inactive residents into, or closer to, employment. This strategic alignment strengthens the project's relevance and its contribution to wider regional priorities.

Relevance to Target Groups

The project was highly relevant and well suited to the needs of the target groups. Consultation with residents and employment advisors carried out by WYCA in June 2025 identified transport as a significant barrier to accessing employment and other opportunities in West Yorkshire.

In response to this, the project was designed to address key barriers to public transport use, including low confidence, limited understanding of transport systems, difficulties with journey planning and interpreting timetables and anxiety around using public transport independently.

Findings from the pre-training questionnaire confirmed the prevalence of these challenges, demonstrating that the intervention was appropriately targeted.

Delivered to Time and Budget

Despite a very compressed delivery schedule, which included participant recruitment, onboarding, training delivery and evaluation, the project was successfully delivered within the agreed timeframe and budget. This reflects effective project management and organisational capacity on the part of Bradford Community Alliance, which is explored in other sections.

Delivery Capacity and Community Relationships

A key strength of the project was the experience and local knowledge of the delivery team. Bradford Community Alliance's established networks and relationships with a range of community and other organisations, including youth centres, community groups and faith organisations, were instrumental in enabling rapid recruitment and sustained participant engagement. These trusted networks were particularly valuable given the short lead time for delivery.

Project Reach

As highlighted in the overview of demographics of the training participants, the project successfully reached individuals facing multiple forms of disadvantage that can be hard to access and engage with. The plethora of wide-ranging challenges they face can naturally present barriers to accessing the employment market that go well beyond transport challenges. This success was in large part thanks to the strong networks and relationships that Bradford Community Alliance has developed over time with a range of different organisations.

Participant Retention

The project achieved a high completion rate, with 40 of the 50 enrolled participants completing the training (80%). This is a strong outcome given the well-known challenges associated with engaging and retaining individuals within this complex cohort and indicates effective engagement and support given by Bradford Community Alliance throughout delivery.

The engagement approach delivered by Bradford Community Alliance was carefully tailored around young people, taking into account the specific challenges they face.

Many participants shared that they had previously been low achievers at school and often didn't attend school, but that the programme created a more inclusive and supportive learning environment where they felt a sense of control and ownership.

The classroom setting encouraged peer to peer support, enabling participants to engage in learning more naturally and, at times, without the pressure often associated with traditional education settings.

The provision of free travel acted as a practical incentive and more importantly removed a key financial barrier to participation. By enabling free and consistent travel, it ensured that young people could attend sessions reliably, reducing drop-off linked to cost or other access issues.

Before I didn’t have experience of how to take the bus or train. Now I feel very confident. I can easily travel anywhere. Where I want. Thank you so much to all the staff who gave us this training.

I travelled by bus from Bradford to Leeds. It was my first experience to travel by bus from Leeds at night. I didn’t get scared in fact I really enjoyed it. Now I can travel alone at night.

Sensitive to Participants' Needs

As a community-based organisation with considerable experience, Bradford Community Alliance is mindful of the risks associated with short-term interventions, particularly where individuals may feel a sense of loss once a programme or incentive ends. Drawing on this experience, BCA ensured that participants were not simply 'picked up and dropped' but were supported beyond the life of the project through appropriate onward pathways and continued engagement. Onward referrals included access to vocational training within Bradford Community Alliance CIC services.

A significant number of economically inactive women identified a need for basic beauty skills training as a stepping stone towards self-employment. In response, Bradford Community Alliance made this training available and successfully engaged participants. Additional onward referrals included access to welfare support and NHS Talking Therapies for mental health related support. This approach has helped to sustain outcomes, maintain trust within the community and support longer-term personal and professional development.

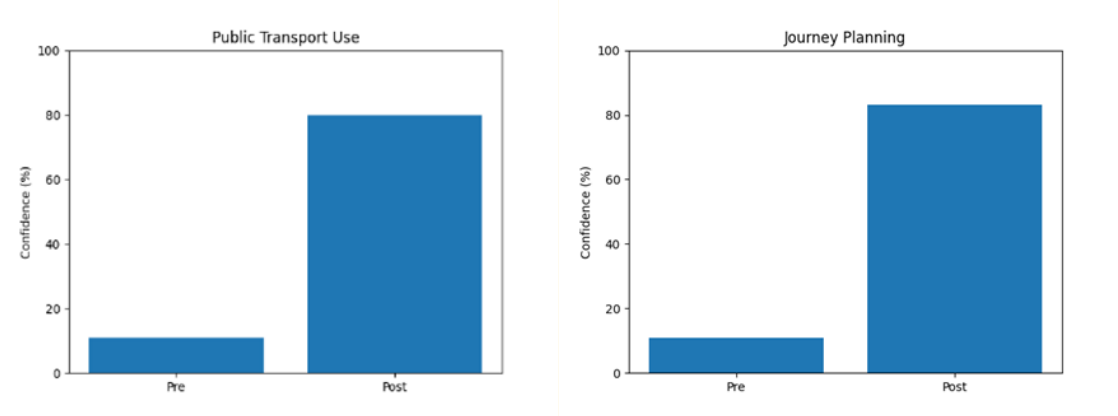




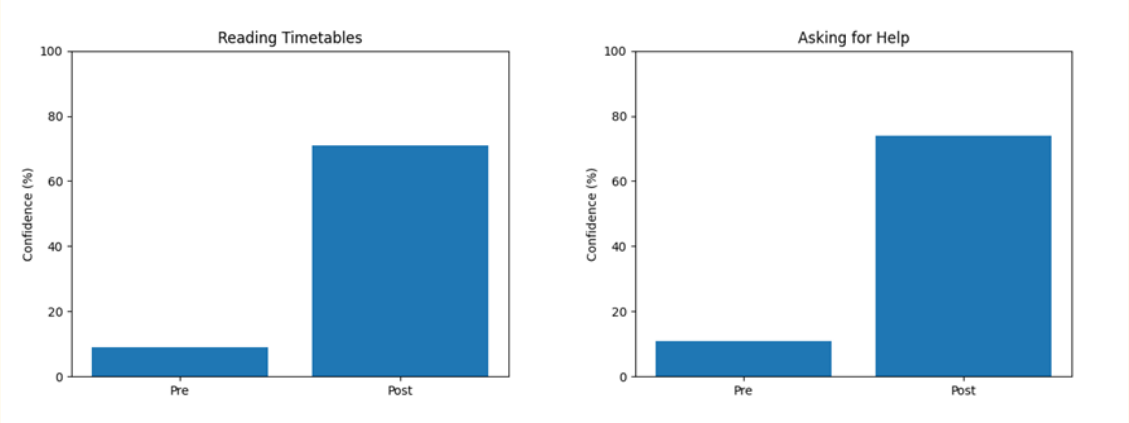
Improved Confidence, Skills and Independence

Before and after training, participants were asked to rate how confident they feel using public transport, planning a journey, reading timetables, asking for help, travelling alone and managing delays. The choices were: not at all, slightly confident, somewhat confident, confident and very confident.

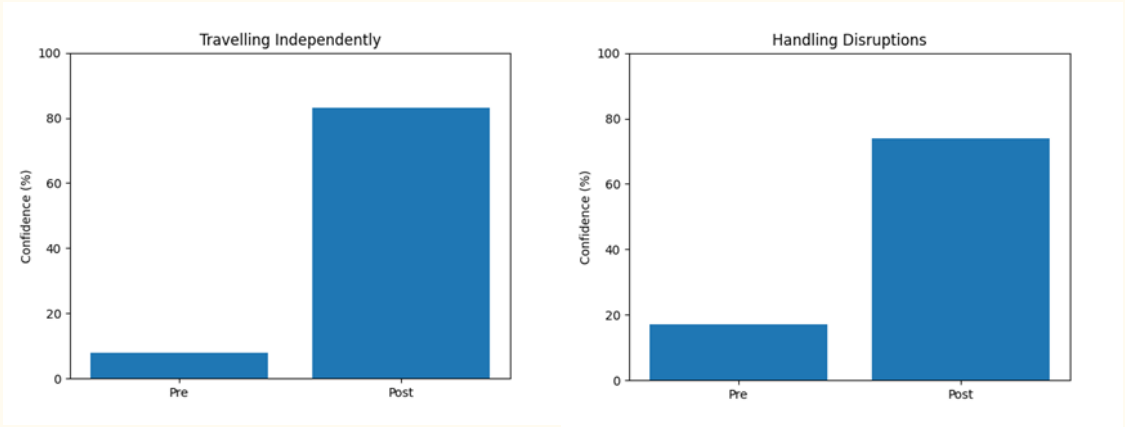
The project achieved significant improvements in participants' confidence and ability to use public transport (and independently). Self-reported confidence increased substantially across all areas measured following the training.



Confidence in using public transport rose from 11% pre-training to 80% post-training (answering confident or very confident), while confidence in journey planning increased from 11% to 83%. Similarly, confidence in reading bus and train timetables improved from 9% to 71% and confidence in asking transport staff or members of the public for help increased from 11% to 74%.



Notably, confidence in travelling independently rose from 8% before the training to 83% afterwards (answering confident or very confident) and confidence in managing disruptions such as delays increased from 17% to 74%.



Case Story: EA

EA took part in travel training to address low confidence and anxiety around using public transport. Prior to the project, they described feeling “really scared” to use buses and training, which significantly restricted their independence and contributed to feelings of isolation.

At the beginning of the project, EA rated their confidence in using public transport at 4 out of 10. Following participation in the training, this increased to 8 out of 10 reflecting a marked improvement. They attributed this progress to the structured support provided by staff, including practical guidance as well as reassurance.

“It’s not as bad as it seems… it’s just a part of life.”

A key element of the project was the supported trip to Manchester. This helped EA build practical skills such as using a travel card, navigating stations and knowing where to get help if they needed it. This experience also supported them to manage unexpected situations like delays.

“If the train’s been delayed, I know where to go and which train to look at next.”

Since completing the training, EA has begun travelling independently more often, including making trips to Leeds to meet friends. They described successfully managing a disrupted journey involving a delayed bus that wasn’t as bad as they had thought it would be.

“I just sat down and relaxed… it wasn’t as bad as I thought.”

While some barriers remain such as concerns around cleanliness on public transport, EA reported being much more able to cope with these challenges and continue their journey. Importantly, these experiences have contributed to a strong sense of achievement and independence.

“I’ve made it. I’ve finally done something.”

These improvements were accompanied by participants reporting wider personal outcomes. A large majority of participants reported feeling less anxious about travelling (83%), more independent in their daily lives (86%) and more able to travel independently (91%). In addition, 85% of respondents reported that the training had improved their ability to access opportunities.

83% felt less anxious

86% felt more independent

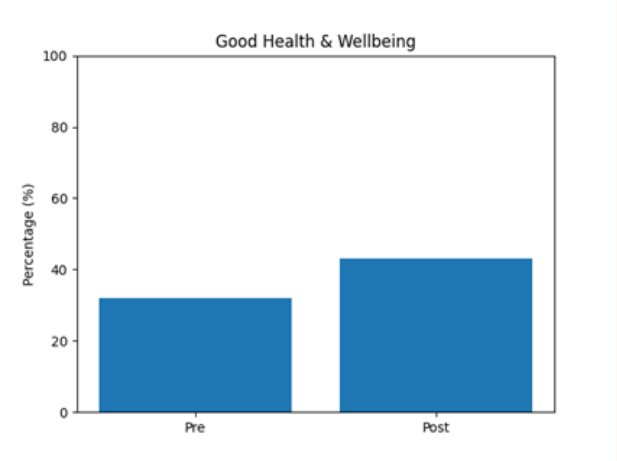
91% felt more able to travel alone

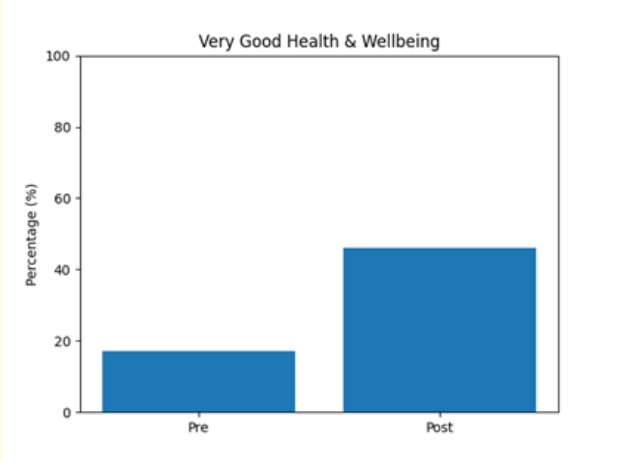
Based on post-training feedback, 34 out of 40 participants (85%) reported that they had started using public transport more regularly and independently- many to access employment, employment support, training, education and/ or health and wellbeing services.

85% reported improved access to opportunities

Health and Wellbeing Outcomes

The project also had a positive impact on participants' self-reported health and wellbeing. Following the training, 46% of participants rated their health and wellbeing as "very good", compared to 17% before the support. Those reporting "good" health increased from 32% to 43%. These findings suggest that increased confidence and independence in travel may contribute to broader wellbeing benefits.





Supported Progression of Selected Participants

Twelve individuals have already progressed on to take up career-enhancing courses, such as hair and beauty, a new project set up by Bradford Community Alliance which is not currently funded by WYCA. Many of these individuals have continued to use public transport to get there. This demonstrates both Bradford Community Alliance and the project's success in not only engaging participants in initial training, but also building their confidence, motivation, and aspirations to pursue further learning and skills development. It highlights a clear pathway for progression and indicates potential further longer-term impact beyond the life of the project.

A key consideration for the sustainability of this work is the need to provide safe, women only spaces, particularly for women who have experienced trauma, including domestic abuse where the perpetrator was male. A significant proportion of female participants expressed a clear preference for gender-specific environments, which enabled them to engage confidently and consistently in the programme. While this approach was highly effective in supporting engagement and outcomes, it has resource implications. Without continued or longer-term funding, there is a risk that these essential elements of delivery cannot be maintained, which may disproportionately impact the engagement of women who are already facing multiple barriers to participation.

Development of a Cohort of Trainers

The project has developed a cohort of 10 certified travel trainers who received formal training from Leeds City Council Travel Training team. This not only ensures that Bradford Community Alliance trainers have the necessary skills to deliver the programme effectively but also builds capacity within the community and supports the future expansion of the project, which can continue to be led and sustained by Bradford Community Alliance.

Data and Evidence

The project contributed to improved collection of demographic and participant data, enhancing the evidence base and understanding of the complex needs of young people, particularly those not in education, employment or training, for future programme design and evaluation.

Before I travelled by bus and train but not alone. Because I was scared and hesitant but now I can travel by bus and train alone without anyone's help. This course was useful to me.

Now I can go to the library and also out looking for more training about education and jobs as well and this is all possible by the MCard and using apps.

My opinion on public transport has changed. I used to think it was difficult to use. But the journey isn't that long when you plan a journey.

Cost-effective and Value for Money

The project engaged 50 young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), achieving an 80% completion rate. Notably, 12 participants have already progressed into further career-enhancing training, demonstrating clear onward pathways.

The total cost of the project was £33,804, equating to £845.10 per participant based on the 40 young people who completed the training. In light of the strong intermediate outcomes achieved, particularly in relation to confidence, independence and access to opportunities, this represents value for money and indicates the potential for cost-effective support in moving individuals closer to economic activity.

The wider cost of economic inactivity particularly amongst young people is significant. Estimates suggest that each young person who is NEET may cost the public purse and local economy approximately £5,000–£12,000 per year through benefit payments, support services, lost income tax and National Insurance contributions, and reduced productivity. These estimates are consistent with UK government evidence on the fiscal and economic costs of youth disengagement. Across a cohort of 50 individuals, this equates to a potential annual cost of £250,000–£600,000.

Youth unemployment is also closely associated with a range of other wider social challenges, including poorer mental health, increased risk of long-term unemployment, reduced lifetime earnings and greater likelihood of involvement in anti-social behaviour and/or contact with the criminal justice system. These factors create additional long-term costs for health, social care and policing services.

The programme has the potential to reduce pressure across multiple public systems and services including but not limited to:

- The welfare system through reduced reliance on Universal Credit and related financial support
- Employment and skills services through lower demand for intensive, repeat interventions (eg. Jobcentre Plus support)
- Health services through reduced incidence of poor mental health associated with long-term unemployment
- Social care and youth services through decreased need for targeted or crisis interventions
- Criminal justice system through lower risk of anti-social behaviour and offending linked to disengagement
- Local economy through increased productivity, spending power and tax contributions

If the programme succeeds in supporting participants to avoid or reduce time spent not in education, employment or training, the financial return becomes significant.

If just five participants avoid one year of NEET status, this would equate to savings of between £25,000 and £60,000.

This represents a return of approximately £0.75 to £1.82 for every £1 invested. If 8 participants achieve this outcome, the return increases to approximately £1.21 to £2.91 per £1 invested.

Case Story: LK

LK decided to participate in the project because they felt really anxious about taking the bus. Uncertainty about routes and processes made bus travel feel intimidating.

After the training, LK reported a significant increase in confidence, describing public transport as now “quite easy” to use. Practical tools such as the MCard and journey planning apps played a key role in this shift.

“All you have to do is scan the ticket.. it’s pretty straightforward.”

Support with understanding how to use these tools reduced anxiety around common challenges such as knowing which ticket to buy or whether to ask the driver for help:

“Now that I do know what I’m getting, it is so much more easier.”

A key benefit of the programme was the supportive learning environment, which helped participants to ask questions without feeling intimidated. This peer and staff support helped build both knowledge and confidence.

“Everyone is just so open to helping you.”

LK now feels more confident leaving the house and travelling alone to appointments, training and social activities and actually enjoying these activities. They also reported improved journey planning skills, including allowing for potential disruptions like delays or cancellations.

The training has also had a positive impact on LK’s family. Increased independence has reduced reliance on parents for transport.

“I’m less reliant on them to give me a lift.”

When considering new or unfamiliar journeys, LK rated their confidence at 7-8 out of 10, compared to previously finding it “really difficult” to leave the house. While some uncertainty remains, this no longer prevents them from travelling alone.

The project has also had a positive impact on EA's wellbeing. They reported improvements in both physical and mental health, moving from feeling "cooped up" and isolated to being more active and socially engaged. Other key changes noted included walking more as part of journeys and greater confidence leaving the house.

Peer support was highlighted as an important factor in their progress. Sharing the experience with others helped normalise their anxieties and provided encouragement.

"It wasn't just me feeling like that.. it was really nice to come over that milestone together."

EA expressed interest in further developing their travel skills, particularly through additional opportunities to use trains and explore new routes. They also indicated openness to trying new modes of transport, such as bike-sharing schemes.

CHALLENGES

While the project was successful in many respects, it also faced a number of challenges relating to delivery, participant engagement and the broader context in which the project operated. These are summarised below.

Compressed Delivery Timescales

The project was delivered over a very short three-month period, which included identifying, recruiting and onboarding a complex cohort of young people not in education, employment or training, alongside delivering the training and completing the evaluation.

While targets were successfully met, delivery required intensive and ongoing support from the project team, including out-of-hours and weekend engagement. This level of input would be difficult to sustain within a longer-term or scaled delivery model.

Participant Engagement, Retention and Completion

Working with a cohort of people facing multiple and often complex life situations presented challenges for engagement and retention. Although the project achieved a strong overall completion rate (80%), the 20% who did not complete the project goes someway to reflecting the realities of working with individuals who may experience personal instability, competing priorities and fluctuating motivation to engage.

These factors required an agile and responsive delivery approach, with significant additional support provided to sustain participation.

Constraints on Depth and Duration of Support

The short timeframe of the project also limited both the depth and duration of support that could be offered. While the training was very effective in building confidence and improving wellbeing in the short term, there was limited opportunity within the scope of the project and project funding to reinforce learning or provide extended support to help ensure these gains made were sustained.

Measuring Longer-Term Impact

Due to the compressed delivery and evaluation period, it has not been possible at this stage to assess longer-term impacts including whether improvements in confidence, independence and overall wellbeing are sustained and/or translate into longer-term outcomes such as sustained engagement in education, training or employment. Bradford Community Alliance plans to follow up with participants six and twelve months after the project but this currently falls out of the scope of this project.

Limited Integration with Wider Employability Support

The project operated with limited formal integration with services focused on skills development and other support to better ensure labour market readiness. While participants developed increased confidence in using public transport and were well supported by Bradford Community Alliance, there were fewer structured pathways to connect this important progress to employability support. This highlights the importance of formally aligning mobility-focused interventions with wider skills and employment provision that would better ensure that increased ability to travel safely and confidently is matched by improved readiness to engage with the labour market.

I went on a train to Manchester and then on a bus to Trafford Centre, which I otherwise would not have made.

I feel more confident in taking public transport, it feels less intimidating because I used to be really unsure about planning a journey.

I have started taking buses regularly thanks to the improvement in my confidence.

I became more confident and now I know how to use public transport without panic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are proposed to strengthen delivery, support sustainability and maximise impact moving forward.

It is recommended that **Bradford Community Alliance:**

- Work together with West Yorkshire Combined Authority and other partners to develop a longer-term delivery model (for example, at least 12 months) that would allow more time for recruitment, deeper engagement and a greater opportunity for participants to translate increased confidence and independence into progression towards employment

- Continue to leverage trusted community networks, while expanding referral routes through employment, health and other services to further increase reach and ensure consistent engagement

- Continue to incorporate simple, light-touch follow-up support points (e.g. check-ins or refresher sessions) to help sustain confidence, reinforce learning and capture progression, strengthening understanding of longer-term outcomes and impact

- Further strengthen links with employment and skills development providers, including structured signposting and embedding “next steps” planning within the training to support participants in accessing opportunities

- Continue to strengthen the role of lived experience within programme design and delivery. This could include continuing to capture participant feedback, involving past participants in shaping future delivery and exploring peer support or ambassador-style roles

- Formalise and document the delivery model and key success factors to support replication and position Bradford Community Alliance as a key delivery partners in future programme delivery

It is recommended that **West Yorkshire Combined Authority**:

- Work in partnership with Bradford Community Alliance to support the development and commissioning of a longer-term delivery model (for example, at least 12 months), recognising that an extended timeframe would enable deeper engagement, more sustainable outcomes and greater opportunity to translate increased confidence and independence into progression towards employment

- Facilitate stronger integration between travel confidence training and wider employment, health and other service provision to help ensure that participants are able to move more seamlessly into further support following completion

- Support the expansion and diversification of referral pathways by working with local partners to increase reach and ensure a consistent flow of participants

- Encourage and support the inclusion of follow-up and light-touch longitudinal tracking within programme design to better understand longer-term outcomes and strengthen the overall evidence base

- Recognise and build on the effectiveness of Bradford Community Alliance delivery model by supporting its continued role as a key delivery partner, including exploring opportunities for replication and scaling across other areas of West Yorkshire

- Promote and embed the use of lived experience within programme design, commissioning and evaluation. This could include encouraging co-production approaches, incorporating participant voice into service improvement and supporting mechanisms for ongoing feedback

- Continue to align travel confidence interventions with wider strategic priorities, including addressing structural barriers to transport where possible to ensure that increased confidence is matched by access to opportunities

Case Story: AF

AF, an apprentice, participated in travel training to reduce her reliance on taxis for long-distance journeys. Prior to the programme, she lacked confidence in using public transport and was incurring high travel costs as a result.

Following the training, AF reported a clear improvement in confidence, increasing from 6 out of 10 to 8 out of 10. She attributed this to gaining practical skills in journey planning and using digital tools.

“I can plan my own journeys, looking at the timings and the live tracking.”

The introduction to bus apps, tracking tools, and journey planners was identified as the most valuable component of the training. These tools enabled her to feel more in control and organised when travelling.

“I quite like to be structured and planned and know where I’m going at what time.”

As a result, AF now feels confident travelling independently to a range of destinations, including appointments and new locations. The ability to track journeys in real time has been particularly important in reducing uncertainty.

“I know how long it’ll take me to get there.”

The training has also encouraged more active travel. Compared to taxi use, public transport requires additional walking, which AF described as a positive change.

“It’s quite nice to look at the views… see stuff you don’t usually see.”

Financial savings have been a significant outcome. Switching from taxis to buses and trains has made travel considerably more affordable, enabling more frequent journeys.

“It’s £6 for the day… you can get there.”

This increased affordability has also had a positive impact on AF's wellbeing. She reported being more willing to go out and access opportunities, as cost is no longer a major barrier.

"You don't think, 'it's £20 to get there, I can't go.'"

Some challenges remain, particularly around reliability and infrastructure. Delays and the lack of bus shelters in poor weather were identified as minor barriers.

"Sometimes they're not always on time... if it's raining you're just stood there."

Despite these issues, AF expressed confidence in travelling to new destinations, particularly when supported by journey planning tools.

"As long as I've got the journey planner... I know exactly what's going on."

Overall, the training has enabled AF to transition from costly, dependent travel to more independent, flexible and affordable journeys.

ANNEX

COPY OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Participant ID:
Name (optional):
Course Location:
Session Facilitator:
Date:

Section 1: Baseline (BeforeTraining)

Travel Confidence
Please rate how confidentyou feel usingpublic transport. Scale:
1 = Not at all confident
2 = Slightly confident
3 = Somewhat confident
4 = Confident
5 = Very confident

Planning a journey using public transport (1–5)
Reading bus or train timetables (1–5)
Asking transport staff or membersof the public for help if needed (1–5)
Travelling alone by bus or train (1–5)
Managing changes or delays during a journey (1–5)
Overall confidence using public transport (1–5)

Current Use of Public Transport

How often do you currently use the following?

Transport Type	Every day	3+ times a week	1-2 times a week	1-3 times a month	Never
Bus					
Train					

Access to Opportunities

Before starting this course, have you used public transport to access any of the following?

□ Employment (travelling to work)
□ Job interviews
□ Employment support(e.g. Jobcentre, employment programme)
□ Training or education
□ Health appointments
□ Wellbeing activities or services
□ Other services
□ Don't use public transport

Health and Wellbeing

How would you rate your currenthealth and wellbeing?

□ Very good
□ Good
□ Fair
□ Poor
□ Very poor

Barriers to Using Public Transport

Before starting this course, what made it difficult for you to use public transport?

□ Lack of confidence
□ Not knowing how to plan journeys
□ Difficulty understanding timetables
□ Anxiety about travelling
□ Accessibility or mobility issues
□ Other (please specify)

Section 2: After Completing the Training

Travel Confidence (After Training)

Please rate your confidence now when usingpublic transport. Scale:
1 = Not at all confident
2 = Slightly confident
3 = Somewhat confident
4 = Confident
5 = Very confident

Planning a journey using public transport (1–5)
Reading bus or train timetables (1–5)
Asking transport staff or members of the public for help if needed (1–5)
Travelling alone by bus or train (1–5)
Managing changes or delays during a journey (1–5)
Overall confidence using public transport (1–5)

Public Transport Use

Since starting the travel confidence training and receiving your MCard, how often do you use the following?

Transport Type	Every day	3+ times a week	1-2 times a week	1-3 times a month	Never
Bus					
Train					

Access to Opportunities Since the Programme

Since taking part in the training, have you used public transport to:

□ Travel to work
□ Attend a job interview
□ Attend employment support (Jobcentre, work programme etc.)
□ Attend training or education
□ Attend a wellbeing activity or service
□ Access other services
□ I still don't use public transport

Independence and Confidence

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

Scale:
1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neither agree nor disagree
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

I feel more confident using public transport (1–5)
I feel less anxious about travelling (1–5)
I feel more independent in my daily life (1–5)
I now feel able to travel independently using public transport (1–5)
The travel confidence training has helped me access more opportunities (1–5)

Health and Wellbeing
How would you rate your health and wellbeing now?
□ Very good
□ Good
□ Fair
□ Poor
□ Very poor

Has your health or wellbeing improved since taking part in the training?
□ Yes
□ No
□ Not sure

Section 3: Participant Feedback(Optional)
What has changed for you since completing the travel confidence training?

Can you describe a journey you have made that you would not have made before?

How has the course affected your confidence or wellbeing?

How has the free MCard helped you in your day-to-day life?

Is there anythingelse you would like to share about your experience?

Bradford Community Alliance
Bradford Quaker House
Russell Street
BD5 0JB
www.bradfordcommunityalliance.org.uk

West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

Healthy Working Life

Funded by UK Government