



Out and about in London

Supporting independent travel

MAYOR OF LONDON



Transport
for London

A guide to supporting a person with learning difficulties to travel on their own in London

The Out and about in London series includes:

- Out and about in London: My guide
- Out and about in London: My guide for listening (audio CD version)
- Out and about in London: Supporting independent travel

To order any of these, contact London Travel Information on 020 7222 1234.

Your borough council Social Services Department may also have copies. See www.alg.gov.uk for links to your borough council Social Services Department.

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Supporting independent travel

This guide helps you support someone learning to travel independently and should be used in conjunction with **Out and about in London: My guide** - a guide for people with learning difficulties about travelling independently. There is also a CD version of **My guide**, which the person you are supporting might find helpful. All the guides are available from London Travel Information on 020 7222 1234 or log on to www.tfl.gov.uk

Travelling independently gives people freedom to do new things like going to work or college, or meeting up with friends in the evening.

It also builds confidence. This guide explains how travel training works and offers ideas to reinforce lessons learned.

The guide is designed for non-professionals like parents and carers (even if somebody else like a day service or an outreach team is doing travel training).

It can also help professionals in colleges and day services and people involved in travel buddy schemes (who may have completed training themselves) to support others to travel independently.



How to use your guides


Out and about in London: Supporting independent travel gives you tips to help you get the most out of working through all the relevant sections of **My guide** together with the person you are supporting.


My guide has been produced with advice from people with learning difficulties who helped with content and photography. It addresses their key concerns when travelling on public transport in London.


My guide is an update of a guide produced in 2003. It covers a wider range of ways to travel and is designed to be a personal log to complete during training. It can then be kept and used by your learner to refer to again and again when travelling.

The guide is presented in sections. Sections like About me, Going out, Staying safe and Getting help will be relevant to everyone. But the Buses, Cabs, Trains, Tube trains, Docklands Light Railway and Trams sections can be removed if they don't apply to any of the journeys your learner makes. For example, they probably won't need sections on the Docklands Light Railway if they live in North West London.



Each section contains guidance for you to work through together, and is followed by a **My journey** section, marked with this symbol: 

My journey  sections have prompts where you and your learner can fill in the specifics of the journey in writing or by adding drawings and/or photographs. You can add bus numbers, station names and familiar landmarks, and useful contact numbers to use if things go wrong. And there are more blank pages at the end of **My guide** if there's anything else you want to record. The information should be adapted to meet the needs of the person you're supporting.

You need to read through the guide yourself to understand what sections are relevant and what details can be added to the **My journey**  sections.

Planning your journey


See Contacts, page 16, for help planning the journey.

Choosing the journey

It's best to support someone to learn to travel a specific route. It should be a relevant journey that will make a difference to your learner's life - perhaps to and from their day service, college or work. The journey should be one they make regularly but should be manageable enough to be a good introduction to independent travel. Discuss this with the person you're supporting to select the best route.

Return journeys

Remember, return journeys will need to be part of training and should be treated as a separate journey as they will be different. A return journey will mean using different stops, platforms and walks so it's important to record these.

Important: The **My journey** sections of **My guide** have space for the details of the journey from home to your destination but not the journey back. Details of return journeys can be added to the extra pages at the back of **My guide** (**Other things: My journey** ) and put behind the relevant section.

You may not want to support the person to learn the outward and return journeys at the same time. It may be best to wait until someone is travelling one way independently before you support the other leg. This means they will need to travel the other way with support for a while - by using their usual minibus, a taxi or public transport with supervision.

Finding a safe route

The most direct route may **not** be the safest. It may be better for someone to catch a bus or train that takes a little longer to avoid crossing a busy road to get to a bus stop, or walking further to use a pelican crossing rather than crossing at a junction.



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Travel the route yourself at the same time of day your learner will be travelling. This is particularly important if the journey will be during rush hour or the school run. Also, think about any issues around travelling in different weather or times of the year.

Break the journey into sections. For example, the outward journey may involve a walk from home to the stop or station, the main part of the journey using public transport, and a walk from the stop or station to the final destination.

Use a street map to work out the safest route to and from stations or stops. Be aware that a map doesn't take into account things like traffic or what crossings there are. By walking the journey yourself you can spot dangers and see if there is a safer route.

Thinking about these issues will help you choose the safest route:

- How many roads are there to cross?
- What types of crossing can you use?
- Does one side of the road have less side streets to cross than the other?
- Are there any busy entrances to building sites or car parks?



- Are there lots of driveways?
- Are you likely to need to cross between parked vehicles?
- Do you have to use an alleyway, or is the road poorly lit at night?

Dial-a-Ride

Are there journeys or parts of journeys the person you are supporting cannot yet manage on their own?

If so, they may be able to use Dial-a-Ride - a door to door service for disabled people who cannot use public transport. It is generally best for providing local trips, but longer journeys can be arranged on request.

To use Dial-a-Ride they must be a member and will need to pre-book trips. Fares are generally cheap. Contact London Travel Information on 020 7222 1234 for details of how to join.

Training tips

Before you start

- Think about your learner's skills, health and mobility. What do they need to learn and how can you best support them?
- Go through the route with your learner before training begins so they are clear what is going to happen.
- Think about key aspects of the journey - for example the safe crossing points, the bus number or the name of the station.
- When choosing a start date, don't forget holidays, bank holidays, and college terms.
- Help your learner to apply for a freedom pass through their Local Authority if they don't have one. This gives disabled people who are permanent residents in a London borough free travel on London's public transport.
- Think about how you will go through **My guide** with the person you support. It's best to start at home so they can get familiar with the idea of independent travel.
- Think about any aids you could use to help the person learn the journey. This could be photographs of landmarks on the route - use the **My journey** sections of **My guide** for this.
- Get to know the rules for pedestrians in the Highway Code. You can see this at www.highwaycode.gov.uk or call the Department for Transport Publications Centre on 0870 1226 236.
- Think about whether the audio CD version of the guide could be useful for the person you're supporting. Listening to the information can reinforce the messages in the main guide. To order a copy, call London Travel Information 020 7222 1234.
- You may want to find out if there is any community safety training in your area for your learner. It could be good for them to do this before you start travel training.



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While you're out and about

- Don't set a time limit for travel training - it takes time and commitment from the trainer. Everyone learns at a different rate.
 - At the start of each session, go over issues that you have discussed before.
 - Don't give too much information in one go. You may need to support someone through a task several times and slowly build on the information you are giving.
 - If your learner makes a mistake, talk about what should be done rather than what they did wrong.
 - To promote awareness of their surroundings, encourage your learner to talk about what is happening around them.
 - Don't tell your learner what to do in a situation, ask questions to help them discover answers.
 - Use short sentences. Don't use jargon.
 - Encourage and reassure your learner.
 - When you are supporting someone to learn new skills, check your learner is using these skills consistently and without prompting.
- As someone's skills are growing, take a step back. Sit behind them rather than next to them on the bus or train.
 - When supporting someone, try not to give non-verbal clues. For example, if you put your paper away just before the right stop, you are saying 'here is the stop'. Your learner may be reading your signal rather than recognising themselves when to get off.

Keeping records


It is important to write down what happens every time you support your learner on a journey. This helps you identify progress, to see where they are having difficulties and to plan future training.

Records give you evidence to show your learner what they are doing well and where they need more practice. Keep clear records so that someone else can pick up the training if you are not able to support a session. Records can be shared with others, such as your learner's tutor or keyworker, who can reinforce what they have learnt.

If possible, support your learner to keep their own record. This reminds them what they've achieved and where they need to do more work. There is space at the back of both guides for keeping records.

Working through My guide

About me

- Check they have useful phone numbers in the **About me: My journey**  section of **My guide**. It would be a good idea to programme these into their mobile phone. Check they know when it is appropriate to call 999.
- In the same section, your learner can write information about their health, communication or mobility which may affect them when they are out (for example, whether they have epilepsy or diabetes). Check your learner knows to only show this to a trusted person when they need help.

Going out

- Talk about how to use a mobile phone safely and how to make sure it is charged and has credit on it.
- If your learner has a condition such as epilepsy or asthma, do they have a Meditag bracelet?

Staying safe

- Talk with the person you're supporting about how they can best look after their belongings while they are out. Make sure they know they should not leave their bags unattended on stations or public transport. Discuss why this is.

- Ask your learner to think about what they should wear if the weather is bad or it is dark.

Staying safe: roads

- When people are crossing a road using the Green Cross Code, make sure they are properly looking and listening for traffic. Ask them to describe what they can see and hear. It is essential they are concentrating on crossing the road, so encourage them to think about what they're doing. Make sure they don't use items that will distract them, such as mobile phones and headphones.



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- Talk about where it is best **not** to cross a road - by parked cars, near a bend or by road works. Ask what they would do in these situations. There may be roads where people have no choice but to cross between parked vehicles. Discuss how to cross here safely.
- Check your learner knows when it is safe to cross for themselves, rather than following the people around them.
- Make sure your learner understands how each type of crossing works (see www.highwaycode.gov.uk or call the Department for Transport Publications Centre on 0870 1226 236). For example, you look across the road for a green man for some, while for others, the green man is on the control panel at your side of the road. Some work as two separate crossings with an island in the middle. Some pedestrian crossings beep to show when it is safe to cross.
- For people with visual impairments there are tactile crossing aids e.g. raised studs that can be felt underfoot to show a dropped kerb.



Some crossings have a cone shape that turns under the control box for blind and deafblind people to put their hand on. It turns when it is safe to cross.

- Make sure your learner is clear they shouldn't start to cross if they see or hear emergency vehicles - even if the road is clear or the green man on a crossing lights up.

Your borough Road Safety Officer can give you information on road safety publications. Ring your local council to find out more.

You can download a copy of the Green Cross Code at www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/arrivealive or call the Department for Transport Publications Centre on 0870 1226 236. **Note:** The website is designed for children so its style may not be appropriate for adults but it does contain useful information.

Buses

- It is safer to use bus stops where there are likely to be lots of people around, such as by shops. But some people find it stressful waiting where it is very busy, so consider where they will be waiting. For example, is the stop near a school or college? This may be very busy at certain times.
- Is the bus stop for just one bus route, or do different buses stop there? Sometimes, two or three buses arrive together. This makes it difficult to see the bus number or to get on the bus safely. Does more than one bus route go to their destination?
- If the journey involves changing buses, can you change buses at the same stop? If your learner needs to walk to another stop, assess this walk as you would the walk to the first bus stop.
- At the bus stop, the most important thing is catching the right bus. If someone finds this difficult, think about the following:
 - Are they standing where they have a clear view of the bus as it approaches?
 - Ask your learner to use a prompt card or photo with the bus number on - there is space in **My guide** for this.
 - Suggest the person you're supporting holds their arm out to stop the bus.
 - Encourage your learner to ask the driver if they are on the right bus.
 - If there is a queue at the stop, suggest they don't push, but make sure they are confident enough to get on the bus themselves.



- If your learner has a freedom pass, do they know how to touch it on the card reader? If they forget their freedom pass, do they know when and how to buy their ticket from a machine before they board? This is indicated on the bus stop sign by the route number being displayed on a yellow background. Where there isn't a machine, they need to pay the driver.
- If your learner uses a wheelchair, there is usually a space for them towards the centre of the bus. They can ask anyone sitting in this space to move, and they should put the wheelchair brakes on. If your learner does not use a wheelchair, encourage them not to sit in this space for wheelchair users and pushchairs, as they may need to move.




- Suggest they sit downstairs near the driver in case they need help. If your learner worries the bus will move before they sit down, they can ask the driver to wait until they are seated.
- When it is time for their stop, point out the STOPPING sign. Encourage them to ring the bell once.

Cabs

Spend some time discussing taxis and minicabs, as people may need to use them in an emergency.

Some people cannot use a bus, train, tube, tram or DLR independently but may be able to use a taxi or minicab on their own. They may be eligible for a mobility allowance to help pay for using taxis or minicabs. To find out more, contact your borough council.

- Discuss the difference between a taxi and a minicab. Taxis can be stopped in the street or caught at taxi ranks; minicabs must be booked.
- Always use a taxi or a licensed minicab. Your borough council Social Services Department may be able to recommend a safe minicab company. To check whether a minicab operator is licensed, call Transport for London on 020 7222 1234. Licensed minicab numbers can be written in the **Cabs: My journey**  section of **My guide**.
- Licensed minicabs have a license disc in the window issued by Transport for London. All taxis and licensed minicabs meet strict safety standards. All licensed taxis are wheelchair accessible.
- If your learner will be booking their own minicab, do they know what information they should give and ask for when booking?
- Remind them to ask the driver the name of the person they have come to pick up, to sit in the back and to wear a seat belt.
- Is your learner able to pay their fare and check their change? If this is difficult, arrange with the firm to pay on account.
- All London boroughs operate the Taxicard scheme, which offers reduced cab fares for people with disabilities. To find out more, ring your borough council Taxicard office. You can apply for a Taxicard by phoning the Taxicard office on 020 7484 2929 or log on to www.taxicard.org.uk. Taxicard members in nine boroughs can also book journeys using local licensed minicab companies. This is through the Capital Call scheme by Transport for London, for boroughs where there is a shortage of licensed taxis. Call 020 7275 2446 or visit www.capitalcall.org

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Train, tube trains, Docklands Light Railway and tram

These modes of transport are covered in detail in **My guide**. Many of the same principles of travelling by bus apply here – see page 10. Here are some extra things to think about:

- Finding the right platform can be difficult at busy times. Try arranging the first training session at a quieter time of day.
- Is your learner comfortable in crowded spaces?
- If they have a freedom pass, do they know how to use the card reader on the ticket barrier? If they don't have a freedom pass, do they know how to buy a ticket and use the ticket barrier? Do they know what to do if their ticket is 'swallowed', it doesn't work or they lose it?
- If they use National Rail, are they aware of time restrictions on using their freedom pass?
- If they find using an escalator difficult, is there another way?
- How easy is it to change trains if they need to?



- Make sure your learner knows to stand away from the edge of the platform and in a well-lit area with other people.
- Check your learner knows how many stops there are on the journey.
- Encourage your learner to sit where other people are - as long as they feel the people are safe. If they do not feel safe, they should move to another seat or carriage.
- Ask them to check where the emergency alarm is and to sit near it if possible. Discuss how to use it properly.

Getting help

Check your learner knows what to do and how to get help if things go wrong.

- Tell your learner the most important thing is to stay calm.
- Check your learner knows who to ask for help. They can ask the bus or tram driver or DLR, train or tube staff. Other people who could help are a policeman, a traffic warden or a shopkeeper.
- Ask them to explain what a stranger is and why it might not be safe to talk to people they don't know. Ask them who it is safe to talk to. Ask what they would do if they are being called names. Discuss behaviours, like not sitting next to a stranger in an otherwise empty bus or train carriage.
- Can they use a payphone to call for help, and do they carry change?



Gaining confidence

Stepping back

When your learner has become confident, gradually reduce the directions you give and allow them to take the lead. When they are starting to make their own decisions about when it's safe to cross a road, you need to be able to intervene if they put themselves in danger. If your learner makes a mistake that doesn't place them in danger, wait and see how they react when they realise what has happened. This gives you an idea of what they would do when on their own.

Reviews

As well as reviewing your learner's progress with them after each session, it helps to have a review after about six training sessions. Having a meeting with your learner and anyone else involved allows everyone to feedback on how the training is going and is an opportunity to celebrate progress.

Once someone's training has finished, holding a final review makes sure there are no outstanding issues, checks everyone agrees with your learner travelling independently and offers the chance to discuss any future training that may be needed.



It is also worth having a review once your learner has been travelling on their own for a few months.

Shadowing

Shadowing is when someone who hasn't been involved in the training observes your person the first times they travel on their own. In most cases it is done by paid workers - usually arranged by the learner's college or day service and gives an independent view on their travel skills.

Your learner will usually be told that they will be shadowed. The person shadowing will carry ID and a recent photograph and contact phone numbers of your learner.

Agree what time the person you support will be leaving on their journey, so the person shadowing is ready to watch. The person shadowing will keep at a distance to observe your learner's skills.

Contacts

Contact your **borough council Social Services Department** with questions you may have about learning to travel independently in London. See www.alg.gov.uk for links to your London borough council.

Transport for London

For general information on transport in London - www.tfl.gov.uk

For planning your journey in Greater London - www.tfl.gov.uk/journeyplanner

For giving feedback on any of Transport for London's services -

- Online feedback form www.tfl.gov.uk/contact
- Telephone 020 7941 4500 (main switchboard)
- Write to Windsor House, 42-50 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0TL

London travel information line

For 24-hour help planning a journey on bus, underground and light rail services in London, or for general questions about transport within Greater London -

- Telephone 020 7222 1234
- Textphone 020 7918 3015
- Email travinfo@tfl.gov.uk

Customer Services (London Buses)

If you want to comment on your journey, contact us -

- Telephone 0845 300 7000 (8am - 8pm Monday to Friday)
- Textphone 020 7918 4435 (8am - 8pm Monday to Friday)
- Fax 020 7918 3999
- Email customerservices@tfl-buses.co.uk
- Write to Customer Services Department, London Buses, 172 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9TN

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National Rail Enquiries

For information on journey times and tickets for national rail services -

- Telephone 08457 484950
- www.nationalrail.co.uk

Freedom pass

Free travel pass for disabled people paid for by your local council -

- Telephone 020 7747 4858 (Association of London Government)
- www.freedompass.org
- Write to ALG freedom pass section, Operations Unit, 1st floor, New Zealand House, 80 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4TZ

Taxicard

Most London Borough Councils have a Taxicard Scheme, which provides their disabled residents with subsidised journeys in accessible taxis.

- Telephone 020 7484 2929
- Fax 020 7484 2919
- www.taxicard.org.uk
- Email taxicard@alg.gov.uk
- Write to ALG TEC Taxicard, New Zealand House, 80 Haymarket, London, SW1Y 4TZ

Capital Call

For Taxicard members to book minicabs in certain boroughs. See page 12.

- Telephone 020 7275 2446
- www.capitalcall.org

Road safety

Arrive Alive

- www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/arrivealive
- Telephone: 0870 1226 236

The Highway Code

- www.highwaycode.gov.uk
- Telephone: 0870 1226 236 (Department for Transport Publications Centre)

London Accident Prevention Council

- www.lapc.org.uk
- Telephone: 020 8227 3204

Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association (LARSOA)

- www.larsoa.org.uk

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

- www.rospace.com/roadsafety
- Telephone: 0121 248 2000

Wheelchair access

- For information on wheelchair access at Underground stations, contact London travel information (above) or log on to www.describe-online.com
- For information on wheelchair access at national rail stations, contact the relevant train operator. For example, www.southernrailway.com has details for Southern Railway.

Notes

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Website www.tfl.gov.uk/journeyplanner

London Travel Information line

Telephone 020 7222 1234