

Modeshift National Sustainable Travel Awards 2021



Best sustainable travel initiative – Education

Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Special Educational Schools

The Get Connected Project

Sponsored by David Richards

What did the project involve?

The Get Connected project was developed in 2017 due to the numbers of young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Wiltshire wanting to travel train but not having the skills to do so safely. Get Connected works within 6 special schools in Wiltshire, supporting young people to learn road awareness and safety in a classroom setting through work sheets, interactive tools and multiple-choice tests before taking that knowledge out for practical sessions local to the school. The classroom-based session led by the project worker is once a week over a 12-week period. From this we identify young people who can transfer their newfound skills into independent travel, this can be travel to school, post 16 education, for confidence or to a community outcome and ultimately onto the existing team's pathway to employment. Personal outcomes include confidence, good mental health, increased wellbeing, choice and control, transferable skills, and social interaction to name a few

Who was involved and what was their role?

Community Connecting (CC) Team Leader - Manager of project and proposal.

WEST Team Leader - supporting CC Team Leader.

Commissioner for Children's Services - Sourced initial funding.

Specialist Schools - interested in and hosting project.

CC Team Manager - overview and manage CC Team Leader.

Community Coordinator (Travel) x 2 initially then down to 1 part time worker - Facilitate the project

What was the cost and how was the project funded?

In 2017, we secured funding for two Community Co-ordinators (Travel), with focus on special schools, for 1 year costing £54,000. In addition, a budget of £16,000 to cover costs of interactive website development, online information, training, support, and resources for schools was agreed. There was commitment to fund a second year, with evidence that the project achieved a cost saving.

Total cost to £126,000.

How does this initiative or project meet at least two of the Awards criteria?

Get Connected is **innovative and creative**, created to support the identified lack of road awareness and safety in Wiltshire for young people with disabilities with a 12-week project piloted in special schools. Our target group are 14 – 18-year-olds, involving special schools from the start, hosting projects and embedding learning. Pupils engage in lessons, adapt resources and provide feedback which shapes the delivery of the project. Two films were made starring pupils. The project involves **partnership working** with special schools. Over 250 pupils have taken part in the project and the numbers that go on to independent travel to post 16 education, for confidence or to a community outcome, means that no transport support from Wiltshire Council is needed. The project was commissioned for 2 years, and is now in its 4th year, and has been extended until 2022, showing **longevity**. **Barriers** identified from existing team's experience of returned travel referrals highlighted the lack of road awareness. **Solutions** were developed, working in schools earlier so independent sustainable travel can happen.

What were the results, and what future plans do you have for the project?

The project is now in its 4th year and is embedded into specialist schools, with over 250 pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan having been supported and taught road safety/awareness. One worker has identified and supported over 20 young people to travel independently; the average time for independent travel is 3.3 months per person which does not include classroom-based sessions. This support has contributed to immediate and long-term savings in the Council's travel budget. Another 21 'Get Connected' pupils have been referred to the wider Employment and Community Skills team, are/or have followed a pathway to community access and paid employment. We have seen increased referrals to our post-16 travel training service from participating schools which means less reliance on Wiltshire Council for ongoing transport. The future will include piloting 'Get Connected' in mainstream schools for pupils with disabilities, with 2 schools already on board for 2021 – 22.

Endorsements:

Lee Davidson Assistant Head Springfield Academy – *“We absolutely would like Get Connected and Travel Training to continue, it is a fantastic initiative that our pupils need to access their community.”*

I Slater, Larkrise - *“I have seen young people who have previously completed Get Connected and are now using public transport independently. It is great!”*

Holly Worts Teacher – *“I think the project is brilliant, I am confident that all our learners will be able to travel independently to college next year.”*

Feedback from the Expert Panel of Judges:

“This initiative to enable young people with special educational needs and disabilities to travel independently is exciting. There is a huge potential for replication in other locations. Opportunities for progression were included, leading to pathways into employment and so improving life chances. The range of people involved showed real commitment to change outcomes for young people. The results of 250 pupils being supported and the long-term savings to the council budget are impressive. It is clear the initiative is continuing to grow. Three strong endorsements are included.”

“The Get Connected project, with its focus on special educational needs and disabilities, is a very valuable initiative indeed. The work with six special schools in Wiltshire to identify young people who can become independent in their travel to school is inspiring. The total cost of £126,000 for the two years so far is an investment very well made, with huge long-term benefits to those who have been helped by the scheme.”

Evidence:

- 1) [Green Cross Code Film Get Connected – YouTube](#)
- 2) [Safe Crossings Film from Get Connected \(Wiltshire Council\) – YouTube](#)
- 3) [Get Connected \(Wiltshire\) - Wiltshire Council](#)