



Brandon Trust
Learning disabilities.
Living a life.

100 Voices On Transport



**A report on transport-related issues, by
people with learning disabilities and autism**

www.brandontrust.org

Why this report?

This report was not written by the usual experts or think tanks: it contains, in simple terms, the views expressed by over 100 people with learning disabilities and autism supported by the charity Brandon Trust. These views were collected over 12 months through a process which started with local meetings and culminated in a conference held on 8 September 2012.

How did 100 People get together?

In order to listen to the views and opinions of people supported by the charity, Brandon Trust holds regular 'Local User Forums' (LUFs) in each of its areas.

The LUFs are facilitated independently of Brandon Trust, in an effort to collect the real and unbiased views of the people supported by the charity.

The LUFs meet regularly and discuss any problems or issues people face in their daily lives. Minutes of these meetings are then sent, by the independent facilitators, to the charity's Executive Management Team, for consideration and action.

Brandon Trust also has a Consultative Subcommittee, consisting of representatives from the LUFs and other people with learning disabilities, some of its Trustees and Directors, and the Chief Executive. The Consultative Committee hosts the 100 Voices conference, every year.

What did the 100 Voices say?

The Local User Forums decided to bring to the conference the topic of Transport, in order to discuss it with other people with learning disabilities and autism. They had identified Transport as presenting particular problems for them and as affecting all areas of their lives.

Why is Transport so important?

People with learning disabilities and autism said that Transport is very important for them because:

- Most people with learning disabilities don't drive and therefore have to rely on others or on public transport to get to places
- Transport enables them to go to work, college, visit family and friends, access their local community, have a social life, go shopping, use leisure facilities. Some of them would even like to travel further, go on holiday or explore other places
- Without transport, people with learning disabilities are stuck at home and become isolated
- Transport gives people with learning disabilities freedom and independence
- Transport makes them feel that they are like everybody else

What problems did the 100 Voices conference identify with Transport?

The delegates said that using public transport is very difficult for them, because:

- It is too expensive
- Lack of availability, in terms of both routes and times
- Lack of accessibility. This refers to every aspect of transport: from the vehicles themselves, to train and bus stations, to timetables and signage
- Fear of being abused or of being mistreated and disrespected by bus drivers, train and station staff, and other passengers. Some of the people we support reported frightening experiences, especially on buses (bullying and teasing)
- Lack of understanding, on behalf of the general public, of the barriers a person with a learning disability faces when travelling alone on public transport. Some people can be impatient and rude
- Inability to use concessionary bus passes before 9.30am and therefore having to pay for a taxi to go to college or work
- Lack of appropriate training and support on how to use public transport for people with a moderate learning disability

How can these problems be solved?

The people at the 100 Voices conference said that they would like to see:

- Better transport solutions for people with learning disabilities, organized by councils, charities and communities in partnership
- Wider time coverage of concessionary travel passes so that they are not restricted to certain hours
- Training for bus and taxi drivers, and other transport staff, on the needs of people with learning disabilities
- More public awareness of learning disabilities and increased acceptance of disabled people on public transport. This can be achieved through media coverage and campaigns
- Better accessibility on buses and trains, fewer environmental barriers
- Easy read complaints procedures
- Easy read timetables
- A telephone number displayed at bus stops or in train stations that people can call if the bus/train is late or if they require assistance
- Cameras on buses to capture abusive behaviour
- More travel and transport training for people with learning disabilities, like the 'Travel Buddy' scheme
- More engagement with local MPs and people who can influence social policy so that the views of people with learning disabilities are heard

Two case studies

At the 100 Voices conference there were a lot of stories of isolation, loss of independence and failure due to the lack, or loss of, adequate transport solutions.

However we want to end with two success stories, to show what people with learning disabilities can achieve, with the right support.

Daniel's Journey



Dan used the Brandon Trust Travel Buddy and Training service to help him to gain independence to get to his Theatre Company. He used to rely on his parents to give him a lift or go on the bus with him.

Following Dan's successful training, his mum and dad also gained confidence in Dan's abilities to remain awake and alert whilst travelling on a bus early in the morning.

Dan still travels by himself.

Laura's Journey



Brandon Trust helped Laura to gain confidence in catching the bus to work and college.

She had to learn two different routes and get to know three different buses. She did really well and enjoyed not needing to rely on her mum to give her lifts.

Catching the bus by herself meant that she got to spend more time with her friends after college and could decide if she wanted to go straight home or not.

People with learning disabilities have the right to access the same opportunities as anybody else. The lack of adequate transport solutions is one of the main barriers in achieving this.

The 100 Voices