

What does the programme entail?

Developing communication skills and confidence is the key aim of the RCP. Any CRP or TOC can use the programme within a mainstream or special needs school. By starting within education, the programme is able to build skills for life, alongside programmes such as BlueAssist, and with a range of resources including Makaton, objects of reference and tailored education resources as required.

The programme begins with a visit to school to discuss the needs of the individual children and groups with the class teacher or other staff member. This is an essential step to clarify academic, safety and communication requirements. These requirements must then be passed on to all relevant TOC staff, including station staff, and any other partners. The teacher may also wish to specify certain project or academic links they would like addressed within the programme, such as safety, history, geography or art.

Following this, a half-day visit is carried out with a range of activities that the class teacher will have selected from, including: timetable reading, journey planning, journey bag packing, ticket writing, poster designs and artefact handling. This initial visit is also vital to ensure young people have met all project partners before coming to the station.

After this, a full day's trip on their local line is planned. Most special needs schools have access to transport to reach the station, though mainstream schools may need some additional planning to assist with this.

At the station, the young people may experience 'purchasing' a ticket, identifying safety features, using i-spy sheets, designing their own trains and mapping their relevant journey route.

The most important aspect of this day is the journey itself; to understand the process of using a station and a train, and aspects of travel such as purchasing a ticket, return or single fares, and where to go for help.

The programme is flexible, and should be adapted on a case-by-case basis.

How to get in touch with us:

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Key Contacts:

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Want to know more?

Go to: www.downtheline.org.uk/projects

Further details of the programme can be found at www.downtheline.org.uk/projects, including safety and child protection information.

If you would like to take part in the programme, use the RCP on your line(s) or would like further advice, please use the contact details provided to get in touch with the Community Rail Lancashire team.



The Railway Confidence Programme



Stanley Grange community residents planting at Pleasington station



The Railway Confidence Programme



Students from Crosshill Special school, Blackburn, undertaking the programme in school before their rail trip

What is the Railway Confidence Programme?

The Railway Confidence Programme (RCP) is a programme designed by Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) to assist young people with additional cognitive or mental health needs onto the railway; aiming to build confidence and enable the passengers of the future. This programme is carried out in partnership with the British Transport Police (BTP), The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) and Northern.

CRL ensures that it does not stereotype young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), and adapts sessions on a case by case basis, viewing all young people as unique individuals. The programme can be carried out in any school, mainstream or special needs, and will benefit any young people who require confidence-building, independent travel guidance or a step-by-step guide to rail travel.

CRL also recognises the need to encourage railway use in people of all ages and of all abilities, needs, cultures and religions. We are committed to encouraging use of and employment within the railway, for a full range of people within society. It is only by encouraging people when they are young that they will become lifelong users, as well as view the railway as a future employment option.

Why is it significant?

We recognise that there are groups that may find it harder to access public transport than others; with access needs that are both physical and cognitive. Further details of some of these groups can be found at www.downtheline.org.uk/projects.

The RCP aims specifically to engage young people with additional cognitive and mental health needs. Engaging with these groups ties in with the Community Rail Strategy, recognising that we are working towards fairer, more equal societies; ensuring full transport access to all communities.

Cognitive needs and disabilities affect 6% of children, 16% of adults and 45% of those over 60, though only half of disabled adults are in full-time employment. Alongside this, mental health needs affect 1 in 4 in the UK. Clearly there are vast numbers of people in our society who must be given every opportunity, and reasonable support, to access the railway and the wider transport network, either alone or with a supporter. This will begin to ensure access to full education, health, employment and leisure prospects, as well as the prospect of employment within the transport industry.

Benefits to our partners

There are of course many benefits to ensuring full access, but to name just a few;

- For educational purposes and to increase safety
- To inspire passion for the transport industry (especially in the young)
- To enhance economic prospects for local and national businesses, and for the financial benefit of individuals
- For environmental and ecological benefits
- Enabling better access to healthcare, education, leisure and employment
- Encouraging diversity, social inclusion and cohesion on local and national lines

Finally, these programmes instil greater confidence and trust in the railway network and relevant operators nationally. The RCP focusses on giving young people with additional needs the chance to experience the railway, as well as increase their travel confidence and independence.

