

SMARTER CHOICES, SMARTER PLACES
KIST: KIRKWALL INDEPENDENT SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

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1. INTRODUCTION

Kirkwall has become one of only seven towns in Scotland to receive funding from the Scottish Government towards becoming a Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town as part of the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places initiative. The three year funding programme will go towards a package of measures, which are aimed at increasing the use of public transport and encouraging people to walk and cycle more around the town. The work streams within the package include Personalised Travel Planning, Car Culture Research, and Independent Travel Training,

The work stream within the programme discussed in this paper is the Kirkwall Independent Sustainable Travel project which focuses on providing travel training to encourage and enable residents and visitors to Kirkwall to be able to maximise their mobility and ease the use of public transport for journeys to, from, and within Kirkwall. The objective of this project was to train a group of Kirkwall residents to be able to train individuals to travel independently.

If a 20 year old man with learning difficulties has spent his entire life being driven to school, to home, to youth clubs to sports centres then his view of life will be very different from his peers. It is hard to imagine the boost in confidence that can come, even at a late age, from doing things independently and making your own way in life. Opening up these opportunities for as many people as possible is what independent travel training is all about.

Additional funding for sustainable towns in Scotland offers, among other things, a one-off opportunity to offer help at an individual level. More importantly, if it is undertaken constructively, a system can be set in place to ensure this benefit extends beyond the present funding.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

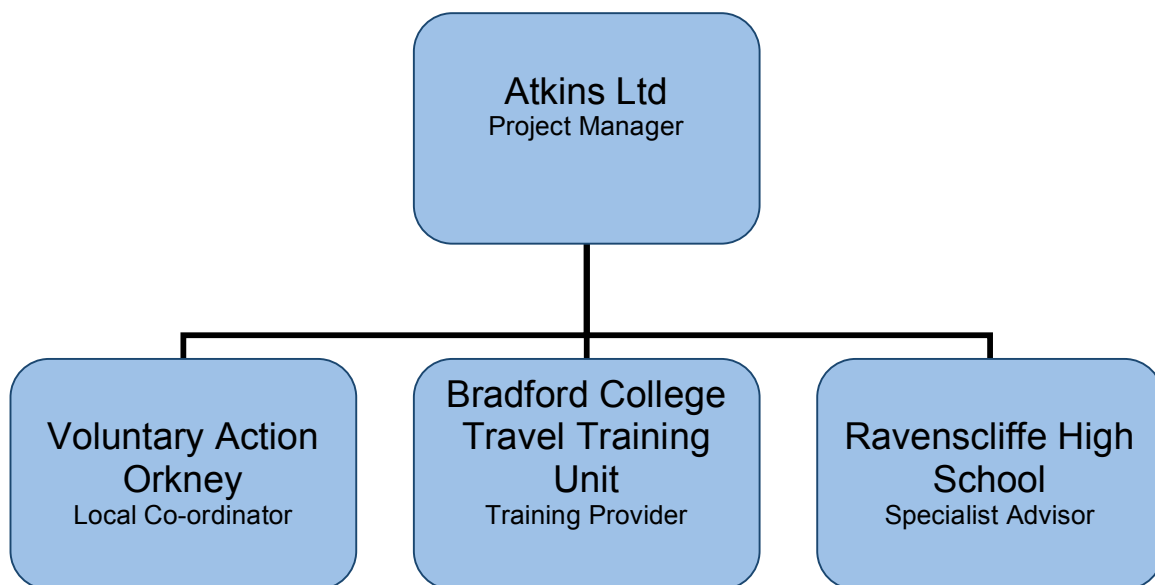
2.1 Smarter Choices, Smarter Places Initiative

Smarter Choices, Smarter Places is a joint initiative between the Scottish Government and COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities). The initiative is designed to increase active travel and public transport use across Scotland. Scottish Local Authorities were asked to submit a bid to receive funding to turn a town within the local authority area into a sustainable travel demonstration town. The funding from the Scottish Government will contribute to a package of localised measures which could comprise of infrastructure improvements, promotion, information provisions, and practical support for the community.

2.2 Study Partners

This project has been carried out by Atkins Ltd with the assistance of Voluntary Action Orkney, Bradford College Travel Training Unit, and with involvement from Ravenscliffe High School.

Figure 2.1 – Project Team



Atkins Ltd

Atkins is one of the UK's leading engineering and design consultancies. With a highly experienced sustainable transport division which has carried out work on Sustainable Transport Strategies and Personalised Travel Planning in the past;

Atkins was well placed to successfully carry out and manage a project on Independent Travel Training, with the assistance of the study partners.

Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO)

Voluntary Action Orkney VAO is an independent community development organisation serving the voluntary sector and volunteering interests, funded mainly by the Scottish Government. VAO has over 125 member organisations, and 300 registered volunteers who are placed in 136 placement situations with voluntary or statutory organisations. Recent projects include “More Choices, More Chances” where a development worker provided support to young people not in education, employment, or training. The project has been extremely successful with the majority of young people moving into employment or other new opportunities and has demonstrated the benefits that extra support can have in people’s lives.

VAO works closely with a range of statutory and voluntary organisations, and manages shared accommodation buildings housing Age Concern Orkney, Home-Start Orkney, Crossroads Orkney, Victim Support Orkney, Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau Advocacy Orkney, Cruse Bereavement Care, Samaritans, Enable, Relationships Scotland, and Women’s Aid Orkney.

Bradford College Travel Training Unit

The Travel Training Unit at Bradford College is one of the most widely respected centres for independent travel training, featured in several government guides to good practice. It exists to offer mobility training to people with learning disabilities. The Unit operates an equal opportunities policy that allows the unit to offer travel training to anyone with a disability, 14 years and above, who displays a willingness to learn and a commitment to succeed. The training is conducted on a one to one basis and follows a unique learning programme specifically designed to meet the individual requirements of each trainee.

The training programme has to be thoroughly planned and well supported, and must take into account all the variables that might occur during the training period. Assessing risks and making sure that all travel training is safe is the most important part of all the work the unit undertake.

Ravenscliffe High School

One of the most effective providers of independent travel training in the UK is Ravenscliffe High School in Halifax, Yorkshire. They have won awards, appeared in good practice guidance and have provided advice to schools throughout Britain. Ofsted has commented ‘programmes for health and safety are very good and provision to assess risks to pupils, either when they are out on activities, Springboard placements, the independent travel programme or the school premises, is extremely well-organised’ and “Whenever possible students are given every support to travel independently to and from school and within activities during the school day, for example, going to the swimming baths or shopping. The school places a significant amount of time and effort into this aspect of students’ education, developing their independence skills extremely well”.

2.3 Kirkwall: The Study Area

Kirkwall is the largest town within the Orkney Islands and has a population of 7,626¹. The town is located to the south east of the Orkney Mainland. The town has the main airport for the Islands with services connecting the Orkney mainland to the outer islands and mainland UK.

Of the 5,581 residents in work or study 53% drive to work or are passengers in a car². This is very similar to the Orkney Islands as a whole where 55% of people travel by car to work or study. The slight decrease for Kirkwall could be due to the remote nature of other parts of the Islands where travel by car may be more of a necessity.

Within Kirkwall 33% of people walk to work or study and 3% cycle to work or study, the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places initiative is aiming to increase this number so that more people within Kirkwall will use an active mode for travel both within the town and around the mainland.

Within Orkney there are approximately 17.5% people registered as being disabled, and within Kirkwall this figure is approximately 16%³. These 16% of Kirkwall residents are who this project is hoping to offer some assistance to in travelling around Kirkwall and the Orkney mainland. This 16% includes people from the age of 16 to 74 so there is likely a number of other people not included in this figure who would benefit from Travel Training.

3. TRAVEL TRAINER RECRUITMENT

The main objective of this event was to inform people that there would be an opportunity to receive training to become travel trainers and to let them know what this training and being a travel trainer would mean for both them personally and the wider community.

3.1 Information Session One

The purpose of this session was so that people with an interest in travel training could gain greater knowledge and understand what the process entailed and for the study team to ascertain the interest among residents for undertaking the training to become travel trainers. There were approximately 20 people in attendance and these people were contacted via the links VAO has within the Orkney community.

The session was presented by Chris Walters of the Bradford College Travel Training Unit. The session gave the attendees information detailing the work that the travel training unit carries out and the benefits that can be gained from independent travel training. The session was then opened for any questions people had for Chris regarding the training of travel trainers and travel training itself. The questions and answers that were given can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Session One: Travel Training Questions and Answers

Questions	Answers
Is the training mostly for bus travel and do other modes provide more of a challenge?	It was explained that the training comprised a road safety element and would normally include both bus and rail training. It was also explained that the training for Kirkwall would include ferries and some air travel information due to the nature of travel in Kirkwall.
Does the training course accredit staff to train others in how to give travel training?	The level two course which was discussed does not accredit anyone to give travel training for trainers; however the unit is currently developing a level 3 course which would be for trainers to train others to give travel training.
Do you have any experience of training people with Alzheimer's to travel independently?	The travel training unit has some experience of working with people with Alzheimer's and find that an important part of it is cue dependent learning rather than remembering the steps.
Do you face any problems with the training?	Unfortunately yes, although these are normally minor problems and can then be used as a trigger to adapt that individuals training for their benefit.
How long does the training normally take and do you set a time limit on it?	There is no time limit set on the training and training would normally take between 8-12 weeks depending on the individual. If it was

	found that to train the individual on a whole route would take months then the training would begin with small steps so that achievement can be made.
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The attendees of this information session were then asked to divide into two groups to discuss three questions so that the specific issues to Kirkwall could be identified.

- i. What is currently being done in Kirkwall in the way of travel training?
- ii. What is not being done in Kirkwall?
- iii. What would they like to see introduced?

Table 2 gives the outcome of these breakout groups.

Table 2: Breakout Group Outcomes

Breakout Question	Group Results
What is currently being done in Kirkwall in the way of travel training?	Informal travel training is being carried out amongst the voluntary groups in Kirkwall.
	Dial-a-bus service and companion travel scheme for bus and ferry journeys.
	New tourist route which is operating as a commercial service commencing in May 2009.
	Travel to day centres being undertaken on organised coaches.
	Introduction of flexible bus routes.
What is not being done in Kirkwall?	There is no volunteer car scheme currently in place in Kirkwall.
	Identification of any people who are isolated at home.
	Co-ordination between trusts so that duplication of services does not occur.
	Those who are so rural that befrienders without cars cannot access them.
	Clear and easy to follow timetable for the elderly not available.
	There is no bus information in areas where the service is hail and ride.
What would they like to see be introduced?	Promotion of the bus so that it is not seen as 2 nd class travel.
	Communication between the voluntary groups.
	Communication between the bus and ferry companies.
	Information provision for visitors with disabilities.
	Clarity on who exactly can use dial-a-bus – publicise this (e.g. some rural residents can use the service while others cannot)

The attendees were then invited to attend a further session at Voluntary Action Orkney.

3.2 Information Session Two

This session was held within an hour of session one ending and approximately 10 people attended this session. Information session two was to give people who had a keen interest in travel training the opportunity to find out a little more about what would be involved in carrying out travel training and what would be involved in becoming a travel trainer. The majority of people who attended this session went on to attend the training session.

4. TRAINING THE TRAVEL TRAINERS

4.1 Introduction

The travel training was carried out to enable a group of Kirkwall residents to be able to train people to travel independently. The objective of this training session was to enable a group of residents to carry out travel training confidently, with the knowledge that they are fully trained and accredited to give independent travel training.

The travel training for travel trainers was carried out by Chris Walters and Ron Pearson of the Bradford Travel Training Unit. The training was held in May 2009, approximately 8 weeks after the initial recruitment sessions, and there were 16 delegates who attended. The delegates ranged from people with a general interest in travel training, to those working at day care centres, to staff from Orkney College.

In order for the delegates to find out about each other and for the trainers to get to know their learners, each person was asked to partner up with another and interview them for a period of 10 to 15 minutes. There was much discussion at this point and the interviews could undoubtedly have gone on much longer. At the end each delegate was asked to say a little bit about their partner and importantly, what they wanted to gain from the training. The aims for the training that were given were:

- A structured process;
- Being able to support families and children;
- Raising disability issues;
- Promoting independence;
- Formalising a policy for Health and Safety;
- Understanding individual needs;
- Confirming existing good practice;
- Addressing barriers put up by parents;
- Bringing about change;
- More insight into what travel training is;
- Better use of resources; and
- Problem solving.

4.2 Day One

To begin the training session Chris Walters explained how travel training worked from the Bradford Travel Training Unit's (BTTU) perspective but highlighted that regional difference would invariably make local factors far more significant. This was particularly important when considering travelling to and around the islands of Orkney and was why constant feedback on specific issues was so useful both to Chris and Ron as trainers and to other delegates. Chris then gave a brief account of how the BTTU was originally formed and how it is currently funded.

The delegates were then given a presentation on the Introduction to Assessment – the process used by the BTTU. It is an educational process having a beginning (typified by the base line assessment) and an end (typified by the summative assessment), and between the two there is a period of delivery (typified by an ongoing assessment).

This was then followed by a session on Road Safety involving a group exercise on road crossings and general feedback. This turned out to be an intensive session stimulating much debate and exchanging of information. Some local issues that gave rise to debate were:

- Street lighting – not always being in the appropriate places and generally the lack of it. Delegates felt that being seen in the dark is very important;
- Light controlled crossings – there was a good understanding of what these were and how they worked although there are none on Orkney;
- Zebra crossings – there is a culture of strict observance when using these. Courteous driving and an awareness of others are very prevalent on Orkney;
- Cars sharing pavements with pedestrians (Albert Street etc.) – a risk factor but one that most people on Orkney are very much aware of; and
- Use of language – some of the expressions and local phrases used during instruction may differ.

One delegate contributed to the training with a small presentation on the 6 points of the Green Cross Code and it was agreed that this was still relevant today. It was concluded that the road safety session was more relevant for the step by step process it uses and for its understanding of individual needs rather than for any accuracy it may have in a case study.

In the afternoon of the training delegates were asked to undertake a practical exercise in road safety which they did with great enthusiasm. They provided good feedback on their return and again highlighted peculiar Orkney issues particularly in the use of zebra crossing.

- Zebras are positioned too close to roundabouts which creates problems both for the motorist and the pedestrian; and
- Some drivers can be too courteous and can often wave pedestrians (who they might know) across the road. This can encourage bad practice and be unsafe as “it might not be like this in other places!”

The second session on assessments, featuring in particular the method used by the BTTU for undertaking Risk Assessments, was then presented to the delegates. The success of this process depends largely on being able to deliver one to one training which in turn gave rise to debate as to whether this would be available to some of the delegates. Some do one to one training; others do not. There was also discussion around the concessionary fare system used by Scotland and how this differs from that used in England. It is important not only to have knowledge of your own system but also of different systems in other regions.

The final session of Day 1 was on the What ifs of travel training. Each delegate had a different scenario and had to think of ways to overcome problems. Again there was good discussion here and many of the local issues previously mentioned were again highlighted. At the end of the first day the Working Manual and Flash Drives with the worksheets from the working manual were distributed to the delegates.

4.3 Day Two

The second day began with a presentation on Bus Training. Again local issues figured largely, especially the frequency of transport and socially acceptable behaviour when travelling. Some buses are very regular but others, to outlying places, far less so. It was also mentioned that all bus drivers are known to local people and likewise many passengers are regulars on particular routes. This would inevitably make the reporting of incidents and complaints far more significant and possibly have personal implications. There are no trains on Orkney but knowing how to use trains is important because of the regular trips made by some individuals and groups to mainland Scotland (and England).

The following session on Ferries and Planes was of particular interest to everyone, bearing in mind the expertise of certain delegates in the room. The delegates were split into smaller groups of four and asked to devise a step by step process for each of these means of transport. There was a wealth of knowledge on this subject and results of the exercise were recorded and distributed to each delegate in turn, they were as follows:

Travel by Plane

- Meet individual and complete initial assessment;
- Look at referral form and note requests and aims;
- Plan route – best options and timetables – carry out route;
- Brief Loganair and note any concerns – confidentiality and data protection;
- Meet with individual – brief them and parents and visit airport etc;
- During visit identify baggage area, toilets, info desk, etc;
- Organise flights and arrange for someone to meet individual;
- Assess individual – whether they require additional support;
- During initial stage, meet and travel on bus to airport – teach, train, assess;
- On arrival, go over H and S issues again – times, check in etc;
- Explain each step before they board the aircraft;
- Highlight to Loganair staff that individual may need assistance;
- Consider all contingencies – weather, cancellations etc;
- Communicate with individual – constantly assess they are happy to travel;
- Check that they will be met at the other side;
- Agree to contact parent/guardian if there is a problem;
- ‘Buddy’ may be useful for travelling on flight;
- Ear defenders may be useful – purchase in advance;
- Travel with them and gradually withdraw support as they become more independent – if financially feasible; and
- Give praise to individual.

Travel by Ferry (Shapinsay to Kirkwall)

- Regular traveller - mail order purchase discounted books of tickets (vouchers);
- Ensure student has ticket on their person;
- Walk from home to waiting room at Shapinsay terminal – arrive 10 minutes before departing – confirm sign at terminal states sailings as per schedule;
- Once you have seen the ship arrive and passengers and vehicles have disembarked – make your way towards ship where a crew member will issue boarding pass and instruct you to board ship;
- Find seating in passenger accommodation;
- Listen to safety announcements en route;
- Purser will come to you and ask for your ticket – hand over your book of tickets and purser will remove a ticket from your book – he will issue you with a ticket from his machine – keep this;
- Listen for arrival announcement when you get to Kirkwall terminal;
- Wait for instructions from crew member to disembark – they will also collect your boarding pass;
- Disembark at Kirkwall terminal; and
- Continue on your normal onward journey.

The delegates were then asked to stay in their groups for the next session which was concerned with **Personal Safety**. Each group discussed, and then fed back on a specific issue of safety, based on real life scenarios. Factors such as lone working and intimidation were highlighted. The importance of forward planning and effective communication were stressed by the trainers and delegates were directed to the Suzy Lamplugh Trust website (www.suzylamplugh.org) for some useful information and practical guidelines.

Delegates were then asked to compile a **Case Study** based on someone they were aware of and who they thought would benefit from travel training. They could do this either in small groups or as individuals. The purpose of this exercise was twofold:

- Firstly, it was to demonstrate delegates understanding of the step by step process involved in travel training, which would in turn contribute to the evidence required for their OCN accreditation; and
- Secondly, it was a working document that could subsequently be presented to a line manager or supervisor showing how travel training could be used by their respective organisations.

In the afternoon of Day 2 the delegates were again asked to form their small groups and they then embarked on a **Town Trail** around the streets of Kirkwall. Whilst the main purpose of this exercise is just to “have a bit of fun” there is also a strong learning element to it involving teamwork, distractions, road safety, competitiveness, and interpreting written and verbal instructions. This proved to be a good session for the delegates and helped to relax them for the accreditation questions which lay ahead.

The next presentation was on the **Final Report** and explained that, whereas the initial referral and the base line assessment forms the start of the learning process, then the final report and the summative assessment signifies the end of the process. One last presentation outlining some travel training **Top Tips** that Chris, Ron, and their staff have compiled over the 7 years the TTU has been operating was then given.

The **Accreditation Process** was then explained to the delegates and they were asked to complete question sheet 1 that formed the first part of the accreditation process. On completion the delegates were handed a second question sheet which they were asked to take away and complete within 7 days. All 16 delegates returned their question sheets and received accreditation status.

The delegates were then offered the chance to stay behind for a further 30 minutes if they were interested in the follow up session on **Where do we go from here**. A total of 10 delegates remained to discuss the next steps with Chris and Ron.

A number of comments were received from the delegates:

- It has made me think how travel must feel for some people with varying disabilities and abilities on thinking how I feel when leaving the island on my own;
- I have a better understanding on what to focus on;
- The course material, pace of delivery and tone was very good;
- Informative sessions, approachable trainers, interesting to listen to;
- Made you more aware and to appreciate the dangers/hazards that others may encounter travelling; and
- Certainly gave me more insight as to why there is a need for this in the Orkneys.

5. Issues and Opportunities for Travel Trainers

The travel trainers within Kirkwall were all offered the opportunity of meeting with both Jason Oldroyd and Martin Moorman (Deputy Head Teacher). The main points to arise from these meetings were that the day care centre staff, who would be doing the vast majority of training within Kirkwall, were unsure of how the parents would react. Martin was able to explain that from his experience parents can seem unsure and anxious to begin with but that they are generally willing once the benefits of the training are highlighted to them. He also explained that it was key to make the parents understand that there would be some level of risk involved and offered to speak to any parents who were anxious when the day care centres began their training.

The different options which Ravenscliffe High School offer their students in way of travel training are described below.

5.1 Yellow School Bus

Ravenscliffe High School (RHS) currently run two yellow bus services with the hope of running a third in the near future. The yellow bus service picks pupils up from a designated spot and drops them off outside the school grounds. The service is for pupils who are partially independent travellers as the pupils are expected to make their own way to the pick-up point. This scheme allows pupils who are not ready to be fully independent to still enjoy some measure of independence.

5.2 In-School Travel Training

Ravenscliffe offer in school travel training to all pupils with the aim of getting pupils onto one of the yellow buses if one serves their locality. Pupils are also monitored so that candidates for the school 'Independence in a Month' scheme can be found. The 'Independence in a Month' scheme is run by Jason Oldroyd (Lead Support for Independent Travel Training) and involves a pupil coming off timetable for 1 month while Jason teaches them the route to and from the school slowly getting them to do more of the route by themselves until they are fully independent.

It was explained that the school does operate mini-buses and that these buses cost Calderdale Council on average £30,000 / year / minibus when on average there is 4 pupils on any one minibus.

6. Stromness Day Out

6.1 The Guide

The objective of producing a guide for a day out on Orkney was to provide assistance for those people who are unsure of travelling by public transport to visit Stromness by themselves, whether this is Kirkwall residents or visitors.

Stromness was chosen as an initial venue as being the second largest town on Orkney Mainland it is a popular destination with visitors to Kirkwall. The guide will assist people in the following steps of the journey:

- The bus stance to wait at when they arrive at Kirkwall Travel Centre;
- Where to get off the bus in Stromness;
- How to get from the Stromness Travel Centre to the Pier Arts Gallery; and
- Where to wait for the bus back to Kirkwall.

The guide also has a list of useful contact numbers such as the local bus company, travel centre numbers and also taxi numbers as a precaution as if something was to go wrong they may feel they should get a taxi back from Stromness or for if people want to venture further than the Pier Arts Gallery.

The guide will be tested in the spring of 2010 by one of the volunteer befrienders being on hand while one of their clients follows the guide for the days visit to Stromness. This testing will allow us to gain valuable feedback about items in the guide that were not easily understood or items which have been missed out. The final guide will be available from the council offices and travel centres from late spring / early summer 2010 in time for the busy tourist season in Kirkwall.

If the use of the guide over the summer of 2010 is high a second guide will be produced for a visit to St Margaret's Hope which is located to the south-east of Kirkwall.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Travel Training

The Kirkwall residents who attended the travel training event are now all accredited travel trainers. They have had an opportunity to have any issues and problems they were facing in beginning travel training discussed with a successful and experienced provider of travel training and are now ready to begin rolling out travel training within Kirkwall.

The next stage in the project will be to monitor the travel trainers as they begin to carry out travel training to ensure that any further issues are being resolved quickly and effectively. Once the travel training has begun within Kirkwall it will be possible to monitor the results through the day care centres and we would hope to have people travelling independently by the autumn of 2010.

By autumn 2010 it is anticipated that there will be a system in place where travel training will continue into the future with the day care centres carrying out the training and gaining much needed assistance from the volunteer groups who also attended the travel training course.

7.2 Walking and Days Out Guides

There will be a system in place for visitors to the island and local residents who do not need full travel training to take advantage of walking and Days Out guides which will be made available from the Kirkwall Travel Centre.

These guides will allow the visitors to the island, who do not have the use of a private vehicle, to make the most of their stay in Kirkwall. The guides will enable visitors to visit both sites of interest within Kirkwall and beyond. The guides will also allow local resident who are unsure of travelling by public transport or foot to venture further afield.

NOTES

- ¹ Scrol: Scotland Census Results Online
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