



Example 40                      **Bus Buddying – Mobility Training to Become Independent Travellers**

City (country)                      **Leeds (UK)**

good practice for people with ...	kind of vehicle	kind of measure/approach
... motor impairment ... visual impairment ... hearing impairment ... cognitive/learning impairment	city bus regional bus	financial support measure organisational/operational support awareness building

**Project description**

Bus Buddying was established to help people with physical and sensory impairments, learning disabilities and all others who lack confidence in using public transport services. It provides one-to-one support by Bus Buddy volunteers who travel around with clients in the public transport network. Bus Buddying is considered a groundbreaking new concept and an initial step toward lowering the barriers of using accessible public transport in Leeds. When clients begin to feel more confident, the support is gradually reduced. The project results in newly independent public transport travellers within the fully accessible public transport system.

Bus Buddying is arranged in partnership with local operators, local authorities and the community (Leeds Alternative Travel, Leeds Social Services and the Transport Action Group) and is funded by the Department for Transport’s Urban Bus Challenge.

The service is designed around users’ needs with continuous development due to permanent feedback from the clients. It has been shown that Bus Buddying leads to more frequent use of the fully accessible transport service in Leeds. Thus public transport operators can increase their demand while former non-users with special needs get more flexibility and widen their mobility and travel horizons.

Here are some lessons that can be learnt from Bus Buddying for those who plan similar projects in future:

- It is crucial to train the trainers thoroughly. Here travel assistants undergo a month long induction and training. This includes disability and mental health awareness, sighted guide training, communication skills, moving and handling and monitoring by other Bus Buddies.
- The existing infrastructure must be fully accessible through the support of driver training and awareness campaigns.
- Permanent feedback from clients (e.g. through an evaluation sheet) is important in order to adapt the service continuously to meet the requirements of future clients.
- Also highly important are a multi-agency training and the use of experience and good practice provided by other agencies.

Source:

pteg: Bus Buddying, [www.pteg.net](http://www.pteg.net) – Publications – Reports – Social Inclusion and Transport, p. 50 (07/11/2007)