Increasing alternative travel support for Special Educational Needs (SEN) students - a behavioural approach

March 2019



for Croydon

www.croydon.gov.uk



The behaviour change hub (BCH) - our mission

Apply behavioural science to improve outcomes, ways of working and ensure services are designed to work for people

Embed behavioural science practice across the council

✓ Discover route cause of problems

Design with people in mind

✓ Make it easy

✓ Create improvement feedback loops

 \checkmark Build an evidence base



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Executive summary

Activities & Goals

- Shift demand for Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport from Direct transport to alternative travel options by redesigning communications using behavioural insights across the customer pathway
- Test whether we can increase awareness and number of referrals for Independent Travel Training from Schools

Interventions

- Behavioural insights were applied to a suite of communications including newsletters, leaflets, website and emails
- An RCT tested whether a behaviourally informed email would increase the number of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCO's) filling out expressions of interest for Independent Travel Training (ITT)
- Service staff were upskilled in behavioural insights

Results

- Service saw an overall increase through more expressions of interest in ITT than previously forecast
- No statistically significant difference between the number of expressions of interests completed for treatment versus control email
- Managing demand by shifting from expensive acute provision to early intervention and invest to save methods can significantly reduce costs, but take time for the benefits to bear fruit

How can we increas uptake of alternative travel provisions?

"We want our children to be able to travel safely to school, to arrive relaxed and happy in order to learn and reach their full potential"

Head of service, SEN Travel

Business case

Like most local authorities, in parallel with an increasing population and changes to the SEND code of practice (2015) extending entitlements to SEN provision to age 25, Croydon has seen a significant increase in the number of children presenting with SEND and requiring home to school travel support.

Without the successful implementation of robust alternative travel options the Council's annual spend on SEND transport would increase by around £425,000 per year and likely exceed £10 million within the next 5 years.



The Service Plan

To tackle rising costs, the service developed two alternative pathways:

Independent Travel Training (ITT) which involves a travel trainer teaching a child to travel independently



Personal Transport **Budgets (PTBs)** which involves paying a set amount to parents/carers/ students for them to arrange transport themselves



The challenge in uptake of alternative pathways



Despite commercialising the ITT offer and generating a healthy interest in ITT, the current provision was overwhelmingly loaded towards providing direct transport, with only 7% choosing PTBs and 5% taking up ITT.

Whilst some students must receive direct transport because of high level or complex needs, a significant proportion have the capability to make use of alternative provisions but choose not to.

THE CHALLENGE

How can we reframe the challenge through a behavioural lens?

How could a behavioural approach be developed to....

Increase uptake of alternative travel provision to enable the service to move away from a model of rationing need through eligibility criteria and statutory duties, in favour of a more financially sustainable preventative model centred on empowering young people to develop resilience and independence.

This would require:



THE APPROACH

The Behaviour Change Hub Model

BCH projects follow a systematic process as set out below:





Identifying the problem – Research Programme

BCH conducted a research programme and behavioural audit to identify pain points and bottlenecks preventing uptake of alternative pathways. Activities carried out during this phase are illustrated below:



- Policies and past research
- Establish baseline
- Literature review

- Scope of influence
- User segmentation
- Quantify barriers & impact •
- Job shadowing
- Process maps
 - User journey map

- Wider teams & partners;
- SEN team manager & Coordinator,
- Schools
- **SENCO & Family Support Officer**

Why?

To understand the key influencers in this project who make referrals or influence parents and young people's decisions

Why?

To understand the user journey and provide an overview of the overall user experience, and develop mental models of service users

Travel planning meetings

1-1 interviews with parents

ITT meetings

Why?

Overview of current council provisions, understand service user pathways and operational processes

Why?

To identify bottlenecks in information provision and application process and identify potential for improvement

Why?

To identify the internal processes, paint points and bottlenecks that lead to difficulty in managing demand

Define – Data analysis



What we did

Analysis of existing data to understand the scope of influence, potential user segmentation and baseline of behaviors to be influenced.

Why?

To identify bottlenecks in information provision and application process and identify potential areas of improvement.

What we learnt:

Only young people with high complex needs require direct transport, however the overwhelming majority of young people who are suitable for alternative provision opt for direct transport.

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DT= 93%	ITT= 5%	PTB = 7%

Insight for further exploration:

How can we help parents/carers/ decision makers overcome behavioral barriers/ resistance and encourage to opt for alternative transport provisions over direct transport from the outset or make the shift from existing provision?

Define – Baseline data

SEN travel support – baseline							
2015/16 2016/17 2017/18							
No. SEN students	2,406	2,691	2,783				
Students receiving travel support	1,200	1,211	1,244				
Direct transport	1,121 (47%)*	1,127 (42%)*	1,156 (41%)*				
ІТТ	41 (1.7%)*	56 (2.1%)*	63 (2.3%)*				
РТВ	79 (3.3%)*	84 (3.1%)*	88 (3.2%)*				
Total Spend	£7.0m	£7.6m	£8.2m				

* Percentage of total SEN students

Comparison of alternative travel provisions: Weighing up which option to target:

ITT preferred pathway, over PTB, for following key reasons:

Financial:

- Cost-benefit analysis showed that ITT had bigger ROI than PTB

Positive Spillovers

- ITT has more sustainable benefits
- ITT promotes independence and provides more valuable life skills
- ITT better aligned with council's wider strategic focus on prevention/early intervention measures to managing demand

Negative Spillovers- ethical considerations of handing over a budget without assessment of needs/ circumstances

Ethical responsibility & unintended consequences

Potential negative spillover of PTBs:

Budget holder might not have capability/ financial literacy to manage a budget and/or the provision could be used as a form of control over another person

Financial benefits of alternative pathways:



In comparison to direct council provided transport, PTB expected to generate savings of around £605,000 and ITT £300,000 for 2017/2018...

...with the following caveats:



1. Full benefits realised only if PTB/ITT replaces direct transport, which isn't always possible as transport often shared by other children on the route



- 2. Larger savings from PTB assumes that students shifted to PTB at a very early age, whereas ITT is only suitable for secondary age pupils
 - 3. Savings from ITT less in the short-term because of the initial investment required, but generate similar levels to PTBs over the long-term



What are the wider BENEFITS of ITT?

Encourage our young people to feel empowered

- Develop self esteem
- Increase confidence
- Promote independence

DIAGNOSE

Field Research

The main activities undertaken during this phase were:

- Referral process mapping
- One-to-one Interviews with stakeholders (service staff, teachers, parents)
- Observation/Job shadowing
- Customer journey mapping

Process Mapping



Referral journey map



X No feedback loop as to whether messages have been received

Opportunities

✓ Draft standard comms

- ✓ Develop timely prompts
- ✓ Use read receipts

✓ **Use** existing contact point with Council (EHCP Review Report)

School Professional Receives Information sent) X No clear responsibility/SRO X Multiple forms X Poor understanding of offer X Unclear Source X Psychological barriers (e.g., perception of parental reaction)

Opportunities

✓ Request name of

✓ Appoint an SRO

informed comms to

motivation

responsible contact

✓ Use behavioural science

maximise understanding &



Referral Form (filled & Service Receives Referral X Multiple form types

More information requested from school

- X Often via phone, in school
- X Subjective judgement X Actual and perceived high effort

X Parental Permission needed

Opportunities

- ✓ Draft key conversation
- Explicitly state decision
 - Call after school ✓ Remove duplication from

✓ Ask minimal questions

Service Decision to Assess

- X Often no response
- X Limited information
- X Subjective decision
- X Psychological barriers (e.g., fear of parental reaction)

X Pressure to assess everyone (KPIs)

Opportunities

- ✓ Explicitly seek decision criteria
- ✓ Identify benefits for parents in advance
- ✓ Re-frame KPIs

X No allocated resource (time & responsibility) X Poor usability of form

✓ Send form with comms

✓ Enhance form usability

✓ Outline process and

Opportunities

responsibility

X Not all relevant information included

Opportunities

criteria

✓ Standardise form

X Not standardised

lesson hours

- points

form







Complete application



Make appointment

Information Sources



Eligibility Criteria

- ✓ Is their journey to school over 3 miles?
- \checkmark Are they over the age of 11?
- ✓ No behavioural concerns?

Summary of Pain Points in Referral Process



X Information Received

X Information Read

X Understanding



X Knowledge of website

X Understanding

X Usability





Stakeholder Interviews - Insights from Service

Lack of objective problem analysis: Assumption of negative perception of ITT by parents and schools, which has not been validated through data.

Interviews with schools suggest that independence is key to SEND teachers and referrals are not made due to lack of knowledge, ease and parents' perceptions.

These beliefs may reflect a lack of response to a changing environment, with existing views becoming entrenched over time, though group membership and confirmation bias, instead of actively re-assessed.

This can lead to defensive framing in conversations and poorly targeted communications.

Knowledge Bias: There was an assumption that schools knew the referral process just as well as the service, which the interviews showed to be erroneous

Endowment Effect: There is a strong sense of team belonging and attachment to ITT within the service. This can lead to overestimation of the value other people place on the service which leads to a heightened focus on presenting benefits over simplifying the process and managing expectations of negative consequences.



'Schools don't want to refer to ITT to avoid ruining the relationship with parents' 'There is an element of fear that if parents show interest in Travel training we will take their names down (to try and make them take up ITT)'



Stakeholder Interviews – Insights from Teachers

Lack of Knowledge: There is recognition that travel training is important, but poor understanding of what it is and what the referral process entails.

Memory Effects: Referrals are so rare, it appears most schools do not think about them.

Diffusion of Responsibility: It's not standard practice to have a designated role who makes the referrals.

Punishment Avoidance (from parents): Perception of parents as barriers for independence overall (including ITT), and uncertain how to have conversations with parents.



"Having a prompt would be really beneficial." "So where do I get the referral form?" "Parents scared to let their child into the big wild world on his own" "Council need to be firmer with families"



Stakeholder Interviews – Insights from Parents

- Risk Avoidance:
 - Worry about the child's safety (and inability to resume transport after travel training).
 - Worry about losing transport provisions and benefits
- Lack of Knowledge: Parents are often unaware of the process until their interview with the service
 - Assessment is seen as a formality and not to ensure safety of the children
- Lack of Comprehension
 - ESL, learning difficulties
- **Present Day Bias**: Parents feel travel training is important for the future, but they are not ready.
 - Immediate convenience of transport is valued higher than travel training benefits (present bias)
 - There is perception that their child will be one day ('Magic 16')
 'be ready', but its not right now (optimism bias)



"I might get ran over if I step out the door, so of course I worry about him as he is also vulnerable"

"I worry about people that might watch him and realise he is vulnerable and take advantage"

"He has his vulnerability so the problem is not focus... He can tell you the route to London. (But) He will give his packed lunch to a beggar if he says he is hungry"

Gaps identified - Awareness & Comprehension



"I have heard of it and know the premise, but not what it entails."



- Knowledge bias: isn't it common sense?
- Endowment effect: but it's really important!
- **Staff turnover:** *someone, somewhere knows...*
- Diffusion of responsibility It's not my job...
- Long leaflet: I didn't have time to read it ...
- Understanding: I just didn't get it...
- Timing: I was dealing with an exam crisis...

Gaps identified - Process Knowledge



- Availability heuristic: but I can find it Memory: I cannot remember where to easily...
- **Optimism Bias:** *I could definitely find a way...*
- Endowment effect: but it's really important!
- Cognitive load: I looked at the form but it was too long so I left it...
- **Punishment aversion**: It asked for parental consent and I don't know how to start the conversation...



Design

- COM-B and debiasing frameworks were applied to address pain points identified in the research
- Content design for behavioural prompts across the suite of communications was based on a range of behavioural insights
- Co-creation workshop with service to feedback insights from discovery phase, get buy in of new approach and co-design materials
- Intervention opportunities analysed using the APEASE framework from the Behaviour Change Wheel and prioritised using the MoSCoW model

The following two pages provides examples of some of the behavioural insights that were employed and a table of intervention ideas

Evidence based behavioural insights used in intervention design



Social Effects (minority influence)

Send letters to schools that are under referring pupils for ITT: 'You are not referring pupils to ITT, whilst other

similar schools in Croydon are' 'To help you decide who can benefit from ITT you can try...'



Evidence of Social Effects

GP's sent over-prescribing letters: 'You are prescribing more compared to your colleagues' 'As an alternative to prescribing Antibiotics you can try...'

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Making the Application Easy

Attaching forms to the comms with an email address to send them to can minimise perceived difficulty and confusion, encouraging referrals.



Use of User Stories (prototype decision making)

Using ITT success stories of children with complex needs can motivate teachers to refer.



Minimising risk perception Informing teachers that the risk the child faces is low can increase referrals

Evidence of Application Ease

HMRC found that sending the user to the form instead of website increased tax return completion



Evidence of User Stories (prototype decision making)

Parents of minority communities in the states were more likely to enrol their children in school if they were contacted with stories of similar families with children successfully enrolled.



Evidence of Minimising perceived risk

People are more likely to attend health screenings, if they are provided with statistics that demonstrate they overestimate mortality rate of the disease.

Intervention Ideas	A affordability	P practicability	E effectiveness	A acceptability	S safety	E equity	S Sustainability	MoS CoW
Train all SEND children across the borough						\checkmark		W
Predictive analytics for ITT eligibility			\checkmark					S
Targeted comms campaigns to parents	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		\checkmark			С
Behavioural prompt tools for one to one parent visits	\checkmark		\checkmark		\checkmark			W
Targeted comms campaign to Schools	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		М
One to one school visits			\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark			С
ITT suitability decision trees for teachers	\checkmark		\checkmark		\checkmark	\checkmark		W
ITT suitability decision trees for service	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		\checkmark	\checkmark		С
Including ITT suitability questionnaire into EHCPIan review documents	\checkmark	\checkmark			\checkmark	\checkmark		W
Including ITT suitability check box prompt into EHCPIan review documents	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		Μ
Align co-ordinated ITT / PTB approach across all teams from council front door	\checkmark		\checkmark		\checkmark	\checkmark		S

Key findings

The final list of interventions agreed were all based on the the design and delivery of a suite of behaviourally informed communications with the goal of '*making it easy*' to improve uptake of ITT:

- ITT referral invitation campaign (chosen for trial)
- Behavioural insights workshops to upskill staff to apply BI to communications
- Revision of the application process, including redesign of application form, using BI
- Revision and redesign of the website using BI
- Leaflet redesign of ITT offer, to be used both for marketing and as a conversation guide during consultations
- Increase awareness of ITT offer in schools to increase appropriate referrals

Within the timescale and budget of the project it was only possible to trial the ITT referral campaign interventions.

Incentive expression of interest email

IDEA

- What? A behaviourally informed email
- Who? Schools/ SENCO's.
- When? Tuesday/ Thursday morning
- How? Travel trainer sends email from laptop
- Why? Create awareness and elicit expressions of interest

Impact measure: Number of responses Next steps: Reminder email

		EXAIVIP	LC	
то				
iend Cc				
Subject In	dependent Travel Training, Invitation to Expres	s Interest		
ocurrananaa,				
	Don't let your pupils miss out on	the benefits of Independent Travel Traini	ng	
We have noticed tha yours have.	t you have not yet referred any pupils	o Independent Travel Training (ITT), whils	other schools similar to	
If you have any SENI skills, please let us kr plan accordingly.) pupils who would benefit from learnir 10w as soon as possible. The demand is	g how to travel to school independently w very high this year and we need to be awa	nilst gaining other vital life re of any further interest to	
All you need to do is	reply to this email now with the follow	ing information:		
1. Contact details of	individual responsible for ITT referrals:			
Name:	individual responsible for thir referrular			
Email:				
 Please type X alor Yes, we have pupil 	igside your response in the table below s suitable for ITT and we are interested	: in applying		
We have pupils wh	o may be suitable, but need help decio	ling (please contact me)		
None of our pupils	are currently ready for ITT			
What to expect from	Independent Travel Training:		MAKE A REFERRAL	
		Step 1 unability assument		
		아 관 Initial meeting: pupil,	Get to know each other sessions	Assessor makes
		parents &assessor	(homed & school)	suitability decision
			TRAINING IS ONLY OFFERED IF IT IS SAFE FOR THE CHILD	
		Step 2 Thinks Internet Internet Applied to the state of t	tavels to and from with pupi teaching units pupi teaching units pupi teaching	TT meets pupil at later stages of journey to build confidence
		Step 2 Stand	travels to and from uith pupil teaching travel teachings	TI meets puil at later stages of journey to build confidence over time
		the 3 tep 2 tep 3 tep 2 tep 3 tep 2 tep 3 tep 4	travels to and from a with pupil teaching to travels to and from a with pupil teaching to travels to and from a with pupil	T meets pupil at later stages of journey to build conductors over time

	Affordable	Practical	Effectiveness	Acceptable	Side-Effects	Equity	Sustainability	MOSCOW
BCH Score	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Must
ST Score	Y	Y	Y	Y	Ν	Y	Y	Must

Treatment email



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Website Changes Example

Easy to access self-explanatory categories

Informing users that the page is in progress with requested feedback: **manage expectations**, improve user experience and gather further **user insight** Ability to skip to relevant section: make

Ability to skip to relevant section: make information **easy to access**

Salient deadline Consequences- loss aversion

Explicit eligibility criteria: **ease** of understanding the criteria deter ineligible applications to save service time

Transport and travel assistance for home to school travel

16 Years	16 -25 year olds in education
lependent Travel Training	Contacts

Assistance for 5 - 16 year olds with SEND

Notice something different? We are currently in the process of improving this page, if you have any suggestions please email <u>mariya.kirichek@croydon.gov.uk</u> to help us make it right for you.

At Croydon Council we offer a range of services designed to help you arrange your child's travel in a way that builds resilience and allows them to lead a more independent life.

This page will help you understand the following topics (click on the heading to skip directly to the section):

Are you eligible?

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Inc

- What options are available?
- How to apply?
- What happens after I apply?

You can find our contact details by clicking on the corresponding tab at the top of the page.



Closing date for applications: 6th July 2018. Travel assistance will not be guaranteed for September term for applications received after the deadline.

Are you eligible?

You may be eligible for travel assistance if you meet the following requirements:

✓ The parent/carer and child reside in Croydon

✓ The child's age is between 5 and 16

✓ The child is registered at a qualifying schools (see Travel Assistance Policy for full list of schools)



Can't find what this page? Brow the Education a

Website Changes Example Cont.

Explicitly stated benefits, framed as preventing loss of freedom: incentivise ITT.

Video with user's talking about their ITT experience: using existing service **users as messengers** to improve trust and encourage ITT uptake

Direct links to form and email: easy submission encourage people to make referrals.

Explicitly stated next steps: used to **manage expectations**, improving user experience and reducing queries to service.

What are the benefits of travel training?

Young people who successfully complete the training will benefit from increased confidence, independence, freedom and better opportunities to access education, training, employment and other day to day activities, whilst helping them maintain better relationships with their peers. It will also help families find time to do things independently, as well as enable them to do more things together. This all contributes to leading a more fulfilled life for the young person and those around them.

Don't take our word for it, watch the video below (click to play) to hear about the experiences of young people who have already undergone independent travel training.



How to apply or make a referral?

To make a referral please complete our travel assistance referral from (download word document <u>here</u>) and email to <u>traveltraining@croydon.gov.uk</u>.

Anyone can make a referral whether you are the parent, a professional working with young people or even if you think you will benefit from the training yourself.

Please note that if you are in the process of applying for travel assistance you will already be considered for ITT.

What happens when you make a referral?

We will review your application and contact you via phone within 20 working days to let you know whether ITT is suitable for the young person. A travel assessor will then organise a meeting with the family and the young person to discuss the programme in more detail and tailor the offer to the young person's needs. If an appropriate program is agreed training will be scheduled.

Note Regarding Existing provisions:



Trial design

An invitation email was redesigned using behavioural insights with a view to increasing the number of expressions of interest for ITT from schools



Sample Size

A power analysis showed that a sample size of 30 would be sufficient but as the cost difference between running a trial on sample of 30 or the universe of 46 schools was minimal we decided to run the trial on the full universe in order to eliminate any possibility of sample bias.

Results

Following implementation, response rates were measured over a two-week period. There were similar levels of response from both the treatment and control groups and there was no statistical difference in the number of email responses from schools for the control and treatment groups.

For completeness the data was analysed using a *Chi* square test of independence to examine the relationship between the treatment and control group. The relationship between these variables was found not to be significant, $X^2(1) = 0.0$, P = 1.0. In conclusion, there was no significant difference in the response rate between the control group and the treatment group.

However, the project generated a large increase in ITT interest, which should translate into more students undergoing ITT next year.

Hypothesised that the increase resulted from:

- increased awareness of ITT offer, resulting from increased contact with stakeholders
- Hawthorne Effect people modify their behaviour (improved ways of working) because they are being observed



LESSONS LEARNT

Lessons learnt include:

- 1. Agile approach required accepting goals might change as new intelligence/obstacles revealed
- 2. Plan project in sprints and ensure client is kept informed and understands rationale for changes
- 3. Conduct pre-mortem to identify risks and plan mitigating actions
- 4. Data & information provided should be verified actual bottlenecks not always same as perceived by client
- 5. Use customer experience maps and personas to demonstrate pain points in practice enables difficult feedback to be depersonalised and given in a clear and constructive way
- 6. Establish data availability and quality at outset to ensure clear baselines and metrics of improvement SRO to create and manage data requirements; build in contingencies for data collection
- 7. Agree priorities e.g. gathering longer-term evidence versus quick win improvements
- 8. Project governance important get director buy-in to act if things get stuck or delayed
- **9.** Difficulties and disappointments sometimes have silver linings work with service and users generated unexpectedly high interest in ITT, achieving goals indirectly through raised awareness
- 10. Unanticipated benefits in addition to longer-term benefits, project will deliver "quick-wins" by helping service to better manage demand and delivering service improvements through upskilling staff and overhauling communications

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