

# **WIRRAL** **TRANSPORT** **STRATEGY**

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CONNECTING WIRRAL

THE WIRRAL PARTNERSHIP

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## FOREWORD

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### **Councillor Stuart Whittingham**

Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure

#### Our Pledge for Transport

“Ensure that Wirral has safe, affordable, well maintained and efficient transport networks for residents to access community services, enjoy our leisure facilities and commute to work”.

Transport is essential for every resident, business and visitor to Wirral. Transport connects people to services, to employment, education and healthcare, and is a fundamental part of our daily lives. Travelling to the airport to go on holiday, popping to the corner shop for a pint of milk, taking the children to school or taking the dog for a walk – we need transport to do all of these activities. Manufacturers need to transport the goods they have produced, and shops need deliveries to stock their shelves.

Transport is much more than just getting from A to B. Safe and accessible transport is a right for all our residents, and crucial to all that we aspire to achieve in the delivery of our Wirral Plan. We need to ensure that transport protects the vulnerable members of our community, supports economic growth and helps to improve the local environment.

We are fortunate – we have a good transport network in Wirral, but we need to work hard to continue to improve and develop this so that it continues to meet residents’ needs, supports inward investment, regeneration and housing growth, and has a positive impact on our environment and communities.

By 2020 we want a transport network that is supporting growth, enabling the development and regeneration of areas such as Wirral Waters, Hoylake Golf Resort, Birkenhead town centre and other major employment and housing sites. We want it to be safe, easy and pleasurable for people to walk, cycle and use

public transport to get from their home to where they want to go, to employment, education, healthcare and to local and district centres.

We need to ensure that transport supports our visitor economy so that people can enjoy Wirral’s wonderful coastline, parks and gardens and heritage, as well as managing the travel needs of major events such as the Open Golf. We will work with our partners to improve links in and out of the borough to enable access to opportunities in the wider area such as Chester and North Wales as well as in the wider City Region.

We will listen to our residents, and we will make it easier for people to plan their journeys, for residents to report any issues with the network and we will make information on road works and incidents on the network more accessible by taking advantage of new technology. We are committed to carrying out annual highways and transport surveys and measuring our progress to check that we are delivering against our pledge.



A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Whittingham', positioned above the printed name.

**Councillor  
Stuart Whittingham**

**“ We will strive to improve the transport offer for all residents, businesses and visitors; creating a joined up and efficient transport system. We will make it easier to ‘Connect Wirral’ ”**

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## INTRODUCTION

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Wirral Plan Pledge:  
Transport and Technology Infrastructure Fit for the Future.

This pledge is supported by two underpinning strategies.

- Connecting Wirral (Transport)
- Digital Strategy (Technology)

This document is our 'Connecting Wirral' strategy and sets out how we will:

**“ Ensure that Wirral has safe, affordable, well maintained and efficient transport networks for residents to access community services, enjoy our leisure facilities and commute to work ”**



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**PUBLIC  
TRANSPORT**

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**WALKING**

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**CYCLING**

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**TRAFFIC**

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**Ensuring that our communities are well connected is essential for the quality of life of our residents and for the economy of Wirral. Transport must be reliable, accessible and affordable to allow people to access jobs, education, training and every day facilities. Good transport links and improved use of technology will make Wirral a better place to live, work and visit, and make Wirral attractive for employers to invest and for businesses to thrive.**

The Wirral Council Plan: A 2020 Vision<sup>1</sup>, published in June 2015, sets out a series of 20 pledges which we, along with our partners will work to achieve by 2020. The plan is based around three key themes:

- protecting the most vulnerable
- driving economic growth
- improving the local environment

The Wirral Growth Plan<sup>2</sup>, published in January 2016, is one of the underpinning strategies to the Wirral Council Plan, and it acknowledges that the provision of efficient, well maintained and accessible transport networks is a critical factor in encouraging inward investment, facilitating economic growth, attracting more visitors and to transforming Wirral's economy. The Growth Plan recognises the importance of access to housing and employment sites, as well as ensuring that residents are able to access work opportunities both within and outside the Borough.

There are a number of areas in Wirral where there are significant opportunities for growth; major regeneration projects such as Wirral Waters, Birkenhead town centre, proposed new developments such as Hoylake Golf Resort, as well as new investment in Wirral's maritime and manufacturing activities. We need to ensure that our transport activities support and maximise the efficient movement of people and goods to and from these areas.

Transport impacts on every aspect of our lives. It is important for every Wirral resident, and for every business and visitor. We know that everyone's transport needs are not the same, and that across Wirral there are differing levels of existing transport provision.

Transport connects people to key services, to employment, to education and to healthcare and other support services. Good transport connections and high quality infrastructure are essential to regeneration, to grow existing businesses, to enable new developments and new housing.

We need to manage the impact of transport on our local environment. Congestion, poor air quality and traffic noise all have negative impacts on our quality of life and well-being. Active travel modes such as walking and cycling can improve our health and our environment. Transport must play a key role in enabling Wirral to be a green and sustainable borough.

Transport is part of our daily lives. Transport opens up economic and social opportunities, and supports all our residents, businesses and visitors.



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## 'PEOPLE' PLEDGE

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**Older people** can access key services to help them live independently in their homes and prevent social isolation.

**Children** can travel to school in a way that is safe and promotes their health.

All **young people** can access education, training and employment opportunities.

**Families in poverty** have affordable transport modes to access education, training and employment opportunities.

**Disabled people** can access education, employment, training and volunteering opportunities.



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## 'BUSINESS' PLEDGE

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**Local businesses** are easily accessible, enabling them to thrive and increase the number and range of jobs in Wirral.

High quality transport infrastructure links Wirral to national and regional networks, making Wirral an attractive place for **businesses to thrive and invest**.

**Residents** can access education, training and employment opportunities to develop workforce skills and gain employment.

**Businesses on local high streets and in district centres** can be easily accessed by customers.

Tourism destinations are easily accessible from inside and outside the borough ensuring a vibrant **tourism economy**.



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## 'ENVIRONMENT' PLEDGE

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**Residents** have an improved quality of life by easy access to leisure and cultural opportunities, and important local facilities.

**Residents** lead healthier lives through a transport network that is safe and well maintained and promotes healthy travel modes such as walking and cycling.

**Residents** can use alternative travel modes to the private car to reduce carbon emissions and maintain standards of air quality.

**“ Wirral’s transport network and transport services are fundamental to supporting the delivery of every theme of the Wirral Plan ”**

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# WHAT WE KNOW

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## SNAPSHOT OF TRANSPORT IN WIRRAL

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**90,000**

VEHICLES PER DAY  
USING TUNNELS



**1,135** KM

ROADS IN WIRRAL

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**4 OUT OF 5**



PUBLIC TRANSPORT TRIPS  
ARE BY BUS



**136** MILLION

BUS JOURNEYS PER YEAR



**28%**

OF HOUSEHOLDS IN WIRRAL  
DO NOT HAVE A CAR



**40** MILLION

PASSENGERS USE  
MERSEYRAIL EVERY YEAR



**21%**

WALKING ACCOUNTS FOR  
OF ALL JOURNEYS



INCREASED BY **30%**

ON WIRRAL BETWEEN  
2010 AND 2015

## Transport Delivery

There is already a wide range of examples of Transport policy and strategy developed through the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, which was established on 1st April 2014. The membership of the Combined Authority includes the five local authority leaders of Halton, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral Councils, the Elected Mayor of Liverpool City Council, and the Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership. The Combined Authority's purpose is to bring about closer partnership working on transport, housing, economic development and skills. It will build on strong links with businesses, and will also enable access to funding opportunities to support growth across the Liverpool City Region. As part of the Devolution Agreement, the Combined Authority received devolved powers and responsibilities which were previously held by Central Government, including responsibility for allocation of transport funding.

The transport priorities of the Combined Authority are set out in the **Liverpool City Region Transport Plan for Growth<sup>3</sup>**.

- **Growth** – supporting economic growth through increasing employment, levels of productivity and investment;
- **Low Carbon** – using a range of sustainable energy sources, having the option to use vehicles powered by alternatives to fossil fuels, and having increased levels of walking and cycling;
- **Access to opportunity** – improving access to employment, training and education and wider opportunities such as healthcare, leisure and recreation.

Working with our partners in the Combined Authority, Merseytravel, Rail and Bus Operators, the Police, Fire Service and Highways England, the delivery of the Connecting Wirral strategy will support the Transport Plan for Growth.

We will work with our partners to deliver a co-ordinated and efficient transport network.



## The Wirral Transport Network

Wirral has a comprehensive transport network.

### Road

The M53 motorway running through Wirral from Birkenhead to Chester, links Wirral to the wider motorway network via the M56 to Warrington and beyond, as well as to the A55 to North Wales. The two Mersey road tunnels connect Wirral to the rest of the Liverpool City Region, from Birkenhead via the Queensway Tunnel (A41) and from Wallasey via the Kingsway Tunnel (M53/A59). Up to 90,000 vehicles per day cross under the River Mersey via these tunnels between Wirral and Liverpool<sup>4</sup>.

The A41 is a busy main road corridor on the east of the Borough linking Birkenhead to Chester, and the A540 is a less busy main road on the west side linking Hoylake to Chester. East-west links across the borough are provided by several other main roads such as the A552 and the A553.

As part of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Devolution Deal<sup>5</sup> we have agreed a Key Route Network (KRN) of main roads which are the backbone to the City Region. These roads will all be managed and maintained by the Combined Authority on behalf of the LCR Mayor, from May 2017. Having a KRN in place will result in a consistent approach to delivery and highway standards across the City Region, which may include elements such as lighting standards, maintenance, winter maintenance, cleansing and road works.

Some parts of Wirral's road networks currently experience congestion at peak times. Other areas are likely to experience problems in the future when considered alongside future planned development such as Wirral Waters.

We have over 1135 km<sup>6</sup> roads in Wirral and maintenance of roads and footways is a big challenge. Over recent years Wirral Council has continually invested in maintenance of roads and bridges and this has proved successful as we have a smaller number of roads that are classed as needing immediate maintenance than almost all other Council areas across England.

We are committed to improving road safety for all road users. We continue to work with Partners such as Merseyside Fire and Rescue,

Merseyside Police and Health Services to educate road users and implement measures to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads.

### Bus

8 out of 10 public transport journeys in Merseyside are by bus and this equates to 136.7 million journeys a year. 100,000 people use the bus every day to get to work and a further 60,000 young people travel to education and training on a bus<sup>7</sup>.

Wirral is served by a network of 27 bus routes. The majority of bus routes are operated by private bus companies (e.g. Arriva, Stagecoach and Avon) on a commercial basis which means that the bus operators set the routes and the fares. Routes 1 and 2, and 471 and 472 are part of the Quality Bus Network which means that bus tickets issued by either operator will be accepted on all services on that route. This is a huge benefit to passengers as it increases frequencies and offers greater convenience to passengers. Some bus routes are commissioned and subsidised by Merseytravel, who provide these services where there is a gap in the network or a particular social need e.g. to access a hospital.

Recent investment by operators has improved the quality of bus services on some routes by providing leather seats, extra legroom, free Wi-Fi, USB charging points, and low emission engines for a cleaner environment.

Travel concessions are available on public transport for people over 60 and disabled people, as well as young people aged up to 18 including term time only tickets, and 'My Ticket', a one day City Region wide all day travel bus ticket.

The 2015 Wirral Residents Survey<sup>8</sup> shows that a high number of residents use public transport, with only 13% saying that they had not used public transport in the last 12 months.

### Rail

The majority of Wirral is also well connected by rail with Merseyrail operating frequent services (between 4 - 6 trains per hour) to Ellesmere Port and Chester, and to Liverpool via the Mersey Railway Tunnel. The Borderlands rail line operates hourly services from Wrexham to Bidston where it connects with the Merseyrail

services, providing connectivity to Deeside in Flintshire. In total there are 25 rail stations in Wirral, 23 on the Merseyrail Wirral Line, and 2 on the Borderlands line.

There are some stations in Wirral which are not fully accessible, or are in need of improvements. Increased number of park and ride spaces, or new park and ride facilities would benefit some passengers. Services from Heswall and Upton, on the Borderlands (Wrexham-Bidston Line) are limited, and at weekends are only every few hours meaning that rail travel is often not considered to be an option from this part of the borough.

### Ferry

Wirral is also served by a direct commuter shuttle ferry service from Seacombe to Pier Head in Liverpool, and a tourist 'daily explorer' ferry service that also calls at Woodside, Birkenhead. Each year there are 450,000 to 500,000 passengers using the daily explorer ferry, which outnumbers the equivalent commuter service boardings by approximately three to one.<sup>9</sup> The running of the Ferry Service and the terminals at Seacombe and Woodside are heavily subsidised by Merseytravel.

### Walking and Cycling

Wirral benefits from a number of local on and off road cycle routes and paths, as well as National Cycle Network Route 56 which runs from Seacombe along the coast to New Brighton and Leasowe, and then south through Wirral via Brimstage to Neston, and the Wirral Circular Trail (Regional Route 89) which runs predominantly along Wirral's coastline. Over recent years significant investment has been made in improving infrastructure for cyclists as a result of funding secured from the Department for Transport. As a result main roads such as the A41 have new facilities for cyclists and pedestrians enabling easier and safer journeys to be undertaken by bike and on foot.

Wirral is also fortunate to have a high number of quality green spaces such as Wirral Country Park and the North Wirral Coastal Park. There are also numerous public rights of way throughout the borough, including promenades on the coast and routes through woodlands. Town centre and urban area provision for pedestrians is varied, however in some areas, such as New Brighton, public space improvements have greatly improved the facilities for pedestrians.

### Integrated Transport Service

Transport is provided for home to school travel for children and for young people to travel to school and college, and for vulnerable adults to travel to places such as day centres, placements and education.

We have a home to school transport policy which covers ages 5-16 years.<sup>10</sup> We also have a Post 16 Transport Policy<sup>11</sup> for students aged 16-19 years, or for students aged 19-24 years old if they have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

These policies are agreed every year prior to the start of the September school term and are how we make decisions regarding whether children are eligible for travel assistance. The policies are in line with other authorities.

The transport policies meet the Council's statutory duty to provide free transport to school for children and young people aged 2 to 16 who are assessed as eligible. Free transport may be provided by a public transport travel pass or by providing a place on a vehicle.

Transport on a specialist vehicle may be provided following an assessment of the needs of the individual children. Where a place on a vehicle is provided, the majority of the vehicles and the drivers are provided by external companies, with vehicle escorts being supplied by the Council. There are currently 891 children and young people who have been issued with a public transport pass and 1066 children and young people who are on specialist transport<sup>11</sup>.

We also offer free independent Travel Training to provide young people with special educational needs with the necessary skills and confidence to travel independently using public transport. We also offer personalised journey planning, travel training, support and advice to any resident over the age of 14 to help them to become more confident in using public transport.

Transport is also provided for vulnerable adults to travel to places such as day centres, placements and education. Eligibility for transport assistance is assessed against the transport policy.

We are committed to removing transport as a barrier to education, employment and opportunity.

**“ Along with our key partners, we are committed to ‘Connecting Wirral’ so that our residents can access opportunities, our businesses and tourist destinations thrive and the quality of our environment improves ”**

## Travel Trends

**The 2015 Wirral Residents Survey<sup>8</sup> told us that the majority (58%) of Wirral residents in employment work within the Borough. One in five (19%) travels into Liverpool to work, 6% travel to Chester and a further 17% work elsewhere.**

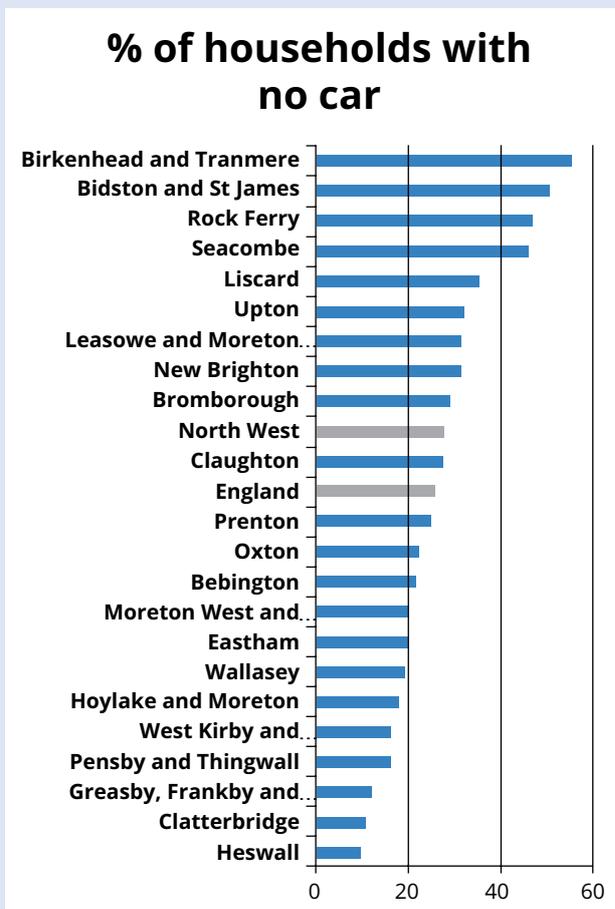
According to the Travel in Merseyside Survey 2014<sup>12</sup>, the car is the most popular form of transport for most people, and this is true in Wirral where commuters are highly dependent on their car as a method of travel to work, with the exception of those that travel to Liverpool where public transport use is relatively high due to the good quality rail and bus connections.

The choice of transport used to travel to school varies with the age of the child. Nationally, for primary school children (aged 5 to 10), car and walking are the two most common modes of travel to school with a similar share of 46% of all trips. Walking remains the most common choice of travel to school for secondary children (aged 11 to 16 years), but is followed by local and private bus (together 29% of all trips), whereas the car accounts for a smaller share (23%). For the younger children, the main reason given for accompanying their children cited by parents is traffic danger. (National Travel Survey 2014<sup>13</sup>).

## Road Trends

Traffic on Wirral's roads had grown fairly substantially between 1994 and 2005, however over the last ten years traffic flows overall have steadily declined. However, the number of cars owned by Wirral residents is increasing year on year, in 1991 107,883 cars were licensed to Wirral residents; by 2013 this figure had risen to over 142,000<sup>14</sup>.

2011 Census data indicates that 28% of households in Wirral have no access to a car or van. This is identical to the rate across the North West. However across Wirral the rates of access to a car or van vary significantly, for example in Heswall only 10% of households have no access to a car or van, whereas in Birkenhead that rate is 56%, which is well above the North West and England average<sup>15</sup>.



(Ref: Data from ONS 2011 Census website)

There has been an overall reduction in the number of people injured on Wirral's Roads, from 735 in 2014 to 674 in 2015, an 8% reduction. However within this, there was an increase of 2% in the number of people killed and seriously injured, which has risen from 140 in 2014 to 143 in 2015<sup>16</sup>.

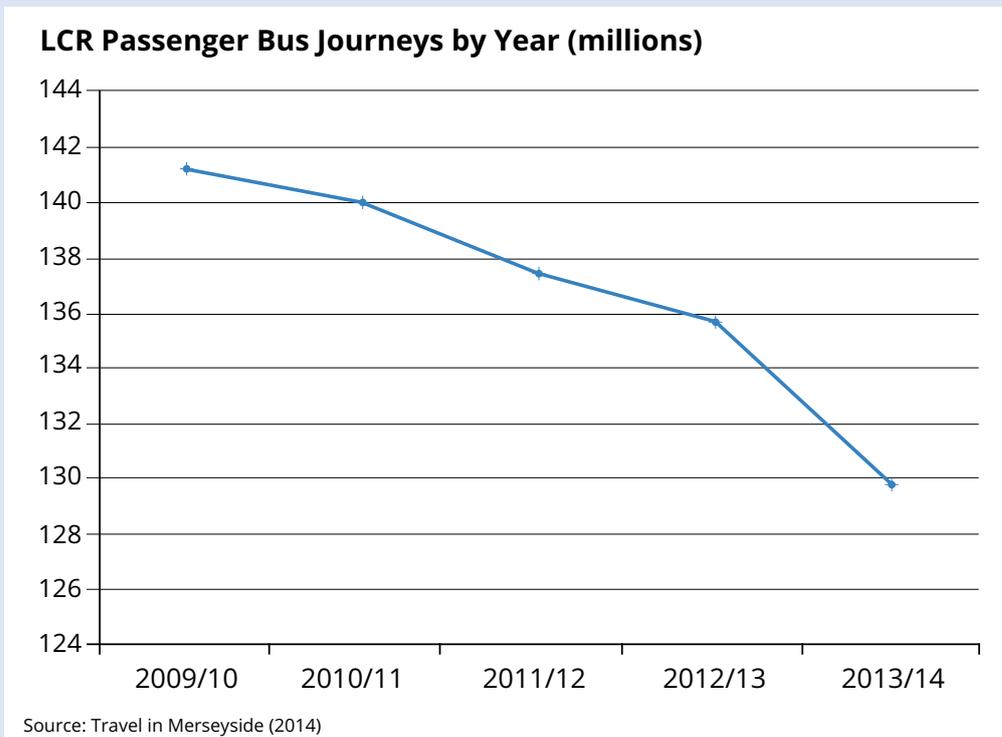
There has been a 21% reduction in the overall number of child casualties, including a 55% reduction in the number of child casualties sustaining fatal or serious injuries, from 20 in 2014 to 9 in 2015. The number of child pedestrians killed and seriously injured fell from 15 to 4 in 2015, a reduction of 73%. The overall pedestrian casualties for all ages have also reduced in 2015 by 13% from 91 casualties in 2014 to 79 in 2015<sup>16</sup>.

There was an increase in the number of adult pedal cyclists killed and seriously injured from 12 in 2014 to 19 in 2015 (58%), although the total number of adult pedal cycle injuries reduced by 10%. The number of riders of two wheeled motor vehicles killed or seriously injured increased by 38% from 29 to 40<sup>16</sup>.

### Bus Trends

Use of bus has fallen across the Liverpool City Region over the last 20 years. Since 2009/10 bus patronage has fallen by approximately 9% from over 140 million journeys per year in 2009/10 to less than 130 million in 2013/14<sup>14</sup>.

Whilst bus use has fallen, bus fares have increased significantly. The average peak fare has increased from £1.45 in 2006/7 to £2.30 in 2013/14. This is part of a long term trend where bus fares have outstripped rises in rail fares and motoring costs<sup>14</sup>.



## Travel Trends

### Train Trends

The 2011 Census indicates that over 18,000 people commute from Wirral to Liverpool every day, with 27% (4860 people) usually travelling by train.<sup>14</sup>

In 2012/13 the Merseyrail network carried over 40 million passengers. There has been strong year on year growth in usage since 2002/3<sup>13</sup>, and in 2012/13 Birkenhead Hamilton Square was the 6th busiest station on the Merseyrail network.<sup>17</sup> Usage of the rail network is forecast to grow year on year.

### Cycling and Walking Trends

Cycling in Merseyside has grown year on year. Between 2006/07 and 2013/14 cycling levels across Merseyside have increased by 65%. Within Wirral, comparisons between 2010/11 and 2014/15 data show that cycling levels have increased by approximately 7% during that time. 12% of people indicate that they cycle at least once a month which may mean that large numbers are cycling for leisure, at weekends, or when the weather is good. Almost 3% cycle at least five times a week, this is likely to be for commuting purposes.<sup>14</sup>

Although primarily for small trips, walking accounts for 21% of all trips across Merseyside. Walking is usually a key part of most other journeys when for example people have to walk to the station, or from the car park. Rates of walking in Wirral have fallen over the past 20 years.<sup>14</sup>

### Special School Transport Trends

An independent review undertaken in 2013/14 found that in Wirral 21 per 1000 pupils attend a special school. 10% of all schools in Wirral are specialist schools, which is considerably higher than in the wider North West and England.<sup>18</sup>

Most children with special education needs who receive support, travel to school by mini-bus or coach with an escort (82%), with the highest number of all journeys (36%) taking between 30 and 45 minutes. The independent review found that the number of single person journeys was low and the average cost per journey was low in comparison with other similar authorities.

The number of children and young people on specialist transport has been reducing. In the 2012-13 academic year there were 1216 young people on specialist transport, compared to 1066 in 2015-16.<sup>19</sup>

Application of transport policy and travel training is having a gradual impact on reducing the number of children and young people on specialist transport. More young people with special educational needs are now accessing public transport. This fits with the Council's pledges to assist people with disabilities to live independently, for vulnerable children to reach their full potential and that young people are ready for work and adulthood.

The remaining elements of discretionary transport for post 16 young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities may form part of a future review of the policy. There are currently 170 students in receipt of transport on a post 16 discretionary Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) policy and following successful appeals. This number has not changed significantly since the new Post 16 SEND policy was introduced.

A review of the special school provision in Wirral is due to commence in the near future and the outcomes of this review may also have a significant impact on the requirement for home to school transport for this group of young people which will be monitored.

### **Mainstream School Transport Trends**

Following consultation, discretionary elements of transport for children and young people aged 5 to 16 was removed from the policy in 2014. The revised policy is being phased in for new applicants. The number of public travel passes issued has reduced from 1769 in academic year 2012-13 to 891 in 2015-16<sup>19</sup>.

We retain a statutory responsibility to provide home to school transport to certain groups of young people aged 16 and under, and the policy is being applied to assess eligibility and monitored to ensure that statutory duties are being met.

### **Adult Transport Trends**

We have a statutory duty to assess eligibility for transport for vulnerable adults.

At present there are 401 vulnerable adults accessing specialist transport. This is a reduction from the position in 2012-13 when there were 493 adults on specialist transport on average<sup>19</sup>.

The majority of specialist transport for adults is carried out by private contractors however the Council retails a small number of in house vehicles and associated staff.

The transport policy is in the process of being revised, subject to consultation.

## **Understanding what residents want**

The way people feel about their transport services and infrastructure is important. Transport provides opportunities; it can support local businesses and can enhance communities.

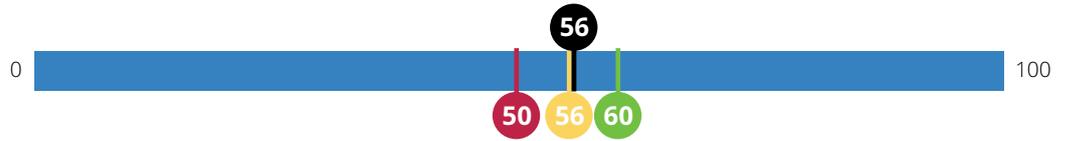
We have drawn on evidence from recent passenger and residents surveys to support the development of this strategy, but engagement with our residents is an on-going conversation. We hold quarterly Active Travel Forums for walking and cycling and Rights of Way User Group Meetings, which are open to all. Merseytravel hold regular Customer Forums and Roadshows and we consult regularly with the public on our proposals for transport schemes.

## **Overall**

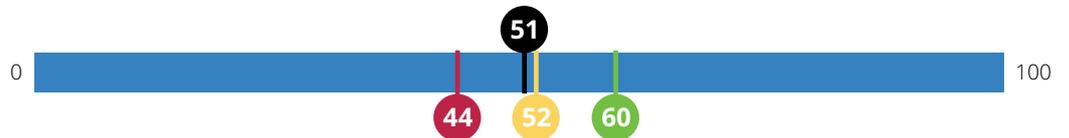
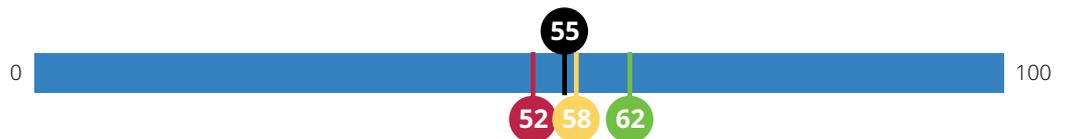
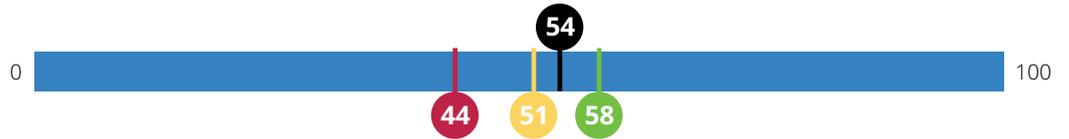
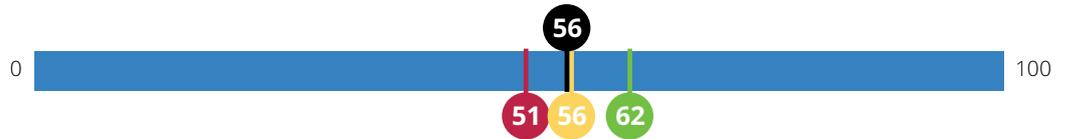
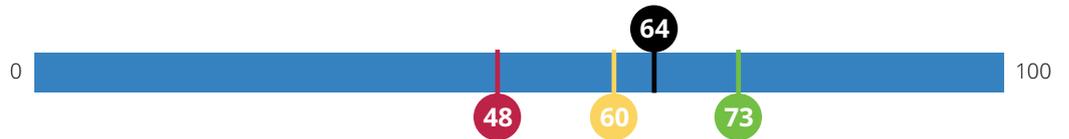
Wirral residents told us in the 2015 National Highways and Transport Survey (NHT)<sup>20</sup> that safer roads (97%), highway condition (95%) and pavements (95%) were the top three important things for them. These were closely followed by street lighting (90%), local buses (90%) and traffic pollution (87%). We have used this information to identify our priorities as set out in this strategy.

Across the majority of the themes covered in the survey, Wirral residents record similar levels of satisfaction as the national average. We will work over the next five years to increase levels of satisfaction with our services.

## Satisfaction Overall



## Satisfaction by Theme



## Roads

The 2015 Wirral Council Residents survey<sup>8</sup> identified that residents consider that road maintenance is the joint second highest priority for the Council, and 56% of residents told us that completing road maintenance and pavement repairs quickly and efficiently is the characteristic of Wirral most in need of improvement. This was the consistent message across all four constituencies with maintenance being the top priority for all except for Birkenhead where it was the joint third highest.

22% of residents told us that congestion levels need to be improved, although this is a significantly greater issue for residents in West Wirral (31%).

## Bus

The Transport Focus Bus Survey (Autumn 2015)<sup>21</sup> reported that 89% of passengers in the Liverpool City Region were either very satisfied (53%) or fairly satisfied (36%) with their bus journey. The most important considerations for bus passengers were journey time (34%), punctuality (26%) and value for money (14%).

The 2015 Wirral Council Residents Survey<sup>8</sup> identified that 76% of people are satisfied with their Public Transport Service.

## Rail

The Transport Focus Rail Survey (Autumn 2015)<sup>22</sup> identified several factors which impact on how users determine what is important for them in their journeys. The most important considerations for passengers are that they want trains to be clean (27%), easy to get on and off (23%), and punctual and reliable (15%).

Merseyrail were awarded 93% in the latest independent National Rail Passenger Survey (Transport Focus Autumn 2015). This is the highest overall score amongst all franchised operators and is 10% above the national average. For the Wirral Line this score increases to 95% satisfaction overall, as well as 95% satisfaction for punctuality and reliability. Merseyrail have also been awarded operator of the year in the Bike & Go category and were highly commended in the Cycle Security Category for their secure cycle storage and cycle hire schemes.

## Walking and Cycling

The NHT survey 2015<sup>20</sup> identified that 68% of residents think that cycle routes/lanes and facilities are important but that only 53% of people are satisfied with the current provision.

The NHT survey also asked residents what services they consider that it would not be acceptable to reduce. Management/maintenance of roads (16%), pavements (14%), and gritting (13%) were considered by residents as being unacceptable to reduce levels of service. Conversely management/maintenance of cycle paths and facilities and country paths/Rights of Way were considered to be least important in terms of reducing levels of service.

## Special Transport Provision

From the 2013/14 independent research<sup>18</sup> 93% of parents were very satisfied or satisfied with the transport services that are provided, and have a positive attitude towards their child's school and the transport service.

98% of parents feel that it is important that their child is supported to become independent as an adult. 45% said they would consider alternative approaches to transport, 23% expressed a particular interest in travel training and 22% said they would consider sharing journeys with families from the same school.

Independent Travel Training for young people with special needs was introduced in 2014 and has so far resulted in more than 60 young people being able to access public transport instead of specialist transport.<sup>23</sup>

**“ Working together with our partners we will focus on continuous improvement in order to develop a fully integrated transport system that meets the needs of Wirral's residents, visitors and businesses ”**

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# OUR VISION

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## So what do we want in Wirral?

- **More** people walking and cycling to become fitter and healthier
- **More** people using public transport to reduce air pollution and congestion
- **More** people using technology to make journeys easier e.g. journey planning, smart ticketing
- **More** people being able to access local centres by bus or by walking and cycling
- **More** public transport, cycle facilities and pedestrian facilities provided across the borough
- **Less** people using their cars, especially for short journeys
- **Less** accidents and injuries on our roads
- **Less** cars on our roads
- **Less** emissions from cars, buses and lorries.
- **Less** congestion and delay

## How will this be achieved?

- Residents, businesses and visitors **will be engaged** through consultations, forums and user groups and we will work in partnership.
- We will use **engineering** to improve our road networks, to build new cycle routes, improve pedestrian facilities and take advantage of new technology to make it easier to travel efficiently, safely and sustainably.
- People will feel confident to **change their travel habits** and try healthy, environmentally friendly ways of getting around.
- Residents, business and visitors will **know how to get around** and where to find information.
- **Enforcement** will be required where people do not comply with the driving laws, or do not consider other road users in their driving or parking habits.

A photograph of a person in a wheelchair, wearing a blue and grey jacket and a black beanie, smiling broadly. They are holding the handlebars of a wheelchair. In the background, several other people are visible, some standing and some in wheelchairs, suggesting an outdoor event or race. The entire image has a blue tint.

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# OUR PRIORITIES

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**Four priority themes have been identified in order to deliver 'The Connecting Wirral' strategy. Each of these themes has a number of associated key actions that will ensure that the 'vision' becomes a reality.**

## **PRIORITY 1:**

### **Keep traffic moving safely and efficiently**

We know that road maintenance and safety are key issues for our residents. Residents have asked that we prioritise road and pavement repairs and address traffic congestion.

To support the delivery of the Council's Growth Plan we know that we must have an efficient, and well maintained main road network to support our economic growth aspirations, so that residents, businesses and visitors can get to where they need to go, safely and efficiently. Our main roads need to support Wirral businesses and the visitor economy by being safe, well maintained and free of congestion.

We will work with our partners to develop a consistent approach to delivery and highway standards and maintenance on the Key Route Network across the City Region.

We will monitor the condition of our roads to ensure we target our maintenance resources efficiently.

We will work with partners to undertake a review of road safety with the view of further reducing the number of people killed and injured on our roads.

We will develop programmes of transport schemes to support economic and housing growth and reduce the number of people killed and injured on our roads.

We will seek funding from a variety of sources to deliver transport improvements and we will work in partnership with developers to improve the network to support economic growth and regeneration.

We will work to eliminate delays and congestion on our roads, improve air quality, reduce journey times and improve energy efficiency.

## **PRIORITY 2:**

### **Reliable and affordable public transport**

We know that many residents do not have access to a car and that even those that do have access to a car, still use public transport services and consider these to be important. There are high levels of satisfaction with existing public transport services, but we know that for some residents barriers can exist to using public transport, such as cost, information, accessibility or confidence.

To support those without access to a car and to minimise congestion on our roads, we need to make sure public transport is attractive to all. Making it easier and more attractive for people to travel by bus and train instead of travelling by car will help to reduce levels of pollution from vehicles. Public transport should provide easy and affordable travel to education, training and employment in order to help residents to develop workforce skills and gain employment.

We will work with our partners to improve rail services, and attract new passengers to the rail network.

The LCR Bus Alliance aims to deliver a thriving, affordable and sustainable bus network that offers the customer value for money and a hassle free journey experience.

We will work with our partners to support existing passengers and to attract new passengers to use the bus network.

We will work with our partners to make it easier to find out information about bus services, and how to travel using the bus.

We will make it easier for people of all ages to use the bus network to access key destinations such as employment, education and retail opportunities from their home.

### **PRIORITY 3:**

#### **Encourage healthy active travel**

Residents are concerned about the impacts of traffic congestion and pollution on our environment. We know that enabling local communities to flourish is also important to Wirral residents. Residents consider that feeling healthy makes for a good quality of life.

People need to get to the shops, and to schools and workplaces. Residents' quality of life is improved by local roads, footpaths and cycle networks that encourage healthy active travel modes and provide easy access to local facilities such as high streets, employment, education and recreation. Increasing the numbers of journeys people make by bike and on foot, as well as using public transport will mean that there are fewer cars on our roads and will help to reduce levels of pollution from vehicles.

We will develop programmes of transport schemes to support increased use of walking and cycling to key destinations such as employment sites, residential areas, local centres and retail areas.

We will work with businesses and communities to support people to travel to work, and on works business, in a safe and healthy way to increase levels of activity, reduce local congestion, improve air quality, address parking issues and reduce the number of people injured and killed on our roads.

We will seek funding from a variety of sources to deliver improvements and will work in partnership with other organisations such as Sustrans and Living Streets to deliver our joint ambitions.

We will consult with and encourage people to share their views regarding walking and cycling to increase the number of people who travel using these modes.

### **PRIORITY 4:**

#### **Inclusive integrated transport that supports our residents needs**

We know that people value the transport services that are provided for residents however some residents would like additional support to develop skills to support increased levels of independence and be able to access education and employment.

There are clear links between transport and social exclusion. Overcoming barriers to opportunities and services is a key issue. Underpinning this strategy is the requirement that the transport system has to support all members of our community. We need a transport offer for disabled and vulnerable people that improves their quality of life and encourages independence by a thorough assessment of individual need, providing training/support and improving physical access.

We will support people to travel independently by providing one to one travel support to assist people to gain confidence and experience using public transport services.

We will set clear policies for transport support and review these annually to ensure they reflect current guidance, achieve the best outcomes and make the best use of Council resources.

We will provide additional support to parents and carers regarding transport.

We will review our transport arrangements to ensure they meet the needs of residents and respect aspirations for increasing levels of independence.

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## HOW WE WILL DELIVER THIS STRATEGY

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**This strategy will provide a clear set of priorities for transport with accompanying actions to make sure that those priorities can be delivered by the Council and its partners. Along the way, we will consult and seek feedback from residents, and take action to address the outcomes of our residents' survey results.**

The actions on the following pages will be delivered over the lifetime of this strategy, and, where required, detailed project plans will be developed going forward.

An annual review of the strategy will take place assessing progress on each of the actions and reporting outcomes that have been achieved through the delivery of the strategy.

## Action Plan

### Priority One - Keep traffic moving safely and efficiently

Theme Lead: Senior Manager (Highways and Transport)		
Action	By When	Lead Organisation
Implementation of a Key Route Network (KRN) to deliver a consistent approach to highway delivery, maintenance and standards across the City Region.	May 2017	Combined Authority
Implement the 2016/17 Transport Programme in order to improve the condition and offer of the transport network.	March 2017	Wirral Council
Develop medium and long term prioritised programmes of Liverpool City Region transport schemes covering all modes of transport in order to seek and secure funding for improvements to the transport network from a variety of local, City Region and European sources.	March 2017	Transport Advisory Group
Evaluate results of annual independent National Highways Public Satisfaction Surveys in order to ensure satisfactory levels of provision with our services and review our approach to communicating this information to residents and partners.	March 2017	Wirral Council
Delivery of the Docks Bridges Replacement Programme (new 'A' and 'C' bridges) to provide a new fit for purpose structures and minimise the potential of future closures due to maintenance issues.	December 2017	Wirral Council
Launch of online mapping system so that road works and traffic information is accessible to all residents via the internet	June 2016	Wirral Council
Roll out system to support remote payment for car parking via mobile phones to make it easier and more convenient for people to park	March 2018	Wirral Council
Undertake a review of the approach to road safety on main roads to ensure we reduce the numbers of people killed and seriously injured on our roads.	March 2017	Wirral Council / Merseyside Police
Undertake a review of street lighting provision with a view to ensuring value for money and improving energy efficiency.	March 2017	Wirral Council

**Priority Two - Reliable and affordable public transport**

<b>Theme Lead: Merseytravel</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Lead Organisation</b>
Commence delivery of the Long Term Rail Strategy to improve accessibility and ensure that rail supports economic growth.	March 2020	Merseytravel
Undertake a full review of the Wirral Bus Network to ensure it serves the right locations and is fully integrated with rail services.	March 2017	LCR Bus Alliance
Deliver marketing and communications programmes to encourage new and existing users and change the perception of bus travel, including the development of a dedicated point of contact.	March 2017	LCR Bus Alliance
Deliver a simpler and easier to understand smart ticketing package to ensure value for money	March 2017	LCR Bus Alliance

**Priority Three - Encourage healthy active travel**

<b>Theme Lead: Senior Manager (Highways and Transport)</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Lead Organisation</b>
Implement the 2016/17 Transport Programmes in order to improve the transport network and demonstrate successful delivery to funding organisations.	March 2017	Wirral Council
Develop medium and long term prioritised programmes of Wirral transport schemes covering all modes of transport in order to seek and secure funding for improvements to the transport network from a variety of local, City Region and European sources e.g. Sustainable Transport Enhancements Programme (STEP) funding, Local Growth Fund.	March 2017	Wirral Council
Review internal funding for transport schemes to ensure we maximise outcomes with our resources.	March 2018	Wirral Council
Deliver the 2016/17 'Business Travel Support/Mind your Business' Programme to support businesses to encourage employees to travel to work, and on works business, sustainably and safely.	March 2017	Wirral Council
Deliver the 2016/17 'Travel Solutions' Programme to support residents to access employment and training.	March 2017	Wirral Council

**Priority Four - Inclusive integrated transport that supports our residents needs**

<b>Theme Lead: Senior Manager (Commissioning and Transformation)</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Lead Organisation</b>
Undertake a review of the Travel Training Programme to ensure we are supporting the travel needs of our most vulnerable residents.	July 2017	Wirral Council
Undertake a review of the current arrangements for specialist transport provision to ensure we are operating efficiently and making the best use of our resources.	July 2017	Wirral Council / Merseytravel

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# HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE ARE GETTING IT RIGHT?

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**Providing a safe, affordable, well maintained and efficient transport network is critical to the future of Wirral. We know what residents tell us is important to them and we will work hard to improve Wirral's transport networks to meet the needs of the borough.**

**We will monitor and report our progress on a regular basis to ensure we are delivering.**

Indicator
<b>Priority One - Keep traffic moving safely and efficiently</b>
Increase the level of public satisfaction with road maintenance (Wirral Residents Survey / NHT Survey)
Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents (Police)
Maintain or improve the condition of Wirral's strategic (A&B) roads (Technical survey)
<b>Priority Two - Reliable and Affordable Public Transport</b>
Increase levels of public satisfaction with public transport (NHT Survey)
<b>Priority Three - Encourage Healthy Active Travel</b>
Increase the number of people cycling (Wirral Council/Combined Authority)
Increase the number of businesses provided with travel support (Wirral Council)
Increase levels of public satisfaction with walking/cycling facilities (NHT Survey)
<b>Priority Four - Inclusive transport that supports our residents needs</b>
Increase the number of successfully travel trained people (Wirral Council)

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## CONCLUSION

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**Wirral has a good transport network and significant progress has been made over recent years.**

**Examples include:**

**Securing external funding  
e.g. Docks Bridges Challenge Fund,  
Local Sustainable Transport Fund,  
Potholes Fund.**

**Partnership working  
e.g. Police and Fire Service**

**Cross department working  
e.g. Public Health**

**Investment by bus operators in  
new vehicles**

**Rail Station refurbishments  
e.g. Hamilton Square**

We know how important transport is to everyone's daily lives. Transport opens up opportunities for people in employment and education and enables people to access healthcare and enjoy leisure and recreational facilities.

The development and regeneration of areas such as Wirral Waters, Hoylake Golf Resort, Birkenhead town centre and other major employment and housing sites mean that there are excellent opportunities in Wirral over the coming years. Together with our partners, we are committed to providing a transport network that is safe, affordable, well maintained and efficient in order to support the economic growth and regeneration of the borough, and the health and well-being of our residents.

This strategy brings partners together, to focus our plans and our funding, to continue improving and achieve even better outcomes for Wirral.



## Case Studies

### Case Study 1 – Potholes

Potholes in our roads are caused by wear, subsidence or failed repairs after utility reinstatements. Poor winters can make the problem worse.

In April 2014 Councils were invited to bid for a share of a £168 million Pothole Fund set aside by the Government to repair local roads, making them safer and smoother for motorists, cyclists and other road users.

Successful local authorities signed a ‘pothole pledge’ as a condition of the funding, setting out the number of potholes to be repaired by March 2015.

Wirral Council submitted an application and was successful in receiving over £460,000 and as a result we filled over 8000 potholes.



### Case Study 2 – Business Travel Support

Wirral Business Travel Support has been working with The Contact Company since 2013. They have over 400 staff and are based in Birkenhead town centre.

Events have been held at the site to encourage staff to use public transport to get to work by giving out trial bus and rail passes, Dr Bike events (where staff can get cycling support and a free bike maintenance service) and encouraged walking by giving out pedometers.

Surveys completed by staff show that car use has decreased and there have been increases in staff using public transport and cycling. This has also increased walking to and from the nearest bus stop, approximately 1600 steps, which goes a long way to the NHS target of 10,000 steps per day and supporting the health and well-being of the staff.

Wirral Business Travel Support is continuing to work with the company and, as they have recently taken on additional office space at Tower Wharf is also working to support staff at their new site.



## Case Studies

### Case Study 3 – Travel Training

Claire was attending training and work experience at The Princes Trust, which she was hoping would lead to employment. This involved work experience at various local places such as Asda Liscard, The Missionary in Birkenhead, the Fire Station in Bromborough and Birkenhead Kennels. Claire lived in Bebington and was keen to learn to use public transport so she could travel independently to these places, as well as be able to travel to future employment opportunities.

Claire had one to one support from a travel trainer to become familiar with the routes and the journeys she had to make. At first Claire was nervous and didn't know where the bus routes were, she was unsure of where to get on and off the bus, how to use a travel pass, and was wary of travelling on busy buses. With the help of Wirral Travel Trainers over a number of sessions Claire was able to gradually overcome her fears and gain the knowledge and confidence to travel independently to her work experience, enabling her to rely less upon her parents and increase her independence. Following completion of the training Claire said that 'the service has increased my confidence because I now go to most places on the bus within my local area'.



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