

South Western Railway

Customer and Communities Improvement Fund proposal (CCIF)

ALL Aboard Project

The Rose Road Association is a charity that supports a unique cohort of profoundly disabled children and young adults.

Our services to these young people are diverse and include:

- Overnight 24-hour respite care at our specialist centre in Southampton
- Weekend, evening and school holiday play schemes
- Advice and guidance to families from across the South East
- An outreach day service in the community, known as 'Destinations'.

Destinations provides specialist care and activities for a very special group of profoundly disabled young adults from across Southampton and Hampshire. We are especially keen to develop our Destinations offer to include travel training and activities making use of the local rail network.

The Department for Transport's "Research on Experiences of Disabled Rail Passengers" report (July 2019) identified that a lack of confidence in planning their rail journey had the biggest impact on disabled rail users. Other problems experienced included not being able to find enough accessible information and not being aware of the accessibility of stations and trains.

The young people using Destinations face a number of barriers to accessing rail travel.

These include:

- prohibitive expense (two tickets needed to accommodate support workers)
- families' confidence in facilities at rail stations
- lack of knowledge of end destinations
- limited awareness of rail restrictions (e.g. how many wheelchair spaces)
- limited communication resources publicly available to facilitate rail travel for profoundly disabled users.

The project aims to address some of these barriers. Activities will include:

- A part-time travel activity co-ordinator
- Research and mapping of accessible rail destinations
- Creation of an open access PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) pack specifically for rail travel from Southampton Railways.
- Disability Awareness Training with rail staff
- The creation of easy access and easy to read user guides
- Trying and testing routes with young disabled people and filming these journeys

The project outputs will include:

- An open access PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) pack specifically for rail travel from Southampton Railways.
- Easy access co-branded resources including destination guides, maps and user guides

- 3 training sessions for rail staff at 3 stations (Southampton Central, Southampton Parkway and Eastleigh)
- 18 rail journeys 'tried and tested' by Destinations service users
- 3 x Travel video diaries
- Attendance at 3 x sector relevant conferences to share and disseminate findings
- Project evaluation

Project considerations due to COVID-19

Travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have meant that rail travel has not been possible during the first year of the project. New resources have been developed to ensure that the project continues to progress while meeting its aims.

To this end we have additionally developed and produced:

- a Board game which highlights some of the issues that disabled rail users experience (and how to overcome them) in a fun and engaging way.
- an online version of the game so that families can play at home.
- a Sensory story sack "Going on a Train Trip" using pictures, sounds and sensory experiences to engage the more profoundly disabled young adults who use our services.

The project outcomes may include:

- Families of disabled children/young adults in Hampshire report feeling more confident in making local journeys by rail
- Rail staff are more knowledgeable about the needs of disabled rail users
- Young disabled adults have made progress towards a number of independence targets including:
 - identifying destinations in their local community that they want to visit;
 - choosing their preferred method of transport
 - building a better understand of their community and the choices available to them.

The overall project aim is to make rail travel more accessible to profoundly disabled children, young people and their families (and/or to change perceptions about rail accessibility). Enabling these families to better access local rail destinations will contribute to them feeling more engaged in the local community.

Beneficiaries

16 Destinations service users

24 support workers

15 rail staff (5 at each station)

Resources made available to **300** families we support directly and through our 3 partner special schools (total school role **328**)

Dissemination to est. **2,500** practitioners and potential disabled rail users through press, local authority commissioners, charity and university partners and social media

