

Conclusions

The project was successful in building a link to the BME residents from the Lockwood/Thornton Lodge area of Huddersfield. It was important to make contact with these groups to enable their views to be heard. The project enabled participants to enhance their knowledge of and confidence in using local train services and to discover areas outside of the immediate community.

Working with the groups to organise and go on an initial train trip with them was beneficial, as the first time of using public transport can be daunting, particularly for those for whom English is not their first language.

There is much to learn from engaging with these groups, particularly in the type of contact and marketing that is effective. For example a one-off leaflet, whilst useful, is not enough, and needs to be part of a continual marketing campaign.

A key feature of the SPRP's project was that it consulted with particular groups in specific locations. This enabled their particular customer needs and interests to be addressed. In consequence, these individuals became confident in their ability to plan and make a journey on the train when previously they had preferred other forms of transport.



The Future

Community Rail nationally is now beginning to focus on similar areas of work with BME groups. In addition, the East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership, the Poacher Line, and Dockland Light Railway are all undertaking projects with BME groups.

More work is also being undertaken locally as a consequence of the 'Reaching Out' Project. Transpennine Express have offered to host workshops in their training room at Huddersfield Station to enable participants to take part in role play activities. Kirklees College have also requested workshops for students on developing their knowledge and understanding of local rail transport systems. The South Pennines Rail Partnership is keen to pursue these opportunities. We look forward to developing our understanding and good practice in this innovative area of community activity.



Thanks

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Northern Rail is delighted to endorse this report of a truly ground-breaking project. It is an excellent example of how community rail partnerships can reach out to parts of the community which the rail industry has traditionally had difficulties in reaching.

We want rail to be accessible to everyone, regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds. But to do that we have to make sure that people feel comfortable and

familiar with our services. 'Reaching Out in the South Pennines' will not, I'm sure, be a one-off project but similar approaches will be tried on other parts of our network and no doubt further afield. Congratulations to Rowena and to everyone who took part in this incredibly valuable project.

Dr Paul Salveson MBE
Head of Government and Community Strategies
Northern Rail



Reaching Out in the South Pennines

In June 2007 the South Pennines Rail Partnership (SPRP) undertook a project that would engage with minority ethnic groups in its region. The SPRP comprises Northern Rail, Passenger Transport Executives, Penistone Line Partnership and local authorities. The aim of the partnership is to increase links within the community.

An earlier project by the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP), 'Making Rail Accessible to All' identified the need to work with socially excluded groups within the area. The Rail Partnership identified that there was a need to particularly engage with minority ethnic groups as it was felt they are under-represented amongst rail passengers. The objectives of the project were:

- To identify the perceived barriers of black and minority ethnic groups (BME) groups using public transport
- To work with groups to identify actual barriers to using public transport
- To work with groups to overcome barriers
- To encourage groups to use public transport to explore their local area

How We Went About the Project:

Staffing

The project was led by Rowena Chantler, the dedicated Community Rail Officer for the SPRP, with responsibility for community outreach. A Project Worker was also recruited to be responsible for contacting and engaging with community groups in the area.

Desktop research was carried out to establish what work had been undertaken in the field of ethnic minorities and their use of public transport/rail travel. A key recommendation from the 'Guided Transport in 2040' report of 1992 informed the project design. The report

recognised the need for working with BME groups if they were to become train users. The report envisaged some form of education and training:

"Everyone has to be taught to travel by train...it is important to provide such training for immigrant groups in a country because in many cases they do not have cars, and have limited knowledge of the national language."

A. Ruhl (1992) Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris.



Location of the Project

The plan for the 'Reaching Out in the South Pennines' project was to make contact with a number of local BME groups, and with their help undertake a series of informative and interesting activities.

The area chosen for the project was Lockwood/Thornton Lodge. This part of Huddersfield has 52.8% of its population from a BME background. This is high relative to the 12.8% in the larger metropolitan borough of Kirklees, of which it is a part. Nationally the figure is 7.9%. The Lockwood/Thornton Lodge area is an appropriate location as it has a local railway station. Lockwood Station is on the Penistone Line, which links the towns of Huddersfield (1 Mile away), and Sheffield (36 miles away).

Communities and organisations with a range of ethnic backgrounds were identified in the Lockwood/Thornton Lodge area. Five groups were approached, and three agreed to participate: one women's group from a Neighbourhood Learning Centre; a Sikh youth group; and an adult education group learning English, with representatives from nine different countries (ESOL Students).

The Make Up of the Groups:

- 54% of the total participants were aged 25-44 years
- 71% of the total participants were women
- 6% of the total participants were white
- 80% of the total participants did not speak English as their first language

A series of activities was planned to provide information and help build confidence:

- Workshops which included a knowledge building session, timetable reading, how to catch a train and buy a ticket (including using the internet to buy a ticket), Communication aids which included a station specific timetable for Lockwood Station were designed and produced
- A trip on the train to a local attraction
- A tour of Huddersfield Station

These activities were augmented by additional publicity and promotional work designed to raise the profile of the project and disseminate its findings.

Activities undertaken:

Workshops were organised for each of the groups, for two consecutive weeks.

Objectives of the Workshop

The main objectives were: to give the groups a 'knowledge session', which would give them a very brief introduction to rail travel in the UK; find out what the groups knew about rail travel/public transport in the area; and to build confidence within the group of using public transport, in particular rail travel.

Activities in the Workshops

Participants were initially asked to complete a questionnaire as part of the project. A short session working in small groups using flip charts, enabled the participants to discuss the pros and cons of different modes of transport. An explanation of how to read a timetable was given, and short exercises were carried out using timetables as an aid. Participants were shown

how to access information on train times on-line and how to book a ticket. A trip was planned by each group, which included planning the journey, and finding out train times and ticket prices.

The pros and cons of different modes of transport With each workshop, various modes of transport were discussed, including car, bus, and train. The majority of participants had used the bus and travelled by car, and had plenty to say about them. It appears that most found the bus easy to use, because someone had shown them how to use it. Yet they had not been shown how to use the train.

46% of the participants stated they did not use the train at all, because either they did not understand how trains worked or they did not know where their nearest station was. The car was seen as convenient, but only because it's usually outside their home, and the journey would not need as much planning. However, there was concern about the number of accidents on motorways, and the amount of traffic hold ups.

As a significant number of the participants had not used the train, there was an obvious lack of knowledge of travelling by train. However, even without experience, they had still gained an impression of what train travel entails. One of the main comments was that the train is an expensive means of travel.

Using Timetables and Planning Journeys

Within each workshop, exercises were carried out using scenarios relevant to the group, with reference to how to use a timetable. For example, members of the Sikh Youth Group were given scenarios about interviews at universities, and how to ensure they got there on time. The ESOL students were given scenarios about moving house, and job interviews.

With each scenario, the workshop participants were encouraged to compare the train journey times with how long it might take on the bus or in the car. After detailed



discussion within the groups involving issues such as parking charges, location of parking, and traffic hold ups, the participants were able to state the advantages of train travel. Some of the discussions were protracted because of language difficulties.

The Use of Language

Much of the language used in planning train journeys, and communicating with train travellers can be complex in its use. This has the effect of being unhelpful and confusing to those for whom English is not their first language. This became very apparent in the workshops where considerable time was taken to make meanings clear. Without such clarity it was easy to see how a potential rail user would be deterred. SPRP's and Northern Rail's publicity and marketing information is obviously of vital importance here.

Going on a Trip

Each of the groups took a trip to a destination of their choice. The Adult Education group with representatives from various countries chose to visit the International Media Museum, which is located in Bradford. The group was met at Huddersfield Railway Station by a representative from Metro, who gave them a brief presentation on what Metro does, and what services they offer. The Community Rail Officer also gave the students a tour of the station, and demonstrated how to buy a ticket at the station and how to read the display boards. Tickets for the journey were provided by Metro, in the form of a Day Ranger ticket. Visiting the station enabled the students to

see where they could travel to, directly from Huddersfield. The students had not been to Bradford previously, or the Media Museum. On the return journey, the party arrived at Bradford Interchange early, to enable them to revisit knowledge gained on timetable information. This demonstrated the students had learnt new skills.

The Neighbourhood Learning Centre group chose to visit Dewsbury Market. The group met the Community Rail Officer and the Project Worker at Thornton Lodge, and were given Day Rangers (supplied by Metro). The group caught the bus to Huddersfield, and then proceeded to Huddersfield Railway Station, where they were met by a representative from Metro, who gave the same presentation that she had to the Adult Education Students. The Community Rail Officer also gave the group a tour of the station, and demonstrated how to buy a ticket at the station and how to read the display boards. A representative from the Neighbourhood Learning Centre provided a translation for the benefit of the non-English speakers. For these female participants it was one of the few opportunities they had to go out without their husbands. The women all said they enjoyed their trip out, particularly as none of them had been on a train before.

The Sikh Youth group chose to attend an Indian Dance Opera at The Paramount, Penistone. The group met the Community Rail Officer at Huddersfield Railway Station. The students were given a tour of the station, and were shown how to buy a ticket on the train, and how to read

the display boards. Many of the students who came on the trip did not use the train. However, many were applying to university and commented that what they had learnt about train travel would be useful to them in the future.

Promotional Activities and Literature: The Leaflet

A leaflet was produced to promote Lockwood Station to other members of the community not engaged in the workshops. Text was provided in English and Urdu (the most commonly understood BME language used in the Lockwood area). The leaflet highlighted the train timetable (for the Penistone Line), the fares to Huddersfield and Sheffield, and the connections that could be made at both Huddersfield and Sheffield. The leaflet was then distributed by the Huddersfield Weekly News and by volunteers to all houses within 800 metres from Lockwood Station.

Dissemination of Project Findings

The Association of Community Rail Partnerships held a conference on Diversity in May 2008, at which the Community Rail Officer was invited to speak. The conference was attended by representatives from the Department of Transport, various Train Operating Companies, and other Community Rail Partnerships. The conference offered the opportunity to widen the profile of the project.

