



YOUTH TRAVEL TOOLKIT

Opportunities for businesses to attract new youth audiences through sustainable travel

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INTRODUCTION

We are committed to improving accessibility, aligning with Gloucestershire’s net-zero goals and future-proofing local businesses and tourist destinations

Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership (GCRP) has long been dedicated to creating a sustainable and inclusive transport network that caters to the diverse needs of our community. We have engaged directly with young people through comprehensive research, workshops and analysis to gain invaluable insights into the unique challenges faced by young people in accessing leisure and work opportunities across Gloucestershire.

The aim of this toolkit is to equip tourism organisations and the local businesses with the resources and knowledge needed to address the travel and transport challenges faced by young people. By providing practical solutions and highlighting best practices, we seek to promote sustainable travel options, improve accessibility to leisure destinations, and support the county’s broader economic and sustainability goals.

“This toolkit is a call to action to join us in creating a more inclusive and accessible public transport network.”

– Hannah McDonnell,
Executive Director GoCRP



YOUTH TRANSPORT & SUSTAINABILITY SURVEY

Identifying youth insights in
leisure behaviours and travel

In 2022 GCRP launched a Youth Travel Transport and Sustainability Survey as a comprehensive research initiative designed to gather insights on young people's travel behaviours, preferences, and attitudes towards sustainable transport.

The aim of this survey was to understand the influencing factors for young people's travel choices and their awareness of environmental issues related to transport. The results of this survey help us to identify key opportunities for car-free leisure travel to be promoted more effectively to younger demographics.

The survey includes responses from individuals aged 16 to 25 and participants were from various towns and cities, including Eastleigh, Hounslow, Harrow, Rotherham and Tetbury.

584
young people
responded to
our survey

“We're seeing a critical shift in transport needs driven by changing behaviours and environmental concerns. Accessible and reliable transport options are becoming increasingly important for young people in particular.”

– David Owen, Director of Economy & Environment, Gloucestershire County Council

If you'd like read our youth insights report scan this QR code or go to:
gloucestershirecommunityrail.org/research-and-development





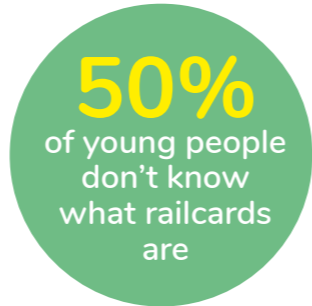
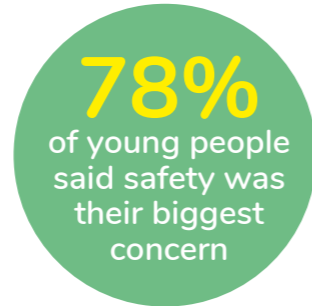
KEY FINDINGS

Understanding young people's drivers will inform and shape travel for the next generation

Public transport perceptions

Safety is the biggest concern for 78% of young people when choosing how to travel, surpassing cost and convenience.

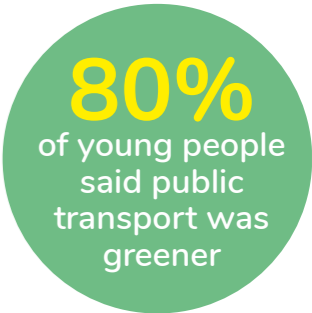
Young people thought train travel was three times more expensive than it actually is.



Environmental Awareness

A significant portion of young people identified public transport as the smarter environmental travel choice.

However, many respondents are confused about the term 'sustainability' and are unaware of tools like carbon calculators.

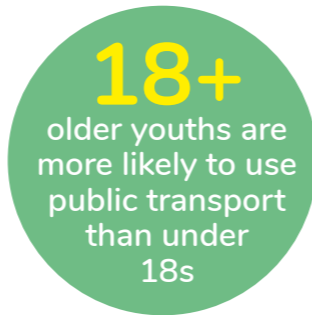




Travel Confidence

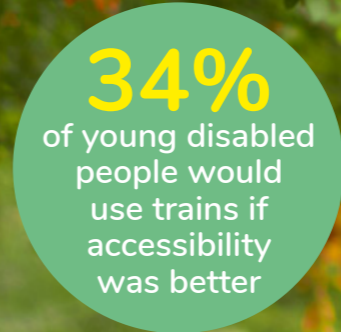
Building travel confidence among young people is essential for promoting sustainable transport as many feel anxious about using public transport particularly for accessing leisure activities.

Our 'Try The Train' programme has shown that supported journeys and positive experiences can dramatically increase young people's willingness to use public transport independently. By addressing safety concerns, providing clear information, and creating opportunities for supported travel experiences we can help young people develop the confidence they need to make sustainable travel choices. include trips.



“After we went on the train trip I feel confident that I can travel on my own.”

– ‘Try The Train’ participant



Nature & Wellbeing

Research reveals that 120 minutes weekly in nature significantly boosts wellbeing. However, many rural areas struggle to attract visitors from diverse and lower-income backgrounds due to accessibility issues and feelings of unwelcome among under-represented communities. Improving accessibility would encourage more young passengers to use sustainable transport, bridging this gap and promoting inclusivity in rural spaces.

Social

Our findings highlight a significant social challenge faced by young people today. Despite being more connected digitally, many young adults experience feelings of isolation and loneliness. This social context is crucial to consider when developing travel and leisure opportunities that result in genuine connections and travel confidence.

“It was nice to be able to travel with my friends.”

– ‘Try The Train’ journey participant

Cigna’s Loneliness Index reported that **79%** of GenZ felt lonely



Car Access

The decline in young people driving is a significant factor, a trend that has been exacerbated by the pandemic’s impact on driving test availability. Households in the Barton and Tredworth areas of Gloucester 39% have no access to a car (above the national average of 26%) and highlights the need for alternative, sustainable transport options.

“The marked decrease we’re seeing in young people driving means it’s essential that we provide viable transport options that can support and retain our youth.”

– Kevin Harris, Business Advisor

Just **29%** of 17-20 year olds drive, down from 48% in 2004

39% of households in some parts of Gloucester have no access to a car

66% of young people in Gloucestershire plan to leave within five years



YOUTH TRAVEL WORKSHOP

Bringing young people and local businesses together to explore barriers to accessing local destinations and help find solutions

To examine in greater detail the survey findings, GCRP facilitated a youth-led workshop bringing together key stakeholders, young people, and local businesses including Stroud Brewery, Stroud District Council, Aktins Realis, and Westonbirt Arboretum. Providing a platform for young people to voice concerns and propose solutions, will ensure their perspectives are at the forefront of our initiatives moving forward.

Participants engaged in a series of interactive sessions designed to explore innovative ways to enhance sustainable travel and accessibility for young people. Activities included:

- Mapping existing knowledge about local destinations and public transport
- Gauging opinions on sustainable living and public transport use
- Exploring the customer journey and identifying current challenges
- Visualizing ideal scenarios and brainstorming ideas for improvement

- Developing potential solutions and discussing strategic directions

These dynamic exercises allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the issues, fostering creative thinking and collaborative problem-solving.

“Some brilliant ideas emerged such as late buses so young people can have better access to nightlife, safer waiting areas and water refill facilities at stations.”

– Greg Pilley, CEO Stroud Brewery


KEY FINDINGS

Youth insights reveal critical barriers and needs in accessing public transport

We found that the insights from this youth-led workshop aligned closely with previous findings. Themes that emerged focused on improved accessibility, affordability, safety, sustainability and engaging experiences. Here we highlight the key insights from which strategies and solutions can be developed.

Perceived barriers

- Safety concerns, especially during evening hours
- High costs and lack of affordability
- Limited service frequencies and inconvenient timings
- Lack of awareness and peer pressure
- Discomfort and fear associated with using public transport



Positive experiences were overshadowed by difficulties such as cancelled trains, long travel times, and safety concerns during late hours.

Leisure needs

- **Social interaction:** opportunities to meet new people and engage in social activities
- **Entertainment:** preferences for music, nature, physical activities, and affordable leisure options
- **Transport:** convenient, reliable, and well-connected transport links
- **Safety:** well-lit, safe environments and digital presence for security

Sustainability

- Growing environmental awareness is often accompanied by eco-anxiety and scepticism towards greenwashing
- There was a sense of hopelessness about the impact of individual actions in tackling climate issues
- Using public transport can be seen to carry a social stigma and drive young people towards car ownership

KEY SOLUTIONS

Achieving a more sustainable and youth-friendly transport system in Gloucestershire requires:

- **Improved Accessibility:** enhancing the frequency, connectivity, and timing of public transport services
- **Affordability:** addressing the high costs associated with public transport to make it a viable option for young people
- **Safety:** ensuring safe environments at stations and on transport, especially during late hours
- **Environmental Awareness:** promoting the benefits of sustainable travel and addressing ecoanxiety through transparent and genuine green initiatives
- **Engaging Experiences:** creating an enjoyable and convenient travel experience with amenities and services tailored to young people's needs

CONTEXT FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

Cotswolds National Landscape is committed to reducing tourism-related emissions by 10% per year by working with key partners and promoting electric vehicles & public transport

Sustainable travel objectives for the region

The Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) Cotswolds Plus published a Sustainable Travel Plan for the region in March 2023 outlining six key objectives that will significantly influence youth travel and local business dynamics.

By aligning with these objectives, businesses can enhance their sustainability credentials, demonstrate a commitment to reducing

carbon footprints and promoting sustainable practices. Collaborating on these initiatives will lead to increased visibility and marketing opportunities, as these collective efforts are expected to gain media attention and funding support. Involvement in these objectives contributes to the long-term viability of the local tourism industry, while preserving its natural beauty and resources.

Promote Sustainable Travel Choices:

Encourage visitors to opt for sustainable travel options by providing accessible information and showcasing businesses with sustainable practices.

Manage Visitor Impact:

Strive for a balanced geographical and seasonal distribution of visitors to minimise negative environmental and community impacts.

Advocate for Sustainable Tourism:

Engage in advocacy efforts to ensure that the visitor economy is considered in transport and community planning processes.

Enhance Rail Accessibility:

Promote Gateway rail stations and collaborate with local communities and businesses to improve visitor access from stations to accommodations.

Support Sustainable Businesses:

Encourage businesses in the visitor economy to provide car-free recommendations to visitors and showcase sustainable practices.

Collaborative Awareness and Involvement:

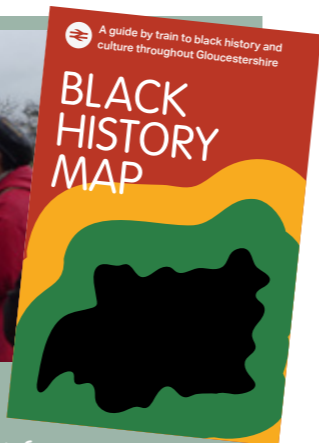
Build partnerships and community engagement to promote sustainable travel and seek funding for initiatives promoting sustainable travel.

TRAVEL INITIATIVES

Businesses can learn from existing initiatives that support sustainable travel and attract a wider audience

These example initiatives address the travel needs and demands of young people as an increasingly eco-conscious, diversity and accessibility aware audience.

The decline in young people driving is a significant factor influencing their travel options. For businesses, understanding this trend, advocating for and facilitating sustainable travel options, such as improved public transport and cycling infrastructure, is crucial. By supporting initiatives that reduce emissions, businesses can attract eco-conscious tourists and demonstrate a commitment to sustainability, enhancing their reputation and appeal.



DIVERSITY

Initiatives such as our maps that focus on accessibility and diverse perspectives which promote inclusive tourism, including guided Black History walks delivered by Black Ark Media have been very well received.

Find the Black History map here: gloucestershirecommunityrail.org/black-history-map or scan here:



MAPS & RESOURCES

GCRP and OxCRP have produced a range of resources including leisure maps of walking and cycling trails, food and drink trails and wellbeing walks have shown to effectively inspire people and support them to get out and enjoy Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire. They have also developed an Moreton-in-Marsh integrated transport map and access maps for stations across their network.



For Gloucestershire resources scan here or visit the GCRP website: gloucestershirecommunityrail.org/discoverthelines



For Oxfordshire resources scan here or visit the OxCRP website: oxfordshirecommunityrail.org/resources



CONNECTIVITY

A coordinated approach to improving 'last mile' connectivity is critical. GCRP's Access to Nature Programme, in partnership with Cotswolds National Landscape, Westonbirt Arboretum, Slimbridge WWT and the National Trust showcases the potential of integrated transport solutions. Projects such as the highly successful Slimbridge Shuttle Pilot, improve connections between rail services with key destinations, enabling visitors to travel sustainably without relying on cars, enhancing the visitor experience and supporting local economies.



“The lack of rural connectivity is a real problem that prevents young people engaging in nature. Improving access to nature is a key priority for us and we are keen to encourage the next generation to come and experience all we have to offer. – Emma Griffiths, CEO Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum

CAR-FREE TRAVEL

More young people are opting for sustainable travel and businesses must adapt to meet demand. The TrainTripper initiative promotes tourism by train, increasing awareness, providing accessible travel itineraries, helping local businesses attract young, environmentally-conscious visitors.



CASE STUDIES

Projects aimed at improving accessibility, such as the auditing of leisure destinations and the development of 'good practice' case studies, support the goal of making Gloucestershire a more inclusive destination. The Accessible Cotswolds initiative and the potential installation of sensory spaces at strategic stations will accommodate diverse travel needs.



Scan here or visit gloucestershirecommunityrail.org/access-case-studies for all the case studies

ACCESS ALL AREAS
Spotlighting Inclusivity in Gloucestershire

Improvements
Access to the Visitor Centre at Battford has been specially designed to be inclusive, the entrance, garden, shops, Terrace Cafe and accessible toilets are all located on one level. The Arboretum boasts two gender-neutral, baby-changing equipped disabled toilets. Details such as picnic benches on the cafe balcony have been thoughtfully designed with overhangs making space for wheelchair users at the table. The Arboretum has an Access Map available at reception or from the website which details important accessibility information such as steps and steeper gradients to reassure people when planning a visit.

Challenges
To overcome the accessibility challenges of being nestled on a hill in 2011, the Arboretum visitor centre and surrounding parking areas underwent a transformative renovation, focused on accessibility. Part of this work on the reception area to ensure that all paths or walkways were designed to 1:20 maximum gradient (20 units of horizontal length to 1 unit of vertical length). The Arboretum's hilltop location presented limited opportunities for parking near the entrance building so a purpose-built car park has been introduced above the buildings, with a long connecting car park to the entrance. There is also a drop-off and pick-up area near the entrance.

Transport
A 5-minute bus service brings visitors from the nearest town, Monks, and drops passengers at the end of the Arboretum drive. But the mile-long driveway from the road to the entrance can prove a challenge. The construction of a smooth path down the long driveway is being explored.

Mobilising
To enable all visitors to access most of the Arboretum grounds, all-terrain Tamper vehicles have been introduced to help visitors with limited mobility traverse the park's various paths. These vehicles, rented from Countrywide Mobility, are available, with a small fee covering insurance. This initiative has brought real joy to visitors who can now explore areas that were previously inaccessible. In the rare event of a breakdown, users can contact staff via mobile phone. The park has good mobile coverage for assistance and transport back to the visitor centre.

MARKETING TO ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE

Understanding effective marketing strategies that take into account young peoples communication preferences is essential



Insights gathered from our survey, workshop and GCRP's Young Researchers Report from 2023, paired with wider data, reveal young people's communication preferences and sources of information. Understanding and engaging with these marketing channels is essential for businesses aiming to promote sustainable travel options.

Communications that work...

Digital and social media

Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Facebook are top sources for updates, trends, and recommendations. Visual content, short videos, interactive posts, polls, quizzes, and challenges are particularly effective in engaging young audiences.

Reviews on platforms like Google and recommendations from influencers they follow on social media impact their choices.

“If I need recommendations or travel information I go online.”

– Youth travel workshop participant

Young people are more likely to respond positively to brands that are transparent about their sustainability efforts.

Ensure all digital content is optimised for mobile devices and smartphones – primary sources of information.

Educational Institutions

Information shared by schools, colleges, and universities is seen as reliable and trustworthy.

Word of mouth

Shared experiences and recommendations from friends and peers significantly influence decision making. Family members, especially parents, are also trusted sources of information.



...and communications that don't!

Young people tend to be less responsive to traditional advertising methods like TV commercials and print advertising, long articles and complex reports, and a formal, corporate tone of voice.

KEY MESSAGES

Defining key messages is crucial in engaging your audience and promoting behaviour change:

- Keep messaging simple, short and to the point
- Convey one idea at a time
- Use a friendly tone of voice
- Be relevant for the audience
- Use consistent messaging

Cost

Highlight the cost-effectiveness:

Save your money on travel with a rail card.

Affordable journeys for students and young professionals.

Sustainability

Showcase the positive environmental impact:

Choose greener travel, choose public transport.

Reduce your carbon footprint, take the train.

Convenience

Emphasise the convenience and accessibility:

Travel without the traffic hassle!

Easily accessible routes to your favourite destinations.

Freedom

Stress the independence public transport allows:

Discover places on your own terms.

Travel Independence - parent and guardian free!

Social

Promote the social opportunities:

Expand your horizons - it's more sociable to travel by train.

Travel together for a greener adventure.

CONCLUSION

As Community Rail Partnerships (CRP), we play a crucial role in representing our communities to encourage place-based approaches to transport planning. We engage with local government, providing valuable insights to integrate local access needs into travel infrastructure.

We have identified a broad range of methods and activities to address travel challenges faced by young people and the broader community in Gloucestershire. By promoting sustainable travel choices, enhancing rail accessibility, supporting local businesses, and improving inclusivity, we collectively contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive travel environment.

Our findings emphasise the importance of authenticity, engagement, and accessibility in communication. By applying these insights, businesses and organisations can better connect with young people, encouraging environmentally friendly travel choices.

Crucially, attracting young people to access tourism destinations and local amenities is mutually beneficial for both the planet and local businesses. According to the Office for National Statistics, by 2030, 16 to 34 year-olds are projected to make up 25.2% of the UK population. This significant proportion underscores that young people represent a key future market. By catering to their needs and preferences for sustainable travel, businesses can secure long-term success while contributing to environmental protection.

If you want to find out more, would like to run your own youth travel workshop or need support to implement any of these strategies please get in touch: hannah@gocrp.org.uk



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Promoting sustainable travel for a greener Gloucestershire



Community Rail
Accredited Partnership

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