

PROJECT REPORT

DECEMBER 2024

TRY THE TRAIN

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Budget: £80,000

Fund: Northern

Geography: Lancashire, Manchester, Yorkshire, Merseyside



CONCEPT AND AIMS

The overarching aim of the pilot programme, for Northern, was to support people of all ages who currently have low confidence levels in accessing rail travel to become more confident and, hopefully, independent rail passengers.

Through practical and emotional support we hoped those involved would learn about the benefits and joy of rail travel and be able to access the social, economic, health (to name a few) benefits that our rail network connects us to. Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) delivered this through collaborating with PWLC, Community Rail Partnerships and other community and youth-based partners across the Northern network during 2023.



ORGANISATION

Although the main partnership was between Northern, CRL and PWLC we also had many other partners. PWLC were responsible for the station maps we created, the social media and the evaluation side of the project.

Within CRL Katie was responsible for the budget and Catherine was responsible for the project management. This meant Catherine liaised with the facilitators and other partners, created the workshop toolkits and resources, trained the facilitators in how to run Try The Train, developed the website and more.

We had a lot of different partners from CRP's, to colleges, football clubs to community groups, ensuring we worked with a diverse set of participants from across Northern's region.



WHAT HAPPENED

For the first quarter of the year resources for the workshops were set up including methods to evaluate the increase in confidence of the participants from the start to the end of their participation. The resources included guides to buy tickets, rail passes and the virtual simulation. These resources were then tested by rail users, feedback given and improvements made. Groups were found from pre-existing community groups and schools. Throughout the project we had 25 groups which meant 209 participants. They went on 75 rail experiences, visiting 38 stations across the network and had 100 workshops. Each group also had different trips where they found out about new places they could visit and things they could do by using the trains confidently.

OUTCOMES

Participants from communities across the Northern network have experienced a remarkable increase in confidence when it comes to utilizing trains. Through tailor made workshops and rail experiences participants and facilitators have successfully addressed the concerns and barriers that communities were facing when using the trains. 86% of those involved became more confident in planning a train journey and over 90% became more confident at finding their way around a train station and taking the train independently. As a result of Try The Train, previously low-confident and/or non-rail passengers have embraced rail travel as a viable option to travel and have the means to access new opportunities across the Northern rail network.

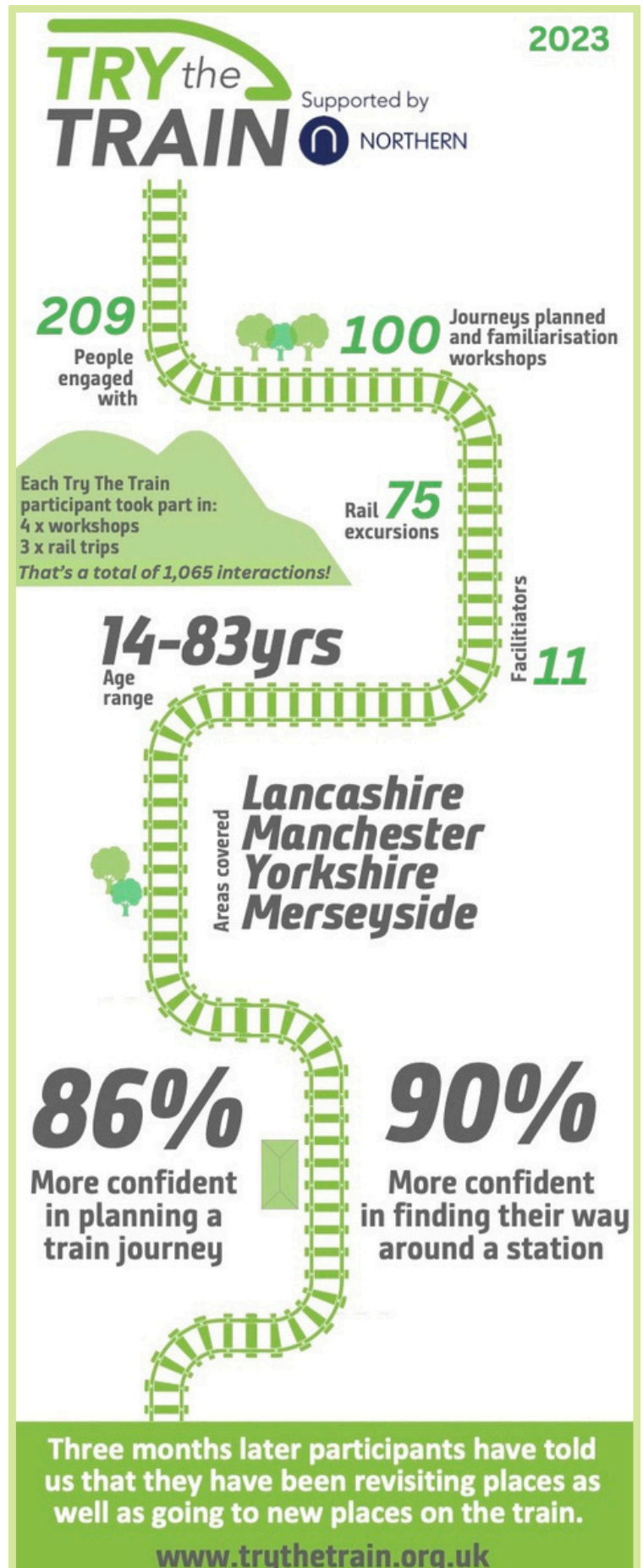
Social Value from Operational Impacts

£625,679.77

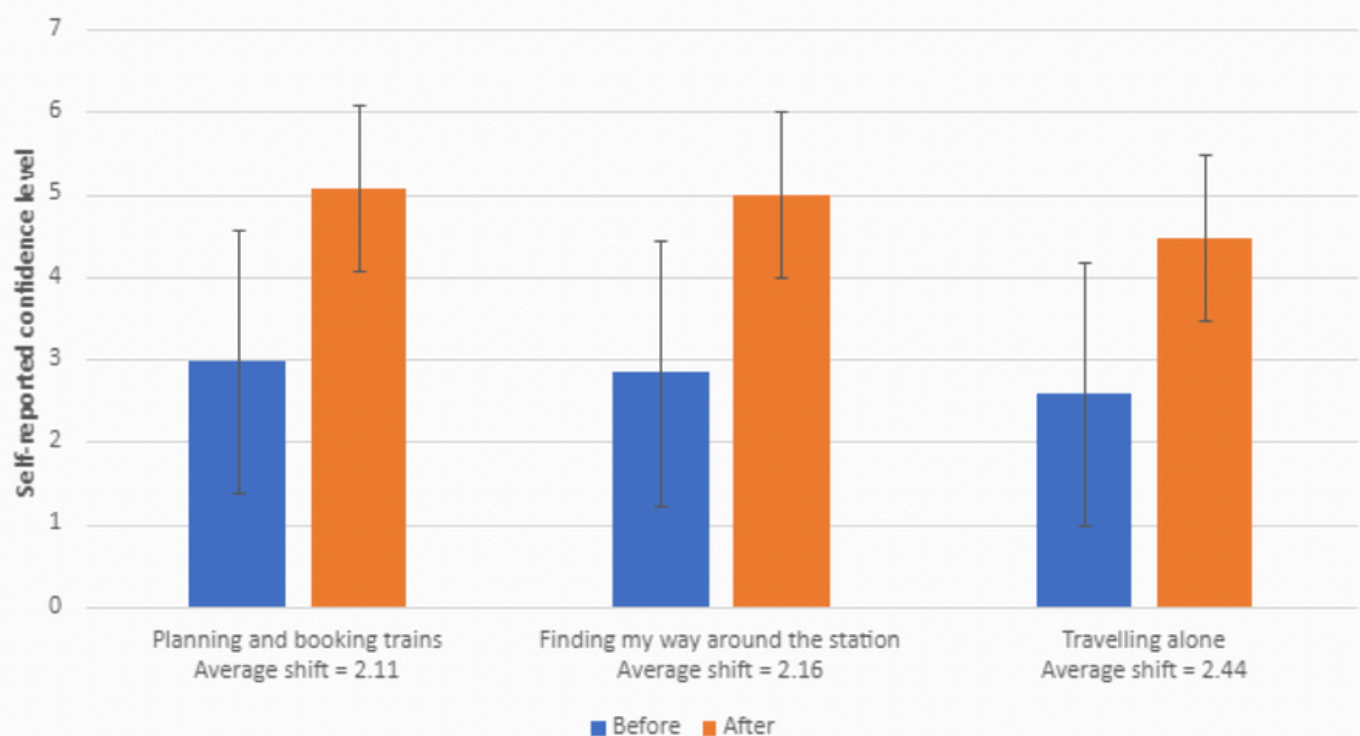


“On this project I found that staff are really helpful and friendly at the stations and I really appreciate the support from the station staff because I need help making sense of information. Knowing that there is always someone helpful available makes me feel more at ease. It gives me the confidence to travel more and I know I'll be able to relax and enjoy the experience in the future.”

Hi,just used wed,lesson on the train.booked ticket's on station computer, even did a returns .not bad for a 83 yr old thanks 😎
Ted



Summary graph to show the mean change in confidence when: planning and booking trains, navigating the station, travelling alone.



LESSONS LEARNT

One of the biggest lessons learnt through the project by all facilitators was the need to be flexible during both the workshops and rail experiences and listen to the needs of the participants. All groups and participants were different and needed support in different ways to build their confidence to use the trains independently from the project.

Working collaboratively was a fantastic piece of learning as we started with a small group of facilitators and partners but again this grew as the project grew meaning. As we set up system for recording data and evaluation information we thought through how it would work on a bigger scale each time to ensure the systems were future proof.

People need people. This was evident in all the groups. Most groups had someone who was slightly more confident at using the trains than some of the others. The peers support was a great addition to the facilitator and deputy leader, particularly on the trips when they were pointing different aspects out as we walked through the station.

For further information:

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