

A trip to confidence

February 19, 2019



Nine young people with learning difficulties from Flitwick, Houghton Regis, and Luton were given a day out with Thameslink station staff to learn how to use the railway and gain confidence travelling independently.

The 'Try A Train' day between Luton Airport Parkway and St Pancras was organised and led by Bedford station manager Joe Healy with the support of other various station staff.

The teenagers and young adults learned how to find their way around the station, buy tickets, use the automatic ticket gates and, most importantly, use the train itself – some had never travelled by train before.

On board, staff members Rebecca Van Dyke and Donna Field organised a question and answer session and, once they arrived, team leader Ciara Fraser helped Joe give them a thorough tour of St Pancras station.

Joe was last year voted through to the finals of the National RailStaff Awards for his 'Try A Train' work and has many more planned this year.

He said: "We run a lot of 'Try A Train' days and many of those who take part have disabilities and are low in confidence. So we get them out of their comfort zone, buying their own tickets to travel. I have received emails saying they are now able to use the trains; it makes you proud that you can help people and it's nice because some of them don't get the opportunity."

Claire Andrews, Personal Tutor to the young students at Central Beds College, said: "Joe and the staff at Thameslink clearly want to see our young disabled adults break through to find independence and be able to have as much freedom as possible."