



TRAVEL TRAINING

A GUIDE FOR THOSE WITH
AUTISTIC SPECTRUM
CONDITIONS IN GETTING AROUND IN
BRIGHTON AND HOVE

Produced by Assert Brighton and Hove—
www.assertbh.org.uk



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ABOUT ASSERT

Assert (B&H) was founded in 2002 and became a registered charity in 2003. We are a small local charity in Brighton and Hove that supports both people with AS and HFA and their parents, partners and carers. In 2006, we received the Argus Charity of the Year award and in 2010 received the Queens Golden Jubilee Award for voluntary services by groups in the community. We recognise that travelling in a city as busy as Brighton and Hove can be stressful and worrying for those with an ASC, so we wanted to put together this booklet to help, and for users to refer to when needed. Although we cannot cover every potential situation you will come across while travelling around the city, we hope this guide will give you some practical solutions for dealing with common worries and situations you may encounter.

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BUSES

Planning the journey

1. What does a bus journey involve?

- Getting to the bus stop
- Reading bus timetables
- Reading electronic displays
- Buying your bus ticket
- Talking to the driver—for example, asking for the correct fare
- Finding a seat on the bus
- Understanding issues of personal safety and security
- Knowing how to cope if and when a bus is late
- Dealing with changes to the route or the operating company (for example, the bus might be a different colour)

2. Getting to the bus stop

The easiest way to find out which bus stop you need to use is by using the Brighton and Hove buses website. This is a really useful website for getting information about the bus services available. It is: www.buses.co.uk

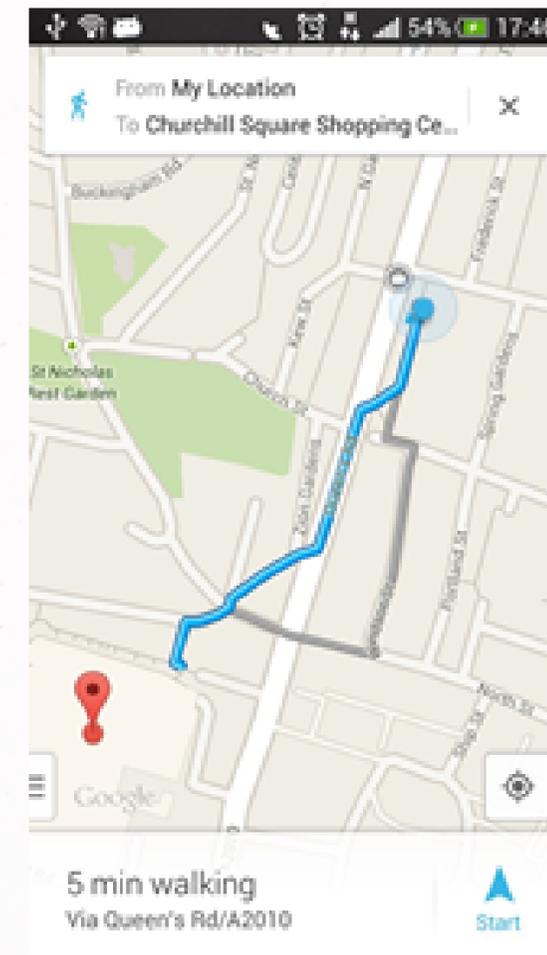


On the website you can put your postcode in, or the postcode you will be travelling from. You will then find the closest available bus stop, and a list of services that run from it. If you are not sure how



to get to the bus stop, you can plan a walking route by using <http://www.walkit.com>.

Alternatively, most smartphones now have 'navigation' apps. These are really useful for planning walking routes, as you can see a map to follow on the screen, or a list of directional instructions.



To get to the bus stop, you may have to use different methods of crossing the road. These methods include:

- Zebra crossings
- Subways
- Pelican, puffin or toucan crossings
- Footbridges; and
- Traffic islands

On a zebra crossing, traffic may come from the left or right. You should wait for all traffic to stop before you try to cross. With a subway, it is only really safe to use these in daylight. With pelican, puffin or toucan crossings, you need to press the button on the traffic light and wait for the green man signal to appear before trying to cross the road. Brighton is a very busy city with lots of traffic, so it is always best to wait until it is definitely safe to cross.

Traffic islands can be used as a half measure to cross a road that does not have a crossing. You should wait at all times in the centre of the road to judge traffic travelling in the opposite direction, and you should not just walk straight across. A traffic island allows you to concentrate on one flow of traffic at a time. If other methods of crossing are available, please try and use these first.

It may not be safe to cross the road in certain places, such as:

- On road corners, or the brow of a hill
- At major junctions where there are no pedestrian crossings
- Across dual carriageways where there are no pedestrian crossings
- Where a safety barrier is in place
- Between parked vehicles; and at bus stops

You should not cross the road if you hear the siren of an emergency vehicle—it is important to wait until a vehicle has passed. Emergency vehicles take priority, even against the flow of normal traffic. They can go through traffic lights at any time, even when there is a red light. If you are travelling when it is dark, it is important that you wear light or reflective clothes and cross only where there is adequate lighting (such as under or near a street light). If you want to know more about road safety for pedestrians, please read The Highway Code. It is available to buy online, and from most bookshops, larger newsagents and supermarkets.

3. Reading bus timetables and electronic displays on buses or at bus stops

Bus timetables can sometimes be confusing and difficult to read. For more information and to plan your journey, the Brighton and Hove buses website is really useful for timetable information.

Here you can see a list of services available, the service times, and different timetables depending on the day of the week. You can also view live timetables and buses shortly departing from your closest stop. This information can be printed off, or written down to take with you. You can also pick up timetable leaflets from the One Stop shop, as well as buying tickets. The address is as follows:

1 Stop Travel, 26 North Street, Brighton

At most of the bus stops in Brighton, there are electronic display boards detailing the services that are scheduled to stop there. These may be difficult to focus on or read, but paper timetables should also be available. There is usually a countdown showing when the next bus is due to arrive, showing in minutes. When a bus is scheduled to arrive, you will see 'due'. The service is fairly accurate, and the buses often run as scheduled.

The bus you need will have the number displayed on the front, such as '25'.



4. Buying your ticket for the bus

Brighton and Hove buses have many different fare options available, and lots of different ways to purchase tickets. Some may be preferable compared to others, as with some you will not need to speak to the driver, which may cause you anxiety. These include:

- Cash payments
- The Key
- 'M' Mobile tickets
- Scratch off saver tickets
- Contactless Payments
- Tap on, Tap off Contactless

When paying buy cash, you can either request a single, return, or saver ticket. For up to date prices on cash fares, please check the Brighton buses website. If you suffer from anxiety when speaking to new people, you could always practice rehearsing what you will need to say to the driver when paying for your ticket. Such as:

"a single to the Marina please"

"A saver ticket please"

You could always write down on a small piece of paper what you will need to say, so you could hand it to the driver if necessary. You will then need to give the driver your money. For cash tickets, change is not provided, so try and give the exact amount.

Your ticket will come from a small machine to the left of the driver, you pull it out, and then find a seat.

The Key is an electronic smartcard, where you purchase tickets online which are loaded electronically for use onto the card. The card is free, and you only pay for the tickets you load onto the card. If you lose the card, it is easily replaced, and you won't lose any of the



tickets loaded on to it. They can sometimes take a little while to load on ready for use, so it is always best to buy them in advance, at least the day before it will be needed. When using The Key on the bus, you will need to touch your card to a panel to the left of the driver, and the red light should turn green. you can then go and find a seat or a place to stand. This system can sometimes be temperamental, so you may need to be patient and try again if it does not work first time.

M Tickets (or Mobile tickets) are tickets that you display on a smartphone. You download an app from either the Apple store, or Android Play store, where you can purchase Saver or single tickets. You purchase these using a credit or debit card. Once you have purchased the ticket, you then need to 'activate' it. There are simple on-screen instructions on how to do this. You then scan the barcode on the ticket screen when getting on the bus – there is a device to do this next to the driver. The barcode will expire once the ticket has been used, so unfortunately you cannot do a screenshot of a ticket

and reuse it! If you have purchased a Saver ticket, the barcode will expire at the end of the day. The mobile ticket system is currently the cheapest way to purchase tickets, and is available to use instantly on your mobile.



Scratch off saver tickets are available to purchase in the 1 Stop shop, as well as online, and in various shops and newsagents in the city. With these, you scratch off the relevant day, month and year (or week for a weekly ticket, month for a monthly ticket). You then replace a clear plastic layer, and the ticket is ready for use. You show these to the driver when getting on the bus.

Contactless Payments are now available as a payment method. All paper tickets bought on the bus can now be paid for using contactless payment of Visa or Mastercard payment card, Google Pay and Apple Pay on a device. After you ask the driver for your ticket, you tap your payment device – cards go face down, and phones go face up.

Tap on, Tap off Contactless is another method you can now use when traveling by bus. You can use a Visa or Mastercard payment card, Google Pay and Apple Pay on a device. You simply tap on with your chosen payment method at the start of the journey, and tap off at the end when you get off. The price of your journeys will be automatically calculated and charged to your account at the end of the day. When using this method, if you use the same card or device to pay for all of your journeys in a day, the total will be capped to the price of a day ticket.

5. Knowing where to sit on the bus

There will always be unknown factors about any bus journey, as you never know how many people will be on the bus, and what these people will be like. Here are a few things to think about when choosing where to sit.

- If there are only a few passengers on the bus, try to avoid sitting next to people who are already on the bus, and choose a seat that is empty
- If you sit in an aisle seat, people may be less likely to sit next to you

- If a bus is fairly full, still try to choose an aisle seat, but if the bus gets busy someone may want to sit next to you. They might say something like “can I have that seat please?” or they may simply just gesture to the seat. It will be easiest to stand up and let them pass by you, rather than squeezing past you sitting down.
- If when you get on the bus it is full, you will most likely have to sit next to someone if you want a seat. You could always stand, if you would prefer to do that, but always take care, and hold onto a rail or a hanging handle.
- People sometimes like to ‘chitchat’ to others on the bus. To avoid this, you could maybe have a book or a magazine with you, so you can read this to avoid talking to others, if it makes you uncomfortable.
- Don’t give out personal information to people you don't know, such as your name, address or place of work.
- Avoid taking valuable items on the bus with you, but if you do, keep them out of sight such as in a pocket or bag.
- When you want to alight the bus, press the bell, and slowly make your way to the exit so you can get off. Quite a few of the buses in Brighton and Hove now have an electronic display board telling you what the next stop will be. Many buses in Brighton now have talking announcements, telling you what the next stop will be. These can be useful but also a bit unsettling, as the speakers can

be quite loud. Try not to sit too close to the speakers if you are sensitive to loud, unexpected noise.

6. Dealing with changes to routes and timetables

It is inevitable that routes and times of buses may occasionally change. Buses will sometimes be late or have to follow a different route. It is always worth remembering this when planning a route, so you are well prepared. To prepare for this possibility, maybe try to plan an alternative bus route to take should a problem arise. It would also be useful to carry a mobile phone with you to contact someone if you are going to be delayed.

TRAINS



1. What does a train journey involve?

- Getting to the train station
- Reading train timetables
- Reading electronic displays
- Buying your train ticket
- Finding a seat on the train
- Understanding issues of personal safety and security
- Knowing how to cope if and when a train is late
- Dealing with changes to the route or the operating company
- (for example, the train might be cancelled or delayed)

2. Getting to the train station



The easiest way to find out which train station you need to visit is by using the National Rail website. This is a really useful website for getting information about the train services available. It is:

www.nationalrail.co.uk

On the website you can put your postcode in, or the postcode you will be travelling from. You will then find the closest available train station to your starting and end destination. If you are not sure how to get to the train station, please see the earlier section in this booklet titled 'Getting to the bus stop' for help and ideas on how to get to the nearest station.

3. Reading train timetables and electronic displays

Train timetables can sometimes be confusing and difficult to read. For more information and to plan your journey, the National Rail website is really useful for timetable information. Here you can see a list of services available, the service times, & different timetables depending on the day of the week. This information can be printed off, or written down to take with you.

At most stations there is usually a large electronic display board for you to look at with all the upcoming departing trains, and the times they will be departing. Here you will also see the details of any cancelled or delayed trains. If you find the electronic displays difficult to focus on or read, paper timetables should also be available. The time the train is usually expected to depart will be displayed, as well as a list of all the stations that will be called at.

4. Buying your ticket for the train

There are three main ways you can buy a train ticket. Some may be more preferable than others, as with some you will not need to speak to anyone, which may cause you anxiety. These include:

- Buying your ticket from a train station employee paying with either card or cash
- Buying your ticket from a machine at the station
- Buying your ticket online, and then collecting it at the station

When buying your ticket at the station on the day of travel, you can pay by either using cash, or card. If paying by card you will most likely have to pay by chip and pin. You can either request a single or return ticket. For up to date prices on tickets, please check the National Rail website. If you suffer from anxiety when speaking to new people, you could always practice rehearsing what you will need to say when paying for your ticket. Such as:

“a single ticket to Worthing please”

“a return ticket to London Victoria please”

You could always write down on a small piece of paper what you will need to say, so you could hand it to the attendant if necessary. You will then need to pay for your ticket, which will then be given to you.

Things to consider when buying your ticket on the day of travel:

- At busy times, there may be a long queue for tickets. You may have to wait some time to purchase your ticket. Leave yourself plenty of time to buy your ticket. At busy time of day (pre 9am and after 4pm) the station will be much more busy.
- While waiting in a queue, you may have to stand at close proximity to other people. They may not be respectful of personal space.

Buying your ticket from the machine at the station is usually fairly quick and easy. You will just need to follow the on screen instructions on how to purchase your ticket—entering your destination and the type of ticket you want to purchase. You will be able to pay using either card or cash. Some machines are cash only, or debit/credit card only. There are several machines at most stations, so hopefully you won't have to queue to use one. Once you have bought your ticket, it will be dispensed along with a receipt, and any change if you are due some when paying with cash.

Another easy way to buy your ticket would be to purchase your ticket online before travel, and then collect it at the station on the day of travel. There are a number of websites you can use to do this, including the following:

www.nationalrail.co.uk

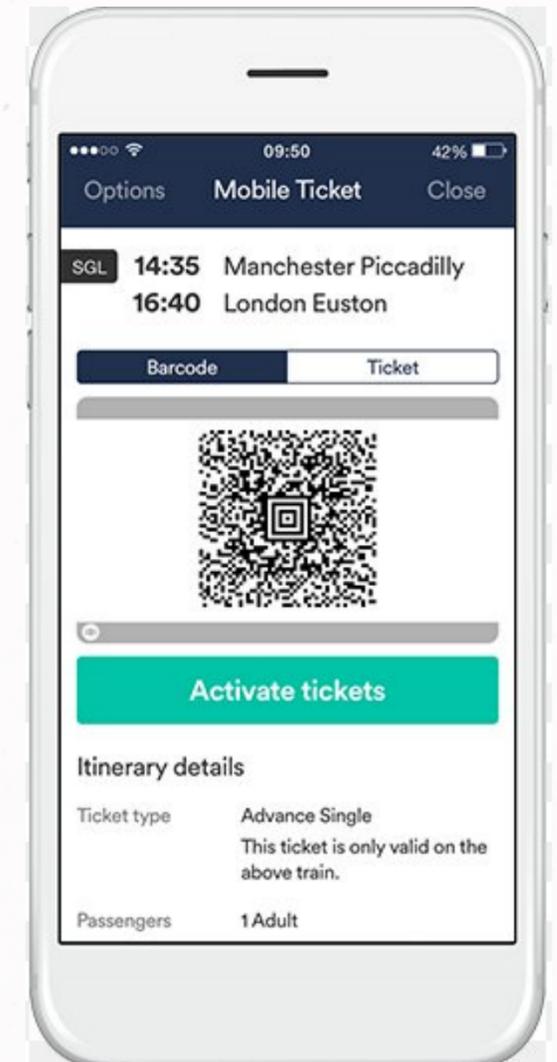
www.southernrailway.com

www.thetrainline.co.uk



You can buy your ticket in advance, and usually get a discount for advance purchasing. You can also see the details of different priced trains depending on what time you choose to travel. If you choose to travel at peak times, the fares will be more expensive. Once you have bought your ticket, you will be provided with a reference number that will usually be emailed to you. You can then collect your ticket at the station by entering your reference number into one of the ticket machines. The instructions are all on screen so it should be fairly straightforward to collect your ticket.

Digital Tickets can now be purchased using apps like Trainline and TrainPal. When you book through an app like this, you will be shown all of your route and ticket options so you can pick the one that is best for you, and digital tickets are available for most UK routes. Once your tickets are booked, you get a Mobile Ticket that you download on to your phone. When this is downloaded, you won't need to have WiFi or internet access to use it at the station, and you won't need to queue for paper tickets. Once you



get to the station you just need to scan the ticket at the barrier machines or show it to station staff to access the platforms and trains. If you choose this method you will need to make sure your phone has enough battery to last for your entire journey.



Once you have your ticket—you may need to watch the electronic board to see which platform your train will be departing from, if it is not already displayed when you get there. Please be aware that platforms can get announced with only a few minutes to spare—so try to get yourself in a good position for accessing the barriers. If you have time to spare, you may choose to wait in the Passenger Lounge. If not, there is seating available in the station main area.



Accessing the platform is done by going through barriers, and either putting your ticket through a machine, or showing your ticket to a guard who will open a door for you. The guards are situated at opposite ends of the barriers. You may prefer to enter the platforms via the guard, as this means you will not have to negotiate the automatic barrier. Going in via the guard will also be easier if you have mobility issues, or have large luggage to carry. The guard may ask why you need to enter via the barrier, you can respond 'I have autism so find this less stressful'.

You will then need to make your way to the platform where your train will be departing. Platforms are well signposted with the destinations of departing trains usually displayed on an electronic board. Please note that train doors close 30 seconds before departure and you will not be able to board the train during this 30 second period.



Knowing where to sit on the train

There will always be unknown factors about any train journey, as you never know how many people will be on the train, and what these people will be like. Here are a few things to think about when choosing where to sit.

- If there are only a few passengers on the train, try to avoid sitting next to people who are already on the train, and choose a seat that is empty.
- If you sit in an aisle seat, people may be less likely to sit next to you.

- If a train is fairly full, still try to choose an aisle seat, but if the train gets busy someone may want to sit next to you. They might say something like “can I have that seat please?” or they may simply just gesture to the seat. It will be easiest to stand up and let them pass by you, rather than squeezing past you sitting down.
- If when you get on the train it is full, you will most likely have to sit next to someone if you want a seat. You could always stand, if you would prefer to do that, but always take care, and hold onto a rail or a hanging handle.
- People sometimes like to ‘chitchat’ to others on the train. To avoid this, you could maybe have a book or a magazine with you, so you can read this to avoid talking to others, if it makes you uncomfortable.
- Don’t give out personal information to people you don't know, such as your name, address or place of work.
- Avoid taking valuable items on the train with you, but if you do, keep them out of sight such as in a pocket or bag.

When you want to alight the train, slowly make your way to the door so you can get off. When the train has come to a standstill, you will then need to wait for the 'open' button to flash before you can press it to exit the train. Take care when stepping down from the train, as there may be a considerable gap between the train and platform.

Dealing with changes to routes and timetables

It is inevitable that routes and times of trains may occasionally change. Trains will sometimes be delayed or have to follow a different route, or even miss previously scheduled stops. It is always worth remembering this when planning a route, so you are well prepared. To prepare for this possibility, maybe try to plan an alternative transport route to take should a problem arise, such as a bus or taxi. It would also be useful to carry a mobile phone with you to contact someone if you are going to be delayed.



TAXIS

Ask someone you trust to tell you the name and number of a good taxi company. Do not get into a taxi that just stops for you in the street. It is usually better to pre-book a taxi from a trusted company. A few reputable firms are as follows:



Brighton & Hove Radio Cabs	01273 20 40 60
Streamline Taxis	01273 20 20 20
Brighton & Hove City Cabs	01272 205 205

Book a taxi by phone or by going to the taxi office. Tell the taxi office what time you want the taxi to pick you up. Many shops, restaurants and supermarkets will also be happy to book a taxi on your behalf if you are leaving somewhere, and are not sure where the closest taxi rank is.

When booking a taxi, ask for the driver's name & the make and colour of car that will come. When the taxi arrives, ask for the driver's name & the name of the taxi company. Often you will be asked for your name, so the driver can check who they are meeting, and call your name when arriving at the pick-up point. Additionally, when you phone for a taxi you will sometimes be asked for your

number (or they can get it automatically from their caller ID system) and will give you a call when the taxi is about to arrive or nearby. If you answer this call nothing happens, it just hangs up. It might not be the same number you dialled for the taxi.

A few things to consider when travelling by taxi:

- When returning home, Ask the taxi driver to wait outside until you get into your house.
- If you travel late at night. Have your door key ready so you can get into your house quickly.
- When booking the taxi ask what the fare will be, so you can have your money ready. This may be an approximation as depending on routes/traffic levels, the fare could be either less or more expensive than the figure quoted.



You can now pay for your taxi using cash, card payments, and methods like Google Pay and Apple Pay. If you would like to pay for your fare using card or other electronic methods you will have to request this when you book your taxi, either by telling the person on the phone, or the person who is booking it on your behalf the payment method you will be using. If you are getting a taxi from a taxi rank, ask the driver if they accept card or electronic payments before you get in.

If you want more information on fares, this website is helpful as it gives guidance on fares at different times of day:

<http://www.brightontaxis.com/brighton-and-hove-prices>

- Do not feel like you have to talk to the driver if it makes you feel more comfortable not to do so. Some drivers will just start talking to you of their own accord, which can feel awkward and confusing. You can perhaps make non committal noises, such as 'uh-huh' or 'mmm' to show your disinterest, or perhaps show you are distracted by another task, such as sending a text message on your mobile phone or reading a book. Hopefully the driver will give up on trying to continue a conversation with you.

Accessibility

Many taxis are now equipped to meet the needs of passengers with mobility issues, and are fitted with wheelchair ramps and harnesses. All drivers for Brighton & Hove Radio Cabs have to complete a Disability Awareness Course. If you feel it would help, when booking your taxi you can inform the company that you have additional needs.

Other things to consider using all transport modes

Weather

On hot sunny days, public transport can become very claustrophobic and warm in a short period of time. If travelling by bus, the upstairs part of the bus will be particularly warm, especially the two front seats. You can open the window if you feel it would help, but this may also bring in loud traffic noise.

On wet days take extra care when travelling anywhere to avoid trips or falls, as the ground may be more slippery than usual. Windows on public transport may also mist up, but you can wipe this away if you would prefer to see out of the window.

Rush hour

Between the hours of 7am and 10am, and between 4pm and 6.30pm, public transport will be especially busy due to commuter traffic, and also children going to school. Avoid travelling at these times if possible as there will be lots of people all at once. If you do need to use public transport during these times, try to catch the bus either nearer the start of a route to avoid it being full when you get there.

Antisocial or threatening behaviour

If when travelling on public transport you are worried about other passengers behaving in an antisocial or threatening way, you can call or text the police using the below methods.

65999	Text number for Sussex police
0800 405040	Transport Police
101	Non emergency police

Travel Update: Covid-19 and Public Transport

The current Covid-19 pandemic means that there are some changes to using public transport at this time. This includes wearing a face covering at all times on trains, busses and in taxis unless you are exempt. Social distancing measures are also in place, which means the capacity on busses and trains have been reduced. This could mean that if they are too full, you will not be able to get on and may have to wait for another. You could also be asked to sit in a specific seat when you get on, or find that some seats have been cordoned off. You can check the latest Government advice on travel on their website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US VIA

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