

There are around 700,000 autistic children and adults in the UK, as well as three million family members. Autistic people would like the same opportunities to travel as everyone else, but can struggle in public places like in stations and on trains and be anxious about unexpected changes, like delays on transport.

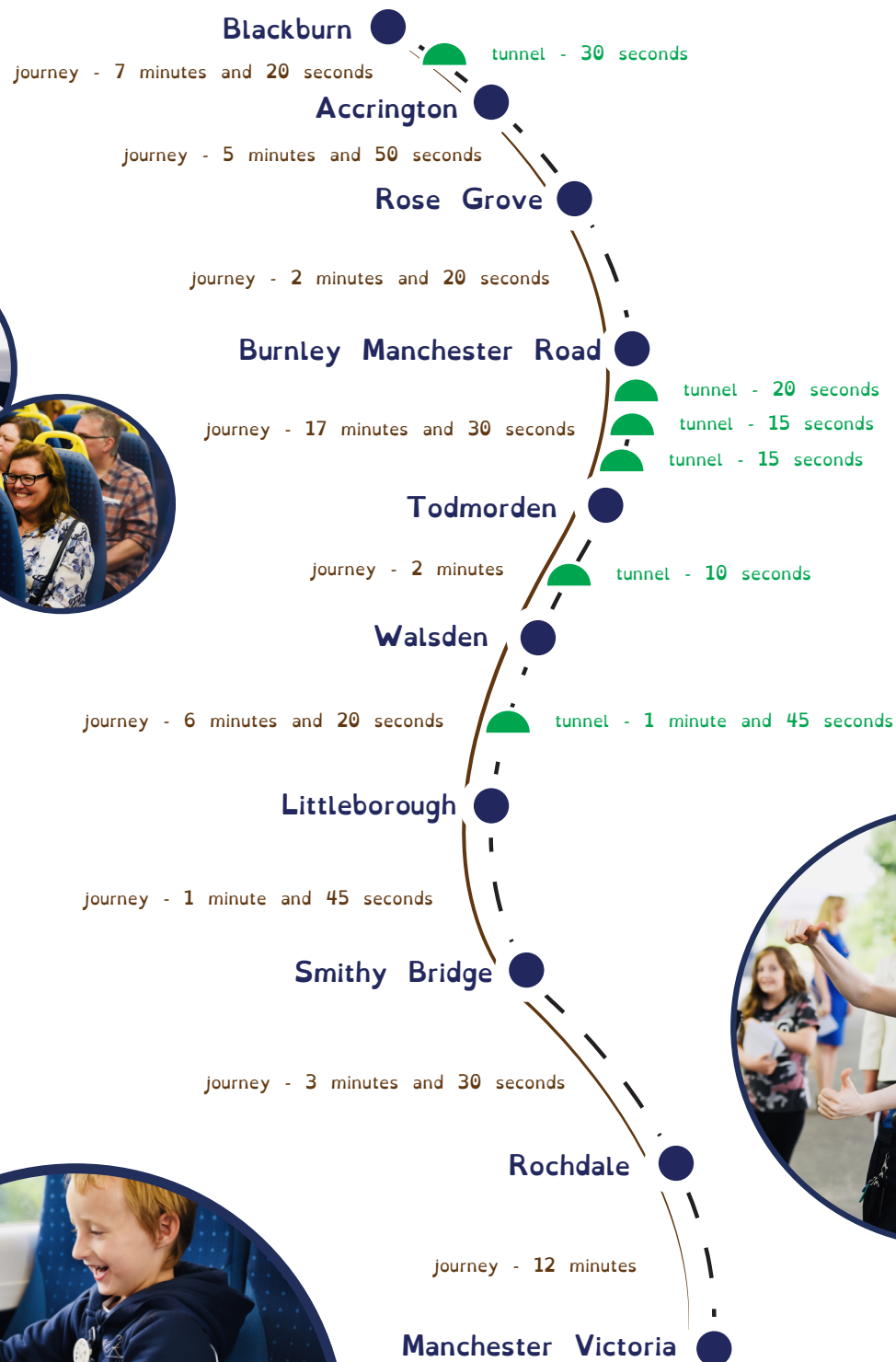
Daisy Chapman-Chamberlain, project manager with Community Rail Lancashire, said: "Unexpected changes when taking public transport can be overwhelming; 79% of autistic people tell the National Autistic Society they feel socially isolated, and for some, the fear of unexpected changes could mean not even leaving the house. By giving these young people and their families the chance to experience public transport in a positive and guided context, we can give them confidence for future use."

Carolyn Watson, Community and Sustainability Director, Northern, said: "Improving the journey experience of our customers is one of our top priorities and we recognise that, for some people, using the railway is not always straightforward.

"We want to make our trains – and our wider network – as accessible as possible, and are delighted to be able to support this fantastic project. Our colleagues jumped at the chance to get involved and we are absolutely committed to making the UK's first autism-friendly line a success that can be replicated elsewhere."

The project launched at Blackburn station, with a number of attendees from within rail and local families with autistic children and young people. The attendees had a fantastic day, with a 100% positive response rate when asked if they would use the line in the future, and if the resources helped them to feel confident or would assist other families.

Daniel Cadey, Autism Friendly Development Manager at the National Autistic Society, said: "We're really pleased that Community Rail Lancashire has developed resources to help their autistic passengers prepare for journeys and that our charity will be training Northern's staff understand the needs of their autistic customers. We want more rail companies to follow Community Rail Lancashire's and Northern's example and open up their services to hundreds of thousands of autistic people."



Northern staff are trained to assist passengers with autism and other additional needs, and comprehensive information booklets are available for the line from Blackburn to Manchester Victoria via Todmorden (these can be collected at staffed stations or downloaded below), as well as activity booklets for children and young people.

We have designated dates during which staff will be made aware there may be more passengers than usual who require assistance.

These dates (within 2019) are;

30th July
(filming and photography will take place)

1st August

7th August

12th August

24th August

30th August

Ear defenders and sunglasses are also available to borrow from staffed stations along the route; please return these at the end of your day.

We encourage travel by rail at all times, but some resources may not be available outside these dates.

Travel guides, including businesses which feature autism-friendly hours and family-friendly activities, can be collected free-of-charge from staffed stations along the route. We recommend travelling between 9.30 and 16.00 to ensure services are quiet.

Tickets can be purchased from staffed stations, ticket machines, or online at www.northernrailway.co.uk, along with timetable information and assistance booking facilities.

How to get in touch with us:

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Telephone:
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Key Contacts:
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Web Master:
Simon Clarke, Community Rail Development Officer

or go to:
www.communityraillancashire.co.uk
www.downtheline.org.uk/projects

All information is accurate as of July 2019.

All resources are subject to availability.

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by arriva

This project was funded by Arriva Rail North's seed corn fund and Community Rail Lancashire.

An Autism Friendly Line

the Todmorden Curve

Community Rail Lancashire and the National Autistic Society, together with Northern, are proud to create and host the UK's first Autism Friendly Railway Line.



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