

## Kent County Council uses QRoutes to transform SEN transport

Kent County Council has transformed its Special Educational Needs transport services, with new computerised routing technology that optimises transport efficiency by up to 15 percent. Using cloud-based software from QRoutes, the Council has reviewed 1500 routes and re-planned transport for 4000 Special Educational Needs pupils, as well as 1000 people entitled to Social Care transport.

Covering 12 District Council areas, Kent County Council is the biggest Shire Council taking on Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport. It has a greater number of SEN clients than any other council in the UK. With a £25 million annual budget, the entire SEN and Social Care transport service is run through flexible framework agreements with a mixture of local bus and taxi operators. This negates the need for a large owned fleet that would be too costly to run over such an extensive area.

Over a 30 month period Kent has moved from tendering for 1500 individual routes to a school-based approach with fewer contracts with bulk-buy services giving better economies of scale.

"At the heart of the reorganisation of our transport services was QRoutes which has enabled us to plan and optimise the transport for every one of almost 5000 clients," says Shane Bushell, Client

Transport Manager, Kent County Council. "It's a task that would have been impossible with manual planning and we've achieved savings of up to 15 percent through improved routing and vehicle utilisation."

According to Kent manually planning a route used to take the team of planners 2 or 3 days. The QRoutes software performs the same task in a few minutes. Additionally the computed

results have proven to be better as the system can simultaneously handle variable factors such as stop times and other complexities affecting special needs.

**"QRoutes makes the impossible possible."**

"QRoutes makes the impossible possible. With just a small team of seven people managing the entire transport services, we could not cope without it," explains Bushell. "For Kent County Council, customers are the heart of what we do and the automation provided by the system frees up time that is better spent dealing with the special needs of our clients."

"We've discovered some other significant benefits as well. Because it uses maps it is a very useful tool for showing how and why routes are calculated so we can explain decisions to clients and stakeholders. In addition the system gives highly consistent results for the shortest available routes used by our transport providers."

With the rapid data processing QRoutes allows Kent to quickly review services by running 'what if' scenarios. "QRoutes allows us to continually review services by testing different scenarios. It means we can be sure we are always being as efficient as possible using tax-payers money well," adds Bushell.



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[info@qroutes.co.uk](mailto:info@qroutes.co.uk)

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