

Become travel savvy with unique bespoke travel safety training for Kent's young people

Young people in Kent can now prepare for their adventures abroad by signing up for unique travel safety training that is only available in a limited number of counties throughout the UK.

The Education People, a Kent County Council Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo), has teamed up with a former Metropolitan Police close protection officer to provide bespoke courses aimed at teenagers and young people planning to travel alone or with friends. Duncan Johnston, director of Kent-based Worldlywise Ltd, will deliver the course and will cover topics including which items to pack, how to stay safe and healthy, and how to avoid becoming a victim of crime, as well as giving basic first aid training. The first course will take place in Maidstone, just before schools break up for the summer holidays and is being promoted using the hashtag #BeTravelSavvy.

The one-day course is designed to give youngsters the skills and knowledge necessary to travel the world safely and is not in any way intended to put them off embarking on a global adventure.

Mr Johnston, who worked for national security in Special Branch during his 30-year career in the police, said: "It's important to remember that the probability of something bad happening while you're away travelling is very low. However, there have been a number of stories in the news recently about holidaymakers, and young backpackers in particular, coming to harm while abroad. The world is probably no more dangerous today than it was when I was a teenager, but young people, and their parents, are more aware of the dangers now and are actively seeking advice on how they can stay safe while travelling."

"The 'Education People' has been fantastic in supporting us and working with us to get this course into schools so young people can benefit from it, and we're very excited for our first course in June.

"I would never want to put anyone off travelling, in fact I would encourage young people to travel as they are likely to have some fantastic experiences and a course like ours can equip them with information, advice and skills needed to keep them safe and healthy and allow them to get the most out of their trip, whether that's a few weeks in Europe or a year travelling all over the world."

Although some travel agents offer safety advice to customers travelling abroad, The Education People and Mr Johnston believe this course is unique as it is one of only a handful in the UK aimed specifically at school leavers and young travellers. The bespoke course will also be tailored to offer advice specific to the destinations attendees plan to visit, which they will be asked to specify in advance. Parents/guardians are welcome to join their offspring in the afternoon for the first aid training and a short question and answer session but the majority of the session, which costs £100 for the full day, will be for young people only.

Mr Johnston added: "We want the young people to feel confident speaking to us and raising issues they may not feel comfortable speaking about in front of their parents or teachers. However, we appreciate parents will also have concerns and questions regarding their son or daughter travelling abroad without them; and everyone can benefit from some first aid training."

Mr Johnston has travelled all over the world throughout his career, including to Syria, Libya and Afghanistan. He has worked with Prime Ministers, Presidents and members of the Royal

Family as well as accompanying journalists to warzones. He drew on his experience of developing risk mitigation courses, in conjunction with working with the military, Foreign Office and private sector security companies, for unarmed police officers and civilian police staff working overseas, adapting it for a younger audience travelling for pleasure.

James Roberts, CEO of The Education People, said: "We are delighted to be working with Duncan Johnston and Worldlywise Ltd to offer this course, which will allow Kent's young people to stay safe and healthy while travelling abroad. We would encourage families to register for this course sooner rather than later, particularly if their sons or daughters are planning on going away this summer, as we anticipate it proving popular."

The first travel safety course will take place at Invicta Grammar School in Maidstone [from 10am to 4pm on Tuesday, June 25](#) and is open to young people from all schools. To request a booking form please email Victoria.Parker@theeducationpeople.org. Please DO NOT contact the school. Young people will gain a Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance (HABC) accreditation for attending the course.

The Education People and Mr Johnston can also offer travel safety training for teachers and school staff preparing to take pupils on trips abroad. To enquire about teacher training or having a course for young people at your venue email joanne.winkler@theeducationpeople.org

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