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Consultation on Free Bus Travel for Older and Disabled People and Modern Apprentices

August 2017

Ministerial Foreword From Minister For Transport And The Islands, Humza Yousaf MSP



The Scottish Government is launching this Consultation to seek your views on the concessionary travel scheme for older and disabled people (“the Scheme”).

This popular and valued scheme improves access for older and disabled people to essential services and opens up participation in family and other social activities that would otherwise not be affordable, ultimately offering independence to people who rely on bus travel.

Over 1.3 million bus pass holders benefit from the Scotland-wide free bus travel scheme for older and disabled people. They make around 145 million bus journeys each year representing around a third of all bus journeys made in Scotland. Free bus travel is delivering one of the Scottish Government’s key commitments, one we believe brings important benefits for all our eligible older and disabled people.

We are committed to continuing to provide free bus travel for those who need it the most, and therefore want to look at options to ensure the longer-term sustainability of the scheme so that free bus travel can continue to benefit those who have the greatest need.

We are also aware of the particular challenges facing younger people and will be asking for your views on our proposal to provide free bus travel to Modern Apprentices and how that might be taken forward. We will also be looking to provide free companion travel for eligible disabled children under five who are not currently covered by the Scheme.

Whatever happens going forward let me make one thing clear and give you this absolute assurance, **if you already have a bus pass, or obtain one before any changes are made, you will not lose it!** Those with a bus pass will continue to access the benefits of the Scheme. In addition we will not be making any adverse changes to the existing eligibility criteria for those with a disability.

I look forward to receiving your views on our proposals.

Humza Yousaf
Minister for Transport and the Islands

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1 Responding to this Consultation

About this Consultation

1.1 Consultation is an essential part of the Scottish Government's policy making process. It gives us the opportunity to seek your opinions. This Consultation sets out the issues under consideration and asks you questions about what we are proposing. After the Consultation is closed we will publish responses where we have been given permission to do so.

1.2 Responses are analysed and used as part of the policy making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. Responses to this Consultation will help to inform the development of future rules and guidance on the National Concessionary Travel Scheme in Scotland.

Deadline

1.3 The Consultation closes at midnight on **17 November 2017**.

How to respond

1.4 To encourage wide participation, the Scottish Government has created a number of ways for you to engage in the Consultation. You can respond online, by email or by post.

1.5 The Consultation will also be available in alternative formats on request, including Large Print, Braille and Easy Read.

1.6 In addition to publishing this Consultation document, we have also produced an information leaflet which can be downloaded from the Transport Scotland website: www.transport.gov.scot/concessionary-travel/

Respond Online

1.7 To respond online please use the Scottish Government's Consultation Hub, Citizen Space, at www.consult.scotland.gov.uk. You can save and return to your response at any time while the Consultation is open. But please ensure that your response is submitted before the Consultation closes at midnight on **17 November 2017**.

1.8 You will automatically be emailed a copy of your response after you submit it. If you choose this method you will be directed to complete the Respondent Information Form. The Respondent Information Form lets us know how you wish your response to be handled, and in particular whether you are happy for your response to be made public.

1.9 You can also complete the response form at Annex B, and either scan this and send it by email, or send it by post to the address given on page 4 below.

Table of response methods

Online	You can use the response form on the Scottish Government's Consultation Hub, Citizen Space, at www.consult.scotland.gov.uk/
Email	Send us your response in an email to concessionarytravelconsultation@transport.gov.scot Please include the Respondent Information Form.
Post	Send your response in English to: Concessionary Travel Policy Team Transport Scotland Area 2D-North Victoria Quay Edinburgh EH6 6QQ Please include the Respondent Information Form.

1.10 With each of these methods you need to include your Respondent Information Form because this lets us know how you wish your response to be handled, and in particular whether you are happy for your response to be made public.

1.11 You can find this in Annex B below.

Next Steps

1.12 After the Consultation has closed we will analyse all the responses received and use your feedback to help inform the development of future rules and guidance on the National Concessionary Travel Scheme. Where permission has been given, we will make all responses available to the public at www.consult.scotland.gov.uk. The responses to the Consultation and analysis will be published in due course.

Need assistance?

1.13 If you need support in answering this Consultation or alternatively have a query about the Consultation process, or a complaint about how this Consultation has been conducted, you can send your query:

- by email to concessionarytravelconsultation@transport.gov.scot
- or by writing to:

Concessionary Travel Policy Team
 Transport Scotland
 Area 2D-North
 Victoria Quay
 Edinburgh
 EH6 6QQ

2 Free bus travel for older and disabled people

2.1 The current scheme for older and disabled people provides free bus travel within Scotland and to Carlisle and Berwick-upon-Tweed on any registered bus service to anyone who lives in Scotland, who is aged 60 and over or meets certain disability criteria, and who has applied for and received a National Entitlement Card (or “bus pass”). In addition, residents of Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles who meet these criteria are entitled to 2 free return ferry journeys to the mainland each year. A history of earlier concessionary travel schemes in Scotland is provided at Annex A.

Benefits of free bus travel

2.2 One of the stated objectives of the Scheme when it was set up in 2006 was to allow older and disabled people improved access to services, facilities and social networks by free scheduled bus services; and so promote social inclusion.

2.3 Research has been undertaken on the benefits of concessionary travel schemes, including a report by the bus industry group, Greener Journeys, “The costs and benefits of concessionary bus travel for older and disabled people”¹.

2.4 In Scotland, we undertook our own customer feedback research in 2013² and 2014³ to gather the views of bus pass holders on the scheme.

2.5 The research demonstrates that the Scheme is greatly valued and works well for bus pass holders for a number of reasons including financial savings, reducing isolation, giving a sense of greater independence and increasing confidence in their own ability to travel. It also highlights how bus pass holders see the Scheme as having improved their mental and physical well-being and has encouraged modal shift from car to public transport and increased use of the bus. Almost half of respondents in our survey said they now made journeys they would not previously have done, in particular for day trips and visiting friends and relatives.

Objectives of the Scheme

2.6 The key objectives for the Scheme include:-

- allowing older and disabled people improved access to services, facilities and social networks; and so promoting social inclusion;
- improving health by promoting a more active lifestyle;
- promoting modal shift from private car to public transport;
- maintaining a “no better, no worse off” position for bus operators with a standard reimbursement rate;
- providing opportunity for improvements to public transport;

¹ www.greenerjourneys.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Concessionary-travel-costs-and-benefits-September-2014.pdf

² www.transport.gov.scot/publication/concessionary-travel-customer-feedback-research-year-one-report/

³ www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20160104171742/http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/system/files/j329860.pdf

- stimulating the introduction of smart cards.

2.7 Since the Scheme was introduced there have been minor modifications, such as simplifying the application process for eligible armed forces veterans in 2012 and changes in 2013 to include people receiving the new Personal Independence Payments (PIP).

2.8 In addition, between 2014 and 2016 new bus passes were issued to replace all existing ones. This was to ensure that they would be smart enabled in order to take advantage of the advances in technology since 2006. The new “*saltirecard*” branded bus passes ensure that card holders are able to make greater use of smart technology.

Eligibility

2.9 The current eligibility criteria are set down in legislation⁴.

How free bus travel is funded



Figure 1 - Reimbursement rate

2.10 Bus pass holders travel for free. Travel through the national scheme is paid for directly by the Scottish Government. It is a principle of the Scheme that operators should be no better and no worse off as a result of their participation.

2.11 The Scottish Government reimburses bus operators for carrying bus pass holders at an agreed rate negotiated with representatives of the bus industry. This is called the reimbursement rate. In 2006-7 the rate was set at 73.6% of the adult single fare for each concessionary journey and, thanks largely to refinements in the economic model used to calculate the rate, has since gradually reduced to 56.9% of the adult single fare in 2017-18.

2.12 So, for every journey made on a bus by a bus pass holder under the Scheme, the bus service operator is currently paid 56.9% of the adult single fare for that journey by the Scottish Government.

⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2006/117/contents/made

Number of bus pass holders

2.13 In the first year of the Scheme, around 900,000 people obtained a National Entitlement Card enabling them to travel for free by bus. This number has gradually increased so that there are now over 1.3 million bus pass holders under the Scheme. Of these around 1.13 million are eligible by age and around 167,000 meet one or more of the disability criteria. Of these 167,000, around 120,000 are eligible for a companion to travel with them free of charge.

1.3 million people have
National Concessionary Travel
Scheme cards in Scotland



2.14 The following graph sets out the increase in numbers of bus pass holders since 2006.

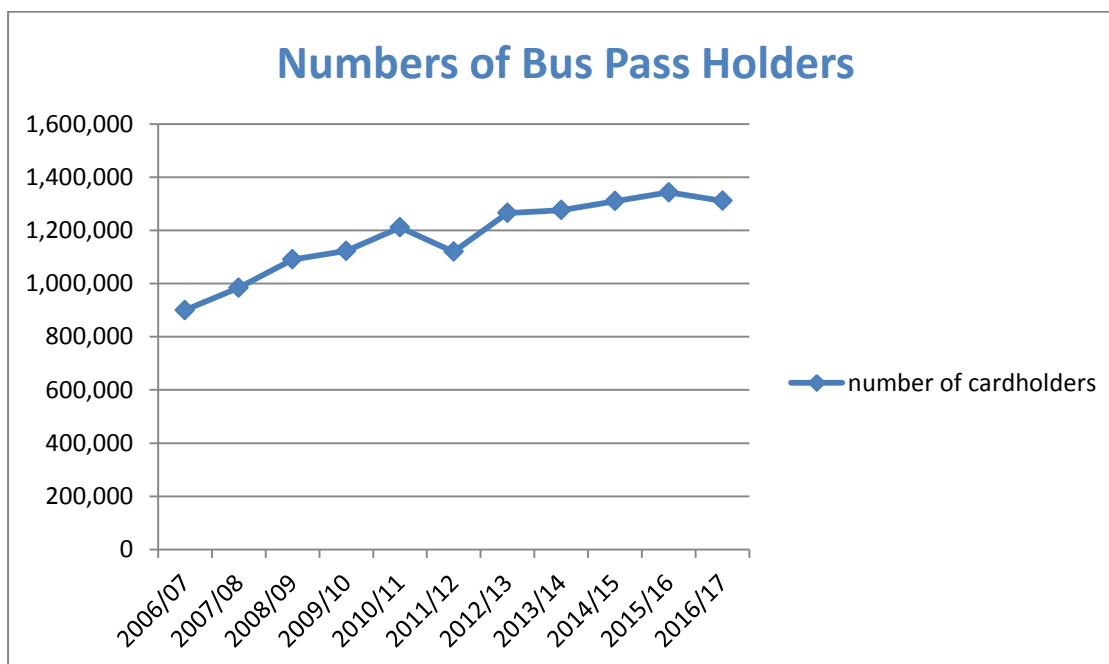


Figure 2 - Trend in concessionary card holders numbers

Journeys made by free bus travel

2.15 Scheme bus pass holders have made over 1,640 million journeys by bus since 2006. There was a small decline in usage between 2007-08 and 2012-13, partly coinciding with the move from “show and go” to smart ticketing. This has since stabilised to around 145 million journeys per year, almost one third of all bus journeys made in Scotland.

2.16 For a variety of reasons, including greatly increased car ownership, bus patronage in general has been continually declining since at least the 1960s. Between 2006-7 and 2014-15 (the most recent year for which we have figures) the number of bus journeys in Scotland fell from 476 million a year to 414 million. The most pronounced decline coincided with the economic downturn and the position has been a little more steady in the past few years. The graph below illustrates this trend over the past decade.

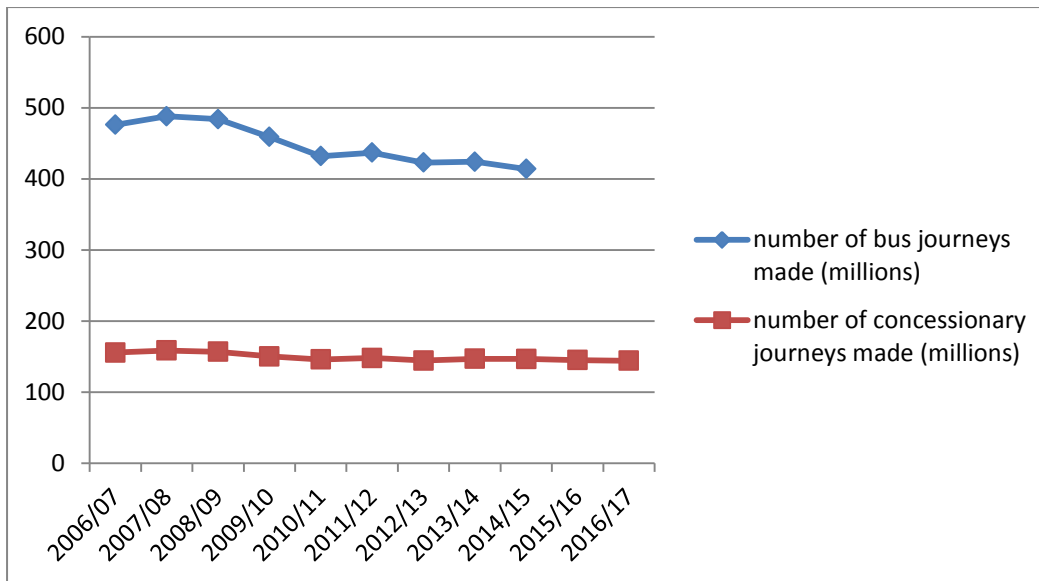


Figure 3 - Trend in bus journeys

Projected future costs of free bus travel

2.17 Each year around 70,000 people in Scotland reach the age of 60. At this point they are entitled to a National Entitlement Card that provides free bus travel on local and long distance routes throughout Scotland.

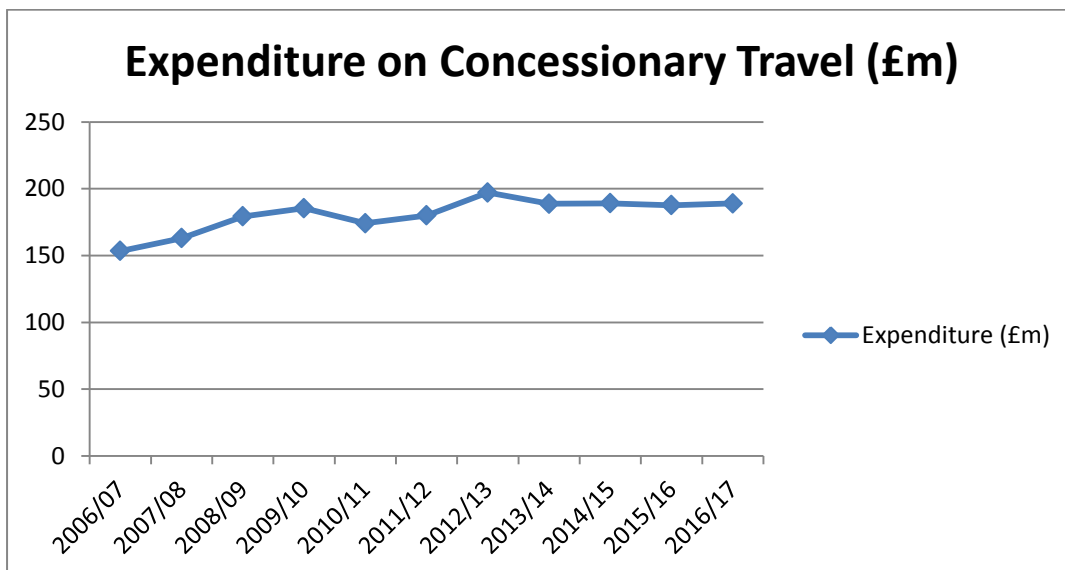


Figure 4 - cost of providing free bus travel

2.18 The fact that people are living longer and leading healthier, more active lives is to be celebrated. However, the fact that there will be more older people year on year does mean that costs for the Scheme are likely to increase further.

2.19 This is why we are looking at options on how best to make sure that the Scheme remains affordable in the coming years.

Options covered

2.20 The Scottish Government is committed to providing access to free bus travel for older and disabled people. The options for change which are consistent with this

commitment involve raising the age of eligibility for older people. In this paper, we invite views on whether such changes should be considered at this time, either by raising the age in one go or gradually to bring it into line with the State Pension age, which will be equalised for men and women in 2018.

2.21 In our early engagement with stakeholders a number of other options were raised. These were either inconsistent with our commitment to provide free bus travel or raised practical implementation issues and the Scottish Government is not therefore minded to pursue these. We are, however, open to alternatives and this paper, therefore, invites respondents to offer views on additional or alternative options to improve the scheme and its sustainability. The alternatives raised in early engagement are listed at Annex C along with the reasons why we are not in favour of these.

Proposals at a glance

What are the options for change?

The Scheme currently costs around £192m a year, and around 70,000 Scots turn age 60 each year.

If changes are to be made to the Scheme, the preferred options, in line with our commitment to continue to provide free bus travel for those that need it the most, involve raising the age of eligibility towards the State Pension age. We can therefore:-

- make no change to the scheme, leaving the eligibility rules as they are; or
- raise the age of eligibility for both men and women in one step from 60 to the (female) State Pension age at the time the change is made, thereafter keeping pace with further changes in the State Pension age, which is set to increase to 67 over the period 2026 to 2028; or
- raise the age of eligibility for men and women progressively towards the State Pension age by annual increases of one year or half a year to the age of eligibility, taking longer to get there but lessening the impact on the expectations of individuals close to 60.

Please see Questions 2 and 3 in Annex B below for further details.

The rising state pension age

2.22 We recognise that the timing and pace of any change to the age of eligibility is as important as the change itself. This point has been raised by the campaign group Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) and others, who have pointed out the inequality for women in the way changes to the female State Pension age are being made. The 1995 State Pension Act included plans to increase the state pension age for women from 60 to 65, to make it the same as for men.

2.23 WASPI agrees with the principle of equalisation but not with the unfair way the changes were implemented. Because of the way the increases were brought in, hundreds of thousands of women born in the 1950s, who would be affected by the changes, were not informed of them at the time and have only recently become

aware that they would have to work for up to five years longer than they had planned. A large percentage of these women received a letter advising them of significant increases to their State Pension age only a year or two before they had expected to receive their State Pension at the age of 60.

2.24 The Scottish Government supports WASPI in pressing their case with the UK Government. This means that if we were to make changes to the age of eligibility to free bus travel for older people, we would consider carefully how to do this in a fair and equitable way. In the options below, we have suggested how a change might be phased in to deal with the issue around the period of notice given to any change in age. In this instance, this is relevant to both men and women since the qualifying age for free bus travel is already aligned.

2.25 The diagram below shows the difference to people of various ages in 2017 between the present situation (getting your bus pass at age 60) and moving either directly to the State Pension age, or moving progressively towards the State Pension age by phasing the arrangements by increments of either +6 months, or +12 months for people in their 50's in 2017.

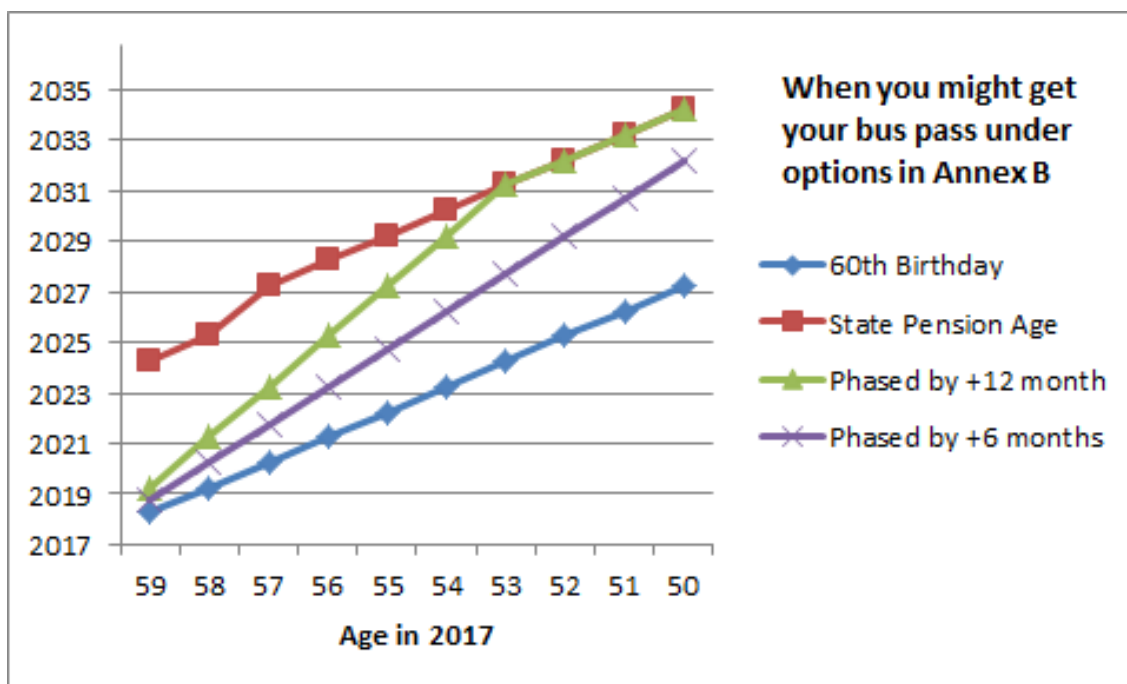


Figure 5 - Effect of proposed changes on 50+ year olds in 2017

Pre-consultation engagement

2.26 The options set out below in Annex B have been arrived at following discussions in the past few months with a number of stakeholder groups. In these discussions a number of ideas were raised as to how we could ensure that the Scheme remains sustainable in the longer term. Some are inconsistent with our commitment to free bus travel and others appear likely to be difficult to implement or operate.

2.27 However, we do not want to close down discussion and we invite alternative or additional suggestions, including whether to make any changes at all to the current eligibility for the Scheme.

2.28 We thank the various organisations and individuals for their participation and help in formulating this Consultation.

2.29 We welcome your views on the Scheme. Annex B contains questions asking if the Scheme age eligibility should stay as it is (Question 1), or if we should change age eligibility towards the State Pension age either at once or progressively (Questions 2 and 3) and on whether you have alternative suggestions (Question 6).

3 Free Bus Travel for Modern Apprentices

Proposal at a glance

The Scottish Government is proposing free bus travel for young Modern Apprentices and we have suggested this might be targeted at those under age 21. The introduction of free bus travel will make Modern Apprenticeships more accessible for all young people. We believe this will make the Modern Apprenticeship route more attractive to young people and potentially to employers.

Question 4 in Annex B below seeks views on offering free bus travel to Modern Apprentices, on whether this should be targeted on those Modern Apprentices aged under 21 and on alternative ways to help Modern Apprentices with transport costs.

3.1 In September 2016 the First Minister announced in the Programme for Government the commitment to work to deliver free bus travel for Modern Apprentices aged under 21.

3.2 Modern Apprenticeships are recognised as an excellent way to gain skills, experience and a qualification while in employment. They allow individuals to earn while they learn and support the development of our collective skills base and in doing so contribute to economic development.

3.3 The Scottish Government is committed to growing, widening and enhancing Scotland's Modern Apprenticeship programme as part of its commitment to the delivery of 30,000 new Modern Apprenticeship opportunities each year by 2020. This commitment includes continuing to focus on higher level apprenticeships, particularly in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Frameworks. This expansion is likely to be focused on young people.

3.4 In 2016-17 there were 26,262 Modern Apprenticeship starts. On 5 March this year we set a target of 27,000 new Modern Apprenticeship starts for 2017-18.

3.5 However, in order to make the Modern Apprenticeship an attractive option for young people looking to enter the world of work, we must ensure we do what we can to make available support where it is needed. The commitment to free bus travel for young Modern Apprentices is part of this.

3.6 We recognise that the transition into the workplace can be a real challenge and can place unforeseen expenses on what are likely to be limited budgets. The pledge of free bus travel is designed to take at least one of those worries away from the young apprentice looking to improve their skills. But we must ensure that what we offer is what is needed by young Modern Apprentices.

3.7 Question 4 in Annex B below seeks your views on the proposal to provide free bus travel to Modern Apprentices. It also invites views on the proposition that the offer should be restricted to those Modern Apprentices aged under 21 and on whether there might be better options for helping with Modern Apprentices' travel costs.

4 Companion Cards for Disabled Children under Age Five

Proposal at a glance

Children under 5 generally travel for free on the bus. As a result access to a disabled bus pass starts at age 5. However, this means that the parents and carers of otherwise eligible disabled under 5s have to pay for their bus travel when at age 5 the disabled child may qualify for a companion card or bus pass. A companion bus pass is given to someone who is not able to safely travel on their own and allows the companion also to travel for free.

The Scottish Government is proposing to fix this anomaly by providing disabled under 5s with access to a companion bus pass where this is needed.

Please see Question 5 in Annex B below for further details

4.1 As part of this Consultation we are seeking to address the anomaly in the Scheme where disabled children under age 5 are not currently entitled to a companion bus pass.

4.2 As part of their commercial operations, most bus operators provide free bus travel for children under 5. The Scheme eligibility criteria do not, therefore, include those under age 5 whether disabled or not.

4.3 Under the Scheme, companion cards are available to disabled people of fare paying age (age five and over) who need assistance to travel and who are in receipt of (i) the higher or middle rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance, (ii) the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment or (iii) Attendance Allowance or who are certified blind.

4.4 This means that disabled children under 5 who would satisfy the companion eligibility criteria if they were older are not entitled to a companion card.

4.5 We estimate that extending the coverage under the Scheme to provide companion cards to eligible disabled children under age 5, based on current eligibility criteria, would add up to an additional £623,000 to the cost of the Scheme for an estimated additional 3,210 bus pass holders.

4.6 Question 5 in Annex B below therefore invites your views on a proposal to extend the Scheme to disabled under 5s.

4.7 We have no plans to adversely change disability eligibility criteria.



Figure 6 – Disabled children under 5 cannot get a Companion Card

Annex A

Background to free bus travel in Scotland

1 The National Bus Travel Scheme for Older and Disabled People was introduced on 1 April 2006 after a public consultation exercise and discussions with stakeholders including local authorities, bus operators and the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS). The Consultation considered the proposed Scheme's coverage and who should be eligible for free travel before it was agreed by the Scottish Parliament.

2 This built on an agreement reached by the Scottish Government and the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), on behalf of bus operators, for the delivery of a free national bus travel scheme for eligible passengers at agreed levels of payment to the industry.

3 It was agreed that the aim of the Scheme would be to provide free bus travel throughout Scotland to those aged sixty and over and to people who had an impairment that severely affected their mobility and ability to carry out day to day activities.

History of earlier concessionary schemes in Scotland

4 During the 1980s and 1990s, local authorities in Scotland financed and operated concessionary travel schemes for specific groups of people including the elderly, disabled and the young. Latterly, there were 16 concessionary schemes covering all local authorities with different rules and levels of reimbursement.

5 The benefits and restrictions in these local schemes varied considerably as it was for each Council to determine how best to meet local needs. Some schemes offered free travel, some half-fare and in one instance a discount for the first 10 miles of any journey. Some schemes were limited to travel within the authority's own boundaries. Some were joint schemes of more than one Council and allowed travel within their combined area, and some allowed journeys to specific identified destinations outwith the Council's boundary. Some schemes had peak period restrictions and others did not.

6 From October 2002 a national minimum standard of free local off-peak bus travel was applied to the local schemes. On 1 April 2003 the schemes were extended to allow men aged 60-64 to receive the same travel benefits as women aged 60+. Previously, men became eligible at age 65.

Annex B

Consultation Responses

Part 1 - Respondent Information Form

PLEASE NOTE THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED WITH YOUR RESPONSE.

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- Individual
 Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

Phone number

Address

Postcode

Email

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your Consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:-

- Publish response with name
 Publish response only (anonymous)
 Do not publish response

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this Consultation exercise?

- Yes
 No

Part 2 – Questions on options

No change to age eligibility of the Scheme

Should scheme eligibility remain unchanged ?

Do you believe that age eligibility for the Scheme should remain as it is? At present everyone resident in Scotland can get the bus pass on their 60th birthday and be able to travel for free at any time of day, for any number of journeys, on local and long distance scheduled bus services throughout Scotland.

Scheme costs have risen over the years to a little over £190 million in 2016-17. In addition, some 70,000 of us reach age 60 each year and that figure is projected to rise to 76,000 by 2021. This adds further pressure to costs, raising questions about the longer-term sustainability of the Scheme in its present form.

Even if your first preference is to make no changes to age eligibility at this time, please consider the options set out in questions 2 and 3 below.

Question 1

Do you think that we should retain the existing age eligibility criteria for the Scheme? Yes No

Please use the box below to provide details.

My comments:

Options to change the National Concessionary Travel Scheme

Raise the age of eligibility for men and women to the female State Pension age in one step

What is it?	<p>Women’s State Pension age is being equalised with men’s, so that they will reach State Pension age at 65 from November 2018. In addition, both men’s and women’s State Pension age is due to increase to 66 by 2020 and to 67 between 2026 and 2028.</p> <p>The proposal would set the age of eligibility for free bus travel at female State Pension age from 2018.</p>
What does it mean for me?	<p>The UK Government provides a handy calculator to check when you will reach State Pension age:- www.gov.uk/state-pension-age</p>
What will it cost or save?	<p>If age eligibility is raised immediately to female State Pension age from April 2018 onwards, it would reduce costs by around £10 million in the first year, increasing to around £65 million by 2022-23.</p> <p>The State Pension age will increase to 66 by 2020 and 67 between 2026 and 2028. In 2023-24, this would result in savings of around £83 million each year, increasing up to reduced costs of around £111 million in 2026-27.</p>
What is the justification for claimed costs/savings?	<p>Raising the eligibility age reduces the number of cardholders, resulting in fewer journeys which also reduces the cost to the Scottish Government. In 2022-23, there would be around 350,000 fewer people eligible compared to what would happen if the current age of 60 was to be maintained. In 2026-27, this would increase to around 520,000 people</p>

Question 2

Are you in favour of raising age eligibility to female State Pension age in this way? Yes No

Please explain your answers.

Raise the age of eligibility to the female State Pension age over a number of years

What is it? Women's State Pension age is being equalised with men's, so that they will reach State Pension age at 65 from November 2018. In addition, both men's and women's State Pension age will increase to 66 by 2020 and to 67 between 2026 and 2028.

Age eligibility could be increased towards the (female) State Pension age either:-

- by one year per year; or
- by six months per year

What does it mean for me? A slower introduction might mean that people affected by the change in the early years will be eligible for their bus passes after age 60 but before the female State Pension age.

If raising the age of eligibility is done progressively for those who are currently in their mid to late fifties, it might be done in one of two ways:-

(A) If the eligible age was raised by **one year annually**, this would increase the age at which people in their late 50s would receive their bus pass but will not mean that they will have to wait until they are at State Pension age. A person who reaches age 59 in 2017 would become eligible for their bus pass on their 61st birthday in 2019, a person who reaches age 58 in 2017 on their 62nd birthday in 2021, a person who reaches age 57 in 2017 on their 63rd birthday in 2023 and so on. A person aged 54 or under in 2017 would become eligible on their 66th birthday.

(B) If the eligible age was raised by **half a year annually**, this would again increase the age at which people in their late 50s will receive their bus pass, but at a slower pace. A person who reaches age 59 in 2017 would become eligible six months after their 60th birthday, a person who reaches age 58 in 2017 on their 61st birthday, a person who reaches age 57 in 2017 six months after their 61st birthday and so on. A person aged 48 or under in 2017 would become eligible on their 66th birthday.

If the age of eligibility is simply raised without any adjustments or phasing, then someone who is 59 in 2017 would become eligible in 2024 when they reach the State Pension age.

This approach would seek to address the issue raised by WASPI and mitigate the effects of the changes on people close to the current age of eligibility by striking a better balance between the size of the change and the period of notice.

What will it cost or save?

Raising age eligibility from April 2018 by one year per year to female State Pension age would reduce costs by around £11 million in the first full year, increasing to around £40 million by 2022-23.

The slower of the two progressive approaches would reduce costs by around £5 million in the first full year, increasing to around £27 million by 2022-23.

What is the justification for claimed costs and savings?

Raising the eligibility age reduces the number of cardholders and hence the number of journeys and also costs to the Scottish Government. For example, if the age is raised by half a year per year, there are projected to be around 157,000 fewer people eligible by 2023-24 compared to what we would see if the current age of 60 was maintained.

Potential annual cost reductions (£million)	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
(A) Age eligibility + 1 year	£11m	£11m	£24m	£25m	£40m
(B) Age eligibility + 0.5 year	£5m	£11m	£12m	£19m	£27m

Question 3

Are you in favour of raising age eligibility to female State Pension age gradually over time?

Yes No

At what rate?

By 1 year per year

By half a year per year

Please explain your answers.

Free bus travel for Modern Apprentices

What is it?	Young people undertaking Modern Apprentice frameworks registered with Skills Development Scotland would be able to get free bus travel. The offer might be targeted at those Modern Apprentices under age 21.
What does it mean for me?	If you are a qualifying Modern Apprentice you would be able to get free bus travel.
What will it cost or save?	It would cost approximately £8m per year to provide free bus travel to Modern Apprentices under 21. Applying it to all Modern Apprentices would roughly double that figure.
What is the justification for claimed costs/savings?	There are around 20,300 Modern Apprentices aged 16-20. Based on the travel behaviour of people in this age group and the estimated uptake of the card, this would cost an estimated £8 million per year.

Question 4

- Are you in favour of providing free bus travel to Modern Apprentices?** Yes No
- Should this be targeted at Modern Apprentices under Age 21?** Yes No
- Is there a better way to provide support to help with the travel costs of Modern Apprentices?** Yes No

If so, please specify below.

Please explain your answers.

Companion cards for disabled children under age 5

What is it? Allow disabled under 5s to get a companion card where this is needed so that their parent/carer can travel for free. Under 5s cannot get a disabled persons bus pass as they generally travel for free.

What does it mean for me? The parent or carer accompanying the child currently has to pay for their own travel until that child qualifies for a companion card on their 5th birthday. This would allow the parent or carer to travel with an eligible disabled child under 5 for free.

What will it cost or save? We believe that there around 3,210 disabled children under 5 who might benefit from a companion card. This will cost just over £600,000 per year.

What is the justification for claimed costs/savings? There currently are around 3,210 children in Scotland who are eligible for the Higher or Middle rate Care Award and/or the Higher rate mobility award of Disability Living Allowance (DLA).

Based on the average numbers of journeys taken by bus pass holders and the current reimbursement cost this would cost just over £600,000 to provide equal access to companion cards for disabled children of all ages.

Question 5

Are you in favour of providing a companion card for disabled under 5s where this is needed? Yes No

Please explain your answer.

Are there any other issues you wish to raise which are not covered above?

The Scottish Government welcomes any further comments and suggestions on the Scheme and how it might be improved or made more sustainable.

Question 6

Do you have any other comments about any of the issues raised in this consultation? Yes No

If so, please use the box below to provide details.

My comments:

Part 3 - Assessing impact

Equality

- 1 In considering possible changes to the National Concessionary Travel Scheme in Scotland the public sector equality duty requires the Scottish Government to pay due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate discrimination, victimisation, harassment or other unlawful conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010;
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic.

1.1 These three requirements apply across the 'protected characteristics' of:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion and belief; and
- sex and sexual orientation.

1.2 At this early stage it is difficult to determine whether significant effects are likely to arise and the aim of the Scottish Government is to use this Consultation process as a means to fully explore the likely equality effects, including the impact on children and young people.

1.3 Once completed the Scottish Government intends to determine, using the consultation process, any actions needed to meet its statutory obligations. Your comments received will be used to complete a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) to determine if any further work in this area is needed.

Question – Equality Impacts

Are there any likely impacts the proposals contained within this Consultation may have on particular groups of people, with reference to the 'protected characteristics' listed above? Please be as specific as possible.

Question – Children and young people

Do you think the proposals contained within this Consultation may have any additional implications on the safety of children and young people?

Business and Regulation

1.4 A Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA) will analyse whether the proposals are likely to increase or reduce the costs and burdens placed on businesses, the public sector and voluntary and community organisations.

Question – Business impacts

Do you think the proposals contained in this Consultation are likely to increase or reduce the costs and burdens placed on any sector? Please be as specific as possible.

Privacy

1.5 A full Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) will be conducted to ascertain whether our proposals on delivering a consistent approach to the Scheme may have an impact on the privacy of individuals.

1.6 At this early stage it is difficult to determine whether significant privacy impacts are likely to arise and the aim of the Scottish Government is to use this Consultation process as a means to fully explore the likely privacy effects.

Question – Privacy impacts

Are there any likely impacts the proposals contained in this Consultation may have upon the privacy of individuals? Please be as specific as possible.

Annex C

Options not favoured by the Scottish Government

A number of those with whom we have engaged in preparing this Consultation indicated a first preference for maintaining the current age of eligibility or, if changes had to be made, for alternative approaches to be taken. For a variety of reasons the Scottish Government is not minded to adopt these but they are listed below for information: -

1 Requiring card holders to make a small financial contribution towards the cost of each concessionary journey.

A fixed contribution of, say, 20p, 50p or £1 would be required to be paid for each journey undertaken. This would be relatively simple to implement and would generate significant savings. For example, a contribution of 20p per journey could save up to £17 million annually if applied to all concessionary passengers, including disabled bus pass holders as well as those qualifying on age. (Requiring a contribution only from non-disabled pass holders would reduce savings by about 10%.)

2 Levying an annual charge for access to free bus travel.

The journeys themselves would be free but there would be a fixed annual fee, for example £10 or £20. In effect, this would be like having an annual very low cost season ticket valid on all buses. Based on current usage, annual savings could be up to £13 million with a £10 charge and proportionately more for higher charges. Excluding disabled bus pass holders from the requirement to pay a charge would reduce savings by about 10%.

The Scottish Government does not favour either of these two options because they would not be consistent with the commitment set out in the Programme for Government 2016-17 to provide free bus travel for older and disabled persons. Option 1 could additionally lengthen boarding times and Option 2 would require new administrative arrangements, for example to issue reminders and process forms.

3 Restricting use of a bus pass during peak travel times.

Limiting the use of the bus pass to off-peak travel might save costs by encouraging people to travel at times when bus services tend to be less busy. This can reduce costs for bus operators and possibly alleviate overcrowding at peak times. However savings might be limited if people simply travel at different times and there could be delays to boarding times if disagreements arise over whether a journey is peak or off peak.

4 Having a cap on the value of individual journeys which can be free.

For example, all journeys made in a year up to an overall limit, such as £250, would be free. Travellers would have to pay for any additional journeys beyond this point until the end of the year. The level of savings would depend on the limit set but such an arrangement would allow costs to be controlled without the need for the present reimbursement capping arrangements. However new systems would be required to administer such an arrangement, including enabling passengers to tell easily how much travel they were still entitled to.

The Scottish Government is not minded to pursue either of these options at this time given the potential implementation and operational issues.

You may wish to use the box below to provide comments on these or any other way in which you believe the long-term sustainability of concessionary travel could be achieved, as well as other comments you may wish to make for improvements to the scheme.

My comments:



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