

Response ID ANON-VKCA-1KXT-D

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

Submitted on 2017-11-17 15:21:45

Questions on National Concessionary Travel Scheme

1 Do you think that we should retain the existing age eligibility criteria for the Scheme?

Yes

If yes, please provide details::

Whilst it is understandable that government wishes to contain future costs, the proposed approach is at the expense of some of the less well-off people in society. This is particularly strange as the scheme is excellent value for money with each £1 spent producing £2.87 in benefits (Greener Journeys UK). Whilst half of these benefits accrue to concessionary travellers, around 20% goes to other bus passengers and road users, and to the wider country from economic and social impacts, particularly in health and well-being.

The proposed cut comes in the context of the decline of the bus patronage in Scotland. Between 2006-07 and 2014-16, bus journeys in Scotland fell from 476m p.a. to 414m p.a. Given the key role that buses have to play in helping to deliver on our social, economic and environmental objectives, it surely makes sense to maintain and even increase a scheme that keeps passenger numbers up and maintains route viability, rather than weakening it.

It certainly seems perverse to be looking for revenue savings here whilst at the same time the Government proposes to abolish Air Passenger Duty. Bus travel often benefits the least well-off and produces environmental benefits, whilst air travel benefits the better off and is to the detriment of the environment.

In 2006-07, the National Concessionary Travel Scheme cost £163m. This rose to a cost of £192m in 2016-17. Should this trend continue as observed over the next decade then the scheme might be expected to cost c. £221m by the end of a further decade (2026-27). The cumulative cost of this would indeed be substantial (perhaps c. £150m over 10 years) over this period. However, this figure is less than half of the intended £300m annual tax cut that the Government proposes to provide to air travellers in any one year through the abolition of Air Passenger Duty (a cumulative value of up to £3,000m over 10 years). If the Government can afford to cut tax for air travellers then there seems to us no good reason why a cut to concessions for bus travellers is necessary.

2 Are you in favour of raising age eligibility to female State Pension age in one step?

No

Please explain your answers.:

As explained above, we do not support changes to the eligibility criteria as we do not consider that the Government has made an adequate case for the scheme to be curtailed on budgetary grounds.

3a Are you in favour of raising age eligibility to female State Pension age gradually over time?

No

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.:

As explained above, we do not support changes to the eligibility criteria as we do not consider that the Government has made an adequate case for the scheme to be curtailed on budgetary grounds.

3b At what rate should age eligibility be raised?

Not Answered

Please explain your answers to 3a and 3b:

As explained above, we do not support changes to the eligibility criteria as we do not consider that the Government has made an adequate case for the scheme to be curtailed on budgetary grounds.

Free bus travel for Modern Apprentices

4a Are you in favour of providing free bus travel to Modern Apprentices?

Yes

4b Should this be targeted at Modern Apprentices under Age 21?

Not Answered

4c Is there a better way to provide support to help with the travel costs of Modern Apprentices?

Not Answered

Please explain your answers:

Companion cards for disabled children under age 5

5 Are you in favour of providing a companion card for disabled under 5s where this is needed?

Yes

Please explain your answer.:

Prior engagement and general issues not previously covered

Do you have any other comments about any of the issues raised in this consultation?

Comments::

The consultation paper indicated that around 70,000 Scots turn 60 each year. No mention is made of the fact that nearly 57,000 Scots die each year and therefore drop out of the scheme. It also appears to overlook the (possibly unknown) number who emigrate out of Scotland.

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.

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Assessing Impact

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.:

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

Please be as specific as possible.:

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. :

Are there any likely impacts the proposals contained in this Consultation may have upon the privacy of individuals?

Please be as specific as possible.:

About You

What is your name?

Name:

Colin Howden

What is your email address?

Email:

colin.howden@transformscotland.org.uk

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

Transform Scotland

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

Publish response with name

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