

Response ID ANON-ZG34-Q8SY-W

Submitted to **Consultation on free bus travel for people resident in Scotland aged under 19**

Submitted on 2020-12-06 12:10:02

Free bus travel for people resident in Scotland aged under 19: our proposal

Objectives of the scheme

Eligible people

Eligible services

1 Do you think extending national concessionary travel to include free bus travel for under 19s in Scotland will contribute towards our objectives to increase opportunities and reduce inequalities?

Yes

Please provide further comments:

The cost of travel is an important factor to consider for many young people when traveling to their place of education, leisure activities or other appointments. A survey by the Scottish Youth Parliament of young people between the ages of 12 and 26, published in 2019, found that nearly a third of respondents paid more than £12 per week to travel to their place of education. This discounts any other trips that the respondents may be making and constitutes a significant share of many young peoples' income. We therefore support the proposals to provide free bus travel to under 19s. Bus is the most commonly used form of public transport in Scotland and as such these proposals will provide opportunities for young people to travel and participate in activities that they might have otherwise been excluded from due to the affordability of travel.

2 Do you think there are any disadvantages to introducing free bus travel for under 19s in Scotland?

No

Please provide further comments:

Delivery options

3 Should a smart card, such as the widely used Young Scot card, be used to establish eligibility for free bus access?

Yes

Please provide further comments:

The eligibility for free bus access should be established through existing cards such as the Young Scot card, as proposed by Transport Scotland. This will reduce the difficulty of implementation and hopefully lead to a wider uptake of the scheme. Ideally, this could also be combined with a mobile phone app or similar that would eliminate the need to carry an additional card.

4 Should children under a certain age need to have their application for a travel card approved by a parent or guardian?

Not Answered

Please provide further comments:

No views.

5 If you answered 'yes' to question 4, at what age should parental or guardian approval be required?

Please give us your views:

N/A

Reimbursement

COVID-19 implications

Assessing impact

6 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.

Please give us your views:

No views.

7 Do you think the proposals contained within this Consultation may have any additional implications on the rights, wellbeing and safety of children and young people? Please be as specific as possible.

Please give us your views:

No views.

8 Do you think the proposals contained in this Consultation are likely to increase or reduce the costs and burdens for bus companies, public bodies, third sector organisations or businesses? Please be as specific as possible.

Please give us your views:

We agree with the principle stated in the consultation paper that bus companies should be left no better or worse off through this scheme. This principle should remain under close review as the reimbursement of bus operators has decreased significantly over recent years. While we are supportive of the scheme, it must ensure that bus operators are adequately reimbursed for the loss of fares and are not adversely affected, as this could result in reductions in quality and quantity of bus services more generally.

Other considerations

9 Are there any other issues you wish to raise which are not covered in the points or questions elsewhere in this Consultation?

Please provide any further comments:

We support the proposal for free bus travel for under 19s on the basis of widening access to opportunities for young people and encouraging modal shift from the private car to the use of public transport. However, the consultation paper that Transport Scotland has produced only provides very limited information on the evidence base and expected outcomes of this policy. We would therefore ask Transport Scotland to produce additional supporting evidence that responds to the following questions:

[1] Rationale for age limit. What is the rationale for limiting the age to under 19s rather than under 25s as the definition of a young person? A large proportion of young people in the latter age bracket are still in education and would equally benefit from this scheme.

[2] Rationale for mode coverage. In some areas of Scotland, public transport may consist of ferries, rail, metros or light rail instead of buses. How will these proposals affect young people living in these communities and what is the rationale for limiting the scheme to bus travel?

[3] Expected modal shift impacts. The consultation paper states that the proposals will encourage modal shift from private car to bus travel. How large is this impact expected to be?

[4] Expected wider benefits. The consultation paper also provides no information on the expected overall benefits of the proposals. For example, we would expect that there would be wider equalities / social inclusion benefits from the scheme, and longer-term benefits from establishing public transport use amongst young people as an alternative to car use. What work has been done by Transport Scotland to establish and monetise these benefits?

[5] Expected scheme costs. The consultation paper provides no information on the expected overall cost of the proposals. How much is the scheme expected to cost per year and how much of this cost is likely to be offset by reducing expenditure on existing schemes for free school travel or reduced fares for young people?

About you

What is your name?

Name:

Colin Howden

What is your email address?

Email:

colin.howden@transform.scot

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

We would like to hear the views of people who will be impacted by these proposals including children and young people, their parents and carers and people who work with children in a paid or voluntary capacity. To help us understand more about you, are you:

None of the above

We would also like to know how often you normally use buses (i.e. prior to the pandemic):

I regularly use buses (daily or weekly)

I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy.

I consent

Evaluation

Please help us improve our consultations by answering the questions below. (Responses to the evaluation will not be published.)

Matrix 1 - How satisfied were you with this consultation?:

Slightly dissatisfied

Please enter comments here.:

Very limited amount of information provided in the consultation to support the proposed policy.

Matrix 1 - How would you rate your satisfaction with using this platform (Citizen Space) to respond to this consultation?:

Very satisfied

Please enter comments here.: