



Hi! My name is Mollie McGoran!

I'm a Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament representing Caithness, Sutherland and Ross and I am also the Convener of the Transport, Environment and Rural Affairs (TERA) Committee. The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) is the democratic voice of Scotland's young people. SYP is a rights-based charity, with members supported by all of Scotland's 32 local authorities and 11 National Voluntary Organisations.

Our democratically elected members listen to and recognise the issues that are most important to young people in every community across the country and ensure that decision-makers listen to their voices. We divide the membership up into ten subject committees, similar to that of the Scottish Parliament, each of which have a convener and a deputy. As TERA Convener, I have spent the past year working on increasing active travel initiatives and looking into green recovery opportunities.

As part of our ongoing campaigning, achieving a green recovery is a priority for the Scottish Youth Parliament. As the TERA committee, we know that sustainable travel must be a key part of any green recovery for Scotland and so we have recently looked into promoting bus and its benefits more heavily.

Our 2018 campaign, All Aboard, aimed 'To improve young people's experience of public transport in Scotland'. To achieve this aim, the campaign focused on three themes: Reducing Fares, Accessibility and Bus Standards. We believe that Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government should provide funding to support initiatives which make it easier, cheaper, and safer for young people to use active and sustainable travel options. Through our campaign survey, cost of public transport was highlighted as one of the main deterrents, with nearly one third of young people who responded to this question saying they would use the bus more regularly if it was cheaper, or if there were promotions or higher concessionary discounts. With the new discounted fares for U26's and free travel for U19's, young people will be more likely to choose buses as a sustainable and efficient mode of transport. This could begin to facilitate a wide spread change to more sustainable travel options as choosing these options becomes normalised.

While there are many other benefits, a key reason we need to encourage the use of buses and other forms of public transport is to help tackle the climate emergency. In the past, we've seen roads lined with cars, polluting our air, damaging the environment, and causing mountains of traffic which ultimately inconveniences all commuters. Post pandemic, we need to move into sustainable and active transport modes to limit our CO₂ outputs and our fuel consumption, to help protect our planet.

SYP is campaigning for a fair, green recovery from COVID-19, and as much as decision-makers determine overall policies, the real change needs to come from us. Young people need to be the change we want to see and demonstrate that we are committed to tackling the climate emergency through choosing sustainable transport options, and choosing bus is a great place to start!