

Respondent Information Form and Questions

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

1. Name/Organisation

Organisation Name

Scottish Youth Parliament

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3. Permissions - I am responding as...

Individual

☐

/

Group/Organisation

☒

Please tick as appropriate

- (a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site)?

Please tick as appropriate ☐ Yes ☐ No

- (b) Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis

Please tick ONE of the following boxes

Yes, make my response, name and address all available ☐

or

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address ☐

or

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address ☐

- (c) The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site).

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

Please tick as appropriate ☒ Yes ☐ No

- (d) 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?

Please tick as appropriate

☒ Yes

☐ No



Rail 2014 - Public Consultation Response from the Scottish Youth Parliament

Background to SYP

Our vision is of a stronger, more inclusive Scotland that empowers young people by truly involving them in the decision-making process.

The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) is democratically elected to represent Scotland's youth. We listen to young people, recognise the issues that are most important to them, and ensure that their voices are heard.

In working towards our aims, we support the following values:

Democracy - All of our plans and activities are youth-led, and we are accountable to young people aged 14-25. Our democratic structure, and the scale of direct participation across Scotland, gives us strength and sets us apart from other organisations.

Inclusion - We are committed to being truly inclusive. The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that all young people have a right to a voice, it doesn't matter who we are or where we come from. We celebrate our diversity.

Political independence - We are independent from political parties. Only by working with all legitimate political parties can we make progress on the policies that are important to young people.

Passion - We believe that drive and energy are key to successful campaigning. We are passionate about the key issues and believe that young people are part of the solution, not the problem.

Introduction and Context of Response

For Scotland's young people, public transport is of vital and particular importance to allow them to get where they want to go. Many of Scotland's 14-25 year olds cannot drive, either because they are not old enough to drive, or because insurance and associated costs makes running a car prohibitively expensive for young people.

The priority placed on public transport issues has been clear from the Scottish Youth Parliament's consultations with young people. In particular, three statements from SYP's youth manifesto, Change the Picture. Created following Scotland's largest youth consultation of its type with 42,804 responses from young people, the youth manifesto contains 49 statements commanding majority support from the young people consulted, is a compelling mandate for the priority issues



for change that Scotland's young people want to see. Change the Picture is the basis for SYP's policy and campaigning work and will be for the next five years.¹

Three of the statements focussed on public transport provision and prices, and were supported by an overwhelming majority. These statements are:

"There should be fairer prices on public transport and more travel discounts for young people." 92% of respondents agreed, 5% disagreed, and 4% were not sure.

"Transport operators should increase the number of trains and buses that run on Sundays. Extra train carriages should be put on for passengers at peak times." 85% agreed, 7% disagreed, 7% were not sure.

"Greater investment in public transport is needed to ensure that young people can get where they want to go without a car. This is particularly important in rural areas." 85% agreed, 7% disagreed, 8% were not sure.

To further inform our response, SYP conducted an online survey, 'Have your say on Scotland's railways' from 1st - 13th February 2012, with a total of 110 responses from our Members (MSYPs) and other young people with a particular interest in the issues included in the Rail 2014 consultation. Figures and comments cited below are from the responses to that survey unless otherwise stated.

Procuring rail passenger services *Consultation questions 1 - 8*

In terms of procurement, we explored the views of respondents to our online survey on how rail passenger services should be run.

30.9% of respondents felt that the franchise should be awarded to one company alone, higher than the 22.7% that would prefer franchises were awarded to multiple companies.

Whilst neither are directly considered as options in the consultation we also explored respondents views on whether they felt the rail network should be entirely nationalised or privatised. A significant number of respondents (35.5%) supported the rail network being nationalised, with very limited support for privatisation (4.5% of respondents). The remaining 6.4% preferred other options, including the suggestion of mutualising the network, and a small number that felt that it should be decided by whichever option could provide the cheapest fares.

The Scottish Youth Parliament feels that it would be preferable to award the franchise to one company rather than multiple ones.

¹ Change the Picture - Scottish Youth Parliament Youth Manifesto - <http://www.syp.org.uk/our-manifesto-W21page-82->

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

Consultation questions 9 -14

Particular aspects of the reliability, quality and performance of the rail network are of importance to young people. In our online survey, we asked respondents about what they felt the Government should prioritise when it comes to rail travel. These spanned a wide range of options relating to several sections of the consultation and will be referenced in other sections. The full table of results is shown below.

When it comes to rail travel, which of these do you think should be the three biggest priorities the Government should focus on?				
Option	Top priority	2 nd priority	3 rd priority	Total
Trains running on time	22	23	19	64
Trains and stations are clean and tidy	1	1	8	10
Communications are better (e.g. passengers are given more information if a train's running late and the reason why)	2	7	8	17
More frequent/extra trains	6	11	16	33
Great customer service from rail staff (e.g. ticket inspectors, station staff)	1	5	6	12
Cheaper prices in general	53	15	12	80
Cheaper prices targeted at young people/more discounts	15	29	3	47
Making it easier to book tickets (e.g. introducing e-tickets or smartcards)	0	5	1	6
Free WiFi/better mobile reception	0	3	13	16
Making sure everyone gets a seat	5	10	13	28
Trains are comfortable to travel on	1	1	8	10
Something else	4	0	3	7
Total Respondents	110			

In relation to reliability, performance and service quality, the punctuality of trains was the clear highest priority for young people, with 'trains running on time' ranking second overall in both the 'top priority' column and in total responses.

'More frequent/extra trains' is also a significant priority for young people, ranking in fourth place overall and reinforcing the statement from the 'Change the Picture' Youth Manifesto that "transport operators should increase the number of trains and buses that run on Sundays. Extra train carriages should be put on for passengers at peak times." Whilst better communications was not the top priority

for more than a handful of respondents, it did feature amongst a reasonable number of secondary priorities.

The Scottish Youth Parliament recommends that ensuring the punctual running of trains together with more frequent and additional trains, particularly at peak times and on Sundays, should be key requirements in the awarding of future rail franchises.

Scottish train services

Consultation questions 15 -19

From the 'Change the Picture' Youth Manifesto, an increase in public transport provision is a key demand as seen from the level of support for the statement "greater investment in public transport is needed to ensure that young people can get where they want to go without a car. This is particularly important in rural areas."

As outlined in the introduction to this response, the availability of rail travel is of a high degree of importance to young people because they rely on it to get where they want to go. When we asked the respondents to our online survey how often they used the train, 27.3% used it 'daily or nearly every day', 52.7% 'every few weeks' 17.3% used it 'once or twice a year', with just 2.7% of respondents never using the train.

When we asked respondents whether they were usually able to get a train to where they want to go, when they want to go there, a mixed response emerged. Just 13.6% said they could 'always' get a train to where they wanted to go at a convenient time, but more than three-quarters (75.5%) could 'mostly' do so. 9.1% said that they could do this 'sometimes', with only a handful (1.8%) stating that they could 'rarely' or 'never' get a suitable train.

A number of participants had suggestions for what the Government could do to improve this situation. Several participants reiterated their demands for more trains running on Sundays. Two of the participants also raised the issue of later trains - with one commenting that it felt like a "*curfew*" was being imposed on them by "*travel restrictions*". A small number of participants were also of the view that they would take the train if they were able to afford it, with one commenting that to get to university in Glasgow from their home, it is cheaper to drive than to buy a train ticket and then pay for the subway. They suggested more focus on joined-up travel.

To assess what participants would consider 'putting up with' if it ensured more convenient trains to where they want to go, when they want to go there, we asked them to choose from a number of options. Significantly a majority of respondents (53.6%) would accept having to change trains during the journey if it meant more frequent and convenient trains. 'Having to stand for most of, or the whole of the journey' was not deemed acceptable by the majority, with just 39.1% of respondents supporting this option.

To achieve more frequent and convenient trains, the SYP recommends that this could be prioritised over ensuring more direct trains. Relaxing regulations that might mean that passengers have to stand for most of, or even the whole journey should not be considered.

Scottish rail fares

Consultation questions 20 - 23

More than any other factor, the main barrier preventing young people using the train more frequently is the cost. In our assessment of survey participants' priorities as outlined on page 3, the highest priority overall was 'cheaper prices in general', with almost half (48.2%) of all respondents choosing it as their top priority for action, and 72.7% of respondents including it in their top three. 'Cheaper prices targeted at young people/more discounts' was the third highest priority overall, with 42.7% including it in their top three.

This reinforces the extremely high level of support for fairer prices on public transport and more discounts for young people in our mass consultation shaping the 'Change the Picture' youth manifesto. Taking measures to keep rail fares affordable, particularly for young people whose travel alternatives may be particularly restricted and who can quickly become 'priced out' of travelling by train when fares rise should be the biggest consideration when considering the conditions attached to the award of future rail franchises, and should be subject to immediate action before 2014.

To further inform our response, we asked respondents their views on existing rail discount schemes for young people, in particular the 16-25 Railcard and the Scottish Youth Railcard. Currently, 38.5% of respondents owned a 16-25 Railcard, 10.9% had a Scottish Youth Railcard, and 5.5% a similar discount card. Significantly, almost half of respondents (48.2%) did not own any form of rail discount card, despite the vast majority of respondents being eligible for it.

We explored respondents' views on the existing rail discount schemes, and reasons for not taking up the discount card. The responses are outlined in the table below.

Thinking about the rail discount cards, do you agree with any of the following statements..? (You can choose more than one answer)			
Statement	16-25 Railcard	Scottish Youth Railcard	Another discount card
It's fantastic!	10 (9.7%)	11 (11.8%)	5 (6.8%)
It's really useful	30 (29.1%)	7 (7.5%)	5 (6.8%)
It's good value for money	23 (22.3%)	9 (9.7%)	2 (2.7%)
It's totally useless	3 (2.9%)	4 (4.3%)	1 (1.4%)
It's a total rip off	5 (4.9%)	1 (1.1%)	2 (2.7%)
I've never had one	39 (37.9%)	39 (41.9%)	47 (63.5%)
I've never heard of it	12 (11.7%)	32 (34.4%)	17 (23.0%)
<i>Total Respondents</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>74</i>

A number of respondents expanded on their answer with several commenting that both the 16-25 and the Scottish Youth Railcards were only of limited use to them because the discounts are not available at peak times, when they are most needed, particularly to students and young people in employment. There was also concern expressed that even with the discount offered with the card, the fares were still not affordable on a regular basis.

One respondent particularly praised the 50% discount on season tickets offered by the Scottish Youth Railcard, but emphasised that this too was not available at peak times when they travelled most frequently. From the responses in general it seems that awareness of the existence of the railcards is a major issue, particularly with the Scottish Youth Railcard, where more than a third of respondents had not heard of it. Increased promotion to enhance awareness of discount schemes available to young people is required, and consideration should be given to extending the provisions of the railcards to trains at peak times to ensure that the train is a viable option to the car for young people in full time education or employment.

Immediate action needs to be taken to ensure rail travel is an affordable option for young people. There should be fairer prices on public transport and more travel discounts for young people.

The ability to keep fares low and affordable for passengers should be the most significant consideration when the Scottish Government awards the rail franchise. Increased promotion of the 16-25 Railcard and the Scottish Youth Railcard, and extending the discount to services at peak times should be a priority for Government and rail operators.

The Scottish Youth Parliament urges the Scottish Government and operators to engage with young people on an ongoing basis to ensure discounts offered are appropriate to young people's transport needs.

Scottish stations

Consultation questions 24 - 28

Most of our respondents could currently get to a train station relatively easily. Almost half (47.3%) said there was a station 'very nearby', with a further 44.5% of respondents living with a bus journey or a short car journey from a station. The remaining 8.2% lived primarily in rural or island areas.²

When we asked whether stations located close to another should be closed, on the proviso that it meant that others could be opened up in areas far from a station, a mixed response emerged, with the largest group of participants unsure. 36.4% were in favour, 20.9% were opposed.

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that the current level of station provision is broadly appropriate for the most part. Station closures should not be a major consideration at this time. An assessment should be made of the

² Respondents who could not access a train station lived in: Denbeath, Skye, Mossblown, Aultbea, Stow, Orkney, Kirriemuir, Westhill and Thornhill.

viability of opening new stations to open up rural communities to the rail network.

Cross-border services

Consultation questions 29 - 30

The consultation document raises the possibility that east coast cross-border services should terminate in Edinburgh, due to capacity issues. 47.3% of respondents opposed this move with just 31.8% in favour. A relatively high proportion (20.9%) was 'not sure', which was largely accounted for by respondents from the west coast with no experience of the service.

Expanding on their answer, a number of respondents questioned the view that the trains were not well-used. One noted that every time they have used the service it has been "*reasonably full*". Some suggested that it could be addressed by not stopping at some smaller stations en route to Aberdeen, but continuing directly to the north east.

The Scottish Youth Parliament recommends that east coast cross-border services should continue to run past Edinburgh, and should not be forced to terminate there.

Passengers - comfort, security, information

Consultation questions 33 - 36

When we asked respondents what they thought the top three rail travel priorities for Government, as outlined in the table on page 3, none of the issues related to comfort, security and information were as high a priority as low fares, punctual trains and additional, more frequent trains. Nonetheless, there was a reasonable level of support for a number of issues as secondary priorities.

As outlined in 'Scottish train services' on page 4, the majority of young people would not favour having to stand for all, or most of the journey, even if it meant more frequent trains. This was further borne out when we asked respondents about their priorities, with 28 selecting 'making sure everyone gets a seat' amongst their top three priorities, with five selecting it as their top priority.

'Communications are better' and 'free WiFi/better mobile reception' also attracted a number of second and third priorities, and as a result we would recommend they are included as secondary areas for improvement in any tender document. Other comfort issues, such as customer service, comfortable trains, clean trains and stations were lesser priorities. Additionally, four respondents who chose 'something else' as their top priority emphasised safety on trains and in stations as the highest issue the Government should address, with one particularly stressing this for people with visual impairments.

The consumption of alcohol on trains was an aspect of the consultation that was particularly contentious amongst young people with strongly held views in favour and against it being retained.

In our online survey, 41.8% of respondents felt that people should still be allowed to drink alcohol on trains. A slightly higher proportion, 44.5% felt that this should no longer be allowed, with 13.6% 'not sure'.

Many of the respondents took the opportunity to expand on their response. Those who felt drinking alcohol should be banned on trains gave examples of how they or the young people they represent had been put into situations of considerable distress by the drunken behaviour of others. They also cited the example of drinking being banned in other comparable scenarios, such as in the street and on buses.

Those who felt that people should be continued to be allowed to drink alcohol on trains often drew a distinction between the behaviour of those who were clearly drunk, who most felt to be in the minority, and those who drank moderately and responsibly. Several respondents felt that banning the consumption of alcohol would be a blunt instrument that would take away the right to drink from those who consume it sensibly. A number pointed out that this would not stop bad behaviour by those who board the train intoxicated, with others wondering whether creating a situation where train staff would be required to stop people who ignored any ban would cause an unnecessary 'flashpoint'.

Many of those who felt that drinking alcohol should not be banned added to their answer by supporting restrictions they felt would be more effective at curbing drunken anti-social behaviour. These suggestions included banning alcohol on services at particular times only, and empowering staff and the British Transport Police to deal with drunken behaviour, regardless of whether the individuals concerned were drinking on the train or had boarded intoxicated. Due to the number of complex issues involved, we would recommend that restrictions or a ban on the consumption of alcohol on trains be subject to a separate legislative measure, to allow full consideration to the particular issue at hand.

Comfort, security and information issues are not as high a priority as prices, provision and punctuality of services. Issues such as making sure everyone gets a seat, better communications, free WiFi and better mobile reception should be secondary considerations when awarding the franchise

Further consideration should be given to banning alcohol being consumed on trains, but the Scottish Youth Parliament feels that this should be subject to a separate legislative measure.

Caledonian Sleeper

Consultation questions 37 - 39

We consulted survey respondents on their usage of sleeper services. Whilst relatively few had used it, with 1.8% using it 'quite regularly' and 16.4% having used it 'once or twice', it is far from an option that young people reject. Almost two-thirds of respondents (66.4%) stated that they had 'never used it, but would consider it', with just 15.5% stating they would never use it.

The Scottish Youth Parliament feels that there is great potential in sleeper services as an alternative to air travel for young people. The Caledonian Sleeper should be preserved.

Summary of Recommendations

- There should be fairer prices on public transport and more travel discounts for young people.
- Transport operators should increase the number of trains and buses that run on Sundays. Extra train carriages should be put on for passengers at peak times.
- Greater investment in public transport is needed to ensure that young people can get where they want to go without a car. This is particularly important in rural areas.
- The Scottish Youth Parliament feels that it would be preferable to award the franchise to one company rather than multiple ones.
- The Scottish Youth Parliament recommends that ensuring the punctual running of trains together with more frequent and additional trains, particularly at peak times and on Sundays, should be key requirements in the awarding of future rail franchises.
- To achieve more frequent and convenient trains, the SYP recommends that this could be prioritised over ensuring more direct trains. Relaxing regulations that might mean that passengers have to stand for most of, or even the whole journey should not be considered.
- Immediate action needs to be taken to ensure rail travel is an affordable option for young people.
- The ability to keep fares low and affordable for passengers should be the most significant consideration when the Scottish Government awards the rail franchise. Increased promotion of the 16-25 Railcard and the Scottish



Youth Railcard, and extending the discount to services at peak times should be a priority for Government and rail operators.

- The Scottish Youth Parliament urges the Scottish Government and operators to engage with young people on an ongoing basis to ensure discounts offered are appropriate to young people's transport needs.
- The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that the current level of station provision is broadly appropriate for the most part. Station closures should not be a major consideration at this time. An assessment should be made of the viability of opening new stations to open up rural communities to the rail network.
- The Scottish Youth Parliament recommends that east coast cross-border services should continue to run past Edinburgh, and should not be forced to terminate there.
- Comfort, security and information issues are not as high a priority as prices, provision and punctuality of services. Issues such as making sure everyone gets a seat, better communications, free WiFi and better mobile reception should be secondary considerations when awarding the franchise.
- Further consideration should be given to banning alcohol being consumed on trains, but the Scottish Youth Parliament feels that this should be subject to a separate legislative measure.
- The Scottish Youth Parliament feels that there is great potential in sleeper services as an alternative to air travel for young people. The Caledonian Sleeper should be preserved.

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