

**Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland
(MACS)**

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Concessionary Travel Policy Team

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MACS Response to the Consultation on Free Bus Travel for Older and Disabled People and Modern Apprentices

Please find enclosed a response to the Consultation on Free Bus Travel for Older and Disabled People and Modern Apprentices provided by the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS).

Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Aga Lysak
MACS Secretary
Transport Scotland

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

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
- X **Organisation**

Full name or organisation's name

Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland.

Phone number Address

Transport Policy Directorate
Transport Scotland
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Victoria Quay
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The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your Consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:-

- X **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- Do not publish response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

Q1 Do you think that we should retain the existing age eligibility criteria for the Scheme? Yes/No
Comments

MACS has no views on this.

Q2 Do you think that we should retain the existing age eligibility criteria for the Scheme? Yes/No
(The proposal is to raise eligibility to the new Woman's State Pension Age. Current card holders will not have their entitlement withdrawn.)
Comments

MACS has no views on this.

Q3 Are you in favour of raising age eligibility to female State Pension age gradually over time? Yes/No
Comments

MACS has no views on this.

Q4 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

MACS has no views on whether Modern Apprentices should be included.

MACS would be concerned about coverage of the scheme and the inequality that would arise unless all Modern Apprentices had access to a transport service on which they could use their entitlement to get to and from employment.

Q5 Are you in favour of providing a companion card for disabled under 5s where this is needed? **Yes**

As with Modern Apprentices, there are likely to be situations, especially in rural areas where there is no service for under 5s and their companions to use.

There is also an issue around companions undertaking a trip to take a child for example to nursery, where they leave the child and continue their journey on their own.

The companion would be unable to use their card when not accompanying the child and would have to pay full fare even although the journey was necessitated because of the needs of the child.

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.

The issue of access to services has not been raised in the consultation.

Many rural communities have had bus services reduced or withdrawn in recent years. The scheme is only a benefit to those who have a service they can use it on.

Q6 Do you have any other comments about any of the issues raised in this consultation?

Comments

The issues MACS would wish to comment on are not raised in the consultation but will be mentioned in the section on Equality Impact below.

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.

The proposals are likely to have a negative equality impact for those

who have an entitlement but have no local service on which to use that entitlement.

As discussed previously this could be the case for Modern Apprentices and Companions of Children under 5 but also currently affects some elderly and disabled people who live in peri-urban and rural areas with infrequent or, in some cases, no bus services.

MACS would also raise the inequity of non-accessible vehicles being used on long distance and rural services. This is a barrier for many older and disabled people.

MACS also believes that there is a significant anomaly in the concessionary travel schemes which excludes those disabled people who cannot get to or from the bus stop, cannot wait for the bus, or cannot board the bus (despite recent access improvements).

Disabled people in this position get no benefit from the scheme at all, but may have the greatest need for support with their mobility.

We believe that this consultation is an opportunity to address this gap, not only meeting the objectives of the Concessionary Travel scheme itself but also wider strategies like countering Social Isolation.

We would like to see Transport Scotland establish a nationwide scheme targeted directly at people who are isolated due to being severely disabled and/or living in areas where there are no or very infrequent services.

MACS members are aware of a number of local schemes that continued beyond the introduction of the national concessionary fare scheme. At the time local authorities were allowed to retain part of their previous concessionary fare budget and given the discretion to pay for reduced fares in taxi schemes, local rail and ferry trips, DRT services or community (social) car schemes.

Alternatively some kind of financial support could be given towards their door-to-door mobility needs. This might take the form of some kind of electronic purse or credit that could be used to pay for some costs by taxi, private hire, Dial-a-Bus or even private lifts from friends or family.

By targeting those individuals in greatest need, we believe that it would be possible to fund such a scheme from within the existing

concessionary travel budget.

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?

No

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.

No

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.

No