

FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY SUMMARY TEMPLATE

Title of Policy, Strategy, Programme etc	The National Bus Travel Concession Scheme for Young Persons (Scotland) Order 2021
Summary of aims and expected outcomes of strategy, proposal, programme or policy	<p>The Scottish Government intends to introduce a national scheme to provide free bus travel to all residents in Scotland aged between 5 and 18 inclusive. Children under five are already eligible for free bus travel as a widespread practice across the bus industry. There are approximately 770,000 people under 19 resident in Scotland who would be eligible for free bus travel.</p> <p>Currently, under the National Concessionary Travel Scheme for Young People, discounted bus travel is limited to 16 to 18 year olds (and full time volunteers aged under 26) holding a valid Young Scot card and provides a one-third discount on adult single fares. This policy will allow all children and young people who are resident in Scotland to travel on the bus in Scotland at no cost to themselves.</p> <p>By providing free bus travel to persons aged 5 to 18 inclusive, we are firstly seeking to embed positive sustainable travel behaviours from an early age and secondly, seeking to improve their access to education, training and employment.</p>
Summary of evidence	<p>Overall, this policy is expected to have a positive impact on reducing socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome.</p> <p>Lack of access to good, affordable transport can trap people into poverty by limiting access to opportunities which could increase people's income, such as jobs, training, or education. One of the four Priorities in Scotland's National Transport Strategy (NTS2) is 'Reducing Inequality' with a particular focus on child poverty, reflecting the important role transport has to play in achieving the type of society we want to live in. Most people aged under 19 are in full time education, working or in training and are likely to not be earning, or earning a low salary, particularly those still in education. People in lower income households are more likely to take the bus, with 44% of people with an income of less than £10,000 a year travelling by bus once a week or more compared to 16% of those with an income over £40,000.</p>

	<p>A primary goal of this policy is embedding positive sustainable travel behaviours in children and young people, thereby reducing the use of private vehicles, improving air quality, and addressing the climate emergency. Children and older people are disproportionately impacted by health effects of air pollution. Low income groups are disproportionately affected by air pollution since they are more likely to live in urban areas with high pollution levels.</p> <p>In response to our public consultation, 91% of respondents agreed this scheme would contribute towards objectives to increase opportunities and reduce inequalities. The majority of responses given by those who felt that the scheme would contribute to these objectives focussed on the improved access to both employment and education opportunities that the scheme would bring, removing cost of travel as an obstacle, especially for those in low (or no) income households.</p>
<p>Summary of assessment findings</p>	<p>As part of the policy development process, we considered a range of options to strengthen the policy and outcomes. These include several implementation options which would have impacted on inequalities of outcome, such as the application process, requirements for children to be accompanied, a physical smartcard versus a mobile app, and replacement fees.</p> <p>Having considered how the policy could impact inequalities throughout the policy development period, the issues identified in this assessment were incorporated into decision-making on the policy and implementation of the scheme. For example, due to issues raised through the impact assessments and for operational reasons, we rejected a requirement that children under a certain age are accompanied on the bus, committed to a physical card rather than a smartphone app and are placing the concessionary travel product onto the Young Scot-branded NEC to reduce application barriers. We intend a robust education and communications campaign aimed at parents, children and young people so they are aware of their entitlement and how to apply. We also intend that the application system for primary school aged children is simple for local authorities to implement.</p>
<p>Sign off</p>	<p>Name: Laura Murdoch</p> <p>Job title: Director of Bus, Accessibility and Active Travel</p>