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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government
Consultation Document

DISCOUNTED BUS TRAVEL FOR YOUNGER PERSONS IN WALES

Date of issue: 10 October 2017
Action required: Responses by 04 January 2018

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

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Overview

This consultation seeks views about increasing the number of young people who use local bus and TrawsCymru services. The Welsh Government is committed to removing barriers that discourage younger persons from using public transport. Buses in particular and trains are important ways for every one of us to access education, training, work and leisure.

How to respond

The consultation period begins on 10 October 2017 and ends at 11:59 p.m. on 04 January 2017. Please ensure that your response reaches us before the required closing date.

The document is available on the internet at

<http://gov.wales/consultations/?lang=en>

Please respond by:

- Completing the consultation response form at Annex A; or
- Emailing or posting your response to the contact details below.

CONTACT DETAILS

Postal address: Public Transport Division
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ

Email: Bus2@gov.wales

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

The document is available on the internet at

<http://gov.wales/consultations/?lang=en>

Contact details

For further information:

Public Transport Division
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ

Email: Bus2@gov.wales

Data protection

How the views and information you give us will be used.

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

Ministerial Introduction

I am determined to improve the appeal of public transport to younger people. Buses are already proven to be by far the most important public transport modes for this age group. We will continue to work in partnership with local authorities, who also contribute significantly to meeting the costs of the bus network, and bus operators themselves.

The bus network itself is, of course, a means of enabling all of us to access key services and facilities. This might include education, training, employment, shopping, seeing friends and relatives, or simply enjoying a day out.

I am determined to work with our partners in local authorities, Bus Users Cymru and with the bus industry, to develop an attractive and sustainable bus network.



Last January's Bus Summit was a significant step in that direction and this Autumn a series of workshops will take place across Wales to identify specific actions to realise that aim.

The new scheme I plan to introduce during 2018 will be a better, more attractive means of encouraging younger persons to use the bus for more of their journeys. The current scheme has made a good start, but we need to do more if we are to change attitudes.

I therefore hope that we can develop a new offer that makes it an easy choice for younger people to use the bus for travelling to and from education, to access training and employment, to get out and about, and to make their contribution to a cleaner, greener and healthier Wales.

There is already a strong, cross-cutting approach overseeing these and other policies. For example, our new employability offer is expected to begin delivery in April 2019. This will be positioned as a single offer under the name, 'Working Wales', and will be underpinned by a new programme for adults, along with two new programmes that will deliver employability support to young people. A good public transport network will have a key part to play in enabling people to access those opportunities. Between now and then, we will reconfigure our existing programmes, amending some of our existing employability programmes, including the EU-funded ReAct, Jobs Growth Wales and Employability Skills Programme, to ensure that these are effectively aligned to enhance support for unemployed people and those who are in and out of temporary, poorly paid employment.

And other work to decarbonise transport, tackle traffic congestion and to help buses in particular to be more punctual, also complements this approach. For example, our strategies for Metros in north east and south east Wales, where the latter will have a major part to play in delivering on our "Our Valleys, Our Future" commitments.

This consultation exercise follows another, earlier this year, about the future of the bus network more generally. Taken together and utilising the Bus Summit workshops that will be held shortly, these exercises provide us with a rare opportunity to refocus and reinvigorate the bus network according to your priorities.

However, any proposal for attracting more young people onto the bus network cannot be undertaken successfully without due regard to the appeal of car travel. The car certainly provides a form of independent travel which buses and trains cannot match. But car journeys also pollute our environment more than buses and trains. They often remove the initial stroll to the bus station and stop, and the walk to the journey's destination at the end. So they undermine the achievement of the undoubted health benefits of active travel, at least for most of us.

While everyone who has used a bus recently will recognise that the vast majority of buses on our roads offer clean, comfortable and well-equipped interiors, unfortunately there remains an incorrect impression that buses are somehow a poorer relation to the car. If this were ever the case, it is most certainly no longer true. Many of the buses on our TrawsCymru network of longer-distance bus services include leather seating, air conditioning, Wifi and Audio Visual information displays. Traveline Cymru provides comprehensive details of the bus network, allowing anyone who contacts Traveline Cymru to plan their journeys.

So, I wish to encourage more young people to use the bus by trialling a new discounted bus travel scheme for younger people. I also hope that many young people whose only experience of bus travel is the daily trips to and from school will take advantage of the new scheme to try the bus for other reasons and, having done so, they will see that today's buses provide a really attractive offer.

To expect every young person to forego the benefits of a car for all of their journeys is, probably, unrealistic. However, it is entirely realistic for many younger people to use the bus for more of their journeys. That is why I am inviting suggestions on the contents of a new discounted bus travel scheme for younger persons that will begin during 2018. I very much look forward to receiving your views.

Ken Skates AC/AM
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

Executive Summary

The Welsh Government's Programme for Government, published in September 2016, sets out how we will deliver more and better jobs through a stronger, fairer economy, improve and reform our public services, and build a united, connected and sustainable Wales.

Delivering a more effective network of local bus services, together with seamless, integrated and multi-modal ticketing arrangements as part of the new travel arrangements for Wales, are fundamental to our objective of building a connected and sustainable society. This is no less important for younger people, who may be continuing their education or training, beginning apprenticeships, looking for work, starting a job, or meeting friends.

This consultation paper sets out a range of ways to encourage more young people to try the bus, perhaps for the first time in years and utilising discounted fares.

In 2015, the Welsh Government announced a pilot scheme – MyTravelPass - to trial discounted fares to people aged 16-18. That pilot scheme allowed younger people to travel for a one third discount on production of the MyTravelPass. The scheme continues today.

To date, over 15,000 young people have applied for a MyTravelPass, out of a total of 113,000 or so persons in that age category. This level of interest is consistent with the initial estimate that the Welsh Government, with local authorities and the bus industry, thought was likely. However, we and our partners wish that number to increase significantly.

Current legislation allows the Welsh Ministers, if they wished, to establish by Order under Section 93(7)(f) of the Transport Act 1985 a discretionary travel scheme to include any or all of the above categories of younger people. In addition, a mandatory scheme could be added through a second Order utilising Section 147(a) of the Transport Act 2000.

Unless and until legislation is brought forward to enable the Welsh Ministers to introduce a statutory scheme for any other groups, there will need to be a voluntary arrangement with bus operators in Wales. The bus industry has an obvious commercial interest in boosting the number of younger persons using the bus, as we and they hope that more members of that group will continue to use the bus as they get older, maintaining the beneficial impact on air pollution and traffic congestion.

Reason for Consultation

- 1 The Welsh Government recognises the significance of providing an attractive offer to encourage young people to use the bus, and its longer-term potential to contribute to decarbonisation, an improved environment and real modal change.
- 2 For these reasons, we are keen to obtain your views about a range of possible enhancements to the current Young Persons Discounted Bus Travel scheme. This means we will review extending the age of eligibility for the offer and improving the level of the offer too.
- 3 We will also consider support for some members of our society – carers, volunteers, those preparing to join the employment market for the first time, or re- joining the market.
- 4 It is important to note whilst the Welsh Government recognises the value of discounted bus travel for all those persons listed, challenging funding settlements mean difficult decisions may well be required about which option might be affordable next year, and in the future.

The Current Offer

- 5 Since September 2015, young people aged 16, 17 and 18 years have been eligible to a one-third discount on the adult fare for all journeys undertaken on buses in Wales. Whilst some operators in Wales previously offered younger persons' discounts on a commercial basis, the scheme sought to extend this benefit universally across Wales.
- 6 Young people were able to apply for a pass online or in hard copy. We believe it is important these options continue. The scheme is administered by MyTravelPass, a business under the wing of Traveline Cymru.
- 7 To date, over 15,000 young people have applied for a MyTravelPass, with the latest results indicating over 500,000 journeys have been made under the scheme since April 2017, with a forecast of 1,500,000 journeys by March 2018. This illustrates the importance of the scheme for these users.
- 8 Bus fares are generally set by the service provider. In general, over the long term, bus fares in Wales have moved broadly in line with those for Great Britain as a whole, but there can be substantial differences between price changes in Wales, compared with the rest of Great Britain, over shorter periods. The availability of discounted fares for younger people provides a relative degree of mitigation when increases are introduced.

Options for Review

- 9 We are already broadly satisfied any offer should continue to be available for all journeys. It is simply too complicated to specify that discounts should be available only for some journeys – such as to education or work – as that would delay boarding times because of drivers spending too much time trying to validate a passenger’s journey. This means any offer would extend to school journeys, where appropriate to the passenger, as well as social events.
- 10 Nevertheless, we would welcome views about whether concerns about boarding times may be overstated and, if so, what categories of journeys should be eligible for discounted travel, and which should not.
- 11 The review provides an opportunity to obtain your view on whether the age of eligibility and size of discount should be maintained or increased. We also welcome your view on extending the scheme to assist other groups.
- 12 Inevitably, options to extend the existing scheme could cost more because of the greater number of passengers likely to utilise the offer, and because the greater the discount the greater the compensation that would be required from the Welsh Government. However, the Welsh Government might wish to reach an agreement with the bus industry such that if income to the bus industry were to reach a certain level, we would then share that additional, generated income, to offset the cost of the scheme to the taxpayer.
- 13 The current scheme provides a discount for each ticket purchased. Although it is envisaged this would continue to be the basis of a new, we welcome views whether alternative options for payment would be appropriate.

Implementation

- 14 Current legislation allows the Welsh Ministers, if they wished, to establish by Order under Section 93(7)(f) of the Transport Act 1985 a discretionary travel scheme to include any or all of the above categories of younger people. In addition, a mandatory scheme could be added through a second Order utilising Section 147(a) of the Transport Act 2000.
- 15 Unless and until legislation is brought forward to enable the Welsh Ministers to introduce a statutory scheme for any other groups, there will need to be a voluntary arrangement with bus operators in Wales. The bus industry has an obvious commercial interest in boosting the number of younger persons using the bus, as we and they hope that more members of that group will continue to use the bus as they get older, maintaining the beneficial impact on air pollution and traffic congestion.

Consultation Responses

- 16 Annex A contains the Consultation Response Form, which presents a range of options for you to indicate your preferences for providing discounted bus travel for younger people. We would be grateful if you could complete and return this form before the closing date of 04 January 2018.
- 17 Following completion of this element, responses will be collated and a consultation report published on the Welsh Government website www.wales.gov.uk

Annex A

Consultation Response Form

SCHEME OBJECTIVE

QUESTION 1

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not important and 5 being very Important) how important do you consider the influence of lower bus fares for young people on their choice of transport mode? **(Please select one of the following)**

Not Important					Very Important	
1	2	3	4	5	Don't know	

SCHEME SCOPE

Based on current usage trends, the scheme is forecast to assist 1.5 million bus journeys by young people during 2017/18 financial year. We wish to obtain your view whether the current offer is suitable or you whether you would consider it appropriate to enhance provision.

QUESTION 2

Do you consider the current age range of 16-18 years appropriate for a Young Persons Discounted Bus Travel scheme?

NO	YES
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QUESTION 3

If you answered no to question 2, what do you consider the appropriate upper age limit for a Young Persons Discounted Bus Travel scheme?

19	21	23	25	Other (Please state)
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QUESTION 4

Do you consider the current discount level of one-third (33%) off the adult fare an appropriate level to attract greater bus use by young people?

NO	YES
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QUESTION 5

If you answered 'yes' to Question 4, what level of discount would you consider appropriate and affordable to attract greater bus use by young people?

(Please indicate one of the following)

50%	66%	75%	100%	Other (Please state)
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QUESTION 6

The current scheme provides a discount off the equivalent adult fare. Would you consider the introduction of a fixed contribution per journey from younger persons a suitable alternative? (A journey being defined as a single trip between one origin and destination regardless of the number of changes of vehicle)

NO	YES
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QUESTION 7

If a user contribution scheme was introduced, what do you consider the appropriate fare per journey?

(Please indicate one of the following)

20p	50p	£1	£2	Other (Please state)
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QUESTION 8

An alternative to paying a fee per journey would be the introduction of a monthly or annual pass that entitled the eligible person to obtain free travel at the point of use. What fee would you consider reasonable for such a scheme?

(Please indicate one of the following for each period)

Monthly fee	£5	£10	£20	£25	Other (Please state)
Annual fee	£20	£50	£100	£200	Other (Please state)

QUESTION 9

Pass holders are currently entitled to a discount on all journeys to reduce confusion and delays when boarding the bus. Do you think significant journey time delays would occur if the discount was restricted to selected journey purposes, which need to be verified to prove eligibility to travel?

NO	YES
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QUESTION 10

If you answered 'yes' to Question 9, which journey purposes do you consider most important?

(Please select a maximum of TWO of the following)

Commuting	Training	Shopping	Education
Other Leisure	Health Appointment	Visiting Friends	Other (Please state)

EXTENDING ELIGIBILITY

The current scheme is available for people aged 16 - 18 years. We are keen to obtain your view whether discounted bus travel should be extended to others outside the current age based eligibility for those who contribute to society or require additional support to assist access to education or employment

QUESTION 11

Should discounted Bus Travel be offered to persons in receipt of Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)?

NO	YES
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QUESTION 12

Should discounted Bus Travel be offered to persons in Full Time further education (Over 15 hours study per week)?

NO	YES
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QUESTION 13

Should discounted Bus Travel be offered to persons in PART-TIME further education (between 8 and 15 hours study per week)?

NO	YES
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QUESTION 14

Should discounted Bus Travel be offered to persons in recognised apprentice schemes?

NO	YES
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QUESTION 15

If you answered 'yes' to Question 14, should the offer be available to apprenticeships in which of the following age groups?

Please indicate one of the following)

19-21 years	19-25 Years	19-30 years	All ages
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QUESTION 16

Should discounted Bus Travel be offered to registered carers?

NO	YES
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QUESTION 17

If you answered 'yes' to Question 16, should the offer be to registered carers in which of the following age groups?

(Please indicate one of the following)

19-21 years	19-25 Years	19-30 years	All ages
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QUESTION 18

Should discounted Bus Travel be offered to people undertaking voluntary work?

NO	YES
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QUESTION 19

If you answered 'yes' to Question 18, should the offer be to registered volunteers in which of the following age groups?

(Please indicate one of the following)

19-21 years	19-25 Years	19-30 years	All ages
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QUESTION 20

Should discounted Bus Travel be offered to any person holding a Job Centre Plus Travel Discount Card?*

NO	YES
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*This is provided to those unemployed claiming Jobseekers Allowance or Universal Credit for 3-9 months (18-24 year olds) or 3-12 months (over 25s). Other benefit recipients may receive a Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card from 3 months of their claim and if they are actively engaged with a Jobcentre Plus adviser.

QUESTION 21

Do you have any further observations about discounted bus travel for younger people in Wales?

Please continue on a separate sheet if required.

RESPONDENT DETAILS

Please print the following details in the spaces below.

NAME
ORGANISATION (if relevant)
POSTAL ADDRESS
E-MAIL ADDRESS

If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this by circling the appropriate box, below. We will then blank them out.

(Please circle one of the following)

I am content for my name and address to be published, if necessary.	I do not wish my name and address to be published.
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Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, although we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published.

However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before deciding to reveal the information.

It would be helpful if you were to also provide the following information about yourself, to help us report on the range of respondents to this consultation.

In which age range are you?

(Please indicate one of the following)

Under 16	16-18	19-22	23-24	25-59	60 & over
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Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Yes	No	Don't wish to say
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Please tell us on behalf of which group you are responding **(Please indicate one)**

Local Government	Public transport user group
Local Education Authority	Third Sector
Disability group	Transport industry
Community group	Commissioner/Ombudsman
Advisory group	Media
Bus operator	Health sector
Emergency services	Trades unions
Individual	Other (Please state)