



Discounted bus travel for younger people

4th January 2018



CLILC • WLGA

INTRODUCTION

1. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) represents the 22 local authorities in Wales, the three national park authorities and the three fire and rescue authorities
2. It seeks to provide representation to local authorities within an emerging policy framework that satisfies the key priorities of our members and delivers a broad range of services that add value to Welsh Local Government and the communities they serve.
3. The WLGA is a politically led cross-party organisation, with the leaders from all local authorities determining policy through the Executive Board and the wider WLGA Council. The WLGA also appoints senior members as Spokespersons and Deputy Spokespersons to provide a national lead on policy matters on behalf of local government.
4. The WLGA works closely with and is often advised by professional advisors and professional associations from local government, however, the WLGA is the representative body for local government and provides the collective, political voice of local government in Wales.
5. The WLGA welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on Discounted Bus Travel for Younger People. Our comments have been informed by views gathered via youth forums, LA youth officers and LA transport officers. Responses are provided below using the pro forma supplied with the consultation document (the shaded boxes signify WLGA's response wherever possible or else a comment is added).

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)

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

SCHEME SCOPE

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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There are a number of considerations here, which make it difficult to give a categorical answer. Responses from young people and officers working with young people indicate that a widening of the age range from 16 to 15 years would be welcome. However, other feedback received suggested there should be consistency with the age range for discounted rail travel. That range is currently from 16 to 25 but due to be extended to 30 from spring 2018. The rail fare discount applies only to off-peak travel after 10.00am though.

As with many of the questions, it is also difficult to determine the best way forward without knowing the cost implications of any changes to eligibility. Finally, it is also important to bear in mind the 'rural-urban' disparity that exists in relation to the existing scheme. This would continue to apply to any extended scheme: the discount is of less value to young people in rural areas with limited access to bus services.

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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See response to Q2 above.

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 'no' 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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A discount against a standard fare is felt to be appropriate but the adult fare *may* not be the best reference to use. In some cases adult fare has risen (due to its role previously in determining concessionary fare payments). It can be greater than the cost of 'day tickets' that have been kept low to encourage patronage. It is therefore important that the reference fare is chosen carefully.

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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Should there be a decision to switch to a fixed contribution, feedback from LA youth officers was that the young people they spoke to might be willing to pay 50p a journey

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)
	£20	£50	£100	£200	Other (Please state)

The feedback from LA youth officers was that the young people might be willing to pay a monthly fee of up to £10 or an annual fee of up to £50.

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 'no' 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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Generally in relation to questions 11-13 above concerns were expressed about the administrative costs of introducing such discounts. Proof of eligibility would need to be supplied and checked regularly, introducing additional costs – especially as individuals' status is likely to change frequently (e.g. finishing or dropping out of courses/schemes). Some local authorities support free bus transport for 16-18 year olds which would make a discount irrelevant.

QUESTIONS 14-20

Should discounted Bus Travel be offered to apprenticeships, registered carers, people undertaking voluntary work, any person holding a Job Centre Plus Travel Discount Card,

NO	YES
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It is difficult to give a categorical answer for questions 14 to 20. Much depends on the specific objectives being pursued and the level of funding available. If the overriding objective is to encourage more people to use buses then, clearly, discounts for as wide a range of users as possible are likely to be beneficial. However funding, inevitably, is a major constraint and much will depend on the relative priorities of encouraging more people to take up apprenticeships, volunteering, caring etc and the likelihood that a fare discount will make a difference to decisions in each case.

QUESTION 21

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

6. A number of additional comments regarding bus travel and young people were gathered from young people as part of the process. These may not be directly relevant to the discounted scheme but we have included them here for information:

- Transport needs to be affordable. The cost of transport needs to be in line with income.
- Young People (YP) need to feel safe and treated with respect when travelling on public transport. There was a feeling that YP are seen as "trouble" before even boarding a bus. They report being treated in a derogatory way, and if they don't have correct change being told to get off the bus.
- YP are often asked to prove their age and, if the bus driver does not believe them, they may be asked to get off the bus if they do not have enough money for fare (i.e. if they have just enough for the child fare but are then asked to pay adult fare)
- YP reported that on some occasions buses "just drive past them" at a bus stop. YP make the assumption that it is because they are YP and the bus driver doesn't want to pick them up. YP and their parents need to feel confident that if they are to use/trust public transport for social or for work purposes that they will be picked up (this is especially worrying late at night/last bus situation)
- YP and their parents want to feel confident that buses will turn up, and if they don't they are not left stranded. There were some reports of YP walking home along dark lanes "guessing" their route home and arriving home in the early hours of the morning unsuitably dressed and with parents extremely concerned and distressed.
- YP from the Traveller community reported that they are sometimes not picked up from the bus stop near their Traveller site (bus drives past if they are in a group of boys)
- Public transport must be fit for purpose for YP traveling from rural areas for work and further education. Many older YP are employed in the catering/pub industries. This requires travel from rural to urban areas, out of the county for employment and often on a split shift basis. Pub work means that they are working later than pub closing time in order to clear up and finish their work. This often means that they have missed the last bus home and they need to organise a taxi to get home. The cost of a taxi is often very nearly or sometimes more than they would earn on that shift. Also, on the split shift pattern of

working, a YP can leave home at very early hours of the morning to work on a breakfast shift and, because of lack of suitable and cost effective transport, can find that they are hanging around until the late hours to finish work. On low wages there is little for them in between shifts other than just to wander about and wait. For some this means spending money unnecessarily on food and drink waiting for their next shift to start. YP say that with a more timely and cost effective transport network they could manage work patterns and their expenses much more effectively.

RESPONDENT DETAILS

Please print the following details in the spaces below.

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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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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

Local Government

For further information please contact:

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