

## Welsh Government Consultation: Discounted bus travel for younger people in Wales

Transport Focus is the independent watchdog for transport users. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to this consultation. We have addressed this based on evidence from our research; in particular our recently published report on Young People's Experiences of Buses. While our statutory remit with bus passengers only covers services in England, much of this research is equally relevant to passengers and services in Wales. In addition, the Bus Passenger Survey has just been completed in Wales for the first time alongside England and Scotland and once ready, the results will provide further insight into passengers' experience of bus travel in Wales.

### 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

We know from the Transport Focus Bus Passenger Survey (BPS) that young people are the least satisfied group of passengers across all elements of the journey. Satisfaction with the overall journey in autumn 2016 was an average of 86% across all age groups, but only 76% among 16-18 year olds. This is more marked with value for money, which is an average of 66% across all age groups, but drops to 53% for 16-18 year olds.

Alongside this, our research into Young People's Experiences of Buses, with 14-19 year olds, which will be published early in 2018, shows that the cost and value for money of the journey is their top priority for improvement.

### 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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This should be considered as the minimum recommendation. Our research with young people shows there are strong feelings that paying adult fare when under 18 is unfair.

Particularly as education and training continues beyond age 16, at the very least some form of support is needed for travelling to and from those places of education and training.

### 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?

<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Other (Please state)</b>
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Our research with young people also shows they want a reappraisal of fares for young people, to make buses more affordable. This is also linked to whether young people are paying fares themselves. 35% are using their own pocket money or earnings, so consideration also needs to be given to the structure of fares and discounts beyond age 18. Young people do not see that offers are targeted at them, or have them in mind.

### 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?

<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
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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)**

<b>50%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Other (Please state)</b>
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As in question 3, this is linked to affordability. We found the majority of young people (75%) spend under £10 per week on bus travel. However this is also compounded by lack of awareness or effective promotion of season tickets leading to tickets being bought every day. So alongside this is a need for easy to find information on the costs and best tickets, with easy ways to pay and receive tickets, such as mobile phone, smart and contactless methods.

### 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)

<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
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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)**

<b>20p</b>	<b>50p</b>	<b>£1</b>	<b>£2</b>	<b>Other (Please state)</b>
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Simplification of approach to fares would be welcomed by young people. Young people find fares confusing. They don't know what the different fares are called or how to find out what the fare costs before they travel. Not knowing how much the fare will be is likely to worry them as they wonder if they'll have enough money or the correct change.

### 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)**

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

How the system works is crucial to being attractive and inviting for young people. So needing a monthly or annual pass mustn't create a barrier for new or infrequent users. Around half of young people did not understand the different discounts or special fares offered; including just under a fifth who weren't sure these existed at all.

### 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?

<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
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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)**

<b>Commuting</b>	<b>Training</b>	<b>Shopping</b>	<b>Education</b>
<b>Other Leisure</b>	<b>Health Appointment</b>	<b>Visiting Friends</b>	<b>Other (Please state)</b>

The experience of boarding the bus is a particular stress point for young people, with particular anxieties around interactions with the driver. This includes worries of not having enough money, the right change or whether their pass will work. Young people want this to be a positive experience that gives them confidence to travel independently and would not appreciate additional complexities.

A positive example of a good deal for young people is from the Liverpool City Region Bus Alliance, where the MyTicket allows unlimited journeys across the City Region on any bus at any time, at 50% discount on adult tickets. This has led to 142% growth in journeys for those aged up to 18, with 12.7 million sold and at least 24.3 million journeys made during the first twelve months of the Alliance.

## **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

For the following set of questions in this category, as in question 3, bus travel should continue to be an attractive and affordable option for young people. One of the issues for young people is the 'cliff-face' they encounter when no longer eligible for discounts, so they would welcome options for extension or mitigation. However this needs to be supported by effective promotion, using appropriate channels for young people. They also want to be engaged by decision-makers and to have a say in the process of improving services and facilities.

## QUESTION 11

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

<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
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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)?

<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
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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)?

<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
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**QUESTION 14**

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

<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
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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)**

<b>19-21 years</b>	<b>19-25 Years</b>	<b>19-30 years</b>	<b>All ages</b>
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**QUESTION 16**

Should discounted Bus Travel be offered to registered carers?

<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
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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)**

<b>19-21 years</b>	<b>19-25 Years</b>	<b>19-30 years</b>	<b>All ages</b>
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**QUESTION 18**

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

<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
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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)**

<b>19-21 years</b>	<b>19-25 Years</b>	<b>19-30 years</b>	<b>All ages</b>
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**QUESTION 20**

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

<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
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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?

In our research, a lot of the issues young people spoke about hinged on availability of information, both before and during the journey:

- Provide easy to use, centralised and streamlined information, across modes and operators
- Fares information available with journey plans and at bus stops, to know how much it will be before boarding
- Make ticketing easy, with smart or contactless available, that work across modes and operators

A fifth of young people in our survey have additional needs, classifying themselves as having a disability – which may be hidden – where they may need even more support.

Alongside this, the industry – bus operators, local authorities and Government together – need a relentless focus on delivering the basics and a more effective approach to customer retention to make using the bus a long-term proposition, and to build trust and loyalty.

Modal choice is limited for young people. We welcome this consultation and the wider review and scrutiny of bus strategy in Wales and opportunity this gives to encourage young people to make more bus journeys and, in the longer term, to make bus a real alternative for young people.

Please continue on a separate sheet if required.

## RESPONDENT DETAILS

Please print the following details in the spaces below.

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