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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of response

Discounted bus travel for younger people in Wales

June 2018

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

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Introduction

Prior to the scheduled ending of the MyTravelPass (MTP) pilot on 31 March 2017, the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure issued on 21 February 2017 a Written Statement about Youth Bus Travel¹, its future and an initial analysis of the scheme.

This initial analysis suggested that few younger people use the bus to travel outside their immediate area. This may be because their schools, colleges, places of training or work, or their friends and social activities do not require them to travel further.

In his Written Statement the Cabinet Secretary confirmed the establishment of a wide-ranging consultation exercise to discuss with young people, including schools, colleges and bus companies a scheme that is attractive, can practically support them in their life, work and study and will encourage modal shift.

The MTP consultation sought views about a range of possible enhancements to the current scheme. These included the categories of journeys which might be eligible for discounted travel; whether the age of eligibility and size of discount should be changed; and alternative methods for contributing towards the cost, including a fixed contribution per journey or a monthly/annual pass for free travel at the point of use. To avoid any accusations of leading or influencing respondents' choices, no indicative funding statements were included in the paper.

It is important to note that, whilst the Welsh Government recognises the value of discounted bus travel for all those persons listed, challenging funding settlements from the UK Government mean difficult decisions are likely to continue to be necessary, including those regarding discounted bus travel for younger people in Wales.

In addition to the normal circulation process details of the consultation exercise were also shared with officials within Welsh Government dealing with those areas where views were sought on extending the discount – for example, to volunteers and apprentices.

MyTravelPass, the scheme administrators set up by PTI (Traveline) Cymru, was asked to make its contacts aware of the consultation exercise, and has indicated that it reached over 3,000 people with information about the consultation using a variety of mechanisms - social activity (Google AdWords, search text ads and Facebook), a banner on the MyTravelPass website with a link to the consultation included information on the consultation, by emails to relevant organisations, through the Traveline Cymru customer panel and an article on the Traveline Cymru website. In addition, five focus groups were staged for young persons across Wales.

¹ <https://gov.wales/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2017/youthbustravel/?lang=en>

Overview of responses

Responses to the consultation that ran between 10 October 2017 and 4 January 2018 were received by email and in writing. Some respondents answered all the questions on which we sought views, despite some being dependent on a Yes or No answer to the preceding question, and one response features a group's % score for each question and component.

A total of 116 responses were received from organisations and individuals. Two responses were received after the closing date, but have been considered. Where responses from, for example, a college, identified the number of votes for each question, each vote was recorded as a separate entry in the analysis, so the total below is greater than the number of responses received.

The number of respondents in the analysis was as follows.

Local Education Authority (schools/colleges)	53	27.32%
Individual	46	23.71%
Local Government	33	17.01%
Public transport user group	23	11.86%
Community group	15	7.73%
Bus operator	7	3.61%
Trades unions	6	3.09%
Third sector	5	2.58%
Transport industry	3	1.55%
Advisory group	1	0.52%
Commissioner/Ombudsman	1	0.52%
Health sector	1	0.52%
Disability group	0	0%
Emergency services	0	0%
Media	0	0%
Other (please state)	0	0%

Individual respondents disclosed that they fell into the following age groups, and two indicated that they considered themselves to be disabled.

Under 16	16-18	19-22	23-24	25-59	60 & over	No age given
2	18	6	1	8	7	4
4.35%	39.13%	13.04%	2.17%	17.39%	15.22%	8.70%

Analysis of responses indicated:

- Strong agreement that lower bus fares influence young people's choice of transport.
- Two thirds of responses felt that the current age range of 16-18 is not appropriate.
- 28% of respondents want age increased to 21; with 26% wanting an upper age limit of 25.
- 52% do not consider the current discount rate appropriate to attract greater bus use by young people. Respondents favoured a rate of 50%.
- 70% of respondents agree with a fixed contribution per journey from younger persons as a suitable alternative to the one-third discount, and 40% agreed it should be £1.
- 32% would agree to a monthly fee of £10 to obtain free travel at the point of use.
- 31% would agree to an annual fee of £50 to obtain free travel at the point of use.
- 84% felt that journeys would be delayed if the discount were restricted to selected journey types.
- If discount were restricted to selected journey types then these should be for education (32%), commuting (17%) and health (6%).
- 76% of respondents favoured including persons in receipt of Educational Maintenance Allowance in the scheme.
- Very strong support for including those in education, whether full-time (91%) or part-time (82%) in such a scheme.
- Very strong support for including those in recognised apprentice schemes (85%) and at any age (37%).
- Very strong support for including registered carers (78%) and at any age (42%).
- Strong support for including people undertaking voluntary work (63%) and at any age (30%).
- Strong support for including people holding a Job Centre Plus Travel Discount Card (63%).

Next steps

This report is published to provide details of the responses received to the Welsh Government's consultation on the future of its discounted bus travel scheme for younger persons.

Current legislation does not allow the Welsh Government to make it a requirement of bus operators that they offer specific discounts to younger persons aged 16 to 18 not in full-time education.

Bus operators that carry MTP passholders at a discount have made it clear to the Welsh Government that they require to be fully compensated for doing so. Consequently, the content of the new MTP scheme that will be introduced in 2018-19 will be subject to a successful negotiation of its terms with bus operators.

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 in continuing to offer discounted bus travel for younger people in Wales.

The identified budget will also need to meet the cost of administering the scheme, which is currently the responsibility of MyTravelPass, its marketing and promotion, and for the production and issue of passes. All these costs fall to the Welsh Government.

The Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport has indicated his hope is that the age range will be increased to those aged 21 years during 2018. As part of this, Welsh Government officials will be discussing his decisions and its implications with representatives of the bus industry, local authorities and Bus Users Cymru to reach a consensus on what will be the new scheme. Until that has been resolved, the current discounted bus travel scheme for 16 to 18 years old will continue unchanged.

List of Respondents

Category	Name
Advisory Group	Skillnet Limited
Bus Operator	Cardiff Bus
Bus Operator	CPT
Bus Operator	First Cymru Buses Ltd
Bus Operator	Newport Bus
Bus Operator	Phil Anslow Ltd
Bus Operator	South Wales Transport (Neath) Ltd
Bus Operator	Stagecoach in South Wales
Commissioner/Ombudsman	Children's Commissioner for Wales
Community Group	Flintshire Youth Forum
Community Group	Pembrokeshire Youth Assembly
Community Group	Travelling Ahead
Community Group	Vale Youth Forum
Health sector	NHS Wales
Individual	Individual @ 46
Local Education authority/college	Blackwood Comp Year 11
Local Education authority/college	Caerphilly Youth Forum – Cabinet group
Local Education authority/college	Caerphilly Youth Forum – Group 1 and 2
Local Education authority/college	Lewis Girls Group 1 and 2
Local Education authority/college	Newtown high School Student Assembly
Local Education authority/college	Coleg Cambria
Local Education authority/college	Ystrad Mynach College IT class
Local Government	Bay of Colwyn Town Council
Local Government	Cardiff Council
Local Government	City and County of Swansea.
Local Government	Mid Wales regional transport collaboration
Local Government	Mike Rose
Local Government	Newport City Council
Local Government	North Wales councils @ 6
Local Government	Pembrokeshire Council
Local Government	Powys Council
Local Government	Rhondda Cynon Tada County Borough Council and Young Carer's Support Team
Local Government	Torfaen County Borough Council and Social Care & Housing
Local Government	WLGA
Local Government	Wrexham Youth Parliament
Local Government - England	Cheshire West & Chester Council
Public transport user group	Five names withheld
Public transport user group	Bus Users Cymru
Public transport user group	Coleg y Cymoedd
Public transport user group	North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum
Public transport user group	Powys Youth Forum
Public transport user group	Transport focus
Public transport user group	Wrexham Bidston Rail Users Association
Third sector	Barnardo's Cymru
Third sector	Brake, the road safety charity
Third sector	CTA UK
Third sector	GISDA
Third sector	Swansea City of Sanctuary
Trade unions	National Education Union Cymru
Trade unions	NUS Wales
Trade unions	UCAC National Union of Athrawon Cymru
Trade unions	UNISON Cymru: Wales Young Members
Transport industry	Association of Local Bus Company Manager

Category	Name
Transport industry	PTI Cymru (Traveline Cymru)
Transport industry	Public Transport Logistics Consultant