

Fife Council submission of 10 March 2023

PE1928/F: Provide free rail travel for disabled people who meet the qualifications for free bus travel

Fife Council: Companion Rail Travel

If a Fife resident holds a valid National Entitlement Card (NEC) that displays a “C+1” or “Ceye+1” then a companion can travel with the cardholder within Fife, for half fare. If the cardholder travels out with Fife their companion would require to pay the relevant full fare.

- **Number of passengers making use of the companion travel discount scheme for rail journeys across Fife**

Fife currently has 203,612 valid NEC cards on issue, 06/03/2023. Of these, 159,546, **78%**, have access to concessionary travel services.

Cards issued on age grounds, 60+, or disability, will have access to both bus and rail travel concessions.

Of those cards offering travel concession 7%, **11,270**, are **companion cards (+1)**:

- Disabled (C+1): 10,499
- Blind (Ceye+1): 771

Between 01/04/2022 - 08/01/2023 the number of companion journeys averaged at 76 per 4-week period, equivalent of 38 return companion journeys.

Potential for 11,270 passengers to travel by rail with a companion, it is estimated, from the current use, that the number of single companion journeys made using +1 element during the financial year 2022/23 will be around 1,000.

- **The support provided to passengers to ensure they can access the reduced fares when travelling with a National Entitlement Cardholder, particularly where staffed ticket offices are not available at the beginning of their journey.**

Information can be found on Fife Council Web site

[MyFife Travel Benefits | Fife Council](#)

Tickets may only be purchased on day of travel

NEC cardholders can purchase their ticket at any manned office or if unmanned, on board the train.

Should there be limited guard facilities on board it may be that they are required to purchase their tickets when they arrive at their destination.

- **What guidance and training is provided to rail staff to ensure that the policy on companion travel is being applied consistently across the region**

Scotrail have the responsibility to ensure that all staff working in Fife stations and train staff working on trains which stop at Fife stations have the relevant scheme guidance and training to be conversant with the Fife concessionary travel rail scheme.

- **Committee Members would also welcome your view on whether there is scope within the existing concessionary travel scheme budget to provide free rail travel to all holders of National Entitlement Cards for people with disabilities.**

In addition to the 11,270 C+1 cards on issue there are a further 2,405 C cards issued to those with disabilities who do not qualify for a companion card.

Unfortunately, there is no provision within our existing rail concessionary travel budget to extend what is currently on offer.