

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on petition PE1928: Provide free rail travel for disabled people who meet the qualifications for free bus travel, submitted by David Gallant

Background

The Scotland-wide national concessionary travel scheme for elderly (aged 60+) and disabled people, administered by Transport Scotland, provides free travel on nearly all local and long-distance bus services within Scotland. A companion can travel for free to assist people with certain disabilities. Scottish island residents also receive two free return ferry trips between their home island and the Scottish mainland every year.

Bus operators are paid a proportion of the full adult fare for each concessionary traveller carried, known as the reimbursement rate. The total amount payable to operators taking part in the scheme is subject to an annual cap, with no further payments made to any bus operator if the cap is reached. The payment cap and reimbursement rate are set following negotiations between Transport Scotland and the Confederation of Passenger Transport, representing bus operators. The reimbursement rate and payment cap are set at a level intended to ensure Scottish Ministers' objective of bus operators being no better and no worse off than they would have been in the absence of the national concessionary travel scheme is met. The payment cap for 2022-23 has been set at £226.1m.

Several local authorities and SPT offer concessionary rail fares to disabled residents, usually limited to travel within the local authority area or SPT boundaries. The [Disabled Persons' Railcard](#) offers one third off most rail fares across Britain. Blind people [can travel for free on rail services](#) in Scotland.

Scottish Government Action

The Scottish Government has not considered extending the national concessionary travel scheme to include rail travel for disabled people.

Scottish Parliament Action

The Scottish Parliament has not considered extending the national concessionary travel scheme to include rail travel for disabled people.

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10 March 2022

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