

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Edward Mountain MSP
Convener
Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

27 March 2025

Dear Convener,

UNDER 22S CONCESSIONARY FERRY TRAVEL

As you are aware, the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee's 26 June 2023 report 'A Modern and Sustainable Ferry Service for Scotland' called on the Scottish Government to consider how it can make ferry services more affordable to young people through a concessionary scheme.

I am therefore pleased to be writing to the Committee to confirm that the Scottish Government will today announce that 1 April 2025 will see the introduction of unlimited free inter-island ferry travel for all island residents under the age of 22 within Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides.

Set out in the Islands Connectivity Plan last year and forming a key commitment in the transport budget for 2025-26, the scheme forms part of the Scottish Government's long term strategy to ensure ferry services are affordable and sustainable for years to come, as well as helping eradicate child poverty and grow the economy.

This new scheme will enable young island residents to travel for free as foot passengers on inter-island ferry services within their own local authority area by showing their Young Scot or National Entitlement Card, allowing children and young people to travel between islands across their local authority area, improving access to education, employment, training, health and social activities and much more.

This scheme will give young islanders in these communities the same opportunities as free bus travel provides for many children and young people in mainland communities and was a key commitment in the transport budget for 2025-26. I also remain committed to extending our existing scheme providing four free journeys to or from the Scottish mainland to more young people on our islands in 2025-26.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

Eradicating child poverty is the single greatest priority of this Government and we are committed to giving all of our children and young people the very best chance to succeed in life.

Yours sincerely,

FIONA HYSLOP
Cabinet Secretary for Transport

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE[™]
We invest in people Silver

