

Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity
Ministear an Àiteachais agus Ceangal
Jim Fairlie MSP
Jim Fairlie BPA

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

Edward Mountain MSP
Convener
Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP
netzero.committee@parliament.scot

11 March 2025

Dear Convener,

During the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee Evidence Session on Tuesday 25 February on the National Bus Travel Concession Schemes (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Order 2025 [draft], I undertook to provide to the Committee further information on a number of questions. Further to the email from the Committee dated 4 March, this information is provided below.

1. A breakdown of how much each bus operator in Scotland receives through the ODPS and YPS schemes.

Transport Scotland publish monthly statistics detailing all expenditure over £25,000. This includes payments made to bus operators for reimbursement under the National Concessionary Travel Schemes and in respect of Network Support Grant. The statistics can be found at [Publications | Transport Scotland](#).

2. A breakdown of the use of concessionary travel in urban and rural areas.

Please see Annex A for a breakdown of uptake by Local Authority of the Young Persons Free Bus Travel Scheme (YPS) and a breakdown of National Entitlement Card holders by Local Authority for the Older and Disabled Persons Scheme (ODPS) as at end of February 2025. Please note that ODPS cardholder uptake is not expressed as a percentage of the population due to difficulties in identifying the number of people in Scotland who are eligible for the disabled element of the scheme.

Further data on the uptake of the ODPS can be found in Transport and Travel in Scotland Table 32, which includes usage statistics in urban and rural areas: [transport-and-travel-in-scotland-2023-social-survey-tables.xlsx](#)

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

3. How the reimbursement rate has changed over time in response to fare increases. Specifically, could you provide the figures showing whether, as fares rose by 65 to 70 per cent, the reimbursement rate correspondingly declined.

The table below sets out the reimbursement rates for each year since the Older and Disabled Persons Scheme came into force in April 2006. The table also shows the Budget Cap for the scheme and the changes in average bus fare prices in each of these years. Current (or nominal) prices refer to the price at a given moment in time and are not adjusted for inflation. Constant (or real) prices are adjusted for inflation.

Year	Reimbursement rate (% adult single fare)	Budget cap (£m)	Change in local bus fares relative to 2006 (current prices)	Change in local bus fares relative to 2006 (constant 2006 prices)
2006/07	73.6%	159	-	-
2007/08	73.6%	163	6.0%	2.8%
2008/09	73.6%	180.1	11.0%	5.1%
2009/10	73.6%	187	20.3%	10.8%
2010/11	67.0%	174.2	23.3%	9.7%
2011/12	67.0%	180	25.8%	7.6%
2012/13	67.0%	187	32.4%	9.5%
2013/14	60.0%	187	38.1%	11.1%
2014/15	58.1%	192	42.5%	12.8%
2015/16	57.1%	202	45.8%	15.4%
2016/17	56.9%	212	49.9%	18.2%
2017/18	56.9%	196.16	55.6%	19.9%
2018/19	56.8%	202.1	63.6%	23.0%
2019/20	56.5%	213.65	67.0%	23.2%
2020/21	55.9%	226.1	72.9%	25.6%
2021/22	55.9%	226.1	73.3%	25.1%
2022/23	55.9%	226.1	73.4%	16.9%
2023/24	55.9%	216.1	76.4%	8.1%
2024/25	55%	203.5	94.1%	15.2%
2025/26	52.9%	215.1		

*as at the end of January 2025.

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



4. Figures regarding the rates of fraud which have occurred under the ODPS and YPS schemes.

During the calendar year 2024, in terms of court action specifically relating to counter fraud work, there was 1 case reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and 1 case concluded in court with a successful outcome.

There were 19 cases considered during calendar year 2024. The outcomes of these vary on a case by case basis, but will include actions such as deductions made from operators, warnings or suspensions issued to cardholders, improvements made to application processes, court referral for fraud, and no further action.

The following table sets out other counter fraud actions that are taken by Transport Scotland across both concessionary travel schemes:

Calendar Year 2024	Total
Warning letters issued to cardholders	47
Suspensions issued to cardholders	5
Cards blocked (for example, when a card is reported lost a hotlist is placed on it which blocks it if attempted to be used, a number of other reasons are used when hotlisting cards)	49,236

Transport Scotland also responds to claims of overstaging (i.e. where a ticket is issued for further than a cardholder requests for their journey and this results in a higher fare being charged). Complaints in 2024:

- Number of complaints - 10
- Number of individual instances within the complaints - 11
- Number of individual instances where overstaging occurred – 9
- Total value of overstaging - £20.30

5. Finally, a question was asked during the session about the number of fare paying bus passengers for the past few years.

There has been a recovery in both concessionary and commercial (i.e. non-concessionary) passenger numbers in recent years following the Covid-19 pandemic, as set out in the table below. Note that following the introduction of the Young Persons Free Bus Travel Scheme in 2022, the relative size of the concessionary and non-concessionary market changed markedly.

Year ending March	Total concessionary journeys (millions)	Total non-concessionary journeys(millions)
2019	142	233
2020	137	224
2021	48	76
2022	86	146
2023	146	151
2024	177	157

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



Source: Department for Transport Annual Bus Statistics. Further details can be found at BUS01: [Local bus passenger journeys](#).

I hope that the information provided is helpful to Committee members and I would like to extend my thanks for your consideration of the Order and for your constructive approach during the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

JIM FAIRLIE

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



ANNEX A

Uptake of the Young Persons Free Bus Travel Scheme by Local Authority at end of February 2025

Local Authority	U22 uptake
Aberdeen City	76.4%
Aberdeenshire	76.7%
Angus Council	74.9%
Argyll and Bute	71.2%
City of Edinburgh	93.1%
Clackmannanshire	59.8%
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	71.7%
Dumfries and Galloway	65.0%
Dundee City	77.8%
East Ayrshire	83.8%
East Dunbartonshire	72.7%
East Lothian	78.6%
East Renfrewshire	75.5%
Falkirk	72.1%
Fife	85.0%
Glasgow City	79.6%
Highland	63.6%
Inverclyde	87.1%
Midlothian	79.8%
Moray	69.2%
North Ayrshire	86.4%
North Lanarkshire	77.3%
Orkney Islands	66.4%
Perth & Kinross	75.8%
Renfrewshire	80.1%
Scottish Borders	67.9%
Shetland Islands	78.3%
South Ayrshire	70.3%
South Lanarkshire	84.5%
Stirling	62.8%
West Dunbartonshire	87.1%
West Lothian	69.5%
Total Uptake (Rounded Population)	78.1%

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



Number of National Entitlement Card holders under the Older and Disabled Persons Scheme by Local Authority at end of February 2025.

Local Authority	ODP Cardholders
Aberdeen City	56,267
Aberdeenshire	74,490
Angus Council	37,023
Argyll and Bute	31,931
City of Edinburgh	141,360
Clackmannanshire	13,696
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	8,966
Dumfries and Galloway	56,435
Dundee City	41,469
East Ayrshire	35,647
East Dunbartonshire	34,512
East Lothian	34,149
East Renfrewshire	26,434
Falkirk	41,203
Fife	115,650
Glasgow City	148,829
Highland	71,392
Inverclyde	24,789
Midlothian	27,017
Moray	27,343
North Ayrshire	43,334
North Lanarkshire	83,680
Orkney Islands	7,551
Perth and Kinross	48,703
Renfrewshire	50,825
Scottish Borders	36,552
Shetland Islands	7,364
South Ayrshire	38,412
South Lanarkshire	90,070
Stirling	23,997
West Dunbartonshire	26,378
West Lothian	45,190
Totals:	1,550,658

This data is supplied by the National Entitlement Card Programme Office (NECPO). The data refers to the number of people with a valid card but does not include products which either start in the future or have expired.

NECPO work with stakeholders and partners to carry out regular data cleansing of the customer database which may impact cardholder numbers when records are updated.

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

