



## Young Person's Free Bus Travel Advice for schools

On 27 July, the Scottish Government announced plans to begin the new Young Person's Free Bus Travel Scheme from 31 January 2022.

We know that, with the return of pupils in the new term, schools may be asked questions about the scheme by young people and their parents or guardians. We want to provide as much information as we can, at this point, to help answer those questions.

### What you need to know

The Scottish Government and its partners at the Improvement Service, National Entitlement Card Programme Office and Young Scot are working at pace to deliver the new scheme.

Legislation was passed by the Scottish Parliament in March enabling the introduction of a new free bus travel scheme for those aged under 19, and further legislation will be laid in August to extend this to include those aged up to 21 (inclusive).

This means all residents of Scotland aged 5-21 will benefit from the new scheme at the same time – from 31 January 2022.

The scheme is a crucial step in embedding more sustainable travel behaviours from a young age, as well as opening up opportunities and access to education, leisure and work.

Further information can be found in the [latest news release](#) or on the [Transport Scotland website](#).

### What you may be asked

#### How can I apply for the scheme? Can I apply for the scheme now?

Young people aged 5 – 21 will be able to travel using the new free bus scheme from 31 January 2022 using the National Entitlement Card (NEC) or Young Scot branded NEC.

However, work is still ongoing to finalise the application process. We recommend waiting until further information on how to apply for and access the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme is provided later this year. Please check the [Transport Scotland website](#) for updates.

If you need a new/replacement NEC or Young Scot NEC in the meantime for other services then please [contact your local authority](#).

### **This scheme was announced in January 2020, why is it not being launched until January 2022?**

The timeline is consistent with post-COVID public commitments to implement the scheme for under 19s this financial year. The new Scheme will also now include all young people aged under 22 from day one, subject to Parliamentary approval of legislation to be laid in August which will include 19 -21 year olds in the Scheme.

### **Will children be safe travelling on the bus?**

Parents or guardians will be required to approve applications for young people under the age of 16 to ensure that they can exercise their responsibility for their children's safety. This includes providing approval for existing cardholders to access the scheme.

Transport Scotland is working with Barnardo's Scotland to ensure sufficient guidance is provided to bus operators in advance of January.

Transport Scotland and its delivery partners will review how the approval arrangements work in practice after the first year the Scheme is in operation.

### **What impact will the scheme have school transport provision?**

Only registered local bus services are included in the scheme, meaning dedicated school transport services are not covered. Transport Scotland and its delivery partners are working with representatives of ATCO/COSLA to consider the potential impacts of the introduction of the scheme on school transport provision.

## **Further information**

Any other queries regarding the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme should be directed to Transport Scotland at [concessionarytravel@transport.gov.scot](mailto:concessionarytravel@transport.gov.scot).