



## Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

**Petition Number:** [PE1338](#)

**Main Petitioner:** David Stuart MacKay

**Subject:** Concessionary travel on night bus services.

Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to amend relevant legislation to provide that night services are eligible services for holders of entitlement cards for free bus travel for older and disabled persons.

### Background

A Scotland-wide national concessionary travel scheme for the elderly and disabled people was launched on 1 April 2006. This scheme operates under the provisions of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 and associated regulations. The aims of the scheme, as set out by the Scottish Government, which are relevant to this petition include to:

- allow older and disabled people (especially those on low incomes) improved access to services, facilities and social networks by 'free' scheduled bus services; and so promote social inclusion
- improve health by promoting a more active lifestyle for the elderly and disabled

The scheme is open to anyone resident in Scotland who is aged 60+ or of fare paying age who meets one or more of the eligibility criteria for disabled people. Full details of the eligibility criteria are available on the [Transport Scotland](#) website.

Concessionary travel is available on virtually all scheduled local and long distance bus services available for use by the general public which operate wholly within Scotland or between Berwick-upon-Tweed and Scotland and Carlisle and Scotland, although not on local services within these two English towns.

Concessionary travel is not available on night buses where a premium fare is charged, excursions, tours, group hire of coaches or on services including a special amenity element. In addition, concessionary travel is not available on services which are difficult to align with routine service and fare structures, e.g. open top tours. These eligibility criteria are set out in The National Bus

Travel Concession Scheme for Older and Disabled Persons (Eligible Persons and Eligible Services) (Scotland) Order 2006.

Table 2.02 of the Scottish Government's [Draft Budget 2010-11](#) indicates that the concessionary travel scheme cost £189.5m in 2009-10 and is predicted to cost up to £191.1m for 2010-11.

### **Scottish Government Action**

The Scottish Government announced a review into the operation and financing of the concessionary travel scheme for the elderly and disabled people during July 2008. The review [report](#) was published on 26 May 2009. The report recommended extending scheme eligibility from 1 April 2011 to include HM Service personnel and veterans under the age of 60 who were seriously injured in service and are resident in Scotland. The Scottish Government accepted this recommendation and the scheme will be extended as of next year. No other recommendations were made on extending scheme eligibility or the bus services eligible for entry to the scheme.

### **Scottish Parliament Action**

The Scottish Parliament has not considered extending the concessionary travel scheme to cover premium fare night bus services.

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**05 July 2010**

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