



A SUSTAINABLE AND RENEWABLE SOCIETY

Policy 5:

The Scottish Government's 'Young Persons' (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel Scheme' should be maintained and expanded to include all young people (up to their 26th birthday) and across all forms of public transport.

Endorsed by:



What's this all about?

Young people told us they support the expansion of the Under-22s Free Bus Travel scheme because of the social, financial and educational benefits that free travel across Scotland provides. Through the scheme, most young people can connect with new work opportunities, access more leisure spaces, and take part in education, youth work, and social activities. By expanding the free public transport out to other modes – such as trains and ferries – and increasing the age young people can access free travel, it will enable even more young people an access free travel, even more young people will be able to access the facilities and services they need to succeed in life and realise their full potential. In particular, more equal opportunities will be available for young people furthest from their rights or who have additional responsibilities, supporting them to overcome more barriers to realising their human rights.

"Free bus travel is a highlight of youths in Scotland social life and helps people through education and connecting Scotland."

– Young person aged 14-17, Dundee

"This travel has been a lifeline for me."

What are young people in Scotland calling for?

- Young people want to see greater investment into public transport for rural and island communities, ensuring ferry travel is included in the young people's concessionary travel scheme, when buses are not an option.

"I think this is a good idea because many deaf people struggle with mental health because of isolation and public transport can help them stay connected. Increasing the free bus service would make it easier for them to travel, meet friends and reduce feelings of loneliness which can help with their mental health."

– Young woman aged 14-17, Dundee

- The Scottish Government should protect and expand the existing young people's concessionary travel scheme to include young people up to their 26th birthdays, and to include a broader range of public transport options (such as trains and ferries).

"Socially the bus travel scheme is amazing allowing for young people to explore a variety of different locations. I believe the scheme should be expanded if possible, I have already used my Young Scot card to visit a friend in university in Glasgow and Dundee, knowing that the cost of transport isn't an issue is fabby."

– Young woman aged 14-17, Edinburgh

- Young people should be involved in measures to ensure public transport is safe for all passengers and transport staff.

Evidence and Support

- In [Together Scotland's State of Children's Rights Report 2024](#), children and young people said free bus travel plays an important role in supporting them to access activities, educational opportunities and maintain friendships. This was particularly important for children and young people from low-income backgrounds.

What has SYP done?

Previous [SYP consultations](#) includes [SYP's response to NZET Committee Inquiry into Ferries \(2022\)](#) and [Reducing Car Use - #WhatsYourTake survey report \(2022\)](#) and [SYP's response to the Impact of Island Communities of Free Bus Travel for People Under 22 \(2021\)](#). The [SYP Policy Log](#) includes several policies on access to public transport, cost of public transport, safety and management of public transport.