



Consultation Workshop: Transport Scotland

September 2025

Overview

What was the purpose of the workshop?

Transport Scotland is currently exploring how to improve the safety for everyone when using public transport, and they want to ensure that young people's voices are centred in deciding what safety measures may look like. The workshop involved asking young people about the introduction of safety officers, a behaviour code for concessionary travel and how to improve education around safe transport use. All of this will further inform an upcoming Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment on concessionary travel usage (such as the Under 22 Free Bus Travel Scheme).

The aims of the workshop were as follows:

1. To ensure the voices and views are heard by Transport Scotland
2. To understand and improve education on safety and behaviour on public transport
3. To understand young people's experiences and ideas about the introduction of safety officers on buses
4. To review the proposed 'Behaviour Code' for concessionary bus users (such as U22 bus scheme) and provide feedback on its impacts and effectiveness

Method

What did the workshop involve?

- Meetings between Transport Scotland and Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs). The MSYPs were involved in planning and facilitating to ensure the workshop was youth-led, engaging and met the needs of the young people and Transport Scotland.
- The delivery of a 1hr 15 mins in-person workshop during SYP's 83rd Sitting with a group of MSYPs to discuss and share views on the agreed topic through a series of youth friendly activities.
- This report summarising the discussions following the workshop.

What was the process of developing the workshop?

SYP staff worked with two MSYPs - David and Lieke to develop plans for the workshop in consultation with staff from Transport Scotland. In the weeks leading up to the workshop, David was Convenor of SYP's Transport, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee. Lieke was elected Deputy Convenor the day the workshop took place.



The SYP staff, David and Lieke met first with George Beale-Pratt from Transport Scotland to discuss a general overview of the workshop, the aims and intended outcomes and gather information for the partnering MSYPs to feedback on. David and Lieke provided feedback on:

- The session plan
- The accessibility of the session's presentation
- How overall youth-friendly the session appeared to be

On the day, workshop consultants (a total of 14 MSYPs) were asked to:

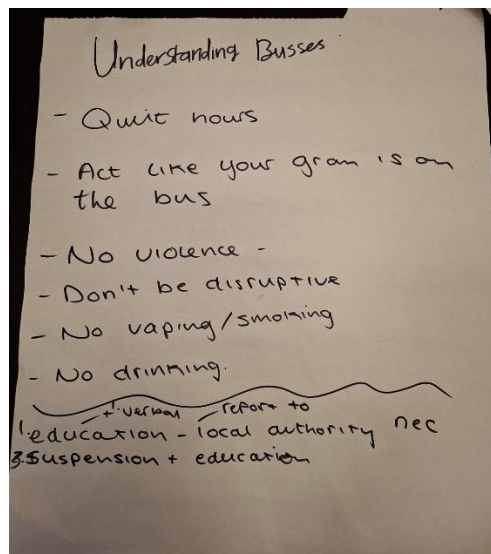
- How can safety be improved on public transport?
- What does education look like for improving safety on public transport?
- Are Safety Officers on buses a good idea?
- What would make a Concessionary Travel Behaviour Code successful in helping to improve safety and behaviour?

The discussions were done in a breakout group format using flipchart paper

Findings

Discussion 1: How can safety be improved on public transport?

MSYPs suggested for there to be 'quiet hours' on buses. There should be rules such as no violence, no vaping, no smoking, no drinking and don't be disruptive -you should act as though your gran is on the bus. Anyone who disobeys the rules should at first receive a verbal warning, education and they along with the National Entitlement Card (NEC) be reported to their local authority. If they continue to misbehave, they should be suspended from bus services and educated on anti-social behaviour.



Discussion 2: What does education look like for improving safety on public transport?

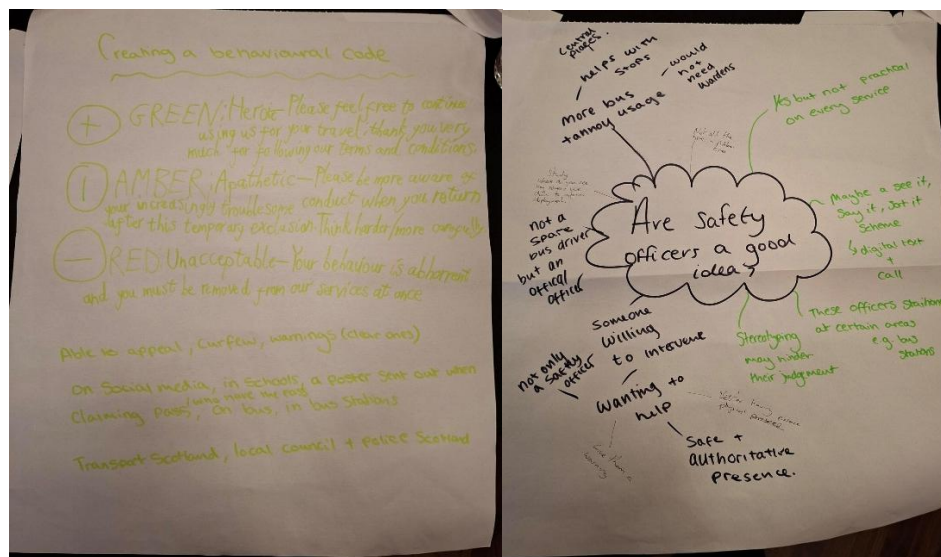
Education on improving anti-social behaviour should be done on social media and less so in the school curriculum. On social media, positive influencers who specialise in public transport such as TikToker Kenzie Bus Boy could be asked to post about these issues. There should be early education and education for young and older people as well as bus drivers. There should also be mandatory training for those expecting to receive a card before the card is issued to them, such as a video when signing up. There is a duty for operators to show people the right path and there must be clear standards that everyone must adhere to, with signage about suspensions and likewise, tannoy announcements about expectations on passenger behaviour.

Discussion 3: Are Safety Officers on buses a good idea?

MSYPs suggested there should be more usage of tannoy on buses and this would mean wardens are not needed, they help with stops and should be used in places of centrality. Opposing this view, it was also noted that it is better to have a physical presence that is safe and authoritative who is willing to intervene and wanting to help.

Safety officers don't necessarily need to be used all the time, but at problem times such as late at night. Safety officers should not be a "spare" bus driver but an "official" officer. Another group said that safety officers should be used but it is not practical on every service. There could also be an initiative set up similar to 'See It, Say It, Sort It' with a digital text and helpline service.

It was suggested that Officers should be stationed at certain areas such as bus stations. One group said key issues should be studied and identified and then use data to inform deployment. It was also noted that there may be a challenge of stereotyping which may hinder the judgement of safety officers.





Further Information

If you require further information about the content of this report, please contact Róisín Hunt at roisin.h@syp.org.uk.

