

Equality Impact Assessment – Concessionary Travel

Title of service being assessed: Potential change to the Leicestershire Concessionary Travel Scheme.
Name of Department: Department of Environment & Transport
Name and role of the officers completing this assessment:
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Defining the service:

1. What are the aims, objectives of purpose of the service? Are these reflected in the relevant service plan?

The purpose of the Concessionary Travel Scheme is to enable elderly and disabled county residents to travel around on bus services free within defined hours. This is by statute using the 1985 and 2000 Transport Act (as modified by the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007). Other discretionary concessions are currently available including use on other modes of transport. The potential change to the scheme would involve discontinuing some or all of these discretionary concessions.

2. What outcomes does the service want to achieve and for whom? How have these been determined? Please also list any relevant performance indicators.

The legal framework (Transport Act 1985 and 2000 and Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007) determines the requirements for the Concessionary Travel Scheme. The desired outcomes are that available passenger transport services reflect the Acts and that those people entitled to concessionary travel under the arrangements currently stipulated and financially supported by central government use the services provided. The potential change to the scheme would provide a contribution to savings the County council is having to find in response to budgetary pressures and the withdrawal of some central government funding. There are no specific performance indicators related to this provision, although use of passenger transport by those entitled to concessionary travel has a beneficial impact on the cumulative number of passenger journeys made in the county of Leicestershire. However, as any increase or decrease in this cumulative number is influenced by a number of independent factors, an increase or decrease in bus patronage will not clearly reflect the effectiveness (or otherwise) of the Concessionary Travel Scheme.

3. Who is responsible for delivering the service? Are there any other organisations involved? If other organisations are involved are they fully compliant with the Council's Equality Policy?

Leicestershire County Council is responsible for delivering the service. The Sustainable Travel Group and Fleet Services (who maintain the Council's vehicles) work in tandem with private bus service companies to deliver local passenger transport services. District

Councils may in future choose to invoke “wellbeing” powers to fund additions to the statutory scheme within their district, and ask the County Council to provide these on their behalf. These external organisations are aware and supportive of the Council’s Equality Policy.

4. Consider the answers given questions 1, 2 and 3 and assess whether your service results, or could result in adverse impact on or discrimination against different groups of people. If you consider that there is adverse impact or discrimination, or the potential for either, please outline below and state whether it is justifiable or legitimate and give your reasons for this.

| Target Equality Group | Does it have a Positive Impact? | Does it have a Negative Impact? | If it has a negative impact, is the level of this impact high or low? |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| Age | Yes. The National Travel Scheme is specifically intended for elderly and disabled persons. | Yes. Although the National Travel Scheme has an age threshold, it does not disadvantage other individuals. However, removing the discretionary elements of the scheme will reduce accessibility to bus services in the late evening and to other modes of transport. | Low - concessionary travel will remain available on buses at statutory times so some currently travelling in the late evening will be able to change their journey time to continue to benefit. At non-statutory times and on non-bus modes, facilities will still exist albeit at full commercial fare. |
| Belief or faith | No. An individual's faith or beliefs does not feature in the operation of the National Travel Scheme. | No. An individual's faith or beliefs does not exclude them from the National Travel Scheme. | |
| Disability | Yes. The National Travel scheme is specifically intended to support residents who are disabled. Documents are available in large print. | Yes. The Council may only have the resource to fund a partial solution for disabled residents able to make practical use of a bus pass. Therefore removing the discretionary elements of the scheme will reduce accessibility to bus services at certain times and to other modes of transport. | Low –Disabled residents in this situation may have other assistance with travel from other sources. Concessionary travel will remain available on buses at statutory times so some will be able to change their journey time or mode to continue to benefit. At non-statutory times and on non-bus modes, facilities will still exist |

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|---------------------------|--|---|---|
| | | | <p>albeit at full commercial fare. There may be a high impact for those with difficulty in using cash to pay fares. This may in particular affect some people with visual impairment, deafness or learning disability. There may also be a high impact for users of community transport who cannot transfer to other modes due to mobility or affordability issues. Withdrawing the concessionary travel facility could result in the closure or partial closure of schemes, as usage levels and income will fall significantly if the half fare travel facility is withdrawn (the County Council reimburses the part of the full fare not paid by concessionary pass holders).</p> |
| Sexual Orientation | No. An individual's sexual orientation does not feature in the administration of the National Travel Scheme | No. An individual's sexual orientation does not feature in the administration of the National Travel Scheme | |
| Gender | No. An individual's gender does not feature in the administration of the National Travel Scheme | No. An individual's gender does not feature in the administration of the National Travel Scheme. Qualifying age for an older person's concession is the same irrespective of gender. | |

| | | | |
|-------------|---|--|--|
| Race | Yes. Documents are available in alternative languages. | No. An individual's race does not feature in the administration of the National Travel Scheme | |
|-------------|---|--|--|

There is likely to be an adverse impact for some groups of people that is justifiable and legitimate rather than illegal. Reasons for this are as follows:

- Groups most affected will be those with insufficient income to afford the full commercial fare, all of the equality strands will be equally affected by this criterion.
- Central Government are funding the statutory scheme: in the current economic and funding climate the County Council may not feel it is able to fund non-statutory elements.
- Consultations are being conducted to obtain a public opinion on whether to continue funding non-statutory services: any savings will contribute towards a reduction in Council Tax for all Leicestershire residents, including all those in the various equality strands.
- Public transport will still be available to concession-holders outside the statutory hours, but only at the full commercial fare.
- There is no requirement to offer discretionary concessions and many other shire counties already do not do so.

5. If you have identified adverse impact of discrimination that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people. This arises out of the duty to promote good relations between people of different groups and is in keeping with the Council’s approach to social cohesion.

| List process and criteria | Essential? | Barriers identified and groups affected |
|--|------------|---|
| Public consultation | Yes | All affected groups, including special interest organisations, invited to comment publicly on the proposals to curtail non-statutory service provision. Consultation documentation available by web, post and large print on request. |
| Statutory provision for a specific group of elderly or disabled people | Yes | |

6. Consider what barriers you can remove, and what reasonable adjustment may be necessary to ensure the service is accessible (this could include providing the service elsewhere). Consider what actions you will need to take to address any unmet needs that you have identified.

Barriers and reasonable adjustments:

Literature about the scheme must be accessible and so must be clear, simple and concise avoiding jargon where possible. Some language barriers may still exist, but the use of the County Council’s Language Line service may mitigate most of these, and increasing driver awareness of British Sign Language may also help. This will be more achievable with the co-operation of external bus companies. Application forms have a small section of alternative languages signposting to the availability of further help.

Reasonable adjustments include ensuring that all literature should be available in other formats upon request.

Information about the service is currently available through the County Council's website, libraries, and other publications. District Councils also hold information on the service.

Encouraging private bus companies to accelerate the move to fully low-floor fleets may make buses more accessible to those who currently use travel concessions on other modes because they cannot manage entrance steps on older buses.

Continuing to offer discretionary concessions on a very limited basis may be appropriate, e.g. where the only bus of the day from an isolated community is at non-statutory times.

7(a). What does analysis of the data tell you about how well your service is meeting the needs of the various equality groups? How up to date is the information.

The monitoring data is as follows for the equality groups concerned.

| Age | Service users | County Population |
|------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 60+ * | 112482 | 150,700 |

*It is necessary to be of State Pension Age or over in order to qualify for concessionary travel.

Source: ONS Population Estimates Unit, published August 2009

| Disability | Service users | County Population |
|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Yes | 10718 | 98456 (15.5%)* |
| No | 112482 | 536744 (84.5%) |
| No Replies | n/a | N/A |

*Figures from 2001 Census for all people with a long term limiting illness

| Gender | Service users | County Population |
|---------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Male | 53400 | 315100 (49.6%) |
| Female | 68600 | 320000 (50.4%) |
| No reply | 0 | N/A |

| Ethnicity | Service users | County Population* |
|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| White: British or Irish | Not known | 582400 (93.3%) |
| Mixed | Not known | 6000 (0.96%) |
| Asian/Asian British | Not known | 28900 (4.62%) |
| Black/Black British | Not known | 3800 (0.6%) |
| Chinese | Not known | 700 (0.1%) |
| No reply | Not known | N/A |

National Statistics 2001

| Faith | Service users | County Population |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Buddhist | n/a | 900 (0.1%) |
| Christian | n/a | 452347 (74.2%) |
| Hindu | n/a | 12329 (2%) |
| Jewish | n/a | 615 (0.1%) |
| Muslim | n/a | 4939 (0.8%) |
| Sikh | n/a | 4967 (0.8%) |

| | | |
|----------|-----|---------------|
| None | n/a | 92810 (15.2%) |
| No reply | n/a | N/A |

National Statistics 2001

| Sexuality* | Service users |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Bi-sexual | n/a |
| Gay | n/a |
| Heterosexual | n/a |
| Lesbian | n/a |
| No reply | n/a |

*Note National Census does not ask about sexual orientation and it is not relevant for the provision of concessionary travel.

Ethnicity data will be collected as part of the processes within the Customer Services Centre. Take-up figures can then be checked against the census data. If a problem is identified from further consideration, a solution will be designed to address those issues raised.

(b) Which groups of people are you hearing from? Are there groups of people that you are not hearing from? What can you do to ensure that people are able to provide feedback on the service? Is there information on service user needs held by other services that would be appropriate for your services?

| Data Type | Source (s) | Analysis of the data and/or gaps in information | When last gathered |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------|
| Compliments, complaints and comments | Feedback through drivers | Verbal comments, including compliments and complaints | Ongoing |
| Service take-up | 70% for elderly persons' scheme | Report from concessionary travel database. | February 2010 |
| Consultation responses | Widely circulated consultation document about potential changes to the scheme | Responses by web, phone and hard copy | March 2012 |

8 Social cohesion is a priority for Councils. Review all the actions and targets that you have identified as a result of this equality impact assessment as to what social cohesion issues could arise.

The Transport Act 2000 sets out clearly the qualifying criteria for participation in the concessionary travel scheme. Therefore, only a minority of Leicestershire residents are considered eligible for participation. No formal monitoring mechanism currently exists, other than the qualifying criteria held on application forms, and these are not held for any length of time by LCC.

The Concessionary Travel Scheme is open to residents of all ethnicities, faiths, sexual orientation and age (depending upon whether or not the applicant is a disabled person), and to non-disabled persons eligible by reason of age.

The potential changes to the scheme may marginally reduce social cohesion due to preventing a minority of concession holders from accessing community facilities as frequently as previously. However, it is not thought that this would be any different in Leicestershire to places elsewhere where discretionary concessions are not provided.