

Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme for Under 22s

Customer Service Toolkit: 14 January 2022

THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD NOT BE SHARED WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC. The aim of this toolkit is to provide information for key stakeholders, organisations and support groups to assist in their communications of the scheme with customers/clients.

In light of the current situation with the pandemic, please see below our messaging for the launch of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme for Under 22s.

Applications officially opened from 10 January, but the launch of the national marketing campaign, including the campaign website, will be postponed until a later date to avoid proactively encouraging unnecessary travel during the recent surge in COVID-19 transmission rates.

However, it is important that children and young people who rely on the bus for essential travel are still able to apply to access free bus travel from 31 January. There is no prescribed list of what constitutes essential travel – it will differ for different children, young people and families. It might include travel for education, training, work, care or health reasons, so applications will be open to all eligible children and young people from 10 January as planned, but we are encouraging those young people for whom bus travel is essential to apply at this stage.

Information about the scheme and how to apply is available at the [Transport Scotland website](#).

Marketing Campaign: Schedule and Phasing

The full launch of the multi-channel marketing campaign will be delayed until there is a reduction in transmission of COVID-19.

The launch of the campaign website has also been paused. **Information about the scheme will, instead, be available on the [Transport Scotland website](#) from 5 January ahead of applications opening on 10 January.**

This approach aims to help reduce pressure on local councils processing applications while ensuring 5-21 year olds for whom bus travel is essential are able to access the scheme from 31 January.

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KEY MESSAGES & SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Key message for all groups:

- Continuing to follow [Scottish Government COVID guidance](#).
- Reducing initial volume of applications to help reduce pressure on local councils processing them.
- Encouraging 5-21 year olds for whom bus travel is essential to apply to access the scheme from 31 January.
- Proactively encouraging all 5-21 year olds to apply to access the scheme by launching the full marketing campaign nationally at a later date.

Key Messages

- Applications for the scheme will open on 10 January as planned. However, please only apply if you do need to make essential journeys by bus from 31 January.
- There are a range of application routes to suit everyone and ensure that all 5-21 year olds can benefit from the scheme. Information on how to apply can be found on the [Transport Scotland website](#)
- All other eligible applicants will be encouraged to apply at a later date when the situation with the pandemic has improved.
- Even if you already have a National Entitlement Card or Young Scot National Entitlement Card, you must apply for a new or replacement card to travel by bus for free.
- If you do have to make an essential journey by bus, you must follow the latest [Scottish Government COVID-19 guidance](#) at all times.
- Young people must have a valid NEC or Young Scot NEC with them when boarding the bus to be able to travel for free.

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ABOUT THE SCHEME

Overview

From 31 January, nearly a million 5–21 year olds living in Scotland will be eligible to benefit from free bus travel. The scheme will embed sustainable travel behaviours from a young age, open doors to new opportunities, and help to meet our target of net zero emissions by 2045.

Children and young people who are 5–21 years old will need a new or replacement National Entitlement Card (NEC) or Young Scot National Entitlement Card (Young Scot NEC) to travel for free by bus. Parents or guardians of 5–15 year olds must apply on their behalf. Children under 5 years old already travel for free on commercial bus services and do not need a card.

The Scottish Government continues to work with its partners at the Improvement Service – who is accountable for the NEC Scheme - and National Entitlement Card Programme Office – who is responsible for the management of the NEC and support local authorities with the application process – and Young Scot to deliver the scheme, which will become operational on 31 January 2022.

Read the [latest news](#) and find out more [information on the legislation](#).

Eligibility

If you are 5–21 years old and live in Scotland then you are eligible for free bus travel from 31 January 2022, no matter your nationality.

You must have a valid National Entitlement Card (NEC) or Young Scot National Entitlement Card (Young Scot NEC) that is in good working order. The photograph on the card must look like you (if your NEC or Young Scot NEC includes a photo) to travel by bus for free.

Children aged under 5 years do not need to apply for a card as they already travel for free on commercial bus services across Scotland.

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Getting your NEC

Age	Which NEC?	Approval required?
0–4 year olds	No card needed to travel for free by bus	N/A
5–10 year olds	NEC	Parent / guardian to apply
11–15 year olds	NEC, or Young Scot NEC	Parent / guardian to apply
16–21 year olds	NEC, or Young Scot NEC	Apply by themselves

Lots of children and young people already have an NEC or Young Scot NEC. However, this cannot be used to travel by bus for free. You must replace this or get a new one to travel by bus for free.

How you do this depends on what age you are:

- A parent or guardian must apply on behalf of 5–15 year olds and provide approval for them to travel for free by bus.
- 16-21 year olds should apply themselves.

Applications open on 10 January 2022.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CORONAVIRUS - OMICRON

If applications are open, why are people being encouraged not to apply for the scheme?

It is important that we all do our bit to stay safe and protect our NHS. Therefore we are encouraging people not to travel unless it is essential. However, we recognise that many children and young people under the age of 22 still have to make essential journeys by bus and it is important that they can still apply to access free bus from 31 January, recognising that not travelling is not an option for them.

Why haven't you advertised the scheme?

We want all 5-21 year olds living in Scotland to benefit from free bus travel. However given the situation with the pandemic, we do not want to heavily market the scheme at a time when people are being actively discouraged from travelling unless they really need to. That said, it is important that children and young people who rely on the bus for essential travel such as to work, where they can't work from home, or for the purposes of education, care and health and so on are able to apply to access free bus travel from 31 January. That's why we have made factual information available on how to apply. The national marketing campaign will follow in due course.

Why are you launching the scheme at a time when there are additional Covid-19 restrictions?

We want all 5-21 year olds living in Scotland to benefit from free bus travel. In particular at this time it is important that those who rely on the bus for essential travel such as to work, where they can't work from home, or for the purposes of education, care and health and so on are able to apply to access free bus travel from 31 January. Scottish Government advice regarding the pandemic should be followed at all times.

Will Council offices be able to process in person applications given the situation with the pandemic?

Applications can be made online at GETYOURNEC.SCOT or at parentsportal.scot, if this is used by your child's school but for those who are unable to apply online, or choose not to, individuals also have the option of applying in person. Due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and the Omicron variant on staffing levels, some local councils may not be able to offer in-person applications at all times and so we are advising people planning to apply in this way to check their council website or call

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before setting off. Scottish Government advice regarding the pandemic should be followed at all times.

GETTING A CARD: INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

Who can get free bus travel?

Every 5–21 year old living in Scotland can travel for free by bus access free bus travel if they have a valid National Entitlement Card (NEC) or Young Scot National Entitlement Card (Young Scot NEC). If you are 5–15 years old, your parent or guardian will apply for you. If you are 16–21 years old, you should apply for your own NEC or Young Scot NEC. Children under 5 years old do not need an NEC as they can already travel for free on buses.

How do I get free bus travel?

You will need an National Entitlement Card (NEC) or a Young Scot NEC. You will not be able to travel for free on the bus without one. If you already have one, you will need to apply for a replacement that will allow free bus travel. You should visit the [Transport Scotland website](#) for information on how to apply.

What will I need to get a National Entitlement Card (NEC) or Young Scot NEC?

You will need to provide proof of person (your name and age), proof of residence (where you usually live) and a photograph if you are 11 years old or over.

Parents, guardians or (in some cases) carers will need to provide proofs of person and address for both themselves and their child, as well as proof of the relationship.

Find out what documents you can use to provide proof on the [NEC website](#). If you are aged 5 -15 years old, your parent/guardian/carer must apply for your NEC on your behalf. If you are aged 16–21 years old, you must apply by yourself.

If all 5–21 year olds travel free, why do I need a new National Entitlement Card (NEC) or Young Scot NEC?

Digital access to the free bus travel scheme will be added to your new card.

All bus journeys made under the scheme must be recorded so that the Scottish Government can reimburse operators for the fare. Tapping your NEC or Young Scot NEC on the ticket machine each time you travel makes this possible.

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This also helps keep card holders safe as once you've tapped, the driver knows that you are eligible for free bus travel. This is important if you are 5-15 years old as your parent or guardian must approve you to travel for free by bus.

If you don't have a valid card, you will need to pay your fare in the normal way.

I live in Scotland for part of the year. Can I still get free bus travel?

If you live in Scotland for the majority of the year (at least 6 months), then you are eligible.

I study and live in one council area but my family home is in another. Which local council do I apply to?

If both places are in Scotland, then you can choose either local council area. Some local councils offer additional concessions to residents, so you may want to check what is available.

If you are studying in Scotland and your family home is elsewhere, then you are eligible if you live in Scotland for more than six months of the year.

I already have a National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot NEC, can I use this for free bus travel too?

No. You must get a replacement NEC or Young Scot NEC that will allow you to travel for free by bus.

I already have a Disabled National Entitlement Card (NEC). Will I need a new card?

It is your choice. Some local council areas provide discounted travel on rail, tram or subway with a Disabled Persons' NEC, but you are likely to have to renew that more often. Currently, a Disabled Persons' NEC is valid for up to three years. Further information can be found on the [Transport Scotland website](#).

However, if you have a Disabled Companion NEC, allowing a companion to travel for free with you, then you should not change to the new scheme. The new scheme does not allow anyone to travel with you for free.

Why do I need a photo on my National Entitlement Card (NEC) /Young Scot NEC, but my younger sibling doesn't?

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All 12 years old and over must have a photograph on their NEC or Young Scot NEC. If you have a Young Scot NEC, this also has a PASS hologram that means you can use it as proof of age. Children who are 5–11 years old have a different type of NEC and that does not need a photograph.

The photo on my existing National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot NEC no longer looks like me. Will I need a replacement?

Yes, the photograph must look like you. You can request a replacement card online at [GETYOURNEC.SCOT](https://www.getyournec.scot) or by contacting your local council.

My application's been rejected. Why?

You should be told why your application has been rejected and given advice on how to submit a successful application. Check to see that your details are all correct and your photo meets all the requirements. If that does not work, get in touch with your local council.

I turn 16 years old before 31 January 2022 – why does my parent or guardian need to apply on my behalf?

If you are 5–15 years old, then your parent or guardian must apply for a replacement NEC or Young Scot NEC on your behalf. You can wait until your 16th birthday and apply for yourself.

How long do I need to wait for my new National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot NEC?

New or replacement cards generally arrive in the post within 10 working days from the date each application is approved. However, demand is expected to be high in January and delivery may take longer.

We know many young people will want to get free bus travel as the new scheme begins, and we will be working hard to process applications as quickly as possible. In some cases, it may not be possible to get a card to you before the free bus travel scheme launches.

If you have applied for a Young Scot NEC through your school, the school can provide more information on when your card will be delivered.

There is no way I'm going to receive my card before 31 January – why didn't you open applications for cards sooner?

The card application process was launched at the earliest possible opportunity, we could not have launched it any sooner.

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Demand for new cards between 10 and 31 January is likely to be high and it may take longer than normal for your card to arrive. We know many young people will want to use the scheme as soon as it begins and are working hard to process applications as quickly as possible but, depending on when you applied, this may not be possible for everyone.

My details aren't right. What do I do?

Most cardholders can update your details at GETYOURNEC.SCOT or get in touch with your [local council](#) to have your details amended.

Why does my parent or guardian have to apply for a National Entitlement Card (NEC) /Young Scot NEC on my behalf?

If you are 5–15 years old, then your parent or guardian must apply on your behalf. This will make sure they are aware that you get to travel for free by bus, so that they can ensure you are safe and well. If you are 16 years old and over, you must apply yourself.

I don't want to throw away my old National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot NEC. Can it be recycled?

Yes it can. If you are getting a new card and would like your old one to be recycled, please send it to:

Transport Scotland Card Recycling
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow G4 0HF

Why do I need to provide proofs to apply for free bus travel?

We need to be able to check and verify who you are and whether you are eligible for the scheme, so we ask for proof of person (your name and age) and proof of residence (where you live).

For children aged 5-15 years old, we also need to carry out some extra checks for child safety reasons. We need to be able to verify who the person making the application is, the child is, and know that they are authorised to act on behalf of that child.

When doing this, we need to make sure we comply with identity verification standards and protocols, and with standards required by the UK National Proof of Age Standards Scheme ([PASS](#)). Young Scot NECs carry the PASS logo and can be used as legal proof of age.

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Is GETYOURNEC.SCOT new?

No, GETYOURNEC.SCOT has been available since July 2020. Thousands of people have already used it to apply for their NEC to access the Older and Disabled Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme or order a new or replacement Young Scot NEC. This has now been extended to enable people to apply online for the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme.

Why do you use biometric scans during the online application process?

GETYOURNEC.SCOT checks proofs digitally during the application process. A face scan is used to make sure that the person submitting the application is the same person as on the identity proofs supplied. It's a way of replicating the in-person application process. Biometric scans are only used when applying online, not when making in-person applications.

Can I save progress on my online application as I go along?

Currently, it's not possible to save an online application as you go along. We are looking at how we can introduce this for online applications in future in a way that continues to keep the process safe and secure and complies with identity verification standards and protocols.

Can you make the application process simpler?

We continually review the application process to make it as straightforward as we can. However, we must also make sure that we meet child safety requirements, and comply with identity verification standards, protocols and PASS standards.

We have made video guides to GETYOURNEC.SCOT which take you through the online application process step-by-step.

- [How to apply for a card for your child](#)
- [How to request a replacement card with free bus travel](#)

You can also [ask for help](#) if you run into problems when applying through GETYOURNEC.SCOT.

I can't apply online, how do I get a card?

If you cannot apply online, there are other ways to apply provided by your local council, such as face-to-face, in-person applications or, in some cases, through schools. Please [contact your local council](#) for more information.

I don't have a passport or driving licence. How do I apply?

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If you don't have proofs such as a passport or driving licence, you can apply directly to your local council.

There are other documents you can use as proof of person if you don't have a passport, driving licence, Yoti account or birth/adoption certificate. A full list of acceptable documents is on the [NEC website](#).

Why do I need a new NEC/Young Scot NEC to get free bus travel?

Your new card will have the free travel entitlement digitally encoded.

All bus journeys made under the scheme must be recorded so that the Scottish Government can reimburse operators for the fare. Tapping your NEC or Young Scot NEC on the ticket machine each time you travel makes this possible.

This also helps keep card holders safe as once you've tapped, the driver knows that you are eligible for free bus travel. This is important if you are 5-15 years old as your parent, guardian or (in some cases) carer must approve you to travel for free by bus.

Will applications be prioritised based on who needs to make essential journeys?

The Scottish Government is asking that only those with an essential need to travel by bus apply currently due to the high rates of COVID-19 cases. However, it is for individuals to decide whether their journeys are essential and therefore when to apply.

All applications submitted will be processed and there is no prioritisation of one person's application over another.

Due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on staffing levels, some local councils may not be able to always offer in-person applications and applications may take longer to process. Please contact your local council to find out how you can apply before setting off.

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GETTING A CARD: INFORMATION FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS

Why do parents/guardians of 5–15 year olds have to apply on their behalf?

Parents / guardians of children under the age of 16 are encouraged to apply for the scheme at a later date, unless it is essential that their child travels on the bus while restrictions are in place.

If you are a parent or guardian of a 5–15 year old, then you must apply on their behalf. This will allow you to continue to exercise responsibility over their wellbeing and safety.

By applying on their behalf, you are agreeing for them to receive an NEC or Young Scot NEC that allows them to travel for free on any registered bus service in Scotland, as well as a limited number of local cross border services into northern England.

What if I don't have a passport or driving licence – what can I use to apply?

If you have an existing Young Scot National Entitlement Card (NEC), you can use it to obtain a Yoti account. This account can then be used to verify your identity when applying for an NEC or Young Scot NEC on GETYOURNEC.SCOT.

If you do not have a passport or driving licence, and do not already have a Young Scot NEC, you should use the in person application routes provided by your local council area.

I am a parent, but my child doesn't live with me. Can I apply on their behalf?

Your child can only have one National Entitlement Card (NEC) or Young Scot NEC. You should decide which parent or guardian applies on their behalf.

Young people who are 16–21 years old must apply themselves. If your 16-21 year old needs additional support with their application please contact your local council.

I do not want my child to have free bus travel. How do I make sure that they don't get it?

You should not apply for the free bus travel scheme. Also, a parent or guardian must apply on behalf of 5–15 year olds. If you are applying on behalf of your child for an National Entitlement Card (NEC) or Young Scot NEC, do not 'opt in' to the free bus travel entitlement. This will allow them to receive their card without access to free bus travel.

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Once a young person is 16 years old and over, they can apply for their own NEC or Young Scot NEC and get access to free bus travel.

What happens if I change my mind and want to stop my child having free bus travel?

If you are the parent or guardian of a 5–15 year old, you can apply to have the free bus travel removed from their NEC or Young Scot NEC. If they have a Young Scot NEC, they will still have access to the free Young Scot services and opportunities.

You can do this online at GETYOURNEC.SCOT or by contacting your local council. Or, you can apply for a new NEC or Young Scot NEC without 'opting in' to the free bus travel scheme.

Young people who are 16-21 years old must apply themselves.

My child will soon be five. How soon can I apply?

You can apply for an National Entitlement Card up to two weeks before your child's fifth birthday.

Will my child's school be arranging to help apply for cards, including getting parental approval?

Your local council will let you know if they are offering to place bulk orders for National Entitlement Cards (NEC) or Young Scot NECs in your area. These come in three types

- a photo less NEC (primary school age)
- an NEC or
- a Young Scot NEC (secondary school age)

My child is 16 years old (or older) and needs help to apply. Can a parent or guardian do this on their behalf?

You should contact your [local council](#) if you need additional support with the application process.

My child is 16 years old (or older). Can I apply on their behalf?

No. Anyone who is 16 years old or above must apply for their own NEC or Young Scot NEC, unless they have difficulty in applying on their own (see question above).

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Will my child's NEC or Young Scot NEC last until they are 21 years old?

Yes. A replacement NEC or Young Scot NEC is likely to be needed to keep their photograph up to date. If they have a Young Scot NEC, they can continue to use it for Young Scot services until the day before their 26th birthday.

Can I see what journeys my child makes?

Transport Scotland does not share the details of individual journeys made.

However, local councils and Transport Scotland can share an individual's personal and card usage data with Police Scotland or the British Transport Police (BTP), as is already the case with the Older and Disabled Scheme, but only in very limited circumstances such as when a serious crime has been committed or in the case of a high risk missing person.

Is there a limit to how many of my children can get free bus travel?

No. All 5–21 year olds can travel for free by bus in Scotland.

I don't read English. How do I apply for free bus travel for my child?

Please contact your [local council](#) to find out more and get support.

USING YOUR NATIONAL ENTITLEMENT CARD (NEC) OR YOUNG SCOT NATIONAL ENTITLEMENT CARD (YOUNG SCOT NEC)

How do I use my National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot NEC on the bus?

In most cases, you place your card on the card reader machine next to the bus driver. Ask the driver if you have any questions.

What do I do if my National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot NEC is not working?

Visit [Transport Scotland website](#) for information on how to apply for a replacement. You will need to pay any fares until the replacement arrives.

How much will it cost to get a replacement?

Replacements are free of charge.

My friend has lost their National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot NEC. Can they use mine?

No. It is only for you and you should not share it with anybody else.

If your card has a photo, then please keep it up to date, as the bus driver might not let you travel if you do not look like your photo. The photo on your Young Scot NEC also needs to be kept up to date to use it to prove your age for age restricted products or services.

You can update the photo for free.

Can my access to free bus travel be stopped?

Yes, if you misuse the free bus travel scheme (such as letting someone else use your card), then you might have free bus travel removed from your card.

If my bus pass is removed will I still be able to use my National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot NEC for other services elsewhere?

Yes, your other services will still be available as suspension removes only the free bus travel from your card.

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Can I load my National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot NEC on an app so that I don't have to carry it?

No, you must have your NEC or Young Scot NEC with you if you want to travel for free.

Where can I go under the free bus travel scheme?

You can travel anywhere in Scotland on local and long distance bus services, apart from a few exceptions such as premium-fare night buses, city sightseeing buses, and some airport transfer services. Check with your bus operator if in doubt.

If you are travelling to England, you will be able to travel to Carlisle or Berwick-Upon-Tweed, but cannot be used to travel within these towns.

Are there any limits on when I can travel?

There are no limits on when you can travel. Most bus services across Scotland are included, but you cannot use tour buses or any services that are charged at a premium rate, such as some night services.

Does my National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot NEC allow me discounts or free travel on rail, tram, subway or ferry?

This scheme is for free bus travel only. However, there may be other discounts available. Please check on the [Transport Scotland website](#) for further information.

Do children need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian to access free bus travel?

No. However, if you are in any doubt check with the bus operator before travelling. All bus operators have conditions of carriage which set out who can travel on their services and they may require younger children to be accompanied.

Can I book a seat for my bus journey?

If the service on which you are travelling offers seat bookings, you can book your seat through the bus operator you are travelling with. They may charge a booking fee which is not covered.

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What are the terms and conditions for my National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot NEC?

You must ensure that your card is in good condition and presented to the bus ticket machine or other transport ticketing equipment in good working order (e.g. it's not damaged). Full terms and conditions can be found at [Transport Scotland website](#).

I already have an NEC/Young Scot NEC that was issued by my local council to travel on the school bus. Will my new card replace this?

Please speak to your local council school transport team for advice on arrangements for school transport.

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STAYING SAFE PERSONAL SAFETY

Please follow the latest [Scottish Government COVID-19 guidance](#) at all times.

What measures are being taken to support children to travel safely?

We are undertaking an awareness campaign with partners to support children, young people, parents and guardians, and bus operators.

Transport Scotland has been working closely with Barnardo's Scotland on how to safeguard young people travelling on the bus network, including providing training material for bus drivers. This will help drivers to recognise and respond to children or young people who need support while travelling on the bus network and help ensure that they can travel safely.

Can an unaccompanied child travel on the bus for free?

For 5–15 year olds, if a parent or guardian has approved them to have access to free bus travel, and they are happy for them to travel unaccompanied, then yes. However, all bus operators have conditions of carriage setting out who can travel on their buses and they may require younger children to be accompanied.

Will the new scheme cause overcrowding and how will this be managed or mitigated against?

This is not likely to be an issue in the short term, due to the ongoing effect of the pandemic on the numbers of people using public transport.

If this does become an issue, operators may need to review their service provision and adjust accordingly to meet any changes in demand.

We also intend to review the scheme after a year in operation and will consider the impact on matters like this.

Will the new scheme lead to a rise in Covid-19 numbers?

Protective measures on the bus are the same for everybody. It is important that the rules and guidance are followed by all bus users to best mitigate the spread of the pandemic.

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What is being done to protect bus users from experiencing the potential for increased anti-social behaviour (due to greater numbers of young people using the bus)?

All bus operators have conditions of carriage that passengers are expected to follow. It is important to remember that the new scheme changes the way in which bus travel is paid for, but does not change rules of behaviour.

Advice for young people is available at the [Transport Scotland website](#) on how to travel safely, with consideration for drivers and other passengers and their responsibilities when using the scheme.

Do I need to follow Covid restrictions whilst travelling on the bus?

Absolutely. Check the [Scottish Government guidelines](#) and your bus operator's information to find out current restrictions.

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PERSONAL DATA

How is the information on my National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot NEC secured?

Only the data required for the provision of the relevant service is made available to the required service provider. For example, if you access both library services and concessionary travel using the NEC or Young Scot NEC, the people administering bus travel cannot read any information about your library membership.

Does the Scottish Government have a central database that records everything I do using my National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot NEC?

No. The central database used for producing and maintaining the physical NECs, known as the Card Management System (CMS), does not receive details of what you have done using your NEC. The Scottish Government does not have access rights to the CMS. Access is restricted to those administering the card on your behalf.

The only personal information held by the CMS is the detail necessary to print or re-print a card for an individual and deliver it. More detail can be found in the NEC Privacy Impact Assessment, which can be downloaded from the [NEC website](#).

Who can see what I do with my National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot NEC?

Transport Scotland records details of journeys made using a NEC/Young Scot NEC to reimburse transport operators; however, they do not need to hold your personal details to do this, only the fact that a valid NEC/Young Scot NEC was used. Transport Scotland does not share the details of individual journeys made.

An individual's personal data and card usage may be shared with Police Scotland or the British Transport Police (BTP) under the relevant data sharing agreements, as is already the case with the Older and Disabled Scheme, but only in very limited circumstances such as when a serious crime has been committed or in the case of a high risk missing person.

How can I check what data the National Entitlement Card (NEC) Scheme holds about me?

To check that the details the NEC Scheme holds for you are correct, please contact your [local council](#). They will also be able to help make changes to your details. If you wish to exercise any of your data protection rights, including the right to see a copy of all the relevant personal data held by the NEC Scheme, you should make a subject access request to your local council who is the lead Data Controller for your data. Further details of Data Controllers can be found at the [NEC website](#).

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

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

The implementation of the scheme has been delayed by the pandemic and the knock on impacts of the pandemic such as the global supply shortage of the silicon chips needed for the smart travel cards.

Launching on 31 January 2022 delivers on our post-Covid commitment to implement the scheme this financial year.

Will the scheme push up the cost of bus fares for others?

We do not expect this to be the case. The scheme is funded by the Scottish Government who reimburse bus operators so that they are no better or worse off for participation in the scheme.

Will the scheme affect free bus travel for those people over the age of 60 or who are disabled?

No. The Scottish Government is providing additional funding for the new scheme.

Who runs the National Entitlement Card scheme?

The Improvement Service is accountable for the NEC Scheme and the National Entitlement Card Programme Office (NECPO) supports its management and delivery.

Why is the reimbursement rate for the scheme different than that of the Older and Disabled Persons Scheme?

The new scheme will have two reimbursement rates during financial year 2021-22: 43.6% of the adult single fare for under 16 year olds and 81.2% for 16–21 year olds. The terms are based on adult single fares for practical administrative reasons but take account of the fact that many journeys made by this age group, especially by 5–15 year olds, would have been made at commercially discounted child rates.

These rates reflect different travel patterns among younger people and has the same aim as the older and disabled scheme and to leave the bus operator no better or worse off for participation in the scheme.

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Does the scheme cover all council areas in Scotland?

Yes, this will be available across all 32 local councils in Scotland.

Why does the scheme not include under 26s?

Young people who are 5–21 years old are the priority for the new scheme as they are more likely to travel by bus and to find public transport expensive and they are also more likely to be in low-paid or insecure work.

However, Scottish Government has commissioned a 'Fair Fares Review' to ensure a sustainable and integrated approach to public transport fares. This review will look at the costs and benefits of public transport concessions across all modes, alongside affordability and availability more generally as part of our ongoing work across public transport.

What impact will the scheme have on school transport provision?

Registered local bus services are included in the scheme and we know that a large number of school children, particularly secondary school age children, rely on these bus services to get to and from school. Transport Scotland and its delivery partners are working with representatives of ATCO and COSLA to consider the potential impacts of the introduction of the scheme on dedicated school transport provision.

Why doesn't the scheme cover all public transport modes such as rail, subway and tram?

Bus provides the widest network of public transport provision in Scotland. The new scheme is for bus travel only in the same way as the existing older and disabled persons free bus scheme.

There are separate local concessionary schemes that are run by local authorities or Regional Transport Partnerships that cover other modes of transport. Any decision to extend concessions to these modes rests with them.

Scottish Government is undertaking a Fair Fares Review to ensure a sustainable and integrated approach to public transport fares. It will look at the range of discounts and concessionary schemes which are available on all modes, and will consider both cost and availability of services.

What is an ITSO card?

ITSO is the smart technology in your card. It means that you can store tickets for travel across different modes of transport and with different operators. This means

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that rail and subway tickets for some operators can be loaded onto your card at ticket offices, ticket vending machines, on board or in advance online.



FURTHER ENQUIRIES

For enquiries about how the scheme works or the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme policy please contact Transport Scotland;

Email	concessionarytravel@transport.gov.scot
Telephone	0141 272 7170
Opening hours	Monday – Thursday: 9.00 am to 4.30 pm Friday: 9.00 am to 4.00 pm Closed on weekends and public holidays.

For enquiries about card applications or replacements or any other question about the National Entitlement Card;

If the individual applied online via GETYOURNEC.SCOT or parentsportal.scot	Get help with GETYOURNEC.SCOT Get help with parentsportal.scot
If the individual applied elsewhere	Contact your local authority

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LONG FORM COPY

This can be used on websites and other communications from 10 January 2022, and tailored according to proposed audience:

[Please note this is subject to change due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19]

5-21 year olds living in Scotland can now apply to access free bus travel from 31 January. In light of high levels of COVID-19 transmission, the Scottish Government is asking that you only apply for the scheme at this point if it is essential that you, or your child, travel while restrictions are in place. All other eligible applicants will be proactively encouraged to apply at a later date.

Even if you already have a National Entitlement Card or Young Scot National Entitlement Card, you must apply for a new or replacement card to travel by bus for free. Parents or guardians must provide approval for children aged between 5-15 to access the scheme by applying on their behalf. Young people aged 16-21 should apply themselves.

The [Transport Scotland website](#) provides all the information needed to apply.

There are two ways to apply:

- Online at [GETYOURNEC.SCOT](#) (or through [parentsportal.scot](#) if this is used by your child's school).
- Local council: if you cannot, or do not want to, apply online please [contact your local council](#) who can tell you how to proceed.

[Please note that this paragraph is optional: It can be included for those local authorities who are using school bulk process] **In some local council areas, schools are coordinating applications on behalf of their pupils. Schools will contact parents/guardians and pupils directly if this arrangement is in place.**

SHORT FORM COPY

This will be used mainly on social media and can be adapted according to the context in which it is used.

[Please note this is subject to change due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19]

Between 10 and 30 January:

From 31 January, 5–21 year olds living in Scotland will be eligible for free bus travel across Scotland with a valid National Entitlement Card. You can apply from today. However, in light of high levels of COVID-19 transmission, the Scottish Government is asking that you only apply for the scheme at this point if it is essential that you, or

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your child, travel while restrictions are in place. All other eligible applicants will be proactively encouraged to apply at a later date.

Even if you already have a National Entitlement Card or Young Scot National Entitlement Card, you must apply for a new or replacement card to travel by bus for free.

Visit the [Transport Scotland website](#) to find out how to apply and more.

From 31 January:

Free bus travel is now available for 5–21 year olds living in Scotland. However, in light of high levels of COVID-19 transmission, please only travel if it is essential.

If you are 5–21 years old and living in Scotland – and it is essential that you travel – you can travel for free on the bus by applying for a new or replacement National Entitlement Card or Young Scot National Entitlement Card.

Visit the [Transport Scotland website](#) to find out how to apply and more.

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