

WHIZZ KIDZ

We're here
for young
wheelchair
users



Beyond fare

Equality through
Concessionary Bus Travel



Whizz Kidz is pleased to share the **Beyond Fare** report, which can be found in full on our website, following Freedom of Information Requests with Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs) in England. The report highlights the inequalities in bus travel across the country and the best practice being undertaken in some areas – here is a snapshot of our key findings.

The English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) has been in place since 2001. Since 2008, it has offered free off-peak local bus travel to eligible older and disabled people in England.

However, the minimum mandatory requirement for the scheme is to **only offer free travel between 9:30am and 11pm, Monday to Friday, and any time on Saturday, Sunday, and Bank Holidays**. Whilst some local authorities offer enhancements, like travel for a flat fee before 9:30am or free travel at all times for those with specific disabilities, according to our research only **27%** offer free any time travel to all disabled bus pass holders seven days a week.

Young wheelchair users have told us this is a problem for them – there’s a lack of

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If you want us to be able to integrate and contribute economically, we need the opportunity to build social capital and skills

Whizz Kidz Research Panellist

consistency in the rules across England, it has impacted their ability to access education and employment opportunities, and generally is another unfair disadvantage to disabled people.

We asked the 82 TCAs who are in charge of running the ENCTS about the scheme in their areas to find out more about the number of passes issued, the number of journeys made, and the financial cost.

TCAs with time restrictions

60 out of 82 TCAs have time restrictions on when disabled people can use their bus passes.

For those TCAs that provided the relevant data, we found:

- Disabled pass holders made **23.2%** of the total concessionary bus trips.
- Disabled pass holders accounted for **19.5%** of the total spend on concessionary travel.
- 10.7%** of all concessionary bus passes issued in 22/23 were disabled passes.

TCAs without time restrictions

22 of out 82 TCAs allowed disabled people to use their bus pass at any time of day.

For those TCAs that provided the relevant data, we found:

- Disabled pass holders made **24.2%** of the total concessionary trips.
- Disabled pass holders accounted for **24.1%** of the total spend on concessionary travel.
- 14.0%** of all concessionary bus passes issued in 22/23 were disabled bus passes.



Caitlin, Freya, Rebecca, Alice, Ruby, and Ella.

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We aren’t just disabled between the hours of 9:30am and 11pm

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To provide free bus travel to all disabled pass holders at all times of day, TCAs with time restrictions estimated this would cost on average **£45,200** more per year – or 1% of the total amount spent on all concessionary travel in the financial year 2022/2023.

Offering free any time bus travel to disabled people has many benefits. TCAs that already do this said it improves social inclusion, supports disabled people into employment and education opportunities, strengthens health and personal wellbeing, and enabled disabled people to access services and live independently. There are also benefits to the local authority and wider community – a more inclusive and diverse place to live, better environmental sustainability and less traffic from more public transport use, benefits to the

economy of having more people in work and more people out and about in the community, and better overall public health.

Whizz Kidz and the Kidz Board are calling for the introduction of mandatory free bus travel at all times of day for those in England with a disabled bus pass.



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**You can find the Beyond Fare report
on our website:**

wkidz.org/policy

If you want to get in touch with Kidz Board or Whizz Kidz about this guide or any other way you feel we can support young wheelchair users, please contact us.

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