

Privacy Notice

Evaluation of the Free Bus Travel Scheme for Older and Disabled People

For the purposes of this project we collect and process the following information:

- Name;
- Personal email and/or telephone number;
- Views and experiences of the free bus pass;
- Self-reported travel patterns and changes in behaviour due to the free bus pass; and
- Demographic data (such as age, whether you have a disability, sex, ethnicity, employment status, financial status, sexual orientation, geographic location, and vehicle ownership).

You may choose to provide a name and contact email address and/or telephone number at the end of the survey, but this is not obligatory.

How we get the information and why we have it:

Transport Scotland is the data controller for all personal data collected as part of this work. We have commissioned research to collect data on the impacts of the free bus travel scheme for older and disabled people (or the free bus pass) in Scotland. The aim of this research is to collect data to establish the extent to which the free bus pass has met its intended aims. The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:

- understand how the scheme works, who is using it, how it is being used and the benefits it brings;
- identify any differences in usage and experiences between groups of cardholders e.g. by location, card type, income, employment status, etc.; and
- undertake a value for money assessment in order to understand the value of benefits delivered through the scheme.

This research is being undertaken by Wellside Research Ltd., our data processor, who work under our clear instructions on how your data will be processed and secured.

Wellside Research Project Manager

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Why do we need to collect this information?

The free bus pass provides card holders with free travel on registered local and long-distance bus services throughout Scotland, at any time of day for any number of journeys.

The evaluation seeks to establish whether the free bus pass has achieved its objectives and delivered benefits to older and disabled people, and to monitor any changes since the scheme was introduced.

The evaluation will consider people's experiences across the five different types of bus passes, as well as the impacts on people across a range of demographic groups. The five bus passes include:

- the older person's bus pass (for those aged 60 and above);
- the disabled person's bus pass (from 5 years old);
- the disabled plus companion bus pass (any age);
- the sight impaired bus pass (from 5 years old); and
- the sight impaired plus companion bus pass (any age).

The findings will be used to develop a deeper understanding of the benefits and impacts of the scheme, as well as to identify any areas for potential improvement going forward.

Our lawful basis for processing:

Under The Data Protection Act 2018 and following the General Data Protection Regulation, the lawful bases we rely on for processing this information are Article 6 (1)(e). 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest'.

What happens to the information you provide?

Your answers are treated with care and with full respect for your privacy. Wellside Research will check through all responses for any personal identifying data and ensure this is removed. The survey findings will then be analysed and Wellside Research will write a report for Transport Scotland that will be published on the Transport Scotland website. Your answers from any pre-coded questions (i.e. where you are asked to select one or more options from a list) and any numerical data will be combined with others and used in aggregate form only to ensure no single respondent can be identified. Similarly, your answers to any open questions (e.g. where you are asked to type out answers) will be compared to others to identify the main topics and themes raised. Wellside Research may also use anonymised verbatim quotes from free-text answers, and these will not be connected with other data that could inadvertently lead to identification.

Transport Scotland and Wellside Research adhere to UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. The survey software used is GDPR compliant. Once the survey is closed, Wellside Research will transfer the data to relevant statistical and research software for analysis. This will be safely stored and backed-up. Access to the survey and its results will be restricted to the research team and Transport Scotland staff.

At the end of the survey we will ask if you would like to leave your name and a contact email address or telephone number. This is to enter you into the Prize Draw and/or to potentially invite you to a focus group where you can discuss your experiences in more detail. Both of these elements are entirely voluntary. Your name and contact details will be removed from your survey response data at the earliest opportunity and kept safely stored until the project is completed. The anonymised dataset including your responses will be shared with Transport Scotland at the end of the research but, again, any data which might identify you will be deleted from that dataset meaning that Transport Scotland will not have access to any identifiable information.

How long is your information stored for?

The project consists of a number of elements, of which this survey is one part. It began in August 2025 and will run until January 2026. Your personal (and research) information will be kept for the duration of the project and all data will be destroyed by the researchers within 3 months of completion. Transport Scotland will retain the anonymised dataset for the purposes of ongoing or longer-term evaluation of the impact of the free bus pass. This may initially be for up to 5 years, after which time they will review the requirement to retain the data. If, at this time, it is determined that the data are no longer needed to fulfil the above purpose, it will be destroyed.

Your data protection rights:

Under data protection law, you have rights including:

- **Your right of access** - You have the right to ask us for copies of your personal information.
- **Your right to rectification** - You have the right to ask us to rectify information you think is inaccurate. You also have the right to ask us to complete information you think is incomplete.
- **Your right to restriction of processing** - You have the right to ask us to restrict the processing of your information in certain circumstances.
- **Your right to object to processing** - You have the the right to object to the processing of your personal data in certain circumstances.

You are not required to pay any charge for exercising your rights. If you make a request, we have **one month** to respond to you.

How to Contact Us:

For more information about how your data is used you can contact us.

Project Manager

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Data Protection Officer

Transport Scotland

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Telephone: 0141 272 7100

Privacy Notice

How to complain:

You can also complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) if you are unhappy with how we have used your data or responded to you. The ICO's address:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Helpline number: 0303 123 1113

Website: <https://www.ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint>