

**Companions for disabled under 5’s**

**transport.gov.scot**

**Concessionary Travel Communications Advice**

**1. Internal Communications - may be issued to relevant partner organisations such as nurseries**

**Extension of the disabled person’s National Concessionary Travel Scheme to include eligible disabled under 5’s**

The Scottish Parliament passed legislation, on 3 March, that extends the existing National Concessionary Travel Scheme (NCTS) to eligible disabled children under the age of five, allowing free bus travel for them and an accompanying companion.

This is a positive step that will give around 4,000 eligible disabled children across Scotland access to the same benefits as those aged five and over, helping reduce household costs for some of our most vulnerable families.

Transport Scotland will commence the scheme extension on 1 April, meaning parents of eligible disabled children can apply from this date and access free bus travel as soon as their National Entitlement Card arrives.

The application process remains the same as the existing process for an NEC with concessionary travel for people with a disability plus a companion. Please refer to the NEC Application Processing Manual (updated for 2021) to see a list of acceptable proofs as well as help on the application process for any training required within your local authority.

The scheme extension applies only to disabled children who are eligible to have a companion travel with them. All other children aged under 5, regardless of whether they have a disability, currently travel for free on commercial bus services.

Please ensure NEC information on your respective websites is updated on or before 1 April, removing any references to the disabled persons scheme applying to those aged five and over. You may wish to include a link to the [Transport Scotland website](https://www.transport.gov.scot/concessionary-travel/60plus-or-disabled/#37401), which will also be updated on that date, for general information on the scheme and eligibility criteria.

We will continue to provide updates through the regular fortnightly NEC Coordinators call and on KHub, however if you have any questions or require further support please contact Gillian.Kelly@transport.gov.scot.

Your companion and journey can vary, but your companion can only travel for free when they are with you. You are not obliged to travel with a companion, but the entitlement is there for when you need it.

Please note that **companions** **must be aged 5 or over**.

Eligibility

Your companion is entitled to travel for free if you meet one of the following criteria:

* You live in a care/residential home or hospital and are eligible for the higher or middle rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance, or Personal Independence Payment or Attendance Allowance.   In many cases DWP benefit may be suspended whilst someone is in care or hospital – in that case you can provide a letter from the hospital/care home confirming that you live there and receive 24 hour care.
* You receive the higher or middle rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance
* You receive the standard or enhanced rate of daily living component of Personal Independence Payment
* You receive Attendance Allowance
* You are registered as severely sight impaired (blind)
* You receive war pensions constant attendance allowance

If you receive Attendance Allowance, the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance under the higher/middle rate of care or live in a care or residential home or hospital, you'll need a letter to confirm your eligibility. For details on getting your letter, please contact the [disability benefits helpline](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Dl1/Directories/DG_10011169).

If you are registered severely sight impaired (blind), please provide a copy of your registration certificate.