

Change in the age of eligibility for Concessionary Travel – Q&A's

Are you taking my bus pass away from me?

Absolutely not. For people who have already reached the age of 60 or are due to do so before 6th April 2010 there will be no change whatsoever. Even if you have not already taken up your entitlement to a bus pass, you will be unaffected by the changes if your 60th birthday is before 6th April 2010.

Will I have to wait until I'm 65 to get my bus pass?

You will only have to wait until you are 65 to get a bus pass if you were born after 5th April 1955. See the 'When will I get my bus pass question' above for details on how to calculate when you will be eligible for a bus pass.

I was born after 5 April 1959, when will I get my bus pass?

People born after 5 April 1959 will not become eligible for concessionary travel until they are 65 or older (in line with future planned changes to the state pension age).

By 2020 the pensionable age for men and women will have harmonised at 65.

Beyond 2020, the age of eligibility for concessionary travel will continue to increase in line with any future changes to the state pension age.

Why have working age men been entitled to a bus pass in the past?

The purpose of the concession has always been to provide greater freedom and independence to older people in their retirement. Until 2002, eligibility for the concessionary bus pass was linked to the state pension age, meaning women became eligible at 60 and men at 65.

However, in 2000 this difference was challenged as discriminatory in the European Court of Human Rights. The Government pre-emptively took the decision to lower the age of entitlement for men and in 2002 new legislation was passed that equalised the age of eligibility for both sexes at 60. However, this meant that, for the first time, concessionary bus travel was made available to older people of working age.

With the difference in state pension age for men and women set to disappear between 2010 and 2020, it is appropriate to re-establish the link with pension age and remove the anomalous position of working age citizens receiving free bus passes.

What about other age-related benefits I'm entitled to?

The Government has already announced that the entitlement age for a number of other benefits currently available at 60, such as pension credit and winter fuel payments will increase in line with changes to the female state pension age.

In addition to confirming that the age of eligibility for concessionary travel will increase in line with the pension age changes, the Government also announced in the Pre-Budget Report that the age of eligibility for free prescriptions will increase, although this change is not being implemented in April 2010.

Further information can be obtained from the DirectGov website or directly from the Government Departments that offer other age-related benefits.

No one currently entitled to other age-related benefits will be affected. The changes will only affect those due to turn 60 on or after 6th April 2010.

Will you be cutting money paid to local authorities for concessionary travel?

These changes are expected to generate savings for local authorities, which will be taken into account when funding allocations are set in future local government finance settlements. No reductions are being made to the overall amount of funding available for concessionary travel in 2010/11 as a result of these changes.

I live in Wales/ Scotland/ Northern Ireland - when will I get my bus pass?

Concessionary travel is a devolved policy area so the arrangements in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be a matter for the devolved administrations.

Currently the age of entitlement in Scotland and Wales is 60 and in Northern Ireland it is 65.