BRITISH YOUTH COUNCIL
Youth Select Committee

Transport and Young People
British Youth Council
Youth Select Committee
2012

Transport and Young People

Written and oral evidence is available on the British Youth Council’s website at www.byc.org.uk
The Youth Select Committee

Introduction from Mr Speaker:

I am delighted to introduce the first Youth Select Committee Report on Transport and Young People produced by the British Youth Council with support from the House of Commons.

I believe that it is extremely important for young people to have the opportunity to participate directly in the consideration of issues that affect them. As Speaker I met with the young people involved in running the Committee and I was most impressed with their dedication to ensuring a fair and full examination of transport and young people.

I am looking forward to seeing the outcome of this report and recommendations.

Mr Speaker, Rt Hon John Bercow MP

The Youth Select Committee is an initiative by the British Youth Council to encourage young people’s participation in issues that affect them.

Current membership

Dara Farrell, Vice-Chair of Campaigns & Communications, British Youth Council
Jessica Cheadle, Member of Staffordshire Scouts
Benjamin Farnes, Member of the UK Youth Parliament for Hampshire
Jack Green, Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament and Young Scot
Jade Hope, Young Mayor for North Tyneside
James Humphry, Member of the Cardiff Youth Forum and the Welsh Youth Parliament (Funky Dragon)
Hamza Jahanzeb, Member of Lancashire Youth Council and Hyndburn Youth Council
Chante Joseph, Member of the UK Youth Parliament for the London Borough of Brent
Jack McCann, Member of the Northern Ireland Youth Forum
Gabrielle Ohlsen, Member of the UK Youth Parliament for Honiton, Tiverton and East Devon
Kay Poon, Youth Forum member for Edmonton

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the British Youth Council, www.byc.org.uk
# Contents

Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people and public transport</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our inquiry</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Cost of transport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age for adult fares</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concessionary schemes</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal of EMA</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Involving young people in improving transport</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Public transport and young disabled people</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making transport accessible</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible information</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff training</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Rural transport for young people</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Conclusion</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions and recommendations</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Youth Select Committee</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the British Youth Council</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

The Youth Select Committee is a pilot initiative by the British Youth Council. It is made up of 11 young people aged 18 and under from across the UK. We set out to follow the UK parliamentary select committee system to inquire into issues that are important to young people today. In 2011 we decided that the subject for our first inquiry should be transport. This decision followed a poll of young people, a debate and ballot of the British Youth Council in September, and a debate of the UK Youth Parliament in November, all of which identified transport as a priority issue. We therefore set out to inquire into the safety, affordability and accessibility of public transport for young people.

Transport is important for young people to access education, training or employment, to socialise, and to play an active role in local communities. With over 1 million young people aged 16-24 unemployed, it is particularly important that young people have affordable transport to be able to get to education or work. Unfortunately, we have found that young people’s experiences of using public transport are often not positive.

One of the biggest issues we found during our inquiry was the cost of transport for young people. We consider it to be unacceptable that young people might be excluded from education, training or their local communities as a result of high transport costs. These costs are often increased as a result of young people being asked to pay adult fares. We think that there should be a single age at which young people should pay adult fares and this should be 18. The Government should show leadership in this matter by sending out a clear message on what age a young person should become eligible for adult fares.

We heard some encouraging examples of local transport schemes or discounts aimed at helping young people to access public transport. However, we were dismayed at the extent to which these schemes varied across the country and the difficulties some young campaigners described in getting their voices heard. We call on the Government to do more to encourage best practice in setting up local concessionary fares schemes for young people. We support the idea of a national concessionary bus scheme for young people, similar to that available in Scotland.

We have particular concerns about the cost of transport for young people who have recently lost Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) funding. We understand that there are discretionary funds made available for schools and colleges to help students access education or training, but we are not convinced that this is sufficient. We therefore call on the Department for Education to provide evidence that young people’s access to education or training has not been curtailed as a result of losing EMA.

In this report we make a number of recommendations about improving public transport for young people, which will in turn affect their attitude and use of public transport into their adult lives. These include making transport more affordable, consulting with young people so that local authorities and transport operators understand our needs, improving the accessibility of transport for young people with disabilities, and improving the information that transport operators provide. We urge the Government, local authorities, and transport operators to take note of our findings and respond to our recommendations.
1 Introduction

Young people and public transport

1. Public transport is important for young people to be able to get to school, training or employment, and to have an active social life. In the current economic climate, with over 1 million unemployed people aged 16-24, it is particularly important that young people can access opportunities for further education or training. At the end of 2011 just over 8% of 16 to 19 year olds were not in education, employment or training (NEET). Research by the Department for Education in 2010 found that a third of young people who are NEET after completing Year 11 at school think that they would have continued in education or training if they had received financial support to cover the cost of transport.

2. Unfortunately, young people often do not have a positive experience of using public transport. Research by Passenger Focus indicates that, compared to other groups, young people report less overall satisfaction with public transport services, find services less value for money, and report feeling less safe using public transport.

3. The Youth Select Committee is a pilot initiative by the British Youth Council. We were set up in 2011 with the aim of inquiring into issues that affect young people. The Committee is made up of eleven young people aged 18 and under from across the UK, including elected representatives from the Local Youth Council Network, Young Mayors, UK Youth Parliament, and the British Youth Council’s partner organisations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Committee also reserved two seats for representatives with particular interests in rural affairs and disability, to ensure that these issues were addressed. The Committee is part of the British Youth Council’s Youth Voice initiative and is supported by the Government’s Positive for Youth programme. Following the UK Youth Parliament’s and British Youth Council’s debates in 2011, and taking into account the results of a national poll of 65,000 young people about the issues important to them, we decided that our first inquiry would be about young people and public transport.

Our inquiry

4. We asked for written evidence about the transport issues that affect young people. Our call for evidence considered the safety, affordability and accessibility of public transport for young people. This included young people’s satisfaction with transport services in their area, the use of concessionary schemes for young people, access to transport for young people with disabilities or those living in rural areas, behaviour by staff and young people

---

1 This includes those in full-time education. Library standard note SN05871
2 16 to 18-year olds not in education, employment or training http://www.education.gov.uk/a0064101/16-to-18-year-olds-not-in-education-employment-or-training-neet
4 Passenger Focus written evidence (see British Youth Council website)
5 Youth Select Committee http://www.byc.org.uk/uk-work/youth-select-committee.aspx
on public transport, and low carbon approaches to transport. We received evidence from young people, charities, industry, and policymakers, all of which is available on the British Youth Council website. We also held two oral evidence sessions in the House of Commons. On 6 July we heard from Norman Baker MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, Tim Loughton MP, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education, Passenger Transport Executive Group (pteg), Transport for London (TfL), Dales Integrated Transport Alliance (DITA), and a number of young campaigners working to improve local transport in their areas. On 13 July we heard from Passenger Focus, the Campaign for Better Transport, Transport Studies Unit (Oxford University), Whizz-Kidz, BBC Children in Need, the Royal National Institute for Blind People (RNIB), Sustrans, Brake and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT). Transcripts of this evidence are also available online. We are grateful to all those who provided written evidence and who came to speak to us, and to Mr Speaker and the parliamentary authorities for providing such valuable support to our work.

5. Transport affects all young people in their daily lives and we explored a range of issues during our inquiry. In this report, we comment on those issues where we believe immediate action needs to be taken. We consider the cost of transport for young people, particularly since the withdrawal of Education Maintenance Allowance funding, and the role of concessionary fare schemes in helping young people get around their local areas. We discuss the importance of including young people in consultation processes. We then note the particular issues that young people with disabilities or those living in rural areas face when trying to access public transport.

---

6 www.byc.org.uk/uk-work/youth-voice

7 These were Youth Councillors and/or Members of the UK Youth Parliament from Staffordshire, Hertfordshire and Suffolk; Sam Kenward, Matthew Percy, Alex Hylton, Maddy Rogers, Alilish Brown and Armaan Bhatti.

8 http://www.byc.org.uk/uk-work/youth-select-committee.aspx

9 Our recommendations are addressed primarily to the Department for Transport and Department for Education, and therefore may not apply directly to the devolved assemblies.
2 Cost of transport

Age for adult fares

6. A consistent frustration for young people who submitted evidence to us was the age at which they stopped being eligible for a child fare. The cost of fares is a key issue for young people using public transport. In particular, the variability of this age between different transport operators was problematic. For some young people travelling in their local area, adult fares were demanded from age 14, whilst for others it might be 16 or even 18. This means that a young person still in education or training is often expected to pay a full fare, despite not being in full-time employment. From next year the age at which young people will leave compulsory education will rise to 17; it will increase again to 18 in 2015. Young people in some areas will therefore face up to four years of paying adult transport fares whilst still at school.

7. We questioned Mr Baker and Mr Loughton on their views regarding when a young person should start paying an adult fare. Mr Baker believed 16 years old was "a sensible point for adulthood", but Mr Loughton disagreed as he thought "an adult fare should start at 18, rather than at 16 or 14". When there is such inconsistency at a ministerial level, it is unsurprising that transport operators across the country are able to operate such variable rules.

8. It seems to us that, if there is any logic to the setting of the age at which adult fares apply, it is a link to the end of compulsory education. After that age it could be argued that young people have a choice whether to travel. The school leaving age rose from 14 to 15 in 1944, from 15 to 16 in 1972 and will rise to 18 in 2015. Some transport operators appear to be over 50 years out of date in their thinking.

9. We think the age at which a young person should start paying adult fares for public transport should be 18, when the compulsory requirement to be in education or training ends. This principle should be applied consistently across the country and across different transport modes and operators. The Government should provide a clear lead to transport operators by defining when adult fares should be applicable. We recommend that the DfT and DfE produce a clear statement outlining this principle. The Department for Transport should take the initiative in encouraging transport operators to reduce the variability in the age at which a young person pays an adult fare by producing clear guidance for public transport operators on this matter.

10 Q 104 (oral evidence, see British Youth Council website)
11 Written evidence from Hertfordshire UK Youth Parliament, for example.
12 Q 6
13 Q 4
14 Q 5
Concessionary schemes

10. What, then, should be the under-18 fare? We have heard about a number of concessionary fare schemes which are available in different areas across the country. However, there seems to be significant variability in what concessions are available.

11. For example, TfL told us about a range of fares offered on London transport services for young people at school or in full-time education post-16. TfL’s zip card allows young people aged under 16 to travel for free. Young people who continue in full-time education post-16 are also eligible for discounted travel, at varying rates.15 It explained that “the reason why we do it like that is not that we are bound by any legislation to do it [...] but because we feel it is the right thing to do.”16 It is commendable that TfL considers this issue to be important, but without Government requiring a binding commitment, other transport operators do not necessarily give the same priority to young people’s needs. Indeed pteg told us that “in our areas, all the PTEs [passenger transport executives] offer some form of concessions for young people, but the part that we use to fund those concessions is our pot for discretionary spend, so it is whatever is left after we have fulfilled all our legal duties. That pot is shrinking, unfortunately.”17

12. We find it unacceptable that there is such a postcode lottery in affordable transport for young people. Mr Loughton agreed that more work could be done to make transport more affordable for young people across the country, he told us

We are really bad at disseminating best practice. There are lots of really good schemes—discounted bus passes and so on—being operated by certain companies in certain parts of the country, but they are just not happening elsewhere. If we can disseminate this information, show what is possible and challenge bus companies and local authorities to get together with young people locally to see what would be appropriate there, we can spread a lot of this best practice much better than we are doing now.18

We agree with this sentiment. The Government should act to ensure public transport is accessible for young people across the country by encouraging best practice amongst local authorities. We recommend that the DfT issues best practice guidance to local authorities and transport providers on providing concessionary fares for under 18s, aimed at ensuring that consistent standards apply nationwide, and that minimum requirements are met.

13. We heard from Passenger Focus that "the Transport Minister is floating an idea at the moment about having a young person’s bus card along the lines of the very successful young person’s railcard, whereby people who qualify could get a third off whatever bus

---

15 Q 52
16 Q 52
17 Q 55
18 Q 13
fares are available in the area. This type of scheme would help a young person’s transition from education or training to employment, particularly as buses are often a primary form of transport for young people. Young people aged 16-18 in Scotland are already entitled to discounted rail and bus services. We have also heard reports that bus operators may implement a discounted travel scheme for young people not in education, employment or training. There should be a national concessionary scheme to provide discounted bus travel to young people, similar to that already provided for rail and to the Transport Scotland concessionary scheme. We support the idea of a young person’s bus card. We would like the Minister to work with the British Youth Council to consult with young people through its networks and programmes on this matter so it can make sure that concessions meet the needs of young people. We also recommend that the Government publish any plans for its concessionary scheme so that young people can be involved in scrutinising it.

14. In addition to the variability of concession provision, a lack of information regarding the concessions available to young people was also brought to our attention. This issue is particularly problematic in relation to buses and Passenger Focus has argued that bus companies should do more to get information to customers. Mr Baker told us that he was trying to address this with bus companies by encouraging the development of a website with information about local services and concessions. He said that something should be available by the end of the year.

15. Young people need to have better access to information about the reduced fares that may be available to them. We welcome the beginning of Government action on this by encouraging bus operators to develop online resources for passenger information. We would like the Government to publish its plans for developing online passenger information resources alongside a timeline for completion. We recommend that the Department for Transport makes additional efforts to include youth representatives in discussions on this matter to make sure that the new resource will meet the needs of young people.

Withdrawal of EMA

16. The Government announced in 2010 that it would abolish the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) programme. The Department for Education justified this decision as follows:

19 Q 112
20 Q 171
21 [http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/public-transport/concessionary-travel] Young people under 26 years old who are volunteering full-time are also eligible for such discounts.
23 Q 110
24 Q 110
25 Q 15
26 Q 17
EMA is a hugely expensive programme, costing over £560 million a year with administration costs amounting to £36 million. Pilot evidence and more recent research from the National Foundation for Educational Research found that almost 90% of young people receiving the EMA believed that they would still have participated in the courses they were doing if they had not received it.

The DfE replaced EMA with “an enhanced discretionary learner fund so that they [colleges, schools and training providers] can target pupils most in need of financial support to stay in education post-16.”

17. Young transport campaigners told us that some young people in their areas had reported difficulties affording transport after they stopped receiving EMA. One constituent went so far as to report that they faced a choice between paying for school transport or being able to eat during the day. The Campaign for Better Transport warned that the cost of fares had become a particular issue since the withdrawal of the EMA, but said that it was “not sure yet” what effect this might have on young people’s participation in education or training. Both the Campaign for Better Transport and Passenger Focus indicated that they may start looking into these issues in future research. We would welcome this research and urge them to give priority to it.

18. Mr Loughton told us that “the replacement for the EMA – the higher education bursary and the further education bursary – is there for people who would have difficulties attending their place of education on account of costs of transport or education materials.” However, as this is a discretionary fund “there is no national definition that says that they have an automatic entitlement to that.” Mr Loughton stated “we are carrying out a study of how it is being used, what it is being used for and who is claiming it”.

19. We are concerned that the loss of education maintenance allowance (EMA) funding may prevent young people from fully engaging in education or training opportunities. The Department for Education says it is reviewing how discretionary funds are being used as a replacement for EMA. We welcome this review. We recommend that this study includes a focus on whether these funds are being made readily available for transport. The Department for Education should also review the extent to which unaffordable transport due to losing EMA funding prevents young people from accessing education or training.

---

27 Plans to end the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) programme

http://www.education.gov.uk/lrthenews/lrthenews/a0073028/plans-to-end-the-education-maintenance-allowance-ema-programme

28 Q 90
29 Q 105
30 Q 107-107
31 Q 6
32 Q 7
3 Involving young people in improving transport

20. The Government’s Positive for Youth initiative aims to coordinate policies affecting young people aged 13-19 across Government departments. According to Positive for Youth, local authorities have “the primary responsibility for improving young people’s outcomes and commissioning appropriate services.” There is a particular focus in this initiative on consultation:

Young people have a right to have their views taken into account in all decisions that affect their lives. We must give them a stronger voice and celebrate their positive contribution and achievements. We must also encourage and support them to speak up when they see media reporting that they believe is unbalanced or unfair.

There are many ways to involve young people locally. The Government urges relevant bodies in every area to involve young people in making decisions about council, health, transport, and other relevant services. It wants to see every area having arrangements for young people to audit the quality of these services.

21. The transport organisations we spoke to showed varying levels of effort to start a dialogue with young people about their transport needs. TfL demonstrated significant engagement with young people through its youth panel. It told us that “nearly every major policy initiative that we develop is done in tandem with the youth panel” and that “it is not a ‘nice to have’; it is actually now a fundamental part of the organisation”. However, PTEG’s evidence to us was more mixed. It assured us that engagement was ongoing but noted that “it varies” between passenger transport executives.

22. We spoke to a number of young people who are campaigning to improve their local transport services. Some young campaigners had positive experiences working with their local councils. In Staffordshire, for example, this work had resulted in ongoing partnerships between the council, youth council and transport providers to offer concessionary fares. However, this positive experience was not universal. Mr Loughton described some of the difficulties young people experienced when working with local authorities and bus operators as resulting from “buck-passing” between these

---

33 Positive for Youth, HM Government, p2

34 Positive for Youth p3

35 Positive for Youth p3

36 Q 45

37 Q 45

38 Q 49

39 Q 34

40 Q 83
organisations. None of the young campaigners we talked to had seen any direct influence from the Positive for Youth programme on the engagement they had with local authorities.

23. The sentiments expressed in the Government’s Positive for Youth initiative were welcome. We believe that young people should be included in the decisions that affect them. We support the establishment of effective structures to engage young people in a dialogue with policymakers that can influence the decision processes concerning transport. Every Passenger Transport Executive should have a youth forum. We recommend that such structures are established across the country and that the Department for Education addresses this issue to ensure that local authorities give young people the chance to be heard.

---

41 Q 18
42 Q 84
4 Public transport and young disabled people

Making transport accessible

24. Around 1 in 20 children in the UK has a disability. During our inquiry we spoke to a number of transport operators, disability charities and young campaigners about the experience of young disabled people using public transport. A 2009 survey found that 22% of disabled people experienced difficulties using public transport. People with mobility difficulties travel less than people without them and young people with learning difficulties are less confident about and feel less safe using public transport.43

25. We heard about the practical experiences of a number of our witnesses, and their difficulties in using public transport. For example, research by Whizz-Kidz found that accessing rail platforms and getting onto buses was often difficult. The RNIB criticised the variability of service provision, as this "chips away at confidence" when disabled people try to use public transport.44 In addition, a reliance on forward planning made it difficult for young disabled people to be spontaneous with their travel.45

26. Being able to access reliable public transport is key for young people with disabilities to be independent.46 The DfT has ‘end dates’ (falling between 2015 and 2020) by which time buses, coaches and trains should be modified so that they are fully accessible for disabled people. Mr Baker told us that the Department was on track to meet these targets, but acknowledged that "it is challenging" to meet them. He stated that "by the end of this decade, there will not be a train or a bus operating, except on the heritage routes, that is not fully accessible."47 At the moment, only 61% of buses and 46% of trains meet these regulatory requirements.48 It therefore seems clear to us that significant efforts are required to meet the targets.

27. Mr Baker told us that he recently held a summit with key disability groups to discuss transport provision.49 Unfortunately, he could not clarify whether the interests of young people were represented at the discussions.50 He pledged to make sure these interests were taken into account at future meetings.51 We were pleased that the DfT undertook to make sure that young disabled people would be included in future discussions about access to public transport. We would like to make sure this is followed through. We

43 Written evidence from the DfT and DfE
44 Q 151
45 Q 149
46 Q 135
47 Q 25
48 Written evidence from the DfT
49 Q 25
50 Q 33
51 Q 35
recommend that the Department for Transport outlines future meetings on this matter so that young disabled people can share their experiences with policymakers.

Accessible information

28. The provision of information for young disabled people about available services was again highlighted to us as an issue that needs to be addressed. BBC Children in Need told us that young disabled people "feel very nervous about using a bus" and need "much clearer" information to help them feel more confident in using public transport. The RNIB noted that audio and visual announcements at bus and rail stops were useful but said that "some kind of additional pressure is required on transport providers outside London" to implement these measures.

29. Transport operators outlined to us some of their efforts to make information about their services more accessible. Pteg said that it is trying "innovative design features" to provide information "such as tactile signage and maps". Tfl. told us that it had introduced a travel support information card for disabled people. The travel support card "will allow someone with dementia, Asperger's or autism to show the card to say How can you help me?" The RNIB welcomed this as "it breaks down some of the confusions and barriers that have existed between passengers and drivers." However, other young disabled people who gave evidence to us had not heard about the scheme, which highlights the need for better information about the offers that are available.

30. We have previously noted that Mr Baker is taking steps to develop online resources to provide information about local transport services. We recommend that the Government should involve young disabled people in the work mentioned by Mr Baker to develop better online information about local transport provision to make sure this resource meets their needs. We ask the Department for Transport to take reasonable measures to ensure that adequate passenger information systems are provided for young disabled people.

Staff training

31. One of the main issues that came up during our discussions with campaigners was the way that public transport staff relate to disabled people. We heard that "there is a huge lack of understanding" about disabilities and that "young disabled people are, in many circumstances, scared to use public transport." Whizz-Kidz explained that staff needed to
listen to the needs of disabled customers as "every disabled person has their own individual problem and their own individual ways of dealing with it". The RNIB commented to us that they were unsure of how effective current training provision is as staff “can go on a day's training and just sit there and at the end of the day they go home.”

32. Mr Baker told us that "the public service vehicles regulations make it a requirement for bus operators to have regard to the needs of disabled people in particular" and that he was "taking steps to ensure that the training is adequate". However, Mr Loughton seemed to echo concerns about the way young disabled people are treated on public transport when he said that “public transport providers should ensure that their staff have that additional training, as some do, to ensure that such kids can be given any extra support that they need" and that more work should be done so that transport staff "are able to take account of the special needs of kids with physical or learning disabilities.”

33. We note continuing concerns that not all transport staff have sufficient awareness of the needs of young disabled people and the assistance they may require. We would like to see transport operators engage with young disabled people, such as those who gave evidence to our inquiry, to improve training for their staff. We recommend that the Department for Transport sets out what steps it is taking to ensure this training is adequate.

63 Q 163
64 Q 142
65 Q 41
5 Rural transport for young people

35. Young people in rural areas face particular difficulties accessing public transport, compared to their counterparts in urban areas. Their relative isolation can act as a barrier to accessing education, training or work. In recent times, this problem has been made worse by the financial pressures faced by local authorities which could previously have funded extra local bus services.63 Young people are especially vulnerable to cuts in public transport services, as they are less likely to have access to their own car or other private transport. This is not only because of the cost of buying a car and fuel, but also because of the high cost of motor insurance for young people.64 Sustrans Cymru described this issue to us as follows, "in rural areas jobs and services are obviously more widely dispersed, so there are higher public transport costs, poor information and often infrequent services, all of which impact on young people".65

36. In order to tackle the issue of rural isolation and improve public transport in rural areas, Passenger Focus told us that "innovative solutions that suit the local market, local employers and the local geography" are necessary.66 One of these solutions is the Wheels to Work idea. These schemes give young people access to a two wheel machine to get them to the workplace. Once the young person is settled in work, they can buy or return the vehicle.67 However, not all local authorities operate such schemes.

37. Mr Baker said that the DfT was trying "to make it easier for alternative forms of transport to be funded".68 In particular, he said that it had provided "two tranches of money to local councils in rural areas to fund community transport".69 This could be used to provide bus services to transport young people to and from town centres or schools to fill in gaps from commercial transport provision. He said that "councils should be spending that money wisely".70 When questioned about whether local authorities needed guidance to help them use this funding to improve rural transport he stated "local authorities know what we are trying to achieve" and that "ultimately it is up to them what they provide in their areas".71

38. We note that rural isolation combined with lack of access to either private or public transport presents a barrier to education, training, work and leisure activities. We recommend that the DfT conduct a review on the current transport provision for young people living in rural areas. We would like to emphasise the need for consultation during this review and that local government and communities take a role in this process.

---

63 Q 21
64 The cost of motor insurance, House of Commons Transport Committee, Fourth Report of Session 2010-11,
65 Q 176
66 Q 117
67 Q 21, Q 117
68 Q 21
69 Q 21
70 Q 21
71 Q 24
6 Conclusion

39. Transport is important for young people to access education, training, and work, as well as allowing them to be part of their local communities. Transport costs can be a significant barrier to young people trying to access education or employment opportunities. Although we heard some examples of good practice in making local transport more affordable for young people during our inquiry, we were struck by the variability of concessionary schemes across the country. The introduction of a single national concessionary fare scheme for bus travel, similar to that currently available for young people’s rail travel, would improve this situation considerably. The lack of information about the availability of concessionary schemes is also an issue, and we hope that we can work with the Government to alleviate this through the development of online resources.

40. It is unacceptable that there is such variability in the age at which a young person is expected to pay an adult fare on public transport. This age should be set nationally at 18. This would be in line with the Government’s proposed increase in the school leaving age and help young people as they leave school and search for further education, employment or training.

41. It is important that young people’s voices are heard when local authorities and transport operators are drawing up plans for local transport provision. The Government’s Positive for Youth initiative is a welcome step in encouraging dialogue between young people and the policymakers in their communities, but the experiences of young people who gave evidence to us demonstrate that this is not enough. Too often, young people feel that their concerns are sidelined. Young people should be included in consultation processes about transport in their local area. We would like to see further engagement with young people, particularly those in rural areas, to improve their local transport.

42. We were disappointed to hear that so many young disabled people continue to face such difficulties in using public transport. There is a clear need for better training of transport staff alongside physical improvements to buses and trains. Again we found that young people struggle to find the information relevant to planning and executing their journeys and we would like to see the needs of young disabled people addressed as part of the DfT’s forthcoming work on information provision.

43. We have made a number of recommendations in this report to the transport industry and policymakers which we hope will help improve public transport for young people. During the course of our inquiry we were encouraged to see the work being done by young campaigners across the UK to improve transport in their local areas. We encourage them to persevere, and wish them every success with their campaigns in the future. We would also encourage the Government to commit to further engagement with the British Youth Council to make progress with work in this important area. Young people may be 20% of

---

32 Barriers to participation in education and training, Research brief, June 2010
https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RB009.pdf
the population, but they are 100% of the future, and the future use of transport. The experience and habits that young people develop now will influence their attitude and use of travel in the future. So we call on all decision makers to take a longer-term view of these issues.
Conclusions and recommendations

Cost of transport

1. We think the age at which a young person should start paying adult fares for public transport should be 18, when the compulsory requirement to be in education or training ends. This principle should be applied consistently across the country and across different transport modes and operators. The Government should provide a clear lead to transport operators by defining when adult fares should be applicable. We recommend that the DfT and DfE produce a clear statement outlining this principle. The Department for Transport should take the initiative in encouraging transport operators to reduce the variability in the age at which a young person pays an adult fare by producing clear guidance for public transport operators on this matter. [Paragraph 9]

2. We recommend that the DfT issues best practice guidance to local authorities and transport providers on providing concessionary fares for under 18s, aimed at ensuring that consistent standards apply nationwide, and that minimum requirements are met. [Paragraph 12]

3. There should be a national concessionary scheme to provide discounted bus travel to young people, similar to that already provided for rail and to the Transport Scotland concessionary scheme. We support the idea of a young person’s bus card. We would like the Minister to work with the British Youth Council to consult with young people through its networks and programmes on this matter so it can make sure that concessions meet the needs of young people. We also recommend that the Government publish any plans for its concessionary scheme so that young people can be involved in scrutinising it. [Paragraph 13]

4. Young people need to have better access to information about the reduced fares that may be available to them. We welcome the beginning of Government action on this by encouraging bus operators to develop online resources for passenger information. We would like the Government to publish its plans for developing online passenger information resources alongside a timeline for completion. We recommend that the Department for Transport makes additional efforts to include youth representatives in discussions on this matter to make sure that the new resource will meet the needs of young people. [Paragraph 15]

5. We are concerned that the loss of education maintenance allowance (EMA) funding may prevent young people from fully engaging in education or training opportunities. The Department for Education says it is reviewing how discretionary funds are being used as a replacement for EMA. We welcome this review. We recommend that this study includes a focus on whether these funds are being made readily available for transport. The Department for Education should also review the extent to which unaffordable transport due to losing EMA funding prevents young people from accessing education or training. [Paragraph 19]

Involving young people in improving transport

6. The sentiments expressed in the Government’s Positive for Youth initiative were welcome. We believe that young people should be included in the decisions that affect them. We support the establishment of effective structures to engage young people in a dialogue with policymakers that can influence the decision processes concerning transport. Every Passenger Transport Executive should have a youth forum. We recommend that such structures are established across the country and that the Department for Education addresses this issue to ensure that local authorities give young people the chance to be heard. [Paragraph 23]

Public transport and young people with disabilities

7. We were pleased that the DfT undertook to make sure that young disabled people would be included in future discussions about access to public transport. We would like to make sure this is followed through. We recommend that the Department for Transport outlines
future meetings on this matter so that young disabled people can share their experiences with policymakers. [Paragraph 27]

8. We recommend that the Government should involve young disabled people in the work mentioned by Mr Baker to develop better online information about local transport provision to make sure this resource meets their needs. We ask the Department for Transport to take reasonable measures to ensure that adequate passenger information systems are provided for young disabled people. [Paragraph 30]

9. We note continuing concerns that not all transport staff have sufficient awareness of the needs of young people with disabilities and the assistance they may require. We would like to see transport operators engage with young people with disabilities, such as those who gave evidence to our inquiry, to improve training for their staff. We recommend that the Department for Transport sets out what steps it is taking to ensure this training is adequate. [Paragraph 33]

Rural transport for young people

10. We note that rural isolation combined with lack of access to either private or public transport presents a barrier to education, training, work and leisure activities. We recommend that the DfT conduct a review on the current transport provision for young people living in rural areas. We would like to emphasise the need for consultation during this review and that local government and communities take a role in this process. [Paragraph 38]
Evidence

Written evidence, available on the British Youth Council website

- Alan & Grace Garbutt
- BBC Children in Need
- Brake
- British Youth Council & Northern Ireland Youth Forum
- Campaign for Better Transport
- Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in the UK (CILT)
- CILT Accessibility and Inclusion Forum Response
- Dales Integrated Transport Alliance (DITA)
- Department for Education
- Department for Transport
- Dr Green, UCL
- Ealing Youth Parliament
- East Sussex Youth Cabinet
- Funky Dragon
- Guide Dogs
- Helen Butcher & West Sussex County Council
- Hertfordshire UK Youth Parliament
- Jack Matthews, MYP Poole
- Kent Youth County Council
- Living Streets
- Mayor of London & TfL
- NCB NCB Supplementary
- Nicholas Carter, Portsmouth Youth Parliament
- North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership
- North Yorkshire Youth Council
- Oxford University Transport Studies Unit
- Passenger Focus
- Passenger Transport Executive Group (PTEG) PTEG supplementary
- Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)
- Suffolk Youth Parliament
- Sustrans
- Trafford Youth Cabinet
- Trailblazers
- Transport Select Committee Chair
- Whizz-Kidz
- York Youth Council & MYP

Oral evidence on Friday 6 July 2012

- Norman Baker MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Regional and Local Transport), Department for Transport
- Tim Loughton MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Children and Families), Department for Education
- Transport for London (TfL)
- Passenger Transport Executive Group (Pteg)
- Dales Integrated Transport Alliance
- Staffordshire Youth Council
- Hertfordshire Youth Council
- Suffolk Youth Council / UKYP Representatives
Oral evidence on Friday 13 July 2012

- Passenger Focus
- Campaign for Better Transport
- Transport Studies Unit – Oxford University
- Whizz-Kids
- BBC Children in Need
- RNIB
- Sustrans
- Brake
- Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in the UK (CILT)

Transcripts from oral evidence are available on the British Youth Council’s website.
About the Youth Select Committee

The Youth Select Committee is a pilot initiative, launched by the British Youth Council (BYC) in April 2012, which enables young people to scrutinise and hold inquiries into issues that they care about in order to influence policy and legislation. It is part of BYC’s Youth Voice initiative, supported by Positive for Youth.

The Committee is adapted from the UK Parliament Select Committee structure. It is made up of 11 young people aged 18 and under, and includes both elected and reserved seats to ensure a broad representation of interests from all parts of the UK. Members were interviewed and appointed by BYC in March 2012. However, whilst many members are elected Members of Youth Parliament, Mayors or Councillors, the committee is not party political.

About this inquiry
The terms of reference for this inquiry were: ‘to inquire into issues and concerns around safe, affordable and accessible transport for young people and make recommendations to decision makers to address them.’

The Committee took evidence between 17th April 2012 and 14th May 2012, and requested views on the following issues:

- Young people’s experiences of public travel within their local area and their overall satisfaction with their current service including availability, feeling safe and cleanliness.
- The affordability of fares for all young people (children and students) regardless where they live.
- The effectiveness of current concessionary fares schemes and local regional initiatives across the UK to enable (young people’s aged 18 and under) to access use of services and opportunities, such as education, training or leisure facilities.
- The accessibility and availability of transports services for disabled young people and those that live in rural communities.
- The current training public transport staff receive in regards to young people and their needs as a customer.
- Recommendations on a code of practice for youth using public transport.
- Which low carbon approaches are being used locally to enable young people to travel.

The Committee held its oral evidence sessions on 6th and 13th July 2012 in the same committee rooms used by Parliamentary Select Committees in Westminster. The inquiry was recorded in Hansard and broadcast live on BBC Democracy Live.

Further information
For more information about the Youth Select Committee visit [www.byc.org.uk/uk-work/youth-select-committee](http://www.byc.org.uk/uk-work/youth-select-committee) or email [bycyouthselect@parliament.uk](mailto:bycyouthselect@parliament.uk)
About the British Youth Council

The British Youth Council is the National Youth Council of the UK. A youth-led charity, we empower young people aged 25 and under to influence and inform the decisions that affect their lives. We support young people to get involved in their communities and democracy locally, nationally and internationally, making a difference as volunteers, campaigners, decision-makers and leaders.

We are young people - and our charity aims to help other young people, whatever their background or barriers they face, to make the world a better place for us all.

Serving our membership
BYC is made up of more than 230 member organisations who support our common vision for young people. Members elect our Board, determine our policies and prioritise our campaigns. They also act as the link between BYC and millions of individuals within the membership of our members. [www.bybc.org.uk/members](http://www.bybc.org.uk/members)

Youth-led networks
BYC runs a number of youth-led networks and programmes – including the UK Youth Parliament, Young Mayor Network, Local Youth Council Network, National Scrutiny Group and Youth Select Committee - which encourage young people to get involved in democracy and campaign to bring about change. [www.bybc.org.uk/uk-work](http://www.bybc.org.uk/uk-work)

Campaigning and consulting
BYC seeks to represent the views of young people and our members to stakeholders and decision makers at a local, national and international level. This work is based on the rolling BYC Manifesto which outlines our beliefs and aspirations. [www.bybc.org.uk/campaigns](http://www.bybc.org.uk/campaigns)

Training and recognition
Our training programmes empower young people with the skills, knowledge and confidence to bring about change. We also recognise young people who have made a significant contribution to their community through our high-profile award schemes. [www.bybc.org.uk/training-services](http://www.bybc.org.uk/training-services)

International work
Through our international youth participation young people learn about global issues and connect and share with other young people around the world. They are able to take part in discussions and influence decisions made at an international level. [www.bybc.org.uk/international](http://www.bybc.org.uk/international)

Further information
For more information about the British Youth Council visit [www.bybc.org.uk](http://www.bybc.org.uk), email [mail@bybc.org.uk](mailto:mail@bybc.org.uk) or call 0845 458 1489.