



Our Ref: KS-23-19

Assembly Members

24 October 2019

Dear Member,

At Plenary on 8 October, I undertook to provide Assembly Members with more detail on the Welsh Government's proposed changes to the eligibility age for concessionary bus passes, which is part of the forthcoming Buses (Wales) Bill.

During my statement I explained that I would make available to you an easy-to-understand table to illustrate how the changes would come into effect. This is attached to this letter and is also available at <https://gov.wales/concessionary-bus-travel-scheme-changes-eligibility>. I would also like to take the opportunity to restate some of the points I raised during the oral statement.

Consideration has been given to the possible impacts of the proposals, including those relating to a specific age group. The Welsh Government has mitigated against this by choosing to increase the eligibility age incrementally over time rather than making a one-step, immediate change to eligibility at state pension age. This gives people affected by changes time to be made aware of, and adequately prepare for, the changes in regard to their financial and personal situations. A gradual increase in eligibility also means that those affected will not have to wait as long as anticipated to receive their pass, allowing the public to benefit from an incremental adjustment to eligibility over time.

Impacts have been considered in the round with the other provisions in the Bill, which are likely to result in improved outcomes for bus passengers across the piece. It was also balanced as against the future affordability of the Mandatory Concessionary Fares scheme and the needs of all passengers. This led us, as a Government, to conclude that the most equitable, proportionate and sustainable approach was to provide for a phased increase to the eligibility age.

The proposals ensure that the scheme remains affordable in the longer term and is targeted at those most in need, without affecting the eligibility of those persons currently entitled to a concessionary pass. By 2030, there will be over a million people aged 60 and over in Wales and I believe this is the most effective way to put the scheme on a sustainable footing for the future.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The objective of a concessionary bus pass was always to assist people who had reached pensionable age when their income falls. This remains the case.

I would like to reiterate that anyone who has already received their pass will be able to keep it, regardless of any future changes and pass holders will be able to catch any bus at any time in Wales. The criteria for disabled people remains the same.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke above the letters.

**Ken Skates AC/AM**

Gweinidog yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Minister for Economy and Transport

## Annex 1 – Mandatory Concessionary Fares

The Buses (Wales) Bill will make changes to the legislative framework relating to the planning and delivery of local bus services in Wales. It will amend the eligibility age for the mandatory concessionary fares scheme so that over time it will align with a person's state pension age.

The Bill amends section 93 of the Transport Acts 1985 and 2000 to substitute the words “elderly or disabled person residing in its area” for “older or disabled person whose sole or principal residence is in the authority's area”.

In order to define an older person a table is inserted into section 146A to show the incremental increases of eligibility for a concessionary bus pass.

The table below provides a date checker for eligibility.

Date of birth:	Age on 01/04/2022:	Age of eligibility:	You will become entitled to a pass on your birthday following this date:
Before 01/04/1962	60	60	01/04/2022
01/04/1962 to 01/04/1963	59	61	01/04/2023
02/04/1963 to 01/04/1964	58	62	02/04/2025
02/04/1964 to 01/04/1965	57	63	02/04/2027
02/04/1965 to 01/04/1966	56	64	02/04/2029
02/04/1966 to 01/04/1967	55	65	02/04/2031
02/04/1967 to 01/04/1968	54	66	02/04/2033
02/04/1968 to 01/04/1969	53	State Pension Age	02/04/2035
02/04/1969 to 01/04/1970	52	State Pension Age	02/04/2036
02/04/1970 to 01/04/1971	51	State Pension Age	02/04/2038 <sup>1</sup>
02/04/1971 to 01/04/1972	50	State Pension Age	02/04/2039

The Bill currently sets out the date when these changes will happen i.e. April 2022. This means that no changes to the eligibility age will take effect until that date; after this time, the age of eligibility will rise in steps over a period of a number of years.

As the Bill amends the Transport Act 2000 to an “older or disabled person whose sole or principal residence is in the authority's area”, it also needs to amend the section relating to residency requirements in Wales.

Currently those of 60 and over are entitled to apply for a permit if they have a residence in a Welsh Local Authority's area, but after this provision is commenced, only those people whose sole or principal residence is in Wales will be eligible for a permit.

<sup>1</sup> State Pension Age is now set to rise to 68 from 2037