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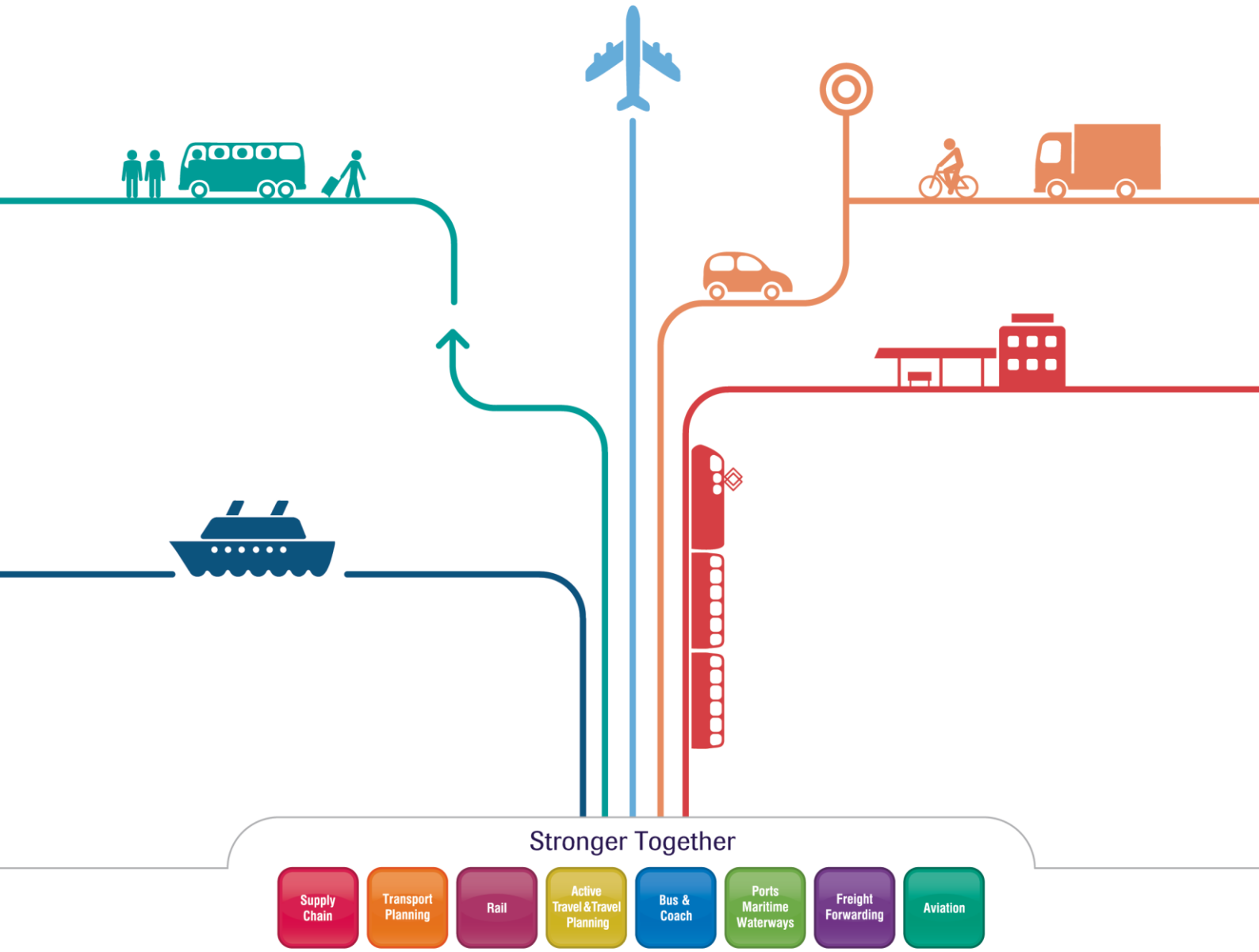

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Executive summary

Concessionary travel, that is discounted or free bus travel, has been offered to older and disabled people in Britain for a number of years. A national scheme of half-price off peak local bus travel for all those above the state pension age was proposed in the 1998 Transport White Paper and implemented in 2001. The scheme was extended to free off-peak local bus travel in England in the 2005 Budget, which was implemented in 2006, and to free off peak bus travel across the country in the 2006 Budget, implemented in 2008. Similar schemes have been introduced in Scotland and Wales.

One third of the bus trips in England are now made free because of concessionary travel passes (CTPs). Bus companies are compensated for the lost revenue and the resulting extra costs. Currently the scheme in England costs the taxpayer over £1 billion a year. This is equivalent to £93 for each pass. Because the total is a significant volume of expenditure, questions are being asked whether this is a good use of public money. However, while the direct costs to the public sector are quite explicit, the value of the benefits generated by the scheme is much less evident. A balanced debate on the topic is needed, considering the positive aspects of concessionary travel as well as the costs.

These issues are examined in this review of the literature. There is much more evidence on CTP use by older people than by disabled people. This partly reflects the greater number of passes issued on the grounds of age (9 million in England) than on the grounds of disability (0.75 million).

Nearly 80% of those eligible for a CTP on the grounds of age have one. This increased from 58% in 2002 after the statutory scheme requiring local authorities to offer a minimum of half-price local bus travel was introduced. The take up rate is highest in London where the scheme includes travel on both buses and the London Underground (metro) at all times. Generally, the take-up rates decrease with the size of urban area and from urban to rural. The take-up rate for disabled people is much lower. Over recent years older people have increased their frequency of bus use. Prior to the introduction of free local bus travel nationally in 2006, about 28% of those aged 60 or over used the bus at least once a week. This rose to 35% in 2010. Conversely, the proportion that never travel on a bus fell from about 46% to 41%, suggesting that offering CTPs has induced some older people who did not travel by bus to do so.

Once they have obtained a pass most people travel more by bus. The evidence suggests that about 20% of the trips being made using passes would have been made by car. Using reasonable assumptions, it seems that the use of CTPs reduces

the number of trips by car in Britain by about 1%. There is evidence that use of CTPs increases walking by younger old people because they walk more as part of extra bus trips while the very elderly walk less, possibly because they are using the bus to take trips they would not be able to afford without a CTP.

The following benefits for older people have been identified in the literature:

- *Improved access to services such as medical facilities and Post Offices;*
- *Improved health by walking more;*
- *Greater inclusion of older people into society by giving them access to more opportunities for social activities;*
- *Easing the transition from driving a car to not doing so because they can use the bus to make trips that they find difficult by car such as at night, in poor weather and in large cities;*
- *General improvements to the quality of life of older and disabled people.*

The following wider benefits to society have been identified:

- *Less car use and so a reduction in traffic;*
- *Voluntary work by older and disabled people, both formal and informal, including work in hospitals, charity shops and child care for grandchildren, allowing the parents of the grandchildren to be employed;*
- *Contributions to the local economy by spending money in shops, restaurants and leisure facilities;*
- *Savings to the tax payer of not providing some special transport services;*
- *A happier, healthier population of older and disabled people.*

Examination of the evidence shows that concessionary travel passes are popular with those who have them and contribute to their wellbeing by providing a variety of benefits, including opportunities to access services and social activities that they could not otherwise do. The availability of the concession is also supported by those that do not have them, perhaps because they can see that it is a benefit that they will enjoy one day without being associated with some of the disadvantages of being old. Society in general benefits as indicated above. Overall, the evidence suggests that the scheme has achieved the objectives set out in the 1998 Transport White Paper and the 2005 and 2006 budget statements. At present it is impossible to put a value on all the benefits, but they are large and need to be borne in mind by anyone considering making any changes to the CTP system.

1 Introduction

As people grow older, their travel needs and abilities change. They are less mobile and, at some stage in their later lives, many cease to be able to drive a car. In most cases they cease to be employed and so not only do they no longer need to travel to work, but also they have more time for leisure and voluntary activities. They also tend to have lower incomes than when they were employed. There is a general recognition that people who have been employed for a number of years, or have supported those who have done so, have made a significant contribution to society and that, in their declining years, they are entitled to financial and other support from the state. In Britain, the main support comes in the form of the old age pension but there are other more targeted forms of support such as the winter fuel allowance, and free television licences for those aged over 75. Another form of support is concessionary bus travel, that is, discounted or free bus travel, which has been offered to older and disabled people in Britain for a number of years.

One third of the bus trips in England are now made free using concessionary travel passes (CTPs) (Department for Transport, 2012b). Nine million people in Britain hold a pass on the grounds of age and 0.75 million because of disability (Department for Transport, 2012a). In 2011 23% of the adult population held an older or disabled person's CTP (Department for Transport, 2013c). Bus companies are compensated for the lost revenue and the resulting extra costs. Currently the scheme in England costs the taxpayer over £1 billion a year (see Table BUS0502b in Department for Transport (2013b)). Because this is a significant volume of expenditure, questions are being asked whether this is a good use of public money. However, while the direct costs to the public sector are quite explicit, the scale of the benefits generated by the scheme is much less evident. A balanced debate on the topic is needed. This should consider the positive aspects of concessionary travel, and it is these which are the subject of this report. The objective is to examine the implications of concessionary fares in terms of their impacts on travel behaviour by older people and people with disabilities, the benefits to them and the wider benefits to society. The political implications of removing the concession are outside the scope of this report, but it is worth bearing in mind that people over the state pension age are forming an increasing proportion of the population (and the electorate). Many younger people have relatives and friends who hold concessionary passes. They may also be looking forward to the day when they have more time for travel for pleasure after retirement and see concessionary fares as part of the reward for their years of work. It would be very difficult politically to remove a concession from those with a disability.

Whilst the report discusses the impacts of concessionary fares on both older people and people with disabilities, there is considerably more evidence about the former. This partly reflects the greater number of passes issued on the grounds of age than on the grounds of disability. Other concessionary schemes, for example, for young people, are not covered explicitly in this report. A short version of the report has been published by the US Transportation Research Board (Mackett, 2013).

2 Background

A comprehensive overview of the current situation with regard to concessionary travel in England, with reference also to the devolved administrations elsewhere in

the UK, is given in the House of Commons Library paper prepared by Butcher (2011). An equivalent review for Scotland is given in the SPICe briefing by Rehfisch (2009).

Concessionary travel has been offered to older people, blind people, children and disabled people since at least the early 1950s (Hansard, 1960). The Transport Act 1968 empowered District Councils to fund concessionary travel. No central government funding was provided. Concessionary fares offering some reduction on the commercial fare, and often free, became commonplace in the larger urban areas, especially where local bus services were provided by municipally-owned bus companies.

The proposal for a national minimum standard for concessionary travel for older people was put forward in the White Paper entitled 'New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone' (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 1998) which said, in paragraph 4.81:

> *"We will introduce a national minimum standard for local authority concessionary fare schemes for elderly people with a maximum £5 a year charge for a pass entitling the holder to travel at half fare on buses. This will enable elderly people, especially those on low incomes, to continue to use public transport and to use it more often, improving their access to a range of basic necessities such as health care and shops and reducing social isolation. Local authorities will still be able to offer more generous schemes if they wish to do so. The change will require legislation".*

The Transport Act 2000 gave all those living in England and Wales who had reached the state pension age (then 65 for men, 60 for women) and those with disabilities, a free pass entitling them to half-fare bus travel within their local area all day Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays and between 0930 and 2300 on weekdays. The new rules came into effect on 1 April 2001 within London and 1 June 2001 outside London (Butcher, 2011).

After a hearing in the European Court of Human Rights, the age at which men were entitled to apply for a concessionary travel pass (CTP) was reduced to 60, which was implemented in April 2003 under the Travel Concessions (Eligibility) Act 2002.

In the 2005 Budget (HM Treasury, 2005), the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, announced that the scheme in England would be extended from a half-price concession to free travel on local bus services. Under the heading of 'Building a fairer society', he said, in paragraphs 5.64 and 5.65:

> *"The Government is continuing to ensure that all pensioners can share in rising national prosperity. Since 1997, it has done this through directly increasing the incomes of older people and by indirectly reducing the cost of key public services to older people.*
>
> *"Budget 2005 continues this policy by announcing free off peak local area bus travel for those aged over 60 and disabled people in England from April 2006. Not only will this reduce the cost of travel for approximately 11 million people aged over 60 and approximately 2 million disabled people, it should also help*

approximately 54 per cent of pensioner households who do not have a car to travel freely in their local area".

This was implemented from 1 April 2006 in England under the Travel Concessions (Extension of Entitlement) (England) Order 2005.

In the 2006 Budget (HM Treasury, 2006) the Chancellor announced that from 1 April 2008 free bus travel would be extended England-wide. He said, in paragraph 5.50:

> *"Budget 2005 announced free off-peak local area bus travel for those aged over 60, and all disabled people, in England from April 2006. Building on this and recognising the importance of public transport for older people and the role access to transport has to play in tackling social exclusion and maintaining well-being, this Budget announces free off-peak bus travel for all pensioners and all disabled people, in England from April 2008, at a cost of up to £250 million a year. The Government will consult with local authorities and other interested parties on the best framework for delivering this entitlement".*

This was introduced from 1 April 2008 under the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007. The statutory scheme in England, known as the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS), provides free bus travel on all local buses for those eligible from 9.30 am to 11.00 pm on weekdays and all day at weekends and on Bank Holidays across England (Butcher, 2011). Local authorities can provide extra concessions for those living in their area. The present coalition government has given a commitment to maintain the scheme, which it regards as successful (Department for Transport, 2012b) but it has retained the policy of increasing the age of eligibility in line with changes in the state pension age in England announced by the previous Government in 2009 (Butcher 2011). This means that the qualifying age will rise to 65 in 2018 and 66 in 2020.

A similar scheme has been introduced in Scotland. In the 1990s, local authorities financed and operated concessionary travel schemes for groups such as older and disabled people (Transport Scotland, 2009). A variety of different schemes emerged, with most offering half-fare bus travel but some offered free bus travel. From 1 October 2002 all the local schemes were enhanced to a minimum standard of free local off-peak travel after 9.30 am Monday to Friday and at weekends for those aged 60 and over (Butcher, 2011). The National Concessionary Scheme (NCT) in Scotland was introduced in April 2006, providing unlimited free travel for those aged 60 plus and disabled people across Scotland on eligible services, including long distance services (Audit Scotland, 2010).

Free local bus travel was introduced in Wales on 1 April 2002 (Welsh Government, 2012).

There are some significant differences between the schemes in England, Scotland and Wales (Audit Scotland, 2010). In Scotland, the scheme allows travel at all times and on national bus services (long-distance coaches). The scheme in Wales allows travel at all times but not on long-distance services. Eligibility on the grounds of age will continue to be 60 in both Scotland and Wales rather than being increased in line with the state pension age for women. The scheme in Scotland is not available to those with learning difficulties in receipt of low Disabled Living Allowance.

In London the pass is branded as the 'Freedom Pass' and permits older and disabled people to travel free on both buses and the London Underground at all times. London has the most comprehensive public transport service in Great Britain. In London, a 60+ Oyster photocard has been introduced (Transport for London, 2013). It can be purchased for £10 and allows London residents aged 60 or over but below the state pension age to travel free on buses, the Underground, Docklands Light Railway, London Overground and some National Rail services at any time of day. They can travel on most other National Rail services within London for free after 9.30 am. When these passholders reach the state pension age they will receive their free Freedom Pass giving them the same travel opportunities but without the need to pay the £10 charge.

The financial implications for the taxpayer of the concessionary travel schemes in England in 2011/12 prices can be seen in Table 1 and Figure 1. The cost has almost doubled since 2001/01. The largest growth has been in the non-metropolitan areas, where expenditure has more than tripled since 2001/02 when the statutory scheme was introduced. These are the areas that showed the largest increase from 2005/06 when free local travel was introduced. This was when the total expenditure in England increased most. From 2008, the statutory entitlement to free bus travel was extended from the local to national level, which showed an increase in expenditure between 2007/08 and 2008/09 but not as much as the effect of the introduction of free local travel. Expenditure is expected to increase from 2011/12 to 2012/13.

Table 1 Net current expenditure on concessionary travel by area status: England, annual from 2000/01 at 2011/12 prices in £000

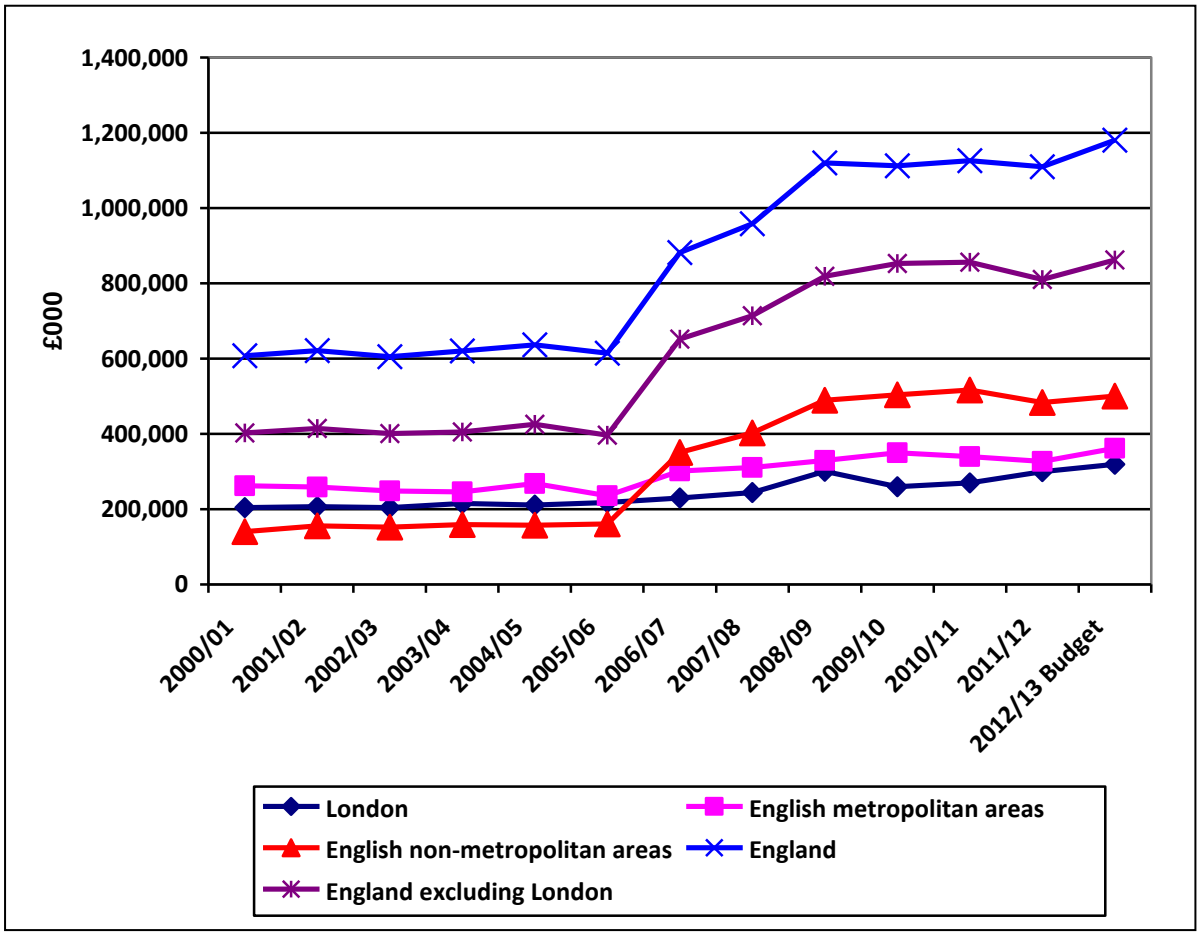
Financial year	London	English metropolitan areas	English non-metropolitan areas	England	England excluding London
2000/01	204,569	262,186	140,598	607,353	402,784
2001/02	206,389	258,925	155,806	621,121	414,732
2002/03	203,934	248,732	152,503	605,169	401,235
2003/04	215,176	245,857	159,525	620,558	405,381
2004/05	211,384	268,103	157,262	636,749	425,365
2005/06	217,736	235,895	160,675	614,305	396,570
2006/07	229,803	301,193	350,955	881,951	652,148
2007/08	244,191	311,006	402,688	957,886	713,694
2008/09	300,721	329,617	489,464	1,119,802	819,081
2009/10	259,232	349,388	503,468	1,112,087	852,856
2010/11	269,469	339,385	516,784	1,125,638	856,168
2011/12	299,230	326,500	483,674	1,109,404	810,174
2012/13 Budget	*319,030*	*361,285*	*500,423*	*1,180,738*	*861,708*

Source: Table BUS0811b in Department for Transport (2013b)
Note: (1) This table includes expenditure on all aspects of concessionary travel, including ENCTS, discretionary concessions e.g. travel outside the statutory time period or on other modes, youth concession schemes and administrative costs.
Note: (2) 'English metropolitan areas' refers to the six Former Metropolitan Counties of Tyne & Wear, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, West Midlands, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

Reimbursement of bus operators for concessionary travel (both statutory and discretionary) by older and disabled people in England cost £906 million in 2012/13 and 9.702 million CTPs were held, which implies that each CTP cost the taxpayer £93 that year. This was a decrease from £94 in 2011/12 and £98 in 2010/11 at 2012/13 prices. The decrease occurred because the number of CTPs increased and the amount reimbursed decreased. In 2012/13 an average of 105 trips was made on each CTP. In England the average reimbursement to the bus operators for each journey was £0.89 in 2012/13, up from £0.85 in 2011/12 at 2012/13 prices (the figures in this paragraph are from Tables BUS0821 and BUS0830b in Department for Transport (2012a)).

The reimbursement to operators per cardholder in 2009/10 was £169.45 in Scotland, £92.74 in Wales and around £90.91 in England, according to Audit Scotland (2010). The higher level in Scotland may be due to the inclusion of long distance services.

Figure 1 Net current expenditure on concessionary travel by area status: England, annual from 2000/01 at 2011/12 prices in £000



Source: Table BUS0811b in Department for Transport (2012a)
Note: See notes under Table 1.

Notwithstanding the Government's commitment to maintaining the national scheme, there have been some local changes, possibly caused by the need to fund the ENCTS. For example, Ling and Howcroft (2007) report that in Greater Manchester residents aged 60 or over were entitled to pay 50p for bus fares and half fares on

local trains and the Tramlink light rail system before 9.30 am Monday to Friday. Now passholders have to pay full fares before 9.30 am (but can travel free on local public transport between 11.00 pm and midnight during the week) (Transport for Greater Manchester, 2012).

The Office for Disability Issues has estimated that over 10 million people have a longstanding illness, disability or infirmity that means that they have a significant difficult in managing day-to-day activities including travelling (Department for Work and Pensions, undated). The conditions that can hinder mobility include visual impairment, limited ability to walk, being in a wheelchair and learning difficulties. Often, people with these conditions have low incomes because their opportunities for employment are limited. They may have extra living expenses because of their disability or infirmity. One way to help provide opportunities for employment, education and participation in society is to provide free or low cost public transport. This can be done by giving a travel pass that subsidises the cost of travel. (There are also other measures such as making buses accessible which are outside the scope of this report).

There are about 10.6 million people in Britain who are disabled (Department for Work and Pensions, undated) and about 11.9 million people over the state pension age (65 for men and 60 for women when the original national scheme was set up) (Office for National Statistics, 2011). In addition, men aged over the state pension age for women and under 65 are eligible for a CTP (1.8 million). About 5.0 million of those who are disabled are over the state pension age. Table 2 illustrates this. It does not include the 1.8 million men above the female state pension age but below 65 because it is not known how many of them have a disability. If it is assumed that the same proportion of them have a disability as the overall population (17.5%) this means that about 0.3 million have a disability. This implies that about 19.0 million people are eligible for a CTP because of age or disability (or both), which is 31% of the population.

Table 2 Number of people in Great Britain by age and disability (in millions)

		Age		
		Under state pension age	Over state pension age	Total
Disability	Without a disability	43.0 (71%)	6.9 (11%)	49.9 (82%)
	With a disability	5.6 (9%)	5.0 (8%)	10.6 (18%)
	Total	48.6 (80%)	11.9 (20%)	60.5 (100%)

Source: Office for National Statistics (2011) and Department for Work and Pensions (undated).

3 The take-up of concessionary travel passes

Most people of an eligible age now hold a CTP, although it should be noted that most sources of data on take-up rates that rely upon local authority records of the number of passes issued overstate take-up, because mechanisms for updating

records when passholders die or move away are limited. Survey-based data provide a more reliable picture.

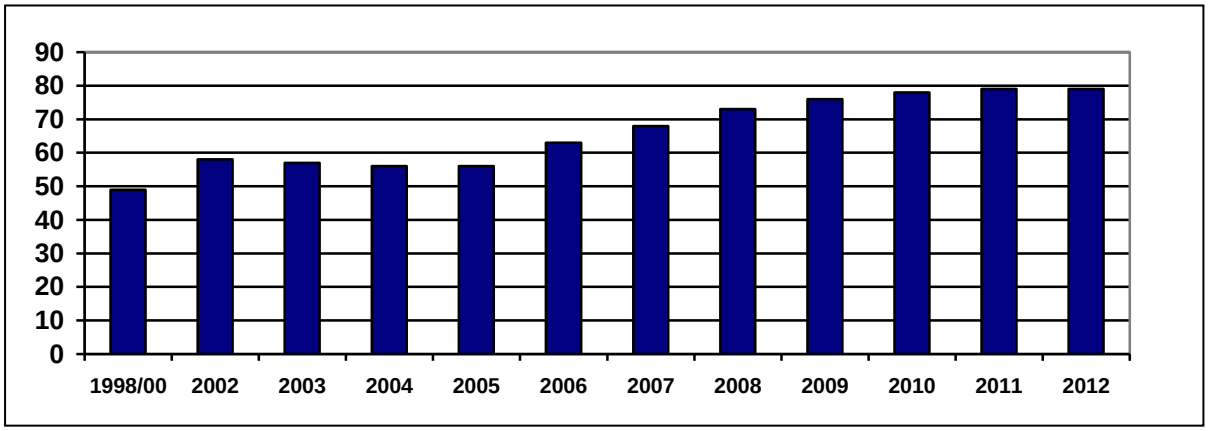
The National Travel Survey (NTS) data in Table 3 and Figure 2 show that the percentage of eligible older people holding CTPs has increased over time. In 1998/00 when CTPs were issued by local authorities at their discretion, fewer than half the eligible people took advantage of the opportunity (some of them may have lived in areas where there was no scheme). There was a large increase to 58% in 2002 when local authorities were required to offer a minimum of a half price concession. This increased to 62% in 2006, probably stimulated by the introduction of statutory free local travel in April 2006 in England, with further growth to 78% in 2010 after the scheme was extended to cover free local travel anywhere in England. The picture is complicated by the different schemes introduced at different times in England, Scotland and Wales and the changes in the age of eligibility for men. This last point is illustrated in Figure 3 where it can be seen that the take-up rate for men fell from 2002 to 2003 because, when the age of eligibility for men was reduced from 65 to 60 on 1 April 2003, the eligible population grew significantly. The fall can be explained by there being a lag in many of the 60-65 year old men obtaining CTPs, perhaps because they had access to a car and saw no reason to obtain one. Even in 2012 there was still a significantly lower take-up rate for men than women, again, perhaps because of greater car availability for men than women or a reluctance by some men to be seen travelling by bus.

Table 3 Take-up rates of CTPs in Great Britain by people eligible on the grounds of age (% of eligible age holding CTPs)

	1998/00	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Males	47	54	49	48	50	56	64	68	72	74	76	74
Females	50	60	63	62	61	68	71	78	79	82	82	82
All	49	58	57	56	56	62	68	73	76	78	79	79

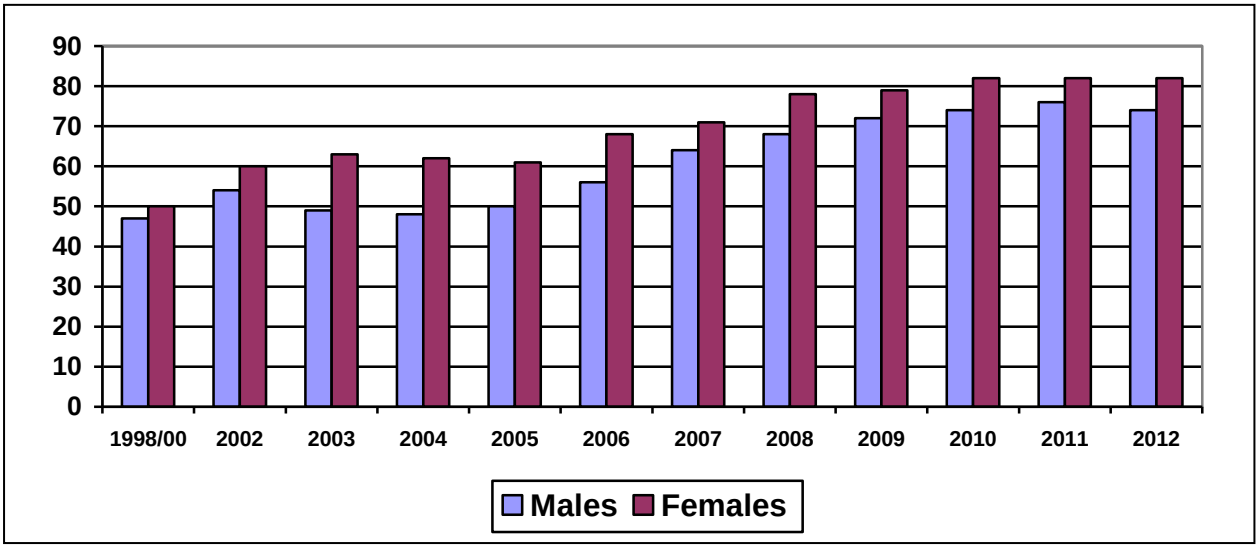
Source: Table NTS0620 in Department for Transport (2013a)

Figure 2 Take-up rates of CTPs in Great Britain by people eligible on the grounds of age (% of eligible age holding CTPs)



Source: Table NTS0620 in Department for Transport (2013a)

Figure 3 Take-up rates of CTPs in Great Britain by people eligible on the grounds of age by gender (% of eligible age holding CTPs)



Source: Table NTS0620 in Department for Transport (2013a)

The impact of the introduction of free travel on the take-up rate is illustrated by Ling and Howcroft (2007) who analysed 1567 questionnaires completed by people travelling on buses in Greater Manchester, at LRT stops and at Metrolink railway stations. They found that 33% of those who obtained a CTP in 2006 did so because it gave free travel while 51% would have obtained one anyway (the other 15% of eligible people were eligible for a disabled permit or gave some other answer).

Given that CTPs are issued free of charge it is interesting to try to understand why over 20% of those eligible to hold one, do not do so. Humphrey and Scott (2012) have examined data obtained in response to specially commissioned questions about CTP holding and use in Ipsos-Mori's Omnibus survey, carried out through face-to-face interviews with 988 people in England aged 61 or over. The reasons for not holding a CTP are shown in Table 4. It can be seen that having access to a car is the dominant reason. The other reasons were all cited by 10% of the respondents or fewer. They fall under several headings including personal difficulty in using buses, poor access to good bus services and simple failure to obtain a CTP.

The variation in the take-up rate by age in England is shown in Table 5, based on analysis of NTS data. It can be seen that the rate increases with age up to 80-84 and then declines. The decline with age beyond 85 is probably explained by decreasing mobility and increasing frailty with age, and the relatively low rate for younger eligible people may be due to greater car availability. (It should be acknowledged that some people may hold them but have ceased to use them because of difficulty in travelling because of increasing age).

Table 4 Reasons for not holding a CTP in England, 2011

Reason	%
I can drive/have someone to drive me	69
Health problems or disabilities make it too difficult to use buses	10
I never thought of getting one	9
I haven't got around to applying for one	9
The buses are too infrequent	8
I just don't like travelling by bus	5
The bus stop is too far for me to walk to	4
There are no buses that go where I need to go	4
The buses take too long	3
I don't consider myself as old	2
I can afford to take the bus if I need to	2
I don't like to rely on handouts	1
I am not eligible for a concessionary bus pass	1
I did not think I was eligible for one	1
I don't like people to know my age	-
I don't use buses as I don't feel safe on them	0
Other	4
Don't know	1
None of these	1

Source: Table 5.1 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

Table 5 Take-up rate of CTPs of those aged 60+ in England in 2010

Age	%
60-69	73
70-79	82
80-84	85
85+	74
All	77

Source: Figure 2.2 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

Data on the variation in the take-up rate by age is available for Scotland, as shown in Table 6. It can be seen that the rate is highest amongst those aged 70-74, and lowest amongst the youngest cohort. It is not clear why the decline with age starts earlier in Scotland than in England. It is also noticeable that the overall rate in 2007 is higher in Scotland at 81% than the equivalent figure for Great Britain of 68% and higher than the figure in England in 2012 of 79% as shown in Table 5. This is partly explained by the fact that free local travel and free country-wide travel were introduced earlier in Scotland than England (October 2002 in Scotland, April 2006 in England for the former, and April 2006 in Scotland and April 2008 in England for the latter).

Table 6 Take-up rate CTPs of those aged 60+ in Scotland from April 2006 to March 2007.

Age	%
60-64	74
65-69	81
70-74	87
75-79	84
80+	81
All	81

Source: Table 4-2 in Transport Scotland (2009).

Humphrey and Scott (2012) have examined the variation in the take-up rate by various personal characteristics. Table 7 shows the variation by socio-economic classification. Those in intermediate occupations have the highest take-up rate, followed by those in routine occupations. The lower rate amongst those in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations is probably because of greater access to a car.

Table 7 CTP take-up rate by socio-economic classification in England in 2010

Socio-economic classification	%
Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations	75
Intermediate occupations	84
Routine and manual occupations	80
Never worked and long-term unemployed	69
Self-employed	68
Unclassified	67
All	77

Source: Table 2.4 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

Table 8 shows the variation by income. As might be expected, those with higher incomes have lower take-up rates, probably because of higher access to cars. They may also tend to live in lower density areas served less well by buses. The effects of access to a car are shown explicitly in Table 9 which shows that those with access to a car have a lower take-up of CTPs.

Table 8 CTP take-up rate by older people by income in England in 2010

Income	%
£0-£4,999	81
£5,000-£7,999	82
£8,000- £9,999	80
£10,000-£14,999	80
£15,000-£29,999	76
£30,000+	66
All	77

Source: Table 2.5 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

Table 9 CTP take-up rate by older people by access to car in England in 2010

Access to car classification	%
Has access to car	75
Does not have access to a car	84
All	77

Source: Table 2.10 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

Spatial variation in the take-up rates is illustrated in Table 10. The highest rate is in London, where the 'Freedom Pass' permits older and disabled people to travel free on both buses and the London Underground (metro) at all times. Generally, the take-up rate decreases with the size of urban area and from urban to rural. It is noticeable that the take-up rate has increased faster in the less urbanised areas as the scheme has offered more concessions. The growth in rural areas has been particularly high since the introduction of free country-wide travel, reaching 66% in 2010. Last (2010b) quotes an increase in passholders between 2005/06 and 2006/07 (when local free travel was introduced) for four PTE (Passenger Transport Executive) areas of 3%, increasing to 17% in 2008/09 compared with 2005/06, whereas for seven county areas, the number of passholders increased by 48% in 2006/07 and had doubled by 2008/09, relative to 2005/06. The PTE areas are the major urban areas outside London while the county areas are more rural, containing a mixture of large and small urban areas.

Table 10 Take-up of CTPs by people eligible on the grounds of age by area type in Great Britain (%)

	1998/00	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
London	79	88	84	84	85	84	85	91	87	90	86	88
Metropolitan areas	72	74	74	71	71	79	82	83	81	84	86	83
Large urban	44	60	56	58	54	61	68	74	80	78	81	79
Medium urban	44	54	56	52	53	58	68	75	76	77	80	82
Small/medium urban	39	52	49	50	53	56	66	72	77	79	80	75
Small urban	36	52	45	47	46	57	62	68	71	81	78	79
Rural	30	33	33	36	34	48	49	56	63	66	66	66
All	49	58	57	56	56	62	68	73	76	78	79	79

Source: Table NTS0619 in Department for Transport (2013a)

Humphrey and Scott (2010) have looked at the variation in the CTP take-up rate in England by type of area and access to bus services. They found a much lower rate in rural areas than urban areas (Table 11). The effects of frequency of bus services are shown in Table 12, and the effect of walking time to the nearest bus stop in Table 13. People with access to an infrequent bus service or a long walk to a bus stop have low take-up rates. Humphrey and Scott (2010) carried out a multivariate analysis using logistic regression analysis model to establish the factors that influence the take-up rate. They found that the urban-rural split was not statistically significant, suggesting that the difference shown in Table 11 is explained by the lower frequency of buses and greater average distance to bus stops in rural areas.

Table 11 CTP take-up rate by older people by type of area in England in 2010

Type of area	%
Urban	80
Rural	63
All	77

Source: Table 2.7 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

Table 12 CTP take-up rate by older people by frequency of bus service in England in 2010

Frequency of bus service	%
Every quarter of an hour	85
Every half an hour	78
One an hour	77
Up to one a day	63
All	77

Source: Table 2.8 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

Table 13 CTP take-up rate by older people by walking time to local bus stop in England in 2010

Walking time to local bus stop	%
6 minutes or less	79
7-13 minutes	76
14 minutes or more	58
All	77

Source: Table 2.9 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

The change in access to bus services over time in Great Britain is shown in Table 14. This shows the much lower level of bus availability in rural areas than other areas, with very high levels in London, metropolitan areas, large and medium urban areas, with slightly lower levels in smaller urban areas. It is noticeable that bus accessibility has improved over time, particularly in areas with lower bus availability.

The effects of bus availability on CTP holding is illustrated by analysis of the Scottish Household Survey to show that, of those eligible for a CTP, 58% of people with a 15 minute or better bus frequency close to their home had one whereas only 54% of those with a less frequent service did so (Rye and Mykura, 2009). Hill et al (2003) reviewed studies in a range of areas and found that the highest increase of CTP holding when free travel was introduced was in rural areas. In their study in Salisbury and the surrounding areas in Wiltshire, Baker and White (2010) found that the take-up rate increased more in rural areas than in the city when free local travel was introduced. This largely reflects much lower take up rates in rural areas prior to the introduction of free travel.

Table 14 Percentage of households in Great Britain whose nearest bus stop is within 13 minutes walk and who have a service at least once an hour

	1998/00	2012
London	97	99
Metropolitan areas	97	98
Large urban	96	97
Medium urban	95	96
Small/medium urban	86	94
Small urban	74	90
Rural	45	61
All	88	91

Source: Table NTS0801 in Department for Transport (2013a)

The calculation of the take-up rate of CTPs by disabled people is more difficult because it is not known exactly how many people in the population have the disabilities specified under the Transport Act 2000 (Butcher 2011) in contrast to CTPs issued on the grounds of age where eligibility is very clear. There is also a great deal of variation in the way that disability criteria are checked between issuing authorities, and this is likely to lead to the application of different standards. Another difficulty is that many disabled people are over the state pension age and so eligible for a pass on both grounds. If it is assumed that all disabled people over the state pension age use a disabled person's pass then the take up rate is 7%. If it assumed that they all switch to a pass issued on the grounds of age, the rate is 13%. Either way, the take-up rate is much lower than that for older people. Transport Scotland (2009) says that 164,266 CTPs have been issued in Scotland on the grounds of disability (15% of the total), compared with 926,726 on the grounds of age. This meant that 3% of the population of Scotland had a CTP on the grounds of disability and 18% on the grounds of age. Analysis of smartcard data from four districts in Lancashire showed that in 2009 between 6% and 9% of passholders had their passes on grounds of disability (Last 2010a). Of the passes issued on the grounds of disability in Scotland, 3% were for visually impaired people alone, 7% for visually impaired people plus a companion, 36% were for people with other disabilities alone and 54% for people with other disabilities plus a companion (Transport Scotland, 2009). (Carers are not included in England unless local authorities offer it as a local concession (Butcher, 2011)).

Mobility issues are a factor in the take-up rate for CTPs for older people as Table 15 shows. Those who are less mobile, particularly those who have difficulties using local buses have lower take-up rates than those who do not have difficulties.

Table 15 CTP take-up rate by older people by mobility problems in England in 2010

Mobility problem	%
Going out on foot	71
Using local buses	66
Getting in or out of a car	68
No difficulty with any of these	80
All	77

Source: Table 2.11 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

There is anecdotal evidence that some people above the state pension age acquire passes for purposes other than bus travel, for example to use as a 'proof of age' card when obtaining discounts offered to older people so the figures for the CTP take-up rates for older people may be inflated because of this factor.

4 The impact of concessionary fares on the travel behaviour of older and disabled people

4a Changes in travel patterns

Humphrey and Scott (2012) have examined the frequency of use of CTPs by older people by a number of personal characteristic. As Table 16 shows, overall, 13% of CTP holders use them daily and 39% used them weekly but less than daily. 19% used them less than once a year. Women tend to use CTPs more frequently than men.

Table 16 Frequency of CTP use by gender in England in 2010

Gender	At least daily	Less than daily, up to weekly	Less than weekly, up to monthly	Less than monthly, up to annually	Less than annually
Male	11	36	16	17	21
Female	14	42	15	13	17
All	13	39	15	15	19

Source: Table 3.1 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

The breakdown of the use of CTPs by socio-economic classification, as shown in Table 17, is complex, but fewer of those in higher managerial, administrative and professional activities and the self-employed used their CTPs daily than those in other groups. The breakdown by income shown in Table 18 is also complex with the lowest daily use by those in the second highest income group. These figures may be influenced by access to a car. As Table 19 shows, this is the case with only 7% of those with access to a car using their CTP daily and 38% less than monthly. The relatively high level of daily use by those with high incomes may also be influenced by location with many of those with the highest incomes living in London where the Freedom Pass offers access to the Underground as well as the bus all day and so can be used to travel to work.

Table 17 Frequency of CTP use by older people by socio-economic classification in England in 2010

Socio-economic classification	At least daily	Less than daily, up to weekly	Less than weekly, up to monthly	Less than monthly, up to annually	Less than annually
Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations	10	39	17	15	19
Intermediate occupations	13	38	16	16	17
Routine and manual occupations	15	41	13	14	18
Never worked and long-term unemployed	16	42	16	6	20
Self-employed	7	30	19	18	25
Unclassified	18	37	17	13	15
All	13	39	15	15	19

Source: Table 3.3 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

Table 18 Frequency of CTP use by older people by income in England in 2010

Income	At least daily	Less than daily, up to weekly	Less than weekly, up to monthly	Less than monthly, up to annually	Less than annually
£0-£4,999	12	41	14	15	18
£5,000-£7,999	13	47	12	13	15
£8,000- £9,999	16	41	14	12	17
£10,000-£14,999	11	39	15	16	19
£15,000-£29,999	9	33	20	17	21
£30,000+	13	34	19	17	17
All	13	39	15	15	19

Source: Table 3.4 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

Table 19 Frequency of CTP use by older people by access to car in England in 2010

Access to car classification	At least daily	Less than daily, up to weekly	Less than weekly, up to monthly	Less than monthly, up to annually	Less than annually
Has access to car	7	37	18	18	20
Does not have access to a car	27	46	8	5	15
All	13	39	15	15	19

Source: Table 3.9 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

Humphrey and Scott (2012) used multivariate analysis to estimate the influence of various factors on CTP use. They found that socio-economic classification and income were not statistically significant when other variables were controlled for,

suggesting that access to a car is the critical factor. The influence the of car is illustrated further by Table 20 which shows the reasons for infrequent use of CTPs. Access to a car is the top reason, followed by difficulty accessing buses either because of health problems or disability or because of poor access to good bus services. As Table 21 shows, the reasons why CTP users do not use buses, or do not use them more often, are very similar to those for people who do not have a pass. The availability of the car is again the dominant reason. Difficulties getting on and off the bus and getting to the bus stop or station apply to more people with passes than without. Not surprisingly, high bus fares are an issue for more non pass holders than pass holders.

Table 20 Reasons for infrequent use of CTPs in England in 2010

Reason	%
I can drive/have someone to drive me	74
The buses are too infrequent	14
Health problems or disabilities make it too difficult to use buses	10
There are no buses that go where I need to go	9
The bus stop is too far for me to walk to	6
The buses take too long	5
I just don't like travelling by bus	4
Prefer to walk	2
I can afford to take the bus if I need to	1
Just received it [the pass]/not used yet	1
I don't use buses as I don't feel safe on them	1
I don't like people to know my age	-
I don't like to rely on handouts	-
Other	3
Don't know	1
None of these	3

Source: Table 5.3 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

Table 21 Reasons why people do not use local bus services or do not use them more often, Great Britain, 2013

Reason	CTP holders (%)	Non-CTP holders (%)
It is easier/more convenient by car	45	46
It is quicker by car	10	11
I have difficulty getting on and off buses	8	1
Buses are not frequent enough/do not run when I need them	5	7
Buses do not go to/ go directly to places where I want to go	5	5
I have difficulty getting to the bus stop/station	4	1
I prefer to walk/cycle	3	7
Bus fares are too high	2	5
The nearest bus stop is too far away	2	2
Not safe on the buses/stops/stations/anti-social behaviour	2	1
Journeys take too long by bus	1	3
I do not know what bus services are available	1	1
It is cheaper by car	-	2
Buses are not reliable enough	-	1
Other	13	7

Source: Table ATT0108 in Department for Transport (2013c)

A different aspect of the impact of CTP holding on bus use is the change in bus use following obtaining a CTP. The impact of obtaining a CTP on bus use is shown in Table 22 where it can be seen that most people have used the bus more since obtaining their passes. Those who were frequent bus users were most likely to say that they had increased their use of buses a lot, while the less frequent users were more likely to have increased their use by a small amount.

Table 22 Change in frequency in the use of buses in Great Britain since receiving a CTP by previous frequency of use, 2013 (%)

		Change in frequency of use of buses since receiving a CTP					
		A lot more often	A little more often	About the same	A little less often	A lot less often	Don't know
Previous frequency of use of buses	At least once a week	53	23	24	-	-	-
	Use, but less than once a week	20	40	30	5	4	1
	Never	2	9	58	5	22	5
	All	28	26	35	3	7	2

Source: Table ATT0105 in Department for Transport (2013c)

The changes in frequency are disaggregated by various characteristics in Tables 23 to 25. As Table 23 shows, similar proportions of men and women have used buses more since obtaining their CTPs.

As Table 24 shows, there is an inverse relationship between age and an increase in bus use, with the younger group aged 55-64 increasing their bus use most and the oldest increasing it least. It should be borne in mind that obtaining a CTP is often associated with reaching the state pension age which is also when many people cease to be employed and travel to work and so have more time for leisure trips, possibly by bus. Some of those who are aged 55-64 may still be employed and using their passes to travel to work for nothing rather than paying for petrol and parking.

As might be expected, more of those who do not own a car used the bus a lot more than those who own one, but those who own one were more likely to use the bus a little more often (Table 25). Combining these two categories shows that more car owners than non-car owners increased their use of the bus (57% compared with 43% of non-car owners reporting an increase). Car owners may see the CTP as an 'insurance' against the possibility of not having a car available and so use the bus infrequently, as reflected in Table 19, but more than they did before obtaining a CTP. When income is considered (Table 26) it can be seen that those with higher incomes are more likely to have increased their use of the bus than those with low incomes, probably because of their lower level of bus usage before obtaining their pass.

Table 23 Change in frequency in the use of buses in Great Britain since receiving a CTP by gender, 2013 (%)

	A lot more often	A little more often	About the same	A little less often	A lot less often	Don't know
Male	28	26	35	2	7	2
Female	28	26	34	4	7	2
All	28	26	35	3	7	2

Source: Table ATT0105 in Department for Transport (2013c)

Table 24 Change in frequency in the use of buses in Great Britain since receiving a CTP by age, 2013 (%)

	A lot more often	A little more often	About the same	A little less often	A lot less often	Don't know
55 to 64	35	33	32	-	-	-
65 to 74	26	31	30	4	7	2
75+	26	17	39	3	11	3
All	28	26	35	3	7	2

Source: Table ATT0105 in Department for Transport (2013c)

Table 25 Change in frequency in the use of buses in Great Britain since receiving a CTP by household car ownership level, 2013 (%)

	A lot more often	A little more often	About the same	A little less often	A lot less often	Don't know
0 cars	29	14	40	2	11	4
1+ cars	27	30	33	3	6	1
All	28	26	35	3	7	2

Source: Table ATT0105 in Department for Transport (2013c)

Table 26 Change in frequency in the use of buses in Great Britain since receiving a CTP by income level, 2013 (%)

	A lot more often	A little more often	About the same	A little less often	A lot less often	Don't know
Up to £7,279	23	25	40	3	9	-
£7,280 up to £14,559	24	25	34	5	9	3
£14,560 up to £25,999	34	27	30	1	5	3
All	28	26	35	3	7	2

Source: Table ATT0105 in Department for Transport (2013c)
Note the sample size was too small to show results for those with incomes of £26,000 or more.

The evidence implies that buses are being used more by older people. Table 27 shows the number of bus trips per year by older people with the figure for the overall population included for comparison. In the late 1990s there were decreases in bus use. The introduction of national scheme for bus passes slowed the downward trend for older people, with a large increase from 2006 to 2006 when free local off-peak bus travel was introduced. There was an increase in the number of bus trips for those aged 70+ from 2007 to 2008 when the scheme was extended to nationwide travel. There was not an equivalent change for those aged 60-69. It can be seen that in 2002 those aged 60-69 made the same number of bus trips per head as the overall average. By 2012, the older people were making 70 trips each on average compared with 61 for the whole population. It is worth noting that in 2012, people aged 60-69 made 1.4 trips a week, while older people made 1.6, which might be regarded as rather low since the travel is free. To clarify the changes, the equivalent percentages of trips that are by bus are shown in Table 28. Between 2002 and 2007 the proportion of trips that were by bus increased more for those aged 60-69 than the overall figure, from 6% to 8% in the former case and 6% to 7% in the latter case. From 2010 to 2011 there was a drop for those aged 60-69. For those aged 70 and over the change from 2005 to 2006 was from 10% to 12%. As implied above, those who hold CTPs use them for a very small proportion of their total trips on average, since they make only a small number of their trips by bus.

Table 27 Number of bus trips in Great Britain per year by older people and the total population

	1995 /97	1998 /00	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
60-69	79	75	65	64	63	66	73	75	74	74	75	70	70
70 +	102	89	84	85	82	76	86	86	90	92	80	81	81
All	68	65	65	67	65	64	65	66	66	68	68	64	61

Source: Table NTS0601 from Department for Transport (2013a)

Table 28 Percentage of all trips in Great Britain per year by older people and the total population that are by bus

	1995 /97	1998 /00	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
60-69	8	7	6	6	6	6	7	8	8	8	8	7	7
70 +	15	12	12	12	11	10	12	12	12	12	11	11	11
All	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	6

Source: Table NTS0601 from Department for Transport (2013a)

The differences in bus use between CTP holders and non holders are shown in Table 29. It can be seen that nearly half of those without a CTP never use a bus. More surprisingly, a quarter of those who hold a pass never travel by bus. They may have obtained a pass in case their car is not available or to show entitlement to facilities that offer concessions to older people. It is clear that CTP holders use the bus more than those who do not.

Table 29 Frequency of use of local bus in Great Britain, 2013

	At least daily	Less than daily, up to weekly	Less than weekly, up to monthly	Less than monthly, up to annually	Less than annually	Never
CTP holder	8	31	15	23	0	25
Non-CTP holder	6	10	11	20	5	49
All	7	14	12	20	4	43

Source: Table ATT0102 in Department for Transport (2013c)

The introduction of CTPs has increased the frequency of bus use by those aged 60 and over as Table 30 shows. Prior to the introduction of free local bus travel in 2006, about 28% of those aged 60 or over used the bus at least once a week. This rose to 35% in 2008. Similarly, use by less frequent users who travelled at least once a month, but less than once a week, increased from 11% to 14%. Conversely, the proportion who never or very rarely travelled on a bus fell from about 46% to 39%, suggesting that offering CTPs has induced some older people who did not travel by bus to do so.

Table 30 Frequency of bus use for those aged 60 years or over in Great Britain

	1988/00	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
At least once a week	32	30	28	31	34	35	34	35	33	33
At least once a month	11	10	11	12	12	14	13	12	14	14
At least once a year	15	14	15	12	14	13	13	12	13	13
Less than once a year or never	42	46	46	45	41	39	40	41	40	41
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Table NTS0621 in Department for Transport (2013a)

The differences by type of area can be seen in Table 31 which shows the change over time in the percentage of all local bus trips that are by concessionary pass holders. The lowest proportions are in London in each year, but the figures are

similar across the different types of area in England and in Scotland, but noticeably higher in Wales. Between 2007/08 and 2009/10, the largest changes were in the English non-metropolitan areas, but the percentage changes levelled off after that.

Table 31 Concessionary passenger journeys on local bus services in Great Britain (% of all local bus journeys)

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
London	31	31	32	32	33	33
English metropolitan areas	34	35	35	36	36	37
English non-metropolitan areas	31	34	36	36	36	35
England	33	33	34	34	34	34
Scotland	32	32	34	34	34	35
Wales	41	42	43	43	44	45
Great Britain	32	33	34	34	35	35

Source: Table BUS0105 of Department for Transport (2013b)
Note: In this table, concessionary travel includes all statutory and discretionary elderly, disabled and youth schemes where bus operators receive reimbursement from local authorities.

Whilst the differences between the areas in England shown in Table 31vare fairly small, there are much greater variations between the areas in terms of the average number of trips made on each CTP, as shown in Table 32. It can be seen that the number of bus trips per pass in London is much higher than anywhere else, and lowest in the non-metropolitan areas, which are the smaller cities and towns and rural areas. The number decreased slightly between 2010/11 and 2012/13, particularly in London. The difference between the areas reflects the service levels of buses in the various areas. The number of trips also affects the average reimbursement per journey, as shown in Table 33, which is lower in London than elsewhere and higher in the non-metropolitan areas. This increased between 2010/11 and 2012/13 in London, and decreased in the non-metropolitan areas. The reimbursement per pass is shown in Table 34. This indicates the value of the pass to the holder, with an average of about £93 a year. The figure is considerably higher in London reflecting the higher number of bus trips made using the CTP probably because of the greater availability of buses and the lower level of car ownership.

Table 32 Average number of bus concessionary journeys per pass in England

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
London	257	252	227
English metropolitan areas	139	139	132
English non-metropolitan areas	74	73	70
England	111	110	105
England excluding London	91	90	86

Source: Table BUS0821 of Department for Transport (2013b)

Table 33 Average reimbursement per journey in pence in England at 2012/13 prices

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
London	68	70	76
English metropolitan areas	86	84	86
English non-metropolitan areas	104	97	100
England	88	85	89
England excluding London	96	92	94

Source: Table BUS0830b of Department for Transport (2013b)

Table 34 Average reimbursement per pass in £ in England at 2012/13 prices

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
London	173	176	172
English metropolitan areas	119	117	113
English non-metropolitan areas	76	70	70
England	98	94	93
England excluding London	88	82	81

Source: Table BUS0830b of Department for Transport (2013b)

Humphrey and Scott (2012) examined the effect of access to bus services on the frequency of CTP use. Table 35 shows the frequency of bus use by type of area. In rural areas only 2% of passholders use their passes daily compared with 14% in urban areas. Another 41% of CTP pass holders in urban areas made weekly trips but not as often as daily, with only 26% of those in rural areas making trips with this frequency. However, the multivariate analysis that Humphrey and Scott (2012) carried out showed that the urban-rural split was not a statistically significant determinant of CTP usage, but that frequency of bus services (Table 36) and walking time to bus stops (Table 37) were. Only 2% of those with a frequency of less than one bus an hour used their passes daily compared to 20% of those who had access to a high frequency service. Conversely, 30% of those with access to a low frequency bus service used the bus less than once a year compared with 13% of those with a bus every quarter of an hour. Similarly, as Table 37 shows, only 3% of those with a long walk to the nearest bus stop used the bus on a daily basis compared to 13% living near to a bus stop. 38% of those living far from a bus stop used the bus less than once a year compared to 17% of those with good access.

Table 35 Frequency of CTP use by older people by type of area in England in 2010

Type of area	At least daily	Less than daily, up to weekly	Less than weekly, up to monthly	Less than monthly, up to annually	Less than annually
Urban	14	41	14	13	18
Rural	2	26	22	24	25
All	13	39	15	15	19

Source: Table 3.6 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

Table 36 Frequency of CTP use by older people by frequency of bus services in England in 2010

Frequency of bus service	At least daily	Less than daily, up to weekly	Less than weekly, up to monthly	Less than monthly, up to annually	Less than annually
Every quarter of an hour	20	46	11	9	13
Every half an hour	10	42	16	14	17
One an hour	5	32	18	23	22
Up to one a day	2	19	29	21	30
All	13	39	15	15	19

Source: Table 3.7 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

Table 37 Frequency of CTP use by older people by walking time to bus stops in England in 2010

Walking time to bus stop	At least daily	Less than daily, up to weekly	Less than weekly, up to monthly	Less than monthly, up to annually	Less than annually
6 minutes or less	13	40	15	14	17
7-13 minutes	12	38	15	16	20
14 minutes or more	3	22	13	23	38
All	13	39	15	15	19

Source: Table 3.8 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

Various researchers have found evidence of increases in bus use by CTP holders in local areas. Dargay et al (2010) analysed data from the National Travel Survey using an econometric model and found that free travel for older people increased the number of bus stages by 26.5% in metropolitan areas and by 45.4% in shire (rural) counties in 2008 compared with a counterfactual case without free travel (from a mean trip rate of 1.98 stages per week per head to 2.50 in the metropolitan areas and from 0.68 to 0.99 in the shire counties). Last (2010b) examined changes in concessionary trips from 2005/06 through to 2008/09 in four PTE areas which did not previously provide free travel and seven county areas in England. In the PTE areas, concessionary journeys increased by 25% in the first year after statutory free local travel was introduced in 2006, and by 40% in 2008/09. In the county areas, exact like-for-like comparisons were more difficult because the pre-free schemes varied, but overall it was estimated that trip numbers increased by 64% in 2006/07 and by 111% by 2008/09.

Andrews (2011), using the results from an on-bus survey of 487 pass holders in south-west England in December 2009, found that 25% of respondents were making many extra bus trips, 35% were making some extra trips and 40% reported that they were making the same number of trips as previously. He also found that there was a statistically significant difference between the increase in bus use in areas well served by buses and the increase elsewhere (Andrews, 2012b). Ling and Howcroft

(2007) found that concessionary travel in Greater Manchester by bus increased by 27% after 9.30 am Monday to Friday and weekends when free concessionary travel was introduced whereas before 9.30 am Monday to Friday it increased by only 0.5%. They also report that there was a difference between the modes on which free travel is available off-peak in Greater Manchester with only 3% of CTP holders travelling on buses saying that they would not have made the trip if free travel had not been introduced whereas the equivalent figures for the Metrolink light rail system and local trains were 38% and 22% respectively. Baker and White (2010) found in their surveys in the Salisbury area that 59% reported an increase in bus use with the free pass, with 39% reporting that their levels of bus use was unchanged and 2% reporting a decline (possibly due to other factors). Baker and White (2010) estimated that this represented an average increase in trip making of 17%. In Scotland, a questionnaire survey distributed by post to concessionary pass holders found that 48% of the respondents reported making more trips as a result of the introduction of free fares and 7% reported making fewer trips (Scottish Executive, 2004b). Last (2010) in his analysis of smartcard data in Lancashire found that people who had obtained their CTPs before the extension of the scheme to trips across the country in April 2008, made twice as many bus trips a week as those of the same age who had obtained one after the national concession was introduced.

Mobility difficulties can also influence bus use by CTP holders (Humphrey and Scott, 2012). As Table 38 shows, only 5% of CTP holders who have difficulty using buses used them on a daily basis compared with 14% of those without mobility difficulties. 41% of with such difficulties used their passes less than once a year compared with 14% of those without such difficulties.

Table 38 Frequency of CTP use by older people by mobility difficulty in England in 2010

Mobility problem	At least daily	Less than daily, up to weekly	Less than weekly, up to monthly	Less than monthly, up to annually	Less than annually
Going out on foot	7	34	12	15	32
Using local buses	5	28	11	16	41
Getting in or out of a car	8	33	10	12	35
No difficulty with any of these	14	41	16	15	14
All	13	39	15	15	19

Source: Table 3.10 in Humphrey and Scott (2012)

As well as changes in the number of bus trips as a result of extensions to the CTP schemes, there have been some changes in the length of bus trips. Andrews (2011), in his surveys in south-west England, found that 28% of respondents reported making longer trips, and 9% said that they were making much longer trips, while 63% said that they were making trips of the same length. Passenger Focus (2009), reporting on surveys of 1000 CTP holders at bus stops in Bath, Birmingham, Scarborough and Newark-on-Trent, found that 15% of respondents were making more and longer local bus journeys than before the introduction of free national bus travel in 2008 and 11% were making more and longer bus journeys outside their local area than previously. In Scotland, 54% of respondents to a postal survey of

8000 holders of older and disabled people's CTPs said that they were making more trips by bus outside their local council area, with 32% saying that they did not, 6% never travelling outside their local area by bus and 2% saying that they did not know (Transport Scotland, 2009). They found that those making more trips outside their local area were more likely not to have access to a car, be in households with low incomes and to be younger. Prior to the introduction of the ENCTS, Hill et al (2003) looked at an area where, a few years previously, free travel was replaced by a flat fare and found a decrease in the number of bus trips of between 15% and 30% with the biggest reduction in short trips.

There is unpublished data from a PTE area that suggests that the impact of the introduction of free travel was to increase short and longer trips more than those of medium length, leading to little change in the overall average trip length.

4b The trip purposes for which CTPs are used

One objective of the concessionary travel pass scheme was to improve the access of older people to services such as health care and shops. Table 39 shows the purposes of trips made by bus by CTP holders and other people. It can be seen that the passes are used for shopping by 81% of pass holders compared with 60% of others. Visiting health care facilities would be included under 'Personal business'. This type of trips has been made by 34% of pass holders, compared with 20% of those who do not have a pass.

Table 39 Purposes of trips made by bus in the past 12 months in 2013 (% of bus users in each category making each type of trip)

	Concessionary pass holders	Non concessionary pass holders
Shopping	81	60
Personal business	34	20
Visiting friends/relatives	31	29
Days out (e.g. visits)	20	21
Other leisure trips	12	14
To/from work	8	30
To/from holiday	6	11
Company business	2	5
To/from school/college/university (not accompanying children)	0	10
To/from school/college/university (accompanying children)	0	5
Other	8	4

Source: Table ATT0103 in Department for Transport (2013c)

The purposes for which CTPs are used have also been examined in a number of other studies. The exact information varies, partly because of the nature of the survey. In surveys conducted in the course of a journey, on a bus or at a bus stop for example, the purpose for that trip is established, and so the figures produced for the number of trips for each purpose usually sum to 100% over all the trips surveyed. In data collected during interviews the respondents are usually asked to state all trip

purposes for which they use their passes, so the results are expressed in terms of the percentage of CTP holders who use their passes for each trip purpose. Because of the variety of ways in which the figures can be expressed, it is difficult to obtain a clear consensus on the scale of use of CTPs for each purpose. It is, however, possible to establish the ranking of the purposes from each survey (which trip purpose are CTPs used for most, which one second most, and so on). It should be noted that only one of the surveys covers the whole of Great Britain and some are very localised, and so it would not be expected that the surveys would all give the same results: the spectrum of trip purposes that CTPs are used for depends on the geography of the area, the available opportunities and the nature of the local bus service. It is, however, of interest to see which types of trip are most popular. Table 40 shows the rankings of trip purposes from ten studies. It should be noted that, in addition, Baker and White (2010) in their study in Salisbury and the surrounding area, found that 'food shopping' was the main trip purpose and Rye and Mykura (2009) found that 'shopping' was the most popular reason for use of CTPs in Edinburgh.

Notwithstanding the caveats mentioned above, it is possible to draw some conclusions from Table 40. The most popular use of CTPs is for shopping. The second most popular purpose is probably various forms of social and leisure trips. This heading covers a variety of types of trips, including visiting friends and making day trips. Many such trips may include some shopping. Another reason that appears on most of the lists is medical, which includes visiting the doctor, hospitals and clinics. A fourth reason, which generally comes below the three reasons already mentioned, is employment. The reasons are fairly similar to those for the use of the bus by whole population, as shown in Table 39.

4c The impact of CTPs on modal usage

One impact of CTPs may be the effect on the usage on other modes. In particular, they may reduce car usage.

Transport Scotland (2009) examined the effects on car usage as a result of the introduction of free bus travel across the whole of Scotland and found that 43% of respondents were travelling by car less, 27% the same and 2% more. A control group in north-east England was used for comparison (this was prior to the introduction of free bus travel across the whole of England). This showed that 21% were travelling by car less, 7% more and 39% the same. This suggests that the introduction of a nationwide free bus travel in Scotland reduced car use. The survey also asked whether respondents had decided not to own or use a car since obtaining a CTP for national travel. 3% said that they had, but, they would have also have aged over the period. This effect is illustrated by considering the effects by age group, which varied from 2% by those aged 60 to 64 and 5% for those aged over 80. This suggests that CTPs cause a small reduction in car ownership.

Earlier, another Scotland-wide study examined the effects of introducing free local bus travel in Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2004b). 24% of those surveyed said that they were using their cars less often, 7% more often and 40% the same (and 30% never used a car). Similarly, there was a 20% reduction in the number of lifts received from friends, with 7% receiving more, 42% the same and 31% never receiving lifts.

Table 40 Rankings of the trip purposes that CTPs are used for, taken from various surveys

Author	Andrews (2011)	Bonsall and Dunkerley (1997)	Department for Transport (2013c)	Hirst and Harrop (2011)	Humphrey and Scott (2012)	Ling and Howcroft (2007)	Passenger Focus (2009)	Scottish Executive (2004a)	Scottish Executive (2004b)	Transport Scotland (2009)
Method	On-bus interview	Postal SCQ	Home interviews	SCQs at five locations	Analysis of NTS	On-vehicle interviews	Bus stop interviews	Bus stop interviews	Postal SCQ	Postal SCQ
Area / Rank	SW England	London	Great Britain	Manchester	England	Manchester	Birmingham, Bath, Scarborough, Newark-on-Trent	Scotland	Scotland	Scotland
1	Shopping	Shops	Shopping	Shopping	Shopping	Leisure and recreational facilities including non-food shopping	Shopping	Shopping	Shopping	Shops
2	Social reasons	Other	Personal business	Leisure/ recreation	Leisure	Visiting friends and relatives	Visiting friends/relatives	Meeting people	Social	Day trip
3	Other	Various	Visiting friends and relatives	Medical appointment	Work/ education	Food shopping	Accessing sport, leisure and recreation	Recreation / leisure	Medical/ health	Medical care
4	Work	Medical	Days out	Visiting friends and family	Medical		Holidays	Medical appointment	Personal business	Visiting family
5	Medical	Work	Other leisure trips	Education/ escort to education	Escort		Days out/ places of interest/ sightseeing	Personal business	Just for the ride	Visiting friends
6	Education		Work	Work			Accessing healthcare	Other purpose	Other	Airport or train
7			Other	Business			Other	Getting to/from work	Work	Holiday
8			Holiday	Other			Commuting/ business travel	Travel during work	Education	Work
9			Company business							Elsewhere

Note: SCQ means self-completion questionnaire; for Humphrey and Scott (2012) return trips to home have been excluded.

Andrews (2011), in his study in south-west England, found that 38% of the trips surveyed would have been made by car, of which 27% would have been as car drivers and 11% as car passengers. 37% of the trips would have been as paid bus journeys, and 16% would not have been made. He also found that 7% of older people reported planning to give up car ownership as a result of the CTP (Andrews, 2012b).

Passenger Focus (2009) looked at the previous mode that was used for trips using CTPs outside the local area. 35% trips were made by car: 18% as drivers and 17% as passengers.

Rye and Mykura (2009) found that 20% of the extra trips being made by bus in Edinburgh as a result of obtaining a CTP would have been made by car.

In Manchester, Ling and Howcroft (2007) asked whether the trip being undertaken when the survey was carried out would have been made on that mode if free concessionary fares had not been introduced. 3% of bus trips, 38% of light rail and 22% of rail trips would not have been made. Of the light rail trips, 22% would have been by car and 42% of the train trips would have been by car. (The figure is not given for bus trips, but the number would have been small because only 3% of the trips by bus would not have been made).

It is not possible to say exactly what the impact of CTPs has been on car usage from these surveys because the questions were asked in different ways and the form of the concession varied according to when and where the survey was carried out. It does seem reasonably clear that offering CTPs has had an impact on car usage. A figure of about 20% of the bus trips being made using CTPs having otherwise been driven by car seems to be a rough (and fairly conservative) estimate, based on the reports cited above. Using this assumption, it is possible to estimate the effects CTPs have on the number of car trips. According to Table NTS0601 in Department for Transport (2013a) people in Britain made 954 trips per head per annum in 2012. With a population of 61.85 million according to the Office of National Statistics (2013), this implies that 59,004 million trips were made in Britain in 2012. According to Table NTS0301 in Department for Transport (2013a), 64% of trips in Great Britain were by car in 2012, implying a total of 37,763 million person trips by car. Table BUS0105 in Department for Transport (2013b) shows that 1771 million concessionary bus journeys were made in Great Britain in 2012/13. If the estimate of 20% of bus trips by CTP being diverted from car is correct, this implies that 354.7 million bus trips would otherwise have been by car. Since 354.7 million divided by 37,763 million is about 9.4×10^{-3}, this suggests that the use of CTPs reduces the number of person trips by car in Britain by about 1%. The reduction in traffic on the road would be less because some people would have been travelling as car passengers, but in some cases, the trips would have been made for the benefit of the CTP holders (for example, to take them shopping or to their GP), and so use of the CTP would remove the need for that car trip. Hence the reduction in the number of vehicle trips by car is probably slightly under 1% (but would be greater if the assumption of a diversion of 20% of bus trips from car because of CTPs is too low).

Another mode which has interactions with bus travel is walking. The issue is fairly complicated because it is possible that some people, when offered the opportunity to travel by bus for free, will switch from walking to bus use for short trips. On the other

hand, most bus trips include an element of walking to and from the bus stop, so by making more trips by bus, some people may be walking more. This question was addressed explicitly by Transport Scotland (2009) which asked respondents whether they walked more, less or the same as the result of obtaining a CTP for the whole of Scotland. 17% said they walked more, 14% said they walked less and 63% said they walked the same amount. Interestingly, there was a clear difference with age, as shown in Table 41. It can be seen that the younger old walked more and the older people walked less. It should be borne in mind that the intervention being examined was the introduction of the national scheme of concessionary travel and that local bus travel was free to CTP holder before the national scheme was introduced. The younger people may have been making more bus trips which involved walking while the reduction for older people may reflect the increase in the take-up rate so that more very elderly people were taking buses for short trips because travel was free. The same issue was examined in terms of access to a car and it was found that the group which claimed to have increased its walking most was the car owners while those without access to a car were least likely to have walked more and most likely to have walked less (the latter group is also likely to contain many very elderly people, so this may be partly linked to the previous point about age).

Table 41 Changes in walking by age as a result of the introduction of the national CTP scheme in Scotland.

Age	% walking more	% walking less	% walking the same
60-64	25	11	61
65-69	19	12	66
70-74	18	13	64
75-79	11	13	67
80+	8	21	60
Overall	17	14	63

Source: Tables 6-15 and 6-16 in Transport Scotland (2009)

In an earlier nationwide survey in Scotland, the Scottish Executive (2004b) found that 10% said that they walked more as the result of the introduction of free local bus travel and 16% said that they walked less, with 55% saying that they walked the same amount and 19% saying they never walked. This was free local travel so the opportunity to switch from walking to bus for very short trips may be the dominant effect here.

Another study in Scotland was the work by Rye and Mykura (2009) in Edinburgh who found that 40% of the extra bus trips being made because of free travel would have been walked. As indicated above, the extra bus trips would probably all have included an element of walking. Passenger Focus (2009) considered the impact of the nationwide scheme in England on non-local trips and found that none of the trips surveyed would have been walked (or they were within the 2% ‘other’ category).

Coronini-Cronberg et al (2012) analysed NTS data for England for 2005-2008 and found that older people in England with a free bus pass seem more likely to use active travel (walking and cycling) and buses, and to undertake regular walking than those without, regardless of their socio-economic status.

Kelly (2011) used an econometric analysis of National Travel Survey data to examine the impact of the introduction of free bus travel for older people in England and showed that it led to more walking as part of bus trips and found no substitution of bus travel for walking trips.

The overall impact of CTPs on walking is difficult to determine because of the two effects: substituting short bus trips for walking trips and walking more as part of an increase in the number of bus trips. It partly depends on the nature of the concession being examined and on the age of the people being considered. The implications are discussed in more detail below when the health benefits of CTPs are examined.

The implications of CTPs for modes other than car and walking are not considered very much in the studies because the impacts are unlikely to be large or have significant policy implications.

5 The impacts of CTPs on the lives of older and disabled people

5a The impacts of CTPs on the health of older and disabled people

There are several ways in which CTPs can improve the health of older and disabled people: through better access to health facilities, through providing more exercise by increasing walking and through better mental health by offering opportunities for more social interaction which might help to reduce depression, for example.

As shown in Table 35, access to medical facilities was one of the purposes for which CTP are used. None of the studies showed how the CTP holders would have reached the medical facilities if they did not have CTPs. Given the importance of visits to hospitals and the doctor, it seems likely that many of them would have paid to travel by bus if that were the best way to travel. One issue is the time of appointments which are often early in the morning. The ENCTS does not allow travel before 9.30 am, although some local schemes do so. Hirst and Harrop (2011) looked at the introduction of full bus fares before 9.30 am in Manchester and reported that 23% of respondents said that it would have an impact on attendance at health appointments while 36% said that they would not be affected. The Audit Commission (2003) discussed the issue of early morning hospital appointments and reported that METRO, the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (PTE), was discussing with health providers the scheduling of appointments later in the day and setting up more demand-responsive services to hospitals and health centres.

The effects of the use of the bus on obesity amongst those aged 60 and over was examined by Webb et al (2012) who analysed the English Longitudinal Survey of Ageing (ELSA) to look at local bus travel in 2006 using logistic regression on the population eligible for bus passes (those aged 60+) compared with those aged 50-60 to predict the use of public transport. ELSA uses a sample of over 11,000 people aged 50 and over from the Health Survey of England. The survey was carried out in 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008 and in each wave, questions were asked about public transport usage. The 2004 and 2008 waves included visits by nurses who measured the height, weight and waist circumference of the participants which allowed BMI (body mass index) to be calculated from their height and weight. (The greater a person's weight relative to his or her height, the higher the value of their BMI, so an increase in BMI is regarded as a sign of an increased risk to health). The participants

were classified as eligible or non-eligible for free local bus travel (introduced on 1 April 2006) according their age at the time of the interview in 2006 and 2008. Those who did not use public transport in 2004 and 2008 had a mean increase of 0.23 kg/m^2 in their BMI over the period 2004-8 while those who went from being non-users to users did not have a significant increase. There were similar increases to that for non-users for those who were users of public transport in both years and those who went from being users to non-users. All groups showed increases over time in waist circumference but the increases were lowest for those who went from being non-users of buses to users (with very similar values for those who went the other way). They concluded that older people who used public transport were less likely to be obese and less likely to become obese than those who did not.

The work by Coronini-Cronberg et al (2012), discussed in Section 4c, suggested that having a bus pass is correlated with walking three or more times a week, which may well be sufficient to contribute positively to health.

Green et al (2014) carried out 47 interviews with older people in London and suggested holders of the pass may enabled them to undertake 'valued' walking to be undertaking such as walking in the park which was perceived as healthy, with bus travel replacing walking trips which were perceived as less valuable, such as walking to distance shops or services.

As well as using National Travel Survey data to show that the introduction of free bus travel has increased the volume of walking by older people, as discussed in Section 4c, Kelly (2011) examined Sport England's Active People Survey (APS). She found no evidence that providing free public transport increased participation in sport. In contrast, Hirst and Harrop (2011) found from their survey of older people in Manchester that respondents reported the use of their CTPs to attend various physical-health oriented recreation and leisure activities.

The survey reported in Transport Scotland (2009) asked respondents to rate the statement 'Scotland-wide free bus travel for older and disabled people has given me a more active lifestyle' on a scale of one to ten where one implied 'Strongly disagree' and ten implied 'Strongly agree'. Over 900 of the 2069 respondents gave a rating of 10, and about 70% rated the statement between 6 and 10, implying that they agreed with the statement to a greater or lesser extent. The report also states that the qualitative analysis showed that the national concessionary travel scheme encouraged more active lifestyles amongst elderly and disabled people. The respondents also noted that there were mental health benefits from being out more and interacting with other people. A few respondents said that they would feel 'housebound' if they could not use their passes. Some of those who did not use their passes regularly expressed the view that having the pass helped to prevent them feeling trapped at home. A respondent with learning difficulties was able to use the bus as a result of a result of having a CTP because he or she was unable to manage money. The respondent was able to obtain a supported employment post and travel on the bus independently.

Whitley and Prince (2005) carried out a two-year qualitative study using in-depth interviews, focus groups and participant observation in the Gospel Oak neighbourhood in North London to examine the relationship between the fear of crime and mental health, and to assess the role that interventions may play in

helping to overcome negative impacts arising from this fear. They found that, for residents with a common mental disorder, which is one characterised by anxiety and depressive symptoms, the Freedom Pass, the CTP scheme in London, allowed them to access services, facilities and social support outside the neighbourhood which appeared to ameliorate some of the symptoms of their condition and prevent deterioration.

5b The impacts on the inclusion of older and disabled people into society

Reducing social isolation was mentioned as an objective of CTPs in the 1998 Transport White Paper (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 1998), while tackling social exclusion was suggested in the 2006 Budget speech (HM Treasury, 2006). Social isolation is about interacting with other people in the community: the Health White Paper 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People' (Department of Health, 2010) says, in Paragraph 1.41:

> "*Maintaining social networks, being part of a community and staying active all benefit health and wellbeing in later life*".

Travel is necessary in order to interact with other people, so the logic of providing CTPs is that, by reducing the cost, more older and disabled people are able to meet one another. Social exclusion is a difficult concept to define, but it is concerned with a perception of feeling part of society. Church et al. (2000) say that social exclusion implies that people or households are not just poor, but that they have additionally lost the ability to connect with many of the jobs, services, and facilities that they need to participate fully in society. For CTPs to tackle social exclusion they need to help provide these connections.

Andrews et al (2012) argue that holding a CTP can help to address isolation in later life by facilitating on-bus interaction, offering access to informal support networks and social engagement, and releasing funds that would have been used to pay bus fares to pay for socially-oriented activities, such as purchasing a cup of tea with friends. Andrews (2012b) found that some respondents in his surveys reported specifically using the bus to meet people and alleviate loneliness and boredom, and that they would have made fewer such bus trips if they had had to pay for the trip.

Whitley and Prince (2005), in their study in Gospel Oak in North London, found that many respondents remarked that the local transport system allowed them to visit family and friends, access appropriate services and to attend community activities, particularly those entitled to a Freedom Pass. Some of them praised the pass as it enabled them to maintain their social and economic involvement in society.

Jones et al (2013) examined the health and wellbeing impacts of concessionary travel on people aged 60 and older as part of a larger study on the public health implications of concessionary travel for young people. They conducted three focus groups with older people living in London and interviewed 46 of them to discuss their everyday travel experiences. They found that some respondents saw the pass in terms of societal belonging, reflecting recognition of their contribution to society over the course of their lives, and a positive affirmation of social worth and therefore having potentially beneficial effects on wellbeing through the meaning attached to the entitlement to the pass. They also argue (Green et al, 2014) that the pass was a

major and non-stigmatising defence against social isolation, particularly for those who live alone. In some cases, this meant enjoying the spectacle of interaction by others and seeing life going on. However, a very small number of respondents felt discomfort at times in the course of using the pass because of their perceptions of the attitudes of other people. This suggests that positive perceptions of the entitlement to the pass by other people can be crucial to the health-promoting effects of the pass.

Hirst and Harrop (2011) found that 74% of the respondents in their survey in Manchester said that their CTPs had enabled them to participate in new activities or visit new places, and that 35% of these newly generated trips were for leisure and social reasons including visits to family and friends.

As mentioned above, in the focus groups conducted as part of the research for Transport Scotland (2009), some respondents said that they would feel 'housebound' if they could not use their passes. Some of those who did not use their passes regularly expressed the view that having the pass helped to prevent them feeling trapped at home and one respondent with learning difficulties reporting being able to use a CTP to travel independently to a job and so be more included in society.

5c The impacts on the transition to ceasing to drive by older people

Musselwhite and Haddad (2010) examined the travel needs of older people by conducting three focus groups with 26 current car drivers aged 68 to 90 years old and then interviews with 31 older ex-drivers aged 65 to 92 years old. They found that ceasing to drive caused many changes in travel behaviour, including anxiety about being able to go shopping and to hospital, and to attend doctors' surgeries, with respondents mentioning feelings of depression and annoyance, particularly amongst those 'forced' to give up driving following advice from others or a driving incident. Isolation and exclusion from society were mentioned as resulting feelings.

As indicated above, the holding of a CTP can help to address some of these issues. Andrews (2012a), in his surveys and focus groups, found evidence that holding a CTP helped ease the transition from being a driver to not being one, particularly for those who held a CTP before they ceased to drive. It meant that they could gradually reduce their car use by giving up driving on some of the journeys that were found to be increasingly difficult such as driving at night, in winter and in congested areas, while using the car for other journeys. Hill et al (2009), who undertook 91 in-depth interviews with people aged 65 to 84 living in central England, found that some car drivers had increased their bus use since obtaining a CTP and that it enabled those with worries about driving to continue to be mobile.

This suggests that the provision of CTPs can help address some of the issues about the travel needs of older people identified by Musselwhite and Haddad (2010).

5d The impacts of CTPs on access to services for older and disabled people

The positive impact of holding a CTP on access to medical services was discussed in Sections 4b and 5a (with the problem of early appointments when CTPs cannot be used in many areas highlighted).

Kelly (2011) used the ELSA data to examine the impact of offering CTPs to older people on access to services (Post Offices and general practitioners (GPs)). She found a 6.1% increase in the probability of reporting that access to Post Offices was very easy and a 3.9% increase for access to GPs.

5e The impacts on the quality of life of older and disabled people

Sections 5a to 5d above have cited evidence on various ways in which the holding of a CTP can help improve the quality of life of older and disabled people. Several of the studies found evidence of respondents saying that holding a CTP had improved their quality of life in general. Andrews (2011) in his surveys in SW England found 74% of respondents stating that having a pass had improved their quality of life. Rye and Mykura (2009) found 60% of their respondents in Edinburgh saying the same thing. Hirst and Harrop (2011) found 74% of their respondents in Manchester saying that having a pass enabled them to engage in new pursuits and visit new places. Green et al (2014) found that the pass was experienced as life-enhancing by almost all the respondents in their survey. Andrews et al (2012) found evidence of a growth in 'buspass tourism' with many older people visiting new places as a result of having a CTP. Jones et al (2013), in their study of CTP holders in London, argue that the act of entitlement to a pass can influence feelings of wellbeing.

6 The achievement of social objectives by CTPs

In this section the extent to which the policy of offering concessionary travel to older people has been successful will be considered.

In the 1998 White Paper it was stated that the scheme would:

> "… *enable elderly people, especially those on low incomes, to continue to use public transport and to use it more often, improving their access to a range of basic necessities such as health care and shops and reducing social isolation".*

It was shown in Section 3 that older people use the bus more than they did before they received the bus pass, on average. This does not necessarily mean that they use the bus more than they would have had they not received the pass because, for many people, obtaining a CTP coincides with retirement which would be associated with changes in travel patterns, such as ceasing to travel to work. However, the research by Andrews (2012b) suggesting that some bus trips would not have been made without the CTP, and the evidence from NTS shown in Table 22 where 54% of respondents said they use the bus more since receiving a CTP (and only 10% said they use it less) mean that it is reasonable to deduce that public transport is being used more as a result of the CTP. Given that most CTP holders use their passes to access shopping, this suggests that access to shops and other services have improved. It is difficult to measure social isolation, but there is anecdotal information, indicated in Section 5b, that the CTP has provided opportunities for social engagement.

The only social objective outlined in the 2005 Budget Statement was:

> "… *it should also help approximately 54 per cent of pensioner households who do not have a car to travel freely in their local area".*

There are trips being made that would not otherwise have been made, as Andrews (2012b) found, and it is likely that some of these are being made by those who do not have a car. It should, however, be borne in mind that many people live in areas that are not well served by buses: providing a pass that offers free travel on local buses does not help those with no buses.

The 2007 Budget Statement said that extending the CTP to free bus travel across the country would help in:

> "… *tackling social exclusion and maintaining well-being"*.

The evidence discussed in Section 5, suggests that the CTP does seem to have achieved this. However, some analysts have been cautious in their interpretations of the evidence. Oxera (2009) points out that, while the evidence suggests that providing concessionary travel has helped to reduce social exclusion, the benefits it provides to those on higher incomes and with access to cars, means that the scheme is targeted too widely and therefore may not provide value for money. Last (2010c) in his analysis of smartcard data in Lancashire, found that about half the passholders made no trips with their passes in the five-week period being studied and that 2.4% of passholders accounted for 25% of local concessionary bus trips. He argues that a large amount of public money is associated with travel by a very small proportion of the targeted population and that this is probably partly due to the variability in the availability of high quality bus services. He argues that this raises questions about the effectiveness of the policy of offering CTPs as a tool for reducing social exclusion and the equity implications of the distribution of subsidy.

Overall, it does seem that the objectives implicit in the statements announcing the initiatives have been met to some extent at least. It would require a large survey of those with passes and a similar population without passes to identify differences in travel behaviour brought about by the passes, but this cannot be done because it is a universal benefit and so everyone in Britain over the state pension age is entitled to have one.

There have been reviews of the success of the National Concessionary Travel scheme in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2009; Transport Scotland, 2009). Both of these sources quote the following as the objectives for the scheme:

> *"To:*
> - *"Allow older and disabled people (especially those on low incomes) improved access to services, facilities and social networks by 'free' scheduled bus services; and so promote social inclusion;*
> - *"Improve health by promoting a more active lifestyle for the elderly and disabled;*
> - *"Remove the restrictions of the previous local off-peak concessionary fare scheme which produced differences in access to facilities in different areas of Scotland;*
> - *"Promote modal shift from private car to public transport;*
> - *"Maintain a 'no better, no worse off' position for bus operators with a standard reimbursement rate;*

- *"Provide opportunity for improvements to public transport (e.g. assist development of multi-operator ticketing; use of improved electronic ticket machine technology; and reduce the number of fraudulent journeys made);*
- *"Facilitate a more effective administration of the system with adoption of the standard reimbursement rate and shift of operational responsibility from local authorities to Transport Scotland; and*
- *"Provide a stimulus to the introduction of SMARTCARD".*

The first objective is similar to those discussed above for the scheme in England. The second introduces the idea of improving health through more active lifestyles. The third was to improve equity for those living in different areas who previously had different schemes and the fourth was to encourage a shift from the private car to public transport. The other objectives are to do with operational aspects of the scheme rather than the wellbeing of older and disabled people. The evidence in Section 5a, 5b and 5d suggests that CTPs have had a positive impact on the health, social inclusion and access to service of older and disabled people respectively, and it was shown in Section 4c that there has been an impact on modal share.

However, the Auditor General for Scotland has examined the scheme in Scotland (Audit Scotland, 2010) and says that there is no evidence that these objectives were in place when the scheme was introduced in 2006 and that neither the Scottish Government nor Transport Scotland can explain how these objectives were established nor which objectives were the priorities. The report summarises the evidence in Transport Scotland (2009) against the objectives listed above in a table. Table 40 shows the evidence for the first four objectives (as explained above, the other four are not relevant to this report).

Whilst the summaries of the impacts of the NCT shown in Table 42 are a fair reflection of the evidence provided in Transport Scotland (2009) it should be borne in mind that the scheme in Scotland, like that in England, has evolved over time, with the scheme being extended from a variety of local schemes to free off peak travel on local buses in 2002, and then to free buses all day for the whole of Scotland in 2006. Hence it is not possible to compare the present situation of comprehensive free bus travel with that of no concessionary travel. It is only possible to infer the impacts from the type of evidence presented in Section 5 of this report.

7 The wider benefits of CTPs

The various impacts of CTPs discussed in Section 5 all represent benefits that having a CTP have brought to the lives of older and disabled people. Many of these also represent benefits to wider society because if older and disabled people are able to reach services and facilities independently by using their passes, this means that others, for example, family members or local authorities, do not have to take them. Whilst it would probably be possible to estimate the savings to local authorities of not having to provide some transport services because of the use of CTPs, it would probably not be possible to put a value on the improvements to well-being that CTPs have brought to many people by reducing feelings of social exclusion and improvements to the quality of life. The evidence that CTPs do induce these perceptions is fairly widespread in the literature.

There are some benefits to the wider community of providing CTPs. Hirst and Harrop (2011) found a number of their respondents in Manchester using their passes for voluntary work. Andrews (2012a) found examples of how having a CTP helped to promote pass holder participation in society, such as working in the voluntary sector (some people surveyed had taken up voluntary posts on the basis they did not have to pay to get there or have the embarrassment of asking the charity for reimbursement of the travelling expenses, and they could use their CTPs to work more flexibly such as going home for lunch and running errands by bus), and giving informal voluntary help to others including grandparents taking children to school (and therefore engaging in social interaction and being given a greater sense of purpose in life).

Table 42 The summary in Audit Scotland (2010) for the achievement of the first four objectives for the Scottish NCT scheme.

Objectives	Conclusions of Transport Scotland's evaluation
Allow older and disabled people (especially those on low incomes) improved access to services, facilities and social networks by 'free' scheduled bus services; and so promote social inclusion.	NCT is supporting a high proportion of trips to access services, facilities and social networks that would have taken place anyway. Take-up and usage of NCT is higher among those in less well off areas. However, since the introduction of NCT, take-up of concessionary passes has increased most among the most affluent and those in employment.
Improve health by promoting a more active lifestyle for the elderly and disabled.	NCT cardholders are walking more than they previously did. However, non-NCT users are also walking more. It is not clear to what extent NCT has contributed to this increase in activity.
Remove the restrictions of the previous local off peak concessionary fare schemes that produced differences in access to facilities in different areas of Scotland.	Transport Scotland's evaluation did not consider this objective. However, NCT has removed the restrictions and variation that existed for concessionary bus travel under the previous arrangements. There is still variation in terms of rail, ferry and other local concessionary travel.
Promote shift from private car use to public transport.	NCT has promoted a shift from private car to bus among NCT users regardless of income or age. The research has been unable to identify the extent to which this is due to NCT or other wider factors such as older people being less willing to drive on unfamiliar roads or into busy town centres.

Source: Appendix 2 of Audit Scotland (2010).

Rayner (2011) analysed over 3000 email responses from older people in London about their use of their CTPs. From these he identified the range of uses shown in Table 43. Whilst this was not a representative sample and the public transport

opportunities are greater in London than elsewhere in Britain, it does indicate the range of uses of CTPs including voluntary work. The WRVS (2011) has estimated the value of the socio-economic contributions of older people in the UK and states on page 5 that: “Our new research shows that every year, older volunteers each spend an average of over 100 hours ‘informally’ volunteering and more than 55 hours in formal volunteering roles”. It is not possible to establish how much the contribution to society of voluntary work is facilitated by the CTP system, but it is likely that it is quite significant.

Table 43 Use of CTPs in London based on over 3000 emails

Purpose	Numbers	Detailed purpose	Numbers
Spending money: directly contributing to the economy	2741 (45.2%)	Visiting museums, exhibitions, galleries, library visits etc.	964 (15.9%)
		Shopping, bank, Post Office	710 (11.7%)
		Eating out, coffee and tea	79 (1.3%)
		Organised social events (lunch clubs, arranged outings)	988 (16.3%)
Directly saving society money	1509 (24.9%)	Voluntary work (formal)	927 (15.3%)
		Voluntary work (informal) Child care/carer duties	467 (7.7%)
		Voluntary work (informal) Stakeholder groups, councils etc.	115 (1.9%)
Indirectly saving money by increasing general well-being, saving the need for NHS care, home visits etc.	1813 (29.9%)	Exercise (swimming, Tai Chi, yoga, walking, Ramblers etc.)	437 (7.2%)
		Attending educational courses, seminars and forums	279 (4.6%)
		Avoiding social exclusion (avoiding being housebound)	339 (5.6%)
		Visiting family and friends	673 (11.1%)
		Attending religious services	85 (1.4%)

Source: Rayner (2011)

PTEG (2012), which represents the Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) in the metropolitan areas, has carried out analysis that suggests that trips by concessionary passengers generate economic benefits of £670m per year in the PTE areas alone, which is more than twice the cost of the scheme in those areas. More recently, PTEG (2013) has estimated the benefits and costs of ENCTS. The summary figures are shown in Table 44. It can be seen that the greatest proportion of benefits accrue to users, particularly those who would have travelled without the concession (‘old users’). This relates to the equity impacts because older people tend to have higher levels of deprivation than the population at large. The estimated

benefits to new users at £69m greatly exceed the costs at £22m, implying a benefit-cost ratio exceeding 3.0. The benefits to other bus users, based on the improvement in bus service frequency, are estimated to be worth £27m. The other wider benefits of decongestion plus other externalities and the wider economic impacts come to £46m.The bus externalities and loss of indirect taxation, a total of £28m, have to be deducted from the benefits. This leaves a total net benefit of £377m. The costs of the revenue foregone and the extra capacity costs come to £254m, so this means that the overall benefit-cost ratio is 1.5 to 1.

Table 44 Welfare assessment of the English national concessionary travel scheme

	Benefits		Costs
Welfare gain to old users (transfer)	£232m	Reimbursement for revenue forgone	£232m
Welfare gain to new users	£69m	Reimbursement for additional capacity costs	£22m
Deadweight welfare loss	-£0.5m		
Decongestion and other externalities	£42m		
Wider economic impacts	£19m		
Welfare gains to other bus users	£27m		
Health benefits (equally split between users and government/society)	£16m		
Bus externalities	-£20m		
Indirect taxation	-£8m		
Total	£377m		£254m
Benefit- cost ratio	**1.5 : 1**		

Source: PTEG (2013)
Note: the assumptions and detailed workings are shown in the appendix of PTEG (2013)

There may be some benefits of providing CTPs to bus operations. PTEG (2013) argues that, because the reimbursement to operators includes an allowance for additional capacity that may be required to carry the additional trips being made, the increase in off-peak frequency may attract more fare-paying passengers, adding to further user and non-user benefits. Focus groups conducted for the Department for Transport (2001) suggested that offering free travel on public transport for older people would speed up the boarding process and reduce the incidence of bus drivers moving away before older people had sat down. In Manchester, the number of journeys on Ring & Ride fell by 4% because some users transferred to normal bus services with free fares, so the number of requests refused due to limited capacity fell from 15,600 in April-September 2005 to 12,400 in April to September 2006 (Ling and Howcroft, 2007).

8 The value of providing CTPs

It is clear from the evidence cited above that providing CTPs provide benefits to both the holders of the passes and to society as a whole. The value to the holders is

illustrated by Andrews (2011) who asked his focus group respondents to sort a set of benefits into order of preference, which produced the following ranking:

1. Free prescriptions
2. **Free bus pass**
3. TV licence
4. Winter fuel payment
5. Free swimming
6. Free mobility aids
7. Free bicycle.

Andrews (2011) argues that putting free prescriptions above the free bus pass reflects the hierarchy of travel needs and experiences identified by Musselwhite and Haddad (2010) which showed that more basic needs tend to be fulfilled before higher needs can be realised.

Passenger Focus (2009) asked their survey respondents whether they felt it was right that elderly and disabled people were provided with free off-peak bus travel throughout England. 95% of the respondents (96% of pass holders and 94% of non-pass holders) thought that it was right that these people receive free bus travel throughout England, while just 4% did not think it was right, and 1% did not know. In the focus group work in that study, most respondents also thought it right that free travel is provided, but a small number of people felt that passes for older people should be made available at retirement rather than at the age of 60, which was the eligible age at the time of the survey, with some of these thinking that the availability should be means tested.

Members of focus groups surveyed in Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2004b) were asked to put a monetary value on the pass. Of those who were able to do so, the estimates ranged from £4 to £30 per week depending on the pattern of trips. The participants felt that the pass was a right that they had earned through paying tax over the years. Hirst and Harrop (2011) asked respondents how much they would be able to pay if a fare were introduced for CTP holders. 11% said that they would not pay anything, 46% said that would be able to pay 50p-£1 per trip and 12% said that they could pay half-fare or £1-£2 per day. (These values do not necessarily reflect the value that they put on the trips, because the values were influenced by what they could afford).

The cost of providing free fares is illustrated in the case of Manchester where Ling and Howcroft (2007) estimated that the introduction of free fares resulted in an increase in the concessionary reimbursement payments in the area and that was likely to result in a need to increase the concessionary bus fare before 9.30 am Monday to Friday from 50p to 70p. Nowadays, CTP holders have to pay full fares before 9.30 am (Transport for Greater Manchester, 2012). The Department for Transport (2012b) acknowledges that the introduction of the national scheme has led to the loss of some local discretionary extensions to the scheme, such as some free peak-time bus travel.

In his focus group work, Andrews (2011) found that some pass holders did not realise that there was a cost associated with CTPs, assuming that they were taking

seats on buses that would otherwise be empty while others thought that they were helping to keep bus companies in business.

Tentative welfare calculations by Kelly (2011) suggested that introducing free for older people generated a net welfare gain to society.

Rye and Carreno (2008) argue that the systems for concessionary fare reimbursement to bus operators in Scotland and Wales over-reimburse them.

9 The future

Despite the obvious political risks, both politicians and policy advisers are increasingly willing to be seen to question the spending priority that is given to concessionary travel. The Deputy Prime Minister has mused on the subject (Kirkup, 2011), and both right and left leaning think tanks (Institute of Directors and the TaxPayers' Alliance, 2009; Social Market Foundation, 2012) have suggested either abolition of the concessionary scheme completely, or significant reductions in its generosity.

PTEG (2012) has argued that other services that the PTEs fund including evening and weekend services supported by the PTEs, concessions for children and young people and services specifically for older and disabled people such as dial-a-ride, will have to be cut unless extra funding is received from central government to help cover the cost of reimbursing bus operators for carrying holders of CTPs for older and disabled people.

In a more recent report, PTEG (2013) has argued that because bus networks tend to operate with significant proportions of empty capacity after the morning peak and that those travelling with CTPs tend to travel after that, the generated passengers are carried at very low marginal cost (about 10p-15p typically). It is then argued that this means that the bulk of the cost of the scheme arises as a result of reimbursement for revenue foregone rather than the cost of carrying the generated traffic.

Oxera (2009) argues that the scheme in England does not offer good value for money because the scheme is not well targeted. Oxera (2009) also argues that the cost of the scheme is high, partly because of the administrative arrangements, but mainly because many of the beneficiaries have access to a car or have sufficient income not to need their travel to be free. It also argues that the modal shift that is induced would be off peak when congestion is lower and that additional journeys may be generated. It is suggested that the number of exemptions should be increased to reduce access to free bus travel by those with a car available so that the savings can be targeted better towards those in greater need. Oxera (2009) also points out that, because many passholders have poor facilities at bus stops and on buses, additional investment would be required in order to improve take-up by those who could benefit from the scheme. The Local Government Association, in its response to the Oxera (2009), report (which is incorporated into the report) sees the recommendation to target free travel more closely towards locally prioritised concessions as problematic. This is because it could suggest ending the current scheme, which is very popular, and because means testing would lead to a reduction in the take up of the scheme and increase the administrative burden.

Given the value put on CTPs by their holders, the large number of people who hold them and the fact that the vast majority are voters, it would be difficult to make changes that were seen as an attack on an existing benefit. Moreover, since in England the right to free bus travel is enshrined in primary legislation, any significant reduction in its generosity (such as introducing charges for the pass, limiting the value of travel that can be made by exploiting the smart technology within the pass, or reintroducing a payment for each trip) would require substantial investment of political capital to push forward an unpopular measure.

The age for eligibility will be increased over time in England in line with the rise in the female state pension age, but since this mirrors the increasing longevity of the population it is not likely to lead to a significant reduction in the cost of providing concessionary travel. In addition, Passenger Focus (2009) found that almost as many of those under 60 as those over 60 thought that it was right that people aged 60 and over should be provided with free off-peak bus travel perhaps reflecting the fact that they would benefit from the concession at some time in the future or because they knew someone who enjoyed the benefits already.

Passenger Focus (2009) examined some possible changes to the CTP scheme in future in terms of the views of both pass-holders and non-holders which are summarised in Table 45. The strongest collective view was disagreement that the concession should be reduced from free travel to half-price travel with 86% of pass-holders disagreeing with the statement and 77% of non-pass-holders doing so. Nearly as strong was the view that the scheme should be extended to cover all types of public transport e.g. train, tram and long distance coach travel, with 84% of pass-holders and 76% of non-pass-holders agreeing. Next in strength in feeling was disagreement with the statement that the concession should be restricted to bus routes and travel times that are less busy. The statement that the concession should be extended to cover travel by bus at all times of day, including the morning peak, was agreed with by more people than disagreed with it, but generated a more balanced response. In all cases the strength of feeling to maintain or extend the benefits of the scheme was higher amongst pass-holders than non-pass-holders but the differences were fairly small.

Table 45 Views on possible changes to CTP schemes (%)

	Pass-holders			Non-pass-holders		
	Agree	Disagree	Other	Agree	Disagree	Other
The concession should be restricted to bus routes and travel times that are less busy	28	64	9	32	57	11
The concession should be reduced so older and disabled passengers pay half fare rather than travelling for free	8	86	5	13	77	10
The concession should be extended to cover travel by bus at all times of day, including the morning peak	59	34	7	56	31	12
The eligibility criteria for the scheme should be extended to cover all types of public transport e.g. train, tram and long distance coach travel	84	10	6	76	13	11

Source: Passenger Focus (2009)

A possible extension of the scheme would be to allow CTP holders to use their passes to obtain a discount on rail travel. Currently those aged 60 plus and disabled people can purchase a card allowing a one third discount off many rail tickets, at a cost of £28 a year. Currently an experiment is being carried out for the Department for Transport on two test routes that allow CTP holders to use their passes to obtain a discount on rail travel. The scheme is being operated by First Great Western and applies to standard off-peak fares between Worcester and Swindon via Stroud, and between Westbury and Weymouth (Department for Transport, 2012c).

One advance that could be made would be the extension of smartcard technology. This would facilitate the collection of more accurate data about usage and would allow the introduction of more specific tailoring of passes to the characteristics of the pass-holder, if desired. It would also be possible to use the technology to give each person a limit on the number of bus trips they could make over a period of time. However, as the Scottish Government (2009) points out, those who do not own cars make more trips by bus, and so are more likely to reach the limit. They are also likely to have lower incomes. Hence this might mean that the scheme would be less socially inclusive.

It is clear that concessionary travel is perceived to have had a large and positive impact on many older and disabled people, and that it is possible to identify a range of personal, social and community benefits that free travel facilitates. However, the national scale of these benefits is not known, nor is much known about older and disabled people who do not use the scheme. In the absence of a systematic evaluation of these benefits on a national scale, it is impossible to form a balanced, objective view about the extent to which the costs are outweighed by the benefits, or not. If national spending priorities are such as to require a reduction in the money spent on concessionary travel, there is no framework through which alternative options can be evaluated, and no basis for a properly informed debate.

10 Further research

Whilst this report has shown a range of impacts of CTPs based on the available evidence, it is clear that there are many unanswered questions.

Most of the research reported here was of limited scope and based on modest sample surveys, designed to maximize the amount of information obtained with the resources available. Generally, they were not able to use fully representative random samples, so it is difficult to generalise the results to the whole population. Also, because the concessions were introduced incrementally over time, it was not possible to use before and after surveys to look at the impact of the introduction of free travel passes. Because of temporal effects, both to do with changes in mobility associated with increasing age and external effects, it is important to survey a control group not offered the concession to establish the impacts. This cannot be done satisfactorily because of the universal nature of the concession, but there have been some efforts to do this such as the control group in north-east England in Transport Scotland (2009), and the comparison with people aged 50-60 by Webb et al (2012). There are difficulties with this type of control: the local opportunities and bus services in north-east England would be different to those in Scotland, and more of those aged 50-60 would be employed, which would influence their travel patterns.

The focus of analysis of most practitioners (e.g. those involved in the operation and administration of concessionary travel in central and local government, and operators) has been reimbursement, which in principle relies upon construction of a counterfactual case in order to calculate a payment that leaves the operator 'no better off, no worse off'. The work by Dargay and Liu (2010) and Last (2010b) provides some evidence on the impacts of the concession on aggregate travel behaviour e.g. travel volumes and elasticities, but does not provide insights into the social impact on different types of individual.

Hence, there is a need for comprehensive research on the impacts of concessionary fares on travel behaviour and its social consequences, so that the impacts can be assessed systematically rather than the rather partial approach that has been adopted in this review because of the nature of the available evidence.

There are a number of specific areas that need to be examined further covering various aspects of usage of CTPs, the effects of doing so and the resulting value both to the CTP holders and the nation.

In terms of CTP usage, it would be very useful to know more about why some people do not take up CTPs. The take-up rate on the grounds of age is high at almost 80% but, given that it is a free, universal benefit for those aged 60 and over, it would be interesting to know more about why the other 20% do not have one. Whilst car availability is the main factor there are other factors, including poor access to local bus services. The evidence suggests that access to a good bus service increases the take-up of CTPs and bus use. Research into this area would be useful and would provide evidence on the effects of improvements in bus services on patronage by older people and, possibly, by the whole population.

The emerging smartcard evidence suggests that, of those who have a pass, usage of it is highly skewed, with a very substantial minority making very little, if any, use of the bus. This may largely reflect the share of the population who benefit from high quality bus services, in contrast to a substantial proportion with very limited service, and a substantial proportion with service levels between these extremes. Smartcard data provides one of the few windows into patterns of travel behaviour by individual passholders over time, and has the potential to offer rich insights into who uses and who does not use the concession that is, in principle, available. In contrast to surveys, the costs of data collection from smartcard sources lie in data processing and validation, all of which must satisfy the providers of data that it will be treated properly with regard to confidentiality and data protection issues. However, the volume of data that is potentially available is massive compared to sample surveys, and therefore allows drilling down into examination of the travel patterns of small subsets of passholders in a way that is otherwise inconceivable.

It would be also useful to know why the take-up is relatively low amongst disabled people. Evidence on this might help to identify some of the other barriers to movement by disabled people. Given the evidence that some older people are using CTPs to make essential journeys such as attending medical appointments, this suggests that there is scope to replace some special transport services, which tend to be expensive, by the use of local bus services using CTPs if other barriers to movement can be overcome, such as features of the vehicles or lack of appropriate information. The issue of the inability of CTP holders being unable to attend early

medical appointments needs to be addressed. There needs to be a study of travel to health facilities and other essential travel by older and disabled people to see if there is scope for rationalisation of the services by improving local bus services so that they can be used by more CTP pass holders, allowing reductions in the provision of special bus services.

It would be very useful to know more about the health effects of CTPs. The effects on physical activity could be established by a study of the effects of CTP holding on volumes of walking. As indicated in Section 4c, CTPs can increase or reduce walking, depending on whether the extra walking as a result of making more bus trips outweighs the switching of short trips from walking to bus. As implied in the work by Transport Scotland (2009) there may be a difference by age group. Establishing the effects of CTPs on mental health and general well being would be more difficult, but there does seem to be a perception that such effects occur, and if they do, there could be significant savings in the cost of providing health care.

There is evidence that CTPs are being used by older people to carry out voluntary work, both formal and informal. This includes work at hospitals and libraries, saving the cost of employing staff. It would be useful to know the extent to which such voluntary work is dependent on the use of CTPs. Once this had been established, the type of approached used in WRVS (2011) could be used to establish the value to the nation of voluntary work by CTP holders (Mackett, 2014).

All the foregoing would contribute to understanding of the impacts of the concession on particular aspects of individual behaviour and some of its social and welfare consequences. However, the evidence of benefits is fragmentary, and is an inadequate basis for a national debate about the place that concessionary travel should have in Government spending priorities. It is therefore desirable to attempt the construction of some sort of framework for evaluating the full range of costs and benefits associated with the policy, which would both help inform the immediate debate, but also help prioritise further research.

11 Conclusions

The evidence presented in this report suggests that CTPs have had a significant impact on the lives of older people. They are popular with those who have them and provide them with a variety of benefits, including opportunities to access services and social activities that they could not otherwise reach. The availability of the concession is also supported by those that do not have them, perhaps because they can see that it is a benefit that they will enjoy one day without being associated with some of the disadvantages of being old, as implied by the concession of free prescriptions, for example.

The evidence also shows that the objectives set out in the 1988 Transport White Paper and the 2005 and 2006 Budget Statements have, to a large extent, been met: older people are using buses more with many of these trips to shops and services, suggesting that their access to these has increased; many of those using the pass do not have access to a car, so these people have had their ability to travel in their local area increased; many respondents in the surveys cited stated that their wellbeing had been increased, and many seem to be participating in society more.

There is also evidence that the scheme generates more benefits than it costs. There are also wider benefits for society that would not normally be included in a cost-benefit exercise, for example, the pool of free labour that older people provide through their voluntary activities, both formal and informal and the benefits arising from having fewer cars on the road and the lower public expenditure in providing social and medical services because holders of CTPs can reach facilities on their own and enjoy better physical and mental health as a result. It is very difficult to put a value on all these benefits, but they are large and need to be borne in mind by anyone considering making any changes to the CTP system.

Whilst the benefits are difficult to quantify, the costs are not: the scheme costs over £1 billion a year. This provides free buses to a large number of people who seem to appreciate it. However this raises an important question: if the Government wished to spend over £1 billion improving the lives of older people, was giving them free off-peak bus travel the best way to do this? It is not possible, in the absence of a comparable population without passes, to be certain that the observed and claimed impacts would not have happened anyway, to some extent, at least. Many older people have a pass but do not have reasonable access to a bus. This contributes to some of the equity issues that have been identified. One way to save money on the scheme would be to introduce means testing, so only those on low incomes would be able to have a pass. However, because it is a universal benefit, it is relatively cheap to administer; any form of means testing would be much more expensive and would mean that some people who would be entitled to a pass probably would not apply. Also, because many of those with higher incomes probably do not use the bus very often, the reduction in the number of trips made using the pass would not be huge: the saving might well be less than the cost of means testing. Another point to be borne in mind is that the scheme means that many bus routes are receiving subsidy through the reimbursement to the bus operators of the revenue that would have been received from those who would have paid to travel without a pass and some of these routes might not be operated otherwise, which benefits not only older people, but also some other members of society. Whilst some people might regard subsidising buses as a good thing, for example, to provide an alternative to the car, the network that is being subsidised is one that has emerged from the commercial decisions of bus operators with some additional services perceived as socially necessary by local authorities. It is not necessarily the optimal network from the perspective of passengers, including older people. Summing up: the policy of providing concessionary travel passes for older people was a political decision which has had major ramifications for both older people and bus operators, and indirectly for the rest of the population as tax payers and travellers.

The CTP scheme is seen as successful by the Government and the evidence examined in this report suggests that the policy has achieved its original objectives, but the nature of the evidence means that there are many uncertainties. It is quite likely that, with better monitoring and more comprehensive surveys, it would be found that the scheme has been rather limited in its achievement of the objectives. The full ramifications of the policy were not examined prior to implementation. If the £1 billion was not being spent on the scheme, it probably would not be spent on either older people or bus services. Given that the money is both benefitting older people and helping to keep bus services running, it could be argued that it is a

positive measure. Introducing policies to improve the quality of life is never going to be an exact science, so, on balance, it seems reasonable to deduce that the scheme has been successful.

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