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Monday 13 February 2017

Colin Thomas, General Manager and
John Pockett, Director, Government Relations
Confederation of Passenger Transport Wales
1 Lewis Terrace
Darren Parc
Pontypridd CF37 2AF

Dear Sirs,

Re: My Travel Pass legacy scheme

We recently made representations to the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure regarding **the Welsh Government's decision to cancel My Travel Pass when the pilot ends in March**, which we deeply regret.

The Cabinet Secretary has replied to inform us that he has asked CPT Wales, as well as local authorities, to come up with an affordable legacy scheme to operate from 1 April this year.

The prospect of there being no subsidised travel scheme for young people in Wales concerns us very much. As you work to develop a legacy scheme, we would like to take this opportunity to share with you our view of why a subsidised travel scheme is so important and how My Travel Pass could be improved.

Why a subsidised scheme is needed

Affordable transport to college and sixth form, as well as to work placements, is crucial for young people in Wales so that they may access education. In 2014, we published a report entitled '[Pound In Your Pocket](#)', which **gave an overview of students' experience** of financial support in Wales.

Our research highlighted that a significant proportion of further education students were being forced to spend money in order to access their education. Indeed, 62% of them had costs associated with travel and the majority of these costs were £20 or more.

The research also found that the cost of travel was putting a strain on students' **abilities to balance** their commitments between work, study, and family life, with 37% of students who pay more than £20 a week reporting this. We also compared the costs of students who live in Office for National **Statistics' classified urban postcode** areas against those who live in rural areas. What we found was that rurally-based students spent more time and more money on transport.

Our calls on government

It was with this research in mind that we raised this very issue in our [manifesto](#) ahead of last year's **National Assembly elections**. In it, we recommended that the 'next Welsh Government extend concessionary travel on public transport to all FE students, building on the My Travel Pass bus scheme for 16-18 year old students, to ensure **none are excluded from opportunities due to transport costs.**'

Our [Apprentices Manifesto](#) also recommended that 'all parties commit to introducing a travel card that covers apprentices aged 16-25.'

Whilst we recognise that the take up of the scheme has not been particularly high, with only 7% of those eligible using the system, we believe that this is not because the scheme itself is unnecessary, but rather because it has not been advertised effectively.

Indeed, before the introduction of the scheme, our research showed that a significant proportion of students did not understand how to receive support with the cost of travel.

We have assured the Cabinet Secretary that we are prepared to assist with the promotion of My Travel Pass, or its legacy scheme, to students and apprentices in Wales.

Requirements for the My Travel Pass legacy scheme

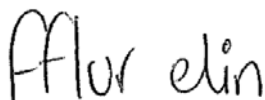
In our initial representations to the Cabinet Secretary, we called on the Welsh Government to re-consider its decision to scrap the scheme, and instead place more emphasis on effectively informing young people about how to receive a travel pass.

As you have now been tasked with working up an affordable legacy scheme, we are calling for the following:

1. As well as offering a 1/3 discount on bus travel to 16-18 year olds, extend the current offering to all learners in further education who do not fit into that age bracket.
2. Extend the current offering to all apprentices in Wales up to the age of 25.
3. Explore how train travel can be incorporated into the offering.

We would be happy to meet with you to further discuss our concerns and views, if you would find that to be useful.

Yours sincerely,



Fflur Elin
President, NUS Wales



Carmen Smith
Deputy President, NUS Wales

A copy of this letter has been sent to:

- The Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure;
- The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government;
- The Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language;
- The Minister for Skills and Science;
- **The Chair of the National Assembly's Children, Young People, and Education Committee;**
- **The Chair of the National Assembly's Economy, Infrastructure, and Skills Committee;**
- **The Chair of the National Assembly's Equality, Local Government, and Communities Committee;**
- **The Welsh Local Government Association's Roads, Infrastructure, and Transport Spokesperson; and**
- The Welsh Local Government Association's Education Spokesperson.