

CONCESSIONARY BUS TRAVEL FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND THOSE WITH DISABILITIES IN WEST SUSSEX

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What changes are taking place from 1st April 2011?

From the 1st April 2011, responsibility for the administration of the Concessionary bus travel will transfer from your local District/Borough Council to West Sussex County Council – your local Council however will continue to be the contact point for queries about your bus pass and other travel concessions.

2. What is a concessionary bus pass?

A concessionary bus pass is given as part of the national bus pass scheme which allows eligible older people to enjoy free off-peak travel on local buses anywhere in England during 'off-peak' times.

It also allows disabled people to travel any time in West Sussex.

3. Why are disabled people getting free bus travel all day?

The Equality Act 2010 requires the authority to take people's disabilities into account, even where this means treating them more favourably than others.

4. How will I know if I am eligible for a free bus pass?

Older Person

If you are a resident in England, you will be entitled to a bus pass giving free off-peak travel on local buses when you reach 'eligible age'. If you were born after 5 April 1950, the age at which you become eligible is tied to changes in the State Pension age for women. This affects both men and women.

Disabled

You are eligible for a disabled person's pass if you are a resident in England and are 'eligible disabled'. This means you:

- are blind or partially sighted
- are profoundly or severely deaf
- are without speech
- have a disability, or have suffered an injury, which has a substantial and long-term effect on your ability to walk
- don't have arms or have long-term loss of the use of both arms

- have a learning disability.
- are or were a member of Her Majesty's Armed Forces aged under 60 and seriously injured in service. You must also be resident in England.

You are also eligible disabled if your application for a driving licence would be refused under section 92 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (physical fitness). However, you will not be eligible if you were refused because of persistent misuse of drugs or alcohol.

5. Can I apply for a pass before I am eligible?

If you are applying for a pass on the grounds of age please go to <http://pensions.direct.gov.uk/en/state-pension-age-calculator/home.asp> to find out when you will become eligible for your concessionary pass. If you do not have internet access, speak to your local Council.

6. Where do I apply for a free bus pass?

Contact your local Council:



Adur & Worthing Councils

Email: info@adur.gov.uk
 Telephone: +44 (0)1273 263399
 Fax: +44 (0)1273 454847



Crawley Borough Council

Email: comments@crawley.gov.uk
 Telephone: +44 (0)1293 438635
 Fax: +44 (0)1293 511803



Arun District Council

Email: info@arun.gov.uk
 Telephone: +44 (0)1903 737655
 Fax: +44 (0)1903 730442



Horsham District Council

Email: contact@horsham.gov.uk
 Telephone: +44 (0)1403 315323
 Fax: +44 (0)1403 262985



Chichester District Council

Email: helpline@chichester.gov.uk
 Telephone: +44 (0)1243 785166
 Fax: +44 (0)1243 776766



Mid Sussex District Council

Email: enquiries@midsussex.gov.uk
 Telephone: +44 (0)1444 477304
 Fax: +44 (0)1444 477236

7. What documents do I need to apply for a bus pass?

You need to complete an application form and provide one proof of address which should not be older than 3 months, and one proof of personal identification which can be your passport, your driving licence, your birth certificate. You also need to attach a clear and recent colour passport photograph with light background.

8. What 'proof' do I need to show that I am eligible on the grounds of disability?

You will need to supply one of the following:

- A certificate showing you are receiving the Higher Rate Component of Mobility Allowance of the Disability Living Allowance
- Evidence of receipt of War Pensioners Mobility Supplement.
- An award letter for guarantee income payment for tariff levels 1-8 under 2005 Armed Forces Compensation scheme and show that you meet one of the disability criteria below.
- A copy of an entry of your name in a Local Authority Register of Disabled People.
- Evidence of Registration as Blind or Sight Impaired
- A letter from the Department for Transport refusing the issue of a driving licence on medical grounds.
- A letter/assessment/report from an independent Health or Social care specialist, eg. An ophthalmist, audiologist, Learning Disability specialist

This letter must state that you suffer from a specific illness or disability, and that, in their opinion, this illness/disability meets the requirements of part (f) or (g) of Section 146 of The Transport Act 2000.

For full details, please ask your local Council for the criteria for issuing bus passes on the grounds of disability.

9. If I have a companion pass, can I or my companion travel alone using the pass?

No, if you have a companion pass, both parties must be traveling together in order to qualify for a concessionary (free) fare.

You will need to supply one of the following:

- A certificate showing you are receiving the Higher Rate Component of Mobility Allowance of the Disability Living Allowance, or War Pensioners Mobility Supplement.
- An award letter for guarantee income payment for tariff levels 1-8 under 2005 Armed Forces Compensation scheme.
- A copy of an entry of your name in a Local Authority Register of Disabled People.
- A letter from the Department for Transport refusing the issue of a driving licence on medical grounds.
- A letter from a senior official of an accepted organisation (eg Mencap, Special School, Blind Association, Social Services, etc).
- A letter from an independent health professional (eg your GP, specialist, an Occupational Therapist or a Physiotherapist).

This letter must state that you suffer from a specific illness or disability, and that, in their opinion, this illness/disability meets the requirements of part (f) or (g) of Section 146 of The Transport Act 2000.

10. How long will it take to get my pass?

Passes are produced and issued by a specialist contractor on behalf of the Council. At the moment it normally takes two to three weeks from receiving your application to the pass being delivered.

11. Where can I use my bus pass?

You can use your pass on local buses anywhere in England:

- between 9.30 am and 11.00 pm Monday to Friday
- all day at weekends and on public holidays

If you are eligible on the grounds of disability, you can travel for free at any time.

Services that are not covered - You cannot use your bus pass on services:

- where most seats can be reserved, like coaches
- that run for less than six weeks, like shuttle buses to special events

- for tourists, like open-top bus tours, or services on vehicles of historical interest
- that are running instead of a train - 'rail replacement' services.

12. What is the definition of a 'local' bus?

Generally services that operate within a restricted area - such as a town, city or county. However many local buses cross county boundaries so if in doubt, check with the bus operator.

13. I have just renewed an age-related bus pass, why has the time I can use my pass changed from 9 am to 9.30 am?

The national scheme allows free travel between 9.30 am and 11 pm Monday to Friday and all day at weekends and on public holidays. We are bringing the County in line with this, which means the time the passes can be used will change in some areas from 9 am to 9.30 am.

14. If I visit an area that offers additional services will I be entitled to them?

Probably not. As a general rule, local authorities will only provide additional services for their own residents.

15. How do I use my bus pass?

To use your bus pass on local buses within England, show your pass to the driver as you get on. You do not need a ticket to travel, but on some services the driver may give you a zero-priced ticket to record their passenger numbers.

16. Is there a limit on how many journeys I can make?

No, the new scheme will allow you to travel off-peak on local buses as far and as much as you like.

17. I am disabled and need a companion to travel. Can they get a pass too?

If you are issued with a free bus pass on the grounds of your disability, you will also be entitled to apply for a pass for a companion. This may mean your current pass will be changed to include a second person.

18. What do I need to do if my bus pass is lost/stolen?

If you have lost your card, or had it stolen contact your local Council.

Cards that are stolen will be replaced free of charge provided that a crime number is given.

If you have damaged or lost your card, a small charge may be made for a replacement.

19. How long will my bus pass be valid?

From 1st April 2011, if you are an older person or permanently disabled, your new/renewed bus pass will be valid for 5 years, and will be automatically renewed unless notified otherwise. There may be circumstances where an annual renewal will be appropriate.

20. My bus pass is about to expire, what do I do?

Generally, a new bus pass will be sent to you in the post as part of an automatic process, to the registered address we hold for you.

If you have not received your new bus pass by the expiry date, which can be found on your current bus pass, or have a general query about this process please contact your local Council at the address shown on the back of your pass. There may be circumstances where we need to ask you to provide up to-date proofs and you will be contacted directly one month before the expiry date.

21. I am temporarily residing in West Sussex, will I be entitled to a free bus pass?

In most circumstances, you will not be entitled to receive a free bus pass unless you are a permanent resident within West Sussex. If you think you may be eligible, please contact your local Council.

22. What do I do if my circumstances change?

If you move address you must notify your local Council in writing, if you do not, you will not receive a new pass when yours has expired.

If you move out of West Sussex, you should return your pass to your local Council office and make an application to your new local Authority.

23. I have a regular hospital appointment which requires catching a bus before 9.30 am and cannot afford to pay for my journey on a regular basis. Is there any help I can get?

The 40X wheelchair accessible bus travels between the Princess Royal and Royal Sussex County hospitals from 7.00 am, and is free to patients showing appropriate identification. A number of community transport schemes may also be able offer assistance with travelling to hospital and other healthcare appointments. Find out more at www.westsussex.gov.uk/communitytransport, or contact your local Council.

You may be able to get financial help from the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme if you are on a low income, need NHS treatment at a hospital, other NHS centre or private clinic and have been referred by an NHS hospital consultant, doctor or dentist.

To find out more go to <http://www.direct.gov.uk> or call NHS Patient Services helpline 0845 850 1166 (8.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday - calls are charged at the local rate).

24. I have an age-related bus pass, what happens if I want to travel at a time when I cannot use my bus pass?

You must pay the full normal fare for the journey you are making.

25. Does having a bus pass mean I can get on the bus before people who pay fares?

No. Pass holders must join the queue with other passengers and may not board if the bus is already full.

26. Can I have a Railcard instead of a National Bus Pass?

Yes, from April 2011 in most areas you will be able to apply for a Senior Citizens / Disabled Persons Railcard instead of a National Bus Pass.

IF YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUERIES
PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL AT THE ADDRESS SHOWN ON THE
BACK OF YOUR BUS PASS