

# **National Free Bus Pass**

## **For Residents aged 60+ or Persons with Disabilities**

**From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008, people aged 60 or over and people with qualifying disabilities will be entitled to Free Off Peak Bus Travel throughout the whole of England.**

### **Your questions answered**

**1. What times can I travel free?**

The National Scheme is Off Peak Only. (i.e. registered / local bus travel between 9:30am-11:00pm, every weekday, all day Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays) Travel within the County however will remain free at all times.

**2. I am disabled, can my companion still travel for free with me?**

'Disabled Persons' companions will be able to travel free of charge within the Worcestershire County but will have to pay the normal fare for journeys in other areas.

**3. Will I be able to travel to and around London for free?**

Yes. You will be able to travel by local bus service to and around London or any other City / Resort within England.

**4. What about Trains, Taxis, National Express?**

The Scheme is currently only for use on registered bus services and the participating Community Transport Schemes.

**5. What is a Registered / Local Bus Service?**

This is a bus service provided for the use of the general public that runs to a published timetable and on which passengers can make journeys of under 15 miles in length.

**6. Can I travel into Wales and Scotland for free too?**

No. The scheme will only be for use within England, so if your journey takes you across the border you will need to pay full price for that part of the journey. Wales and Scotland have free schemes too but qualifying residents there will also have to pay full price if they visit England.

**7. Is Park and Ride included?**

Yes Park and Ride is included. You will still need to pay for your parking (if applicable) but your bus journey will be free.

**8. How will Bus Operators in others parts of the Country know to accept my pass?**

All passes will be in a Smartcard format and will follow a National recognisable design including the National Bus Pass logo.

**9. What is a Smartcard?**

A Smartcard is a small credit card size pass that will display your name, photograph, local authority details and the National Bus Pass logo. It will have an embedded microchip which will contain further details including your address and your travel entitlements. In the future this will be scanned by a reader on the bus that will confirm that you are eligible to travel and will store journey details for statistics so that we reimburse the bus operators correctly. Smartcards have a number of advantages over traditional paper based passes. When used on smart readers, they are highly resistant to fraudulent replication. They can also help to speed up boarding, helping to reduce bus journey times.

**10. Will I be issued with a ticket?**

Some bus companies will do this as a way of recording concessionary trips, however this is not a legal requirement and has no bearing on an eligible person's entitlement to free travel.

**11. I have already got a bus pass what do I do next?**

If your pass has a photograph on it then you don't need to do anything, we will post your new smartcard out to you in March 2008. If your pass does not have a photograph on then please visit one of our Contact Centres now. Bring your current pass with you and a recent utility bill so that we know you are still a Worcestershire resident. Please note that even if your existing bus pass has a later expiry date you will not be able to use it for National Travel. Local passes will continue to be valid for County travel but only until the end of September 2008.

**12. I am over 60 but never collected a pass before what do I do?**

Visit your nearest Contact Centre now and get a local pass. When your national smartcard is ready we will post it out to you in March 2008.

**13. I would like a pass but I will not be 60 until next year, what do I do?**

If you are going to be 60 before the end of April 2008 come and apply for your National Pass now. Bring with you proof of your age and identity, a recent utility bill and a passport sized photograph. (if you do not have one of these we can provide one for a £2 charge)

**14. Will you be issuing the new National Pass on the spot?**

Unfortunately not. Because we will be issuing Smartcards for the National Scheme we can not issue these immediately. We will however take all your details and your pass will be forwarded on to you by post, this should take approximately 5 days. Because we expect a large number of applicants it is important to get your details to us as quickly as possible.

**15. What are the disability categories?**

- Blind or partially sighted
- Profoundly or severely deaf
- Without Speech
- Has a disability or injury, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the applicants ability to walk.
- Does not have arms or has long term loss of the use of both arms.
- Has a learning disability that started prior to adulthood and has a lasting effect on development.
- Would if applied for a driving licence have it refused on the grounds of physical fitness, other than on the grounds of persistent misuse of drugs or alcohol.

**16. Will free Community Transport still be available?**

Yes, Community Transport will still be available to those pass holders who qualify from;

The Vale of Evesham Volunteer Centre

Pershore & District Voluntary Help Centre

Droitwich Spa & Rural Council for Voluntary Service

**17. What if I lose my pass?**

You will need to inform us as soon as possible. We can then get your pass 'stopped' to prevent it being used by anybody else. It will cost £5 to get a replacement but this fee will be waived if your pass was stolen and you can provide a crime reference number.

**18. I am moving out of the area. What do I do about a National pass?**

Although the new pass is a National English pass it must be issued from the Local Authority area where you live, this is to ensure that payments are made to the bus companies from the right Council. Therefore if you move you must hand in your old pass and apply for a replacement at your new Council.

**19. Is there a limit to the number of times that the pass can be used?**

No there is no limit.

**20. How long will my pass last?**

Smartcards should last up to a period of 5 years.

**21. Will Travel Tokens still be available?**

Yes, they will continue to be offered to people aged 80 or over or the disabled as an alternative to the Bus Pass.

**22. I should like to have a Bus Pass for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 instead of Travel Tokens, what do I do?**

Visit your nearest Contact Centre now. We can process your application ready and will post your national smartcard out to you in March 2008.

**23. Where can I get all the latest information?**

The Department for Transport website will give you all the latest information. [www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/buses/concessionary](http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/buses/concessionary)

Alternatively visit the Wychavon website or telephone Louise Bennett on 01386 565437.