

# Equality Impact and Needs Assessment Form



NB: Use the electronic MS Word template. Add additional rows and increase box size as required. Make sure your final document is suitable for publishing.

## A) Description

Name of service, function, policy (or other) being assessed

English National Concessionary Bus Scheme – Local Discretions (companion pass, 09:00 start, excluding Exeter Megarider area and unlimited evening travel).

Directorate or organisation responsible (and service, if it is a policy)

Transport Co-Ordination Service, Waste, Engineering & Transport Co-Ordination Service, Environment Economy & Culture.

Date of assessment (DD/MM/YY)

27<sup>th</sup> October 2010

Date next assessment due (3 years)

26<sup>th</sup> October 2013

Names and/or job titles of people carrying out the assessment

Mark Wilson – Senior Concessionary Travel Officer  
Clare Stone – Team Leader, Concessionary Bus Travel  
John Richardson-Dawes – Senior Transport Co-Ordination Officer

Name and Signature of Accountable person (e.g. Head of Service)

Bruce Thompson

Date EINA Form approved by accountable person (e.g. Head of Service)

1. What are the aims or main purpose of the service, function or policy? What does it provide and how does it provide it?

The English National Concessionary Bus Travel Scheme aims to provide free off-peak bus travel throughout England to older people and those with certain disabilities.

2. Location or any other relevant information (such as profile of the area)

This assessment applies to the geographical area administered by Devon County Council and applies to residents of Devon in respect of companion passes and all holders of the English National Concessionary Bus Pass regarding the 09:00 start and unlimited evening travel.

Currently, all districts in Devon, excluding Torridge and South Hams offer companion concessions and West Devon, Mid Devon and East Devon offer 09:00 start on most local bus services.

One bus operator, Stagecoach South West offers 09:00 start time on all services

except those within the area known as the Exeter Megarider area.

District powers to offer local concessions cease on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

3. List any key policies or procedures to be reviewed as part of this assessment.

This assessment applies solely to locally-applied discretions as part of the proposed Devon County Council concessionary travel scheme, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011. The discretions are within the powers of Devon County Council to bring into force through primary legislation under 1985 Transport Act.

4. Who is intended to benefit from the service, function or policy?

1. The issue of companion passes will enable severely disabled people to access local bus service with a companion free of charge. Without this discretion, it is likely that many severely disabled people would not be able to access public transport.
2. The 09:00 start aims to provide free travel outside the statutory minimum concession in predominantly rural locations for all national concessionary bus pass holders. The unlimited evening travel would enable travel beyond 23:00 so as not to restrict social mobility for all national concessionary bus pass holders where a local bus service exists within Devon.

5. Who are the stakeholders? What is their interest?

1. All concessionary bus pass holders, whether issued due to age or disability. The recipients of the proposed discretions.
2. Local bus operators who will be obliged under legislation to provide free travel beyond the statutory minimum scheme as outlined within this assessment.

6. Are there any concerns at this stage which indicate the possibility of inequalities/negative impacts? For example: complaints, comments, research, outcomes of a scrutiny review. Please describe:

1. Upheld Ombudsman complaint against Mid Devon District Council with specific regard to the process by which the decision was taken not to offer the local companion discretion in the first instance.
2. Correspondence from disabled pass holders when previous companion discretion was withdrawn at the end of the Devonwide scheme.
3. Correspondence from previous Devonwide pass holders regarding the withdrawal of the Devonwide 09:00 start time.
3. The 09:00 start excludes any services within a defined area, predominantly Exeter City. This inequality already exists within the existing concessionary travel scheme and is viewed negatively by Exeter residents who feel disadvantaged compared to the rest of Devon and in particular towns where 09:00 travel is possible. It is also felt that the provision of 09:00 travel excluding Exeter may unduly affect the amount of reimbursement paid by Exeter City Council. More travel is generated as a result of the 09:00 start that potentially brings more pass holders to Exeter City; thus inflating return journeys from Exeter for which Exeter City Council are obliged to pay reimbursement.

**B) Relevance – Note: if not relevant, do not complete this form**

Select **all** that apply:

		Scale of relevance	
7. Service or function that people use.	<b>X</b>	Low	Section C applies
8. Discretion is exercised, or potential for people to experience different outcomes or level of satisfaction.	<b>X</b>	Medium	
9. Employment policy – where discretion is not exercised.		Medium	Sections C & E apply
10. Employment policy – where discretion is exercised (e.g. recruitment or disciplinary process).		High	
11. Concerns at a local, regional or national level of discrimination/inequalities.	<b>X</b>	High	
12. Major change such as the closure, removal or transfer of a service/provision.	<b>X</b>	High	
13. Community and regeneration strategies, local area agreements and organisational or directorate/partnership strategies/plans.		High	

Other:

State why it is relevant:

How relevant (high, medium or low?):

**Initial Screening:**

Mark an 'X' in the box to confirm which strands are relevant to the review. Ensure they are assessed against in Section D.

If not relevant, please explain why not (refer to pages 25-30 of the Toolkit for guidance). Do not say "everyone is treated equally/fairly" or similar.

Age	<b>X</b>	
Disability	<b>X</b>	
Gender (men and women)		<a href="#"><u>The scheme is aimed at people who require travel companions regardless of their gender, race/ethnicity, religion/belief, sexual orientation or if they happen to be trans-gendered.</u></a>
Race/ethnicity		
Religion/belief		
Sexual orientation		
Trans-gender		
Other (state below)		

Any other (such as Human Rights, people on low incomes and specific sub-strands requiring particular focus such as Travellers and Gypsies, Deaf people):

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**C) Information**

14. What information (monitoring or consultation data) have you got and what is it telling you? *Required where relevance is Medium or High.*

1. As six out of eight districts currently offer a companion concession, each made separate decisions to arrive at the conclusion to offer the concession. Teignbridge and Exeter City were the first to introduce the companion pass and, in the case of Teignbridge, carried out a survey of companion pass holders in August 2008 which showed more than 90% of those surveyed made use of this concession. The main reason given as the primary use of the pass was increased social mobility. It was noted by some respondents that due to the restrictive nature of the companion concession, with travel only applicable to journeys starting within their own district, that this inhibited travel to medical facilities outside the home district. Access Groups responded favourably to the introduction of the Teignbridge companion concession. Mid Devon introduced a companion pass at a much later date, after an Ombudsman case found against them for the way in which the District Council had decided not to offer a companion concession. After the case, an Equality Impact Assessment was carried out to inform the decision to offer the concession from July 2010. Two districts; Torridge and South Hams, have not offered the companion concession. Torridge District Council, through councillor debate recognised the need for the concession, but due to uncertainties over scheme administration at the time of the debate decided to defer the introduction. Once it was clear that there was going to be a change to County-level administration for concessionary travel from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011, the concern was that to introduce a potentially short-lived concession not honoured or carried on by Devon County Council would be counter-productive.

2. Two districts offer an unrestricted 09:00 start – Mid Devon and West Devon. This variation to the start of free concessionary travel is available to all holders of an English National Concessionary Bus Pass and is not restricted to residents of Mid or West Devon. However, due to the way this discretion was introduced, not all local bus operators have allowed this concession, causing local confusion and complaints from residents who live on routes served by the non-participating bus operator. Exeter City Council view the 09:00 start, excluding the Exeter Megarider area, as an inequality and as such do not feel that Exeter City should be singled out within this concession.

**D) Assessment**

15. Describe any NEGATIVE impacts (actual or potential):

Strand/community	Impact ( <i>how</i> they may be affected). Include assessment of risk (likelihood and severity).
Severe disability	Not able to access public transport regardless of statutory concessions.
Rural location	Unable to access timely service due to low frequency of service.

Severe disability	Not able to use alternatives to public transport due to cost of Fare Car/Taxi/Rail/Ferry. National concession not applicable to these modes of transport and no alternative offer e.g tokens.
Older / infirm	Inactive and potentially unable to travel without assistance unless close to a bus route.
Wheelchair user	Unable to access bus service unless low floor buses in operation on the route required.
09:00 start Excluding Exeter Megarider area	All Exeter city residents treated differently to all other Devon residents based on location and anticipated cost.

16. Describe any POSITIVE impacts:

Strand/community	Impact ( <i>how they may be affected</i> )
People with a disability <a href="#">and/or learning disability</a>	Improved access to bus services as able to take a companion free of charge throughout the Devon County Council administrative area.
All residents and visitors excluding those in the Exeter Megarider area able to travel earlier	Increased ability to use the national concessionary bus pass on earlier services.
All national concessionary bus pass holders	Universal coverage of local discretions throughout Devon County Council area making travel easier and not subject to district boundaries.
All eligible residents/visitors	Ability to use pass beyond 23:00 where there is an available service.

17. Provide any information about NEUTRAL impacts that have been identified (there is neither a positive or negative impact):

Strand/community	Why there is 'no differential impact'

**E) Consultation**

18. Did you carry out any consultations? *Required where relevance is High.*

**Yes**

19. Who was consulted? Include your findings in 15, 16 and 17 above.

Teignbridge District Council  
 West Devon Borough Council  
 Mid Devon District Council  
 North Devon District Council  
 South Hams District Council  
 Torrington District Council  
 Exeter City Council  
 East Devon District Council  
 Stagecoach South West

First Devon & Cornwall  
Countrybus

20. Describe other research, studies or information used to assist with the assessment and include your findings above:

The estimated number of companion passes is likely to be around 1750 Devon-wide in the first year with a full budgetary cost in 2011/12 estimated to be £28,500. It is known from previous Devon administered concessionary bus schemes that the companion pass was a much valued concession. The estimated cost of providing a 09:00 start on weekdays across Devon, excluding the Exeter Megarider area is £189,000. The cost of providing unrestricted evening travel is insignificant as so few services operate past 23:00. The cost of reimbursement for the companion concession is estimated to be £18,500 per annum with an initial set up cost to Devon County Council of approximately £10,000.

## F) Conclusions

	<b>Action/objective/target OR Justification</b>	<b>Resources required</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>I/R/S/O</b>
a)	Cabinet paper submitted for consideration in June 2010 with outline of Devon Concessionary Travel Scheme from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2011. Included companion passes and earlier start time/later travelling time.		Completed	<b>R</b>
b)	<b>09:00 concession discounted due to inequalities and cost. Replaced by selective pre 09:30 start for services where the first bus is not before 11:00 weekdays.</b>			
c)	Draft paper referring to concessions only submitted to Cllr Hughes for a decision on whether to offer from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2011 as legislation suggests public notices have to be published for the full concessionary scheme including concessions by 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2010.		Completed	<b>R</b>
d)	Approval given to offer concessions as per draft paper from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2011 by Cllr Hughes.		Completed	<b>S</b>

e)	Issue statutory notices on 1 <sup>st</sup> December to advise public of the new scheme including the new concessions.		1 <sup>st</sup> December	
f)	Discuss with district councils the process by which existing district companion pass holders will be able to transfer to the new Devon-wide companion pass by 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2011.	Application form and letter via districts to current companion pass holder.	By 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2011	
g)	Issue new companion passes ready for new scheme from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2011	Design new companion pass, print/complete as applicable.	By 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2011	
h)	Issue press release/prepare and distribute publicity material throughout Devon for the new scheme	Amend existing scheme publications	By 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2011	
i)	Amend website information and guidance to reflect new concessions.	Amend existing website pages	By 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2011	

(I) Taking immediate effect.

(R) Recommended to Council/Directors through a Committee or other Report\*.

(S) Added to the Service Plan.

(O) Added to the Fair for All Programme (as an organisational improvement)\*\*