



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Equalities and Human Rights Committee
Christina McKelvie MSP
Convener

Humza Yousaf MSP
Minister for Transport and the
Islands
The Scottish Government

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The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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Via email only

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10 October 2017

Dear Humza Yousaf,

The National Bus Travel Concession Scheme for Older and Disabled Persons Scheme

Thank you for your letter of 7 September in response to our letter of [2 August 2017](#), which had sought further information on the operation of the Scheme.

You advised one of the main difficulties was that “while there are some conditions which will be permanent there may be many cases where these circumstances may change and, as local authorities do not hold specific details about individual conditions, this means that up to date eligibility confirmation is required for all people applying on the grounds of a disability.” You go on to state “these measures are not designed to disadvantage vulnerable citizens, but to ensure that only those people who are eligible have access to the scheme”.

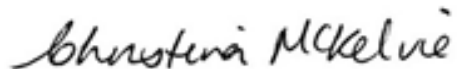
Having considered your response, we believe disabled people who are entitled to a National Entitlement Card because they are in receipt of certain social security benefits, and whose disability or condition is permanent, should not have to periodically apply to renew the National Entitlement Card. We would appreciate an explanation as to why the Government is not prepared to remove the requirement to renew for those who have a lifetime award.

Additionally, we note from your response that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was not carried out when the Scheme was established, or reviewed, although feedback from users of the Scheme was obtained in 2012-13. We are concerned that an EIA was not undertaken in line with meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty, which aims to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people with different protected characteristics. As such we seek assurances that an Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken before the regulations are changed and note Transport Scotland is undertaking a review of the Scheme to which we will be submitting a response.

We have also written to the Social Security Committee to alert them to our concerns.

I am happy to meet with you to discuss our concerns in more detail and have copied this letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Security, Communities and Equalities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christina McKelvie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christina McKelvie MSP
Convener
Equalities and Human Rights Committee