



Orkney Islands Council
Local Concessionary Travel Scheme

April 2025

Document Control Sheet

Description	Date
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee – following establishment of Scotland-wide free bus scheme, local scheme was amended for internal Ferry, Air and Dial a Bus only.	6/6/2006
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee – qualifying age amended from 60 to 65 over the next five years.	9/11/2010
Efficiency Savings - Amendment of community transport allocation to 3 x trips per month – reduction by 1 trip per month	2018/2019
Clarification of policy	24/4/2025

Revision	Description	Date

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Orkney Islands Council's Local Concessionary Travel Scheme is a discretionary fund supporting limited travel across inter-island air and ferry services for eligible elderly and disabled isles residents. The scheme also supports limited travel on community transport services, operated by Orkney Disability Forum (Dial-a-Bus – Orkney Community Connect).
- 1.2. Inter-island air and ferry travel and community transport are currently exempt under the Scotland-wide National Concessionary Travel Scheme for elderly and disabled residents. The Council's discretionary scheme was therefore established to provide a limited number of free concessionary trips for both eligible isles residents and members of Dial a Bus (operating as Orkney Community Connect with effect from 1 April 2025) for social and leisure trips.
- 1.3. Inter-island air and ferry travel is essentially the 'bus' service to and from mainland Orkney to access key services. Community transport provides door to door transport for those who are unable to access timetabled public bus services or where there are no scheduled services in the area, usually due to a large geographical area and dispersed population.
- 1.4. Therefore, some of our most vulnerable members of our community are unable to benefit from free bus travel under the Scotland-wide National Concessionary Travel Scheme. This matter has been raised by the Community Transport Association UK to Ministers.
- 1.5. Consistent with the objectives of the National Scheme, the aim of the Local Concessionary Travel Scheme is to:
 - Allow older and disabled people, improved access to services, facilities and social networks, promoting social inclusion.
 - Improve health by promoting a more active lifestyle for the elderly and disabled.

2. POLICY LINKAGES

- 2.1. The Council Plan (2023 – 2028) considers a number of aims and outcomes grouped under three priority themes – growing our economy, strengthening our communities and developing our infrastructure. One of the core principles is equality, fairness and inclusion, particularly for vulnerable and remote communities like the ferry-linked isles.
- 2.2. The Local Concessionary Travel Scheme reflects the core principles of the Council Plan by helping to grow and strengthen our most fragile communities.

- 2.3. The Local Transport Strategy (2024 – 2044) also sets a policy framework with a goal that communities are places where people can thrive, regardless of mobility or income, with liveable and inclusive communities.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Inter-Island Ferry Services

- 3.1 Under the discretionary Local Concessionary Travel Scheme funded by the Council, eligible elderly and disabled isles residents (Eday, Sanday, Stronsay, Westray, Shapinsay, Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre, Graemsay, Hoy or Flotta) are allocated a total of twenty-four single passenger trips per annum to be used on Orkney Ferries Ltd services.
- 3.2 Eligible residents must be in receipt of a valid National Entitlement Card (NEC) which is available for those over sixty years of age or disabled. The Local Concessionary Travel Scheme is valid for those over sixty-five years of age or disabled.
- 3.3 The scheme is administered via an 'Orkney Ferries SmartCard' with photograph and unique QR code directing the purser on the boat to the appropriate concessionary account. The cards are loaded with the entitlement on 1 April each year and re-loaded on consecutive years.
- 3.4 Concessionary entitlement cannot be carried forward to another year and companion trips are not allocated in addition to passenger trips for those already entitled under the concessionary scheme. The purpose of the free companion and vehicle entitlement is to assist and enable an isles resident to travel up to twenty-four single trips per annum, noting that Orkney Ferries Ltd concessionary fares shall apply thereafter.
- 3.5 Due to the price variance, free concessionary trips issued to inner isles residents are for inner isles travel only and concessionary trips for outer north isles residents are for use on north isles services only.
- 3.6 As the scheme is discretionary, the allocation of twenty-four single trips will be subject to review and budget availability each year by the Council.
- 3.7 Proof of entitlement (disability criteria), age and address must be submitted to the Transportation Service prior to award. Concessionary entitlement under the disability criteria will only be valid if also in receipt of a valid National Entitlement Card or proof of entitlement must be produced every three years.

3.8. Eligibility criteria as at April 2025:

Eligibility under the disabled criteria requires the applicant to be in receipt of one of the following:

Disabled Person Criteria (valid proof MUST be submitted with application)	Passenger	Companion (C+1)	Vehicle Enhanced/ Higher Rate
Disability Living Allowance (DLA) Higher or Middle Rate Care Component	✓	✓	
Social Security Scotland - Child Disability Payment Higher or Middle Rate Care Component	✓	✓	
Social Security Scotland - Adult Disability Payment Daily Living Component - Standard or Enhanced Rate	✓	✓	
PIP Daily Living Component – Standard or Enhanced Rate	✓	✓	
Registered Blind - Certificate of Vision (CVI) Scotland, severely sight impaired	✓	✓	
Living in Care / Residential Home and eligible for higher or middle rate care component of DLA or Attendance Allowance	✓	✓	
War Pension Constant Attendance Allowance	✓	✓	
In Receipt of Attendance Allowance (Middle rate)	✓	✓	
In Receipt of Attendance Allowance (Higher rate)	✓	✓	✓
Social Security Scotland - Adult Disability Payment Mobility Component – Enhanced Rate	✓		✓
PIP Mobility Component – Enhanced Rate	✓		✓
Disability Living Allowance (DLA) Higher Rate Mobility Component	✓		✓
PIP Mobility Component – Standard Rate	✓		
Award letter or letter of confirmation from Veterans Agency confirming War Pension Mobility Supplement	✓		
Blue Badge holder; profoundly or severely Deaf; Visual Impairment - Certificate of Vision (CVI) Scotland sight impaired; told not to drive on medical grounds (Epilepsy); <u>Mental</u> Health condition, Learning Difficulty; Terminal Illness; Progressive Degenerative Condition; Loss of one or more Limbs	✓		

Companion Eligibility

3.9. You are eligible to have a companion travel with you if you receive one of the qualifying benefits listed below or meet one of the criteria:

- Attendance Allowance
- Pension Age Disability Payment (lower or higher rate of the care component)
- Disability Living Allowance (higher or middle rate of the care component)
- Scottish Adult Disability Living Allowance (middle or higher rate of the care component)
- Child Disability Payment (higher or middle rate of the care component)
- Adult Disability Payment (standard or enhanced rate of the daily living component)
- Personal Independence Payment (higher or lower rate of daily living component)
- War Pensions Constant Attendance Allowance
- you live in a care/residential home or hospital and are eligible for one of the qualifying benefits listed above
- you are severely sight impaired (blind)

Vehicle Eligibility

- 3.10 Disabled residents may also be entitled to twenty-four single vehicle trips if in receipt of the Higher rate of Attendance Allowance, Enhanced Rate of the PIP Mobility Component, Social Security Scotland – Adult Disability Payment - Enhanced Rate Mobility Component, or Higher Rate Mobility Component of DLA.
- 3.11 With effect from March 2025, the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) will be moving to Social Security Scotland, Scottish Adult DLA (SADLA).
- 3.12 With effect from April 2025, Attendance Allowance will be moving to Social Security Scotland, Pension Aged Disability Payment (PADP). The Local Concessionary Travel Scheme eligibility will be amended to reflect any changes in benefits.

Providing Proof Documents

- 3.13 If you receive one of the qualifying benefits, you will need a letter to confirm your eligibility. The letter must be dated within the last eighteen months and confirm the length of benefit entitlement. For details on getting your letter, please contact DWP or Social Security Scotland.
- 3.14 If you live in a care or residential home or hospital and your qualifying benefit is suspended, you can also provide a letter from the hospital/care home confirming that you are eligible for one of the above benefits, live there and receive twenty-four-hour care.
- 3.15 If you are severely sight impaired (blind), and aged sixteen and over you will need to provide a copy of the Certificate of Vision (CVI) Scotland form. If you are aged under sixteen you should provide a letter from a Visual Impairment Network for Children and Young People (VINCYP) team member, health professional, or other registered society or voluntary sector organisation stating that you have a severe sight impairment that has been confirmed by an ophthalmologist or paediatrician.

Inter-Island Air Services

- 3.16 For the residents of North Ronaldsay and Papa Westray, concessionary fares are via the inter-island air service which is contracted by the Council to Loganair Ltd.
- 3.17 The current allocation for eligible North Ronaldsay and Papa Westray concessionary residents is a maximum of twenty-four single trips per annum funded by the Council. Thereafter, the concessionary fares by Loganair Ltd shall apply.

- 3.18 The air concessionary entitlement for eligible elderly and disabled residents is currently loaded onto the National Entitlement Card and then deducted at the point of travel.
- 3.19 Consistent with the Orkney Ferries Ltd scheme, passengers will be entitled to travel with a companion if they meet the companion eligibility as outlined above.
- 3.20 Concessionary entitlement cannot be carried forward to another year and companion trips are not allocated in addition to passenger trips for those entitled under the concessionary scheme. Therefore, the maximum allocation per person is twenty-four single trips per annum.

Community Transport

- 3.21 For eligible members travelling on Mainland 'Orkney Community Connect' services operated by Orkney Disability Forum (Dial-a-Bus), a maximum of three return free trips for social and leisure purposes per month can be met under the Council's Local Concessionary Travel Scheme.
- 3.22 Eligible concessionary members must be over sixty-five years old or disabled to receive free concessionary trips and must be registered members of Dial a Bus. Consistent with the air and ferry scheme, eligible passengers can travel with a companion should they require assistance and meet the necessary criteria (and hold a valid NEC C+1 card).
- 3.23 Community transport services operating under a Section 19 licence are not currently eligible under the Scotland-wide Concessionary Travel Scheme. Discussions are ongoing between the Council and the operator to find ways for the service to be met under the national scheme. The operator will charge the passenger for any additional trips incurred as per the fare structure approved by the Council.
- 3.24 The Council's Community Transport Grant Scheme also considers relevant projects from trusts and community groups across the county. These schemes are eligible to receive funding up to £10,000 per annum to establish and operate eligible community transport services in their area.