

18 November 2009

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*From the Chair of the Regeneration and Transport Board  
Councillor David Sparks*

Rt. Hon. Sadiq Khan MP  
Minister of State for Transport  
Department for Transport  
Great Minister House  
76 Marsham Street  
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22nd October 2009

### **Cross-border concessionary bus travel**

I am writing on behalf of a number of councils who are concerned about the issue of concessionary bus travel across national borders within the UK.

The Concessionary Travel Act 2007 which introduced the English national scheme, included provision for reciprocal arrangements with devolved administrations to allow for passes issued in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to be used throughout the UK. As yet, there has been no indication of any plans to make use of this provision.

This is an important issue for people in border towns and rural areas who may need to access services, such as a hospital just across the border. It would also extend the benefits of the existing national schemes by increasing accessibility and social inclusion for the eligible groups.

We are aware that at present the Welsh Assembly fund concessionary trips for Welsh residents to access facilities in nearby English towns. English local authorities can make arrangements for cross border travel locally, but such arrangements must be funded locally. Given councils concerns about funding for the national scheme, many are unable to commit additional funding to discretionary add-ons and would like to see the Department for Transport fund cross border travel in a similar way to the Welsh Assembly.

Councils in areas bordering Scotland and Wales would welcome a discussion with DfT and the devolved administrations on the possibility and potential benefits of including such reciprocal arrangements within the scheme. The LGA would be happy to coordinate a discussion with a group of interested councils if helpful.

Yours

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