



16th November 2010

New concessionary fares scheme for Gloucestershire

Free bus travel for the elderly and disabled will continue in Gloucestershire.

From April next year, Gloucestershire County Council will take over responsibility from the district councils to provide the concessionary fares service.

The scheme, introduced in 2006, provides free local bus travel for the over 60's and eligible disabled people throughout England.

In Gloucestershire, currently each district council operates a different scheme, which means what people are eligible for varies from area to area.

At the moment, some of the district councils pay for an enhanced service, which in some areas includes earlier start times, travel tokens in lieu of bus passes and taxi tokens/vouchers.

From April 2011, there will be one county-wide scheme operated by the county council so everyone will be entitled to the same level of service.

The new scheme will provide bus passes for people to use between 9.30am and 11pm weekdays and all day at weekends and bank holidays.

To protect the more vulnerable in our society we will also be offering a free companion pass for disabled people who are unable to travel unaccompanied.

Applying for and renewing passes will be simpler as the council will introduce online and library facilities for customers to use.

All existing passes will continue to be valid but anyone renewing after April 2011 will need to deal with the county council instead of their district council to get their new pass.

Concessionary fares is a statutory scheme paid for by the government, but it is not clear yet whether Gloucestershire County Council will receive enough money to cover the cost of the scheme.

With the county and district councils already facing significant funding pressures, it is unlikely that additional enhanced services will be provided.

This means the current enhanced discretionary elements may stop from April 2011, subject to consultation.

Working with district councils, we will be asking concessionary fare users how these changes will affect them in November and December.

Cllr Stan Waddington, cabinet member for environment and transport, said: "During our recent conversations with the public, the majority of people told us that concessionary fares were important so I am delighted this scheme will continue.

"I do understand that for some people losing the discretionary enhancements may be difficult.



“Unfortunately, we simply cannot afford to put any additional money into this scheme when we’re facing the biggest funding gap we’ve ever had.

“The service we are providing will still allow free travel across the county for anyone who is eligible and that has to be our priority.”

For further information and to fill in a questionnaire, visit www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/concessionaryfares or call 01452 426263. Both the website and phone number will be open from Friday 19th November.

ENDS

Notes to editors

The County Council and District Councils will be conducting a survey and holding drop-in sessions throughout the county in November and December for people to give feedback about how these changes may affect them.

Questionnaires can be requested by calling 01452 426233 or visiting the above website. The details of the drop-in sessions are:

Location	Venue	Date	Time
Coleford	Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council, High Street Coleford GL16 8HG	23/11/10	2.30pm to 6.30pm
Cheltenham	Montpellier Committee Room, Cheltenham Borough Council, Municipal Offices, Promenade, Cheltenham, GL50 9SA	24/11/10	2.30pm to 6.30pm
Newent	Newent Memorial Hall, Market Square, Newent, GL18 1PS	25/11/10	2.30pm to 6.30pm
Stroud	Council Chamber, Stroud District Council, Ebley Mill Westward Rd, Stroud, GL5 4UB	30/11/10	2.30pm to 6.30pm
Moreton in Marsh	Moreton Area Centre, High Street, Moreton-in-Marsh,	02/12/10	2.30pm to 6.30pm



	GL56 0AZ		
Cirencester	Council Chamber, Cotswold District Council, Trinity Road, Cirencester GL7 1PX	06/12/10	2.30pm to 6.30pm
Dursley	Dursley library, May Lane, Dursley, GL11 4JH	07/12/10	2.30pm to 6.30pm
Gloucester	Guildhall, 23 Eastgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1NS	15/12/10	2.30pm to 6.30pm
Tewkesbury	Committee Room 1, Tewkesbury Borough Council, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury, GL20 5TT	16/12/10	2.30pm to 6.30pm

Contact

Issued by Lisa Bonnell, Gloucestershire County Council Media Team, 01452 425226,
lisa.bonnell@gloucestershire.gov.uk.