



NICRE submission on

Department of Infrastructure

Consultation on free and

discounted fares on public

transport

24th August 2023

Comments:

1. NICRE welcomes Department of Infrastructure to consult on free and discounted fares for public transport. It attracts a lot of discussion and protest. The fundamental question is how the Executive Government fund the over 60 and senior smart pass we? Why there was no problem in the past but why now? Due to collapse of Stormont, we do not have an Executive Government and our budget forced to cut across all departments and next step agencies. it is the fault of the politicians, not the ordinary people and/or voters. According to the Department's data, in 2022/2023 the Scheme cost £39m. In 2023/24, it estimates that the cost of the scheme will rise to £44.6m. Therefore, we oppose any cuts and maintain the current Scheme of over 60 and senior smart pass.
2. We welcome the proposal in Part B: Options to promote social inclusion. These include currently receiving a half fare concession due to a qualifying disability; companion passes for disabled people unable to travel alone; extend the qualifying criteria for a half fare smart pass in line with other jurisdictions; and free transport for those receiving asylum support and victims of trafficking. NICRE agrees to extend Part B Option when the new Executive Government is set up.
3. The concept of public transport is to reduce the people use private car which is polluted the environment and create climate changes that could not achieve the UN agreed standards: Paris Agreement 2015. Therefore, we also propose the future Scheme of over 60+ and senior citizens smart pass funded by the private care through taxation and registration of car.
4. Everyone has a role in climate action: joint actions by governments, businesses, civil society, youth and more in every part of the world. It is our planet, and while we know it is in crisis such as forest wildfires, flooding, icebergs disappearing, temperatures increase, etc. man-made disasters. We also know that solutions are in reach. Progress is already well underway, from more green energy to more secure food supplies. And the benefits are clear and well, such as green jobs, clean air and sound economies, prosperous world is in reach.

If you have any queries about this submission, please contact Mr. Patrick Yu at 07710 717635 or email at patrick@nicre.org