



Subway Kids Go Free Offer

Date of meeting 23 June 2023

Date of report 8 June 2023

Report by Director of Subway

1. Object of report

To inform the Partnership of an initiative to support and encourage Subway travel by under 16s during the school summer holiday period.

2. Background to report

A flexible range of good value Subway ticket options are available for customers of all ages, including for under 16 (child) customers.

To offer further benefits to customers and in support of SPT's strategic objectives, a "Kids Go Free" promotion will run on Subway during the 2023 school summer period. This promotion has the potential to:

- Encourage increased Subway usage by under 16s and by family groups, during a traditionally quieter time of year for Subway patronage;
- Encourage familiarity with Subway travel among young people, informing their future long-term travel choices; and
- Support young people and family groups in the face of cost-of-living challenges.

A trial Kids Go Free promotion was successfully carried out during the 2023 school Easter holidays (from Saturday 1 April to Sunday 16 April 2023). This trial confirmed that the Subway ticketing equipment can be configured to temporarily apply no charge for under 16 travel, and allowed staff processes to be established and tested.

The trial period was also used to monitor for instances of anti-social behaviour among under 16s travelling for free, and British Transport Police were engaged before and during the promotion. No such anti-social behaviour concerns were observed.

The trial promotion was carried out at a time of strong patronage recover for the Subway, with overall passenger numbers up 18.5% year-on-year for the relevant two-week period. Passenger numbers for under 16s were up by a much higher 43.5%, demonstrating the attractiveness of the Kids Go Free offer to encourage increased Subway travel.

The Easter promotion was publicised to customers as part of the Subway Explorers campaign primarily through social media, digital advertising, digital audio, out of home advertising and in-station advertising. Positive trends when compared to the 2022 Easter campaign included:

- 95.8% increase in social media impressions compared to 2022; and
- Social media delivered 145% increase in website clicks compared to 2022.

3. Outline of proposals

All Subway travel for under 16 customers will be free of charge from Saturday 24 June 2023 until Sunday 20 August 2023. These dates cover the school summer holiday period across all SPT local authorities.

Customers aged under 16 can obtain a single use ticket for travel (single, return or day ticket) from the Subway ticket office, free of charge, providing proof of age if required.

Alternatively, customers aged under 16 can use a registered Child Subway Smartcard, or a National Entitlement Card/Young Scot Card for travel. These customers will simply present their smartcard at the Subway entry gate where they will be allowed entry free of charge. The ticket gate will verify the cardholder's age electronically before allowing free travel.

The National Entitlement Card option builds on the increasing usage of these cards by young people following introduction of national free bus travel for under 22s, offering convenience for customers while reducing the number of single use tickets being issued.

The effect of the summer promotion will be carefully analysed to inform future planning and promotions.

Any anti-social behaviour impacts will again be closely monitored in co-operation with British Transport Police, with the option retained by SPT to withdraw the promotion in the event of significant issues arising. As normal, SPT retains the right to refuse travel to any customer for their own safety or the safety of others.

Based on 2022 patronage and applying 18.5% underlying patronage growth, without the Kids Go Free promotion around 89,000 under 16 journeys would be expected over the eight week summer period. By offering free travel, the lost revenue from these journeys is estimated at around £67,000. As a result of the promotion around 19,000 additional under 16 journeys are also forecast to be made. It is likely that some additional (paid) adult journeys will be made along with the free under 16 journeys, offsetting some of the lost revenue. There should also be positive longer term revenue impacts.

4. Partnership action

The Partnership is recommended to note the contents of this paper.

5. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>Supportive of SPT policies to encourage public transport usage.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>Impacts on Subway patronage and revenue will be carefully monitored. Lost revenue estimated at £67,000 with positive benefits also expected but difficult to forecast.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>None.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None.</i>

Climate Change, Adaptation &
Carbon consequences

*Positive impact from encouraging sustainable travel
behaviour among young people.*

Name Antony Smith

Title Director of subway

Name Valerie Davidson

Title Chief Executive

For further information, please contact *Michael Nimmo, Ticketing Commercial Team Leader* on
0141 333 3234