



Concessionary Subway Travel and Smart Ticketing

Date of meeting 8 March 2019

Date of report 13 February 2019

Report by Senior Director

1. Object of report

To inform the Partnership of a report being presented to the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee (SCTSJC) regarding proposed improvements to concession ticketing on the Subway.

2. Background

The SPT Subway has operated a fully smart ticketing system, with ticket gates for entry and exit at all stations, since 2013. Customers can travel using a smartcard, or a single use lightweight smart ticket, usually referred to as a paper or disposable ticket.

Concession Subway fares are available to holders of a National Entitlement Card (60+ or disabled NEC) issued in the Strathclyde area. Holders of NEC's for persons aged 60+ cannot use concession travel on Subway services before 09:00 on normal weekdays. Those customers holding a NEC on the grounds of disability, or travelling to a medical appointment, have access to concession travel at all times.

NEC customers can currently purchase a concession single or return Subway ticket, which is issued as a disposable ticket, by presenting their NEC at the Subway ticket office.

3. Outline of proposals

Any NEC holder will be able to load Subway Pay As You Go (PAYG) credit to their NEC. Concession Subway tickets will no longer be issued as disposable tickets.

Cardholders eligible for concessionary fares (those with 60+ or disabled cards issued in the SPT area) will be deducted those fares (currently £1.00 single and £1.50 return) at the Subway ticket gate. Holders of NEC who are not eligible for concession fares (for example those whose cards were issued outside Strathclyde) will be deducted a full adult smart fare (currently £1.50 single and £2.90 return).

Eligible NEC 60+ holders travelling before 09:00 on a weekday will be charged full fare, in line with Scheme rules.

This change will offer the following benefits:

- Customer convenience:
 - Top up PAYG credit for any number of journeys (up to £50) and thus reduced number of visits to ticket office required.
 - Customer retains the option to simply pay for a single or return journey if they choose by loading (at current fares) £1.00 or £1.50.
 - Option to purchase PAYG credit at ticket vending machine as well as at ticket office allowing greater flexibility.
 - Travel on Subway using same card currently used for Scotland-wide free bus travel.
 - Best value travel price (in the current system, a customer must decide in advance to buy a return ticket - in the smart system they will automatically get the return price if you make a second journey).
 - Eligible NEC customers will benefit from a daily cap on the cost of Subway travel, with the cap being at the return concession fare of £1.50.
- Operational benefits to SPT:
 - Reduced number of transactions at ticket office.
 - Improved processes, reduced costs and reduced environmental impacts associated with issuing disposable Subway tickets. In 2017-18, there were 554,865 disposable concession tickets sold.

Implementation of the project proposals will require a technical change to the Subway gates, a programme of testing, engagement with the SPT Travel Card Unit and other local authorities who issue NECs, Subway staff training and communication/promotion to customers. Engagement will also be required with Transport Scotland regarding processes for delivering any PAYG balance to replacement National Entitlement Cards. These processes are already established in other cases, for example Subway customers using ScotRail smartcards.

Concession Subway fares remain a matter for the Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee. Single and return fares would not change as a result of these proposals, however the return fare would become a “daily cap” for any number of Subway journeys made in a day.

The proposals are planned for implementation during 2019/20.

4. Conclusion

It is proposed to enable concession Subway travel using PAYG credit on NEC, for eligible concession customers, and to discontinue the use of disposable tickets for concession travel.

This will improve customer convenience, streamline Subway operational processes, and remove the use of more than 500,000 disposable tickets issued per year.

5. Partnership action

The Partnership is asked to note the proposals as described in this report, which is being considered by Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee.

6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>Supports provision of an excellent transport system.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None identified.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>Any change in the level of concessionary travel should be monitored.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None identified.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>Provides similar smart ticketing benefits to concessionary customers as Subway smartcard users.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>Potential low risk of increased concessionary card fraud from:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>i. eligibility verified electronically at ticket gate instead of visually by staff; and</i><i>ii. an NEC loaded with PAYG credit is stolen or handed to another person, they could benefit from concession fares.</i> <i>These will be mitigated through Subway revenue controls.</i>

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