



28 May 2013

## **New research: Government transport policy hits young hardest**

A new report shows that government transport spending priorities are disadvantaging young people, denying them opportunities in work and education.

The report, 'Transport Barriers Facing Young People', was commissioned by the Intergenerational Foundation ([www.if.org.uk](http://www.if.org.uk)) and undertaken by the Campaign for Better Transport. The report found that young people rely on buses more than any other age group and are significantly disadvantaged by policies affecting bus provision.

With more than a million 16-24 year olds not in employment, education or training, many young people are often unable to afford to go to job interviews or even attend a job centre because of the rising price of bus fares. Over the last seven years, bus fares have increased by an average of 33 per cent and by 6.5 per cent between June 2011 and June 2012 alone. This compares with an RPI inflation rate of 2.8 per cent.

While support for concessionary fares for the over-60s is ring-fenced by government, similar support for young people between 16 and 19 is discretionary. Only a third of local authorities outside London currently offer concessionary travel to young people (28 of 89 authorities).

The removal of discretionary fare concessions for young people by local authorities and the abolition of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) by central government have also reduced the ability of young people to afford public transport to access education.

Cuts to government support for buses meant 41 per cent of authorities cut bus routes in 2012/13, further reducing young people's ability to reach jobs. In addition, the lower skilled jobs available to young people are increasingly located in out of town locations poorly served by public transport.

Angus Hanton, IF Co-founder commented, "Increased bus fares are making travelling to work unaffordable for many young people. They are paying the price for excessive government spending on older generations."

Stephen Joseph, Chief Executive, Campaign for Better Transport added, "Our research found it is now more difficult for young people to access jobs and education than it was 15 years ago. This is in no ones' interests,

least of all young people themselves. Government needs to use the upcoming spending review to ensure young people aren't priced off public transport."

The Intergenerational Foundation and Campaign for Better Transport have called on government to protect young people from being further in the 2013 spending round. In particular, they have argued government should include the following measures in this year's Comprehensive Spending Review:

- Introduce a national, free concessionary travel scheme for young people
- Resist further cuts to support for bus services and ensure bus services better meet the needs of young people
- Announce the development of a package of land use planning and transport improvements which encourage jobs to be created and retained in locations served by public transport

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

- One fifth of 16-19 year olds use the bus to commute to work, Spielhofer T et al, 2008, Barriers to Participation in Education and Training
- Government statistics show a million young people are not in education, employment or training [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/167586/sfr09-2013.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/167586/sfr09-2013.pdf)
- Over-60s receive government subsidised free travel passes worth £100 million annually to travel to work for free, *Jeremy Leach, May 2013 'Fare Concessions for Older People: Identifying The Numbers'*.
- In 2012 only 28 out of 89 Travel Concession Authorities outside London offered concessionary fares to young people, Department of Transport, BUS0840
- Norfolk, Lincolnshire and Hampshire are planning to cut back the support of 16-18 year olds travelling to and from places of learning, House of Commons Education Committee, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmeduc/850/85006.htm> - note121
- The total cost of concessionary travel (£1.1 billion a year) has more than doubled since the year 2000.
- Approx. 1 million 16-24 year olds are unemployed
- Average student debt on graduation in 2012/3 university entrants estimated to be £40,000.
- The new research is available on the IF website [www.if.org.uk](http://www.if.org.uk)

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