

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND TECHNICAL SERVICES BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 7th JUNE 2011**

Question

Will the Minister outline the criteria for free passes on Connex buses for senior citizens and explain –

- (a) whether the criteria for these passes has changed at any time since they were introduced, and, if so, provide details regarding –
- (i) the nature and number of these changes and the reasons for them;
 - (ii) the dates they were introduced;
 - (iii) whether such changes were publicised and, if so, where and, if not, why not?
- (b) whether the staff at Liberation Station have any literature setting out the criteria for such bus passes and, if not, why not?

Answer

The criteria for free concessionary bus travel passes were defined by an Act of the former Defence Committee during the late 1980s, and have remained unchanged since then. It was decided that ‘pensionable age’, as defined by the Social Security Law, 1974, be adopted for the purposes of travel pass eligibility, which can be summarised as follows:

- 65 years of age for all males (or 63 if the individual has opted to take a reduced pension early).
- 60 years of age for all females, unless not registered with Social Security prior to 1 January 1975, in which case 65 years (or 63 if the individual has opted to take a reduced pension early). Some females aged 60, and not Jersey-born (before 1959), have been unable to prove entitlement to a travel pass because their pension is being paid via the Married Persons scheme. In such cases, Social Security will issue the female with a pension card if they have made no less than 4-and-a-half years’ contributions in their own right (as this is what would entitle them to a pension in their own right were it not for opting to receive payments via the Married Persons scheme). The pension card is accepted as proof of entitlement for the travel pass for those persons under 65 years of age.
- In all cases the applicant must be permanently resident in Jersey and able to show proof of entitlement prior to the travel pass being issued.

Because the 1974 Law contains provision to harmonise pensionable age at 65, by 2019 no females will thereafter be entitled to a pension at 60. Therefore, from 2019, under the current criteria, an individual must attain the age of 65 years before a travel pass will be granted, or 63 years if opting to take a reduced pension early.

- (a) There have been no changes to the criteria since the 1980s. However, before it was revamped in early 2010, the States of Jersey website did contain wording used to define female eligibility for a concessionary travel pass including the phrase 'or Jersey born before 1959'. The relevant web page was re-written for the new-style website and during the process this phrase became omitted. Subsequently a small number of cases came to light in which some females who had been expecting to obtain a travel pass at 60 were being refused due to being unable to provide the correct documentary proof of entitlement. The missing words have now been reinstated on the States website.
- (i) The criteria have remained unchanged since originally determined by the former Defence Committee. There is a desire to simplify the policy and its administration, so options for change are being actively evaluated, but no changes have been made to date
 - (ii) No dates can be given since there have been no changes
 - (iii) No changes have been publicised since no changes have been made
- (b) The staff employed by Connex at Liberation Station were first provided with instructions for administering concessionary travel pass applications in early 2003. At various points since that time these instructions have been reconfirmed to the staff or clarified as and when queries have arisen.