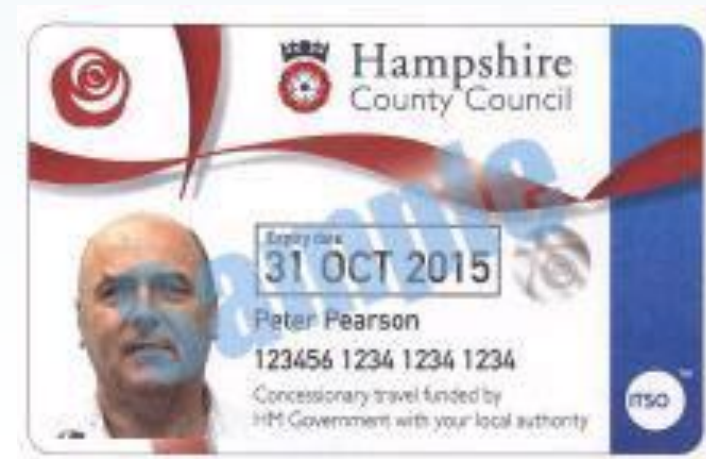


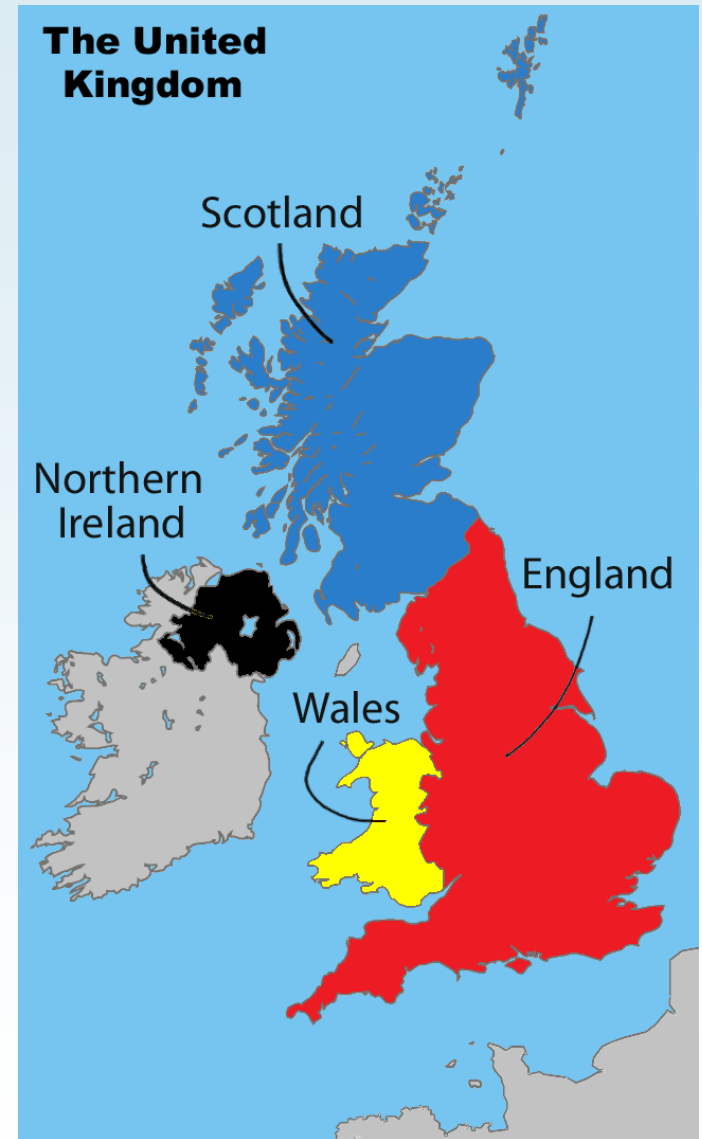
# The benefits of bus free travel for older people

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# The geography of Britain

- Great Britain (or Britain) = England + Scotland + Wales
- United Kingdom = Great Britain + Northern Ireland



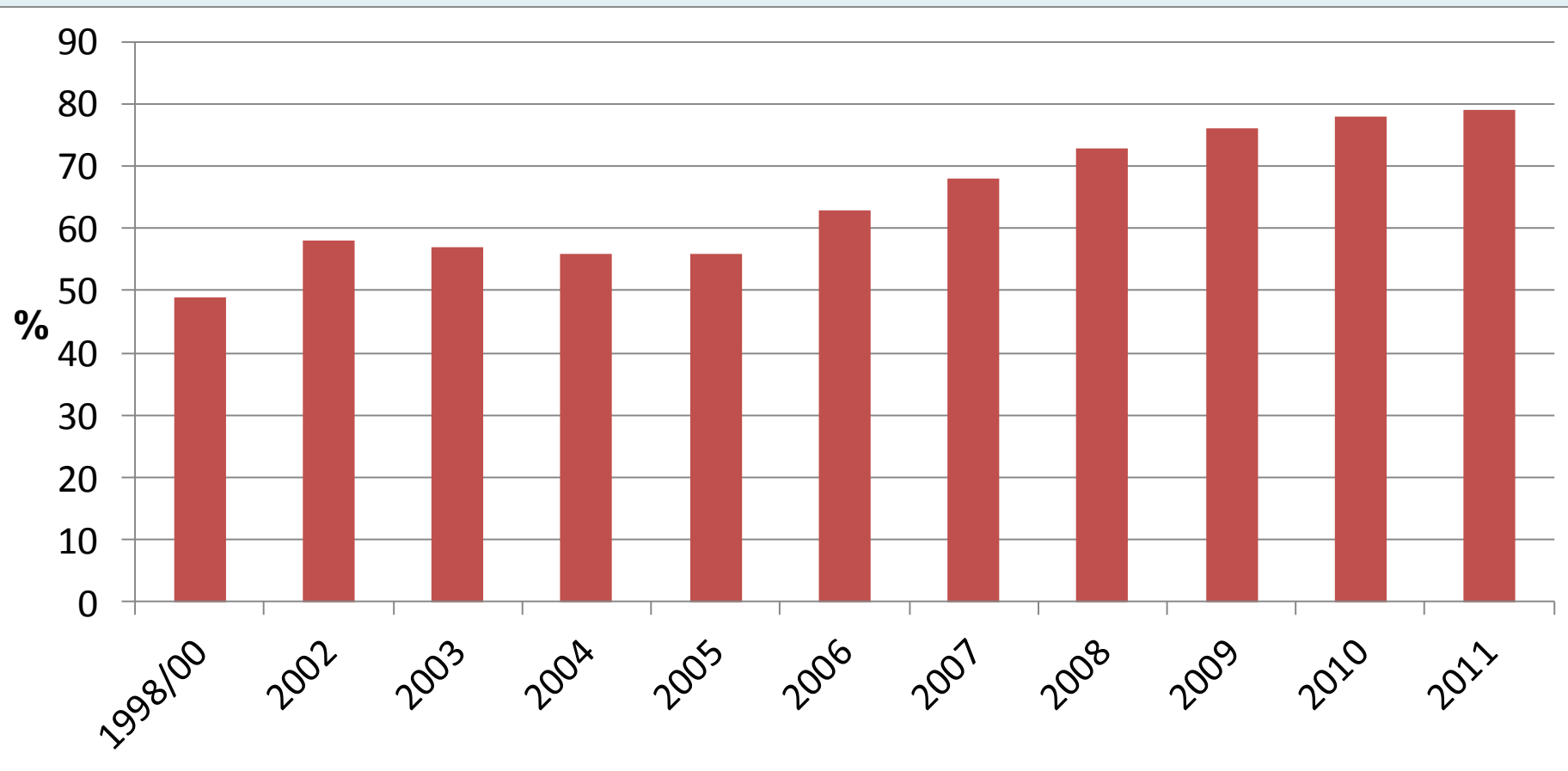
# Free bus travel for older people in Great Britain

- People who have reached the state pension age in Great Britain are entitled to a concessionary travel pass (CTP) giving them free off-peak travel by bus anywhere within the country.
- What does this do to their travel patterns?
- What benefits does it give them?
- What are the wider benefits for society?
- The scheme costs the country over \$1.6 billion (£1 billion) to compensate bus operators for lost revenue and extra costs.

## **Concessionary bus travel in Great Britain**

- Before 2000, there were various local schemes, mainly in larger urban areas.
- In 2001, half-fare bus travel in their local area was introduced for all those of pensionable age (65 for men, 60 for women) and those with disabilities, from 9.30 am to 11.00 pm Monday to Friday and at weekends and public holidays. Local authorities can add local concessions.
- Eligible age for men reduced to 60 in April 2003.
- Concession extended to free local bus travel from 2006 in England (earlier in Scotland and Wales).
- Scheme extended to England-wide travel in 2008.
- Costs over £1 billion (\$1.6 billion) per year.

# Take up rate of concessionary travel passes (CTPs) in Great Britain by those eligible on the grounds of age



Source: National Travel Survey

## Why don't holders of CTPs use them more?

Reason	%
I can drive/have someone to drive me	74
The buses are too infrequent	14
Health problems or disabilities make it too difficult to use buses	10
There are no buses that go where I need to go	9
The bus stop is too far for me to walk to	6
The buses take too long	5
I just don't like travelling by bus	4

# Factors influencing CTP use

	CTP use above average	CTP use below average
Gender	Female	Male
Income	Middle income	Low or high income
Car access	No access to a car	Access to a car
Mobility difficulties	No	Yes
Type of area	Urban	Rural
Frequency of local bus service	High (every 15 minutes)	Low (less than one a day)
Walking time to bus stop	6 minutes or less	14 minutes or more

Source: National Travel Survey

# Effects of free national bus travel on the length of bus trips

- South-West England – 37% of users making longer trips
- Four towns in England – 15% of users making more and longer local bus trips
- Scotland – 54% making more trips by bus outside their local council area



# Types of trips made using bus passes

In order of popularity:

- Shopping
- Social and leisure (may include shopping)
- Health (visiting doctor, hospital and clinic)
- Employment.

Based on nine studies

# Use of CTPs in London based on the analysis of 3000 emails by Rayner (2011)

Purpose	Detailed purpose	%
Spending money : directly contributing to the economy	Visiting museums, exhibitions etc.	16
	Shopping, bank, Post Office	12
	Eating out, tea and coffee	1
	Organised social events (lunch clubs, arranged outings)	16
Directly saving society money	Voluntary work (formal)	15
	Voluntary work (informal) – child care and similar duties	8
	Formal meetings - stakeholder groups, councils etc.	2
Increasing saving money by increasing general well-being, saving the need for care, home visits etc.	Exercise (swimming, Tai Chi, yoga, walking, etc.)	7
	Attending educational courses, seminars and forums	5
	Avoiding social exclusion (avoiding being housebound)	6
	Visiting family and friends	11
	Attending religious services	1
Total		100

## % of trips being made using CTPs that would have been made by car

	Car driver	Car passenger	Total
South-west England	27	11	38
Four towns in England	18	17	35

If we assume 20% of trips made using CTPs would have been by car in 2010/11, 353.4 million trips have been diverted from car to bus, which is about 1% of car trips made in Great Britain.

Source: Andrews (2011), Passenger Focus (2009), Transport Scotland (2009), Department for Transport for the statistics used in the calculation.

# Effects of concessionary travel on ceasing to drive

- Holding a CTP eases the transition to not driving, particularly for those who held one before ceasing. They can give up driving in stages by not driving journeys that they found difficult, e.g. in winter, in cities or at night.
- Ceasing to drive causes:
  - Anxiety about being able to go to shops and hospital
  - Evidence of depression and annoyance
  - Feelings of isolation

(based on focus groups with current car drivers aged 68-90 and ex-drivers aged 65-92).

Source: Andrews (2011), Musselwhite and Haddad (2010)

## The effects of free bus travel on walking (%)

- The young old walk more, the old old walk less.

Age	less	Walking the same	more
60-64	11	61	25
65-69	12	66	19
70-74	13	64	18
75-79	13	67	11
80+	21	60	8
<b>Overall</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>17</b>

Source: Transport Scotland

# The benefits of CTPs to older people

- Improved access to services such as medical facilities and Post Offices;
- Improved health by walking more;
- Greater inclusion of older people into society by giving them access to more opportunities for social activities;
- Easing the transition from driving a car to not doing so because they can use the bus to make trips that they find difficult by car such as at night, in poor weather and in large cities;
- General improvements to the quality of life of older and disabled people.

## **The wider benefits of CTPs to society**

- Less car use and so a reduction in traffic;
- Voluntary work by older and disabled people – both formal and informal
- Contributions to the local economy by spending money in shops, restaurants and leisure facilities;
- Savings to the tax payer of not providing some special transport services;
- A happier, healthier population of older and disabled people.

# The costs and benefits of concessionary bus travel

- Costs – £1 billion a year (\$1.6 billion).
- Benefits – Improvements in health, social inclusion, access to services, and quality of life for older people, reduction in car use.
- Passengers using CTPs generate economic benefits worth more than twice the cost of the scheme in metropolitan areas (PTEG, 2012).



# Conclusions

- The improvements to health, social inclusion and access to services mentioned above plus the easing of the transition from car driving are improvements in the wellbeing of older people.
- The evidence on the benefits of concessionary travel is fairly diverse and not very systematic.
- There is concern in Great Britain about the cost of providing concessionary travel (\$1.6 billion), but any debate should consider the benefits, including the cost of providing the benefits by other means if CTPs were abolished, not just simplistic discussions about reducing public expenditure.