

**Public Policy Statement**  
**Transport and Active Travel**  
**April 2026**

**Summary**

Public and community transport are vitally important in helping older people to maintain independence and well-being. Such transport networks can ensure communities are well-connected and that services, facilities and amenities are accessible to older people. Without these there is an increased risk that isolation and loneliness will impact upon people's well-being. It is essential that older people in all areas have the means to get out to buy food, get medical attention, get money and pay bills, and have social contact. These are basic features of a decent life and ought to be a high priority in transport policy.

Many older people rely on public transport, usually the bus, to get out and about. The free bus travel scheme has been invaluable in helping older people in Wales to retain their independence and remain active, and it is vital that this continues to be supported by the Welsh Government.

We support Welsh Government's Wales Transport Strategy's<sup>1</sup> vision for the development of an accessible, sustainable and efficient transport system, and we would wish to see better integration between transport and key services. The Strategy prioritises active travel and public transport ahead of private motor vehicles and states the need to change the way we travel, with fewer cars on our roads, and more people using public transport, walking or cycling.

Whilst we support the Strategy's aim to 'reduce the need for people to use their cars on a daily basis',<sup>2</sup> some people depend on a car as the only practical form of independent transport, including older people that may experience mobility issues, or for carers, and for those living in rural areas where public transport is sparse. Continuing to drive may be crucial for older people to get out and about, access essential services such as health care, and reduce the risk of social isolation, particularly in rural areas.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/llybr-newydd-wales-transport-strategy-2021-full-strategy\\_0.pdf](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/llybr-newydd-wales-transport-strategy-2021-full-strategy_0.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

To encourage people to use public transport, reliable, accessible and sustainable public transport services need to be available, with good connections and ease of connection between the different forms of transport and travel. In Age Cymru's 2025 annual survey of people aged 50 and over in Wales, transport challenges were recorded in all local authorities across Wales,<sup>3</sup> impacting both rural and urban areas. Several respondents described bus services as 'poor', noting the reduced frequency of buses, cuts to routes and the unreliability of existing services. A lack of bus services in the evenings and on Sundays and bank holidays was also a commonly reported problem. All of these issues can have an impact on a person's ability to live a healthy, active and sociable life.

The Bus Services (Wales) Act 2026 establishes a new legislative framework to support the delivery of local bus services as part of a wider 'one network, one timetable, one ticket' reform of public transport in Wales.<sup>4</sup> The Act imposes a duty on Welsh Ministers to identify the local bus services required for the purpose of providing safe, integrated, sustainable, efficient and economic transport in Wales, and requires them to consult on, and publish, a Welsh Bus Network Plan.<sup>5</sup>

Welsh Government and Transport for Wales must work with local authorities, Corporate Joint Committees and bus operators to ensure the stability of provision and maintenance of vital bus services through the timely implementation of the Bus Services (Wales) Act 2026. Transport for Wales and local authorities must ensure that older people are involved in meaningful regional consultation and engagement relating to the preparation and development of the bus network plan as the system is rolled out across Wales.

Accessing public transport can present significant physical problems for many older people. Some older people are able to walk short distances and stand for short periods only, so more bus stops and shelters with seating would help to make public transport more accessible. Local authorities remain responsible for providing and maintaining bus stop and bus station infrastructure, and we welcome that Transport for Wales is developing national bus stop infrastructure guidance to ensure consistent standards at bus stops and stations across Wales.<sup>6</sup> Accessibility problems at railway stations include stairs to platforms and a lack of lifts. We welcome proposals for improvements at rail stations for step-free access, better waiting rooms, shelters, toilets, lighting and seating.<sup>7</sup>

It is essential that the purchasing of tickets and the availability of information relating to public transport services are easily accessible both online and offline, as some older people are not able to access online information and may not have smart phones. It is important that Welsh Government's Accessible and Inclusive public transport objectives<sup>8</sup> are implemented.

Community transport schemes provide an essential lifeline for many older people, especially in rural areas. Levels of public funding allocated to community transport must be closely

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<sup>3</sup> [Age Cymru | Annual survey](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Bus Services \(Wales\) Bill: overview | GOV.WALES](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Bus Services \(Wales\) Bill – Bill Summary](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Our roadmap to bus reform](#)

<sup>7</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2021/10/4/1633593161/age-friendly-wales-our-strategy-ageing-society.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://beta.gov.wales/accessible-and-inclusive-public-transport-objectives>

monitored by the Welsh Government to ensure stability of provision and maintenance of vital services.

Age Cymru supports the aims of active travel for older people, in light of the documented health and social, as well as environmental, benefits that this can bring to individuals. To enable active travel, it is essential that local authorities ensure that the built environment in communities is safe and inclusive. Welsh Government has recently consulted on the updated Active Travel Act Guidance (ATAG).<sup>9</sup> Older people have raised concerns about the use of shared routes for walking and cycling, and cycle track continuity at bus stops whereby people have to cross cycle lanes to access buses. We welcome the inclusion of Placemaking principles in the Guidance with reference to regular seating and accessible toilets.

A car may become the only practical form of independent transport for many older people. It remains a major concern that a broad exemption for financial services in the Equality Act 2010 may restrict older people's access to essential products including motor insurance, making it harder for older people to shop around for the best products. The UK Government must reconsider the financial services exemption from the ban on harmful age discrimination.

For those who drive, stopping driving can be a major life event. Accessible and good quality transport options are therefore important to help facilitate older people through this major life transition.<sup>10</sup> At the time of writing, the Department for Transport is consulting on potentially moving away from the current self-declaration system for eyesight standards for drivers aged 70 and over, and introducing mandatory eyesight tests for drivers aged 70 and over as part of the driving licence renewal process.<sup>11</sup>

## **Summary of public policy proposals**

- Welsh Government must ensure that its Accessible and Inclusive Public Transport Objectives are implemented and monitored.
- Welsh Government and Transport for Wales must work with local authorities, Corporate Joint Committees and bus operators to ensure the stability of provision and maintenance of vital bus services through the timely implementation of the Bus Services (Wales) Act 2026.
- Transport for Wales and local authorities must ensure that older people are involved in meaningful regional consultation and engagement relating to the preparation and development of the bus network plan as the system is rolled out across Wales.
- Welsh Government must work with Transport for Wales, Corporate Joint Committees, local authorities and community and public transport providers to support a sustainable, integrated and inclusive transport network across Wales to ensure that older people remain connected to communities and services. Engagement with health boards across Wales is needed to develop effective, co-ordinated transport links to enable older people to access vital health services.
- Given its importance to older people, the Welsh Government must continue to support the concessionary bus travel scheme for all older and disabled people.

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<sup>9</sup> [Active Travel Act Guidance \(ATAG\) | GOV.WALES](#)

<sup>10</sup> Age UK & ILC-UK (2015) The Future of Transport in an Ageing Society. George Holley-Moore and Helen Creighton.

<sup>11</sup> [Introducing mandatory eyesight testing for older drivers - GOV.UK](#)

- Welsh Government and Transport for Wales must ensure that work on improving accessibility and facilities at rail stations is completed as soon as possible.
- Transport for Wales must ensure that both online and offline means are available and accessible for purchasing tickets for rail travel.
- Further investment is needed to improve existing bus stops so that they are accessible to older people. Transport for Wales must ensure that the national bus stop infrastructure guidance to ensure consistent standards at bus stops and stations across Wales is implemented as soon as possible.
- Comprehensive information about public transport services must be accessible and available in various formats. Online information needs to be high quality and easy to use, whilst information provided in other formats must be of equal quality and fully accessible.
- Welsh Government must closely monitor funding allocated to community transport and ensure stability of provision and maintenance of vital services.
- Welsh Government should ensure that successful models of demand-responsive transport are replicated and supported by local authorities to ensure their sustainability.
- Local authorities should ensure that walking and cycle routes are segregated wherever possible and should adhere to the Active Travel Act Guidance. Where consideration is being given to their introduction, there must be meaningful consultation with disabled and older people.
- Local authorities should ensure that cycle lanes are aligned away from bus stops. Where cycle track continuity at bus stops currently exists, push button crossings should be provided at such bus stops to help ensure the safety of both bus passengers and cyclists.
- Local authorities must adopt and monitor the implementation of 'Placemaking principles' in accordance with the Active Travel Act Guidance to help ensure that communities are accessible and inclusive and to promote active travel.
- Local authorities must ensure that streets are safe and accessible, with good lighting. Pedestrian crossings must allow sufficient time to cross roads, and pavements must be well maintained and free of obstruction.
- The UK Government must reconsider the financial services exemption from the ban on harmful age discrimination, with reference to the Equality Act 2010.

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