



# freedom never gets old

## MASTER EDITORIAL CONTENT

### WHAT IS THE CAMPAIGN?

**Freedom Never Gets Old** is a new campaign designed to encourage people entitled to the English National Concessionary bus pass in Lincolnshire to get back on their bus services in the wake of the COVID pandemic. The campaign rolls out in August and will be actively promoted throughout the summer and autumn of 2022.

As people resume more familiar daily routines including shopping, seeing friends, accessing important services, and the simple enjoyment of travelling around our beautiful Lincolnshire landscapes and market towns, it is evident that many are missing out on free bus travel.

Older people were among those who experienced the longest and most severe restrictions during the pandemic and are now in need of support and encouragement to reconnect with bus services.

Many have found either alternative methods of travel or have had to limit accessing essential elements of daily life. These new routines may result missing the benefits of bus travel such as companionship, independence, social inclusion, saving money, and ultimately freedom. These are some of the key messages of the campaign.

**The Freedom Never Gets Old campaign** will be seen at bus stops and shelters, libraries, supermarkets, parish noticeboards, community venues and via social media platforms such as NextDoor, parish websites, Facebook and Twitter.

## **THE MANY BENEFITS OF FREE BUS TRAVEL**

**The Freedom Never Gets Old campaign** aims to reassure, enable and inform bus pass holders about free bus travel, explaining how the bus pass is a brilliant benefit and have a positive impact on their lives that won't cost them a penny.

**Saving Money** – Managing finances during the cost of living crisis is difficult and particularly for people who rely solely on a state pension. Using a bus pass and traveling for free can save money on petrol, parking, taxi fares or paying friends or family for car journeys.

**Mental health and wellbeing** – Saving money is always a bonus and it certainly helps reduce financial worries. Many people still have anxieties about going out and about after the pandemic and building confidence can take time. But there is no doubting the benefits of getting out in the community, connecting with people and places, having something to look forward to during the week or taking a walk. Making new friends and joining a coffee or lunch club can remind older people of life before Covid, as well as improving mental agility and well-being.

**Preventing loneliness** – Getting on a bus can be a social activity from saying hello to the driver, meeting and making friends to positives of 'changing scenery' by visiting neighbouring villages to market towns. Spending time with other people on the bus or a simple "Hello" can begin to ease a sense of isolation and create friendships and companionship and open minds to a more positive attitude.

**Access to services** - Bus service can't get people to every location in a county as large as Lincolnshire but there are certain essential services such as hospitals, supermarkets and doctors' surgeries that bus services - especially in conjunction with Demand Responsive bus services such as CallConnect and ConnectBus- can access. They may miss important appointments due to a reluctance to drive outside of their normal area or they may have limited access to help. Planning a journey by bus may seem daunting but with the help of the Transport Helpline - 0345 456 4474 - many journeys using a bus pass are possible.

**Sense of purpose and value to communities** – Retired people are vital in the voluntary sector for many organisations. In addition, they support younger people in everything from child-minding to giving face-to-face support. It is important that people stay connected, and the bus service can help.

**Helping protect bus services** - Bus service need passengers. Bus services are only as stable as the number of people getting on board. Although bus pass holders do not pay fares, their journeys are subsidised by the local transport authority and therefore support the bus operator.

## HOW TO GET YOUR BUS PASS

It is easy to work out if you are eligible for a free concessionary bus pass through the English National Concessionary travel scheme; you must have reached the national retirement age and be eligible for a state pension. (NB Different rules apply to different regions of the UK).

The best way to find out if you are eligible is to check locally and there are easy ways to do that. Lincolnshire County Council, for instance, allows you to apply, renew and check eligibility via its website ([live link](#)). You can apply online or by telephone. You will receive your pass within 10 working days. At peak times this may take longer. There isn't a charge to apply for or renew an older person's pass or disability bus pass (a charge is made to replace lost bus passes).

Your bus pass gives you free travel on off-peak scheduled bus services in England. In Lincolnshire you can have the extra benefit of free local journeys before 9.30am - if the journey originated in Lincolnshire.

You can use your bus pass on all local bus services in England but there are some exceptions listed below. These are classed as non-standard service:

- services where most seats can be reserved (for example, National Express or other long-distance services)
- rail replacement services
- park and ride services
- coach excursions and tours
- taxis and private hire cars/community schemes
- trains
- certain seasonal services



## KEY MESSAGES

Here are additional key messages that can be used along with copy and/or graphics to support **The Freedom Never Gets Old** campaign.

GET ON BOARD  
& USE YOUR  
**FREE BUS PASS**

**STILL PAYING FOR  
PARKING & PETROL?**  
APPLY FOR YOUR  
FREE BUS PASS TODAY

**£100 A TANK. £0 A TICKET**  
APPLY FOR YOUR  
FREE BUS PASS TODAY

**WHERE WILL  
YOU GO NEXT**  
WITH YOUR  
FREE BUS PASS?