

# ITEM 6

## Disabled People's Diversity Forum Update from previous meeting

### **57/07 Concessionary Travel Pass**

The Chair has written to the Secretary of State on behalf of the Forum raising the concerns expressed regarding the new national concessionary travel arrangements. A copy of the letter is attached.

The Right Hon. Ruth Kelly MP  
Secretary of State for Transport  
Department of Transport  
Great Minster House  
76 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DR

*Your Reference*

*Our Reference*  
PC/R Kelly MP

*Date*  
15 February 2008

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Councillor Prem S Chera

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Dear Secretary of State

## **NATIONAL CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL SCHEME**

I write as Chair of Derby City Council's, Disabled People's Diversity Forum (DPDF), and the Council's, Disabled People's Champion. The Forum being a meeting of elected Members of the Council, and disabled people representing a cross section of local organisations of disabled people in Derby.

At the last meeting of the forum members received a report from the Council's, Senior Public Transport Co-ordinator about the introduction of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme.

Currently, Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council and the District Councils have a partnership arrangement for the delivery of concessionary travel within the County. Forum members expressed their support for a scheme, which had deliver and enhanced the travel opportunities and choices for local older and disabled people.

Forum members were generally supportive of the principle of a national travel scheme, but concerned that the national criteria would deliver reduced concessionary provisions, and eligibility criteria for Derby older and disabled people travelling within Derbyshire. Further concerns were:

- The terminology used in the entitlement criteria was seen as offensive, particularly the definition for people with learning difficulties. This point was supported by UMBRELLA a local organisation of people with disabled children, who had received complaints from parents about the poor terminology.
- The long standing benefit of free travel for people enduring mental health illness would be lost

- The loss of the peak time concession would result in prohibitively expensive travel for disabled employees, voluntary workers, people with learning difficulties on work experience placement and representatives of disabled people's organisations attending meetings and so on.
- That people enduring mental illness, Blue Badge holders and people in receipt of middle or higher rate Disability Living Allowance were now not eligible for the national concession, when previously they qualified under the Derbyshire scheme.
- The eligibility criteria for hearing impairment did not state whether the average dbHL of 95+dbHL for profoundly deaf people or 70-95 dbHL for severely deaf is a score of both ears is used, or if each ear is tested individually
- Incidents were reported of doctors charging to provide proof of disability or some even refusing to sign the forms at all. This point was again supported by UMBRELLA.
- The lack of additional funding that has been made available to the City Council and the other councils in the Derbyshire scheme which is insufficient to cover the cost of the new national scheme.

The points above illustrate the concerns expressed by DPDF members about the new national concessionary travel arrangements, which I share. The Forum asked me as their Chair to write to you with these concerns, and seek an assurance from you that you would consider and address the detailed and important points raise.

The next meeting of the Forum is 6 March 2008 and it would be helpful to be able to report your response at that meeting.

Yours Sincerely

Councillor Prem Chera  
Chair, Disabled People's Diversity Forum and Disabled People's Champion