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Transport Barriers facing Young People

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The Intergenerational Foundation:

The Intergenerational Foundation (www.if.org.uk) is an independent, non-party-political charity that exists to protect the rights of younger and future generations in British policy-making.

Whilst increasing longevity is to be welcomed, our changing national demographic and expectations of entitlement are placing increasingly heavy burdens on younger and future generations. From housing, health and education to employment, taxation, pensions, voting, spending, transport and environmental degradation, younger generations are under increasing pressure to maintain the intergenerational compact whilst losing out disproportionately to older, wealthier cohorts. IF questions this status quo, calling instead for sustainable long-term policies that ensure younger and future generations are better protected by policy-makers.

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Campaign for Better Transport:

Campaign for Better Transport's vision is a country where communities have affordable transport that improves quality of life and protects the environment. Achieving our vision requires substantial changes to UK transport policy which we aim to achieve by providing well-researched, practical solutions that gain support from both decision-makers and the public.

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Executive summary

- More than a million young people are not in any employment, education or training.
- Two million young people are from low-income households and young people's debts and living costs are rising due, for example, to the increase in tuition fees.
- Young and older people have the least access to cars but young people make more journeys by bus and travel a longer distance by bus than any other age group.
- Whilst bus passes for older people are protected by statute, concessionary fares for young people, which are discretionary, have seen cuts by local authorities.
- The percentage of under-20s with a driving licence is dropping steadily; one of the factors is the high costs of driving and insurance.
- Meanwhile bus fares have risen much more than inflation since 2005.
- **Younger people are travelling 21% less than they were 15 years ago** but are having to travel further for essential journeys.
- Cuts in bus services, the location of jobs in places not served by public transport, the lack of evening bus services and rising bus fares make travelling to local jobs impossible for many young people.
- Job centres require frequent signing on, the bus fares for which eat into job seekers' allowances.
- Cost, rather than availability of, transport present most problems for young people following the withdrawal of the Educational Maintenance Allowance.

IF recommends:

- The 2013 spending round should not result in young people being further priced off public transport, or more cuts being made in bus services.
- National free bus fares for young people and job seekers.
- The DfT Better Bus Areas fund should encourage bidders to improve the offer for young people in their areas as part of moves to introduce tickets and passes that cover more than one operator
- Support by the planning system for the retention and creation of jobs in places served by public transport.
- Co-operation between job centres, local authorities, schools, colleges and transport operators to give people better information on public transport.
- Recognition of transport as a barrier to getting young people into work.



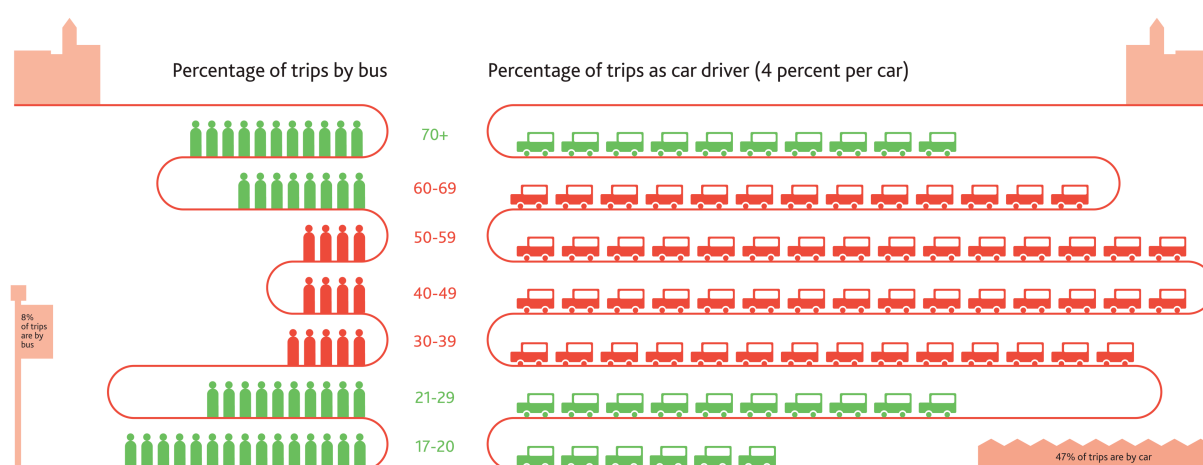
Introduction

Young people are under pressure. At the end of 2012 nearly a million, or one in five, 16-24 year olds were unemployed¹ and more than a million young people are not in any employment, education or training.² Young people are almost three times as likely to be jobless as older adults.³ Those in higher education are burdened by levels of debt that are increasing as the cost of tuition rises. Students who started university in England in 2012/13 will graduate with an average student loan debt of over £40,000.⁴ The incomes of young people in employment have to be stretched further as income levels stagnate and living costs rise. Over 2 million young people come from low income households.⁵

Transport is an important part of the solutions to these problems. Transport allows access to employment, education, and training. Transport must be affordable. The cost of transport can determine whether young people can travel to a job interview and sometimes even to a job centre. Low incomes must be shared between transport and other essentials.

The travel patterns of young people and people in the oldest age groups are similar: both make fewer journeys than average and are more likely to rely on bus services. People under 20 years old and over 70 years old are also more likely to walk than other age groups.

Bus and car use By age



Older people (and those with disabilities) have statutory concessionary travel schemes that meet all their local public transport costs. But provision for young people is patchy and is at the discretion of the local authority or the local bus operator. For those at college, help with costs can be inadequate and since the abolition of the Educational Maintenance Allowance, depends on bursary schemes awarded at the discretion of the college.

¹ <http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/sn05871>

² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-20444524>

³ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2013/jan/23/unemployment-rate-fell>

⁴ House of Commons Library, Student Loan Statistics, Nov.2012,

⁵ <http://www.jrf.org.uk/austerity-spotlight-young-people>



Transport services themselves are under pressure as public spending is squeezed. For the tenth year in a row, the Government has required that train fares rise by more than the rate of inflation. Meanwhile declining levels of central and local government funding have placed additional upward pressure on bus fares and led to cuts in discretionary concessions on bus travel for young people. Many bus services have been reduced or entirely removed.

These pressures are likely to increase. Local authority revenue expenditure, which subsidises many marginal bus services essential for vulnerable groups, may be further reduced following the next spending review as the Government seeks to increase capital at the expense of revenue spending (known as “resource” spending in central government departments).

This means that funding to help with the costs of travel is under pressure. Politicians have committed to protecting the statutory concessionary fares scheme for older people, at least until the 2015 election. But the underfunding of the statutory fares scheme, the pressure on both local authority and central government resource budgets and pressures on commercial bus services are all likely to mean that public transport becomes less available and affordable for young people. Already, far more is spent on the statutory national concessionary fares scheme for older people than discretionary fares schemes for young people.

Further difficulties in the transport conditions faced by young people can be expected. On the one hand there is a rising tide of expectation to continue in education. 17 year olds will be required to remain in some form of education or training from this year and 18 year olds from 2015. Further education colleges are being consolidated and their catchment areas are growing, increasing journey lengths and the need to travel. On the other hand the transport offer to young people by local bus companies and local authorities (either through school or college transport, concessionary travel or supported services) is being withdrawn. The juxtaposition of the two is causing real and growing problems.

Expecting young people to travel by car if public transport continues to increase in cost or decline in availability will not be an answer. Apart from the impact of higher traffic levels on air quality, carbon emissions and congestion, the cost of travelling by car will rise further as insurance, petrol and other motoring costs, already a deterrent to growing numbers of young people, continue to increase. There is also growing evidence that younger people do not see cars as the aspirational objects they once were when compared to other goods like smart phones.

Meeting the transport needs of young people must involve reducing the damaging impact that travel and transport conditions have had on their lives and must allow them to establish the travel patterns that will allow carbon reduction aspirations to be met. Central government, local councils and bus operators need to reach agreement on how to improve the offer for young people and tackle the kinds of problems this report identifies.

Young people themselves are taking action with the Youth Select Committee setting out its recommendations to Government ministers on the action it thinks is needed. But decision makers too often ignore the views of younger and poorer people and develop policies for those older and richer people with whom they have more in common. It is time that transport policy ensured that different generations are treated fairly so that transport is an enabler of opportunity rather than a barrier to progress for young people.



About the report

This report draws mainly on three sources: a literature review of recent research; National Travel Survey and other data published by the Department for Transport; and work recently undertaken by Campaign for Better Transport sometimes in conjunction with other organisations.

Our definition of young people

The United Nations defines young people as being between the ages of 15 and 24. The National Travel Survey uses the age groups: less than 17; 17 to 20; and 21 to 29. This paper focuses mainly on 17-20 year olds but draws also on aspects of the travel of children and young adults where this is helpful.

The report contains a number of comparisons of the travel behaviour of young people and older people and the relevant provision for each. The term 'older people' generally refers here to those in the two oldest age groups used in the National Travel Survey (60-69 and 70+).

The area covered

The report uses transport statistics from the UK's Department for Transport which cover the UK as a whole. However, much transport policy and spending is devolved to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The report's discussion of transport policy is focused on England but similar pressures and issues exist in each nation, including similar challenges in terms of public spending cuts.

Transport modes

The report discusses the main transport modes used by young people but there is a special focus on buses because of their importance in young people's travel patterns.



Understanding how and why young people travel

Distance travelled and changes over time

Since the 1970s the average length of a journey has increased by over 50 per cent, from 4.7 to 7.1 miles.⁶ It has often been pointed out that mass car ownership and use and an assumption of universal car ownership have led to more dispersed land use patterns and longer journeys. Local services and amenities have become less available as car ownership and mobility have increased (though a substantial minority of households – 25 per cent overall, more or much more in some urban areas – do not own a car). Young people have to make travel decisions within a context of growing distances and journey lengths.

The lengths of the types of journeys commonly made by young people also continue to grow.⁷ While the average journey for all purposes in Great Britain increased from 6.4 to 7.1 miles between 1995/97 and 2011, education journeys increased from 2.9 to 3.5 miles, commuter journeys from 8.2 to 8.9 miles and shopping journeys from 3.9 to 4.4. The average length of a journey to visit friends increased by an even larger amount, from 8.1 to 9.8 miles.⁸

The National Travel Survey records an increase between 1995/97 and 2011 from 2.1 to 2.5 miles in the average length of a trip to school for children between the ages of 5 and 16. This has contributed to a reduction from 25 to 22 in the percentage of children who travel to school unaccompanied and from 47 to 43 per cent in those who walk to school, while those who are driven to school has gone up during that period from 29 to 33 per cent.⁹

The changes in school travel have been part of a circular process in which rising car use has meant that services have increasingly been designed around cars and often located in more remote locations, which in turn has encouraged more people to use cars, reduced the viability of public transport, made the conditions worse for walking and cycling and further encouraged car use. This has also meant that access to services has become more difficult for those who do not have access to a car, including a disproportionate number of young as well as older people. However, there are now signs that car use is falling, particularly among young people (see below), and that the circular process may be beginning to break down.

For the time being the long standing decline in accessibility continues. Accessibility Statistics 2011, published by the Department for Transport, show that: 'The index of households with good transport access (areas with either a high car ownership rate or short public transport access) to key services or work has been falling since 2007. The index fell from 100 in 2010 to 97 in 2011. As average vehicle ownership rates have not changed much between years, this suggests that public transport services have decreased, increasing travel times for users to access the services.'¹⁰

Journey lengths are not therefore the only consideration. Development may often be located in places less well served by public transport.

⁶ NTS0101, 2012

⁷ The average length of the journeys made by 17-20 year olds has also increased over the years though by a smaller amount, from 6.1 miles in 1995/97 to 6.8 in 2011. NTS0601 and NTS0605

⁸ NTS0405, 2012

⁹ NTS0613, 2012

¹⁰ Accessibility Statistics 2011, DfT 2012



The Social Exclusion Unit recorded that: ‘Transport has become more of an issue over time partly because of the growth of employment in places and at times that are not served by public transport, and which are not always close to where unemployed people live. Many of the new jobs created in recent years have been in out-of-town or suburban locations, which can be hard to reach without a car. More jobs also require evening and weekend work, when public transport services are poorer.’¹¹

Types of journey

The National Travel Survey gives a picture of personal travel patterns, how these have changed over the years and how travel differs across the age groups.

Each person now makes an average of 958 journeys a year.¹² This is about the same as it was in the early 1970s (though for roughly thirty years in between it was approximately 10 per cent more). The three youngest age groups, and the two oldest age groups, make slightly less than the average number of journeys and the 30 to 59 year old age range makes more than average¹³.

From NTS0605, Average Distance travelled by age: Great Britain, 2011 (pubd. 2012)								
Miles per person per year								
All ages	<17	17-20	21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
6,826	4,373	5,449	6,841	8,559	9,059	8,768	7,165	4,359

From a low total of 4,373 miles for the youngest age group and 5,449 miles for 17-20 year olds, the average annual distance travelled increases with age. 21-29 year olds travel roughly the average distance, 30-59 year olds substantially more than average. Travel distance peaks with the 40-49 year old group at almost 9,000 miles. It only falls back again to below average in the 70+ age group. The shorter distances travelled by younger age groups reflect the fact that many more of their destinations are local, for education or visits to friends for example, while the two youngest groups obviously travel far less for commuting or business purposes.

The largest number of journeys is made by people in the middle age groups, from 30 to 59 years old, who also travel the longest distance in total and are the most likely to travel by car.

¹¹ Making the Connections

¹² NTS0601

¹³ NTS0601, 2012



Trips per person per year by age and mode (derived from NTS0601, 2010 pubd 2012)									
	All ages	<17	17-20	21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
Total no of trips, all modes	960	861	883	934	1094	1134	1063	941	714
% of trips by mode (to nearest round figure)									
Walk	22	31	27	24	21	18	18	18	20
Bicycle	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1
Car/van driver	42	-	23	40	55	61	60	52	41
Car/van passenger	22	56	25	16	11	11	13	17	22
Other private transport	1	2	1	-	1	1	1	1	2
Bus	7	7	15	10	5	4	4	8	11
Rail	3	1	4	6	5	2	2	2	1
Taxi/mini cab	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1

Breaking trips or journeys down by mode of travel used, perhaps the most notable feature is that, taking trips as driver and passenger together, most journeys - 66 per cent averaged across the age groups - are made by car. The car is the most frequently used means of transport for every age group. This is true even of those up to 17 years old, who travel by car only as passengers, and of 17-20 year olds who are less often qualified to drive and less likely to own a car. Car travel accounts for 56, 48 and 56 per cent of journeys by the three youngest age groups, far more than any other mode, though the three youngest age groups travel by car for a smaller proportion of journeys than any other group. However, the even higher proportion of journeys made by car by the four age groups between 30 and 69 is also notable.

Number of trips per year by 17-20 year olds (derived from NTS0601, pubd 2012)					
Mode	Annual average for 1995-1997	% of total trips by each mode	2011	% of total trips by each mode	Change in % mode share 1995-1997 to 2011
Walk	309	27	218	27	0
Bicycle	30	3	15	2	-1
Car/van driver	328	29	179	22	-7
Car/van passenger	267	24	198	26	+2
Other private transport	19	2	13	2	0
Local and non-local buses	124	11	120	15	+4
Rail	29	3	40	5	+2
Taxi/minicab	23	2	21	3	1
Other public transport	4	-	3	-	-
All modes	1133	100	806	100	-29

All per centage figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

The most striking aspect of the figures in this table is the large reduction – almost 30 per cent – in the number of journeys being made by 17-20 year olds now compared to 15 years ago.



The total distance travelled by 17-20 year olds has gone down by 21 per cent over the same period.¹⁴ The population as a whole is also making fewer journeys but the reduction is much smaller – only 12 per cent.

There have also been changes in the modal share of journeys made by young people. They are making significantly fewer journeys as car drivers and significantly more by public transport, particularly by bus. These changes are likely to be bound up with increased use of mobile phones, networking online and with the increased cost of car use and are considered in more detail below.

While travel by 17-20 year olds car drivers has gone down substantially, the proportion of journeys made as car passengers has increased by two per cent. It should be stressed that this is two per cent of a smaller total and that the absolute number of car passenger journeys has also gone down. Contrary to what might be expected, there appears to have been no absolute increase in young people, 17-20 years old, travelling as passengers in cars or relying more on lifts from their parents to go to college or to work as the impacts of the recession and Government spending cuts have been felt. Rather, the opposite appears to be the case,

After travel by car, walking is the second most common mode for all age groups. The three younger age groups each make a higher proportion of journeys on foot than average, somewhere between a quarter and almost a third of all their journeys. The proportion of journeys made, on foot has remained constant over the last 15 years. The overall number of journeys made by both these means has declined. It is noteworthy that none of the younger age groups exceed the average percentage of trips made by bicycle and that the average across all age groups, at 2 per cent, is itself strikingly low.

The three youngest age groups are also distinguished from other age groups, except those above 60, in making more trips by bus. The average number of trips made by bus is raised by the travel behaviour of 17 to 29 year olds and by the two oldest age groups. 17-20 year olds make the most journeys by bus of any age group and 30 to 59 year olds the least. Bus travel may be especially important for young people, nevertheless the highest proportion of all journeys made by bus by any of the younger age groups is only 15 per cent. Other forms of public transport account for a smaller proportion of younger people's travel, between one and six per cent.

Table NTS0605

Average distance travelled by age and mode: Great Britain, 2011

Mode	All ages	<17	17-20	21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
Local and non-local buses	351	294	738	429	310	254	239	413	439

Conclusion

Young people are making fewer journeys and travelling a shorter total distance than was the case 15 years ago but they have to travel further for the journeys they make most frequently – for education and work, for shopping and to visit friends. Most of their journeys are made by car but the proportion being made by car has declined and the proportion by public transport, particularly bus, has grown. Young people use buses far more than any other age group. The proportion of journeys they make by foot is largely unchanged but the proportion by bicycle has declined.

By contrast people in the middle age groups make the most journeys and travel the longest distance. They are also the most likely to travel by car and the least likely to travel by bus.

¹⁴ NTS0605



“Peak car” hypothesis and young people

We have seen that for all age groups the car is the mode of travel for a much larger proportion of journeys than any other. This is true also for young people in the age brackets of less than 17, 17-20 and 21-29 who make respectively 56, 48 and 56 per cent of their journeys by this means. In considering young people’s travel, and travel problems, the car is far too important to ignore.

However, it has been the subject of much recent discussion that, after decades of growth, travel by car in several developed countries including the UK, US, France and Sweden may not merely have levelled off but have turned down – a moment that has been called ‘peak car’ may have occurred.¹⁵ The fall in the distance travelled by car has been much more pronounced for younger people than for the population at large. Also, although both are travelling less by car, the fall has been much steeper for young males than females.

Average distance travelled by car/van in miles per year (derived from NTS0605, pubd 2012)									
	1995/97			2011			% change 1995/97-2011		
	All ages	17-20	21-29	All ages	17-20	21-29	All ages	17-20	21-29
Car/van driver	3,623	2,268	4965	3,438	1,310	3409	- 5	- 42	- 31
Car/van passenger	2,083	2,480	2137	1,959	2,026	1625	- 6	- 18	- 24

Many explanations have been advanced for the large reduction in young people’s car travel. Some are ‘push’ factors deterring car use while others are ‘pull’ factors that suggest young people are moving towards changes in life style. Possible explanations include:

- Increased motoring costs including learning to drive, fuel, insurance and parking
- Declining full-time and rising part-time employment and the income consequences
- Declining company car travel due to tax changes
- Increasing use of the internet and smart phones instead of car travel for social reasons
- The replacement of the car by smart phones, lap-tops and tablets as aspirational objects
- Improvements in urban public transport and the rise in inner city living
- The deterrent effect of traffic congestion
- Improvements and increases in travel by rail
- A rise of car-sharing and car-clubs instead of car ownership
- Decline of traditional shopping and growth of internet shopping
- Increased cycling in some urban areas and reduction in road capacity for motor traffic especially in London
- The trend to marry and have children later.¹⁶

¹⁵ See for example Professor Goodwin, What about ‘peak car’ – heresy or revelation?, Local Transport Today, June 2010

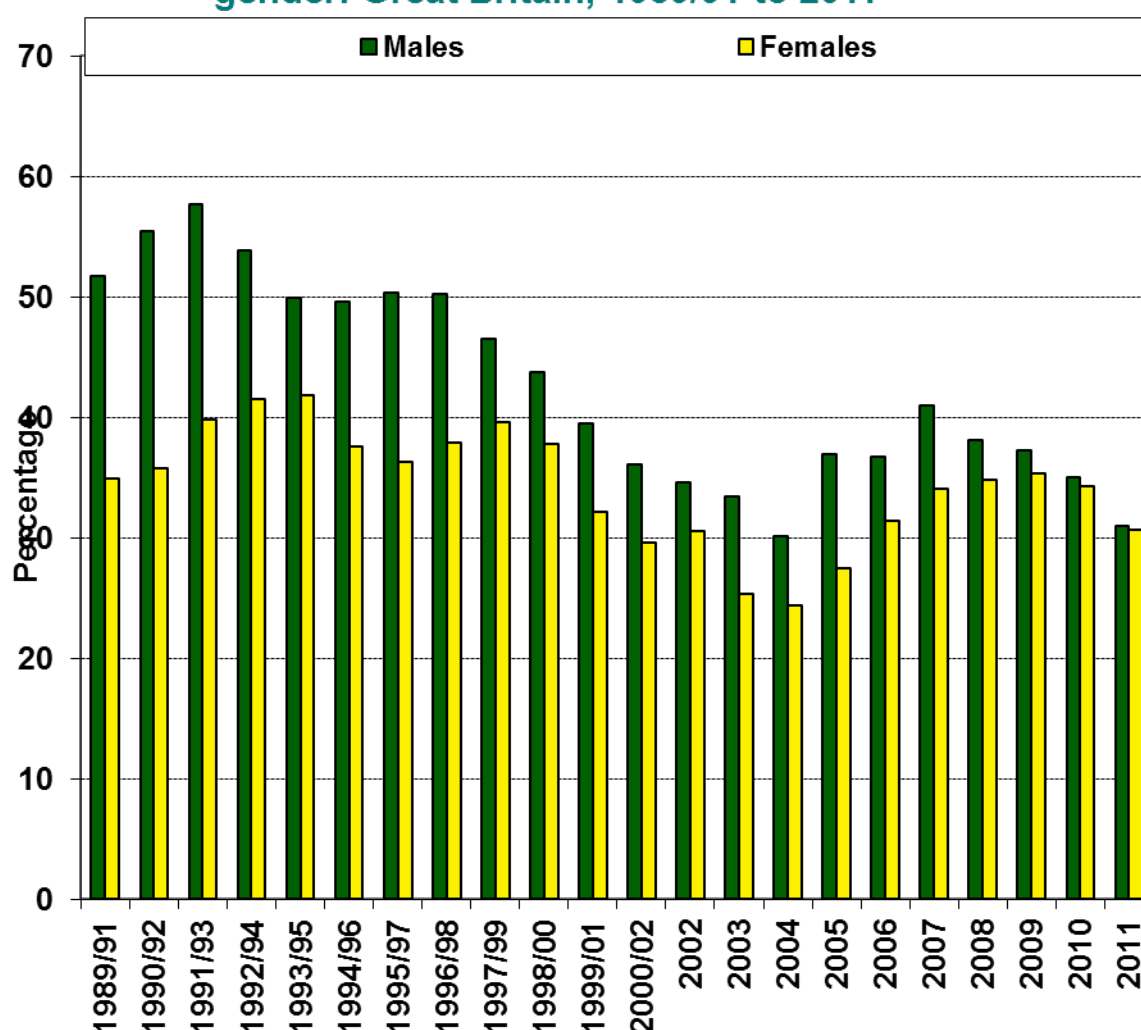
¹⁶ Explanations are partly drawn from On the Move: Making sense of car and train travel trends in Britain, Scott Le Vine and Peter Jones, RAC Foundation 2012 and The future of driving: seeing the back of the car, Economist, Sept. 2012



It is unarguable that the internet, mobile 'phones and computers have had a major impact on the lives, and thus the travel patterns, of young people. In one report, young people, referred to as Digital Natives, are said to be different to previous generations in having grown up with digital communications which have become a key part of their lives. 84 per cent of the members of a survey group reported that the internet brings communities of similar people together and 76 per cent that it ensured friends were available whenever and wherever they were needed. Young people use mobiles, televisions and lap-tops simultaneously to make complex connections to each other and to internet locations. Clearly for these people the need to travel, and to travel by car, has diminished.¹⁷

The proportion of young people who hold driving licences has also decreased substantially. Between 1992/94 and 2007 the proportion of 17-20 year olds with a licence went down from 48 per cent to 38 per cent and of 21-29 year olds from 75 to 66 per cent. Department for Transport figures show a long term decline over the last twenty years in the number of driving licence holders among the 17-20 year old age group. The decline is pronounced for males, much less so for females.

Full car driving licence holders aged 17-20 by gender: Great Britain, 1989/91 to 2011



¹⁷ Youthnet, 2009. Life Support - Young people's needs in a digital age.
<http://www.youthnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Life-Support-Report.pdf>



https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/35585/nts0202.xls.

The Department for Transport carried out a survey of the reasons for not driving among 17-20 year olds without a licence.¹⁸ The main answers given were as follows:

Cost of learning to drive	54%
Cost of insurance	34%
Cost of buying a car	33%
Family/friends drive me when necessary	29%
Other forms of transport available	20%
Not interested in driving	15%
Other general motoring costs	13%
Too busy to learn	13%
Safety concerns/Nervous about driving	8%
Physical difficulties/disabilities/health problems	5%

The discussion about why young people are driving less continues but the reduction seems likely to be caused by a combination of some or all of these factors.

One possible explanation has been considered and rejected. Although 17-20 year olds are making fewer journeys by car and fewer of them hold driving licences this does not indicate a desire to renounce driving permanently. DfT survey results show that 42 per cent of non-licence holders intend to learn to drive within the next year and 48 per cent within the next five years. Only 6 per cent say that they never intend to learn to drive.¹⁹

Line et al looked at the travel intentions of 11 to 18 year olds and found that they were “dominated by the desire to drive” and that their understanding of the connection between transport and climate change was weak. The study participants showed apathy to climate change and doubted that their transport behaviour could be effective in tackling it anyway.²⁰

Whichever explanations turn out to be most significant, one study concluded that the car no longer has the same symbolic value for young people in cities and that public transport is a more convenient means of serving the multiple destinations of an everyday lifestyle that might include, for example, university, part-time work, training, and meeting friends in a café.²¹ Another recent study found evidence that bus travel, at least in London, has become integrated in the social lives of 12-18 year olds and contributes to their independence and well-being.²² Free bus travel is key to this.

Since 2005 free bus travel in London has been available to people up to the age of 18 if they are in full-time education and possess a £10 Zip Card. This overcomes transport poverty (when access to opportunities or services is denied because of the cost of transport) allowing young people to make the most of opportunities.

¹⁸ NTS0203

¹⁹ Table NTS0204, Likelihood of non-licence holders learning to drive by age: Great Britain, 2010

²⁰ Line, T., Chatterjee, K. and Lyons, G. (2010), The travel behaviour intentions of young people in the context of climate change. *Journal of Transport Geography*

²¹ Ruud, A and Nordbakke, S. 2005, Decreasing driving licence rates among young people - consequences for local public transport.

²² Jones A et al, 2012. Rethinking passive transport: bus fare exemptions and young people's wellbeing.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22321902?dopt=Abstract>

Reported in the Evening Standard, 28 March 2013



Because it is universally available in London it overcomes any stigma that might previously have been attached to bus travel. It may also have laid the basis for future public transport use and partially accounted for the declining car travel and growing use of public transport that has been particularly marked in the capital.²³

For the three youngest age groups, the car is the means of travel in 56 to 66 per cent of journeys and in a larger proportion of miles travelled²⁴. The average journey length for <17, 17-20 and 21-29 year old age groups is 5 miles, 6.3 miles and 7.4 miles respectively. Even for car journeys alone the average length is 6.8, 8 and 9.34 miles.²⁵ For some longer journeys, the car may be the most suitable mode. Public transport alternatives may be available for journeys of any length. But many car journeys are shorter than average and for these journeys walking and cycling are obvious options.

In conclusion: car use may now have peaked and be in decline in many developed countries including the UK. The decline has been most marked in younger people, particularly younger males. The reasons for this are not yet fully understood but do not appear to be due to increased environmental awareness and an intention to renounce car use.

²³ Wilkinson, P et al (2011) The health impact of free bus travel for young people in London: protocol for an observational study *Occasional Papers in Transport and Health (2)*. London: London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

²⁴ See NTS0605

²⁵ All calculations based on figures in Tables NTS0601 and NTS0605



Transport, young people and independence

“increase in personal freedom and choice arising from widening car ownership has been gained at the cost of a loss of freedom and choice for children”

Seminal research published more than 20 years ago showed how rising car use and the subsequent increase in traffic danger had resulted in a huge reduction in children’s freedom of independent travel. It recorded a fall from 80 per cent to 9 per cent from 1971 to 1990 in the proportion of 7 and 8 year old children allowed to go to school on their own. Older children had suffered a similar loss of independence.²⁶ The report pointed out that if traffic continued to increase as the government predicted there would be even less safe space for children. The prediction has been borne out by events.

The research has just been up-dated and shows a further reduction in the independence of school children. Only one in four primary school children in England is now allowed to travel home from school alone compared with 86 per cent in 1971. English children have much less independence than their German counterparts; their loss of independence now extends to destinations other than school and to children older than primary school age. Constraints on children’s travel freedom reduce levels of physical activity, sociability and mental well-being.²⁷ Mayer Hillman, one of the authors of both these reports, who has researched this field for more than 40 years has said: “It is highly regrettable that so little attention has been paid to the damage caused by this erosion of children’s freedoms and decline in their quality of life. Far more effort needs to be invested in reversing the process that has had such an unfortunate outcome.”²⁸

Children’s loss of travel freedom has also been documented in research sponsored by Liverpool Victoria, a financial mutual friendly society, which found that 60 per cent of children aged 15 and under are not allowed to use public transport on their own, and 43 per cent cannot visit their closest park without a parent. This compared with just 2 per cent of adults who said that as children of that age they could not use public transport or travel to such local destinations as the park on their own.²⁹

The continuing trend has also been confirmed by the National Travel Survey (NTS0613) published in July 2011 which includes figures for the journey to school of children between the ages of 5 and 16 for the period 1995/97 to 2010. It records a decline from 47 to 41 in the percentage of children walking to school and from 25 to 22 in the percentage travelling to school unaccompanied. At the same time the percentage travelling to school by car rose from 29 to 33.

²⁶ Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg, 1991. One False Move...a study of children’s independent mobility. <http://john-adams.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2007/11/one%20false%20move.pdf>

²⁷ Shaw, Watson, Frauendienst, Redecker, and Jones with Hillman, 2013. Children’s Independent Mobility in England and Germany, 1971-2010, Policy Studies Institute

²⁸ Press release, Policy Studies Institute, 13 January 2013. ‘New PSI research reveals the erosion of children’s independence’

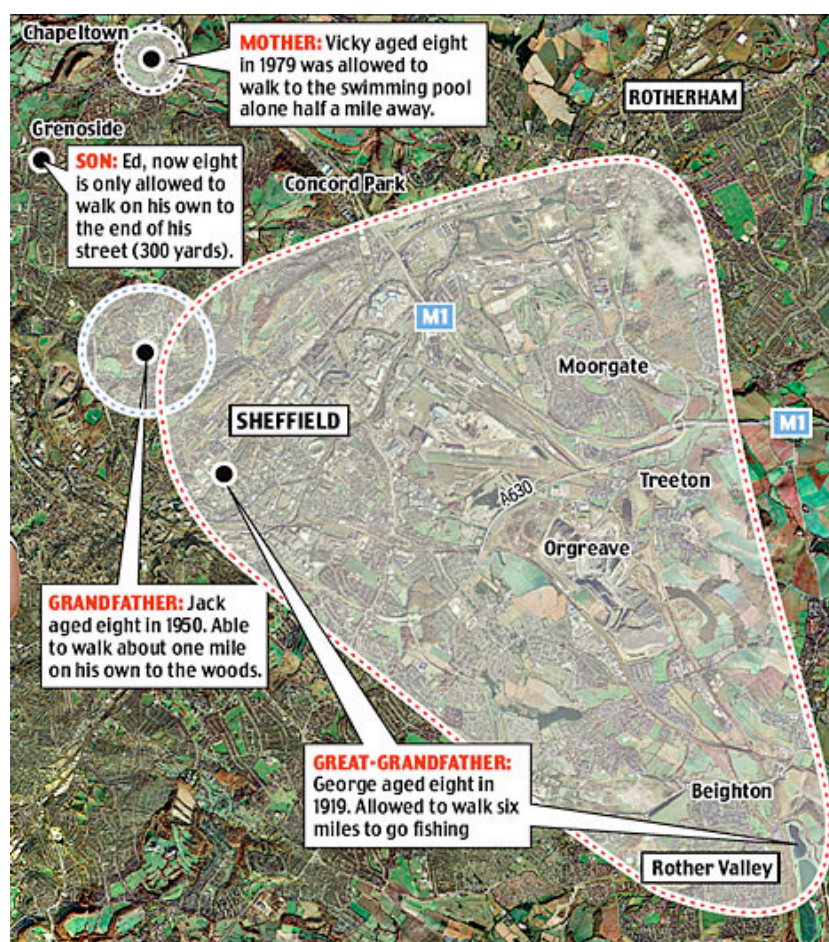
²⁹ Liverpool Victoria, press release article, 28/04/2010 ‘Today’s kids have less freedom than previous generations’ http://www.lv.com/media_centre/press_releases/todays-kids-have-less-freedom



The fall in both the number of journeys and the proportion of journeys, made by bicycle by young people is a related factor. DfT statistics document a continuing decline.

Cycle journeys (derived from NTS0601)				
	<17		17-20	
	No. of journeys	% of all journeys	No. of journeys	% of all journeys
1995/97	21	2.2%	30	2.6%
2011	15	1.8%	15	1.9%

Even in London “the proportion of children cycling to school in London has fallen” according to the Mayor’s Cycling Commissioner for London³⁰ despite a large increase in the amount of cycling in the capital – cycling on London’s main roads has increased by 173 per cent since 2001³¹ – and substantial expenditure on cycle training. The comparison with the Netherlands is made by Cyclists in the City, a widely respected London cycling blog: “Dutch kids (and especially teenagers) seem to have been granted massively more independence than their UK counterparts, in part thanks to safe, easy-to-use bike infrastructure.”³² The dramatic drawing in of children’s travel horizons was well illustrated in an article for the Daily Mail.³³



³⁰ Quoted in the Cyclists in the City blog, 9 April, 2013
<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?shva=1#inbox/13df005990eeacab>

³¹ The Mayor’s Vision for Cycling in London, 2013

³² Cyclists in the City blog, 9 April, 2013

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?shva=1#inbox/13df005990eeacab>

³³ Daily Mail 2007, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-462091/How-children-lost-right-roam-generations.html>



Young people's ability to use public transport has also become a matter of concern. For some (particularly but not only those with learning difficulties or disabilities), this can be about working out bus timetables. A report, *Barriers to Participation in Education and Training*, published in 2008 for the Department for Education, found that a sizeable proportion of young people found it difficult to work out the times of buses and trains and that more needed to be done to make young people confident in using public transport.³⁴

Buses Matter, published by Campaign for Better Transport in 2011, pointed out how buses can help young people take their first steps to independence and are important for personal development and in creating the experience that encourages public transport use later in life, thus reducing future car use. Both this report and *Barriers to Education* stressed that the availability, and equally important, the cost of bus services can make the difference between taking up education and training opportunities and 'becoming a NEET statistic' (Not in employment, education or training).³⁵

Other research commissioned by Campaign for Better Transport, looked at the social exclusion impact of cutting bus services at two urban edge locations with few facilities nearby. The research showed that the bus cuts meant that people including young people, were less able to get to local shops and employment, to meet friends and conduct social lives and to lead more independent lives. This loss of independence meant that they were less able to "get on" rather than just "get by" with a danger that they would be trapped in welfare dependency and isolation.³⁶

The typical picture is that now, unlike in the past, people emerge from childhood and embark on youth and then to adulthood with limited experience of independent travel, with their freedom to travel on foot and by bicycle increasingly circumscribed and with a background of having had to rely on others to accompany them, often by car, wherever they have needed or wanted to go. Many then find the facilities for independent travel inadequate; for them youth can be a period of waiting for the age and resources to arrive for travelling in their own cars. Youth, for many, is the gap years between being taken by car as children and taking to cars as adults when age and resources allow.

Disenchantment with traffic and transport conditions may be something that young people today have grown up with.

³⁴ Spielhofer et al, 2008. *Barriers to Participation in Education and Training*. National Foundation for Educational Research. <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RR009.pdf>

³⁵ *Buses Matter*, 2011. Campaign for Better Transport

³⁶ Campaign for Better Transport, 2012, *Transport, Accessibility and Social Exclusion*



Young people's views about transport

For a long time transport has come at or near the top of young people's concerns. This was documented by the British Youth Council and National Children's Bureau (NCB) which cited the views expressed by a large group of young people to the Children and Young People's Unit in 2003. Transport was the top concern of the Young NCB membership in 2006. The NCB focussed on three main transport issues: access, cost and safety.³⁷

In 2010, the British Youth Council and NCB surveyed the views on transport safety of 240 people under the age of 18. They found that many children and young people feel that public transport is unsafe both while waiting to travel and when travelling, particularly if travelling alone and after dark. In addition, many find the costs of public transport prohibitive and work, education, health services, social and sporting activities are often inaccessible, particularly for young people with disabilities and for those in rural areas.³⁸

Last year the Annual Council of the British Youth Council chose Safe and Affordable Public Transport as one of its four campaigns with the following three main demands:

- safer and cleaner public transport for all young people
- fairer bus fares for young people
- improved public transport services.³⁹

Following a nationwide poll of over 65,000 young people which identified transport as one of the five top issues of concern, the UK Youth Parliament selected the campaign to 'Make public transport cheaper, better and accessible for all' as the priority campaign for 2011/12 and called for cheaper, subsidised public transport for young people in full time education or under the age of eighteen, with fares set at no more than half the adult fares. Young people across the country were encouraged to campaign on the issue and a campaign pack was produced providing sources of information and assistance.⁴⁰

The importance of public transport for younger people has also been confirmed by pteg, which represents the interests of the six Passenger Transport Executives in England;

"Public transport is central to the lives of many young people and their families. When asked what issues affect them, public transport is frequently at the top of young people's list of concerns. They rely upon public transport, and the bus in particular, to reach a whole host of valuable opportunities, from attainment boosting after-school activities and weekend jobs to visiting friends and volunteering in the community. Access to these opportunities is crucial to their growth and development."⁴¹

Many of the young people contributing to the views of the British Youth Council, the NCP and the Youth Parliament were younger than eighteen and therefore mostly too young to drive and unlikely to have their own cars in any case. For that reason it is not surprising that their concern focused mainly on one mode of independent travel that is available to them: public transport.

³⁷ The British Youth Council and NCB survey of under 18s on transport safety. 2010.
http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/114827/transport_survey_2.pdf

³⁸ The British Youth Council and NCB survey of under 18s on transport safety. 2010

³⁹ <http://www.byc.org.uk/campaigns/safe-and-affordable-public-transport.aspx>

⁴⁰ UK Youth Parliament, 2012. Make public transport cheaper, better and accessible for all.

<http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/campaign/create-debate-safe-affordable-public-transport/>

⁴¹ pteg 2012. Moving On: working towards a better public transport offer for young people in tough times.

<http://www.pteg.net/NR/rdonlyres/A9AB6C4C-929D-470E-A440-A2C14648F133/0/MovingonreportFINALweb.pdf>



The UK Youth Parliament's 2013 Manifesto noted that cycling can be dangerous, called for free cycling proficiency courses and stated that 'we want young people to be able to safely take advantage of this free and healthy means of transport'.⁴² But it is surprising young people have not expressed greater concern that the conditions for walking and cycling are so unfavourable. It appears to be the case that, in the words of a study commissioned by the Department of Transport:

"Health and the environment did not seem to play a significant role in the choices young people made about transport."⁴³

⁴² Youth Parliament Manifesto 2013,
<http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/BYC-UKYP-manifesto-2013.pdf>

⁴³ Department for Transport, 2007. Understanding the Travel Aspirations, Needs and Behaviour of Young Adults.
<http://www.liftshare.com/business/pdfs/dft-young%20adults.pdf>



Why transport matters to young people

Our transport system and the ways in which we support people's access to it matter to young people in a variety of ways.

Access to employment

"Access to work: Two out of five jobseekers say lack of transport is a barrier to getting a job. One in four jobseekers say that the cost of transport is a problem getting to interviews. One in four young people have not applied for a particular job in the last 12 months because of transport problems."⁴⁴

Travel and transport difficulties have long been recognised as a problem in accessing employment. The 2003 Social Exclusion Unit report on transport recorded the response from an evaluation of the New Deal for Young People showing that three different access problems accounted for fully two-thirds of the difficulties encountered by young people looking for work: 'no jobs nearby', 'lack of personal transport' and 'lack of public transport'.⁴⁵ Nearly two-thirds of people claiming income support or jobseeker's allowance do not have access to a car or a licence to drive it.⁴⁶

Problems experienced by young people seeking work⁴⁷

Problems	Percentage reporting the problem
No problems	31
No jobs nearby	29
Lack of personal transport	25
Own ill health or disability	17
Lack of references from previous employer	15
Debt or money problems	12
Lack of public transport	12
Problems with the law or previous record	8
No permanent place to live	5
Illness of another member of the family	5
Problems with drugs or alcohol	3
Lack of childcare or affordable childcare	2

These problems contributed to a situation where a quarter of 16-25 year olds had not applied for **any** job in the previous 12 months because of the transport difficulties they would face in getting there.

⁴⁴ Social Exclusion Unit, 2003, Making the Connections: Final report on transport and social exclusion

⁴⁵ Social Exclusion Unit, 2003, Making the Connections: Final Report on Transport and Social Exclusion, reporting data from Bryson et al, New Deal for Young People: national survey of participants

⁴⁶ Survey findings from: Easing the transition into work (part 2 – client survey), Stephen Woodland, William Mandy and Melissa Miller for DWP, 2003 <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rrep186.pdf>

⁴⁷ Bryson et al, 2000. New Deal for Young People. Quoted in Making the Connections. Fig1.2



The problems persist. Last year, using data gathered by Citizen Bureau, Campaign for Better Transport reported on transport difficulties faced by job-seekers on low incomes (including many young people). The difficulties were particularly severe for those living in rural areas. Five main problems were identified:

- The location of job centres causes difficulties for those in rural areas, particularly when Jobcentre Plus offices insist on weekly or daily signing-on and when offices have closed permanently. The return fare to visit the job centre can be as much as £6 or £7 – a substantial proportion of the job seeker’s allowance
- Those living in rural areas without access to a car face particular difficulties in finding work due to poor transport provision and a lack of affordable social housing located nearer to employment opportunities. Those on low incomes may also be reluctant to move nearer to jobs due to their informal networks of support or family commitments in the area where they live
- Housing and jobs available to those on low incomes are often in locations that are more difficult to serve by public transport
- Weekend and evening services are being cut back making it difficult for those working shifts outside the core nine to five Monday to Friday working week
- Jobcentre Plus offices do not always recognise the difficulties that those reliant on public transport face and impose unreasonable sanctions on job seekers whose transport difficulties make it difficult for them to find work⁴⁸

Last year, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation published research on the difficulties faced in particular by young people seeking work, focusing on those from disadvantaged areas looking for low-skilled jobs. This found that: “Transport is a particularly important issue. While most of the jobseekers we spoke to were very willing to travel, more than half of the identified vacancies would have been difficult to get to for jobseekers living in deprived neighbourhoods if they did not have access to a car and were reliant on public transport. Employers tended to express a preference for people living nearby, especially for jobs involving non-standard hours. This suggests that policies that require people to look further afield for work, while encouraging a proactive attitude, will not necessarily succeed in getting more people into employment.”⁴⁹ The report pointed out that during 2011 the maximum time that people receiving jobseekers allowance could be required to spend travelling (both ways) was increased from 60 to 90 minutes.

The Rowntree Foundation also found that relying only on public transport halved the number of employment vacancies that could be reached and that “having a driving licence and access to a car may be an important element in enhancing employability, especially for work at sites poorly served by public transport or for jobs with antisocial hours.” Evidence of “preference by employers for workers who lived close to the workplace” was widespread. “Improvement of (public) transport links and information about links,” it therefore concluded “is important to maintaining and improving access to employment.”

Having access to a private car may be necessary for travelling to many work sites but car access varies widely by age. As the following table shows, 17-20 year olds are much less likely to have a driving licence and even if they do are much less likely to be the main driver in their household where someone else has a prior claim to the car. The table shows that only 22 per cent of 17-20 year olds and 44 per cent of 21-29 year olds were the main driver in their households in 2010. The vast majority of young people, for most of the time, are dependent either on other people to give them lifts or on other modes than the car to meet their transport needs. Bus services are very important for young people’s travel to work.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Campaign for Better Transport, 2012, Transport barriers to getting a job – Evidence from Citizens Advice clients

⁴⁹ Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2012: Disadvantaged Young People Looking for Work
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/young-people-disadvantage-jobseekers-full.pdf>

⁵⁰ NTS0206 (unpublished)



Adult personal car availability by age and gender: Great Britain, 2010 Table NTS0206 (edit)								
	<i>Percentage</i>							
Adult personal car availability	17-20	21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	All people (aged 17+ years)
All people								
Persons in households without a car / van	18	28	17	13	12	15	36	20
Persons in households with a car / van	82	72	83	87	88	85	64	80
Of which:								
Main driver	22	44	62	68	67	60	43	56
Other driver	11	12	13	12	13	15	9	12
Non driver	49	17	8	7	8	10	12	13
All persons	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

This is confirmed by information from Greener Journeys, an alliance of bus and coach operators and other stakeholders to promote bus travel. This shows that young people depend on bus travel more than any other demographic group and that a fifth of 16-19 year olds use the bus to commute to work.⁵¹ Many young people have no other means than the bus of getting to work. Maintaining bus services and the affordability of bus fares is therefore a matter of keeping young people in work.

Training and education

The obstacles that transport might present to accessing education and training, because of its cost, availability, or for some other reason, have been well-researched. The Youth Select Committee report drew on research commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families in 2008 and published in 2010 (after its name had changed to the Department for Education).

This found that very few people, including most young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), considered the availability (or unavailability) of transport to be a barrier that prevented them doing what they wanted after year 11. For obvious reasons transport availability was much more likely to be mentioned as a barrier by those living in rural or other areas where public transport provision was bad or very bad.

The cost of transport, on the other hand, was often found to be a barrier. A third of young people who were NEET or in jobs without training think they would have done something else after Year 11 if they had received more assistance with travel costs.⁵²

⁵¹ Greener Journeys, 2012. Bus policy: a five point plan for growth
<http://www.greenerjourneys.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Five-Point-Plan-for-Growth-FINAL-PDF.pdf>

⁵² Spielhofer T et al , 2008, Barriers to Participation in Education and Training
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RR009.pdf>



The House of Commons Education Committee has looked at participation by 16-19 year olds in education and training and concluded that the cost of travel to places of learning frequently presented problems for young people.⁵³ These problems were magnified by the abolition in 2010 of the Educational Maintenance Allowance, which had been designed to help young people to remain in education.

The cost of public transport is considered in more detail below.

Access to services and to social interaction

The cost or availability of transport can also have a substantial impact on young people's access to services and social activities. This is a significant part of the travel undertaken by 16-19 year olds (or people of any age); the majority of journeys are for shopping, visiting friends, and other purposes that may be broadly categorised as personal business, social and recreational.⁵⁴ Journey lengths for all these purposes have been increasing: the average length of a journey to visit friends at home for example, has gone up from 8.1 to 9.8 miles between 1995/97 and 2011.

The Department for Transport data in NTS0601 considered above shows that young people make roughly a quarter of journeys on foot, over half by car (both as driver and, more often, as passenger) and most of the remainder by public transport, particularly bus. 22 per cent of all households and 44 per cent of workless households do not have access to a car. The vast majority of 17-20 year olds either do not drive (49 per cent) or live in households which do not have a car (18 per cent), or are not the main driver (11 per cent) and therefore have limited access to a car.⁵⁵ Walking becomes less of an option as journey lengths increase. Most of the destinations to which young people travel for social and recreational purposes are not served by rail. Bus services are essential for young people.

Whether there is a bus service or not, how punctual it is and how late in the evening, or at what other times of the day, the service operates, and the cost of the service, are all important considerations for young people and determine how good is their access to other services and social activities.

Impact of traffic on young people

Younger people use cars less than older age groups but suffer disproportionately, and suffered during their childhood, from the effects of car use. In the words of a report from the Sustainable Development Commission, the young are one of the more vulnerable groups which are both 'less travelled' and 'more travelled upon'.⁵⁶ This occurs in a number of ways.

The loss of the independent mobility of children because of the danger, and the fear of the danger, from increased levels of traffic has been documented above.

⁵³ House of Commons Education Committee report 2011, Participation by 16-19 year olds in education and training. <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/2011-CESC-16to19-year-olds.pdf>

⁵⁴ NTS0611

⁵⁵ DfT NTS0206 Adult personal car availability by age and gender: Great Britain, 2010
Unpublished DfT table. Saved on the server. Emailed from DfT 6 March

⁵⁶ Sustainable Development Commission, 2011. Fairness in a Car Dependent Society



This fear is not misplaced. Large numbers of children and young people are involved in road collisions and figure in road casualty statistics. The Sustainable Development Commission cites Department for Transport data showing that 28 children and young people are killed or seriously injured on the roads in the UK every day. According to its report, *Fairness in a Car Dependent Society*, on average a child in every class is killed or injured as a pedestrian, cyclist or car passenger by the age of 16 and for 14-35 year olds road collisions are the most common cause of death. In addition, it is thought by the Department for Transport, that there is substantial under-reporting of road casualties. 16-19 year olds are more likely than the average adult to be injured in a road accident.⁵⁷

As we have seen, the reduction in children's independent walking journeys has meant an increase in the journeys they make with their parents, very often by car. The number of children travelling to school by car has doubled over the last 20 years.⁵⁸ The corresponding decline in children's walking and cycling contributes to childhood obesity.

Young people's choice of housing is constrained by low incomes and the lack of affordable housing. Lower-income households, which obviously often comprise or include young people and children, live in disproportionate numbers on more heavily-trafficked roads where rents and property values are lower. There they are exposed to higher levels of air and noise pollution.

In addition many schools are located near busy roads where they are exposed to high levels of pollutants. Figures obtained from Transport for London by the campaign group Clean Air in London indicate that 1,148 schools in London are located within 150 metres, and 2,270 within 400 metres of roads each carrying over 10,000 vehicles per day.⁵⁹

Kings College, London maintains maps of London showing the levels of the two common air pollutants known to have effects on health: nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and small particles (PM₁₀).⁶⁰ The maps show wide bands on either side of the main, or busy, road network where air quality fails to meet the annual mean objective levels for NO₂. Exceedences for PM₁₀ are more localised but are also widespread and may be more serious in their long term health consequences.

American research, conducted with the participation of UK academics and claiming to be 'the most comprehensive and systematic review of the world wide traffic emissions and health science to date', concluded that although there were still substantial gaps in what was known about exposure to air pollution from traffic and its health impacts, there was sufficient evidence to show that air pollution from traffic exacerbated asthma and could cause other effects.⁶¹ The research also found evidence of a 'causal relationship' with the onset of childhood asthma. The areas most likely to be affected by polluting emissions were up to 300-500 metres from major or busy roads.

Aphecom, a European research project examining the health impacts of air pollution in 25 European cities, published its findings in 2011 and was more emphatic.⁶²

⁵⁷ Table NTS0623, Proportion of adults who have been involved in a road accident: Great Britain, 2007/10

⁵⁸ Fairness in a Car Dependent Society

⁵⁹ Clean Air in London, press release 2011, <http://cleanairinlondon.org/sources/clean-air-in-london-has-found-1148-schools-in-london-within-150-metres-of-busiest-roads/>

⁶⁰ Kings College London, website, <http://www.londonair.org.uk/london/asp/annualmaps.asp>

⁶¹ Can't find the title of this research but it's here: <http://pubs.healtheffects.org/getfile.php?u=551>

⁶² Aphecom, 2011. Improving Knowledge and Communication for Decision Making on Air Pollution and Health in Europe. http://www.aphecom.org/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=5532fafa-921f-4ab1-9ed9-c0148f7da36a&groupId=10347



Drawing on health impact assessments, the research estimated that living near heavily-trafficked roads (ie those with more than 10,000 vehicles per day) could account for 15-30 per cent of the new cases of asthma in children.

This is not a marginal issue. Over 5 million people, including 1.1 million children, suffer from asthma in the UK. On average 3 people per day die from the disease. 42 per cent of people with asthma say that traffic fumes discourage them from walking or shopping in congested areas.⁶³ In all, 30,000 people across the UK, and 4,000 people in London, died from air pollution in 2008.⁶⁴

CO2 emissions and future generations

In addition to the problems of traffic emissions damaging to health outlined above, there is also the carbon or CO2 emissions from transport which contribute to climate change. The question arises whether the high level of carbon emissions from our current transport system are fair to future generations who have to live with the consequences of global warming. Today's young people and future generations will bear the costs of the travel patterns of older generations.

⁶³ All figures from Asthma UK. <http://www.asthma.org.uk/news-centre/facts-for-journalists/>

⁶⁴ Widely accepted figures cited in House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee report, 2011. Air Quality: A follow up report



Why transport is becoming more of a problem for young people

In addition to those already mentioned, two main factors make transport an increasing problem for young people – its cost and the location of opportunities, particularly employment opportunities. In addition, cuts to bus service networks may start to become more of a barrier in future.

Cost of transport and access to concessionary fare schemes

The cost of public transport has already been mentioned several times in this paper and is considered here in more detail.

Free or concessionary travel has been available to children on various conditions for a long time. By statute dating back to 1944 local authorities are required to provide free transport to school for children between the ages of 5 and 16, providing they are attending their nearest suitable school and the walking distance is more than two miles for those below the age of eight, and three miles for those of eight and over. Children from low-income families or with special educational needs, a disability or mobility problem, or those with an unsafe walking route, are also entitled to free travel. Transport can be provided under a variety of suitable arrangements including school or local authority minibuses, public transport pass, taxi, cycle route and others.⁶⁵

In London children between the ages of 5 and 10 travel free on the buses and, with a Zip Oyster card, at no cost on other public transport. Between the ages of 11 and 15 children with a £10 Zip Oyster card travel free on buses and trams and at child fares on the Tube and most other rail services. Young people between 16 and 18 can buy weekly, monthly or longer bus and tram passes at the child rate, or travel at half the adult pay as you go rate on buses, the Tube and many other rail services. If they are in full-time education they can qualify for free bus and tram travel.⁶⁶

Across England concessionary travel is administered by so-called Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs) who fund public transport operators according to a formula and are themselves, at least partly, reimbursed by central government. There is a mandatory concessionary travel scheme for older and disabled people which entitles them to free bus travel. The TCAs are the County Councils, Unitary Authorities, Passenger Transport Executives and London Boroughs.

By statute the TCAs are required to provide free travel to schoolchildren on the one hand and to older and disabled people on the other. Young people are caught somewhere between. No statutory obligation requires that they travel for free. Assistance in meeting their travel costs is left to the discretion of individual TCAs or to individual bus companies. Two types of travel concessions are offered to young people. In 2012/13 concessions to young people were offered in 28 of the 89 TCAs outside London⁶⁷ and in 80 TCAs concessions are offered by one or more bus operators on a commercial basis.

⁶⁵ Information on free and concessionary travel for children is available from many sources. See for instance: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/community/transport/a0077797/efficiency-and-practice-review-home-to-school-transport>

and Home to school travel and transport guidance, DfES, 2007

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFES-00373-2007.pdf>

⁶⁶ See the Transport for London website: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/14308.aspx>

⁶⁷ DfT, BUS0840



There is some overlap. However, there are 5 TCAs where no concessions at all are offered to young people.⁶⁸

Patchy and uneven provision for young people contrasts with a comprehensive concessionary travel scheme for older age groups. By statute, the concessionary travel scheme provides free bus travel throughout England to everyone who has reached the state pension age for women or qualifies on grounds of disability. Similar schemes operate in Scotland and Wales and in London the Freedom pass allows free travel on the rail, Tube and tram networks (with some restrictions on certain peak hour services).

For England as a whole in 2011/12, 82 per cent of expenditure by the TCAs on concessionary travel or £910 million, was on the so-called English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) – the free travel that local authorities are required by statute to provide for older and disabled people. The remaining 18 per cent was divided between discretionary, or optional, concessions such as travel outside the statutory time period or on other modes, concessions for young people and administrative costs.⁶⁹

As the following table shows, the disparity is more striking for the non-metropolitan (ie the shire counties which exclude London and the larger metropolitan areas) where assistance in using public transport may be considered even more necessary for young people. In the English non-metropolitan areas only 7-8 per cent of total expenditure on concessionary travel is allocated to discretionary concessions including concessions for young people and part of this is absorbed in general administrative costs.

Table BUS0810

Expenditure on the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme as a percentage of total net expenditure on concessionary travel by metropolitan area status: England, annual from 2010/11

		Percentage				
		London ³	English metropolitan areas ⁴	English non-metropolitan areas	England	England excluding London
2010/11	R	72%	75%	90%	81%	84%
2011/12 (outturn)		71%	78%	92%	82%	87%
2012/13 (forecast)		70%	78%	93%	82%	87%

Funding for transport may not be as weighted in favour of older people as these figures suggest. A 2010 report for pteg by the Scott Wilson Transport Consultancy included a table showing a diverse range of funding streams, totalling £1.36bn, which contributed to young persons' concessionary travel. The largest item was the £950m expenditure by Department for Children, Schools and Families and local education authorities on home to school and home to college transport⁷⁰ and most of the rest is clearly related to travel to schools in various forms. But, once again, this funding does not generally provide for assistance with the travel costs of the 16-19 year old age group.

⁶⁸ Table NTS0842 Concessions available for young people by Travel Concession Authority: England outside London, 2012/13: www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus08-concessionary-travel

⁶⁹ Table BUS0810 & BUS0812

⁷⁰ Scott Wilson study for pteg, 2010, Concessionary Fares for Young People



Scott Wilson concluded that the legal framework for concessionary fares is complex and that “Total public expenditure on child concessionary fares is unknown due to the variety and complexity of offers and pricing structures”. They say though that “It is thought to be less than the total” shown in the table referred to above.

As long as the travel costs of younger people are discretionary and not obligatory, the assistance they do receive is vulnerable to cut-backs.

The obligation to provide free travel for older and disabled people is created by national Government and national Government is supposed to reimburse TCAs for the costs of providing it, but at a time of Government spending cuts this increasingly does not happen. In order to continue to meet their statutory obligations the TCAs cut back on their discretionary expenditure including assistance for young people’s travel and support for many transport services. This has been described by the Passenger Transport Executives who run transport in England’s major metropolitan areas with the exception of London as a “funding timebomb”.

“The (English National Concessionary Travel Scheme) is of great value to older and disabled people, giving millions the opportunity for greater freedom and independence through free off-peak travel. However with funding falling and demand rising concessionary travel is a financial ‘timebomb’ which if not addressed will mean drastic cuts in the future to socially necessary services and local transport provision.”⁷¹

The Passenger Transport Executives called for an appropriate level of Government funding to be provided for statutory concessionary travel and thus allow a range of socially necessary transport services and discretionary travel assistance to be protected.

“Despite the clear value of supporting young people’s travel – both from a social inclusion and a market development point of view – provision for this group has been hard hit by spending cuts. In efforts to balance budgets concessionary fare schemes have been cut back, whilst the evening and weekend bus services that are highly valued by young people, are often the first to disappear when times are tough.

The concessionary fare offer for young people is under particular pressure because, unlike the national concession for older and disabled people, it is non-statutory. With tightening budgets, there is often a difficult choice to be made between cutting these non-statutory concessions or cutting wider ‘supported’ bus services (which are also non-statutory). These supported bus services are those that would not be profitable for bus companies to run, but which are considered ‘socially necessary’ (such as some evening services or buses to isolated housing estates or rural areas). Faced with this decision, transport authorities have often chosen to put service protection first in the interests of the wider community.”⁷²

The House of Commons Education Committee confirmed that concessionary fares for young people are indeed being cut. Various local authorities including Norfolk, Lincolnshire and Hampshire are planning to cut back the support for 16-18 year olds travelling to and from places of learning.⁷³

⁷¹ pteg press release, Nov 2012 <http://www.pteg.net/MediaCentre/PressReleases/cttimebomb> and briefing <http://www.pteg.net/NR/rdonlyres/8FE5E264-4721-4201-AEA2-3537F73679A1/0/CTbriefingfinal.pdf>

⁷² pteg, 2012. Moving On –working towards a better public transport offer for young people in tough times <http://www.pteg.net/NR/rdonlyres/A9AB6C4C-929D-470E-A440-A2C14648F133/0/MovingonreportFINALweb.pdf>

⁷³ House of Commons Education Committee <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmeduc/850/85006.htm#note121>



It is certainly true that some young people find the cost of transport, and the absence of support in meeting it, a barrier to participation in training and education. The National Foundation for Educational Research in work already quoted found that although only 4 per cent of 16-18 year olds said that financial concerns had stopped them doing what they wanted, 29 per cent of young people not in education, employment or training said that they would have taken part in education after Year 11 if they had had help with the cost of transport and 39 per cent of young people in jobs without training also said that, with support in meeting transport costs, they would have taken part in part in education and training.⁷⁴

The House of Commons Education Committee looked at the travel of 16-19 year olds to places of education and training. Evidence submitted to the Committee by the Association of Colleges confirmed the importance of travel by bus: 72 per cent of students travelled to college by this means. Local authorities were not required to provide assistance in meeting their transport costs and local authority support varied widely: 29 per cent provided transport, 20 per cent financial support, 18 per cent an element of both and 27 per cent nothing. The cost of travel, reported the Committee, was repeatedly cited as a problem.⁷⁵

An important source of support for young people in meeting transport and other costs was withdrawn in 2010 when the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA), a household income related entitlement to enable 16-19 year olds to continue in education, was abolished as part of Government spending cuts. The Allowances had ranged from £10 to £30 per week according to income. The EMA was replaced by a bursary scheme, where bursaries were to be awarded at the discretion of colleges according to need but the total expenditure on the bursary scheme would only be about a third of that on allowances. The abolition of the EMA heightened concerns about the ability of 16-19 year olds to afford the costs they would incur in travel to education and training.

Meanwhile bus fares have been increasing. Over the slightly more than seven year period between March 2007 and June 2012 average bus fares in England increased by 33 per cent while the retail price index increased by 18 per cent over the same period. In the twelve months between June 2011 and June 2012 average bus fares went up by 6.5 per cent compared to a rise in the RPI of 2.8 per cent. The increase in bus fares was greater in non-metropolitan areas (7.6 per cent) than in London or other metropolitan areas (5.4 and 6.8 per cent).⁷⁶

The following table (see over) shows the increases in bus fares for England outstripping the retail price index for the period from March 2005 to the end of 2012.

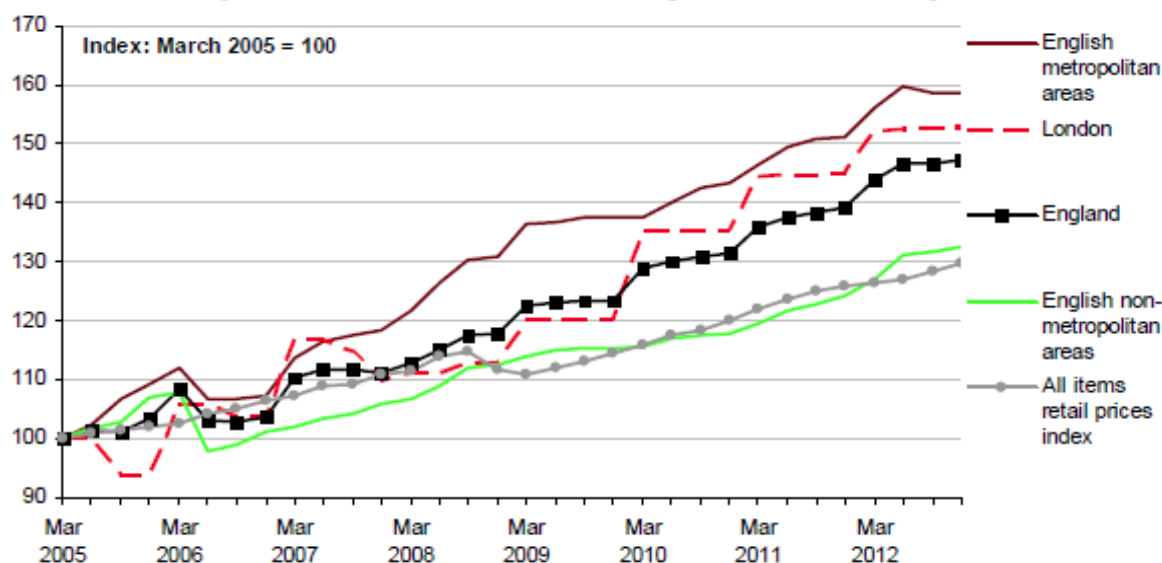
⁷⁴ Spielhofer T et al, 2008, Barriers to Participation in Education and Training quoted in House of Commons Education Committee report 2011, Participation by 16-19 year olds in education and training. <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/2011-CESC-16to19-year-olds.pdf>

⁷⁵ House of Commons Education Committee report 2011, Participation by 16-19 year olds in education and training

⁷⁶ DfT bus statistics tables BUS0405 and BUS0415

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/11854/annual-bus-statistics-2011-12.pdf

Local bus fares index (in current prices) by metropolitan area status: England, quarterly from March 2005 [table bus0415, which also includes figures for Great Britain]



In contrast to the very mixed position for bus travel, a simpler and much more uniform concessionary fare scheme is available for young people's travel by rail. A one year 16-25 Railcard, previously called the Young Person's Railcard, offers one third reduction on rail fares for an annual charge of £28 and is valid on the services of any rail operating company.

Changes in the location and times of employment

This report has already considered difficulties faced by young people in accessing employment (see the section above 'Why transport matters to young people'). These difficulties may be compounded by changes occurring in the location and times of employment, particularly low-skilled employment.

Research by the Centre for Cities found that the geography of jobs is changing with higher-skilled jobs increasingly being concentrated in cities along the main transport corridors and in city centres while low-skilled jobs are dispersed to locations out of city centres where they are less accessible for those without cars.⁷⁷

This is an important matter for young people who tend, as we have seen, not to have driving licences or access to a car and are therefore dependent on public transport. The Joseph Rowntree report already quoted concluded that more than half of the job vacancies it identified would have been difficult to reach for jobseekers in deprived areas not having access to a car and reliant on public transport.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Tochtermann & Clayton, 2011. Moving on up, moving on out? Overcoming the jobs-skills mismatch http://www.centreforcities.org/assets/files/2011%20Research/11-07-04_City_Collaboration.pdf

⁷⁸ Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2012: Disadvantaged Young People Looking for Work <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/young-people-disadvantage-jobseekers-full.pdf>



Cuts in bus services or reductions in the frequency of services may mean that the people, often young people, employed in them may no longer be able to reach their employment. Early morning, evening, night-time and weekend work may become impossible due to public transport service cuts or timetable changes. Obviously such changes are also a serious concern for jobseekers in rural areas who do not have private transport.

Cuts to bus services

Campaign for Better Transport has identified threats to bus services from three different directions:

- Central Government has cut local authority funding by 28 per cent and local authorities in turn have reduced support for socially necessary bus services
- The bus fuel tax rebate, or Bus Service Operators Grant, has been cut by 20 per cent
- Underfunding of the concessionary fares scheme for older people⁷⁹

Local authorities have warned that they can only meet the cost of the national concessionary fares scheme by reducing their budget for subsidising socially necessary buses, which often provide access for young people to employment, education, training and social activities and allow them to retain some freedom and independence of travel.⁸⁰

The Department for Transport has recorded a 14 per cent fall in the total miles travelled by local authority supported local bus services outside London and the largest conurbations between 2008/9 and 2011/12.⁸¹ Commercial services have increased in non-metropolitan areas, possibly as a result of commercial operators picking up some services previously supported by local authorities, but this is unlikely to continue with the cuts to bus service operators grant affecting these services too.

This is consistent with conclusions of research carried out by Campaign for Better Transport which show that:

- Over two-thirds of the 88 local authorities in England have already decided to make cutbacks to buses. Many more bus services are likely to be lost as 77% of local transport authorities in England are either planning, or cannot rule out, further cuts in the future.
- Communities outside major urban centres have been the worst hit, and more than one thousand bus services in these areas have already been reduced or withdrawn, amounting to 1 in 5 of all council supported bus services.⁸²

The impact on passengers of bus service cuts has also been assessed by Passenger Focus, the statutory public transport watchdog. The groups most affected by the cuts were older people, less affluent households, people with health issues and households containing teenagers.

⁷⁹ Campaign for Better Transport. Saving Your Bus Service. <http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/system/files/save-our-buses-guide.pdf>

⁸⁰ Campaign for Better Transport, 2012
<http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/files/County-spreadsheet-with-GO-letter-060312.pdf>
<http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/files/Concessionary-fares-shortfall.pdf>

⁸¹ DfT BUS0205

⁸² Campaign for Better Transport. Save Our Buses Map. <http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/campaigns/save-our-buses/map>



The impacts identified were of four main types:

- Passengers make fewer discretionary trips such as meeting friends or visiting family members, perhaps because later, return bus services have been cut
- Dependency on others increases; teenagers, for example, are more reliant on parents for lifts
- Costs to passengers increase as they find themselves being obliged, for instance, to take more taxis
- There is a lack of spontaneity because the opportunities to go out have been reduced and journeys require more planning in advance.⁸³

⁸³ Passenger Focus, 2012. Bus service reductions – the impact on passengers.
<http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/bus-service-reductions-the-impact-on-passengers>



Conclusion and recommendations

Despite the lack of focus on young people's transport issues in the past, there is now increasing interest in this area. In 2012, the British Youth Council launched a pilot initiative, the Youth Select Committee, to conduct inquiries on the model of the Commons Select Committees and chose transport as the subject of its first inquiry which took written and oral evidence and was conducted with House of Commons support. The Committee published its report, entitled 'Make public transport cheaper, better and accessible for all', in November 2012.⁸⁴

The report emphasised the importance of transport to young people in accessing education, training, employment and leisure activities but found that high transport costs could act as a barrier. The inquiry found a wide variation in the age at which young people are expected to pay the adult fare with some areas offering schemes or discounts to help with travel costs while others required payment of the adult fare for people as young as 14. The report called for more encouragement of concessionary fares' schemes and recommended the adoption of a nationwide concessionary scheme for bus travel such as that which already operates in Scotland.

Young people suffered in a number of other ways, the report concluded:

- Their concerns are not heeded in planning or consultations on transport provision
- Inadequate information is provided either about the availability of concessionary schemes and fares or about planning and making their journeys

Young disabled people face particular transport difficulties and improved staff training as well as physical improvements in buses and trains are necessary to meet their needs.

Although young people have expressed concerns about travel on many recent occasions those concerns have normally centred on public transport and particularly on its cost, availability and safety. It might have been expected that, since young people had grown up in conditions where their external environment had been dominated by traffic, and their freedom curtailed by traffic danger, safer conditions for walking and cycling might also have figured.

Campaign for Better Transport's Save Our Buses campaign has also worked with young people to raise their concerns, including producing a video on why buses matter which was taken to the Department for Education, and working with colleges at the party conferences to provide an opportunity for young people to talk directly to decision makers, including transport minister Norman Baker and Shadow Transport Secretary Maria Eagle.

With this rising recognition of the problem, it is time that central government, local authorities and transport operators worked together to tackle this problem. Transport operators should be part of the solution, particularly as young people are key to the long-term viability of their businesses. Few other industries would be so blasé about simply losing so many of their young customers as they get older. There are some initiatives, such as the Confederation of Passenger Transport's www.busforus.co.uk site aimed at young people and Greener

⁸⁴ British Youth Council, Youth Select Committee Report, Transport and Young People
http://www.byc.org.uk/media/189434/youth_select_committee_-_young_people_transport.pdf



Journey's offer of free travel for job seekers in January 2013, but there is still a lack of real drive on this agenda by bus operators.

Our recommendations

Addressing the problems outlined above requires action by national government, local authorities and public transport operators.

The Treasury and the Department for Transport need to ensure that the 2013 spending round's emphasis on cutting resource spending on services to boost capital spending on infrastructure does not result in young people being further priced off public transport nor that bus services are cut back further. Bus service operators grant has already been cut back by 20% and should not be cut further. In the long-term, more effective means to support accessibility should be considered.

Spending on buses benefits Department of Work and Pensions (through reducing welfare spending by providing jobseekers with access to employment), the Department of Health (through public health benefits and through providing access to healthcare and reducing the cost of missed appointments), the Department for Education (through providing access to schools and colleges) and of course transport and the wider economy. Yet this is not recognised in the complex way in which bus services are supported.

The 2013 Spending Round should therefore include

- A cumulative assessment of the overall impact of the spending round on bus services.
- Recognition of the need for a national free concessionary travel scheme for young people and jobseekers, and a review of how this could be achieved in a way which builds on existing industry and local government initiatives and be implemented so as not to lead to unintended consequences for the overall level of bus service provision
- Ensure that the concessionary travel scheme for older and disabled people is adequately funded so that the benefits it brings are not at the expense of overall bus service provision

Existing DfT programmes should also consider the needs of young people more clearly. In particular, the Better Bus Areas fund should be encouraging bidders to consider improving the offer for young people in their areas as part of moves to introduce tickets and passes that cover more than one operator. At present, information from the Department for Transport is sending mixed messages with economists downplaying the value of concessionary schemes for young people while other guidance suggests that they can have value.⁸⁵ This funding is likely to be the main tool with which central government can influence bus services but is in danger of being a wasted opportunity if it does not more clearly set out how improving fares for young people fits with its aims.

The planning system needs to support the creation and retention of jobs in locations that can be served by public transport and ensure that services and amenities are close to where people live and can be reached by a variety of means of transport. For instance the Department for Communities and Local Government should ensure that efforts to free up development through the National Planning Policy Framework does not result in employment opportunities for young people being accessible only by car.

⁸⁵ See materials from the DfT workshop on Better Bus Areas from March 2013
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-bus-areas-workshop-materials>



The Department for Transport should give stronger impetus to accessibility planning by local authorities which are unlikely to take this issue seriously if the Department does not consider it important enough to allocate its own resources to it.

A package of measures should be introduced to improve road safety and encourage cycling among children and young people including: much wider use of 20 mph limits in towns and lower speed limits on country roads; better enforcement of road traffic laws including speed limits and ensuring that traffic offences are treated seriously; providing cycle training at all primary and secondary schools; and promoting cycling as a safe and normal activity for people of all ages and backgrounds.

There is also a need to improve information for young people. As Greener Journeys have said, bus operators, local authorities, school and colleges, Connexions and JobCentrePlus need to provide targeted, transparent and accessible information. Travel planning assistance and fares offers for school leavers and unemployed people help connect them to education, training and the job market. Many young school leavers and those not in work are unaware of the locational spread of bus routes and networks and that the bus is in fact very likely able to transport them to sites of employment and education and training.⁸⁶ Wheels to Work schemes have already helped many young people to overcome difficulties in travelling to work or to college. They provide travel plans and advice but can also arrange loans of motor scooters and bicycles. Unfortunately they have also been vulnerable to local authority cuts despite have a high benefit to cost ratio.

Local authorities should also consider how they can integrate the significant sums spent on home to school and home to college transport with wider support for public transport. For instance, there is evidence that season tickets with local bus operators cost around 25% less than contracted routes.⁸⁷ Some improvements can be inexpensive or even cost-free. As part of the Yeovil Transport Plan, lecture times at Yeovil College were adjusted to ensure they were integrated with the operational needs of the bus company.

Bus operators themselves should see the benefits that improving their offer for young people will have for their businesses. Even where an immediate return is not apparent, they should look at how they can align their corporate social responsibility programmes with young people's reliance on their services, for instance targeting programmes at young people on low incomes or those looking for work.

Without the kinds of actions outlined above, we face a situation where young people are priced out of opportunities. Spending cuts that lead to this situation will simply add to long-term costs for our society as a result. Decision makers should ensure always ensure that young people are involved in decisions that affect them. For example information provision should be developed in consultation with young people and they should be involved in the design of any national concessionary travel scheme. It is time that young people's needs as transport users are taken seriously by the country's decision makers.

⁸⁶ Greener Journeys, Bus Policy: a five-point plan for growth, September 2012, <http://www.greenerjourneys.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Five-Point-Plan-for-Growth-FINAL-PDF.pdf>

⁸⁷ Sian Thornthwaite for ATCO News, Autumn 2011