

CONCESSIONARY BUS TRAVEL – BULLETIN #11

Appeals

To date 102 appeals have been received in respect of Travel Concession Schemes for the financial year 2007-08. Of these, 21 were subsequently withdrawn. Two appeals have been deferred at the request of the parties subject to local negotiation. The Department strongly encourages continued dialogue and local resolution where possible.

The independent adjudicator appointed last year has made 29 determinations to date. In a significant number of cases it has been necessary to request further information from both parties before a determination could be reached. This has caused some delay. However, the over-riding consideration is that the appeals are carefully considered and determined fairly.

A second independent adjudicator has now been appointed in order to help to clear the remaining 50 appeals cases. It is expected that decisions on the majority of appeals will be taken by the end of January.

Reimbursement Guidance and Reimbursement Analysis Tool

The Department has recently published new guidance on reimbursing bus operators, with a spreadsheet based Reimbursement Analysis Tool (RAT) to assist Travel Concession Authorities assess appropriate reimbursement. These are both now available here on the DfT website:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/buses/concessionary/>

Reimbursement Workshops

In Bulletin #10 we announced that the department would be holding a series of reimbursement workshops open to all TCAs. The workshops will provide a walk-through of the guidance and the Reimbursement Analysis Tool. Many TCAs have now expressed an interest and we have decided to hold an initial set of 4 workshops which will take place at the Department's offices in London on the following dates:

1st February: 10:30 - 15:30
4th February: 10:30 - 15:30
14th February: 10:30 - 15:30
20th February: 10:30 - 15:30

We will also be arranging a separate workshop for operators in due course. If you would be interested in attending one of the above workshops please email us at: concessionaryfares@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Eligibility Guidance

The Department has prepared revised guidance on assessing eligibility for the statutory concession. We been consulting key stakeholders on this in draft form but now expect to be in a position to publish it in the next few weeks. Keep an eye on the DfT website for this.

Implementation of the 2008 national concession

Days until 1 April 2008: 74

Passes - TCA Action Now

On the basis of the information currently available to the Department, we are aware that not all TCAs have yet transferred all of their data to their pass suppliers. Although we understand why TCAs may wish to wait until the last chance to transfer their data, we would urge TCAs to do so as soon as possible so that their supplier can verify that their data can be used to produce passes.

We are aware, for example, of instances when data has needed to be returned to TCAs for further work. The longer a TCA waits to initially transfer their data to suppliers the greater the risk that any problems with the data or data transfer will result in passes not being delivered in time for 1 April.

TCAs should, of course, remember to send any data securely in accordance with all relevant Data Protection legislation and best practice.

TCAs should also ensure that their pass suppliers have all other information, including their detailed design requirements (for the top right of the pass as well as the back) and any leaflets or letters to be sent out with the passes, as soon as possible. Suppliers may also need to refer back to TCAs on these details before they can start pass production.

Testing of Passes

In Bulletin 10 we told you that we would issue details about the pass testing or validation service being offered by ITSO. This will be an optional service, paid for by TCAs. It will allow them to verify that passes produced by their supplier, or in house, are correctly encoded for use to their specification. The service is expected to be available from mid-February 08.

Annex A sets out detailed information on when TCAs might wish to use this service and what is available.

TCAs should note that the ITSO validation service is entirely separate from any testing that their pass suppliers will do to ensure that they are producing fully functioning passes.

Producing passes in-house

We are aware that some TCAs who have contracted with suppliers for their bulk pass production are considering bringing the production of passes in-house after April. As we said in Bulletin #10, this will be a complex and time consuming process to set up; it should not be under estimated.

To be able to produce passes in-house TCAs need to ensure that they have fully certified and tested hardware/software and all the associated DfT & ITSO technical encoding guidelines. For 'non-smart' TCAs using ITSO Services Ltd this includes:

- ITSO certified hardware and software to produce the passes
- A tested link to the ISL HOPs
- ITSO certified card supply
- Access to ENCTS hologram supply

- Detailed card design specification
- ISAMs
- Embodiment specifications for card encoding
- ISSN range allocation

ITSO Services Ltd will provide support to TCAs to help get all these elements in place, but there is **no guarantee that this can be done in time for 1 April**. It is because of this that the Department strongly recommends that all TCAs who are considering bringing pass production in-house allow a sufficient contingency period for passes to continue to be produced by their current pass suppliers after April. In other words, you should continue to use your current pass supplier until you are absolutely sure you are able to produce passes in-house.

In the first instance, TCAs considering this approach should talk to a hardware & software supplier (which could be done through LOT 4 of the DfT's Framework Agreements) about what they can supply and the timescales involved. The TCAs should then confirm their intent to bring pass production in house by emailing ISL (info@itsoservices.org.uk). ISL will then provide the appropriate support to help the TCA get the service up and running as soon as possible.

If you want to talk through the implications of producing passes in house or any of the details above with the DfT's support team please contact Ian McConnell (07841 947431) or Nick Rawlings (07841 947383)

National Advertising

The Department has planned a national advertising campaign to ensure that pass holders are aware of what the national concession entitles them to. The campaign will begin on 4th February. The national campaign will feature

- Adverts in the national press
- On-bus posters
- Posters at bus shelters

A plan and timelines for the roll out of the national advertising campaign will be placed online at www.dft.gov.uk/buspass. This will give TCAs an indication of where and when activity is taking place and allow them to plan around the DfT's campaign.

If you would like more information or have any other communication enquiries, please email: busconcession.marketing@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Integrity Network

Bulletins #9 and #10 gave details of a new "Integrity Network" which we are setting up to share and disseminate best practice and practical advice on integrity issues such as assessment of eligibility, pass distribution and intelligence and techniques for dealing with fraudulent passes.

Although we anticipate that this will be a virtual network and the majority of communication will be by email, we intend to hold **an initial meeting in Great Minster House, London on 29 February**. The purpose of this meeting will be to formalise the terms of reference of the group and to begin discussions about the key integrity issues for the National Concession. The Department will produce and circulate a discussion paper in advance of this meeting.

We asked all TCAs to nominate a representative to be part of the Integrity Network. Many thanks to all those TCAs who have done so and an email invitation will be sent out to nominated contacts. Please could those who have not already done so let us have their contacts as soon as possible so that we can send out an invitation as we are keen that at least every scheme is represented.

Nominations for the integrity network, or inquiries about the initial meeting, should be sent to concessionaryfares@dft.gsi.gov.uk and should list the name, email and contact telephone number of the nominee, along with which TCA(s) they are representing.

Passes Regulations

The Department will soon be laying the Regulations that will make the national design of the pass a legal requirement. The contents of these Regulations was consulted on earlier this year, and the outcome of the consultation was included in Bulletin #8. A consultation response document has been produced and published on our website at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/closed/concessionarybustravelpass/>

In summary, the Regulations will include a requirement that passes must be ITSO smartcards, that they must comply with the standard design and that they must feature the national concession hologram. The base artwork for the passes and the holograms are both supplied by the Department to pass producers. TCAs should ensure that the information and artwork that they submit to their pass suppliers meets the Regulations.

The Regulations will also say that:

- The expiry date of the pass must be no more than 5 years from the date of issue and must be displayed on the pass in the format "01 APR 2008";
- A photo of the pass holder must be on each pass;
- The area for local customisation must feature, at a minimum, either the logo or the name of the issuing authority (or both) to allow drivers to recognise who has issued the pass. TCAs are free to add further words or symbols in this area if they wish;
- The name of the pass holder must be displayed on the pass as either first name then family name eg "Peter Person" or, as first initial then family name eg "P Person". (We recommend the full name, but the initial may be needed, for example, if the full name is too long to appear on the pass);
- The reverse of the pass must feature a telephone number for reporting that a lost card has been stolen and a statement that the card is issued subject to terms and conditions.

Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

As mentioned in the bulletin #10, the Operations and Technology Working Group has produced a number of Technical Advice Notes (TANs). The first three of these:

- TAN 1 - Guidance for TCAs relating to Blind and Partially Sighted Concessionaires

- TAN 2 - Guidance on Fare Stage Boundary Allocations to TCAs for Operator Reimbursement
- TAN 3 - Guidance for Data Recording by ETM for Concessionary Travel Reimbursement

have now been published on the DfT website at:

www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/buses/concessionary

New Operator Fare Stage Reimbursement Support Website

TAN 2 recommends how TCAs and Bus Operators can work together to ensure the fair and appropriate allocation of operator fare stages to individual TCAs for concessionary reimbursement. To do this requires a knowledge of both the fare stage area bus stops, and the TCA boundaries.

To help TCAs and operators identify boundary stop locations throughout England, a **free to use** colour coded map based visual look up facility of all Bus Stops and TCA boundaries has been created for all TCAs and Bus Operators. This Website is available at:

http://data.itoworld.com/management/concessionary_pass

Supplier technical information pack

Earlier this month the Department sent a technical information pack to all known suppliers for concessionary travel passes. This brought together previously issued technical information which suppliers need in order to produce passes. The information pack includes:

Document	Document Description
TYP16 embodiment form - Disabled	Card encoding settings for the disabled national concession product
TYP16 embodiment form - Over 60	Card encoding settings for the age national concession product
TYP0 embodiment form - Private application	Card encoding settings for a private IPE (used to support non transport or legacy systems)
TYP2 embodiment form - Stored Travel Right	Card encoding settings for the national stored travel rights product
TYP14 PTYP29	Card encoding settings for the disabled

embodiment form – disabled companion	companion product
TYP14 PTYP30 embodiment form – over 60 companion	Card encoding settings for the over 60 companion product
Shell embodiment FVC1	Card encoding settings for Mifare 1k cards
Shell embodiment FVC2	Card encoding settings for Microprocessor cards
Shell embodiment FVC3	Card encoding settings for Mifare 4k cards
Shell embodiment FVC7	Card encoding settings for Mifare DESfire cards
Shell embodiment FVC8	Card encoding settings for Calypso cards
Supplier Questionnaire	This questionnaire, to be completed for all ISL TCAs, includes the information required for the provision of ISAMs
Multi application encoding guidance	Guidance for sharing non ITSO applications on an ENCTS card
Hologram security and request form	DfT declaration form for requesting the release of ENCTS holograms
Art work request form	DfT form requesting the release of Artwork for the English National Concessionary Travel Pass

It is intended that the supplier information pack will be published on the ISL website once the site is created. If you would like a copy of the pack in the meantime, for example if you intend to produce passes in-house, please email concessionaryfares@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

Recent and future communications from DfT

As preparations for the new concession continue the Department has issued, and is likely to continue to issue, a number of important communications to TCAs. These either take the form of a direct letter to TCAs, or information included in a bulletin. To ensure that all TCAs are aware of all of these communications a list of key recent and future communications is provided below. Likely future communications are in italics and dates are indicative only at this stage.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Format</u>	<u>Key content</u>
5 April 07	Bulletin #5	Detailed information about the data that TCAs need to collect in order to be able to produce passes
25 May 07	Passes Consultation Paper (closed on 20 July)	Outlines the Department's initial proposals for the design and specification of the national passes and asks for comments
27 June 07	Ministerial letter to TCAs about passes	A letter from Gillian Merron about the passes project

29 June 07	Bulletin #6	Information about the framework agreements including a worked example of an order form for Lot 1. Extensive Q&A about all aspects of the national concession
5 July 07	Grant explanation letter	An explanation of how the grant to cover reasonable new burdens associated with passes will be calculated
31 July 07	Plain English Guide to ITSO	A basic, easy to understand introduction to ITSO smartcards
29 August 07	1 st Tranche Grant Determination	A breakdown of how much each TCA received for the first tranche of the passes grant
5 September 07	Bulletin #7	Details of the framework providers for all 4 lots and details of mentor authorities
18 September 07	Press release about the pass design	The official announcement about the final pass design
19 September 07	Letter about the Framework Agreements	Further information about the framework agreement and pricing schedules
28 September 07	Funding Consultation Paper (closed 23 November)	Invites comments on options for distributing additional funding for the 2008 national concession via special grant
1 October 07	Letter about second tranche of grant	Confirms the second grant payment will be made on 14 November and requests a signed declaration of the number of passes in circulation, which must be received before the second tranche can be paid
3 October 07	Letter about ITSO services Ltd	Explains the services that ITSO Services Ltd will provide to non-smart TCAs and provides a letter for TCAs to "sign up"
3 October 07	Passes Consultation Response Document	Summarises the responses received to the consultation and sets out the Department's plans for the design and specifications of the national pass
5 October	Bulletin #8	Reporting the outcome of the consultation on pass design and providing information about data to be encoded on passes
13 November	Bulletin #9	Providing advice on producing and formatting passes including how to allocate unique reference numbers and how to protect holograms and pass design artwork.

12 December	Bulletin #10	Providing information about the Special Grant funding for 2008, adding companions to Concessionary Passes and an updated list of OIDs and CPICCs
<i>Shortly</i>	<i>Funding consultation</i>	<i>Summary of responses to funding consultation</i>

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What is the ITSO pass validation service?

ITSO is purchasing equipment which will allow them to validate that passes are correctly encoded. This means that a TCA can send to ITSO a sample of passes together with the details of the encoding requirements (in other words, what ITSO products they should contain); ITSO will then check the passes, validating whether or not they have been produced in accordance with the TCA's instructions.

TCAs should bear in mind that the validation service is not intended to remove the responsibility of the pass suppliers to supply them with fully functioning passes. Nor is it intended to replace any testing that has been agreed between TCA and pass supplier. TCAs should discuss this with their supplier if they have any concerns.

There is no requirement for any TCA to use the ITSO pass validation service; it is completely at the TCA's discretion.

When might a TCA use the ITSO pass validation service?

Before bulk pass production commences

TCAs can use this service immediately, before the start of their supplier's bulk pass production run. However, in the run up to the 1 April 2008, this is likely to create a delay in TCAs having their passes available. We therefore recommend that TCAs should not ask ITSO to carry out pass validation before their supplier starts to produce passes needed for 1 April. Remember, this service is not intended to remove the responsibility of the pass suppliers to supply them with fully functioning passes.

After bulk pass production is complete

Following pass production, a TCA may wish to use the ITSO pass validation service to confirm that the passes produced (by their supplier) are correctly encoded to their specified requirements. This might be because;

- A 'non smart' TCA wants additional independent assurance, on top of that provided by their supplier, that their passes are encoded correctly

- A 'non-smart' TCA has received report(s) that their passes are being rejected by readers in a fully 'smart' area somewhere else in the country
- A 'smart' TCA is encountering problems with a number of their concessionaires' passes not being recognised by readers on buses, and this problem is unable to be resolved by their supplier. It could also be used to help a TCA check whether the problem was with the pass or the smart reader.

Following a change to any element of pass production process

TCAs who make future changes to elements of their pass production process may also wish to use this service to validate that the change has not adversely impacted the integrity or functionality of the passes they are issuing. For example, TCAs may wish to use this service if they;

- Change supplier(s)
- Change the scheme layout that results in a new OID and/or CPICC being issued to the TCA
- Change an element of the pass ordering process, such as implementation of a new 'Card Management System'
- Add new products to the passes
- Bring production and encoding of passes in-house

How much will it cost?

The ITSO pass validation service will be charged at a fixed rate according to the number of passes being submitted by the TCA. Prices include administration, management and shipping. Details are in the table below.

NUMBER OF PASSES	PRICE
Up to 10 passes	£250
11 to 20 passes	£500
21 to 30 passes	£750
31 or more passes	£750 + £25 per additional pass over 30

How many passes should be validated?

This may be dependent on the reason for using the validating service; TCAs should therefore discuss detailed requirements with ITSO. We recommend that, at a minimum, two passes for each product combination are tested (e.g. 2 x passes holding the basic concession, 2 x passes holding companion pass entitlement (if applicable), 2 x passes holding any other application)

How long will it take?

ITSO will confirm the service timescales when an order is taken. Depending on demand the indicative timescales are:

- A minimum of ½ day to validate a batch of 10 passes
- A minimum of 3 days following validation for passes to be returned to TCA

How can a TCA take up the service?

To use the ITSO pass validation services TCAs should email ITSO at validation@itso.org.uk for the service request documentation.

What information should you expect from the pass validation service?

On receipt of completed service request documentation ITSO will log the request, sending a receipt acknowledgement and an expected completion and report/pass return date.

Following validation ITSO will provide a short standard validation report which explains, in non-technical language, whether or not the passes have been produced in accordance with the TCA's requirements. ITSO will also provide a short technical report of their validation. For non-smart TCAs, ITSO Services Ltd will be able to discuss with a TCA what this report means.

Any questions?

TCAs who wish to find out more about the ITSO pass validation service should contact ITSO by emailing validation@itso.org.uk.

The DfT support team can also provide further information and answer any questions you have – contact Ian McConnell 07841 947431 or Nick Rawlings 07841 947383