



**Scottish Women's Convention response to the Scottish Government:
Implementing the bus provisions of the Transport (Scotland)
Act 2019
October 2021**

Question 35: Do you have any views on the contents of the impact assessments published in association with this consultation paper?

- With the heightened awareness of violence against women and girls, women's safety on buses, and at bus stops, needs to be given more consideration.
 - Many women do not feel safe taking buses on their own, especially late at night, because they fear violence, threats, and sexual harassment.
 - There should be statutory guidance on ensuring women's safety is a priority:
 - More training for drivers
 - An equivalent service to the BTP 61016 text service on trains that is widely publicised
 - Wider use of CCTV on buses
 - More signage etc. to alert passengers to CCTV
 - Better lighting at bus stops
 - Making services more reliable will also help women feel safer
 - They will not need to wait as long at bus stops
 - Many women keep a friend informed about their location and when they get home safe, so more reliable services will help with some of this worry.

- In-depth analysis of how women use public transport needs to be considered when developing bus services.
 - Women are more likely to use buses than men
 - More likely to be in lower paid jobs
 - Car ownership is lower among women
 - More women use buses to do errands, shopping etc.
 - Women are more likely to be in jobs in hospitality or retail, therefore often work shifts and unsociable hours – there are often not enough late-night buses for women to get home safely
 - Encouraging more women to take up employment in bus services such as drivers and mechanics may make other women feel safer using this mode of transport.
 - Thinking about the community services that women use and ensuring there are regular, accessible bus routes there
 - Childcare, nurseries, schools

- GPs surgeries, community hospitals, maternity services
 - Housing associations
 - Foodbanks
 - Job Centre Plus
 - Police offices and courts
 - Parks, playing fields and allotments
 - Community centres
 - Sports and leisure facilities
 - Changes to working patterns (e.g., more homeworking and hybrid working) will change the way people use public transport. We cannot rely on pre-pandemic data to reflect current and future bus use.
 - Older women, in particular those who have been shielding, are still scared to start using buses again.
 - “There are some really strong, active women who are now scared to go back out there, and it’s quite worrying that they’ve basically just been ignored, they’ve just been left behind.”
- Women need buses to be cheaper and more accessible.
 - “I think transport should be in the public’s hands. We’ve now got free transport for under 21s, but why not for mothers and children? Why don’t we have concessions for that? And then it could get extended on and on and on, hopefully.”
 - “I am disabled so rely on my car now. But before covid, I had a travel card so that I could go all over Scotland with a carer. I just think if it can be done for one group, then maybe slowly it could be expanded so that everyone could get involved in lower cost transport.”
 - “If you look at a family going out, for an all-day pass for all of them it is expensive, so you can understand why they would rather go out in the car... I walk most of the time to work or to the city centre, but if I was having to drag children with me, I can understand why people go in the car.”
 - “As a disabled mother in a chair with a baby there are not enough accessible seats on the bus. I often have to let buses go by until I can find one which can accommodate the space for us both. This stops me and my child from going out to visit people or get things I need as there are just not enough accessible spaces on these buses to accommodate us all.”
 - There must be proactive engagement with women and community groups to gain more insight into how buses can best serve women’s needs.
 - An ongoing dialogue with women from different backgrounds – e.g., BAME women, disabled women, women of different ages, mothers.
 - We know that disabled women have been unable to access bus stops where certain bike lanes have been installed. This could have been avoided if there was more of an onus on engaging in conversations with more women.
 - Women need to be involved when routes are being planned and timetabling is taking place to ensure a focus on gender is being considered.
 - Ensure that equality impact assessments are done at the start rather than a bolt on and an afterthought.

Conclusion

The SWC is grateful for the opportunity to respond to Transport Scotland's consultation on implementing bus provision. As an organisation, we will continue to work with women from across Scotland to gather voices and experiences relating to such legislation and the effect of this on women's equality.

For further information, please contact

The Scottish Women's Convention

Email – info@scottishwomensconvention.org

Telephone – 0141 339 4797

www.scottishwomensconvention.org

The Scottish Women's Convention engages with women using numerous communication channels including roadshow events, thematic conferences and regional contact groups.

This submission paper provides the views of women and reflects their opinions and experiences in a number of key areas relevant to women's equality.

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