

Information regarding June 2017 Bus Pass Renewals.

A large number (approx. 10,000) concessionary bus passes are due for renewal in June 2017. It is expected that there will be some questions raised regarding these renewals.

During the Passenger Transport Strategy consultation in the Summer of 2016 it was proposed that the Council would move away from auto-renewing of passes.

When the Strategy was adopted in November 2016 this proposal was also adopted. However it is going to take some time for us to define and put these processes in place in order to ensure that users are able to easily renew their bus passes.

For the passes that are expiring at the end of June 2017 the following process will apply:

If you have used the pass on a bus (it can be anywhere in England) at least once in the last 12 months then it should be auto-renewed as previously. You will need to ensure that your address and personal details are up to date on our system in order to receive the renewal. If you are unsure, please contact Customer Services.

If you are unsure if you have used your pass in the last 12 months (or have not done at all) but wish to have the pass renewed then please contact our Customer Services to let us know. You will have to re-confirm your personal details to ensure the pass reaches you correctly. You should then receive a new pass a week or so prior to the expiry date of your current one.

Passes that are renewed will be sent out approx. 2 weeks before the expiry date of the old pass. Customers do not need to enquire if they have not received their pass until a week prior to the expiry date.

If your pass has already expired but you wish to renew it please contact Customer Services and they can arrange for a new pass to be send immediately.

Unfortunately if your pass is still valid and has been lost you will still have to pay for it's replacement. Stolen passes will be replaced free of charge if a Police Crime Number is supplied.

We are always keen to ensure our databases are up to date so we can get in touch with you. If you have recently changed your address, telephone number or email address please let us know.

Some additional FAQ's are below:

I've heard mention of the Council moving to online applications and renewals. When will this be happening?

At present the Council are not moving completely over to online applications and renewals although we will soon be offering this option alongside current methods. For the time being paper forms and telephone assistance will continue to be available.

I can't use a computer! How will I be able to renew if it all goes online.

Following the Passenger Transport Strategy consultation in the Summer of 2016 there were many comments regarding the proposal to move all pass applications and renewals online. These comments indicated that respondents did not support our proposals to move things fully online at the present time. As such we will be continuing with existing methods of pass application and renewal for the foreseeable future.

I would be happy to use an online application service, when will you start offering that?

We are currently working with our suppliers to implement an online pass application and renewal portal that will be linked to the current Concessionary Pass page of the Central Bedfordshire Council website. We hope this will enable you to fully apply online for age related applications and if successful it will be extended to disabled applications also. We hope that the initial online application offering will be online by mid-2017.

Why has the Council chosen to move away from auto-renewing of passes?

Currently the government is reducing the amount of money it spends in many areas – this is known as austerity and has resulted in the reduction in funding provided to local authorities. Decisions have to be made by local authorities as to where the funding should be allocated. Bus service funding is only a discretionary (optional) service and local authorities are not obliged to fund

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buses which has resulted in less money is being allocated to them. However administering a concessionary pass scheme is a mandatory (compulsory) service so we must provide it although we must look for ways of increasing efficiency overall.

My friend / relative has passed away, but I'm worried their pass might auto-renew.

In the last round of pass auto-renewals in 2015 a significant number of passes were returned to us due to the holders having passed away or moved out of Central Bedfordshire and we had not been informed. Unfortunately in some cases this was distressing for people to receive a new pass for a deceased relative. Subsequent to this we have improved the cleansing and management of our pass database and now regularly update it and annul records of those customers who have passed away. Unless your relative has passed away within the last 4 weeks it is likely we will already have received their details from the Registrar of Deaths and their pass record will have been annulled. You are welcome to confirm this with Customer Services in order to ensure the record is annulled.

Why are you still auto-renewing some passes this year?

We understand that any change in the application and renewals process needs to be fully thought out in order that customers are not inconvenienced in any way during the changeover. We are looking to introduce an online application and renewals process over the coming few months which we hope will make it much easier to apply for and renew a bus pass for many people. We have felt that until that online system is operational it would not be sensible to try and make any great changes to the existing pass application system. We will be continually reviewing the pass application and renewals process with a view to improving and developing it over time.

I've never used my pass / haven't used it for years and it's already expired, however I might start using it. Can I now have it renewed?

Yes, this can be easily done via Customer Services. Just ask the Customer Service Agent to renew your bus pass and they will do the rest. You will need to confirm that your personal details and address are correct though, just to ensure that our database is up to date. You do not need to have to make a new application to do this as we will already have your details on record.

Can I still use my bus pass before 9:30am?

The Council were originally proposing to stop concessionary travel prior to 9:30am but due to the amount of comments regarding this during the strategy consultation this was removed and you will be able to continue using your pass 24 hours a day for travel within Central Bedfordshire. Bedford Borough Council have recently introduced a scheme to pay £1 to travel prior to 9:30am so whilst your journey commencing within Central Bedfordshire will still be free if you need to make an onward journey within Bedford Borough prior to 9:30am you will have to pay for this.

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My regular bus service has changed. Will I still be able to use my pass on the new bus?

Concessionary passes are valid on all buses operating within Central Bedfordshire regardless of operator. The ENCTS concessionary pass scheme is a mandatory scheme by central government and local authorities have to administer it and follow its rules.

We'd be happy to pay something towards our bus journey as part of our concessionary bus pass.

The ENCTS concessionary pass scheme is a Government scheme that states that all local authorities must offer free travel for pass holders from 9:30am to 11pm weekdays and all day on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays. We are unable to change these rules and as such cannot start to accept any payments as part of the concessionary scheme. Pass holders are free to pay the full adult fare for their journey rather than use their concessionary pass should they wish to support the bus service further.

I am disabled and it will be extremely difficult for me to not have my bus pass auto-renewed. What alternatives are there to ensure I can receive my new pass?

Our customer services will be able to support you if you need help to apply or renew your pass. They can be accessed either via telephone or via email / web details below.

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