

Aging Mobility and Quality of Life 2012, University of Michigan, USA, 24-26 June 2012

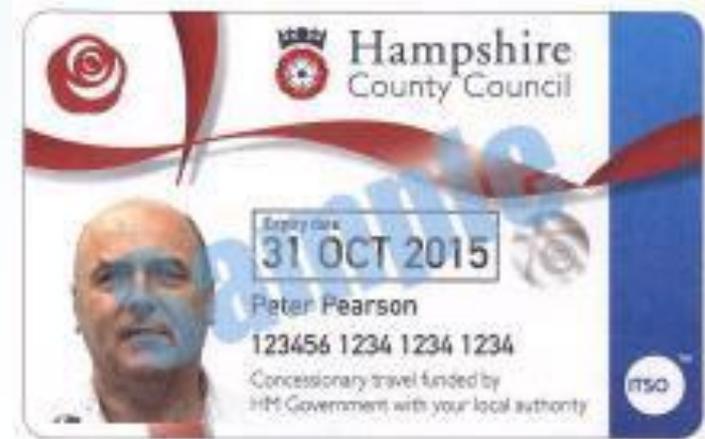


Improving the quality of life of older people through concessionary travel

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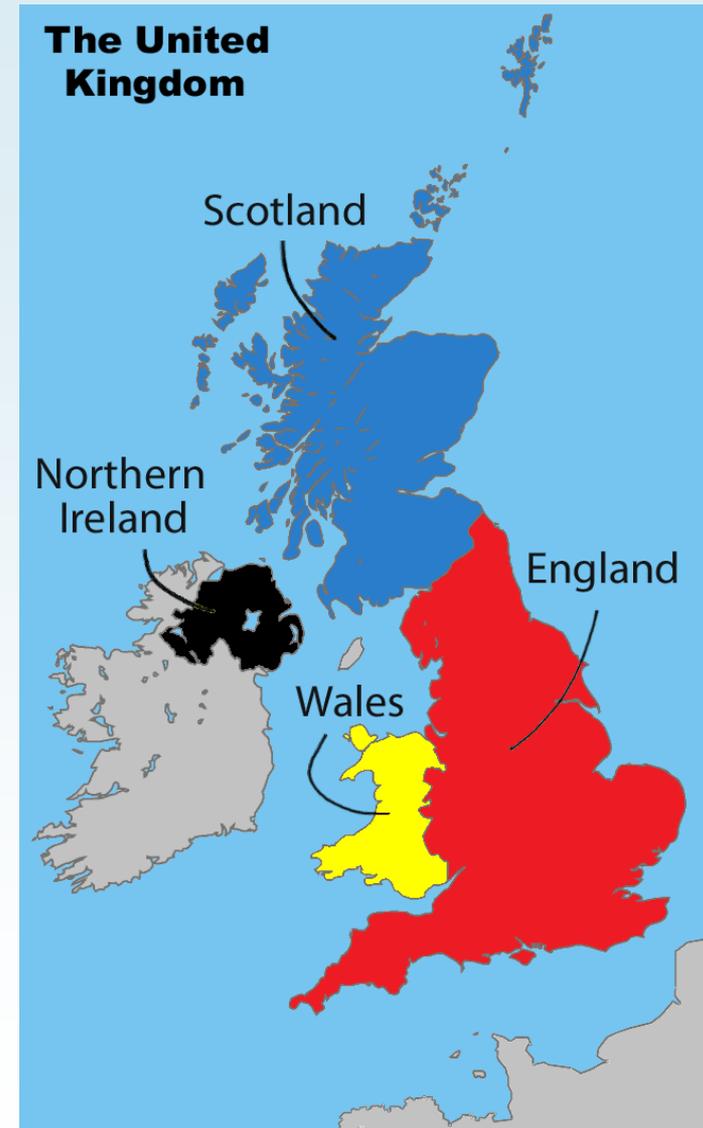
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The geography of Britain

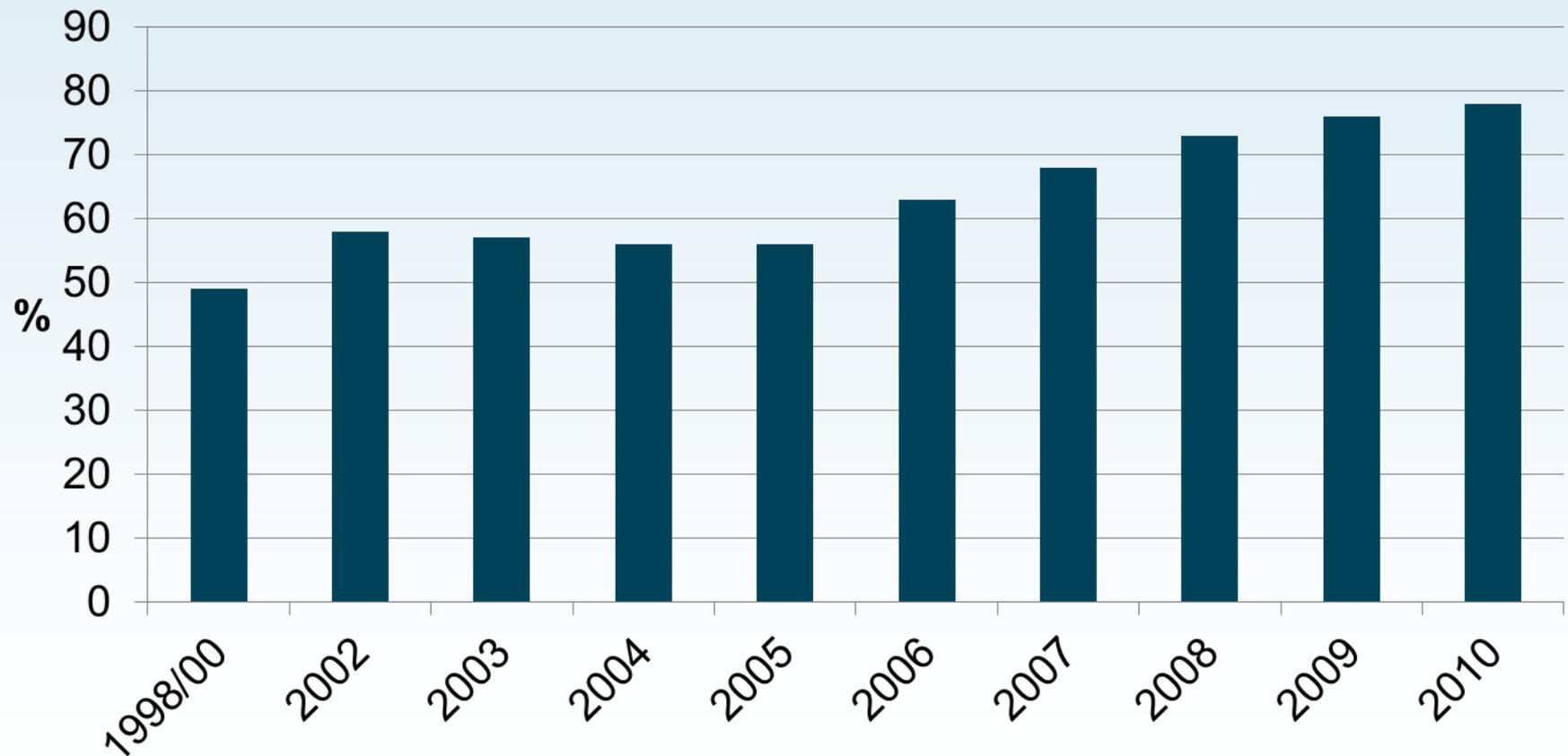
- Great Britain (or Britain) = England + Scotland + Wales
- United Kingdom = Great Britain + Northern Ireland



Concessionary travel in Great Britain

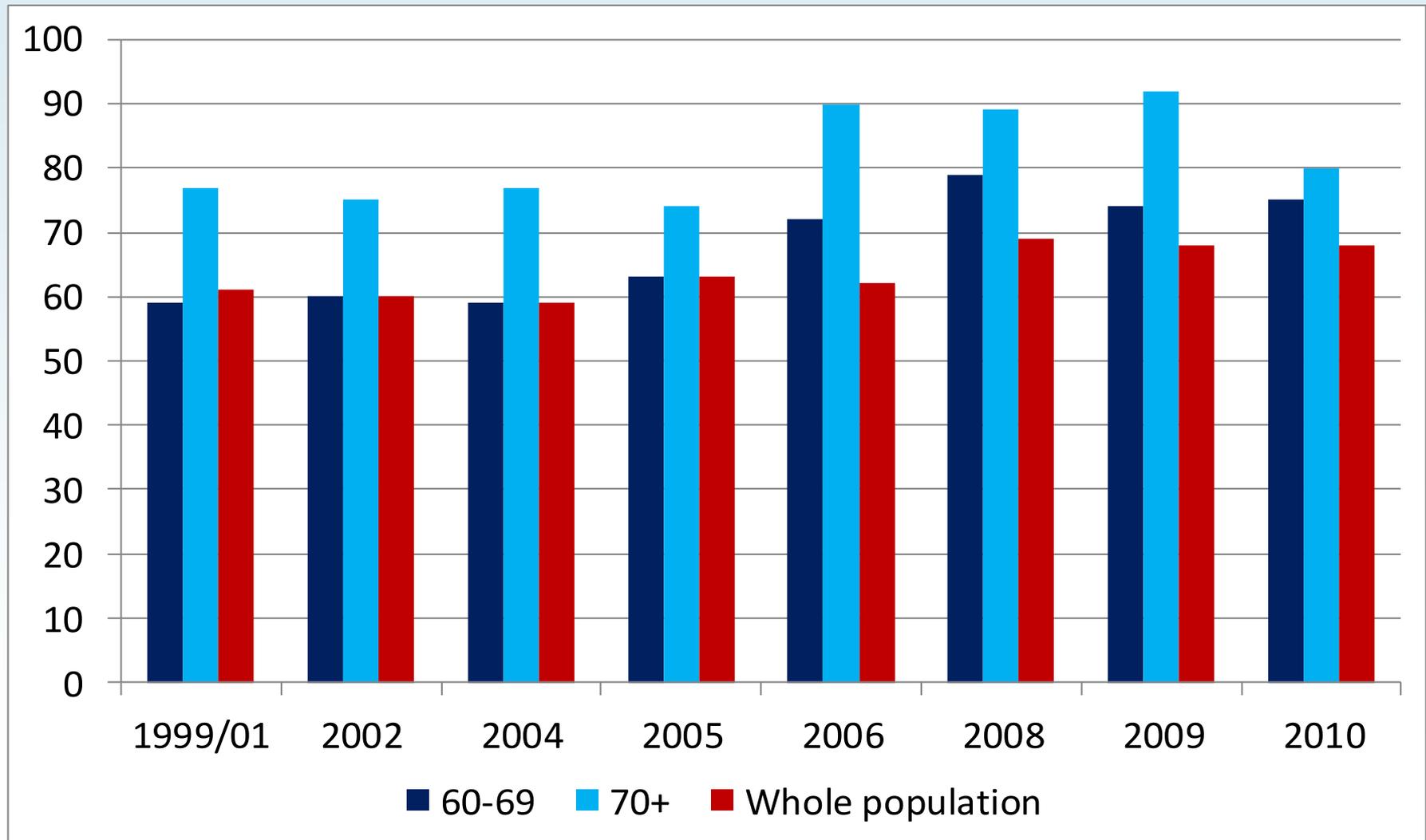
- Before 2000, there were various local schemes, mainly in larger urban areas
- The Transport Act 2000 gave all those of pensionable age (65 for men, 60 for women) and those with disabilities, half-fare bus travel in their local area from 9.30 am to 11.00 pm Monday to Friday and at weekends and public holidays. Local authorities can add local concessions.
- Eligible age for men reduced to 60 in April 2003
- Concession extended to free local bus travel from 2006 in England (earlier in Scotland and Wales)
- Scheme extended to England-wide travel in 2008
- Costs over \$1.6 billion per year

Take up of concessionary travel in Great Britain by people eligible on grounds of age



Source: National Travel Survey

Number of bus trips per year



Source: National Travel Survey

Evidence of increases in bus use by concessionary travel pass (CTP) holders

- Joyce Dargay and colleagues found free travel for older people increased bus travel by 27% in urban areas and 45% in rural areas based on analysis of National Travel Survey (NTS) data
- Andrew Last found that concessionary journeys increased by 25% in large urban areas in the first year of free travel
- Geoffrey Andrews, using surveys in SW England, found that 25% of respondents were making lots of extra bus trips and 35% were making some extra trips
- Stuart Baker and Peter White found 59% of their sample in Salisbury reported an increase in bus use with free travel

Types of trips made using bus passes

In order of popularity

- Shopping
- Social and leisure (may include shopping)
- Health (visiting doctor, hospital and clinic)
- Employment

Based on eight studies

The effects of free bus travel on car use (%)

	Less car use	Same	More car use
With free bus travel (Scotland)	43	27	2
Without free bus travel (NE England)	21	39	7

The figures show the change in car use caused by the introduction of free bus travel across the whole of Scotland. This was prior to the introduction of the same concession in England.

Source: Transport Scotland

The effects of free bus travel on walking (%)

Age	Walking less	Walking the same	Walking more
60-64	11	61	25
65-69	12	66	19
70-74	13	64	18
75-79	13	67	11
80+	21	60	8
Overall	14	63	17

Source: Transport Scotland

Effects of concessionary travel on health

- Elizabeth Webb and colleagues analysed the English Longitudinal Survey of Ageing (ELSA). They concluded that older people who used public transport were less likely to be obese and less likely to become obese than those who did not.
- In Scotland, 70% out of 2069 respondents said that Scotland-wide free bus travel gave them a more active lifestyle.
- Bus passes are used to reach health facilities.

Effects of concessionary travel on social inclusion

- ‘Social inclusion’ is a difficult concept to measure
- CTPs lower the financial barrier to movement by older people and so facilitates social interaction
- Emily Hirst and Bill Harrop found that 74% of the respondents in a survey in Manchester said that CTPs had enabled them to participate in new activities or visit new places
- Some of those in the survey in Scotland said they would feel ‘housebound’ if they could not use their passes

Effects of concessionary travel on ceasing to drive

- Charles Musselwhite and Hebba Haddad conducted focus groups with current car drivers aged 68-90 and ex-drivers aged 65-92. They found ceasing to drive caused:
 - Anxiety about being able to go to shops and hospital
 - Evidence of depression and annoyance
 - Feelings of isolation
- Geoffrey Andrews found that holding a CTP eased the transition to not driving, particularly for those who held one before ceasing. They could give up driving in stages by not driving journeys that they found difficult, e.g. in winter, in cities or at night.

Effects of concessionary travel on access to services

- Elaine Kelly, using ELSA data, found a 6.1% increase in the probability of reporting that access to Post Offices was very easy and a 3.9% increase in access to doctors.
- In Manchester, full bus fares were introduced before 9.30 am Monday to Friday (removing a local concession). Emily Hirst and Bill Harrop found that 23% of respondents said it would have an adverse impact on attendance at health appointments while 36% said they would not be affected.

Effects of concessionary travel on quality of life

- Geoffrey Andrews in surveys in SW England found 74% said that having a CTP had improved their quality of life
- Tom Rye and William Mykura found 60% of respondents in Edinburgh saying the same thing

Conclusions

- The improvements to health, social inclusion and access to services mentioned above plus the easing of the transition from car driving are improvements in the quality of life of older people
- The evidence on the benefits of concessionary travel is fairly diverse and not very systematic
- There is concern in Great Britain about the cost of providing concessionary travel (\$1.6 billion), but any debate should consider the benefits, including the cost of providing the benefits by other means if CTPs were abolished, not just simplistic discussions about reducing public expenditure.