

Dundee campaign sees kids travelling for 20p



Summary

Local authority:
Dundee City Council



In early 2017, Dundee City Council and the bus operators that serve the city, launched a promotional campaign that enables families to purchase kids bus tickets for the nominal fee of £0.20. This represents a significant discount on the price of the usual child fare of between £1.00 and £1.45.

The aim of this ongoing campaign is to make bus travel more affordable for and attractive to families in Dundee during peak school holiday periods. The reduced fares have been subsidised by some of the Council's 2017/18 Smarter Choices, Smarter Places (SCSP) funding, coupled with match funding from the bus companies.

The '20p for Kids' offer was extremely successful in encouraging families with young children in Dundee to use public transport more. On this basis, delivery of the campaign was once again funded by SCSP in 2018/19 and funding for the 2019/20 financial year has also been secured.

Project monitoring shows that the '20p for kids' promotional campaign has supported several of the Council's policy objectives. For instance, it has facilitated greater social and financial equality across Dundee's diverse population and successfully promoted more sustainable travel choices by families from all backgrounds. Hopefully, this will help to justify ongoing council support for the campaign.

This project received funding through the *Smarter Choices, Smarter Places* programme, which is administered by Paths for All and funded by Transport Scotland.



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Working in partnership with the three bus companies that serve the city - Stagecoach, Xplore Dundee or Moffatt & Williamson – Dundee City Council recently supported the delivery of a ‘20p for kids’ promotional campaign, which aimed to make bus travel more affordable for and attractive to families in Dundee.

Initial discussions were held with bus operators Xplore Dundee and Stagecoach East Scotland in 2016, to consider how this aim could be delivered. This led to an agreement to create a trial offer of reduced fares to children travelling with an adult during the Easter, summer and October school holidays.

A child’s fare costs a maximum of £1.45 but with the ‘20p for Kids’ school holiday offer in place, this reduced to just £0.20, thereby making family bus travel more economical and appealing, especially if an accompanying adult has a free bus pass. A requirement of the offer is that at least one adult needs to travel with up to three children.

From the outset, Dundee City Council recognised that the ‘20p for Kids’ offer had the capacity to support greater social and financial equality across Dundee’s diverse population and to promote more sustainable travel choices by families from all backgrounds.

For this reason, the Council chose to draw on its 2017/18 Smarter Choices, Smarter Places (SCSP) funding allocation to underwrite the bulk of the revenues lost by bus operators by delivering the promotional offer.

More specifically, SCSP funding was used to subsidise 65% of revenue forgone by the operators, after the £0.20 fare had been taken into consideration. Therefore, on a £1.45 child’s ticket, SCSP funding was used to reimburse 65% of £1.25, with the bus companies forgoing the remaining amount. The overall projected loss of revenue was treated as a source of match funding in Dundee City Council’s SCSP application.

Prior to the trial, there was no way of assessing potential demand for the ‘20p for Kids’ promotional campaign as there was no information about how many children usually travel with families at different times of the year. However, bus companies did hold data about the number of child’s fares sold at different times of the year and these figures were used as the basis of calculations about how much uptake the initiative was likely to, and actually did generate.

The ‘20p for Kids’ offer was formally launched in time for the April 2017 school holidays. A variety of promotional activities were carried out in advance of the launch, including social media activity and use of posters. This PR activity was repeated again for the summer and October school holidays.

The ‘20p for Kids’ offer showed great success in encouraging families with young children in Dundee to use public transport more. For example, child ticket sales over the 2017 Easter break showed a 39% increase from baseline 2016 Easter data. Similarly, sales during the summer of 2017 increased by 61%, and October 2017 sales were up 42%, relative to baseline sales in 2016.

The success of the first year led to the ‘20p for Kids’ campaign being repeated again in 2018, once again drawing on SCSP funding. Results in 2018 show incremental growth on top of the year one success. This year-on-year success encouraged Dundee City Council to apply for further SCSP funding, so the initiative will be delivered again during 2019.

Without doubt, the ‘20p for kids’ holiday ticketing promotion has generated high levels of awareness about the initiative and successfully increased bus use during school holidays, particularly in relation to encouraging families with young children in Dundee to use public transport more. This has provided strong support for a range of Dundee City Council’s policy objectives, including a desire to promote more sustainable travel choices by families from all backgrounds.

“ This SCSP funded project has exceeded our expectations and seems to demonstrate that the demand for travel is being suppressed by perceived cost. Bringing the price down makes the bus a far more attractive option for families travelling together and a lot more journeys are being made as a result. ”

John Berry, Sustainable Transport Team Leader, Dundee City Council

In numbers

65%

of fare revenues forgone by the operators was subsidised by SCSP funding



Child ticket sales over the 2017 Easter break showed a 39% increase on the previous year



During the summer of 2017, child ticket sales increased by 61%, relative to a 2016 baseline



October 2017 sales were up 42%, relative to baseline sales in 2016

51%

out of 100 members of public surveyed in 2017/18 had heard of the ‘20p for Kids’ offer



Neighbouring local authorities are now considering whether they can implement 20p for kids in their area

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“ I don't use them [buses]but my wife does. The buses are too expensive in Dundee. The 20p offer is great for days out in the holidays when I've got the car and my wife takes the wee one out for the day though. ”

Dundee resident