

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND
Transport Scotland

177 Bothwell Street, 5th Floor, Glasgow, G2 7ER
Direct Line: 0141 272 7100



Your ref:

Our ref:
202600517785

Date:
24 June 2026

Dear [REDACTED],

REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002 (FOISA)

Thank you for your request dated 26 May 2026 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA).

Your request

You asked for:

1. The Reimbursement Formula: The specific formula or methodology used by Transport Scotland to calculate the financial reimbursement paid to private bus operators for revenue lost due to the implementation of the £2 fare cap.
2. Basis of Calculation: Clarification on whether the reimbursement calculation uses the operator's standard "commercial" fare price as its baseline. If a different baseline is used to ensure value for public money, please provide details.
3. Financial Safeguards: The mechanisms, auditing processes, and regulatory guardrails in place to ensure operators do not artificially inflate their baseline standard fare prices to extract higher government payouts through the reimbursement scheme.
4. Pilot Evaluation Data: Any internal reports, correspondence, and data from the last 12 months evaluating the financial performance of the pilot, specifically focusing on the cost-per-passenger vs. original commercial fares.

Response to your request

1. The bus fare cap pilot operates by capping the cost of single adult journey fares at £2 to the passenger. Participating operators are reimbursed between 90% and 98% of the differential between the operator's usual single adult single journey fare and £2 for each journey taken under the pilot.

Transport Scotland has agreed reimbursement rates with participating operators depending on factors

such as existing ticket types and potential for patronage growth.

2. The bus fare cap pilot operates by capping the cost of single adult journey fares at £2 to the passenger. Participating operators, are reimbursed based on an agreed percentage of the differential between the operator's usual single adult single journey fare and £2 for each journey taken under the pilot.

All reimbursement claims are subject to validation.

3. Bus operators in Scotland participate in the statutory National Concessionary Travel Schemes, which provide free bus travel to those under 22, over 60 and with eligible disabilities. These schemes also reimburse operators based on a percentage of the single adult journey fare. Proposals by operators to increase fares are subject to agreement with Transport Scotland. The fares used as the basis for reimbursement through the National Concessionary Schemes are also those used as the basis for reimbursement for the bus fare cap pilot.

4. It is not yet possible to evaluate the financial performance of the pilot, however, the Scottish Government will work with participating operators over the summer to assess the impact of the pilot against comparable baseline data.

Since the launch of the bus fare cap pilot in the Highlands and Islands in January 2026, the Scottish Government has received claims relating to passenger journeys, with total reimbursement claims of £2,679,769 made by participating bus operators (figures correct at 19 June).

Your right to request a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your FOI request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by writing to Bettina Sizeland C/O FOI@gov.scot and C/O this postal address: FOI Unit 1E.10, St Andrew's House, Regent Road, EDINBURGH EH1 3DG. Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response, and should be made within 40 working days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review in accordance with FOISA as soon as possible, and not later than 20 working days from the day following the date we receive your review request.

If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you then have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. More detailed information on your appeal rights is available on the Commissioner's website at:

[Appeal to the Commissioner | Scottish Information Commissioner](#)

Yours sincerely

The Transformation Communications & Governance Team

TS : TIC - PUBLIC TRANSPORT TRANSFORMATION & GOVERNANCE REFORM PROGRAMME