



### **SPT & GCC – Supporting Applicants with a Life-Limiting Cancer Diagnosis**

**Date of meeting**

**Date of report** 21 January 2020

#### **1. Object of report**

The object of this report is to update the Joint Committee on an improvement to the National Entitlement Card application process to support people with a life-limiting cancer diagnosis.

#### **2. Background**

In the course of the year the Travel Card Unit (TCU) at BBS handle and process many thousands of first time National Entitlement Card concessionary travel applications. The vast majority of applications are from over-60s with the remainder coming from disabled applicants. A small, but significant percentage of applications are received from individuals who have recently received a life-limiting cancer diagnosis. These people, who have less than six months to live, face many challenges in the weeks ahead.

TCU follow the application process stipulated by Transport Scotland and the National Entitlement Programme Office. First time applicants are required to apply in person. This is usually at a local authority office, post office, social services centre or at Buchanan Bus Station. Amongst various proofs, such as identity and address, applicants must also provide proof of entitlement. For those with a life-limiting cancer diagnosis, this is a DS1500 Form.

A DS1500 Form is also used to access a number of benefits and services, such as the award of the Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments, housing and council tax benefits and access to counselling and other support services. Often the form is sent to DWP, the local authority or other institutions, and may not be readily available to obtain a 'free bus pass'. As a result the application process can be delayed and represents a barrier to some. A delay accessing concessionary travel for some users who desperately need to attend appointments or services can impact on their finances and further compound the issues.

To better support this group SPT and GCC's Improving the Cancer Journey (ICJ) team have had on-going discussions to establish a fast-track application process. To achieve this required the support of Transport Scotland and NECPO to help negotiate the scheme rules.

Based within Glasgow City Council the Glasgow ICJ service was the first of its kind in Scotland. It is a partnership between Macmillan, Glasgow City Council, the Beatson

Cancer Charity, Cordia, Glasgow Life, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and the Wheatley Group. The programme has expanded to include additional authority areas including West Dunbartonshire and Renfrewshire as well as Dundee and Fife with plans to roll out nationwide.

SPT are delighted to confirm the fast-track application process is in place and operating between Glasgow's ICJ team and SPT.

### 3. Fast Track Process

- Applicant is diagnosed and DS1500 form issued by a medically qualified professional.
- ICJ team confirm applicant requires concessionary travel and submits details via secure file transfer service.
- TCU receive new applicant details, including photograph. The application is processed same-day.
- NEC is produced and issued to the applicant and often received within three days.

Applicants are no longer required to apply in person at one of the locations mentioned above, or to provide the various proofs. This is because ICJ has been granted 'trusted' status with authorisation to verify applicant details and proof of identity, address and eligibility. This enables the DS1500 form to be retained by the applicant and used to apply for essential benefits and access to wider support.

Timescales from the point of application, often very close to diagnosis, to receipt of the concessionary travel card are reduced from weeks to days. Swift access to concessionary travel removes a potential financial concern and makes attending treatment sessions and other vital services easier.

### 4. Next Steps

SPT and GCC's ICJ team want to roll the initiative out further. GCC's ICJ team are in contact with partner ICJ teams in neighbouring LAs and, working with SPT, will be supporting the expansion of the fast-track scheme to other LAs over the coming months. The ultimate aim is to launch the fast-track process nationally with support from Transport Scotland, NECPO and the Improvement Service.

### 5. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>A review of the scheme will be completed in 2019/20</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None directly.</i>

Equalities consequences

*None directly.*

Risk consequences

*Mitigations to minimise the risk to card holders.*

**Name** Valerie Davidson

**Title** **Treasurer**

For further information, please contact *Tony Jones, Contact Centre Manager on 0141 333 3656.*