

Public transport ticketing schemes block exemption: Response from ATCO and the Local Government Association Public Transport Consortium

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft guidance on the application of the Public Transport Ticketing Schemes Block Exemption.

The principle of guidance enabling assessments of public transport schemes is welcomed.

The guidance may need to be reviewed when the Buses Bill is enacted.

Responses to the specific questions are as follows:

1. The guidance would be more useful if it set out ticketing schemes that are acceptable and examples of those that are not. A flow chart may aid understanding. Template documents for agreements would encourage greater use of the Block Exemption.
The guidance should encourage the use of multi-operator transport tickets that produce significant benefits for passengers.
2. The overview that summarises the ticketing schemes is helpful. The examples of restrictions that infringe Chapter 1 Prohibition are useful. Greater clarification of the interpretation of 'substantially the same' would be welcome; 'all or most of the stops' could be better defined, as paragraph 3.28 could be open to different interpretations.
Clarification in this section of the guidance is essential to give confidence to introduce ticketing schemes.
3. This section, as drafted, is complex – 'in practice, not substantially used as an MIT or TT' could be made clearer. Information required to make the assessment may not be available. Connecting services can have different interpretations – some connect by timetable construction, others are unplanned. 'Substantial' in paragraph 3.37 can have a number of interpretations.
4. Good examples are set out where excluding operators or potential operators is unacceptable.
5. The examples given are relevant. The concern with this type of ticket is that operators require a premium price to encourage sales of their own tickets.
Box 4 Example 1 – the agreement could, in effect, specify the price.
6. Many authorities have partnership working arrangements with operators which can include co-ordination of bus service change dates, which is in the interest of the travelling public.
7. This section is helpful but the exchange of information that is 'directly related and indispensable' could be defined to provide reassurance. A template of an acceptable scheme would be useful.
8. This is complex: the reimbursement arrangements can be administratively difficult. Fares are not always related to cost of service provision.

9. The system of revenue remaining with the operator who issued the ticket is simple to implement. In paragraph 4.31 explanation would help of how the price should be set. It would be helpful to explain an acceptable revenue distribution method other than 'lies where it falls'.
10. It may be difficult to prove compliance with the requirements, set out in paragraph 4.43.
The introduction of smartcard and bank card payments will enable reimbursement to become more sophisticated.
An example of price determination of a ticket would be helpful.
11. The example of a revenue self-assessment set out in Box 9 is helpful. It would be helpful if the section on 'Agreements that *might* fall outside the block exemption' could also be 'Agreements that *do* fall outside the block exemption'