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### **Age UK London urges the government not to use older Londoners' travel concessions as a bargaining chip**

Older Londoners' travel concessions must not be used as a bargaining chip in last minute negotiations with TFL, says charity Age UK London.

Following the announcement of a two-week extension to the current deal, both TFL and the Department for Transport must now agree a new funding deal by 31<sup>st</sup> October.

It is over four months since Freedom Pass and 60+ Oyster card travel was suspended before 9am on weekday mornings as a condition of the current funding deal. Speculation has been rising since Friday that the next funding deal will not see a lifting of the suspension, originally announced as a 'temporary' measure, but instead mean even greater restrictions on older Londoners concessions.

Age UK London have been campaigning against the suspension since it was first announced in May on the grounds that it penalises older Londoners, particularly those on low incomes, with no choice about when and how they travel.

Age UK London's Chief Executive, Abi Wood, said:

*"Earlier this month we wrote to the Mayor to ask that the suspension be lifted and to call on the Department for Transport to recognise that travel concessions are a lifeline for older Londoners on low incomes."*

*"We've always been clear that this suspension penalises older Londoners making essential journeys such as NHS workers and carers. London already has the highest rate of 'pensioner poverty' in the UK and the suspension comes at a time when older Londoners in the job market have been hit particularly hard. The number of older Londoners needing out-of-work support such as Universal Credit has doubled in just seven months due to the pandemic and we know that only one in three older workers made redundant find a new job within three months."*

*"Older Londoners have told us they are only travelling with extreme caution because of the pandemic. People are not travelling because they feel like it but because they have no alternative. This attack on concessions will drive more into poverty and exacerbate the capital's social isolation crisis"*

**-Ends-**

**Notes to editors:**

1. Age UK London is the regional Age UK for London, which campaigns to make London an Age-friendly City.

- [www.ageuk.org.uk/london](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/london)
- [www.twitter.com/ageuklondon](https://www.twitter.com/ageuklondon)
- [www.facebook.com/ageuklondon](https://www.facebook.com/ageuklondon)

2. Age UK London has launched the "Protect free travel for older Londoners" campaign, to protest against the suspension of travel concessions, as it penalises older Londoners with no choice about when and how they travel.

3. Abigail Wood, Age UK London's Chief Executive, is available for interviews. Please contact Aurelie Leroy for more information.