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Age UK London speak out on one year anniversary of “temporary” suspension to concessionary travel

Today is exactly one year since concessionary travel for older Londoners was suspended before 9am on weekdays. The suspension of the Freedom Pass and 60+ Oyster Card before 9am was introduced as a ‘temporary’ measure to reduce crowding as part of a government finance deal with TFL.

Abigail Wood, CEO at Age UK London said:

“Every day the suspension stays in force the greater the impact on some of the poorest people in our city is. Over the past year we’ve heard from older unpaid carers, volunteers, hospital patients, key workers and others that don’t travel before 9am because they want to but because they have to. They are carers for relatives travelling to different parts of the city to help a loved one to get up in the morning and key workers returning home a night shift serving the community.

It’s ironic that 15th June was the date in 2018 that the Mayor announced London was to become an age-friendly city. Affordable transport has a huge impact on how age-friendly a place is; it enables older Londoners to make their incredible contribution to our city and is one of the best tools we have in the fight against rising social isolation.”

A frontline worker who uses his 60+ Oyster Card holder to commute told Age UK London:

“Throughout the lockdown I had been working nightshifts in a Mental Health unit, and along with all the others in essential jobs had been hailed and applauded as a ‘brave Keyworker’; I had never thought of myself as a ‘front line hero’, but it felt like a cynical kick in the teeth to lose my concession and find myself paying to go home after a 12-hour night shift.

“I finish work at 8am and cannot use my Older Persons Oyster card until 9am, so I have to pay the full fare. Unless I can get overtime, I cannot make ends meet.”

-Ends-

Notes to editors:

1. Age UK London is the regional Age UK for London, which campaigns to make London an age-friendly City
2. You can find more of our campaign work on our website here:
<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/london/projects-campaigns/protect-free-travel-for-older-londoners/>
3. Abigail Wood, Age UK London’s Chief Executive, is available for interviews. Please contact Aurelie Leroy for more information