

Project title:	'On the buses': evaluating the impact of free bus travel for young people on the public health
Project reference:	09/3001/13
Cost:	£536,226
Lead applicant and institution:	Dr Judith Green Public Health & Policy Department London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
Start date:	1 February 2010
End date:	31 July 2012
Methodology:	A mixed method, quasi-experimental design drawing on secondary analysis of HES, STATS19, travel diary and other data sets and primary qualitative data.
Outcome measure:	Reported effects of access to bus travel on health, well being and determinants of health; change in frequency and distance of active and other travel modes; incidence of injury.
Sample group:	Population of London
Abstract:	<p>There has been increasing interest in the ways in which transport policies affect the public health but to date, few robust evaluations of specific policies. This study aims to evaluate the impact of the introduction of free bus and tram travel to under 16 year olds in 2005 and under 18 year olds in 2006 in London. The aims of this policy included reducing transport exclusion among young people. This potentially had a positive effect on the determinants of health and health equity. However, there has also been concern that extending access to bus travel may have reduced the amount of healthier 'active transport' done by young people. There are also concerns about consequent impacts on other population groups, such as elderly people. Using a mixed method, quasi-experimental design, this study aims to provide empirical evidence for the impact of free bus travel on public health, and evaluate the economic costs and benefits. The objectives are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine the causal pathways that plausibly link transport interventions and young people's health. 2. Identify the ways in which young people and older citizens understand the role of bus and other transport mode access in facilitating and constraining their well being.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Assess the impact of the intervention on the use of bus and other (particularly active) transport modes for young people and other age groups.4. Identify the impact of the intervention on injury rates.5. Develop and apply methods for conducting an economic evaluation of the health impacts of free bus travel. <p>This study will also contribute to the development of methods to evaluate the public health impact of interventions in complex systems in the absence of RCT evidence.</p>
--	--