

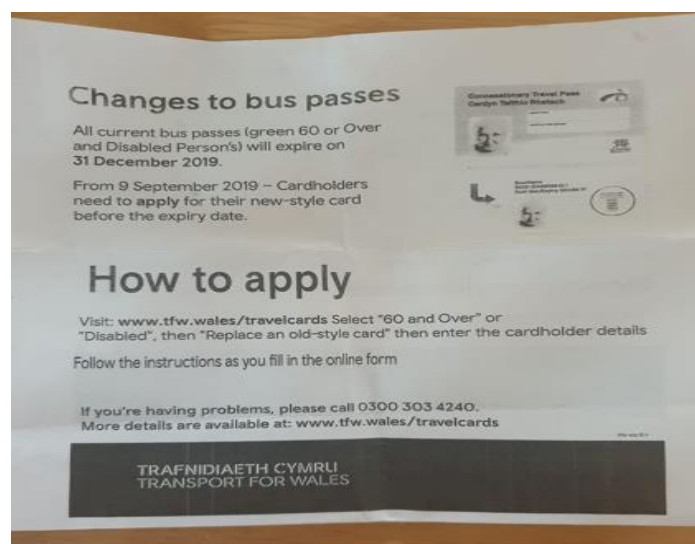
## Case Study 2 – Bus Pass Renewal

### Summary

This is more of a response to a problem for the local community, than a project, but, demonstrates how important Libraries can be to a local community.

Transport for Wales exists to drive forward the Welsh Government's vision of a high quality, safe, integrated, affordable and accessible transport network that the people of Wales are proud of. As part of this, Transport for Wales is working with all Welsh local councils and Welsh Government to roll out new-style Concessionary Travel Cards by the end of December 2019. These cards will replace the current green 'bus passes' across Wales. The old-style cards will not be recognised by electronic readers on buses after 31 December 2019.

The website that the public could use to renew their bus pass went live in September. The website recommended contacting your local library for help to renew your bus pass, as public libraries provide free access to the internet. There was a lack of communication between those in local government and the Library service, although Libraries in other areas had been subject to better communication.



### The Project

The Library Manager at Merthyr Central Library contacted MTCBC, who confirmed this was happening, and agreed to send over paper copies of forms for the public.

Help sessions were quickly arranged for library staff to help support people renewing their bus passes at all libraries.

## Renewing your Bus Pass



Your current card will expire on 31 December 2019  
You can apply for a new card online using: [www.tfw.wales/travelcards](http://www.tfw.wales/travelcards)

You can access the website for free at all  
Merthyr Tydfil Public Libraries from 11.09.2019

If you would like help applying for a new card  
there will be a session at  
Dowlais Library:  
Tuesday 17th September  
10am - 1pm

- Current Card
- Date of Birth
- Postcode to which the card is registered
- National Insurance Number
- Photo of yourself

PLEASE NOTE THERE MAYBE A WAITING TIME FOR STAFF HELP

At the beginning of September the web site went 'live' and promptly crashed, because of the number of people trying to access it. Eventually the website went 'live' again on the afternoon of 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2019. The Help Sessions were rescheduled. However, because of the overwhelming number of people who flooded into libraries desperate for help, the sessions were largely abandoned, and staff helped people who enquired as needed. Because of the large numbers, a queueing system was introduced at Merthyr Central Library, with library users given a numbered slip of paper. They were then assisted in numerical order. At Aberfan, Dowlais, Rhydydar, and, Treharris Libraries, bus pass renewal enquirers were helped as soon as they asked.

### Project Results

**By the end of the first week, 1018 individuals had visited Merthyr Tydfil's libraries to try to renew their bus passes.** Library staff were magnificent in their endeavour to help. Many of those trying to renew their bus passes had come without the required information – one member of staff helped a 93 year old man by phoning his pub landlady to get his post code and phone number! Thankfully the gentleman had his National Insurance number. In Merthyr Central Library, several ladies were so overcome with relief when their bus passes were renewed that they became quite giddy, and nearly fainted. This illustrates how important the bus passes are to those who rely on them for transport.

**By the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2019 – 6090 individuals had been helped.**

**This equates to roughly to 507 hours of staff time (assuming an average of 5 mins to complete each application for the new concessionary travel pass.)**

About a quarter of those trying to renew their bus passes experienced problems on the website. Problems arose because

1. The individual had moved and not reported a change of address
2. The individual had lost their original bus pass, and received a new bus pass, but, were still trying to use the re-found original bus pass.
3. Incorrect data entry – the transposition of digits and numerals, e.g. Using a capital O instead of a zero.
4. The website had crashed.

Many organisations and neighbouring library services had taken the stance to hand out forms rather than provide the face to face support that Merthyr Tydfil did.

The public were full of praise for the help they received:

*“Excellent. Means a lot to be able to come here to get my bus pass renewed quickly”*  
Evelyn

*“I was worried that I wouldn’t be able to renew my bus pass and change the address. Staff have been very helpful and got it all sorted quickly.”* Elizabeth

*“ I struggled to complete the renewal at home as the database did not recognise my information. I came to the library and had my photo taken, and applied for a new card quickly and easily. Very helpful staff have saved me lots of stress.”* Jean

*“Thank you for helping people who are unable to use the computers themselves to renew their bus pass.”* Pat

*“Very good to have details sorted out in such a pleasant place, that I haven’t visited in years!”* Robert

*“I tried several times to complete a new bus pass online, without success. Thankfully, Library staff have helped out.”* Linda

*“Marvellous!”* Vincent

*“I think the Library is a big help.”* Mona

The majority of those trying to renew their bus passes, had no access to the internet at home. Without the support of staff and the public access pcs in the libraries, they would not have been able to renew their bus passes. It is also interesting to note, that some of the enquirers did have access to the internet at home, but, had experienced problems whilst trying to renew their bus pass and looked for support and advice at their local library. Many have expressed how stressed and anxious they have been, which in some cases had badly affected their well-being.

Although four week basic computing courses are offered at Merthyr Library, most bus pass renewers have commented that they have managed without computers up until now, and are not interested in learning at their advanced age, when told about the course.

The delay in some people receiving their bus pass after renewal has caused a few of those affected to visit the library and ask where their bus pass is. For them, the Library has become part of the organisation issuing the bus pass. However, library staff have explained and given out the Transport for Wales contact number, and the problem has been resolved.

### Next Steps

For many, the library is now recognised as a place where they can get help and support in accessing and using the internet. Enquiries have already been made about renewing Driving Licences at 70 etc.. Volunteer led help sessions are being planned at libraries to direct enquirers to.