



Young Scot National Entitlement Card (NEC) Briefing

1. Introduction

Young Scot is the national youth information and citizenship charity for Scotland. We provide young people, aged 11 to 26, with a mixture of information, ideas and incentives to help them become confident, informed and active citizens.

We are perhaps best known amongst young people for the Young Scot National Entitlement Card (NEC), carried by over 600,000 young people (60% of the population), which offers discounts, travel concessions and access to a wide range of opportunities and services, as well as being a voluntary proof of age card via the inclusion of the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram.

Young Scot is highly recognised amongst young people in Scotland. In a nationally representative independent survey of young people, 'Being Young in Scotland', 98% reported that they were aware of the Young Scot card and 49% of 11 to 16 year olds reported using their card in the previous month.

This briefing presents an overview of the history and development of the Young Scot NEC and the current services associated with the card.

2. Background and history

There has been a Young Scot Card in existence for almost 30 years. In the early days, the card was a simple plastic card, which provided young people with discounts to support access to cultural activities across Scotland. Cards were distributed to young people along with information handbooks. Over time, the card evolved to include discounts on a wider range of products and services as well providing additional benefits for young people.

In 2002, the Dialogue Youth Programme led to the development of the localised versions of the Young Scot card for all 32 local authority areas. These localised cards began to replace many other local cards, such as cashless catering, leisure and library cards, and include these services on a single multi-function Young Scot card. These local services were added by placing additional technology on to the cards, such as bar codes and magnetic strips.

The National Entitlement Card (NEC) was launched in 2007 as a partnership between the Scottish Government, Local Authorities, Transport Scotland, Young Scot and others, aiming to make it quicker and easier to access services provided by partners using one card rather than many. One of the key drivers for the development of the National Entitlement Card (NEC) was the introduction of the national concessionary travel scheme for older people (60+), disabled people and young people aged 16 to 18.



The NEC included a contactless chip within the card, instead of barcodes or magnetic strips. This provided a common technology platform across all of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities more suitable for multiple applications, including concessionary travel. The introduction of the NEC also brought efficiency savings for local authorities as a result of the development of a national infrastructure, including a shared card management system and card production process. The Improvement Service manage this national infrastructure on behalf of local authorities.

Local authorities made the transition from producing local cards to using the NEC as they updated their local systems to use the contactless technology. Now Young Scot NECs are available free of charge to young people aged 11 to 26 across all 32 local authority areas in Scotland.

3. Services on the Young Scot National Entitlement Card

Young Scot Services on the NEC

Young Scot's partnership with the Scottish Government and local authorities enables young people to access a wide range of benefits using their Young Scot NEC, including:

- Access to over 1,400 discounts on products, services and activities across Scotland by showing their card at the point of sale. Online discounts are also available through the Young Scot portals;
- Access to over 50,000 discounts in 38 other countries around Europe through our involvement in the European Youth Card Association; and
- A recognised way of proving their age is through the inclusion of the Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) hologram. This enables young people to access the goods and services they are entitled to, as well as getting discounted fares on public transport.



The Young Scot NEC is also accepted by banks in Scotland as a form of identification for opening a basic bank account. Additionally, an e-Voting system linked to the card has been developed. This system was used in nine areas to support the Scottish Youth Parliament elections in March 2015, with over 46,000 young people voting online.

The latest service to be added to the card is Young Scot Rewards. Young Scot Rewards aims to encourage young people to participate in positive activities by offering points which can then be used to unlock rewards, including positive activities or opportunities and "money can't buy" experiences.



Concessionary travel

The NEC is also the delivery mechanism for the national concessionary travel scheme, managed by Transport Scotland. All young people aged 16, 17 and 18 year olds, or full-time volunteers aged under 26, are entitled to receive:

- A third off adult single fares on bus services in Scotland;
- A free Scottish Youth Railcard (giving a third off most Scottish rail services); and

- Two free ferry journeys per year to the mainland for Islanders.

Disabled young people can get a Young Scot NEC which entitles them to Scotland-wide free bus travel.



Local authority and other services

Local authorities also provide a range of services on the Young Scot NEC. The most common application is cashless catering in schools, enabling young people to pay for school meals using their card, while those entitled to free school meals also use their card, removing the stigma associated with claiming this entitlement. Other local authority services commonly included on the Young Scot NEC include public and school library membership as well as leisure membership.

Abertay University and Dundee College issue co-branded Young Scot NECs to students aged up to 26 as their matriculation card. Older students receive a standard NEC.

4. Application process

The Young Scot NEC is voluntary and is available free of charge from every local authority in Scotland. Over 80,000 new applications are processed each year.

The majority of applications are processed through schools, with most pupils being offered the opportunity to apply for a Young Scot NEC when they make the transition from primary to secondary school at age 11. Personal details are validated against school records to ensure the names, addresses and dates of birth on the applications are correct. Young people who have left school can apply for a card by taking a completed application and documentation to prove their identity to a local validation point. The validation points are often libraries or customer service centres.

5. More information

For more information about the Young Scot National Entitlement Card, please contact:

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