

# FREE TRAVEL

## UNDER 18 TRAVEL



*The Mayor of London gave all young people under the age of 18 free travel. Then he decided to take it away again because of rising youth crime figures on buses across the capital.*

*Across London young people have been protesting about losing their free travel, here is what young people in Kingston did to help the cause...*

On the 16th March, at Surbiton Library, there was a conference about under 18's travel. The aim of this conference was to allow young peoples opinions on the free travel situation to be heard. The day was conducted by Edward Davey MP, Geoff Pope Chair of the London Assembly's Transport Committee and Liberal Democrat spokesman on Transport at the Assembly, and representatives from the Safer Neighbourhood Teams Paul Kenny, Kingston's Member of Youth Parliament and members of the Kingston Youth Council

All KYC participants supported free travel for under 18s in full time Education in London and did not want to see it scrapped.

### **What was discussed at the conference?**

Issues on under 18's free travel. There were also complaints about how the system was operated- especially when oyster cards stopped working or had to be re-placed.

Some of the participants agreed there were people who abused the free travel scheme, but

felt they were a tiny minority. Ideas were put forward for stopping abuse, including-

- A "top up" Oyster Card to replace an annual card, with schools and colleges issuing the "top up" credits for the free travel, so they could ensure free travel was linked to attending school and good behaviour.
- Stopping free travel weekdays between 9:30am until 3:30pm, as young people should be in school or college during these hours.
- More police and/ or bus conductors.

During the discussions, the police explained that new Safer Transport Teams were coming soon to the area. The dedicated transport team will have 18 Police Community Support Officers plus at least 2 Sergeants and 1 police officer to patrol transport in the Kingston Area from June 2007.

### **How did the session go?**

Overall the conference went very well, covering many areas on Under 18's Travel. Many people shared their views and opinions, which made the topic interesting and enjoyable.

The Royal Borough of Kingston remains one of the safest Boroughs in London, and, although crimes remain high, there has been real progress, such as the recent roll out of Police Safer Neighbourhood teams across the borough.

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