

CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

9 November 2018 – 16 November 2018



Northern Ireland
Assembly

The Northern Ireland Assembly was dissolved at 00:01 on Thursday 26 January 2017.



Tuesday 13 November 2018

Department for Employment Affairs and Social Protection

Brendan Smith asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the discussions she has had with the authorities in Northern Ireland and her counterpart in the British Government regarding the operation of the free travel scheme post Brexit; if there will be no disruption to this scheme particularly in respect of cross-Border travel; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Regina Doherty: The free travel scheme provides free travel on the main public and private transport services for those eligible under the scheme. These include road, rail and ferry services provided by companies such as Bus Átha Cliath, Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann, as well as Luas and services provided by over 80 private transport operators. There are currently approximately 928,216 customers with direct eligibility with an annual allocation of €90 million.

The All Ireland free travel scheme allows a free travel pass holder (those aged 66 and older) to travel free of charge on all bus and rail services within Northern Ireland using a senior smartpass card. Similarly, Northern Ireland senior smartpass holders (aged 65 years or older) are entitled to travel for

free on services in Ireland using their existing senior smartpass card. This is a bilateral arrangement, and does not apply to other parts of the EU.

A key area of concern is the impact of Brexit on the current reciprocal arrangements for social security schemes and services between Ireland and the UK, including Northern Ireland. This includes the arrangements for the All Ireland free travel scheme.

The Government's long-term objective is to ensure that the reciprocity of rights which currently exist for Irish and UK citizens moving within Ireland and between Ireland and the UK under the Common Travel Area, are safeguarded and maintained.

I met with the UK Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Right Honourable Esther McVey, on Monday 23rd April 2018. I emphasised my objective of ensuring that the reciprocity of social welfare rights and entitlements, which currently exist for Irish and UK citizens moving within Ireland and between Ireland and the UK under the Common Travel Area, are safeguarded and maintained.

Source <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-11-13a.116&s=cross+border+2018-11-09..2018-11-16#g117.q>

Thursday 15 November 2018

Department for Transport, Tourism and Sport

Imelda Munster asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if the construction of the A5 upgrade to a dual carriageway from Derry city and County Donegal to County Monaghan will be equally co-funded.

Shane Ross: The current funding arrangements in relation to the A5 are governed by the Stormont House Agreement and Implementation Plan - A Fresh Start. This Agreement reaffirmed the Government's commitment to provide funding of £50 million for the A5 project and committed an additional £25 million towards the cost of Phase 1 of the project (Newbuildings to north of Strabane).

The funding allocated to my Department as part of the 2017 Capital Plan Review includes financial provision for meeting the Government's commitment regarding the A5 in three £25 million (sterling) tranches over the period 2019 to 2021. The project is the subject of legal proceedings at present.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-11-15a.481&s=cross+border+2018-11-09..2018-11-16>