‘Breaking Bus Barriers To Education’ Policy

The Highlands & Islands Students’ Association shall…

- Lobby local authorities within the UHI Partnership to use their powers to regulate bus services to provide affordable and accessible transport to campuses within the UHI Partnership.
- Lobby the Scottish government to expand the existing concessionary bus scheme to include all students.
- Lobby local authorities within the UHI Partnership to include HISA within the development of local transport planning.

Start Date: 03/11/2026 **End Date:** 02/11/2028

Motion Title: Breaking Bus Barriers To Education

Proposer: Corben Bruce

The Situation

Students across the Highlands and Islands face significant transport barriers when accessing education. Many students rely on limited public transport services that do not align with teaching timetables, placements, or extracurricular activities. Recent service reductions and increasing travel costs have further restricted access for learners, particularly those living in rural and island communities.

These challenges can lead to missed classes, reduced participation in student life, increased financial pressure, and unequal educational opportunities. Students should not be disadvantaged because of where they live or their ability to afford transport. A coordinated effort is needed to ensure that transport provision meets the needs of the student population and supports equal access to education.

The Solution

- Local authorities within the UHI Partnership will use their powers to regulate bus services within their areas, ensuring routes, timetables, and fares reflect the needs of local communities and students.
- The Scottish Government's bus concessionary scheme for bus travel will cover all further and higher education students, regardless of age or mode of study.
- Transport planning across the UHI Partnership will recognise access to education as a key priority, ensuring students can travel to and from their place of study affordably and reliably.

The Importance

Access to education should not depend on a student's postcode, income, or access to a private vehicle. Reliable and affordable transport is essential for student attendance, academic success, wellbeing, and participation in campus life. Rural and island learners are often disproportionately affected by poor transport links, creating barriers that many urban students do not experience.

The Action

- Lobby local authorities within the UHI Partnership to use their powers to regulate bus services to provide affordable and accessible transport to campuses within the UHI Partnership.

- Lobby the Scottish government to expand the existing concessionary bus scheme to include all students.
- Lobby local authorities within the UHI Partnership to include HISA within the development of local transport planning.