



# A Manifesto for Scotland's bus services

Bus services over the past decade have battled a fall in passenger numbers, driver shortages, rising congestion and funding cuts.

To realise the potential of bus services as a force for social, environmental and economic good, our 2024 Bus Manifesto is calling for long-term, fully-funded support for these lifeline services.

We need the next elected government to put communities at the heart of transport planning and to prioritise public, shared and active travel over private car use.

## Our Manifesto

### 1 Green

Just 2% of greenhouse gas emissions produced by transport come from buses and coaches compared to 52% from cars. We need transport policy that prioritises public, shared and active travel rather than promoting private electric vehicles which contribute to transport inequality and congestion.

### 2 Viable

To encourage modal shift, bus services need to be reliable, affordable and attractive: the more services are used, the more attractive they become. This virtuous cycle requires a commitment to, and investment in, bus priority measures and infrastructure to ensure the bus is a genuinely viable alternative to the car.

### 3 Fit-for-purpose

Society is constantly changing and events like the pandemic have transformed the way we live and work. To keep pace with that change, transport providers need to be in tune with the social and economic landscape of the areas they serve, and responsive to the current and future needs of the people who live in them.

### 4 Connected

Transport should be a core element of all major planning decisions from education and employment to housing and the environment. A cross-departmental approach, aligned to the work of the Disability and Access Ambassadors, is needed to reflect the vital importance of transport on every aspect of our lives.

### 5 Accessible

Everyone deserves access to life's opportunities, including the growing number of people who are older, have a disability or a mental or physical health condition. People with these lived experiences need to be actively involved in the design and delivery of services to identify barriers to travel and ensure no-one is left behind.



## 6 Inclusive

Bus service consultations need to be genuinely inclusive to reflect the diversity of the people they represent. That means actively engaging with education centres, charities, care homes, places of worship, local employers and medical centres as well as current transport providers, to ensure local transport meets the needs of the local community.

## 7 Transparent

Passengers should be better informed about their rights and means of redress. Operators need to make their own complaints process clear and accessible, with easily available contact information including non-premium landline, and details of an appropriate Alternative Dispute Resolution Body to which complaints can be escalated.

## 8 Fair

A simplified fare system across all transport modes would make sustainable travel more affordable, more accessible and more attractive. While digital technology has a critical role to

play, it should not be a barrier for the millions of people who are either digitally excluded or have no access to a bank account.

## 9 Unrestricted

Concessionary bus passes have become a vital tool of connectivity for the under 22s, the over 60s and people with disabilities across Scotland. Lifting restrictions on peak-time and cross-border travel throughout the UK will open up opportunities for education, work and volunteering, and improve access to healthcare, leisure, family and friends. To protect services for passengers and ensure they remain viable, funding for this scheme must be protected.

## 10 Necessary

For millions of people bus services are a lifeline, providing access to education, employment and healthcare and ensuring they can lead active and fulfilling lives. Section 63 of the 1985 Transport Act needs to be updated to reflect the 'duty' local authorities have to provide these social necessary services, along with sufficient, ring-fenced funding.



# About Bus Users

Bus Users UK is a charity that campaigns for inclusive, accessible transport. We are the only approved Alternative Dispute Resolution Body for the bus and coach industry and the designated body for handling complaints under the Passenger Rights in Bus and Coach Legislation. We are also part of the Sustainable Transport Alliance, a group working to promote the benefits of public, shared and active travel.

Alongside our complaints work we investigate and monitor services and work with operators and transport providers to improve services for everyone. We run events, carry out research, respond to consultations, speak at government select committees and take part in industry events to make sure the voice of the passenger is heard.

*Bus Users UK Charitable Trust Ltd is a registered charity (1178677 and SC049144) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (04635458).*

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