bus users
bringing people together

Annual Impact Report 2025/26

www.bususers.org

Bus Users UK – driving change in 2025/26

Throughout 2025/26, Bus Users UK has championed passengers and communities across England, Scotland and Wales, successfully resolving complaints, improving services and accessibility, and promoting sustainable, accessible, affordable and reliable transport for all.

A word from our Chief Executive

Buses and coaches are about much more than getting from A to B. They are about people: the journey to work, the trip to school, the connection to family and friends, and the freedom to access the opportunities and services that allow communities to thrive. For millions of people every day, bus and coach services are essential, providing independence, opportunity and connection. They are also central to creating a more inclusive, sustainable and prosperous future.

Stepping into the role of Chief Executive of Bus Users UK at a time of such significant change across England, Scotland and Wales has been both a privilege and a responsibility. The pace of reform and transformation across the bus and coach sector has been unprecedented, but one thing has remained constant: the passenger voice must be at the heart of every decision.

I also want to recognise the tremendous contribution of my predecessor, Claire Walters, who led Bus Users UK with passion, commitment and a steadfast belief in the importance of putting passengers first. Claire played a pivotal role in strengthening our voice across the sector, building relationships with partners and stakeholders, and ensuring that the experiences of passengers remained at the centre of national conversations about transport. I am grateful for the strong foundations she helped create and proud to continue that work, alongside our dedicated staff team, trustees and industry partners.

Over the past year, we have continued to strengthen our role as the independent champion for bus and coach passengers. From the introduction of new legislation and evolving approaches to franchising, to the ongoing challenges around funding, accessibility and service reliability, we have worked tirelessly to ensure that passengers are not just consulted on change, but genuinely shape it.

Lydia Horbury

What we do

We bring the voices of passengers to the people who shape services -working with communities, operators, and government to drive real change on the ground.

As the only approved Alternative Dispute Resolution body for bus and coach, we provide an independent route for complaints under Passenger Rights legislation, ensuring passengers are heard and treated fairly. And we are a critical ally to the industry, working with transport providers to improve services and holding them to account when services fall short.

As part of the Sustainable Transport Alliance, we champion the huge benefits of public, shared, and active travel.

Find out more and keep up to date at **www.bususers.org**

Making headlines

In 2025/26 we...

2,000
Successfully resolved over 2,000 complaints

200
Hosted and took part in nearly 200 events

We welcomed Lydia Horbury as Chief Executive

This year, we were thrilled to welcome Lydia Horbury into her new role as Chief Executive following on from her successful tenure as our Director for England. Lydia is committed to championing the voice of passengers and working alongside all those involved in the bus and coach industry to make sustainable transport accessible to everyone.

We appointed Becky Miller as Director for England

With a background in education, advocacy and stakeholder collaboration, Becky has a deep appreciation of the power of public transport to shape lives and connect communities.

And we said goodbye to Claire Walters

A highly respected advocate for passenger rights and a staunch critical ally to the bus sector, Claire was Chief Executive for 13 pivotal years. In 2025 she was presented with the Bus Centre of Excellence Lifetime Achievement Award.

Resolving your complaints

Issues raised	England	Scotland	Wales	Total 2025/26
Driver/staff attitude	334	73	20	427
Other ticket matter	303	63	18	384
Bus failed to show	215	38	13	266
Lack of information	135	24	10	169
Bus failed to stop	78	23	3	104
Service reliability	44	38	6	88
Incorrect information provided	67	10	6	83
Vehicle condition	52	22	3	77
Disability Issues	39	14	2	55
Luggage	49	6	0	55
Other	44	6	3	53
App/Smartcard	39	7	3	49
Accessibility issues	34	10	2	46
Ticket prices	34	7	4	45
Personal injury and accident	28	3	1	32
EPRR	22	1	0	23
Ticket acceptance	15	6	1	22
Standard fare charge	14	5	0	19
Capacity	12	4	0	16
Concession pass matter	6	3	1	10
Smoking	2	1	0	3
Infrastructure	2	0	0	2
Accessible Info Regs - Technical	1	0	1	2
Accessible Info Regs - Staff	1	0	1	2
Accessible Info Regs - Other	1	0	1	2
Frequency of service	4	1	0	1
Compliment	0	0	0	0
	1571	**365**	**99**	**2035**

"I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your support and assistance throughout this process. Without your help, I do not believe I would have been able to recover the amount I paid for the cancelled trip. Your efforts have been greatly valued."

"I am truly grateful for the fair, honest, and professional way you handled my case. You treated me with respect and without any form of discrimination, which meant a great deal to me during a very difficult time. Thank you for listening carefully and for taking my concerns seriously. Your integrity, humanity, and sense of justice did not go unnoticed. If it were possible, I would gladly give you more than five stars in recognition of your excellent conduct and support."

"Thank you for all of your help, the process was so easy and you guys have been brilliant. I really appreciate it!"

Championing accessibility

We brought together pioneers in accessibility from government, transport and the non-profit sector for an insightful online panel released for Global Accessibility Awareness Day, 15 May 2025. 'Access Unlocked' tackled some of the wider issues around transport accessibility, from vehicle and infrastructure design to restrictions on concessionary travel, and examined technology as both an enabler and a barrier to travel. Panellists included Robert Johnson, Head of Local Transport Accessibility at the DfT, Emma Vogelman, Head of Policy, Public Affairs and Campaigns at Transport for All, Kirsten Keen, Major Roads Senior Strategy and Planning Office at Transport for the North and Victoria Garcia, Accessibility and Communities Manager at Brighton & Hove and Metrobus.

We pressed to **lift restrictions on concessionary travel** which would open up opportunities for passengers accessing education, employment and healthcare. We joined an **Accessible Transport Policy Commission Parliamentary roundtable** alongside other campaigners, transport professionals and disabled people with a shared commitment: to remove these barriers and make transport fair, inclusive and available to everyone, at all times. The movement continues to grow with Transport for Greater Manchester announcing the permanent removal of travel restrictions for concessionary bus passes from March 2026 onwards.

We fully supported **new research from Consumer Scotland** setting out the transport barriers for people in rural Scotland. We know from our own research that infrequent and unreliable transport disproportionately affects disabled people, limiting independence, access to essential services and participation in everyday life.

We produced a series of **short films with the RNIB** highlighting the experiences of blind and visually impaired bus passengers. The films demonstrated both the value of accessible transport and the barriers that affect travel, reinforcing the need for services and infrastructure built around accessibility. Improvements that support blind and visually impaired people create safer, more inclusive and reliable transport for everyone.

We **partnered with Guide Dogs** on Cardiff Bus services to showcase the training that enables guide dogs – and the people who depend on them - to navigate public transport safely and confidently. The collaboration highlighted how partnership working between bus operators and accessibility organisations can improve accessibility and help ensure public transport is inclusive for all passengers.

Prioritising passengers

Major new reforms were introduced in 2025/26 promising to transform bus services in England, Scotland and Wales. We welcomed these opportunities and are actively engaged in their development and implementation so the voices, needs and concerns of passengers remain front and centre.

Bus Services Bill for Wales

In our response to the Bus Services Bill for Wales, we fully supported the political focus on improving the bus services in Wales but warned that, without meaningful passenger engagement, services would fail to match their needs and aspirations.

We gave evidence at the Senedd on whether the Bill goes far enough to reflect the needs and priorities of current and potential passengers, and how passengers should be involved in shaping the regulations.

Many of the issues we raised were included in the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee's recommendations and published in the Bus Services Bill Stage 1 Report.

Bus Services Bill for England

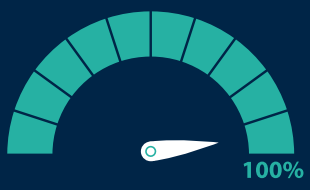
We welcomed the Bus Services Act in October 2025 as a major step towards more accessible local transport. Proposals to protect socially necessary services and enable council-run networks have the potential to shift buses away from purely commercial priorities and towards community need. We were equally encouraged by commitments to mandatory staff training on anti-social behaviour and passenger safety - vital measures for building confidence and inclusion.

Delivering results

We became the official Alternative Dispute Resolution body for Transport for Greater Manchester, giving passengers across the region direct access to an impartial, independent complaints escalation service.

Our work alongside **Stagecoach North Scotland** led to a 'marked uplift' in performance and punctuality on its Inverness services. Data collected through our monitoring and mystery traveller surveys, following roll out of an extensive recovery plan, found consistently high standards across the customer experience, particularly around driver presentation and friendliness, vehicle cleanliness, driving standards and passenger safety.

By law, **audible and visual information** must be available to passengers while travelling. As part of our monitoring work in Wales we let operators and local authorities know whenever this technology is not functioning. This has led directly to improvements in reporting and addressing issues, improving journeys and accessibility for people across the country.

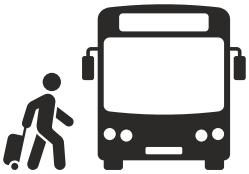


100%
completion of scheduled services

Our monitoring work on **Midland Bluebird** services between Stirling and Glasgow found an overall punctuality rate of 97% and 100% completion of scheduled services despite major challenges on routes. The professionalism and customer care of drivers was among the areas highlighted in our report which saw kneeling functions and ramps used where needed and clear communication with passengers.

Driving change

We welcomed **Buses Connecting Communities** from the Transport Committee which addressed many of the key issues we raise on behalf of passengers – not least the need for equal access for young people and vulnerable groups and secure funding to reverse the long-term decline in services.



We led calls for long-term, ring-fenced support for buses, resulting in a **£3 billion funding** package from the Department for Transport. This funding will benefit millions of passengers, provide stability for local authorities to plan ahead, and help to rebuild confidence in bus travel.

We campaigned for an extension of the **£3 bus fare cap** in England which was announced in the June Spending Review. This was hugely welcome news for the millions of passengers who rely on these lifeline services.

We joined the launch of a **pilot scheme in Wales** that will see cheap bus travel for 16-21 year olds extended to 5-15 year olds. Unlimited £1 and £3 day tickets will now be available to all young people across the country, encouraging lifelong sustainable travel habits in younger generations.

We helped shape Scotland's **£2 bus fare cap pilot** for 2026. As part of the selection panel we jointly awarded the 12-month, £10 million pilot to two Regional Transport Partnerships, and will continue to work with RTPs and Transport for Scotland to support the pilot and maximise its impact for passengers.

We **co-signed letters** to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language Mark Drakeford MS, and Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport Ken Skates MS, urging Welsh Government to increase the 1.9% below-inflation rise in bus funding announced in its draft Budget. In response, the Cabinet Secretary invited us, along with our partners, to a roundtable discussion to give evidence on the impact of the sub-inflation increase. The result was an additional £6 million in revenue support and £10 million in capital funding announced in the final Budget.

We contributed extensively to the Post Implementation Review of **Passenger Rights Regulation**, re-affirming the fundamental principles that passengers are entitled to clear rights, protection from discrimination, and effective redress when things go wrong. Our work continues to ensure passenger rights are understood, respected and delivered.

We responded to a number of **major consultations** during the year including the Scottish Parliament Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee; Scottish Government Just Transition Plan for Transport; Scottish Bus Open Data Consultation; West Yorkshire Combined Authority On Board Consultation 2025; East Midland's Combined County Authority Mayor's Transport Plan 2026; and the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2050 and Delivery Plan Consultation.

Connecting communities

Throughout 2025/26 we worked with **bus alliances and partnerships** across Scotland - including the Glasgow Bus Partnership, Northeast Bus Alliance, Tayside Bus Alliance, Edinburgh Bus Alliance, Midlothian Bus Alliance and West Lothian Bus Alliance - to ensure passengers' views are represented and reflected in public transport decision-making.

We collaborated with a group of leading transport and passenger bodies in Wales including CPT, CaBAC and the CTA, to **petition Welsh Government** over a proposed below-inflationary funding increase for bus services in their draft budget. As a direct result, an additional £6 million in revenue support and £10 million in capital funding was announced in the final Budget.

We represent passenger interests at **the Strategic Management Delivery Group** meetings of TrawsCymru and Fflecsi services, highlighting issues affecting passengers and making the case for rural services that meet local needs.

We play an active role in a range of transport forums and user groups, **championing improvements** to public transport reliability, accessibility and connectivity. Among these are Stirling Passenger Transport User Group, Dumfries Bus Users Group, Aberdeenshire Transport Forum, East Lothian Public Transport Forum, Edinburgh Bus Users Group, Get Glasgow Moving and Perth & Kinross Transport Users Group.

Our **Let's Talk Buses** events across England, Scotland and Wales bring together transport authorities and bus operators with local communities to ensure the voices of passengers are heard. Thousands of people join these events, email their comments and respond to our online surveys, building one of the most comprehensive picture of passenger experiences across Britain.

We are actively involved with **the Scottish Rural & Islands Transport Community** (SRITC), a network of more than 600 members across 19 countries working to shape fairer, more sustainable and integrated transport systems.

We work closely with the **Highland Safer Transport Group**, helping to promote safer public transport for passengers across all modes, and with **Scotland's seven Regional Transport Partnerships**. During 2025/26 we contributed to sector-wide discussions through events including the SEStran Conference and the SPT Transport Summit in Glasgow.

We represented the passenger perspective as part of the panel assessing Regional Transport Partnership bids for the **Scottish Government's £2 fare cap pilot**. This placed passenger needs at the heart of decision-making before the pilot was rolled out across the Highlands & Islands, Moray, and Argyll & Bute Council areas.

We chair the - Warwickshire Enhanced Partnership Board; West Midlands Bus Alliance Board; West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Board; and the South Yorkshire Combined Authority Enhanced Partnership Passenger Forum. And we serve on the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Enhanced Partnership Board, York Enhanced Partnership Forum, North East Bus Partnership Board, Plymouth Enhanced Partnership Bus Forum, Derbyshire Wider Stakeholder Group, BSIP Evaluation Stakeholder Group.

We are members of the - Campaign for Better Transport Bus Stop Standards Working Group, Women in Transport Diversity and Inclusion Bus Group, Women in Bus and Coach Northern Steering Group, Accessible Travel Charter, Sustainable Transport Alliance and the North Yorkshire Accessible Transport Group.

We work alongside - the Department for Transport, Transport for Wales, Transport Scotland, CPT, Transport Focus, Transport for London, London TravelWatch, Office of the Traffic Commissioners and the DVSA to raise standards and strengthen passenger representation.

Taking action

CATCH THE BUS MONTH

#CTBM

GET ON BOARD

SEPTEMBER 2025

"Catch The Bus Month is the campaign that reminds us all of the power of buses in connecting and transforming our communities."

Richard Parker – Mayor of the West Midlands

"Catch the Bus Month has come of age and now serves the twin purpose of promoting bus travel while forming part of the political toolbox."

routeONE magazine

Catch the Bus Month 2025 brought together entire communities to champion the essential role buses play in connecting people to the places and opportunities that matter.

We engaged **376 official partners** and hundreds of key allies representing local authorities, community transport providers, government, charities, NGOs, international coach operators and more. Attracted over 7,000 people to 170 separate events at universities, community events, depots, bus stops and tourist attractions.

We generated **1,000 posts, 3.5m social media impressions** and 60 articles online and in-print.

And we **united MPs** from across the political spectrum, with members of the All Party Parliamentary Group and representatives from Welsh and Scottish Governments coming together to celebrate the power of buses.

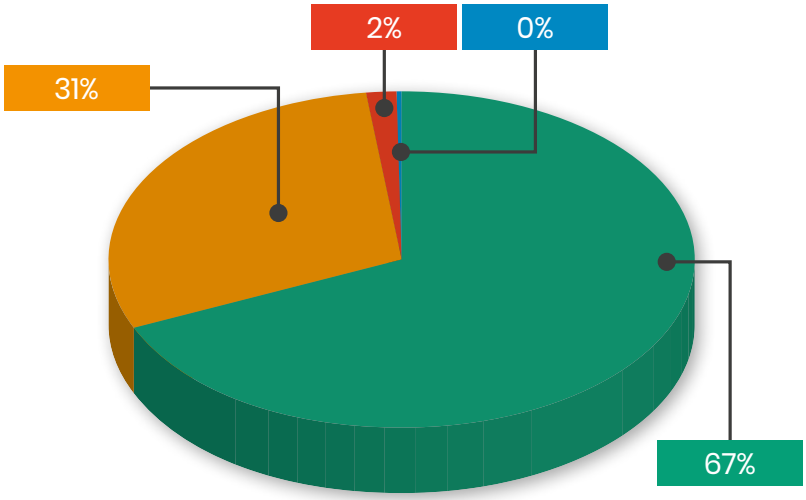
Optimising resources

The number of operators subscribing to our ADR services grew in 2025/26, leading to an increase in operator income. We also saw an increase in grants awarded by the governments of Scotland and Wales.

Expenditure rose by 3% on the previous year, reflecting full staffing levels, staff salary increases, a change of CEO and an increase in events for Catch the Bus Month.

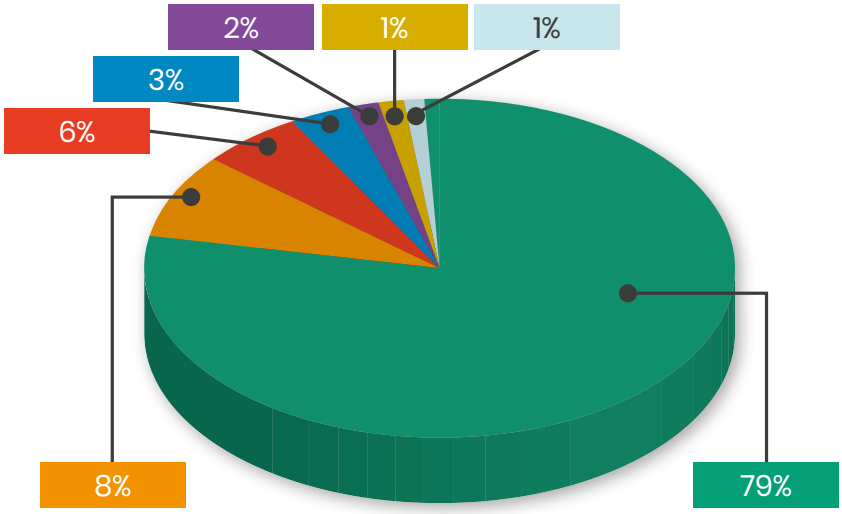
We end the year with a surplus.

INCOME - 2025/26



Government	582,470
Operators	271,689
Other Income	16,089
Deposit Interest	20
Total:	870,268

EXPENDITURE - 2025/26



Staff Costs	647,927
Professional Fees	66,435
Travel	47,073
IT	23,376
Working from home	14,288
Catch the Bus Month	10,227
Other	10,089
Total:	819,415
Surplus:	50,853

bus users
bringing people together

Support our work

The work of Bus Users is funded by operators, by the governments in Wales, Scotland and England and by voluntary donations.

As a registered charity, all the funding we receive goes towards achieving our mission and helping to keep people and communities connected.

To support this vital work, get in touch with us on the details below or visit our website to find out how you can make a donation.

You can also sign up to our free, electronic newsletter at **www.bususers.org**

Get in touch

0300 111 0001

enquiries@bususers.org

www.bususers.org

www.x.com/BusUsersUK

www.facebook.com/BusUsersUK

Head Office
22 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1PR

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