bus users
bringing people together

Annual Impact Report for Scotland 2025/26

www.bususers.org

"Our work with local communities, transport bodies and government at all levels is helping to improve services for everyone"

About us

Bus Users UK champions the rights of passengers and campaigns for inclusive, accessible transport.

Our work with local communities, transport bodies and government at all levels is helping to improve services for everyone. The only approved Alternative Dispute Resolution Body for the bus and coach industry, we are also the designated body for handling complaints under the Passenger Rights in Bus and Coach Legislation and part of the Sustainable Transport Alliance, a group dedicated to promoting the benefits of public, shared and active travel.

As well as handling complaints, our Bus Compliance Officers (BCOs) carry out regular checks to ensure transport providers fully meet their responsibilities and we make sure local communities are at the heart of transport planning and delivery across Scotland.

You can find out more about our work and keep up-to-date with our latest news at **www.bususers.org**

Resolving your complaints

Helping passengers resolve complaints is central to our work.

During 2025/26, we handled 173 complaints. More than one-third were resolved in favour of the passenger, while just over one-quarter supported the operator's position. Digital ticketing issues continued to feature prominently, alongside concerns about staff conduct, service reliability and buses failing to operate as scheduled.

We also dealt with 499 first-stage enquiries where passengers had not yet contacted the operator directly. Our advice, guidance and interventions have helped many passengers navigate the complaints process and reach resolution more effectively.

Our average complaint resolution time was 22 days.

Scotland Complaints Successfully Resolved for Passengers 2025/26

Driver/staff attitude	73
Other ticket matter	63
Service reliability	38
Bus failed to show	38
Lack of information	24
Bus failed to stop	23
Vehicle condition	22
Disability issues	14
Accessibility issues	10
Incorrect information provided	10
App/smartcard	7
Ticket prices	7
Ticket acceptance	6
Luggage	6
Other	6
Standard fare charge	5
Capacity	4
Personal injury and accident	3
Concession Pass matter	3
Frequency of service	1
Smoking	1
EPRR	1
Infrastructure	0
Compliment	0
Total complaints	**173**
Total codes	**365**

Our impact

Our complaints work helps identify issues and challenge poor practice.

Here are just two examples that show how individual complaints can lead, not only to a satisfactory outcome for passengers, but to wider improvements in services.

A parent approached us after their 12-year-old son, who is autistic, was refused travel on an airport express service despite holding a valid concessionary travel card. Following our intervention, the operator apologised and reviewed its procedures to help ensure passengers with similar needs are treated fairly and consistently in future.

In another case, a passenger's luggage was mistakenly loaded onto the wrong intercity coach service. After escalating the matter with the operator, we secured full reimbursement of costs incurred as a result of the incident.

Improving services

Our work contributes directly to improvements in services for everyone.

Throughout 2025/26, we continued to support bus partnerships across Scotland, despite changes to government funding arrangements. While the £500 million Bus Partnership Fund was paused and subsequently withdrawn, a new £20 million Bus Infrastructure Fund was introduced for 2025/26. Although the timescales for submitting bids were challenging, partners worked quickly to bring forward projects that could improve bus journeys for passengers. The Scottish Government has since confirmed plans to increase the fund to £60 million in 2026/27, accelerating investment in infrastructure and bus priority measures.

"The average punctuality of services monitored during 2025/26 was 87.6% - an improvement on both the previous year's figure of 82.7% and the long-term average of 80.6%"

Our Compliance Team carried out over 2,600 hours of monitoring across Scotland's bus services to ensure transport is safe, reliable and accessible. This work contributed to two Public Inquiries: one examining wheelchair accessibility and the operation of hydraulic ramps on interurban coach services, and another focused on engineering and service reliability issues. In both cases, our independent evidence helped inform the regulatory process and contributed to improvements for passengers.

The average punctuality of services monitored during 2025/26 was 87.6% - an improvement on both the previous year's figure of 82.7% and the long-term average of 80.6%. While congestion remains a significant challenge and there has been limited progress in delivering bus priority measures, operators have worked to improve reliability through timetable revisions and service planning.

Improved reliability is reflected in passenger feedback. The latest Your Bus Journey survey found that overall satisfaction among passengers in Scotland increased to 91%, up from 86% the previous year.

Influence

We make sure the interests of passengers are at the heart of policy and investment decisions.

During the year, we worked alongside Transport Scotland and other stakeholders to assess bids submitted by Scotland's Regional Transport Partnerships for the Scottish Government's £2 fare cap pilot. This ensured that passenger needs and experiences were represented throughout the decision-making process. The successful proposal from HITRANS was subsequently expanded to include Moray and Argyll & Bute.

We also contributed to Transport Scotland's review of the Older and Disabled Persons' Concessionary Travel Scheme. This work will help ensure that the scheme continues to meet the needs of current and future users and supports accessible travel across Scotland.

The passenger voice

Our events programme lets passengers share their experiences directly with decision-makers.

One of our key events was at Borders General Hospital in partnership with NHS Borders, Scottish Borders Council and Borders Buses. The event explored how staff, patients and visitors access healthcare using public transport. Participants highlighted the importance of reliable and frequent services, with many NHS staff providing positive feedback on bus services serving the hospital.

Additional events took place across East Dunbartonshire, Fife, Falkirk, Stirling and the Scottish Borders. During Catch the Bus Month, we participated in more than 50 events across Scotland, engaging passengers of all ages and gathering insights into their experiences and priorities.

Advocacy

Accessible, affordable and reliable bus services connect communities and reduce inequality.

Our work highlights the vital role of bus services in supporting access to employment, education, healthcare and social opportunities.

We participated in an expert panel at the SEStran South East of Scotland Transport Summit, which included the launch of the region's new Bus Strategy and we contributed to the development of Tactran's Bus Development Plan as part of a specialist stakeholder panel.

We joined a stakeholder panel to assess bids for the Scottish Government's £2 fare cap pilot. By representing passenger interests throughout the assessment process, we helped ensure the needs of local communities were reflected in decisions affecting the delivery of the pilot across the Highlands and Islands, Moray, and Argyll & Bute.

We responded to a wide range of consultations affecting passengers and local communities. These included proposals relating to bus priority measures, active travel programmes, local transport strategies, roadworks coordination and the Scottish Government's Just Transition agenda. By drawing on our engagement with passengers and our extensive evidence base, we were able to provide informed feedback on how proposed changes could affect people who rely on bus services.

Partnerships and collaboration

Collaboration remains central to achieving better outcomes for passengers.

Throughout 2025/26 we continued to work closely with bus partnerships and alliances across Scotland, including those operating in Glasgow, Edinburgh, the North East, Tayside, Midlothian and West Lothian. Through these partnerships, we help ensure that passenger needs are considered in local transport planning and service development.

We supported the Highland Safer Transport Group and its work to improve passenger safety across public transport networks.

Locally, we collaborated with a wide range of transport forums, passenger groups and community organisations. These partnerships help identify local issues, promote good practice and support improvements in reliability, accessibility and connectivity. They include organisations such as the 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 programme was delivered in partnership with local authorities, operators and community organisations"

We built on our close working relationships with national stakeholders, including the Confederation of Passenger Transport Scotland, Transport Focus, Consumer Scotland, Disability Equality Scotland, the Community Transport Association, the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland, Transport Scotland, the Office of the Traffic Commissioner and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency. These relationships enable us to champion the passenger voice at every level of the transport sector and contribute to improvements in policy, service quality and accessibility.

Our "Let's Talk Buses" events programme was delivered in partnership with local authorities, operators and community organisations. Working together helps ensure that passengers have meaningful opportunities to influence decisions about the services they use.

Scotland's seven Regional Transport Partnerships remain important allies and we contributed to a number of events and conferences including the SEStran Transport Summit and the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport Summit, helping to promote passenger-focused approaches to transport planning.

We contributed to the work of the Scottish Rural and Islands Transport Community, supporting fairer, more sustainable and better-connected transport networks for remote communities.

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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**

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