
Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Menter a Busnes

National Assembly for Wales
Enterprise and Business Committee

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| Y Pwyllgor Menter a Busnes | Enterprise and Business Committee |
| Gwasanaethau Bysiau a Thrafnidiaeth Gymunedol yng Nghymru | Bus and Community Transport Services in Wales |
| BCT 24 | BCT 24 |
| Diverse Cymru | Diverse Cymru |

Consultation questions

Question 1 – how would you describe the current condition of the bus and community transport sectors in Wales?

Diverse Cymru run a Co-Creating Healthy Change project in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan which focuses on personal development and direct engagement in service and policy development in health and social care for BME, disabled, older, and LGBT people and carers.

Participants in both the project steering group and engagement forums highlighted the importance of public transport and bus services in particular and invited Cardiff Bus to a forum engagement meeting on this topic.

This submission is based on their views, comments, and recommendations at both the bus service forum and at our 50+ engagement event.

Overall participants from these protected characteristic groups felt that bus services were important to them, but the number of services had fallen to a level causing them difficulties in accessing work, appointments, and leisure services and there are a number of other factors which need to be addressed.

The issues raised and participants' views are outlined in the remainder of this response.

Question 2 – why do you think the number of bus services and the number of bus passengers is declining in Wales?

Participants at our forum were informed that cuts to services have been due to cuts in funding from the Local Authority, which has meant that both routes and numbers of busses on routes have been cut so that only profitable services are run.

There is also a great deal of confusion in relation to where responsibility lies between local authorities, bus companies, Traveline Cymru, and health services in relation to bus services, bus shelters and stop locations, and timetable information. This results in individuals being unclear who they should raise a concern or complaint with and feeling unable to express the impacts of changes and other issues and to lobby for change.

Question 3 – what do you think is the social, economic and environmental impact of recent changes in bus and community transport service levels?

The impacts raised by BME, disabled, LGBT, and older people and carers at our engagement groups were wide-ranging. However these generally fall into the categories of changes and reductions to services and scheduling; driver training and attitudes; a workforce that does not reflect diversity; information provision; and policies and practices. These issues are outlined below with quotations from participants.

Changes and reductions to services and scheduling

In particular participants were concerned about cuts in service frequency in

Lisvane, Radyr and Splott, and the route of the number 12 bus in Ely. They highlighted that cuts to routes can affect older people in particular who may be reliant on the bus service in order to attend hospital appointments and to socialise with family and friends. At the meeting Cardiff Bus said that cuts were due to a decrease in funding by Cardiff Council and participants wanted to know how they could work with Cardiff Bus to fight Cardiff Council for increased funding.

"I live in Lisvane, and I am also speaking on behalf of nearly everyone in Lisvane, one bus an hour, and it's very difficult to go to somewhere like Sainsbury's, which is fairly near, you have to go into Llanishen, all the way around and then when you come back, you come back the other way and that is the only bus. It's also cut out the hospital link. I used to use that myself regularly, I can't now." (Older disabled woman from Cardiff)

"The buses are a vital connection for older people, without buses they can't get to hospitals, doctors, see friends, see family and we have seen the buses disappear off our roads, particularly on Sundays, which is the one day that a lot of older people like to get out, when they can" (Older woman from Vale)

"One of the big issues, all the people they are suffering from is changing the routes of the bus stop which is affecting them, really, really affecting them... I've got a group of people, they live in Lewis Street, it's next to Cardiff Splott Market. There is a big day centre there for the Indian community. They are certain most of the ladies that go there is 90 plus but they stopped going there. And this is the only place they go for social, for meeting friends, they are going to see other people, but they stopped because every time Cardiff Bus, they changed the route for the bus and they are elderly. They cannot walk for long." (BME woman who is a community worker in Cardiff)

"My service user lives in Radyr and is trying to hold down a job at the moment. There's only a bus at 5 past 8 in the morning. Then the next one is at 5 past 9. Now I understand what you are saying about restraints, you know, you think everybody in Radyr and Lisvane have all got cars and loads of money, so they don't need buses. And I know that's not you personally, um but her suggestion, as we are trying to be positive here, is that a number 66 bus could pick up in Radyr and at least get her to Fairwater so then she can get to work at a reasonable time, instead if she misses the bus by a minute, she doesn't get into work for at least an hour later, if not more, misses appointment" (Older female support worker talking about a visually impaired service user in Cardiff)

Driver training and attitudes

- a. Accessibility Ramps** – drivers have refused assistance with accessibility ramps to participants who use wheelchairs.

"I did a survey a couple of years ago, I stopped 10 buses, I was by myself and not one of them would help me on the bus, right. You showed a lovely picture there of the ramps coming down. I'm sure the bus drivers are paraplegic, because not one of them would offer to get the ramp down. And I've been told they are not allowed to, for health and safety" (Disabled woman from Cardiff)

b. **Orange Wallet** - participants who used the Orange Wallet scheme because of their learning disability had been ignored by drivers, who had driven the bus passed them when they had held out their Orange Wallets.

"It's obvious that training is a massive issue... I've actually been on a bus stop with 2 of my members and they have been trained to hold the Orange Wallet out on the bus stop. Because people with a learning disability, sometimes, their attention span, they can't do this, but they have learnt to actually hold the wallet in their hand. Umpteen times, drivers drive straight past." (Older male support worker from Vale)

c. **Courtesy/Health & Safety** – Many drivers don't wait for people to be seated before leaving the bus stop, and also allow overcrowding on the buses. Participants highlighted that this can particularly affect older people, disabled people and wheelchair users.

"How much training do they have, when people want to sit down and they take off, whether they are infirm, elderly or with children, which happens a lot?" (Older BME disabled man from Cardiff)

"Surely it would be at the bus driver's discretion on how many passengers he actually lets on the bus? I have actually been on the bus, as you can see, I am disabled, and I've actually got on buses where the drivers have literally crammed them on so they were actually like sardines. I would have thought it would have been at the bus driver's discretion how many people he actually allowed on the bus." (Older disabled woman from Cardiff)

d. **Awareness of issues such as dementia and needs of people with a visual impairment** – many older people have mild dementia – are drivers trained to deal with this? Are drivers trained to be aware when serving customers with a visual impairment, e.g. ensuring there are no obstacles blocking the bus exit when dropping people off? Participants appreciated that many drivers were helpful and willing to offer assistance but felt that appropriate training could help overcome areas where good customer service is lacking.

"Do your drivers have training for dementia? Specific dementia training, because a lot of older people have mild dementia, they get a bit unsure of what they are doing, and do you give any specific training for dementia?" (Older woman from Vale)

A workforce that does not reflect diversity

How many Black and Minority Ethnic bus drivers are employed by Cardiff Bus? Can the company provide ethnic monitoring statistics? How does the company promote recruitment opportunities, does it practice positive action e.g., sending out vacancies to community groups, holding recruitment events in ethnic minority communities. Are drivers assessed for attitude e.g. towards disabled people?

I haven't seen any driver from the diverse, ethnic minority driving the buses and given the chance or opportunity so I don't know, where does that fit in to equal opportunity with the bus driver in terms of ethnic minority bus drivers. There is a lot of unemployed people from the, who have experience from their point of view." (Older BME man from Cardiff)

Are there any opportunities for customers to become involved in recruitment and selection, how is the Customer Panel promoted? Participants in the forum linked to other community organisations recommended that Cardiff Bus visit their groups too.

"It would be quite nice if we were invited to your meetings like, have you got anybody disabled on your groups that you meet with?" (Disabled woman from Cardiff)

Information provision

Is information presented in accessible formats e.g. large print (many people are not online); frequently timetable information is missing from bus stops; people want information from a local provider. There was also a request for information to be presented in other languages as many older minority ethnic people do not speak English.

"Do your timetables come in large print versions, so that people who have problems with their sight, and not all older people are online, so it's all very well saying this is on our website, that's on our website and if you're elderly and you've never touched a computer, that's a waste of time" (Older woman from Cardiff)

"So many bus stops do not have a timetable on, which makes it impossible for people to know when a bus is coming and when it's not. And finally, do your drivers know their route? An elderly person gets on, wants to get off at Westgate Street, or I mean, that's a bit street, or somewhere in Barry, say and they ask the driver, Can you put me off at such and such as street and they turn around and say, Oh I don't know this route, I don't know where that is." (Older woman from Vale)

"I work with older people of the minority ethnic community and they speak a different language. They don't speak English. All the leaflets for Cardiff Bus is all in English. I've not seen the Bengali, Somali language and all the

languages. So I just wanted to ask, what are you going to do about it? And the older ones, because they don't speak English, they need to know all the information in their languages. So it's how we can do that and do something about the language problem.” (Older BME woman who is also a support worker from Cardiff)

Policies and practices

a. Is there a policy on priority between people who use wheelchairs, baby buggies, shopping trolleys?

“My question is, “Who has priority on the buses?” A lot of people are using what they call shopping trolleys and shopping baskets, whatever it is. And young mothers with babies in the pram are not getting the room on the bus. Now who has priority? Because I deem that shopping think is luggage and it should go in the luggage rack, if there's not enough room they shouldn't be allowed on the bus” (Older disabled man from Cardiff)

b. Is there a policy on passenger on passenger abuse and whether drivers should become involved?

“Are you saying it's alright then, for a driver to be driving a bus, and a gang of young boys to get up and verbally abuse a young mother with a child, to be verbally abusive and that's to be tolerated? The driver can hear, he knows what's going on. Surely, the driver should stop the bus and ask those boys to leave the bus... there should be a policy” (Older disabled woman from Cardiff)

c. Participants wanted more clarity on the complaints procedure and how the results of complaints were fed back to the complainant. – people had made complaints but had not received any response from the company.

“I want to know, what is the procedure regarding complaints and what is the feedback on that? The second one is, as you said, they have training in customer care. How much training do they have, when people want to sit down and they take off, whether they are infirm, elderly or with children, which happens a lot?” (Older disabled man from Cardiff)

d. Confusion about Cardiff Bus responsibilities and responsibilities of other organisations.

- i. Cardiff Bus and Traveline Cymru** Participants contacting Traveline Cymru telephone numbers for information were under the impression that Cardiff Bus provided this service. They were not sure how they could get information about bus services. This can be particularly difficult for people who are not online.

Participants were also concerned that phoning Traveline Cymru costs 10p per minute.

“When you ring for a timetable, you ring, you don’t go through to a call centre in Cardiff any longer, and when you go through to your call centre, the number of people who do not know, and I believe it’s up in Wrexham, correct me if I am wrong. They do not know the routes or where the roads are” (Older disabled woman from Cardiff)

“I’m enquiring about your 0817 telephone line. I imagine that it is mostly old people that would use it because the youngsters all have their iPhones. But why should we have to pay 10p a minute to be taking to somebody about a particular bus, you need to know the number, to get from a to b” (Older woman from Cardiff)

- II. **Cardiff Bus and Cardiff Council** – Participants thought that certain issues such as raised kerbs, were the responsibility of Cardiff Bus when they were the council’s responsibility. There was also confusion over whether Cardiff Bus was owned by Cardiff Council.

“Raised kerbs. What intention do you have of putting them in in Grand Avenue?” (Disabled BME woman from Cardiff)

- III. **Cardiff Bus and University Hospital of Wales** – Participants complained about the repositioning of bus stops at UHW and as Cardiff Bus said this was not its responsibility they wanted to know who they should approach about this issue. They were concerned as bus stops had been moved from outside the concourse towards A&E as a result of building work. This creates a longer walk which participants highlighted can affect disabled people.

“My question is, at the Heath Hospital, you’ve moved the bus stops from outside the main part of the hospital outpatients, right up to A&E, which is a very long walk for someone who is disabled. I might not look disabled but I am. When are you thinking of putting the bus stops back, to make it easier for people” (Older disabled woman from Cardiff)

Question 4 – what do you think the Welsh Government should do to support bus and community transport in Wales?

In order to address the issues highlighted in response to question 3 above we recommend that Welsh Government:

- Requires bus drivers to participate in comprehensive equality and diversity training, including use of ramps, use of priority seating, inclusive attitudes and behaviours, dementia awareness, the Orange

Wallet scheme, accessible information, and sensory impairments

- Provides guidance to bus service providers in relation to recruiting from diverse communities and positive action
- Requires bus service providers to provide mechanisms for public involvement and to advertise these widely in accessible formats on- and off-line. This should include guidance on easy to use, accessible complaints, concerns and compliments processes
- Require bus service information to be available in a variety of accessible formats and clearly promoted as being accessible in other languages and formats
- Provides guidance to bus service providers on recognising and tackling abuse and discrimination from passengers
- Clarifies which service providers are responsible for provision of which services and facilities and makes this information available in Plain English as the standard format, with other accessible formats and community languages available
- Investigates the savings made to public services, including health and local authorities, of reducing isolation, increasing wellbeing, and improving access to employment and education, amongst other issues, through providing bus services. This information should be used to evaluate the value of providing bus services in terms of any savings to other services not merely direct economic viability of services

Question 5 – what do you think Welsh local authorities should do to support bus and community transport services?

Local authorities are vital to addressing the issues raised in response to question 3.

We recommend that local authorities should:

- Carry out comprehensive Equality Impact Assessments in relation to any cut or change to bus services and involve people from across the protected characteristics in this work
- Require bus drivers to receive comprehensive equality training and provide evidence of service user involvement, accessible complaints procedures, well-evidenced priority and tackling abuse policies and procedures, accessible information, and actions to increase driver diversity as part of their commissioning and procurement processes
- Investigate the impacts of service reductions and a lack of services on health, well-being, and access to education, employment, leisure and other important services in terms of both the impact on different groups and on Council finances
- Support bus services where these can provide a saving to other services such as welfare benefits, housing, leisure, social services, and education through improving access to services and work with the

Local Health Board to support bus services and infrastructure where savings apply to health services

Question 6 – what do you think about proposals to devolve bus registration powers to Wales? How should these be used?

We feel that the decision to devolve bus registration powers must be based on a full Equality Impact Assessment and with regard to whether using these powers would address existing barriers and concerns effectively.

Question 7 – please tell us whether you think further powers to regulate the bus industry in Wales are required and why?

Question 8 – what other action can be taken to ensure that bus and community transport services meet the needs of people in Wales?

Please tell us anything else you would like to mention this topic, thank you for contributing to our inquiry.