



# Transport User Community

Bus congestion and cashless services

September 2020

# Who is in our bus community?

60

people using bus prior  
to Covid-19



Across England,  
Scotland and Wales



Mix of payment  
methods



Mix of those currently  
using bus and not  
using bus



A spread of age,  
gender and ethnicity



Some have  
disabilities

# What did we ask our community recently?



## Road space and congestion

How have bus users been experiencing any changes to road traffic since lockdown began? How should it be effectively managed?

In addition, how have changes to road layouts to accommodate cyclists or pedestrians impacted their journey, if at all?

## Cash and buses

How do passengers feel about the prospect of buses going 'cashless' to avoid transmission of Covid-19 from passenger to driver?

What would the advantages and disadvantages be, and what would need to change for such a system to be implemented properly?



“During lockdown the roads were absolute bliss...going back to work this last week the congestion has still been quieter than normal. I’ve not noticed anything else different on the roads.”

**Female, 44, East Midlands**

“The roads have been really quiet throughout lockdown because of so many people working from home. Very quiet at the beginning but even now much less traffic than usual which has been great. I’d love if it could stay like this.”

**Female, 29, North West**

“During lockdown I was shielding and I only went out for walks – I lived near a motorway and it was like a ghost town. But the traffic has resumed like nothing happened.”

**Female, 46, Yorks and Humber**



## **While congestion in the early stages of lockdown was almost blissfully low, the return to ‘normal’ levels of traffic is not a cause of frustration**

### **The community is stoic about increasing congestion**

Most delays or traffic-related issues are ascribed to the ‘usual suspects’ of roadworks, incident-related closures or standard peak hours.

While some community members saw isolated incidents of heavy congestion towards leisure spots as lockdown began to ease in parts of the country, rarely if ever did it impact their journey. There is a strong sense that congestion was always going to return to something like pre-lockdown levels and few, if any, are calling for changes to how it is managed.

Likewise – and this is our community’s main priority – congestion on the roads does not pose a threat of Covid-19 transmission. Ultimately the community remains focused on a safe and reliable bus service, and the question of congestion had not emerged as relevant prior to being explicitly asked.

Generally, the community had not seen any changes to road layouts to accommodate pedestrians or cyclists – where they have, it is seen as worthwhile in the name of social distancing.

# The community is almost unanimously accepting of a cashless bus service in principle

## The community is accustomed to cashless services in most other spheres of life

Bus users regularly pay by contactless for most other services they use, and there was already some consternation around other passengers fumbling for coins which can hold up the service. Ultimately then, a cashless bus service would cause very little consternation and indeed, would receive very strong support.

Some feel that changes will need to be put in place to enable a seamless transition to a cashless service. Bus ticket apps have been criticised as poorly-built and confusing, and others worry about older passengers not being able to adapt to the new system. As with any significant change, the community hopes to see due consideration and care for vulnerable passengers, even if they cannot foresee the specific challenges such a move may involve.

“It seems like the entire world is moving towards cashless in all aspects. The benefits would be that it’s faster to board and pay, and you can purchase in advance. But our elderly passengers may not be up to speed.”

Female, 44, East Midlands

“It’s all well and good but I don’t have a contactless card and I can’t download my bus app.”

Female, 31, South East

“If buses do this then the bus paying apps need to be made more simple.”

Female, 20, Scotland