



# Transport User Community

Cleanliness on public transport

January 2021

# What did we ask our community?

## Thoughts on Cleaning

What cleaning measures do the communities assume is taking place on rail and bus? Are they assumed to be sufficient, and how does this compare to pre-COVID?

## COVID Cleaning Measures

Respondents were shown various pieces of material from train operators showcasing their safety and cleanliness measures. Do they stack up against respondents' expectations, and what aspects of those measures are seen as the most important?

# Executive Summary

- **Those in bus community not currently travelling are unsure of what cleaning measures are currently in place and some are sceptical as to whether this has improved compared to pre-pandemic.** Rail users have more trust that operators are taking appropriate measures in response to COVID.
- **Seeing information about public transport providers' cleaning efforts is reassuring.** It builds confidence that rail and bus operators are going 'beyond the minimum' and actively working to keep people safe.
- **The fogging techniques and COVID testing being done were particularly impressive and reassuring,** and often above and beyond what people had assumed was being done.
- **However, it is unlikely that this information *in and of itself* can encourage a confident return to public transport.** Passengers have long argued that the behaviour of their fellow travellers and having the space to social distance are of higher importance.
- **Undoubtedly, our community thought better of public transport providers as a result of the information shown.**

**Those not currently travelling in the bus community are unsure of what cleaning measures are taking place – some who are travelling have noticed improvement versus pre-COVID**

**Bus passengers are generally more sceptical in their assumptions than rail passengers about what cleaning measures are being done.**

- Most of the community aren't certain of any specific cleaning measures taking place - a handful assume that no additional cleaning is being done and others assume that the bus is only 'deep cleaned' as opposed to sanitised with antiviral agents
- This perception largely comes from those who aren't currently using bus – some who have used it throughout the pandemic commented that it is cleaner than before
- A few people who have been using bus mentioned that they would like to see more visible cleaning taking place while they are on the bus so they feel more confident in what is being done

Since the pandemic, expectations for cleanliness on public transport have changed from 'tidy' to 'sanitary'.

### **Rail users have more confidence that there are additional cleaning measures taking place, even if they haven't seen for themselves**

- There are mixed feelings about the standard of cleanliness on trains before the pandemic, but regardless the community expects that this has since improved
- This is an assumption given most of the community haven't travelled regularly throughout the pandemic

#### **Specific measures the community is aware of:**

- “Powerful” cleaning agents (vaguely defined but essentially virucidal and “hospital grade” products)
- Cleaning at the end of each journey (i.e. from one end of the line to the other)
- Focus on contact surfaces like rails and seats
- Cleaning litter and cleaning toilets

Since the pandemic, expectations for cleanliness on public transport have changed from 'tidy' to 'sanitary'.

The community found this example from National Express impressive and reassuring, and some commented that they hoped a similar cleaning approach was being adopted on their local bus.

The fogging technique was the most impressive measure – the community thought it sounded very thorough and effective.

The advice around hand sanitiser was also valued, but people felt that hand sanitiser should be made available on the bus in case people don't have their own.

The material did highlight concerns in terms of enforcement on bus services – passengers still want to see a sense of **enforcement** and the ability to deny passage to non-compliant service users.

### Top things to do when travelling with us

- Plan ahead - allow extra time for your journey and wrap up warm
- Carry and use hand sanitiser before and after you travel
- You must wear a face covering, unless you are exempt
- Sit in a window seat if you can
- Keep the windows open to keep fresh air flowing through the bus

### What you can expect from us?

- We have enhanced our extensive cleaning regimes to ensure we maintain high levels of hygiene for both customers and employees and reduce the risk of contact with Coronavirus (COVID-19). This includes extra cleaning of shared surface areas and cleaners jumping on buses at bus stations, key interchanges and stops. We also regularly use aerosol based disinfection containing a high performance antiviral solution - sometimes called 'fogging' on the bus fleet. We will continue to follow advice from the government and introduce any additional measures that are recommended or required.
- The expert advice from public health authorities around washing hands frequently, what to look out for and what to do if you develop symptoms, is being regularly shared with all of our employees.
- Our timetables are currently running normally, and we also have a mini-fleet of extra "sweeper" vehicles on standby every day. We send them out to double up where it gets busy so there are more buses available, giving more space on board each bus.
- Our drivers are here for you and if you need to ask them something please keep a safe distance between yourself and the driver.

## Bus Users

The provision of hand sanitiser and the X-Mist fogging technique were the most popular measures in this example.

The bus community has long been arguing for **hand sanitiser** on-board and seeing that this has been implemented on Go North East was very well-liked. In addition, the knowledge that cleaners occasionally board the bus mid-journey was pleasantly surprising.

A couple of people mentioned that they were pleased to see 60 extra buses now running at peak times, but this had less pull than the other measures.

Overall, people were impressed by the measures being taken and it was generally above and beyond what people had assumed was being done.

Extra antibacterial treatments and hand sanitisers on all buses as Go North East introduces further measures to protect bus users and make services even safer

2 months ago Mon 19th Oct 2020



Go North East, the region's largest bus operator, is taking further steps to make sure its buses are the cleanest and safest they can be during the coronavirus pandemic.

Right from the start of Covid-19, the bus operator implemented extra cleaning regimes, with special measures on board to protect customers and colleagues and have flexed its services to meet demand, with 60 extra buses now running at peak times to help with school movements and other busy services.

As the bus operator continues to keep abreast of the latest developments, including the local lockdown and now the new tiered system, along with emerging data about infection rates and new tools and products, it has challenged itself on what more it can do.

The company also championed the recent all-operator 'Face Covering Awareness Week' and put boxes of masks on board all its buses to help improve compliance. It is now working with the local police to share non-compliance data, although generally wearing rates have been in the high 90 percent range.

*(National Express) making their staff take their temperature before work, more hand sanitiser being handed out on buses and the idea of extra sweeper buses makes me feel secure if I were to travel with National Express.*

**Female, 40, South East (Bus)**

*I hadn't seen or read anything about the measures companies have in place so I think they both seem really positive and reassuring. I especially like the National Express info and how they have laid it out the steps in which they're taking.*

**Female, 30, West Midlands (Bus)**

*I mentioned on a previous question last year that hand sanitiser on board would be a good idea, not everyone carries it or may have forgotten theirs at home, the extra busses during peak/busy times helps with less of my time wasted.*

**Male, 45, Scotland (Bus)**

*I think one good example is the North East bus adding extra busses to help in the pandemic. It doesn't really change how I feel about the safety of public transport because the problem might not be from cleanliness but from individuals or passengers who see it fit not to adhere to the rules.*

**Female, 29, North West (Bus)**





Respondents were highly impressed by the **new approach** to sanitising trains being trialled in this example. Indeed, one respondent had noted a strong cleaning smell on Avanti trains and sure enough, something was different about them.

Reactions to this piece of material highlighted our community's need for **detail**. When it comes to cleaning measures, more information is more reassuring – How do they work, and how do they keep me safe? This material struck the community as detailed, clear and valuable.

However, as previously seen in this research, hygiene is no substitute for **passenger caution** in their view. There is a limit to how reassuring cleanliness measures can present themselves if case numbers are high and perceptions of passenger compliance are low.

### Additional information needs:

- How often are these sanitisers used?
- How well-ventilated are the trains?
- How is passenger behaviour being monitored?
- Which surfaces are sanitised – all or some?

*Ultimately, seeing Avanti innovate in their cleanliness procedures demonstrated that the operator is taking COVID seriously, building trust and goodwill among these passengers*



11 JUN 2020

Avanti UK Network Trains

## Avanti West Coast trials powerful sanitiser to protect customers and employees

**Sanitiser trialled onboard as part of extra protective measures.**

- Powerful sanitiser being used on Avanti West Coast's fleet
- Zoono is effective for extended periods of time after being applied on surfaces
- Scientifically proven to be highly effective against a broad spectrum of bacteria and viruses

A powerful, long-lasting sanitising treatment, which provides protection against viruses and bacteria on surfaces is being trialled on trains operated by Avanti West Coast.

With a potential increase in passenger numbers following the easing of lockdown measures, the inter-city operator has been testing Zoono Z-71 inside the carriage of its Pendolino and Super Voyager fleets.

The disinfectant uses no alcohol and is scientifically proven to be highly effective against viruses and bacteria. It lasts for an extended period of time and is reapplied on a monthly basis.

It is being sprayed in carriages using a "fogging" or misting machine and is the latest addition to Avanti West Coast's already increased safety procedures.

## Rail Users

The fact that COVID-19 tests are being done independently by the operator's own initiative in this example was very impressive and reassuring to the community. Again, it signifies that the operator is taking the pandemic seriously, and there was no sense of scepticism around the 'validity' of their processes here.

The point about the trains themselves testing negative reassured respondents around their long-lasting concern about catching the virus in spite of their best social distancing efforts.

**Avoiding contact surfaces on trains** was long felt to be difficult if not impossible, so being reassured about their relative safety was highly useful.

However, the community reiterates that cleaning measures can only go some way to reassure them that travelling by train is safe, and that the behaviour of other passengers is the bigger and more unpredictable concern.

Laboratory tests have found that the COVID-19 viruscide being used on Southern, Thameslink and Great Northern trains is successfully working.



Credit: Govia Thameslink Railway

Independent laboratory results show that [Southern](#), [Thameslink](#) and [Great Northern](#) trains are testing negative for COVID-19 over three weeks after being treated with a long-lasting viruscide.

Operator of the three franchises, [Govia Thameslink Railway](#) (GTR), randomly selected carriages from all eight of its train fleets up to 23 days after the carriages were treated with the long-lasting viruscide.

*The GTR option gives me a bit more reassurance in that they're using industrial strength sanitizing products. I would have liked to see the 'before and after effect' on improvement and getting rid of the virus and bacteria.*

**Male, 45, North West (Rail)**

*I'm most impressed. Think the virucide is outstanding – this is the sort of application that has immediate impact and give travellers a sense of confidence. But I'd question the social responsibility of others.*

**Male, 65, North West (Rail)**

*I think the sanitiser in the other two sounds really good but if they are not telling people to wear a mask properly and not removing rubbish then it's not safe. It's customers who make the service unsafe.*

**Female, 29, Midlands (Rail)**

*I'm impressed that Avanti are trialing a new sanitiser that's very powerful. It shows that they're innovative in looking for solutions to make their services safer, which I think is really key. You have to be doing more than the bare minimum.*

**Male, 32, North West (Rail)**

