

Bus Service Improvement Plans: what passengers want

This document pulls together some of the main conclusions from our national bus passenger research on what passengers would like to see improved. We believe that Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) should reflect passengers' priorities for improvement as well as those of non-users who we are seeking to encourage to start using the bus.

The main focus of the document is on *Bus passengers' priorities for improvement*, published in September 2020. This work, also referenced in the Government's '*Bus Back Better: national bus strategy for England*', was based on research carried out with a representative sample of 5000 passengers and 1700 non-users across the country in March and April 2019 - before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. We have also drawn on our other significant passenger research.

The document provides local transport authorities (LTAs) in England (outside London) with a checklist that we would recommend they use as they draw up their BSIPs. We will be using this checklist to review their Enhanced Partnership plans and schemes when they formally consult on them at the end of 2021 or start of 2022.

BSIPs should be written in a way which:

- provides evidence that objectives are derived from passenger research and/or consultation
- helps accountability by explaining targets and measures (and constraints) rather than simply listing them and commits to public reporting of performance against targets
- links measures explicitly to targets and to charter commitments.

BSIPs should include the following measures to improve bus services

Buses running more often:

- improvements in frequency of weekday, daytime services
- more services at weekends, in the evenings and at night
- more frequent services to smaller towns and villages
- consideration of potential for improving connections to other forms of transport such as train stations or cycling routes.

Buses going to more places:

- new and extended routes
- creation of a stable network by limiting the number of changes each year
- communication and consultation with passengers on significant changes.

More buses on time/faster journey times:

- action to improve punctuality and achieve targets, such as bus priority measures, enforcement of bus priority, better management of roadworks and action by operators
- commitment to keeping passengers on board informed of delays and disruption
- direct, express buses to key destinations.

Better value for money:

- a central source of pre-journey information on fares and ticket types
- lower fares (for all or for specific groups)
- flat fares
- more integrated fares
- price capping or flexible tickets
- retention of cash option.

More effort to tackle any anti-social behaviour:

- specific action, such as CCTV and improved lighting at stops
- enforcement
- including safety in design guidelines for buses and stops.

Better quality of information at bus stops:

- an up-to-date timetable at every stop
- consideration given to provide route and network connections maps at major stops
- fares information at major stops
- real-time information at more stops and on apps.

Accessible buses:

- space for at least one wheelchair or buggy
- commitment to provide alternative transport, such as a taxi, where wheelchair space in use
- on board audio-visual next stop information
- commitment to customer service training.

Cleaner buses:

- enhanced cleaning regimes
- commitment to regular removal of graffiti.

The evidence

This assessment of what passengers want is based upon years of research conducted by Transport Focus amongst current and potential bus passengers. For those wishing to review the evidence behind our list of what passengers want, or who want to understand the topics in more detail, we provide links below to the main reports we have drawn upon and the topic areas they cover.

Link to report	Year published	Topic areas
Bus passengers' priorities for improvement	2020	Buses running more often Buses going to more places More buses on time/faster journey times Better value for money More effort to tackle any anti-social behaviour Better quality of information at bus stops
The route ahead: getting passengers back on buses	2021	More buses on time/faster journey times Better value for money Better quality of information at bus stops Cleaner buses
Bus Passenger Survey – Autumn 2019	2020	More buses on time/faster journey times More effort to tackle any anti-social behaviour Accessible buses Cleaner buses
Using the bus: what young people think	2018	Better value for money
Bus passenger views on value for money	2013	Better value for money Better quality of information at bus stops
Bus punctuality and timetables – summary report	2014	More buses on time/faster journey times
Response to the Transport Select Committee's Inquiry effectiveness of legislation relating to transport for disabled people	2013	Accessible buses
Bus service reviews: consulting on changes to local services – progress report,	2017	Buses going to more places
What's the hold-up? Exploring bus service punctuality	2014	More buses on time/faster journey times
Bus passengers' experience of delays and disruption	2013	More buses on time/faster journey times
Cleanliness on public transport	2021	Cleaner buses
Feeling safe on the bus	2021	Cleaner buses
Public transport: a cleaner future	2021	Cleaner buses