



Making great bus journeys

Your Bus Journey survey – key driver analysis

November 2024



Introduction

Your Bus Journey is the cornerstone of Transport Focus’s insight into the experiences of bus passengers. The findings from the survey provide a compelling evidence base for journey improvements, across a range of factors, for transport authorities, bus operators and Governments.

As such, we are often asked ‘how do we improve overall passenger satisfaction?’ along with ‘where should we focus our attention or resources?’ and ‘why do the top areas/operators score so well?’

By conducting a key driver analysis on the Your Bus Journey 2023 survey results we can start to answer these questions and start to understand what does ‘better’ look like in the push to ‘make buses better’.

Overall satisfaction with the journey is the headline measure on the Your Bus Journey survey. We carried out the key driver analysis to identify those elements of the journey experience that have the greatest impact for passengers on the overall journey satisfaction rating.

This enables us to provide insight on the ‘ingredients’ for improving or maintaining overall passenger satisfaction with bus journeys. In other words, what core factors need to be delivered more consistently to achieve more satisfied and very satisfied passengers.

This report focuses on the findings from fare paying passengers in England (outside of London) from the 2023 Your Bus Journey survey.

A great bus journey – what do passengers want and why it is important?

Passengers want their bus to turn up on time, without a long wait, and to reach their destination in good time mirroring the expectation set in the timetable. Having a good experience at the bus stop/station environment while waiting, with accurate, ideally real-time information, to hand can make this a better experience.

Building on that experience to get from a **good** to a **great** journey are two further ingredients; having a friendly and helpful bus driver at the wheel and the experience on the bus (clean and comfortable vehicle). Both play a larger role, although still secondary to timeliness.

This report teases out the factors and what can be done practically to nudge ratings into the satisfied category of journey experience and what factors deliver the very satisfied journey experience. This report will also look behind the data, explaining why the key factors matter to passengers and, where possible, put a spotlight on an area/operator where good work is being done to deliver strong ratings.

How we carried out the analysis

We grouped the individual rating questions into six themes (see the following table for the list of themes and which questions fell into each), for fare paying passengers, then analysed how much each theme contributed towards the overall journey satisfaction rating.

This enables us to look at how the themes contribute to a passenger being either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' (good) or 'very satisfied' (great), and what could be done to move passenger ratings from 'fairly satisfied' to 'very satisfied'.

While we have presented the results here for England overall across the 35 areas that participated in the 2023 survey, we have conducted the same analysis for each of the individual areas. This enables these areas to work more closely to inform the development of their options for local services.

Where relevant in this report we have highlighted examples where transport authorities and bus operators have used our analysis to support local interventions to improve services. These serve as brief case studies, highlighting good practice and context for industry stakeholders.

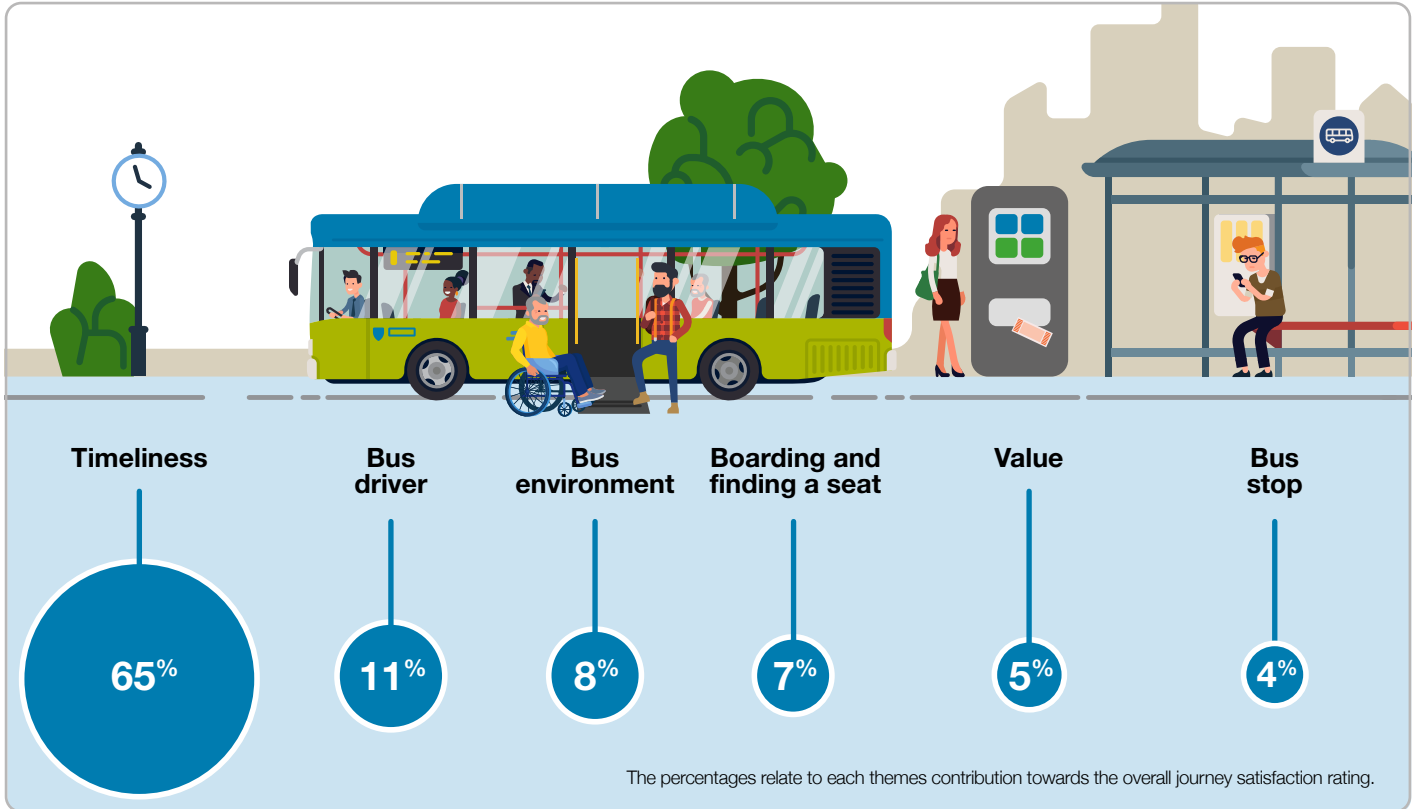
The picture was similar for free pass holders, only without the value for money theme as a factor.



The themes

| Individual questions | Bus driver | Experience onboard the bus | Bus stop | Timeliness | Boarding and finding a seat | Value for money |
|---|------------|----------------------------|----------|------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Rating - the bus driver helpfulness/attitude | | | | | | |
| Rating - the bus driver time to get to seat | | | | | | |
| Satisfaction with bus driver overall | | | | | | |
| Rating - the bus driver smoothness/freedom from jolting | | | | | | |
| Rating - the bus driver nearness to kerb/stop | | | | | | |
| Rating - temperature inside the bus | | | | | | |
| Rating - ventilation on board the bus | | | | | | |
| Rating - comfort of the seats | | | | | | |
| Rating - cleanliness and condition inside bus | | | | | | |
| Rating - personal security on the bus | | | | | | |
| Rating - bus stop general condition/standard of maintenance | | | | | | |
| Rating - bus stop being clear of litter | | | | | | |
| Rating - personal safety at the bus stop | | | | | | |
| Rating - info provided at the bus stop | | | | | | |
| Satisfaction with waiting time | | | | | | |
| Satisfaction with punctuality | | | | | | |
| Satisfaction with length of journey | | | | | | |
| Satisfaction with boarding bus stop overall | | | | | | |
| Rating - time taken to board bus | | | | | | |
| Rating - ease of getting on bus | | | | | | |
| Rating - availability of seating or space to stand | | | | | | |
| Satisfaction with value for money (fare-payers only) | | | | | | |

Key driver analysis 2023 - what makes a *good* bus journey?



Key driver analysis 2023 - what makes a *great* bus journey?



Timeliness

51%

Bus driver

16%

Bus environment

13%

Boarding and finding a seat

4%

Value

7%

Bus stop

9%

The percentages relate to each themes contribution towards the overall journey satisfaction rating.

Timeliness

Timeliness is the most important driver of overall journey satisfaction and accounts for over half (51 per cent) of what differentiates between a good and a great journey.

At a national level, passengers who are very satisfied are seeing generally consistent levels of reliability with their service, but the backdrop since 2019 (see graphic below) is one of declining punctuality and this poorer experience is putting people off travelling by bus, leading to fewer journeys.

Timeliness is about waiting time, punctuality, journey time and the time spent waiting at the bus stop where passengers get on. The results show that a relentless focus on these timeliness aspects is likely to have the greatest effect in terms of supporting or improving overall passenger satisfaction.

Road congestion in many areas of the country is hampering bus journeys. The impact of buses arriving late may be felt more acutely when there are long gaps between services in the timetable, in areas with less frequent services or where services have been withdrawn altogether. The shortage of bus drivers in some areas is likely to contribute to poor reliability and, alongside congestion, impact upon a passenger's trust in a service that they absolutely depend on.

Passengers travelling at peak times are less satisfied with their bus journey than those travelling off-peak. Peak-time services can be less reliable and punctual, but also busier and, in the morning peak, potentially more time critical as people need to get to work, places of education and appointments on time. The typical peak time journey is more likely to be a regular occurrence for many passengers.

Speeding up buses and making them more reliable holds the key, however managing passengers' expectations of waiting time with better information at bus stops/stations and during the journey can mitigate the impact and help to raise satisfaction.

Good real-time information at stops/stations and use of apps helps passengers track where their bus is and when it is likely to arrive.

It also builds passenger confidence and trust when waiting, especially where there is any disruption and supports passengers who may feel more vulnerable about waiting for a bus at certain times of day or locations to know that their bus is on its way.

“We can track where the bus is and that it's running. We do not go out until we know the bus is running.”

Department for Transport punctuality stats: % on-time (1 min early to 5.59 min late)

| Region | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| England outside London | 83.3 | 84.5 | 89.1 | 83.9 | 79.9 |

Department for Transport passenger journey stats: millions

| 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| 2112.9 | 1982.1 | 723.8 | 1359.2 | 1617.1 |

“I don’t think it is safe for large amounts of students to be at the Falmer station/Old Steine station for large periods of time (waiting over 45 minutes for buses) the area isn’t safe, especially in winter with low lighting.”

In parts of the country where punctuality, waiting and journey time are rated higher by passengers, other factors become more prominent in driving overall satisfaction and delivering that ‘great’ journey. In other words, get the basics right and other factors become more apparent and important to passengers.

Passengers in Stoke-on-Trent for example have good satisfaction with waiting time (75 per cent), supported by a good level of satisfaction with information at the bus stop (73 per cent), so whilst still important, timeliness is less of a driving impact to improving satisfaction (with a factor impact of 47 per cent). Here, the bus driver is more prominent (with a factor impact of 22 per cent). Helping passengers to get on and off safely and helpful customer service contributing to a positive rating of the driver and feelings of security on-board, supporting overall journey satisfaction.

A relentless focus on the key elements – greater reliability and journey time improvements – are needed to deliver increasing levels of bus passenger satisfaction. The implementation of local plans involving all relevant local partners (such as the transport authority, bus operator(s), local highways and traffic enforcement teams etc) working jointly on identifying measures can deliver vital ‘marginal gains’ on routes to speed up journeys and improve punctuality.

Nottingham City Council

We know several areas, such as Nottingham, have introduced or are looking to introduce such ‘marginal gain’ measures. These can include more stringent enforcement of bus lanes and yellow box junctions. Also, examples where interactive technology between the bus and traffic signals at certain busy road junctions are helping give buses a priority over other traffic. Satisfaction with punctuality in Nottingham was 85 per cent in 2023. Scoring joint second highest in the 2023 Your Bus Journey survey.

Norfolk County Council

Norfolk’s approach to timeliness includes increased service frequencies, so it is not as long to wait until the next bus arrives. Norfolk have also introduced QR codes at every stop linking to real time information, with usage monitored to gauge where particular bus stops would benefit from real-time screens. This is a great way to build the evidence base to deploy the technology at a time when overall funding is scarce.

The vital role the bus driver plays

In terms of delivering a great journey, the bus driver is the second most important ingredient, with 16 per cent of the influence for overall satisfaction.

In areas where timeliness ratings are better, the role of the bus driver tends to emerge as a factor for overall satisfaction, with helpfulness, safety and careful driving being key points in passenger comments.

“Bus driver saw me running for the bus and waited. Helpful with what ticket I needed as I don’t usually catch the bus.”

The bus driver is doing a difficult, skilled and responsible job. They not only have to navigate safely through traffic and roadworks and keep the bus on schedule but also consider the comfort and safety of diverse groups of passengers, who may have a variety of needs.

Small courtesies such as waiting until someone is seated before moving off, waiting at a stop if someone is hurrying to catch the bus and helping with buggies, walking aids or luggage can make all the difference.

Examples of satisfaction with bus driver helpfulness from areas shows differences for passengers with a disability that for some is markedly lower, particularly in some larger conurbations. This suggests a need for an industry focus on support and training for drivers to improve this, particularly for passengers with a visible or non-visible disability.

Passengers tell us ease of boarding and having time to get to their seat are important, highlighting appreciation for the driver lowering the bus or the ramp and ensuring passengers are safely seated.

And while many passengers may have limited interaction with drivers, they do observe how drivers handle requests for such help from fellow passengers. The role of the driver is often under the microscope and noted by passengers.

In recent years, the role of the driver has become even more prominent. Challenges to retain and recruit in some areas of the country has been a significant challenge for the industry. In turn the shortage of drivers, at times, has impacted on the reliability of services for passengers.

There are several great initiatives across the sector where bus operators are aiming their bus driver recruitment campaigns at more diverse areas of our communities and population. Passenger comments make particular mention of female bus drivers:

“I appreciated the fact that the (female) driver got as close to the kerb as she could before lowering the floor. I use a walking aid and need all the help I can get. I was allowed to get seated before she moved off.”

“Bus clean, seats available and female driver always pleasant and drives sensibly.”

It is important that drivers know that their role is valued by passengers as one of the key factors in delivering those good and great journeys.

East Riding of Yorkshire

In East Riding timeliness is good (satisfaction with waiting time 79 per cent punctuality 85 per cent, journey time 89 per cent and the bus stop 84 per cent - all way ahead of the rural and all areas averages), which may explain why this factor has a lower impact on making a great journey (with an impact value of 43 per cent) and the role the bus driver plays is the second factor driving satisfaction (with an impact value of 19 per cent).

In parallel, satisfaction ratings in East Riding with the bus driver (92 per cent) and security on board (88 per cent rated it as 'good') are particularly good, helping establish the area's standing as 'top area' in our league table. Could this be down to more rural/semi-rural routes where passengers may recognise, and in turn, build up a good rapport with certain drivers? The higher-than-average proportion of passengers travelling on concessionary passes is also likely to be contributing to this.

Trentbarton

Trentbarton drivers were number one for satisfaction, with 93 per cent of passengers saying they were satisfied or very satisfied with their bus driver. Their managing director said: *"An outstanding driver is what makes an everyday bus journey a great experience, so for our drivers to be the best in the country is a fantastic achievement."*



Onboard the bus

The on-board environment, namely cleanliness, seat comfort, ventilation and temperature, are all aspects that set the tone for passengers on their journey and provide 13 per cent of the driving force for overall satisfaction towards a great journey. Getting this aspect of a journey right for passengers, on a consistent basis, is fully within the gift of the operator to manage and deliver.

Where timeliness is better, the bus environment emerges as a secondary key factor in driving overall passenger satisfaction.

Gaining regular feedback from passengers, and drivers, on issues that impact on passengers is also valuable free advice to operators to help continually adapt and improve the on-bus environment for passengers.

Transdev

Transdev supports their service delivery and customer experience with a culture they call Transdev Spirit. A range of communications schemes engage with teams, encouraging them to contribute thoughts and ideas on service improvements, and delivery is joined up with their training academy.

Such initiatives may be behind achieving above average satisfaction with cleanliness and condition on the bus at 88 per cent against 78 per cent for all England; and 90 per cent with the bus driver against 85 per cent for all England.

The bus environment here makes a big impact and young people in particular tell us they really notice poor quality, especially if the bus feels dirty with lots of litter visible, which makes them feel uneasy. Passenger comments gathered in our survey give insight into the impact that falling short on cleanliness and comfort can have on journeys:

"I could smell wee everywhere and I had the fear if I was sitting on it or not. I have experienced this a couple of times before and it is definitely the bad side of taking public transport."

"The buses need to be cleaned and checked for rubbish, the floors were very wet so it would be nice to see that cleaned and the window needs to be cleaned along side the window shelf and hand rails, better cleaning. More bins on the bus!"

Measures to address anti-social behaviour are of particular importance in making public transport an attractive and safe proposition. Tackling this is key to passengers' feelings of personal security on board, illustrated by further comments:

“One major problem with bus journeys is frequent anti social behaviour from usually (but not always) young people. Am sure it puts a lot of people off traveling by public transport.”

“Bus was half full of youth, being very loud, intimidating, swearing etc. Currently doing bus training with a child with social anxiety to get to and from school, this has now taken us back a step. As an adult I was nervous esp as they were throwing things round.”

“My biggest problem is people smoking vapes on the bus. As a non smoker I detest the smell and have health concerns over them. These vape smokers blow the smoke into the floor so you don't know who is doing it.”

Bournemouth

Morebus in Bournemouth has included dementia-friendly floors on its buses, larger luggage areas, two bays for wheelchairs/pushchairs deep cushion seating with lots of grab handles and better legroom. There is also a lift-up section on the rear-facing seats over the wheel-arch, revealing a footrest that avoids spoiling the seat cushions.

These factors can contribute towards supporting higher satisfaction with the onboard environment where cleanliness and condition is at 83 per cent in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole against the all-England average of 77 per cent and comfort of the seats is at 82 per cent compared against 76 per cent.



The bus stop

A passenger's experience at the bus stop can set the tone for the whole journey. And better-quality information supports expectations of waiting time. It is clear from comments from the survey that passengers want a proper shelter with somewhere clean and comfortable to sit rather than just a pole and a sign. Good lighting, safe walking routes and addressing any vandalism or graffiti provide support for passengers' feelings of safety at the bus stop.

"I appreciated the electronic board giving details of bus arrival times."

"The bus stops are always sheltered so I feel comfortable while I wait for the bus."

"I arrived at 9am and had to stand in the rain as there's no shelters till gone 9.30am waiting on a bus."

"Finding the bus station was the hardest thing. I'd missed my connection at Crewe railway station and had to walk to the bus station. There were no signs nearby to tell me where I could get the bus. I had to ask a member of the public where the bus stop was."

"I would say the bus stops were quite confusing, there were two bus stop in opposite direction with the same name, same bus number which made locating where to stand and wait for the bus difficult as I wasn't sure I was waiting at the right bus stop."



A number of areas are benefiting from a pilot scheme which sees specially trained Transport Safety Officers travelling across key routes on the bus networks and patrolling bus stations interacting with people and dealing with any incidents.

City of York

Bus shelter improvements include:

- installation or planned installation of 175 new or replacement real time information screens across the entire City of York area, which include an audio announcement facility
- refurbishment, painting, upgrading lighting and seating, of over 50 shelters. Work includes upgrades and 20 total replacements
- a rolling programme to ensure facilities are in good condition

The work also extends to kerbs and hardstanding, where over 30 bus stops without raised kerb and/or suitable hardstanding for wheelchair access will be improved.

Locations have been prioritised by proximity to services (hospital/school/care homes) and current condition of stop, potentially contributing to overall satisfaction with the bus stop of 80 per cent, against the all-England average of 76 per cent.

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole is one of four areas in the pilot, which is part of the council's ongoing commitment to improving safety on public transport.

In addition, over 150 bus shelters have been upgraded with new closed-circuit television cameras. Further measures include clearly marked bus stops with up-to-date printed timetable and real time information displays at busier bus shelters.

Together these aim to reduce anti-social behaviour and make travelling by bus a more welcoming and safer option which is beginning to be recognised in passenger satisfaction:

- information at the stop 82 per cent, against 71 per cent for all England
- bus stop maintenance 75 per cent, against 69 per cent for all England
- personal safety at the bus stop 75 per cent, against 73 per cent for all England.



Value for money

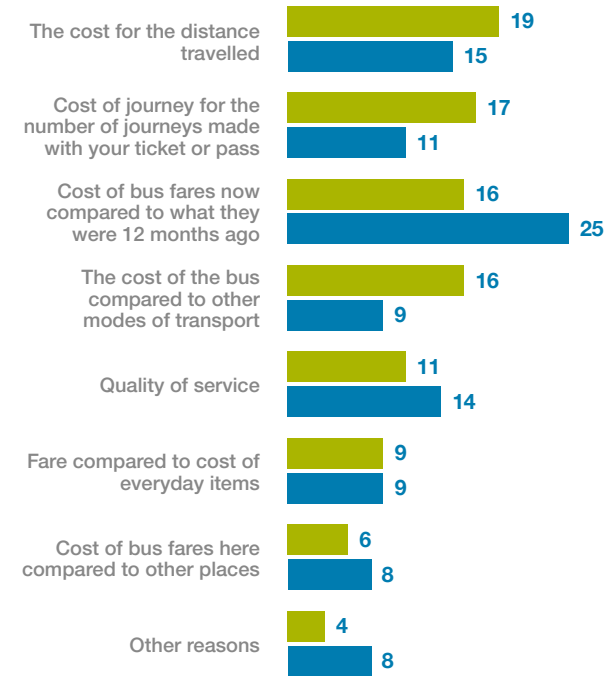
Value for money is often regarded as a proxy for how passengers feel more generally about the quality of the service on offer, rather than simply a clear correlation with the cost of their ticket. This tends to emerge as a factor where the basics of the service are being delivered more consistently and in terms of delivering a great journey, accounts for 7 per cent of the influence for overall satisfaction.

Satisfaction with value for money is measured with fare-payers and influenced by factors beyond just the cost of the ticket, such as the cost for the distance travelled, or per journey for the number of journeys they make with a ticket or pass, comparison of fares with what they were previously or against other modes or everyday items, as well as the quality of the service, illustrated in the chart opposite.

Where the national fare cap is in place, this has had an influence on attitudes and attracted people to use buses more, as well as helping with the cost of living. However, looking at satisfaction with value for money across ticket types, the highest scores are for single tickets and lower for weekly or monthly products, suggesting an opportunity to reassess longer term products, particularly where there are changes in travel habits.



Influential factors on value for money rating (%)



Satisfaction with value for money (vfm)

■ Satisfied (very/fairly)
 ■ Not satisfied

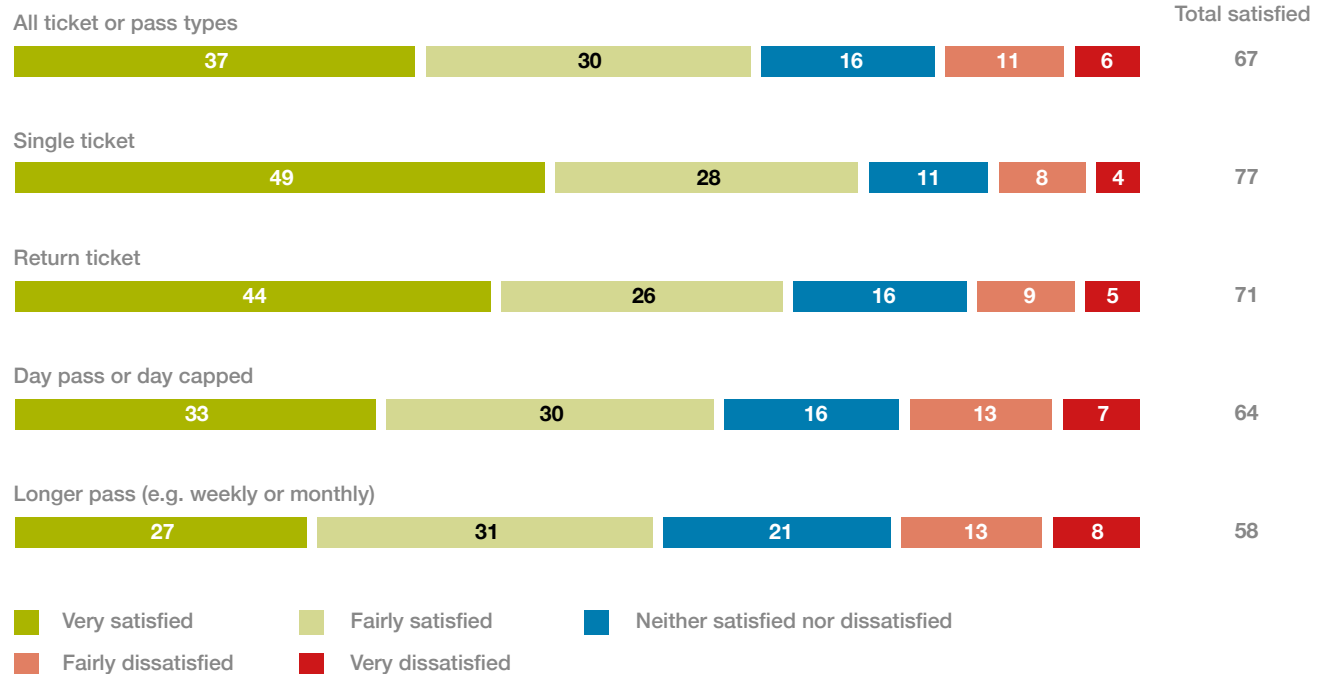
Q What had the biggest influence on your rating of the value for money?

Base: Fare-payers only; those satisfied with vfm 15138; those not satisfied with vfm 6293

Value for money rating across ticket types for fare payers (%)

Those using single tickets are far more likely to be satisfied with value for money than those using period passes

Satisfaction with the journey's value for money amongst fare-payers - by main ticket or pass types



Q How satisfied were you with the value for money of your journey?

Base: Fare-payers only 21431; Single ticket 8248; Day pass 2647; Longer pass 4674

We are also seeing other innovative deals roll out across areas, for example, through offers targeted at younger people, group travel and multi-operator deals.

Norfolk

Norfolk has seen a 16 per cent increase in passenger journeys in the year to March 2024 and April to June 2024 had 13 per cent more journeys than the same period in 2023. Here are some fare initiatives which may have contributed to this increase in patronage:

- Reduced fares, with a £1.50 single journey fare cap in Thetford, King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth and a 25 per cent discount on weekly, monthly and group tickets.
- Norwich Park & Ride fares simplified and discounted, with an adult day ticket now costing £3 and additional passengers £1 each.

Cornwall

Cornwall has been successful in securing significant government funding and this has helped to convince bus operators that they could achieve patronage growth within an Enhanced Partnership. Government funding for a bus fares pilot has helped to trial some attractive local fares packages which, together with the national cap on single fares has driven increases in patronage and improvements to satisfaction with value for money scores. Improvements have been made to infrastructure and to the quality of services.

Cornwall's score of 85 per cent overall passenger satisfaction put them towards the top of the 2023 results, while 75 per cent satisfaction with value for money was a significant improvement on the 57 per cent scored in our 2019 Bus Passenger Survey. In July 2024 Cornwall reported their best patronage results, including a 56 per cent increase in journeys made by fare payers, when compared with the year before the pandemic.



Boarding and getting a seat

This factor accounts for 4 per cent of the influence for overall satisfaction towards a great journey. For many younger, and non-disabled passengers, boarding a bus and getting to a seat is taken for granted, so the percentage highlighting this as an issue is always going to be lower than for factors that are universally experienced.

However, for some groups of passengers, the impact can be highly significant. For example passengers with a disability and restricted mobility such as using a bus with a wheelchair. But this also extends to passengers using the bus with a child in a pushchair or simply carrying bags of shopping.

Generally, for all passengers, where boarding a bus and getting a seat emerges as a factor, it tends to be linked to lower overall journey satisfaction and lower satisfaction with the role of the bus driver – which sees satisfaction levels ranging from 80 to 92 per cent.

However, for passengers needing more assistance for example, we know those bus drivers lowering the ramp or vehicle for passengers getting on or off and allowing them time to reach their seat safely are valued by some passengers and also helps them to feel safer during the journey.

Examples of satisfaction with personal security on the bus show a similar disparity between passengers with and without disabilities. Those who are disabled also show lower levels of satisfaction being experienced than those without a disability.

Satisfaction with bus driver helpfulness

| Area | Passengers without a disability (%) | Passengers with a disability (%) |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| All England | 83 | 79 |
| Highest scoring areas | | |
| East Riding | 92 | 91 |
| Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole | 90 | 89 |
| Derbyshire | 91 | 86 |
| Lowest scoring areas | | |
| West Yorkshire | 79 | 76 |
| West Midlands | 79 | 73 |
| Greater Manchester | 81 | 72 |

Satisfaction with personal security on the bus

| Area | Passengers without a disability (%) | Passengers with a disability (%) |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| All England | 83 | 75 |
| Highest scoring areas | | |
| East Riding | 91 | 83 |
| City of York | 90 | 80 |
| Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole | 89 | 81 |
| Lowest scoring areas | | |
| Tees Valley | 83 | 65 |
| West Yorkshire | 79 | 71 |
| West Midlands | 78 | 66 |

Negative comments mention sufficient space on the bus for mobility aids, or to get on with a wheelchair, driver not lowering the ramp or the bus, not stopping near the raised kerb, not waiting for disabled passengers to reach seats, confusion over pass validity, acting insensitively towards passengers with hidden disabilities and partial sight, lack of visual information, or not having the audio information turned on/volume up.

“The driver didn’t lower the bus so it was an effort to get up onto the bus.”

“The drivers don’t bring out the ramp for wheelchairs.”

“I am disabled and I walk with a crutch. The driver could see this but still pulled out at speed before I sat down. I nearly ended up on the floor.”

“The driver never stops by the raised kerb there. I have a mobility aid and it is a struggle to get out.”

“I support a lady with Downs Syndrome and for the first time in three years the driver asked me to pay my fair. Said pass didn’t allow carer, no other driver has ever queried this. But despite her disability this lady has twice been made to pay with her pass.”

“I have a son who has ASD and ADHD and struggles a lot with loud noises and sitting down, I was trying to distract my son from getting up which is a struggle at times, the bus driver was extremely rude even after I told the bus driver that my son has these disabilities, he answered very rudely and made me feel really upset.”

Positive comments mention letting the bus or ramp down, giving time to get to seat, being attentive to those with mobility difficulties, being patient, using discretion about someone waiting for their disability pass, audio announcements on to hear bus stop, awareness of needs.

Disabled passengers tell us if public transport was easier for them to use, they would like to go to many more places.

“I appreciated the fact that the (female) driver got as close to the kerb as she could before lowering the floor. I use a walking aid and need all the help I can get. I was allowed to get seated before she moved off.”

“The bus driver was very patient helping a lady in a wheelchair off the bus before I got on.”

“It was a good journey. Driver was friendly. He saw my white cane getting on bus as I got off he lowered the bus for me. He had parked close to kerb so could easily get off. He had the audio announcements on so I knew where my stop was.”

“Bus driver is aware of my medical needs and asked if there was anything he could do to assist me.”



Conclusions and recommendations

People depend on buses to get them to places of work and education, to important appointments and to give them access to shops and leisure. Inadequate bus services can also act as a check on economic and social growth.

A key outcome for any type of bus service investment is achieving sustainable passenger growth. But, at a time of tight public and private sector resources, focusing plans, investment and delivery on the factors that matter most to today's and future bus passengers must be an even keener priority for operators, authorities and Governments.

So, surely having more of today's passengers experiencing those good and very good journeys described in this report provides a compelling, positive image for the bus sector and Government to further promote bus, encouraging existing passengers to make additional journeys and those who would not normally choose the bus to give it a go.

The findings set out in this report, and contained as conclusions and **recommendations** below, will no doubt look familiar to experienced, and perhaps less experienced, bus industry observers. But as stressed above, delivering what matters most to today's and future bus passengers, as evidenced in this report, has never been more important.

Recommendations 1

Timeliness is more important than ever. We support investment in a variety of bus priority measures and enhanced frequencies.

Enhanced Partnership Schemes and Franchising plans, and future revisions of Bus Service Improvement Plans, should continue to prioritise the delivery of measures to speed up buses and make them more frequent and more reliable.

Recommendations 2

Our punctuality report – *What's the hold up? Exploring bus service punctuality* – also highlighted areas where bus operators could speed up buses and make them more reliable, such as when boarding passengers and rostering drivers. Direct, express buses to key destinations can also play a role.

Bus operators should review their operational and ticketing arrangements to minimise cancellations and reduce the time spent at stops, where this can be safely done.

Recommendations 3

Local Authorities and relevant agencies should take more co-ordinated action to control roadworks and enforce measures to speed up buses.

Recommendations 4

Operators and authorities should use data, from multiple sources, to better understand and address the reasons for poor punctuality – when, where and why buses are not on time – and consider how best to put things right.

Recommendations 5

The Bus Centre of Excellence/Department of Transport should further focus resources, guidance and support to transport authorities to improve their capacity and capability to introduce bus priority and reliability measures.

Recommendations 6

Where buses cannot be speeded up or made more reliable, keeping passengers informed of disruption while at the stop or on the bus can help at the margins. At the stop, using Real Time Passenger Information displays and online updates to explain reasons for delays. On the bus, ensuring drivers are well informed and encouraging them to pass information on to passengers.

Operators should make most effective use of onboard Audio-Visual equipment to announce impacts of delays.

Recommendations 7

In our report – *Bus driver training. What works and what next?* – we noted that training bus drivers is not just about elements of customer service. It is about whole systems management as well. Many operators are grappling with these issues, and many have inventive ways of managing the challenges.

But how many of these initiatives and best practices are pooled to support improved driving standards and customer service delivery across the sector?

The Bus Centre of Excellence, Confederation of Passenger Transport and other industry representative bodies should focus on sharing of good practice training, resources, capacity and capability to support the role, retention and recruitment of drivers.

Recommendations 8

This analysis focusses on what drives satisfaction for most bus users. There will also be interventions that are critical for a smaller proportion of bus users, such as disabled passengers, that in some cases are the difference between being able to use the service and not. It is important that these continue to be prioritised.

Transport authorities and bus operators should make sure that in focussing on the issues that would improve journeys for most users they properly assess how the accessibility of their service can be improved for all users, particularly those with disabilities.

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Transport Focus is the operating name
of the Passengers' Council.

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The voice of Britain's transport users

We listen to the public and find out their experience of using, or trying to use, Britain's railways and England's buses, coaches, trams and motorways and major 'A' roads.

We protect the interests and champion the needs of all transport users today and ensure they're at the centre of tomorrow's policy decisions and future investment.