

# Bus Appeals Body

## 2013 Annual Report

The Bus Appeals Body provides an independently-chaired arena in which a passenger representative and an industry representative re-assess the unresolved complaints of bus and coach passengers in England & Wales. It was set up in 1999 and is a joint undertaking by Bus Users UK and the Confederation of Passenger Transport.

When passengers are not satisfied with the way the bus or coach company has (or even has not) responded to their complaint, Bus Users UK aim to broker a solution with the bus company. Where this cannot be achieved for whatever reason, the issue can be escalated to the Bus Appeals Body.

Most operators of scheduled bus and coach services in Britain are members of the Confederation of Passenger Transport, and agree to abide by Bus Appeals Body decisions as part of their CPT membership. However the Bus Appeals Body has no statutory remit.

London and Northern Ireland have statutory bus passenger representation. Until 2013 Scotland also had statutory provision but during that year, processes similar to those already in place in England & Wales, were set up in Scotland; they are independent of those in England & Wales with a separate Bus Appeals Body Scotland as the independently-chaired arena. Further details of this new Body will be found later in this Report, but this Report covers, as it has done for the previous 14 years, the activities of the BAB in England and Wales.

Lord Snape of Wednesbury was chairman during 2013, with Dennis Flower (nominated by the CPT) representing the bus operators' perspective and Claire Walters (Bus Users UK) representing the passenger. Lord Snape and Dennis Flower both stood down at the end of 2013. At the December 2013 meeting, both were warmly thanked for their contributions to the BAB and both reciprocated in kind, thanking the other members for the "always helpful and constructive atmosphere" of the Body. Dennis Flower had been the Operator Representative since the BAB's inception and his contribution was duly noted.

The Chair of the Bus Appeals Body in England and Wales for 2014 is Christopher Heaps, a former Traffic Commissioner, and the bus operators are represented by Roger French, who retired as Managing Director of Brighton & Hove Bus & Coach during

2013. Claire Walters, Chief Executive of Bus Users UK continues as passenger representative in England and Wales, assisted by Deputy Chief Executive Stephen Morris. Julian Osborne continues to provide secretarial and administrative support.

The Chair of Bus Appeals Body Scotland is Ian Longair. The bus operators in Scotland are represented by John Elliot, Managing Director of Traveline and passengers are represented by Gavin Booth of Bus Users Scotland. BAB Scotland has only issued one Decision so far, it not being fully in place until very close to the end of 2013.

### 2013 Cases

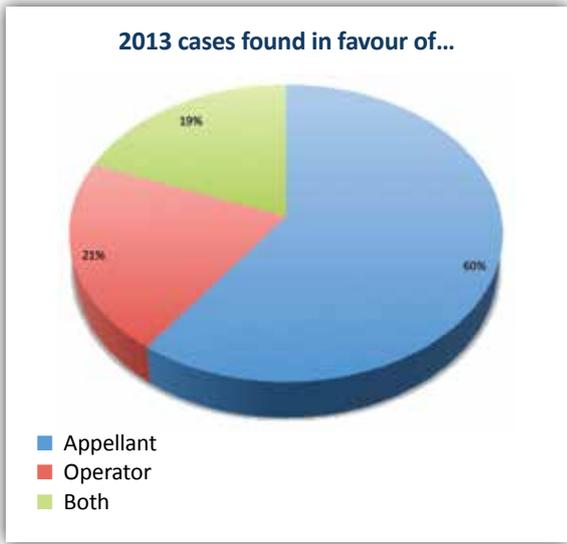
During 2013 Bus Users UK experienced a further increase in volume of complaints handled in England and Wales, following earlier and continuing work to heighten its profile, particularly through bus companies and local authorities. This has led in turn to a rise in the number of complaints reaching the Bus Appeals Body (BAB).

A total of 1,171 complaints was handled by Bus Users UK in 2013, 940 in England and 231 in Wales, compared with 1,032 (789 in England and 243 in Wales) in 2012. Of those English and Welsh complaints, 69 reached referral to the Bus Appeals Body, 65 from England and four from Wales: again a sizeable increase over 2012. Nine cases were resolved before the Bus Appeals Body had issued a decision, one case was deferred until after a route review and consultation set up by the operator after referral, one remains live and one was deemed to be out of the BAB's remit.

The BAB sets itself a target of eight weeks to resolve all cases. In 2013, it was noted that the target was only being met in around 50% of referred cases so a review was undertaken to analyse and address the reasons behind this. Since October 2013, the target has been met in 100% of referred cases.

Of the 57 cases on which Decisions have been made in 2013, 34 (60%) were found in favour of the passenger, and a further slight increase in the number found in favour of the operator was recorded this year, at 12. Eleven were more ambiguous, for example agreeing that the bus company had been at fault but had acted appropriately in making redress or recommending that both sides take specific actions to avoid recurrence.

34 cases found in favour of Appellant, 12 for the bus company, 11 “ambiguous”, as described in the text.



### Issues dealt with

In 2013 service reliability remained one of the largest categories but driver/staff attitude issues were once again prominent, after a fall last year. Complaints under the latter category encompass those about non-driving staff, including customer service staff employed to resolve complaints. Service reliability issues arise when services regularly do not run to time or fail to arrive; no stop or no show complaints relate to specific instances. Operators have traditionally been better at resolving complaints about one-off instances than they have about resolving concerns about systemic unreliability, often seeking to explain the latter by detailing the causes of each example offered, rather than addressing the bigger picture. Vehicle condition appears this year for the first time with four referrals about this – two breakdowns and two about on-board temperature. Luggage, or rather the disappearance of luggage en route, continues to appear but with fewer instances this year. Another major operator has introduced stricter luggage procedures in 2013.

ISSUE	2012		2013	
	CASES	%	CASES	%
Service Reliability	15	29%	18%	32%
Driver/Staff attitude	5	10%	20	33%
Bus no show or stop	9	17%	13	23%
Ticket issues	7	13.5%	0	0%
Injury/accident	0	0%	1	2%
Incorrect information	2	4%	3	5%
Lost Luggage or property	8	15%	4	7%
Vehicle condition			4	7%
Other	6	11.5%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>		<b>57</b>	

NB: some cases refer to more than one issue; vehicle condition was in Other in 2012

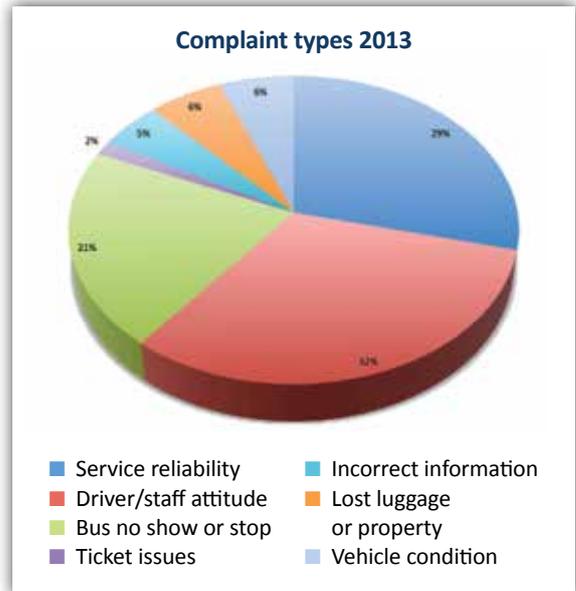
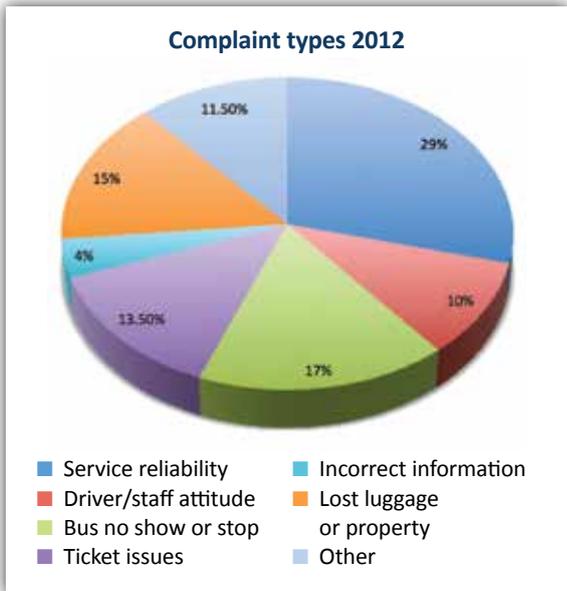
### 2012

Ten BAB Decisions were not implemented by the operator. Three operators accounted for 70% of these and the retiring Chair has asked that they be named in this Report. easyBus, Thandi Coaches and SM Coaches (and its various other names) have consistently declined to engage with the BAB over a long period of time. With bus companies generally becoming keener to avoid referral to BAB, disengaged operators had proportionally greater representation at BAB than in previous years in 2013.

In 2011 the relevant Traffic Commissioner called In-Chambers Meetings with three operators that had failed to implement Bus Appeals Body Decisions and stressed that failure to implement them may affect adversely the ‘repute’ of operators. In 2012, the Body received a request from the Senior Traffic Commissioner for all cases of non-implementation to be referred formally to the relevant Traffic Commissioner and discussion about associated procedures continued with the STC in 2013.

### No of cases dealt with by Bus Appeals Body, 2005-2013

2005:86	2006:77	2007:88
2008:26	2009:80	2010:41
2011:25	2012:49	2013:69



The Bus Appeals Body website is [www.busappealsbody.co.uk](http://www.busappealsbody.co.uk)

Footnote: The Welsh Assembly Government requires Bus Users UK Cymru to immediately take on any complaint referred, whether or not the complainant has approached the bus company. In England, Bus Users UK used to engage with referrals that had had no bus company involvement, but did not classify such issues as a complaint until the bus company had had a chance to deal with it and been found wanting by the complainant. During 2013, it moved to the Welsh process but all complaints (English and Welsh) are now logged as “first line” or “second stage” as appropriate.