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Electronic copies of this 2015 - 2016 Annual Report are available as PDF
Documents from: www.bususers.org or by e-mailing: wales@bususers.org

Cover photograph:

From Left to Right - Carwyn Jones AM, First Minister, National Assembly & Margaret Everson MBE, Director for Wales, Bus Users Cymru attending the T3 Traws Cymru Network launch at Corwen 22nd July 2015.
Foreword

Director for Wales

We have had another very busy year with fewer written and telephoned complaints but increasingly complex issues. In addition to complaints we have also held an increased number of events where we facilitate the meetings between passengers and the people who provide their services. 41% of people attending the events told us they were concerned about level of service but, in a change from last year, 24% of complaints were about staff attitude. We are sure responsible bus operators have very robust training in place but this training does not always manifest itself out on the road. A similar pattern has been noted elsewhere in the UK.

We have been getting to grips with the European Passenger Rights Regulation particularly in relation to disability issues. These regulations have been in place for some time now but there is insufficient awareness of the requirements. We organised three seminars in 2014 to introduce the Regulations and will be organising a follow up seminar before the end of 2016 to bring operators fully up to speed.

As part of our work with the Public Transport Users Advisory Panel we worked with CTA, Older People’s Commissioner for Wales, Disability Wales and Guide Dogs Wales to produce the Getting There Together toolkit. The Toolkit’s subtitle is Local Authorities: Inclusivity and Accessibility of the Consultation Process on Changes to Transport Services in Wales and is designed to support local authorities in engaging effectively with local communities as they develop and implement their plans for local bus services in their areas. The guidance looks in particular at how it can be ensured that the voices of those with protected characteristics are heard. (This guidance can be found on http://gov.wales/topics/transport/public/bus-policy/guidance/?lang=en)

We shall continue to work on behalf of the passenger to seek to influence development of services and provision of information and look forward to the implementation of the Voluntary Quality Standards Scheme.

We are indebted to the Welsh Government for their continued funding and expect to further develop our activities in the year ahead.

Above: Mrs Edwina Hart AM MBE CStJ (centre) launches the T2 service with, left to right, Professor Stuart Cole CBE and Margaret Everson MBE - 10th March 2016
Foreword

Deputy Director for Wales

These continue to be uncertain times for bus users with local authorities implementing cuts to funding resulting in service reductions or withdrawals. Most of us accept with budgets stretched, that savings have to be made, but very importantly, there is also a need for balance, and not to see cuts to bus services as an easy option that doesn’t have an impact because we know that it does! We hear time and again from people how their local bus service is their lifeline to the outside world. We need to work hard to find innovative solutions to retain these services to avoid the threat of rural isolation becoming a reality.

We have been busy out and about in communities across Wales with our ‘Your Bus Matters’ events programme. From Caldicot to Cerrigydrudion and from Pontarddulais to Penmaenmawr, it is important for us to hear and take note of comments made by bus users at these events. We use this information gathered at grass roots level to inform our conversations with operators, local authority staff, in our conversations with Government officials and also our evidence before the Business and Enterprise Committee to represent your concerns and ensure that your voices are heard.

We have been busy handling complaints. This year has seen a reduction in the number of complainants but an increase in the number of issues. Dealing with the complexity of some of the issues can be quite time consuming and often involves significant investigation and research.

We will be actively supporting Catch the Bus Week in July and you can read all about our various activities from last year later in this report. The Minister launched the mytravelpass scheme and recently presented the 5,000th card to a user. We need to encourage more young people to join this scheme and to catch the bus!

I have represented the UK on behalf of Bus Users at the National Enforcement Bodies meeting in Brussels to discuss application of the regulations under European coach and bus Passenger Rights Regulation.

Bus Users Cymru is in a unique position to bang the drum for passengers, with a team of Bus Compliance Officers working in the best interest of passengers. Our network of local representatives helps us understand what is happening in their communities across Wales and our Mystery Traveller programme allows us an opportunity to run a health check on services across Wales. I hope that you find it an interesting read and I welcome any feedback you may have to offer.

Barclay Davies CMILT, 7th April 2015
attending Meeting of National Enforcement Bodies, Rights of Passenger travelling by bus and coach.

Conference centre Albert Borschette, Brussels
### Executive Summary 2015-2016

#### The year in numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count/Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complainants</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues raised</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complainants concerned about attitude</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Your Bus Matters' events across Wales</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases sent to Bus Appeals Body</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who approached us at events say concerned about level of service</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operators across Wales monitored by Bus Compliance Officers</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Areas across Wales monitored for BSSG</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authority areas across Wales monitored</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services monitored</td>
<td>464</td>
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<td>Consultations</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>'No further action' or 'satisfactory letters' issued on behalf of the OTC</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Mystery Travelling' journeys carried out</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operators involved in our 'meet the public' events</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders met during the year</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Customer Panels' chaired</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People came to our YBM events</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary for year ending 31st March 2016

Bus Users UK is now in its 30th Year. It is an independent organisation dedicated to ensuring that the voice of the bus user is heard.

Since 2001, Bus Users Cymru has received funding from the Welsh Government and our structure is aimed at delivering agreed outcomes. In the year under review the staff comprised one part-time Director, one full-time Deputy Director for Wales and two part-time Complaint Handlers / Office Administrators. We employ and facilitate three full-time Bus Compliance Officers who have specific roles. There were ten part time Local Representatives, who live across Wales providing local knowledge and feedback.

This Annual Report Summary is for year to 31st March 2016 and highlights our key activities:

• Gathering and reflecting the views of bus passengers in Wales – we organised 32 “Your Bus Matters” Events this year, throughout Wales, in order to meet and hear users’ concerns or problems, of these events 9 were consultations and we saw nearly 500 people during these events. In addition, Bus Users Cymru chaired 9 Customer Panel Events; averaging at least 10 attendees per panel event.
• We have dealt with 896 issues from the public at “Your Bus Matters” Events. Where members of the public did not raise specific concerns we dealt with their enquiries instead.
• We provide a contact point for bus user complaints in Wales and administer a follow up process keeping a database of case history and responses. This year we have dealt with a total of 428 issues received in letters, e-mails and telephone calls.
• Our involvement continues when people are unhappy with responses from operators and so we act as an advisor on cases referred to the Bus Appeals Body (BAB). We work hard to resolve complaints but where it has reached a “deadlock” position between the complainant and the Operator, Bus Users Cymru will refer case to BAB; this year we referred 3 cases.
• We provide advice, as required, to Welsh Government Ministers and officials on strategic and technical matters for example, on the Bus Policy Advisory Group and Public Transport Users Advisory Panel (PTUAP).
• We continue to represent bus users on a range of bodies at Local Authority level and to bodies related to industry or consumer groups such as Traveline Cymru, Older People’s Commissioner for Wales, Public Transport Users Advisory Panel (PTUAP), Transport Focus and the Confederation of Public Transport (CPT).
• Additionally, Bus Users Cymru contributed to consultations such as, Active Travel and TAS Policy Exchange.
Complaints handled this year by Bus Users Cymru totalled 1324. Of those received at the Bus Users Office we noted an increase in complaints relating to reliability and compliance, whilst the majority of complaints received at the “Your Bus Matters” Events were concerned with loss of services.

As part of our research into the state of the bus industry, our annual ongoing Mystery Travelling Survey covered 356 random bus journeys throughout all the 22 unitary authorities in Wales. The mystery traveller completed a 97 item questionnaire covering a range of issues from facilities at the bus stop, to ratings on the driver, the bus and the journey. By comparing surveys with previous years, this identified some areas of improvement and some of concern. Full details can be found in the Chapter titled Mystery Traveller Results.

Bus Users Cymru maintains regular contact with the Office of the Traffic Commissioner. Nick Jones is the Traffic Commissioner for the Wales and West Midlands and is co-located within Bus Users Cymru office in Cardiff. He has responsibility for the licensing of the operators of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and Public Service Vehicles (PSVs); the registration of local bus services, granting licences and taking action against drivers and operators of HGVs and PSVs.

Bus Users Cymru staff have attended 3 Public Inquiries, to give evidence where required, and as observers; this enables us to understand more fully the causes of problems and support the interests of the bus using public. In some cases the Bus Compliance Officers will have provided evidence to the Traffic Commissioner who may have brought an operator to Public Inquiry on grounds highlighted.

Our Bus Compliance Officers have monitored 32 bus operators this year with 20 "No further action" or "Satisfactory" letters sent by Bus Users Cymru on behalf of the Traffic Commissioner meeting 90% or more on punctuality. In addition, 27 areas were also monitored for Bus Services Support Grant compliance.

A Memorandum of Understanding developed between Welsh Ministers, the DVSA, Traffic Commissioners and Bus Users Cymru now operates to enable the smooth working between all agencies involved in the monitoring and compliance of the Industry.

Bus Users Cymru expects 2016 - 2017 to be another busy year as bus operators and local authorities continue to juggle changes to funding and budgets and find themselves having to make difficult choices. Buses are an integral part of our daily lives for commuting, getting to an important hospital appointment, visiting family and friends or supporting tourism. The industry serves one million or a third of Welsh citizens. Therefore, Bus Users Cymru will continue to be proactive in representing the interests of the bus user through all consultations connected with any public transport changes or amendments and monitoring the industry.
Bus Users Cymru

Bus Users Cymru is funded by the Welsh Government to:

- Handle complaints
- Facilitate “Your Bus Matters” Events where the public can meet face to face the local authorities and the operators that provide the services
- Carry out monitoring and mystery travelling
- Employ, direct and lead three Bus Compliance Officers

These combine to deliver our core activities:

- To improve bus services across Wales by monitoring and reporting on bus operations
- To gather the views of users and accurately reflect them to the industry and legislators
- To provide guidance and support for bus users
- To provide advice on proposed transport policy
- To handle bus complaints relating to the European Passenger Rights Regulation. Bus Users UK is the designated UK Body for EPRR

The structure of Bus Users Cymru during Financial Year 2015 - 2016 was as follows:

- Director for Wales
- Deputy Director for Wales
- Bus Compliance Officers
- Complaints Handlers/ Office Administrators
- Local Representatives

Local Representatives: There are a number of local representatives based all around Wales working on a part-time ad-hoc basis. Together they are the eyes and ears of Bus Users Cymru. They observe, provide feedback and monitor events, including local media to ensure that we are aware of local issues, and can respond accordingly. They travel a lot by bus and have also engaged in many local problems, drawing these to the attention of operators or local authorities.

The following people are our representatives across Wales:

- Greg Varney (Powys)
- Bob Saxby FCILT (North Wales West)
- Ian Roberts (North Wales East)
- Hywel Jones (West Wales)
- Jim Maggs (South Wales West)
- Joyce Porter (Ceredigion)
- Judi Hartland (Pembrokeshire)
- Paul Harley (South Wales Gwent and Western Valleys) until 30th November 2015
- Mike Noke (Cardiff and the Valleys)
- Neville Garland (Newport & South East Wales) joined November 2015

Local Representatives Meetings: The local representatives attend four meetings each year to share information, promote best practice, and provide a sense of team spirit and belonging. A staff member of the Welsh Government normally attends these meetings and guests are invited to give a presentation on a topical subject. We also invite representatives from Traveline Cymru and the Welsh Government TrawsCymru Network Manager because their activities have a bearing on our work and how we learn about planned service changes.
Complaints Handling Results

So what do bus users complain about?

Bus Users Cymru generally sees the complaints that have not been dealt with satisfactorily by the transport providers or by those who insist that we handle their concerns. Therefore, the number of complaints that we see is not representative of all complaints received in Wales about bus services. The complainant should contact the operator in the first instance and if they do not receive a satisfactory response we then make representation on their behalf.

For the year from 01 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 all the issues received totalled 1324 (1076 2014/2015). There were 428 (395 2014/2015) issues received at the Bus Users Cymru Office via letter, email and telephone call and 896 (681 2014/2015) taken at the 32 “Your Bus Matters” events and ‘Consultations’ held throughout the year across Wales.

The Table below shows the specific topic areas and categories of the complaints received and recorded at Bus Users Cymru Office.

Complaints for the year 1st April 2015 - 31st March 2016

- 270 Complainants contacted the office via letter, email or telephone in the period under review (311 in 2014/2015) and a breakdown of subject matter is shown below. Of the 270 people who contacted us 428 separate issues (395 in 2014/2015) were raised.

Breakdown of Complaints issues raised via Bus Users Cymru Office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complaint Topic</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Driver/Staff Attitude</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus failed to stop or show</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Reliability</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level/Frequency of Service</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticketing</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure (Bus Stops etc.)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect Information provided</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility issues</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Injury and Accident</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Condition/Type</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Passenger Rights Regulation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luggage</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total issues raised at Bus Users Cymru office</strong></td>
<td><strong>428</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The pie chart below shows the total number of complaints recorded at the office of Bus Users Cymru.

European Passenger Rights Regulations

Over the last few years the European Union has been bringing in standardised rights for public transport users. The aims are primarily to eliminate discrimination, ensure that passengers have adequate information, and provide help for people who get stranded miles from home when there are serious problems. Separate legislation has been brought in progressively for airline passengers, train passengers, ferry passengers, and most recently for coach and bus passengers. ‘Regulation (EU) No 181/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 concerning the rights of passengers in bus and coach transport’, to give it its full title, came into force on 1 March 2013.

Coverage and exemptions

Most of the Regulation’s provisions only apply to coach services in excess of 250km in length (about 155 miles) and the UK Government has taken advantage of the option to exempt domestic (non international) services for at least four years, with the possibility of a further four-year extension.
National Enforcement Bodies

However there are parts of the Regulation that do apply to all bus and coach services, regardless of whether they are more than 250km or cross an international boundary. Member states are required to nominate enforcement bodies, which can impose penalties on operators and handle complaints. In the UK the enforcement and complaints roles have been split. Outside London, Bus Users is the nominated body to handle complaints, while London TravelWatch handles complaints on London bus services and facilities.

Responsibility for enforcement lies with the Traffic Commissioners, who can impose fines on operators that do not comply. In the UK, passengers will have to give the bus or coach company the opportunity to sort the matter out first, which is the approach Bus Users has always taken in our complaint handling. If the matter isn’t resolved to the passenger’s satisfaction, then Bus Users (or London TravelWatch) will review the case. Any operator not complying with the resolution of the case has to be referred to the Traffic Commissioner, who can fine them.

The table below shows the specific topic areas and categories of the complaints received at "Your Bus Matters" events.

"Your Bus Matters" events 2015 - 2016

- 32 "Your Bus Matters" events and 'Consultations' were held across Wales (26 2014/2015). 500 people were bus users attending the events and who raised 896 issues (681 in 2014/2015).

Breakdown of Complaints issues raised at "Your Bus Matters" events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complaint Topic</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level /Frequency of Service</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Reliability</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticketing</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver/Staff Attitude</td>
<td>61</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Compliment</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luggage</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Injury and Accident</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Passenger Rights Regulation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total issues raised at &quot;Your Bus Matters&quot; Events</strong></td>
<td><strong>896</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Complaints received this year have become more complex, there are several strands to a complaint that are being referred to us by the complainant. They are noticeably expecting more detailed responses to their complaints and we are getting more involved in bespoke operator and complainant resolution meetings to resolve some specific issues. On the whole Operators' complaints processes have improved as in many cases they appear to resolve more minor issues quickly.
“Your Bus Matters” Events

One key role of Bus Users Cymru is to listen to the views of the users; we need to do this so that we can ensure we represent bus passengers. One way we do this is through organising and facilitating the "Your Bus Matters" events throughout various locations across the whole of Wales during the course of the year. We provide a meeting place and invite the public to come and meet their local Bus Operator, Local Authority Transport Representative or Councillor and our Team. They provide a real opportunity for bus users to speak to their service providers and discuss issues that are of concern to them; gain valuable information about local services in their area and also tell us what is going well! Matters for discussion can be wide ranging so we note every comment made so that the issues raised can be followed up.

"Your Bus Matters" events require a suitable venue; this can be a bus station, local library, shopping centre or even on board a Bus! We liaise with local bus operators and the local authority officials with responsibility for bus services and ask them to make themselves available to answer questions about their bus services. Prior to the event we arrange advertising through the bus companies (posters on local buses) and we ask the appropriate council to display posters. We also issue a press release in advance to the local newspaper.

We vary locations and include many rural towns so that we achieve a good coverage across Wales. We often get approaches from local authorities and bus operators with requests to hold events and will hold an event as a 'Consultation' in conjunction with them. If we notice a significant change in a local bus network or a sudden rise in complaints from an area we may earmark that town for an event too.

'Customer Panel' - In addition to the "Your Bus Matters" and 'Consultation' events, Bus Users Cymru regularly chairs 'Customer Panel' meetings across the principality. This year we have chaired 9 panels. Customer Panels offer an opportunity for members of the bus using public, council transportation officials, operators and Bus Users Cymru team to discuss specific issues in a particular area, allocate responsibility and devise Action Plans to help resolve concerns.

Outcomes include revisions to services and users understanding the challenges that Local Authorities and Operators face in running bus services.

In the year under review Bus Users Cymru has organised and attended 41 different Customer Facing Events, as noted above. During these events we have met 500 members of the public at the "Your Bus Matters" events and 'Consultations'; the Customer Panel events hosts a minimum of ten attendees per panel.

Below is a list of the "Your Bus Matters", 'Consultations' and 'Customer Panel' events held during April 2015 - March 2016. A breakdown of the issues raised at the "Your Bus Matters" Events can be found in the "Complaints Handling" Chapter.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bridgend</td>
<td>13/05/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Neath</td>
<td>03/06/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Llanberis</td>
<td>18/06/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bethesda</td>
<td>18/06/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Port Talbot</td>
<td>25/06/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Maesteg</td>
<td>29/06/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Newport</td>
<td>30/06/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>01/07/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Chepstow</td>
<td>03/07/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Caldicot</td>
<td>03/07/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Newbridge</td>
<td>29/09/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Rhymney</td>
<td>30/09/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>30/09/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Bargoed</td>
<td>01/10/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Risca</td>
<td>05/10/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ystrad Mynach</td>
<td>07/10/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Caerphilly</td>
<td>07/10/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Blackwood</td>
<td>09/10/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Gorseinon</td>
<td>02/11/2015</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Pontarddulais</td>
<td>02/11/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Corwen</td>
<td>13/11/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters in Consultation with Denbighshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Ruthin</td>
<td>13/11/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters in Consultation with Denbighshire County Council</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Denbigh</td>
<td>13/11/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters in Consultation with Denbighshire County Council</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Clydach</td>
<td>17/11/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Morriston</td>
<td>17/11/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Llangollen</td>
<td>08/12/2015</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Rowen</td>
<td>25/01/2016</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters in Consultation with Conwy County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Llanfairfechan</td>
<td>26/01/2016</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters in Consultation with Conwy County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Penmaenmawr</td>
<td>26/01/2016</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters in Consultation with Conwy County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Cerrigydrudion</td>
<td>27/01/2016</td>
<td>Your Bus Matters in Consultation with Conwy County Council</td>
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“Your Bus Matters” events, Consultations and Customer Panels all provide an ideal meeting point between user and provider; the benefit to the service providers and Bus Users Cymru is being able to listen to the public about their concerns. The benefit to customers is that they have a direct path to the people or organisation that provides their services.

Above: Penmaenmawr 26/01/2016 and Cerrigydrudion 27/01/2016

Above: Rowen 25/01/2016 and Llanfairfechan 26/01/2016

Above: Swansea 01/07/2015 and Llansannan 27/01/2016

Above: Bargoed 01/10/2015 and Caerphilly 07/10/2015
Above: Gorseinon 02/11/2015 and Llanberis 18/06/2015

Above: Maesteg 29/06/2015

Above: Newbridge 29/09/2015 and Port Talbot 25/06/2015

Above: Rhymney 30/09/2015 and Bridgend 13/05/2015
Mystery Traveller Journeys - Results

At Bus Users Cymru we know that the bus passengers will judge a journey by their experiences. It is immaterial whether a bus service is commercially run or subsidised through the local authority. Bus Passengers are consumers and travelling on a bus needs to be of a certain standard to encourage another purchase or journey. Local Authorities have a duty to promote public transport use and provide comprehensive information. Overall, an increase in passengers using buses is more sustainable, good for the environment, socially inclusive and increases the viability of bus service provision.

Throughout the year Bus Users Cymru monitors the typical bus journey and rates the on street infrastructure on a wide range of random bus journeys across Wales. Our survey covers a variety of bus travel related topics including: was there a bus stop flag at the start of the trip through to on board information to the attitude of the driver and the cleanliness of the seats. We also monitor reliability against the timetable and quality of the bus ride.

In the year under review Bus Users Cymru assessed 356 journeys.

What does the Mystery Traveller do?

Bus Users Cymru staff and Team of Local Representatives will undertake a bus journey, similar to many thousands of other people. They will complete a 97 item questionnaire and score the passenger experience accordingly.

Questions cover the following areas:
- Bus arrival time and journey completion compared to the timetable
- Bus Stop and shelter condition including information available
- Bus exterior – front, side and rear showing destination and route numbers
- Bus stopping at the kerb and how easy it is to board
- Driver (appearance, attitude and helpfulness)
- Interior condition of the bus (seats, windows, floor)
- Capacity - How full is the bus? Are there wheelchairs and buggies?
- Sign - Are posters neat and tidy; does the bell, stopping sign or audio visual work?
- Journey experience – How comfortable was the ride?

Mystery Traveller surveys do not measure or comment on the following issues:
- Perceived value for money or cost of the bus fare
- Types of tickets available
- Service frequency offered in the timetable
- Colour or livery of the vehicle
- Promotional marketing or product enhancements provided e.g. Wi-Fi
- Accessibility to a bus route e.g. distance from home or shop to a bus stop
Results
The total number of Mystery Traveller Surveys undertaken for 2015 - 2016 was 356. 36 Operators were assessed. This included the big group bus operators: Arriva, First Cymru, Stagecoach, Cardiff Bus and Newport Transport; plus medium sized businesses and small family run operators.
A minimum of 10 journeys for each of the 22 Local Authority council areas in Wales were surveyed. Mystery Traveller journeys did take place on all days of the week; although Sunday is an increasingly difficult day to travel by bus, as service levels are not as great as they used to be. This is due to service and frequency reductions.

The Survey Questionnaire Results:

Section 1: At the Bus Stop/Shelter and Information

Is there a flag or display board at the bus stop?
These were present at 72.5% of stops; and this is similar to last year 74.9%. This of course still means that 27.5% of bus stops do not have a flag.

For roadside safety, was there a kerb at the bus stop?
There was a kerb at 96.7% of bus stops used and compares to 98.9% last year.

For accessibility for all, was there a raised kerb to ease boarding the bus at the bus stop?
Raised kerbs were provided at 71.3% of the bus stops used by the Mystery Travellers when they first boarded the bus. This compares to 68.9% last year.

Was the location name shown at the bus stop?
Comparing last year with this year the result moves up from 85% to 87%.

Are Route Numbers displayed at the bus stop?
These were displayed correctly at 73.0% of bus stops compared to 72.4% last year. No numbers were shown on the flag at 19.6% of bus stops – similar to last year at 20.2%.
Does the stop have the Traveline Phone Number on it (flag or timetable) and is it correct?
This year 78.7% of stops had the correct telephone number displayed and 1.5% of stops had an old, wrong number, with 19.8% not displaying it at all. Last year the scores were 84.3%, 3.2% and 12.5% respectively.

Does the stop have Traveline Cymru 'Bus Stop Txt Number' on display?
The Txt number was shown on 67% of bus stops. These are used to receive a ‘SMS’ by mobile telephone giving the time of the next bus at the bus stop. Last year the figure was 69%.

Is the information legible at the bus stop?
On a score of 1 to 6, where 1 = ‘poor’ and 6 = ‘excellent’, the average rating for bus stops is 4.79, last year this was 4.71. Bus Users Cymru rates this score as information is generally “easily readable” at bus stops and it is improving over time, but there is still room for improvement.

Was there a timetable at the bus stop for the bus route you were waiting to board?
These were provided at the boarding stop in 79.3% of journeys made, slightly down on last year at 82.9%.

As far as you can tell, is the whole timetable up-to-date?
Where surveyors were certain, these were up-to-date in 68.2% of timetables on display, last year this figure was 73.9%.

Was there an electronic display fitted to the shelter or at the stop?
These were provided at the boarding stop in 25.7% of journeys made, last year it was 26.7%. Of those fitted 74.1% of them were working; 3.5% of them were showing wrong information and 22.4% were blank or disconnected. Last year the scores were 58.4%, 4% and 37.6% respectively.

Rate the condition of the Electronic Display?
These were rated using a scale of 1-6, and on average the score this year was 5.39 compared to 5.9 last year. RTI (Real Time Information) displays are generally clearly visible.

Was there a vicinity map and/or a stick map in the timetable display?
Vicinity maps were seen at 18% of bus stops this year, compared to 17% last year. Diagrammatic Stick Maps were on display at 22% of bus stops this year, last year this was 39.5%.
Is there a shelter provided?
Shelters include bus stop waiting areas and these were provided at 87% of bus stops where Mystery Travellers started their journey. Last year this was 85.2%.

Rate the Cleanliness of Shelter if there is one?
Using a scale of 1-6, this was rated on average as 4.27 compared to 4.89 last year.

Rate the Condition of Shelter?
Using a scale of 1-6, this was rated on average as 4.6 this year compared to 5.18 last year.

Who owned the shelter – the Council or Commercial Advertiser?
This was scored on the basis of advertising being displayed and managed by an agency rather than actual ownership. This year 92.4% were council owned and 7.6% by commercial advertisers. Last year these figures were 84.8% and 15.2% respectively.

Are there Seats inside the shelter, if not any nearby?
These were provided in 89.3% of bus shelters and in the remaining 10.7% seating such as a bench nearby was found in 30.3% of locations. This compares to last year where seating was provided in 84.5% of bus shelters.

Was the Bus Shelter fitted with lighting?
This was provided in 40.33% of shelters this year compared to 49.2% last year.

Was graffiti present at the bus stop and or shelter?
Unfortunately graffiti was seen at 27.3% of bus stops graded in levels as: 19.5% slight, 5.6% moderate and 2.2% extreme. This is worse than last year when graffiti was seen at 21.9% of bus stops graded in levels as: 16.6% slight, 4.5% moderate and 0.8% extreme.

Was any graffiti present racial or objectionable at the bus stop and or shelter?
The level of objectionable graffiti, covering overt sexual or racial comments has risen to 2.16% compared to last year at 0.95% of bus stops. Bus Users Cymru looks forward to the day when this figure is zero.
Rate the level of litter and cleanliness of the pavement at the bus stop?
Using a scale of 1-6, the average score was at 4.66 this year, indicating only small amounts of litter found at bus stops. This compares well to the score of 5.38 for last year.

Section 2: The Bus Exterior and Front

Was the route number correctly displayed on the front of the bus?
This was correct on 98.3% of buses this year compared to 99.2% last year. This year on only six bus journeys was there no route number displayed.

Rate the route number on the bus front for clarity?
Using a scale of 1-6, route number clarity was rated on average as 5.90 compared to 5.89 last year. This indicates they are “clear and easy to read”.

Was the route destination correctly displayed on the front of the bus?
This was correct on 98.6% of buses this year compared to 98.2% last year. No destination was displayed on 0.3% this year compared to 0.6% last year.

Rate the route destination on the bus front for clarity?
Using a scale of 1-6, route number clarity was rated on average as 5.90 compared to 5.91 last year.

Did the front route display show ‘Via’ information?
This was displayed in the front destination box in 76.2% of buses. This compares well to the figure of 73.3% achieved last year.
Section 3: Boarding the Bus

Was there an obstruction at the bus stop?
A parked vehicle is the usual culprit although it could be a delivery vehicle or a skip, which results in the bus being unable to pull close into the kerb and is very important for mobility impaired and wheelchair bus users. This year in 96.7% of journeys made by Mystery Travellers there was no obstruction. This compares to 97.2% last year.

Was there a Waiting Restriction?
Yellow lines, restriction plate or the obvious presence of a bus station “Buses Only” etc. were at 66.1% of bus stops compared to 87.8% of bus stops last year. This figure includes what is recognised as buses only which would apply in a bus station.

Rate how close the bus door is to the kerb?
Using a scale of 1-6, this was rated on average as 5.4 and falls into the category as “close as possible”. This score was 5.86 last year.

Rate how close the bus door is to stop?
Using a scale of 1-6, this was rated on average as 5.38 and is in the category of the bus being “at the stop or as close as possible”. This score was 5.87 last year.

When waiting at the bus stop did the driver sit in his seat and ignore waiting passengers?
This occurred in 2.8% of journeys this year compared to 1.4% last year.
Did you observe the driver:
giving tickets/recording passes?
In 98.6% of journeys, the driver was seen giving tickets and or recording passes. Last year this was 99.6%.

smoking on the bus whilst passengers were on board?
No driver was seen this year smoking on the bus which compared to one incident last year.

listening to a radio/iPod (or wearing a Bluetooth ear-piece) or using a mobile phone whilst you were on the bus and whilst driving?
Unfortunately a few drivers still think it is acceptable to be seen with electronic gadgets. This year, the percentage is 0.6% or two drivers compared to 0.6% or three drivers last year.

eating/drinking on the bus whilst driving and passengers were on board?
This year one driver 0.3% was seen eating or drinking, compared to three drivers, 0.6% last year.

Appearance of the driver.
Using a scale of 1-6, this was rated on average as 5.06. This compares to last year at 5.24 and consequently drivers are generally ‘smart’ and look the part.

Politeness of the driver.
Using a scale of 1-6, this was rated on average as 4.85. This compares to the score last year at 4.89 and shows a steady trend of ‘good, polite and smiling’ bus drivers, noting room for improvement.

Helpfulness of driver and consideration for passengers.
Using a scale of 1-6, this was rated on average as 4.67. Last year, it was 5.08. This indicates deterioration. Are drivers under too much pressure to adhere to challenging timetables? Some drivers were noted proactively giving information to passengers.

Was there anyone standing alongside the driver when the vehicle was in motion?
Bus journeys were completed without someone standing alongside the driver whilst the bus was moving in 93.6% of cases. Last year this question scored 97.2%. Of those observed this year standing alongside the driver, eight were company staff identified by their attire. The remaining twelve were members of the public.
Were the doors open at any time whilst the bus was moving?
7% of journeys were made with the doors open at some point whilst the bus was moving representing 24 journeys. This compares to 2.6% last year.

Did the driver complete their last transaction before the bus moved off?
Yes, the driver completed all transactions during 98.8% of journeys this year. This compares to 98.2% last year.

Boarding passengers had sat down (if seats were available) before moving off?
Yes, in 90.7% of journeys all passengers were seated or had walked past an available empty seat before the bus moved off. Last year this was 80.53%. In 9.3% of journeys observed, the driver set off before passengers had sat down.

Section 5: Bus Interior

Mystery Travellers were asked on what deck of the bus they travelled to observe the bus interior, such as the floor, fixtures, posters, windows, seating and cleanliness.
This year 92.1% of the journeys took place on Single Deck or Articulated buses – last year this was 94.3%. Travel upstairs on Double Deck vehicles accounted for 3.1% whilst lower deck travel accounted for 4.8%. Last year 3.4% of journeys took place on the lower deck and 2.3% on the upper deck.

Where inside the bus were observations made from?
27.9% of journeys were made by travelling at the rear of the vehicle, whilst last year this was 32.6%. The centre of the bus was used on 54.3 this year compared to last year at 41.3%. The front of the bus was travelled in 17.8% (last year 26.1%).

Rate the standard of signs, adverts, notices etc. include Legal Notices?
Using a scale of 1-6, the condition of internal signs, advertisements and legal notices was rated on average as 5.38. This was 5.58 last year.

Rate the availability of seats on the lower deck.
A score rating was used with a percentage occupancy level based on the bus being observed at 20, 40, 60, 80 or 100 percent full resulting in the average bus being 43% full compared to 46% last year.

Rate the Cleanliness of the seating?
Using a scale of 1-6, the cleanliness of seating was rated on average as 5.14. This compares to last year at 5.61.

Rate the Condition of seating?
Using a scale of 1-6, the condition of seating was rated on average as 5.24. This compares to last year at 5.58.
Rate the Comfort of the bus seats?
Using a scale of 1-6, the comfort of seating was rated on average as 4.8. This was 5.5 last year. This score falls into the category of ‘being good and quite comfortable’.

Rate the cleanliness of the windows?
Using a scale of 1-6, the cleanliness of windows was rated on average as 4.76. This compares to last year at 5.41.

Was your view out of the window obscured by condensation?
6.8% of journeys were made on buses where the windows were obscured by condensation, last year this was 4%.

Was your view obscured by exterior advertising on the glass?
16% of journeys were made on buses where exterior on-glass advertising or livery design vinyl obscured the passengers view. This compares to 14.5% last year, an increasing trend.

Rate the internal cleanliness of the bus body or panels?
Using a scale of 1-6, the cleanliness of the bus interior was rated on average as 4.96. This compares to last year at 5.60. This score falls into the category of being “clean looking, no noticeable dirt”.

Rate the level of litter on the bus?
Using a scale of 1-6, the level of litter in the bus was rated on average as 4.99. This compares to last year at 5.45.

Rate the level of any graffiti on the bus or backs of seats?
Using a scale of 1-6, the level of graffiti in the bus was rated on average as 5.82. This compares to last year at 5.94. The score is good and it means there are ‘very rare occurrences’.

Indicate if the bus you travelled on had interior lighting on, making it bright and friendly, or was it adequate or very dim and unwelcoming?
Just over a half of bus journeys were in "Bright & Friendly" lighting conditions with a score of 54.6%, compared to 71.1% last year. This year saw 43% rated as 'Acceptable' compared to 25% last year. Journeys recorded as being in very dim conditions, being unwelcoming, were recorded as 2.28% compared to 3.9% last year.

Was the temperature in the bus: Far too cold, Cold, Comfortable, Hot, Far too hot?
Using these measures 89% were 'Comfortable', whilst 'Hot' scored 4.5%, ‘Cold’ scored 5.6% and 'Far too cold’ 0.9%.
Rate the interior condition of the bus?
Using a scale of 1-6, the condition of the bus interior was rated on average as 5.25. The score falls into the category of buses being in a very good condition often in 'perfect condition'. This compares to last year at 5.61.

Were there any loose or flapping fixtures?
This was 0.85% compared to 1% last year.

Rate the bus floor condition?
Using a scale of 1-6, the condition of the floor of the bus was rated on average as 5.43, compared to last year at 5.78. The score indicates that the average bus floor is very good with only minor occurrences of imperfections.

Rate any rattles and noise in the interior?
Using a scale of 1-6, the general interior condition of the bus was rated on average at 4.73. This compares to last year at 5.28.

Electronic Signs and Audio Visual equipment.

Was the Bell audible: 'Working OK', 'Poor Sound' or 'Not working'?
75.2% were 'Working OK'; whilst a 'Poor Sound' was recorded in 23.6% of buses, and only 1.8% was found to be 'Not working'.

Was the 'Bus Stopping' sign working?
These were working on 95.3% of bus journeys, last year they were working on 96.7% of bus journeys.

Did the bus have Audio 'Next Stop' Announcement Units fitted?
Audio 'Next Stop' units were fitted on 14.6% of buses used by Mystery Travellers; last year the figure was 9.9%.

If Audio 'Next Stop' Announcement Units are fitted, were they: 'Working OK', 'Working but giving just a general message', 'Working OK but distorted sound' or 'Not working'?
On those that were fitted, 55.8% were working correctly. There were also 41.9% fitted but not working whilst 2.3% of the units were giving out general messages, not 'next stop' information.

Did the bus have Visual 'Next Stop' Announcement Units fitted?
Visual 'Next Stop' units were fitted on 14.6% of buses used by Mystery Travellers.

If Visual 'Next Stop' Announcement Units are fitted, were they: 'Working OK', 'Working but giving just a general message', 'Working OK but flickering' or 'Not working'?
On those that were fitted, 50% were 'Working OK'. There were also 40% fitted but 'Not working', whilst 6% of the units were 'Working but giving out a general message', not 'next stop' information.

Anti-social and illegal:
Did you see any passengers smoking sitting in the bus?
This year, no passengers were observed smoking. This compares to one passenger observed smoking last year.

Section 6: Quality of Ride

Rate the overall bus ride quality?
Using a scale of 1-6, the quality of the ride on the bus was rated on average as 4.86. The score last year was 5.39. This can be described as 'good to smooth.'

Rate the overall bus ride quality: the 'vehicle suspension', 'the Driver' or the 'road surface'?
This year 36.2% of journeys did not score a 6 and of these, 42% was due to some mechanical aspect relating to the 'vehicle suspension', 17% due to the 'driver' and 41% was due to the 'road surface' or highway condition.
Was there a change of driver during your journey?
This occurred on just under 2.5% of surveyed journeys, last year this was 1.9%.

Rate the delay in your journey caused by the driver changeover?
Using a scale 1-6 the score this year was 5.1 whilst last year this was 4.0.

Section 7: Bus Exterior Information - side and rear

People often approach a bus from behind especially if there is a queue of people. Therefore it is essential to have reliable rear and side information.

Did the bus have 'Side Route Number' display equipment fitted?
This year it was fitted on 98.8% of buses, last year this was 93.5%.

Was this side information display: 'Correct', 'Wrong' or 'Not working'?
This year of those fitted with side number display equipment 96.8% of buses were showing 'Correct' information, 1.2% were 'Wrong' and 2.0% were blank or showing meaningless noughts. Last year, 97.8% were showing the 'Correct' route number.

Did the bus have 'Side Route Destination' display equipment fitted?
This year it was fitted on 96.8% of buses, last year this was 91.3%.

Was the side information display: 'Correct', 'Wrong' or 'Not working'?
This year of those buses fitted with side destination equipment 97.1% of buses were showing correct information, 0.8% were wrong and 2.1% were blank or showing the operator’s name. Last year 97.3% were showing the correct route destination.

Did the bus have a 'Rear Route Number' display equipment fitted?
This year it was fitted on 97.1% of buses, last year this was 94.1%.

Was the 'Rear Route Number' display: 'Correct', 'Wrong' or 'Not working'?
This year of those fitted with rear number display equipment 69.1% of buses were showing correct information, 0.2% were ‘Wrong’ and 30.7% were blank or showing meaningless noughts. Last year 90.1% were showing the ‘Correct’ route number.
Section 8: Accessibility, Buggies and Wheelchairs

Was the Bus Accessible?
This year 97.1% of buses which were boarded by Mystery Travellers were accessible. This was also 97.3% last year.

How many child buggies did you see on your bus?
This year 28.6% of buses had at least one child buggy on board. This compares to 30% last year. However, some buses had more than one buggy on board (a two-child buggy is counted as one buggy). This survey year, on buses where buggies were seen the average was 1.28 buggies per bus and this compares to 1.29 last year.

How many wheelchair users did you see on your bus?
This year, on 4.9% of journeys there were wheelchair users on the bus, made up of 17 wheelchair users. Last year on 4.2% of bus journeys there was a wheelchair user on the bus.

How many sensory impaired users did you see on your bus?
On 12 journeys representing 3.7% of journeys surveyed could Mystery Travellers identify sensory impaired passengers. Last year the figure was 0.3%.

A few observations...
In addition to the standard Mystery Traveller journeys undertaken by our team of representatives, Bus Users Cymru staff have monitored a further 2553 journeys for a number of key indicators per Traffic Commissioner Guidelines and Care Quality Control standards which do not form part of the main Mystery Traveller report.

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<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Percentage of journeys</th>
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<tr>
<td>Was the departure within the TC* window of tolerance?</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the arrival at destination within TC window of tolerance?</td>
<td>88%</td>
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<td>Was an &quot;orange wallet&quot; ** presented by a passenger?</td>
<td>6 presented</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did the driver demonstrate understanding of any &quot;orange wallet&quot; presented?</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did the driver demonstrate &quot;disability awareness&quot;?</td>
<td>75% Of 1742</td>
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<tr>
<td>Was the bus fitted with CCTV?</td>
<td>72% Of 1848</td>
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<td>Was the bus WiFi enabled?</td>
<td>22% Of 571</td>
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*TC - Traffic Commissioner’s window of tolerance states that operators should operate their services no more than 1 minute early or 5 minutes late for at least 95% of journeys made.

**The Orange Wallet Scheme - operates in Wales. It is one of a range of collaborative regional projects funded by the Welsh Government as part of the All Wales ASD strategy. It is intended to help people, especially those on the Autistic Spectrum to cope more easily with public transport. The wallet contains space for the user to insert written and/or visual prompts to show staff. Further information and templates to insert in the wallet can be found on: www.asdinfowales.co.uk and local authority web sites.

We continue to see operators invest in their fleet and this is reflected here in some of our Mystery Traveller scores, for the internal condition of buses and seating all areas scored reasonably well.

One area that has continued to suffer is the provision of information at bus stops with only 68.2% up to date this year compared to 73.9% and 93.5% in the previous two years. Whilst we recognise that this is a reflection of the constraints on local authority resources, it does seem that with the threat of further cuts to funding, some authorities have stopped updating roadside timetables. At our “Your Bus Matters” events many users tell us that they obtain their travel information from their bus stop and the lack of, or incorrect information will deter use of services.

On a related matter the level of shelter condition and cleanliness has decreased and unfortunately we have seen a rise in the level of graffiti with 27.3% of shelters observed having some graffiti and an increase of racial/homophobic graffiti to 2.16%

Another area of concern is the deterioration in ride quality. Last year this was rated at 5.29 and this year it has dropped to 4.86. We have also seen an increase in doors being observed open whilst the bus is in motion rise from 2.6% last year to 7% this year and 9.3% of drivers have set off from the stop before passengers have reached a seat. Is this a coincidence or does it reflect increasing congestion in our towns and cities, or drivers rushing to meet challenging timetables. This is an area we will be looking at over the next 12 months.

We talked last year about the importance of audio/visual display screens and these were observed on 14.6% of journeys compared to 9.9% of journeys undertaken last year. However, where screens were fitted, in only 55% for Audio announcements and 50% for visual screen announcements were they observed working correctly. Operators need to perform better in this area and constantly monitor these systems. (BJD)
Bus Compliance Officer Role

The Welsh Government funds Bus Users Cymru to employ and direct three Bus Compliance Officers (BCOs) who cover the whole of Wales.

The BCOs’ activities support the work of Bus Users Cymru in improving bus travel for passengers. Their work has a direct bearing on the punctuality and reliability of bus services in Wales and they meet bus operators in order to understand punctuality and reliability concerns. They support complaints activity and they monitor areas where clusters of complaints indicate that a problem may exist.

The main task of the BCO is monitoring and education but they will report adverse findings to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner.

As part of their day to day monitoring duties the BCOs are required to monitor annually at least 5% of bus services operating in Wales.

The BCOs also monitor bus services for failures to operate as part of the Bus Services Support Grant (BSSG) and they report to nominated local authorities in each Region.

In the year under review, at least 32 operators were monitored for punctuality and reliability across Wales. Of these 27 areas were monitored for BSSG compliance.

Their work has resulted in operator visits and changes to timetables. Reports to the Traffic Commissioner have resulted in 20 letters of congratulation sent to the operators by Bus Users Cymru, on behalf of the Office of the Traffic Commissioner. Warning letters were also sent to the Operators where monitoring has found that their services were running below the standard of 95% punctuality and compliance.

They have undertaken a number of other tasks involving complaints, often staving off issues before they manifest themselves as significant problems. They have also taken an active part in negotiating with operators in order to get bus to bus connections working in the interests of passengers.

The BCOs largely work undercover but do have additional, separate responsibilities linked to their work e.g. monitoring the TrawsCymru network and reporting to the network manager, attending Customer Panels, Focus groups and ATCO Cymru meetings.

During the year under review the Traffic Commissioner for Wales and the West Midlands has held three Public Inquiries and one “In Chambers” in Wales.
Bus Users UK General Meeting – Cardiff

Bus Users UK Ltd held its 2015 General Meeting on 11th July in the iconic Pierhead Building, Cardiff, which is owned by the National Assembly for Wales. Our use of the building was sponsored by Jane Hutt AM, Business and Finance Manager National Assembly for Wales.

Jane Hutt AM gave the keynote speech. She welcomed everyone to Cardiff and said how pleased she was to have been invited to host the Bus Users UK General Meeting and to be given the chance to say how proud Welsh Government is of Bus Users Cymru.

The work of BUC was incredibly important and Jane thanked Margaret and her team including the BCOs for the work carried out in her constituency, holding errant operators to account. Welsh Government had funded Bus Users Cymru for a number of years and she was sure the Traffic Commissioner for Wales and the West Midlands Nick Jones also had praised the work which assisted the commissioners in their work.

Jo Foxall, Marketing Manager Traveline Cymru spoke about Devolution, Apps for Phones & Tablets, Fares, Changing Passenger Demand, Social Media and Digital Exclusion and cost of access. Andrea Gordon, Engagement Manager, Guide Dogs Association spoke about the difficulties encountered by Blind and Partially Sighted people and Alex Clarke, Passenger Transport Information Officer, Caerphilly County Borough Council gave a very comprehensive presentation on Bus Services and the role of a Local Authority. Jo and Alex's presentations are available on request from BUC Wales office.

At the conclusion of the meeting a modern vehicle provided by New Adventure Travel took delegates around Cardiff and to the Central railway Station while a Heritage vehicle provided by Cardiff Transport Preservation Group (picture below by Tudor Thomas) took delegates to their depot in Barry.
Top: Jane Hu/g425, AM and Nick Jones, Traffic Commissioner
Centre: Jo Foxall, Traveline Cymru and Andrea Gordon, Guide Dogs Association
Bottom: Alex Clarke, Caerphilly County Borough Council
Enterprise & Business Committee

Inquiry into Bus & Community Transport Services in Wales - Senedd, 11th November 2015

The National Assembly for Wales carried out an inquiry into Bus and Community Transport Services in Wales in response to the decline of the provision of bus services and the number of passengers using them. The decline of passenger numbers in Wales is greater than any other part of Britain.

Bus Users Cymru was invited to the Committee, together with other stakeholders, to provide their views on a number of points:

- The current condition of the bus and community transport sector in Wales, including the reasons for the recent decline in both registered bus services and bus passenger numbers.
- The social, environmental and economic impact of the recent decline in bus services and passenger numbers.
- The potential benefits or otherwise of devolution of bus registration powers, proposed in the UK Government’s Command Paper - "Powers for a purpose: Towards a Lasting Devolution Settlement" in February 2015, and whether further powers to regulate the bus industry are desirable.
- The steps which should be taken to ensure bus and community transport services meet the needs of Wales.

Attending the committee on behalf of Bus Users Cymru were Margaret Everson MBE, Director for Wales, Barclay Davies CMILT, Deputy Director for Wales and Bob Saxby FCILT, North West Wales Representative.

The written submission can be found at http://senedd.assembly.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=228&MId=3313&Ver=4

and the evidence session can be found at http://senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s46207/11%20November%202015.pdf

Above left to right: Barclay Davies CMILT, Margaret Everson MBE, Bob Saxby FCILT
Catch the Bus Week 2015

Bus Users Cymru staff attended many events throughout the Principality in support of Catch the Bus Week. Catch the Bus Week was co-ordinated by Greener Journeys and took place from 29 June – 5 July. Greener Journeys is a campaign dedicated to encouraging people to make more sustainable travel choices. It aims to reduce CO₂ emissions from transport by encouraging people to switch some of their car journeys to bus or coach instead. Claire Haigh, CEO Greener Journeys commented:

“During Catch the Bus Week 2015, the activity across Wales was inventive and engaging, and Bus Users Cymru was truly engaged with the fantastic work taking place. We were bowled over by the creativity and the enthusiasm of support in Wales, and are so grateful for Bus Users Cymru’s ongoing support for the week. Our campaign wouldn’t work without the help of groups like Bus Users, and we are lucky to have them on board.”

Monday 29th June 2015

First Cymru – Swap with Me Event Maesteg attended by Barclay Davies

Above Left: Huw Irranca-Davies AM, Natacha Tagholm First Cymru, Andrea Gordon, Guide Dogs Cymru, Barclay Davies
Above Right: Andrea Gordon Engagement Manager, Guide Dogs Cymru & Huw Irranca-Davies AM
Below: Cardiff City Hall - Launch of Catch the Bus Week with the Confederation of Passenger Transport attended by Margaret Everson, MBE
Tuesday 30th June 2015

Newport Queensway – “Your Bus Matters” event attended by Newport Transport Ltd., Margaret Everson MBE and Angela Guarno, Bus Users Cymru

Wednesday 1st July 2015

Swansea “Your Bus Matters” Event for Catch the Bus Week attended by N.A.T., First Cymru Buses Ltd., Traveline Cymru, Barclay Davies and City and County of Swansea
Thursday 2nd July 2015
First Cymru Buses Ltd - "Diolch Drive" Swansea and Neath

Friday 3rd July 2015
Caldicot and Chepstow “Your Bus Matters” Events for Catch the Bus Week attended by Barclay Davies, Newport Transport Ltd and Monmouthshire County Council

Below: T5 official ministerial Launch at Gwbert, Cardigan attended by Margaret Everson MBE, Bus Users Cymru

***Catch the Bus Week 2016 runs from 4th July - 10th July 2016***
mytravelpass

Jo Foxall, Marketing Manager, Traveline Cymru

mytravelpass is the Welsh Government’s discounted travel scheme, providing 16 to 18 year olds living in Wales with 1/3 off the price of an equivalent adult bus fare. The scheme was launched by First Minister, Carwyn Jones and Minister for Transport, Edwina Hart and was available from 1st September 2016. To March 2016, 5000 applications have been made.

Young people aged 16 to 18 are able to apply online via the mytravelpass website gov.wales/mytravelpass / or in Welsh llyw.cymru/fyngherdynteithio, over the telephone on local rate number 0300 200 22 33 or by post.

To be eligible to apply for a mytravelpass, you simply need to be aged 16 to 18 years old and living in Wales, including students who are resident at universities and colleges in Wales. All you need is your name, date of birth, location and a recent, passport quality photograph.

The scheme was developed to ensure that all 16 to 18 year olds in Wales are able to travel to work, college, school and for leisure for a child fare. Some operators, authorities and colleges in Wales already provide a discounted scheme to under eighteens and this scheme ensures that all 16 to 18 year olds receive the same discount.

The Welsh Government has allocated £5million to the introduction of the scheme in 2015-16, and a further £9.75million in 2016-17. It is estimated that 110,000 young people living in Wales are eligible for a mytravelpass and the Welsh Government are working with bus operators, local authorities, colleges, schools and other partners to promote the scheme. In September, information will be taken along to all college and university fresher’s fairs across Wales.

The mytravelpass scheme is managed by PTI Cymru, the organisation that delivers Traveline Cymru, the public transport information service in Wales. PTI Cymru are perfectly placed to be able to process applications, print and fulfil cards as well as provide pass holders with timetable and journey planning information to ensure that customers can make their journeys. Applications are processed at PTI Cymru’s contact centre, Contact Centre Cymru in Penrhyndeudraeth, Gwynedd.

Below: Carwyn Jones AM, First Minister at mytravelpass Launch 22/07/2015
Looking ahead

The year ahead promises to be interesting.

The transport industry has a new Minister, Ken Skates AC/AM. Will the new Minister be looking at re-regulation or franchising in the bus industry and how this will impact on bus passengers.

The Welsh Language Commissioner is undertaking a standards investigation into the bus and rail industry in Wales. Letters and questionnaires were sent to bus companies across Wales in order for the Welsh Language Commissioner to gather information about the services currently provided by the companies, and the extent to which any of these are currently provided in Welsh. We wait to see what impact this will have on services and passengers.

The Public Transport Users Advisory Panel and the Bus Policy Advisory Group will be working towards improved services for the passenger and potential passenger. The BPAG has produced the Voluntary Quality Standards Scheme and we wait to see how this impacts on services. The Welsh Government announcement can be found at http://gov.wales/topics/transport/public/bus-policy/voluntary-welsh-bus-quality-standard/?lang=en and an extract follows:

“The Voluntary Welsh Bus Quality Standard is designed to help bus operators and local authorities work together to improve the quality of local bus services across Wales.

“Purpose of the standard
The Voluntary Welsh Bus Quality Standard Scheme was developed to:
• ensure that the quality of local bus services is consistent and available throughout Wales
• encourage local bus operators to improve the quality of the services they provide to passengers.

“What passengers can expect
We (Welsh Ministers) expect bus companies to achieve the following requirements by March 2017:
• participate in our Young Persons’ Discounted Bus Fare Scheme by offering a third off the price of the ticket for 16, 17 and 18 year olds;
• operate vehicles that are compliant with the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000 and any associated legislation
• ensure vehicles have working destination blinds that are clearly visible telling passengers about the destination and key stopping points along the route
• clean buses inside and out ready for the first service each day
• provide drivers and other on-board employees with a uniform
• have a published passenger complaints policy.
Larger bus companies will be expected to operate audio-visual next stop bus announcements on newer buses.”

The TrawsCymru Strategic Management Board has been reconvened to advise on the strategic development of the TrawsCymru network and to oversee the operation of individual services.
**Bus Users Cymru** is spending a day in the Oriel gallery of the Senedd in October to enable the Assembly Members, particularly the new ones, to get to know us and to understand how we can help with enquiries and complaints that come into their offices.

Further steps will be taken towards the development of the new **Cardiff Central Interchange**

![Artist’s impression of how the new Interchange building might look (picture courtesy of Rightacres Ltd)](image)

Bus Users Cymru contributes to the **Cardiff Council Access Focus Group** which convenes regular workshops on the proposed interchange in Cardiff Central Square. They look at the requirements of people with protected characteristics and, as always, if we can get it right for disabled people we get it right for everyone. The workshops throw up issues such as security, the type of steps used, the need for level surfaces, readily identifiable entrances and exits, the inclusion of Shopmobility, uniformed staff on duty, audio and visual announcements, staffed public conveniences, protection from the elements.

Below is a typical workshop in Cardiff County Hall.

![Below is a typical workshop in Cardiff County Hall.](image)

In the year April 2016 to March 2017 we shall continue to assist bus users with raising complaints about local bus services; facilitate at least 20 **Your Bus Matters** (YBM) events; continue to monitor complaints under the European Passenger Rights Regulation; carry out our Annual Survey; and represent passengers’ views at meetings such as those convened by ATCO Wales; PTUAP; Bus Policy Advisory Group; CAB; CPT Cymru; CTA Cymru; Guide Dogs Association and Older People’s Commissioner for Wales.
Obituary John Richards

We were sad to announce the death of John Richards, our former local representative for North Wales Central. John died in hospital on August 30th 2015 aged 77.

John was a busman in the late 1950’s and 1960’s working for what was then called Midland Red. John later pursued other lines of employment but maintained a lifelong interest in the bus industry and had a good general knowledge of bus operations so that when he retired he became involved with Bus Users Cymru representing passengers’ interests in North Wales. In 2002 when the concessionary scheme was launched in Wales, John accepted a challenge from his local AM at the time, Alun Pugh, to travel from Colwyn Bay to Cardiff Bay by local bus services earning a free lunch in the Assembly in the process. In 2012 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the scheme, John accompanied by me reprised the journey from Colwyn Bay to Cardiff Bay and back again by local bus. John was interviewed by the media and said “I hope to raise people’s awareness of the scheme and encourage pass holders to make the most of their free pass”. When asked what the concessionary pass meant to him he responded “Freedom”. A comment we hear again at our YBM events across the UK.

Sadly John’s health was deteriorating and he decided in 2013 to hang up his bus pass, but not before his efforts on behalf of bus users had been recognised with an invitation to a Garden Party at the Palace. Here, accompanied by his daughter, John had a great day and met various members of the Royal family. John was quite a character, or in modern day terminology a legend. He could be stubborn, bordering on obdurate but you couldn’t help but warm to him, after all he even got our former Chairman to carry his suitcase to the station in Liverpool after our AGM in 2012. John had a wicked sense of humour and often joked that he would go into a meeting, make a deliberately controversial comment and having caused a stir, quietly leave. Above all though, John had an overwhelming desire to help people and to ensure that justice was done and he was always fair and equitable in his dealings with others, earning much respect along the way. I can picture him now at those pearly gates waiting for the bus. Thanks John for the memories, we’ll miss you. (BJD)