



Bus Users Cymru
Gweithio dros deithwyr
Working for passengers

Bus Users Cymru Annual Report 2016/2017

Highlights

- 284 complaints
- 429 different issues raised
- 26% of complainants were concerned about staff attitude
- 45% of people at events said they were concerned about level of service
- 15 YBM events
- 6 community events
- 10 cases referred to the Bus Appeals Body
- 30 operators monitored by the Bus Compliance Officers
- 26 areas across Wales monitored for BSSG
- 443 services monitored
- 360 Mystery Travelling journeys carried out
- 655 stakeholders met during the year
- 7 customer panels chaired

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 Welsh Government funded 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 highlights our key activities:

- Gathering and reflecting the views of bus passengers in Wales – we organised **15** “*Your Bus Matters*” events this year and attended **6** Community Information events, throughout Wales in order to meet and hear users’ concerns or problems. We saw over **500** people during these meetings. In addition, Bus Users Cymru chaired **7** Customer Panel Events; averaging at least **10** attendees per panel event.
- We have dealt with **442** 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 **430** 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 the case to the BAB; this year we referred **10** cases.
- We provide advice, as required, to Welsh Government Ministers and officials on strategic and technical matters for example, Public Transport Users Advisory Panel (PTUAP) and the Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing.
- 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, the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales, Cardiff Council Access Focus Group (Cardiff Central Square), Community Transport Association, Guide Dogs Association, Age Cymru, Transport Focus and the Confederation of Public Transport (CPT).

Complaints handled this year by Bus Users Cymru totalled **871**. Of those received at the Bus Users Office we noted 26% of complainants were concerned about staff attitude, while 45% of people who approached us at events say they are concerned about level of service.

As part of our research into the state of the bus industry, our annual ongoing Mystery Travelling Survey covered **360** 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 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 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 by the BCO’s.

Our Bus Compliance Officers have monitored 30 bus operators this year with **14 "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, **26 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. This MOU eliminates duplication of work.

Bus Users Cymru expects 2017/2018 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 healthcare, 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 consultations connected with any public transport changes or amendments, and monitoring the industry.

Margaret Everson MBE
Director for Bus Users Cymru/Wales