



# Annual Report 2017-18

# Introduction

This short report summarises key aspects of the performance of the TrawsCymru® longer distance bus network across Wales in 2017-18 which is funded by the Welsh Government, and delivered in partnership with local authorities and bus operators. In 2017-18 the Welsh Government contributed £2.057m in revenue support to provide services topped up with a further £1m to trial weekend free travel across the network.

## Network of Services provided in 2017-18.

During 2017-18 we operated a network of eight TrawsCymru services, which are shown below.



- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>T1</b> Aberystwyth - Caerfyrddin<br>Aberystwyth - Carmarthen | <b>T2</b> Aberystwyth - Bangor                        | <b>T5</b> Aberystwyth - Hwlfordd<br>Aberystwyth - Haverfordwest                  |
| <b>T1C</b> Aberystwyth - Caerdydd<br>Aberystwyth - Cardiff      | <b>T3</b> Abermo - Wrecsam<br>Barmouth - Wrexham      | <b>T6</b> Abertawe - Aberhonddu<br>Swansea - Brecon                              |
| <b>T1S</b> Caerfyrddin - Abertawe<br>Carmarthen - Swansea       | <b>T4</b> Caerdydd - Y Drenewydd<br>Cardiff - Newtown | <b>T9</b> Maes Awyr Cymru Caerdydd - Caerdydd<br>Cardiff Wales Airport - Cardiff |

## Patronage

In 2017-18 the TrawsCymru® network carried

**1.751 million passengers**

in total, which represented a growth of

**133,438 passengers,**

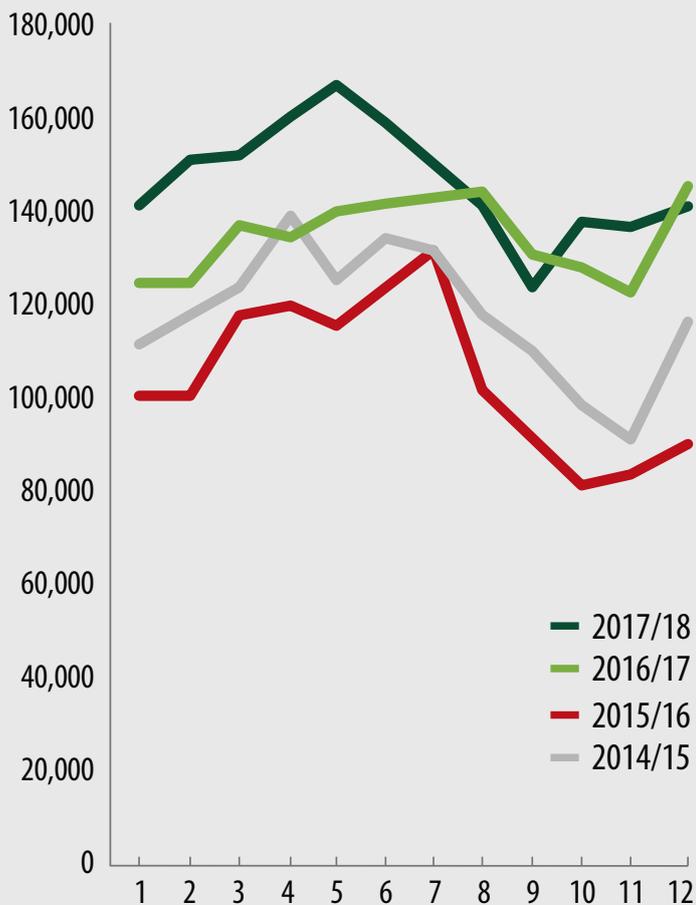
or +8.25% compared to the previous year 2016-17.



This represents a **24% increase** compared to the numbers of passengers using TrawsCymru® services during financial year 2014-15.

Fig.2 below shows monthly patronage trends across the network.

### TrawsCymru Network Monthly Patronage Trends



Subsidy per passenger journey ranged from

**0.38p** for the T4 service to **£3.19**

for the T9 Cardiff Airport Express.

## Network Developments

The network of services operated as part of the TrawsCymru® network was relatively stable during 2017-18. The only major change was the introduction of additional journeys on the T2 service between **Bangor and Aberystwyth** operating weekdays and Saturday daytimes which were introduced to cater for an **increase of 23%** in the number of people using the service compared to 2016-17.

In 2017-18 we also organised with Bus Users Cymru a series of passenger consultation events across the TrawsCymru® network enabling passengers to speak directly with key Welsh Government officials, local authority officers and operators about aspects of the TrawsCymru® services. For instance events were organised in **Port Talbot and Aberystwyth** following calls to the Welsh Government to reinstate a daily direct coach service linking **Aberystwyth to Cardiff**.

In 2017-18 in partnership with Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion County Council's we also introduced the TrawsCymru® Connect shuttle bus service 460 linking **Cardigan — Newcastle Emlyn — Carmarthen** as well as the trial T1C service linking **Aberystwyth — Carmarthen — Cardiff**. In addition, Bwcabus continues to provide an important integrated part of the network feeding in passengers from smaller rural settlements in the Teifi valley, Lampeter and Letterston areas of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and north Pembrokeshire to the T1 and T5 services.

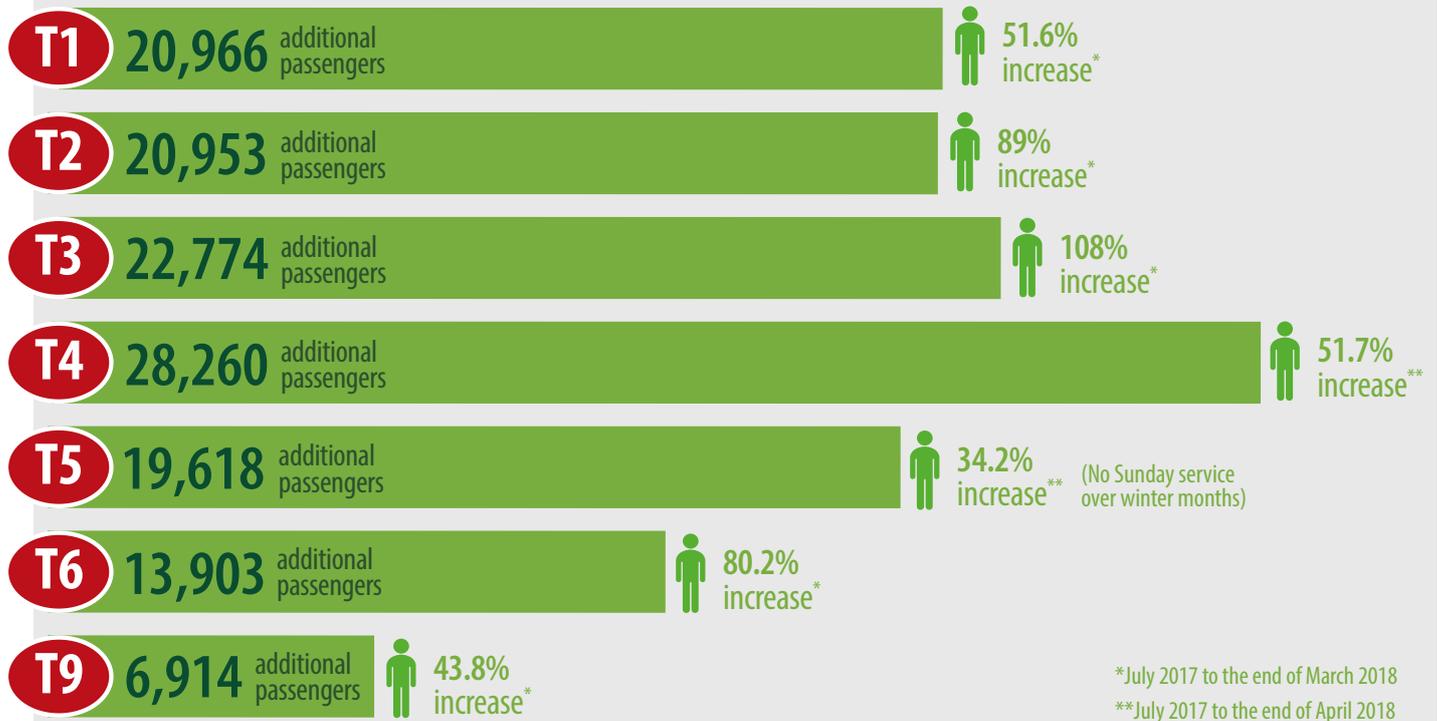
# Weekend Free Travel

In July 2017, we introduced the 'ground breaking' weekend free fare trial across the TrawsCymru® network in partnership with local authorities and the bus operators. Up to £1m in additional revenue funding was set aside for the initiative in financial year 2017/18. The initial trial has been very successful in generating additional passengers onto the network on weekends. Between July 2017 and March 2018, an additional 133,391 passengers travelled on TrawsCymru® services which represented an increase of 65.49% on weekends, compared to the equivalent period in 2016-17.

## This funding was to:

- Reimburse operators for fares forgone from existing passengers;
- Provide duplicate buses to cater for increased passenger numbers;
- Provide a contingency to reimburse other operators for any verifiable claims as a result of passengers being abstracted from their commercial services;
- Provide supervisors at key hubs;
- Market and publicise the trial; and
- Evaluate the impact of the trial.

A more detailed breakdown for individual TrawsCymru routes is as follows:



\* July 2017 to the end of March 2018  
 \*\* July 2017 to the end of April 2018

Professor Stuart Cole of the University of south Wales was asked to review the first six months of the scheme in November 2017, and recommended that the initiative should be extended for a further twelve months (April 2018 – March 2019) to enable a fuller analysis to be undertaken of the economic benefits of the trial for destinations along the routes.

# What Passengers Think of TrawsCymru® Services

In August 2017, the first extensive passenger satisfaction survey was carried out across the TrawsCymru® network, which revealed encouragingly high levels of passenger satisfaction with services.

Passengers were also asked to rank the individual TrawsCymru® services between (0 = Very Poor, 10= Excellent).

The results for the individual TrawsCymru® services are shown here:

<b>T1</b>	Aberystwyth to Carmarthen	8.9
<b>T2</b>	Aberystwyth to Bangor	9.2
<b>T3</b>	Wrexham to Barmouth	9.2
<b>T4</b>	Newtown to Cardiff	8.6
<b>T5</b>	Aberystwyth to Haverfordwest	9.2
<b>T6</b>	Brecon to Swansea	8.8
<b>T9</b>	Cardiff Airport Express	8.5

## Better Facilities at Bus Stops

Working with Powys County Council we have also made good progress at improving facilities for passengers at key bus stops across the TrawsCymru network on the section of the T4 route between Newtown and Merthyr Tydfil, and the T6 route between Ystradgynlais and Brecon.

## Enhanced Customer Engagement

During financial year 2017-18 the TrawsCymru® website was re-launched with delivery partner PTI Cymru [www.trawscymru.info](http://www.trawscymru.info) and new social media platforms were opened on Facebook and Twitter to enable us to engage more fully on a real time basis with customers.



When asked to rank their on board travelling experience (0 = Very Poor, 10= Excellent), passengers indicated their satisfaction with different elements of the service as follows:

	Friendliness and helpfulness of staff	8.8
	Ease of getting on and off the bus	8.8
	Cleanliness inside of the bus	8.5
	Reliability of the service	8.5
	Seating comfort	8.4
	Quality of the ride	8.4
	Journey time	8.3
	Frequency of the service	8.2
	Information provided during service disruptions	7.7
	Air conditioning	7.6



## Testimonials from passengers



"I use the **T3 bus** as my daily commute (from Cynwyd at 7:22 in to Wrexham) and have only good things to say — the new buses are very comfortable, and reliable; the punctuality is generally perfect, and I've only been late due to roadworks/ traffic — nothing that you can control."

"All in, the **T3** is a great service, fairly priced, the people running it are friendly & obliging when another passenger has a request or needs help, the buses are clean & comfortable; I actually look forwards to my morning journey!"

"I would like to pass on my gratitude to you about the service provided by the **T9 Cardiff Airport Express** driver tonight. I boarded the bus at 21:10, it arrived on time, the driver was very welcoming and informative. This was an excellent experience provided by Traws Cymru and I will be using the service again."

"I used **T3 service** yesterday to/from Barmouth to take advantage of the marvellous free weekend offer. The whole experience was a delight and I saw Wales at its best passing the lovely Bala Lake and the pretty villages. The service was prompt, very fast and the drivers skilful and professional negotiating some of the narrowest parts of the route.

"I just want to let you know that my partner and I are really impressed with the Traws Cymru bus service. We are regular users of the **T2 and T3 routes** now that they link up in Dolgellau and we think it's fantastic. Earlier this week we visited Bala and Aberystwyth and noticed quite a few European holiday makers using the services. Let's hope the service endures and that more people make use of it."

I did travel from Birmingham to use the service and look forward to my next trip with you which will be very soon. These are bus services at its best and I like to commend your company for providing pleasure to its passengers. Thank you again for a wonderful day."