

# Working together to improve bus services across Wales

## Bus Services (Wales) Bill



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



# Hello

There are lots of different bus companies across Wales. Together we make around **100 million bus journeys** each year.

We want people to be able to rely on and use bus services.

Our ambition is to have more people using buses instead of cars. We're introducing new legislation to improve the planning and delivery of bus services.



We want to make all bus services:

1. **Easy to use** – with better real-time information.
2. **Accessible** – so everyone feels confident to use the bus.
3. **Responsive** – taking passengers where they want to go, when they want to go there.
4. **Seamless** – connecting to rail, walking, cycling and road networks.
5. **Faster** – with fewer delays and traffic jams.
6. **Provide better value for money** – for passengers, bus companies and government.
7. **Greener** – with low-emission buses.



# Improving bus services

## A good bus service meets local needs.

One size doesn't fit all. Different areas of Wales have different needs.



Large urban areas may have lots of bus routes, but congestion could make these services unreliable.



Areas with urban and rural areas may need bus routes that connect better.



## A good bus service gives passengers an excellent experience.

- Is reliable.
- Gets there quickly.
- Connects to other public transport and active travel.
- Is modern, safe and comfortable.
- Has easy ways to buy tickets.
- Has up-to-date information.
- Is accessible to all users.

## A good bus service supports the wider needs of the community.

- Takes people where they want to go, when they want to go.
- Connects to other transport links and promotes walking and cycling.
- Responds to different needs at different times of the day.
- Helps businesses grow.
- Is connected to new housing developments and other community facilities.
- Supports everyone in the community.
- Is environmentally friendly.
- Has buses that are low emission vehicles.



## A good bus service is cost effective and makes it easier to leave your car at home.

- Is sustainable.
- Is affordable.
- Is resilient and adaptable to change.
- Reduces people's need to use their own cars.



# Actions

To provide good bus services that meet local needs we need to do lots of different things. We are already working to improve services by:

- having a new, greener bus fleet,
- improving information about how soon buses will arrive, helping passengers get the best price for their journey.

Another way we want to help improve bus services is by giving local authorities better tools to plan and deliver bus services in their area. We will do this through a new law – **the Bus Services (Wales) Bill**.

This new law will give local authorities better tools to plan and deliver bus services in their area. Local authorities will be able to choose to:



## Set up **Welsh Partnership Schemes**

to work with bus companies so communities have better bus services.



Set up  
**Welsh Franchising Schemes**  
where a local authority can give bus companies the right to run some or all of the bus services in an area.



Set up and run  
**their own  
bus service.**

We want to make sure any changes we make improve bus services for everyone.



The new law will also introduce rules for **sharing information**.

This means local authorities can ask bus companies for information about routes so they can plan bus services better. It also means passengers have better information so they can plan their journeys more easily.



The rest of this document describes how the new law might be used and the changes passengers could expect to see.



## Welsh Partnership Schemes (WPS)

The new law will mean that local authorities can work with bus companies to set up Welsh Partnership Schemes. They can agree:

- routes, bus times and frequency of services,
- what facilities should be available on buses, like Wi-Fi or USB ports,
- ticket prices and the different types of offers available,
- how to share information with passengers,
- investment in facilities such as bus lanes,
- traffic management measures such as enforcement of bus lanes to ensure buses run smoothly and are on time.

### Frank manages a bus company

"We're investing in low emission buses and this is a great opportunity to do something good together."



### Dave works for the local authority

"Working in partnership with the bus companies has been a really great way of improving bus services in our area. We've been able to work together to make changes and make commitments that will deliver the local bus services that people need."



## Example of using a WPS

The local authority covers a large urban area. Traffic is growing and there's more congestion on the roads. This is harming air quality and the environment.

The local authority decides to set up a WPS with a number of bus companies in their area. As part of setting up a WPS the local authority has spoken to communities, bus companies and other local authorities about the proposals to find out what they think.

As part of the WPS the local authority agrees to put in new bus lanes. The bus companies agree to invest in new low emission buses. The aim is to give people reliable bus services they can trust while protecting the environment.



## Welsh franchising schemes

The new law will allow local authorities to set up a franchise scheme. The **franchise means bus companies get the exclusive right to run bus services on set routes**. Other bus companies won't be able to run services on those routes.

There will be new guidance to help local authorities set up and introduce a franchise. Local authorities can also work together and have joint franchising schemes. Franchising schemes could provide better, more joined-up services.



### Pam works for the local planning department

"Sometimes it's hard to link our plans and our priorities with what local people need – but this is a real opportunity to do it. We have a lot of rural areas. A franchise will give people the service they want while making sure the routes are sustainable for the bus company."

## Example of using a franchise scheme

The local authority has a transport plan. Their main priority is to get more people using public transport.

From listening to passengers, they know they need to improve the connection between different bus services running in their area and have better ticket options that can be used across the different services.

A franchising scheme may be the way to do both. However, before the local authority can make a franchising scheme they must:

- prepare a business case and consider whether that's the right model for their area,
- get an independent auditor to check their proposals,
- talk to communities and bus companies to find out what they think.

If the local authority go ahead with the franchise scheme, all bus companies can apply to run the services under the franchise. Different bus companies could run different parts of the franchise area.



## Running their own bus services

The new law means local authorities can run their own local bus services. They can do it to fill gaps in existing services or to run services like any other bus company.

They can work together with other local authorities to run a bus service across their counties if that's needed.



## Example of running a bus service

The local authority asked bus companies to run subsidised services that communities need, but none of them wanted to cover the routes. So, they're thinking about running their own bus service.

They are working out the costs of:

- setting up a bus depot,
- leasing or buying the buses they'll need,
- ticketing options,
- staff.

They are also looking at:

- which routes would work best,
- registering as a bus operator,
- whether to run the services 'in-house' or set up a separate company to run the services.

Welsh Government guidance is helping them consider all the issues.

### Wyn works at the local authority

"There's lots to consider. Our area has some difficult challenges and we want a bus service that really delivers for our communities. It's important we think about how to set this up carefully... it's not just the cost.

We're using Welsh Government guidance to help us, but we haven't made a final decision yet."



## Sharing information with passengers

The new law means up-to-date and better information will be available to passengers. This includes:

- information on routes and timetables,
- information on fares and ticket types,
- live information about routes.



## Example of sharing information with passengers

Information about the bus services that are available is important, but people find it confusing and difficult to access. Now there is a new bus app which has live information on all local bus routes running in Wales.

It's easy to use and download the app onto any smartphone. It helps people plan their journey by showing:

- bus services that are available,
- where and when buses will stop,
- fares and saver ticket prices,
- where to buy tickets.

It also allows people to check real-time journey arrivals and travel times.

### Yvonne is a passenger

"The app was great. I didn't want to drive to the doctors because it's difficult to park. I was nervous because I rarely take the bus, but the app made it easy. I could see where to get on, how much it would cost and different times for coming home. I'll definitely use the bus again."



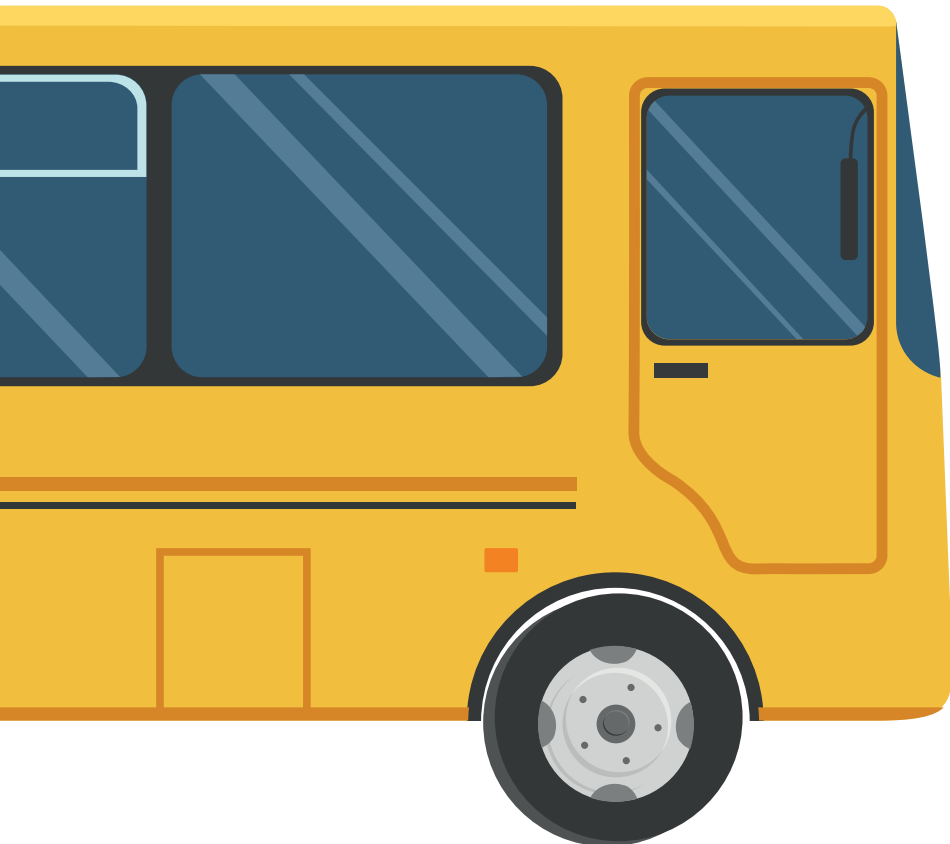


## Sharing information with local authorities

The new law means bus companies must share information with local authorities if they decide to stop or make a change to a particular service. This includes:

- information on passenger numbers, for example, by route, day of the week and by time of day,
- information about the money they make on different routes.

This helps local authorities look at their options and plan for the future.



## Example of sharing information with local authorities

A bus company tells the local authority that they're stopping a bus route because it's not making a profit. Local councillors worry that it will affect local people who do not have cars and rely on the bus.

The local authority asks the bus company for information about the number of passengers using the service and the money it makes. They want to use the information to see how best to meet the need in an affordable way, so people don't lose out.

This information can be shared with other transport providers to see if they can replace the service. This information can also be used by the local authority if it is making arrangements to replace the service to help other bus companies to apply to replace the service.


### Jim is a Councillor


"I understand that the bus company isn't making a profit. My worry is that local people will be more isolated and won't have the bus services into town that they need. If we can look at the information, we might find ways to keep or replace the service."



## Thanks for reading this

You can read more about the new law here:

 [gov.wales/improving-bus-services](https://gov.wales/improving-bus-services)

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