



Missing the Bus: Can older and disabled people get on board?

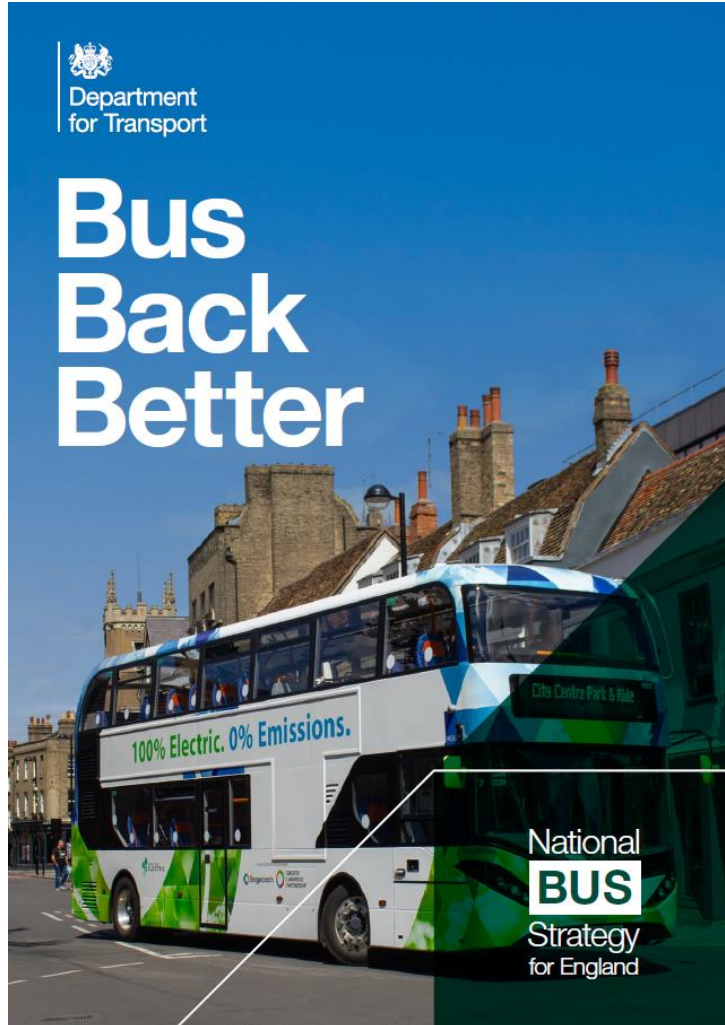
The Bus strategy – what will it deliver for older and disabled people?

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Document Management

Version	1
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Issue Date	15 June 2021





NBS - fE (OL)

- England Outside London
- Issued 15 March 2021
- Good news – first serious English bus strategy for a long time
- £3bn funding – not enough but significant
- Very aspirational
- Clearly driven by No. 10

Aspirations include:

- Frequent services on main urban routes so no need for timetable
- Evening & Weekend services
- DRT services in rural / out of town
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Consistent networks and brands
- Simple cheap flat fares
- Contactless payment
- Daily / weekly fare capping (across modes)
- Comprehensive service information in modern media
- 4,000 new green buses
- Major increase in bus lanes and bus priority

Accessibility Intentions (1):

Information

- Audible / Visible route & next stop announcements – Regs. By summer 2022
- Extra £1.5m for small operators to help implement A/V
- Apps to include accessibility data about bus stations and stops

Infrastructure

- LTAs to undertake “inclusivity audits” of bus infrastructure
- Review of accessibility and convenience of roadside infrastructure

Accessibility Intentions (2):

Buses

- DfT funded buses to have enhanced accessibility:
 - Second wheelchair space
 - Hearing loops
 - Space for assistance dogs
 - Audio-visual announcements
- Review PSVAR by end 2023

Concessions

- Free off-peak to continue
- Digital passes
- Review ENCTS eligibility

Accessibility Intentions (3):

Getting on

- Consult in 2021 on Driver Conduct Regs. to ensure access to dedicated space (Doug Paulley v First Group)
- DVSA to monitor compliance

Consumer

- Bus Passenger Charters
- Bus Advisory Boards
- Promote Disability Awareness Training
- Publish the high level training framework (REAL)

Why is it Good News?

- Core aim: reverse the decline in bus use
- Only bus can meet the timetable for decarbonisation – road and rail cannot
- Despite difficulties, people with disabilities more likely to use buses than those without
- Nothing excludes more than no bus at all (value of concessionary pass = £0)
- Transfer of road space from cars to buses
- Disabled people 5 times as likely to be injured as a pedestrian than non-disabled people

How delivered (1)?

- Main model = **Enhanced Partnerships**
 - LTAs + Bus Operators + Other stakeholders (e.g. Highways Authorities, Bus Users)
 - No EP => No funding – so will happen
 - Creates legal commitments to invest on both sides
 - Must contain ambitious bus priority schemes
 - Start working April 2022
 - New commitments can be added
- **Funding**
 - £3bn announced last February – some already spent and committed – most still ‘promised’
 - Consultation on reform of BSOG

How delivered (2)?

■ **Bus Service Improvement Plans**

- LTAs to publish BSIPs by end October 2021
- High level plans as to how to improve services and meet the aspirations in the Strategy
- Must set out more comprehensive networks including “socially and economically necessary” services (guidance to follow (and a threat to make this mandatory!?!))
- Must include measurable improvement targets (Journey time / Reliability / Passenger numbers / Satisfaction)
- Funding will reflect the ambition within BSIPs
- Must be developed WITH stakeholders, including community transport

Some concerns

- LTAs asked to create ambitious plans with no budget framework
- Expectations raised that £3bn cannot meet e.g. low flat fares
- Considerable mindset change required on all sides
- Have local politicians caught up?
- Emphasis on app-based DRT as a solution outside main urban areas – very poor track record
- EPs exclude CT and no guidance on DRT ↔ CT interaction
- Timescales & resources
- CMA dislike of coordinating fare levels

Conclusion – Get stuck in

“Give me a lever and somewhere to stand and I can move the earth”

- The strategy creates a lever for local action
- Requirement on LTAs to consult
- BSIPs must cover:
 - Access and accessibility issues
 - Socially necessary services
 - Bus Passenger Charters
- What targets do you / we want to see?
- You / we have a maximum 3 months window