



REPORT ON THE BUS FOR JOBS SCHEME

Updated - 14th February 2013

1. INTRODUCTION

The Bus for Jobs scheme that has run in January 2013 enabled tens of thousands of unemployed people to travel for free by bus in order to access jobs and training. This document summarises the Bus for Jobs scheme, provides ridership overall figures and draws conclusions about the scheme.

2. SCHEME BACKGROUND

The scheme's objectives were born out of a major research report (*'Buses and Economic Growth'*) undertaken last year for Greener Journeys - the campaign to promote sustainable travel - by the Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds.

The research was undertaken to quantify the benefits that bus services bring. It showed that the bus is a major contributor to the British economy, especially linking people to employment and training. More than one billion journeys are made for work purposes every day contributing around £64 billion in economic output.

The idea of a pilot support scheme targeted at unemployed people was conceived by the major bus companies and trailed publicly in summer 2012. The concept was developed by the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) in order to make a contribution to improving the life chances of people who have been unemployed for some time – to provide tangible help for unemployed people who are actively seeking work or taking part in training or seeking apprenticeships or travelling to job interviews.

The CPT coordinated an arrangement, initially with the 'big five' UK leading bus companies (Arriva, Go-Ahead, First, National Express and Stagecoach) and invited other companies to come into the scheme. This attracted some other sizeable private and municipal operators to join the scheme.

To establish it, the CPT worked closely with officials at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) who manage the Jobcentre Plus branch network.

Greener Journeys, the campaign dedicated to encouraging people to make more sustainable travel choices, was mandated by the CPT to announce and promote the scheme and to develop internal communications 'template' materials for use both by bus companies and for DWP/Jobcentre Plus branches.

3. SCHEME OPERATION

The scheme was set up to run for one calendar month – Tuesday 1st January to Thursday 31st January inclusive. This was to enable the scheme to act as a ‘pilot’, and to maximise the number of companies feeling able to be part of it.

Participating companies have been: Arriva, Blackpool Transport, Cardiff Bus, First, Go-Ahead, Ipswich Buses, Kinchbus, National Express, Network Warrington, Newport Bus, Stagecoach and trent barton.

With these companies on board, the Bus for Jobs scheme covered more than 70 per cent of bus routes (not evenly spread) across England, Scotland and Wales. The scheme has provided free travel on the local bus services of participating companies for the month of January. There were some eligibility criteria: it has been open to jobseekers who have been unemployed for between three months and one year and it covers around 817,000 people who are currently out of work and claiming benefits.

To take advantage of the scheme, people have to be holders of a Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card. Eligibility criteria have meant that those who are eligible for the card, which is available through Jobcentre Plus, include people claiming Jobseekers’ Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance or Income Support and are actively engaged with a Jobcentre Plus adviser in returning to employment.

4. PUBLICISING THE SCHEME

The scheme was actively and successfully publicised locally and nationally. Announcements achieved widespread print, broadcast and online media coverage. This work was coordinated by Greener Journeys working with external agencies. It comprised:

1. Press releases which were prepared and widely distributed in advance of the scheme (10.12.12) and just as the scheme began (01.01.13). These included quotes from Transport Minister Norman Baker and the CEO of Jobcentre Plus, Neil Couling. This was issued by Greener Journeys who also undertook a number of broadcast media interviews on national/local TV and radio stations on 10th December, and again in early January. This publicity was invaluable for raising awareness of the scheme.
2. A special ‘Bus for Jobs’ logo was created and a ‘BfJ’ section of the new ‘Bus for Us’ website was set up and promoted: www.busforus.co.uk/busforjobs. This included a welcome message setting out basic scheme and journey planning information, including a list of participating bus companies by region and a summary of eligibility criteria. The website was very useful in providing a source of introductory information.
3. Participating bus companies also undertook their own publicity activities including local photocalls and press activity before and during the operation of the scheme.
4. Jobcentre Plus advisers and staff actively promoted the scheme to their clients and DWP featured it prominently on their staff intranet.
5. Questions were asked in the House of Commons about the scheme to both Transport and DWP ministers.

5. SCHEME EXEMPTIONS

While the scheme was made available on the local bus services of participating companies, there were some notable exceptions where free travel was not permitted, and these were set out on the Bus for Us website.

For instance, the scheme did not operate on bus services in London where an existing ongoing scheme run by Transport for London provides a 50 discount on public transport for unemployed people (TfL declined to join the Bus for Jobs scheme). Longer-distance coach services and airport shuttle services were also not part of the scheme including: megabus, Oxford tube, Scottish Citylink, Tyne Tees Xpress (X9/X10), Greenline, TGM Coaches and airport services, Greyhound, and the long-distance coaches of National Express.

6. RIDERSHIP LEVELS AND ANALYSIS

Overall: the total number of journeys reached more than 50,000 during the period of the scheme – or **52,033 journeys** to be precise.

The scheme was a one month trial only and was not available on all bus routes across the country, so these figures are considerable. It is also worth reflecting that if this scheme was available on an ongoing 12 month basis on the same routes of the same bus companies with the same eligibility criteria, we could reasonably extrapolate that there would be nearly 600,000 free bus journeys being made per annum.

Regional disparity: there was a wide variation in take-up across the different regions of England. The north and north-east of England showed the highest level of take-up while the south east of England showed the lowest. There was also decent take-up in Scotland and Wales, as well as in other parts of northern England.

These variations may well be partly affected by different levels of unemployment across Britain, and/or it could also reflect the extent of local bus company routes that were part of the scheme. The regional figures of individual bus companies often have different boundaries and make it difficult to produce a precise regional comparison.

Estimates from the DWP show that around 100,000+ Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Cards were issued over the past few weeks, and that this is a significant increase on normal levels - which they attribute to awareness of the scheme.

7. NEXT STEPS

While the scheme is now complete, a number of companies such as trent barton and Blackpool Transport are seeking to continue offering a similar discount scheme. Ipswich Buses is not extending the scheme but already runs a scheme that provides discounted travel to unemployed people.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Certainly the scheme, although a short pilot scheme, has been a success. It attracted substantial interest from unemployed people which shows the economic and social value of the bus; the collaboration with the Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus has been positive; and it has fitted with Greener Journeys objectives to raise public and stakeholder awareness of the benefits of bus travel; and promoting the main policy objectives which are:

- i) *Creating the right public policy framework* - the wider economic impacts of the bus system need to be captured in to the appraisal and allocation of funds for bus infrastructure
- ii) *Meeting the needs of bus passengers* - not just by providing good quality services but also through tangible interventions like marketing, special offers, ticket promotions and good information to attract different types of users
- iii) *Supporting the bus in its vital role in the labour market* - helping employers recruit from and retain employees from a wider pool of people, providing taxation incentives and local travel and transport plans
- iv) *Enabling businesses and local retail economies to benefit from bus services* - to rejuvenate high streets and local amenities through 'Business Improvement Districts' and town centre management alliances
- v) *Building strong alliances* - across bus operators, businesses and local government, so that policy can be joined up with agreed objectives and locally relevant measures taken with effective monitoring.

9. ABOUT GREENER JOURNEYS

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. Switching from car to bus for just one journey a month would mean one billion fewer car journeys on our roads and would save two million tonnes of CO₂ every year.

Greener Journeys a coalition of Britain's leading bus companies and other supporters including Transport for London, Campaign for Better Transport, the RAC Foundation, Confederation for Passenger Transport (CPT), and the Passenger Transport Executive Group (pteg). Its primary funders are bus companies Arriva, FirstGroup, Go-Ahead, and Stagecoach.

Report prepared by:

*Edward Funnell
Communications Adviser
Greener Journeys
www.greener-journeys.com*

11th February 2013