



Bus for a Just Recovery

Bus already has a critical role in delivering a fairer Scotland.

In times of economic crisis, the bus becomes even more important to those who need it most. The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities and buses will be essential for a just recovery.

Access for All

Accessibility for everyone is fundamental to a fairer Scotland and is a vital part of ongoing social and economic policy.

The aim of Scottish Government's long-term policy is to break the inter-generational cycles of poverty, inequality and deprivation. Since 2016, the Government's approach has been built around five ambitions:

- A Fairer Scotland For All
- Ending Child Poverty
- A Strong Start for All Young People
- Fairer Working Lives
- A Thriving Third Age

The provision and maintenance of good public transport links is absolutely integral to those ambitions. In particular, Scotland has to ensure that:

- Our networks provide access to jobs, educational and training opportunities that already exist or are created
- Affordable housing is located so that it can be served by public transport
- Healthcare facilities can be reached by public transport.

The Role of Bus

Inadequate transport provision is a barrier to the well-being and prosperity of all, but is especially damaging to those on lower incomes, without a car or living in a deprived community.

Therefore buses have a critical role in providing good public transport that unlocks access for everyone to jobs, training and educational opportunities, healthcare, shopping, leisure facilities and more.

Our buses have a critical part to play in delivering a fairer Scotland, for social mobility, travel to work, for households without a car and those who do not drive.

Social Mobility

Ensuring that there is affordable access to educational, training and employment opportunities for areas of low car ownership or economic deprivation is particularly important. Specifically for social housing estates and satellite towns, typically 1950s or 1960s developments on the edge of the bigger cities.

We can see how important the bus is to so many people by looking at three different measures:

- Use of the bus to travel to work
- The proportion of households without access to a car
- The proportion of people who do not hold a driving licence.

Travel to Work

Large numbers of those already in employment (people over 16 and not working from home) rely on the bus to travel to and from work every day. The importance of the bus rises greatly when we look at the population by different measures:

- National average: 9.6%
- By local authority area, with Edinburgh the highest on 28% followed by Glasgow on 17% and Dundee on 12%
- By annual income, rising to 22% for people with annual incomes <£15,000
- In relation to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, rising to 18% for the most deprived 20% of people
- By car ownership – 37% of those without a car rely on the bus to travel to and from work.

No-Car Households

In large parts of Scotland, a substantial proportion of households do not have access to a car. The national average is 27.6%. This rises to 47% in Glasgow City, 41% in Edinburgh and 39% in Dundee. In four other authorities more than 30% of households have no car.

Non-Drivers

Many people do not hold a driving licence. The national average is 29%, but this rises to 51% in large urban areas, and to 61% amongst 17-19 year olds. For those aged 20-29, the figure is 40%. Almost half (49%) of people with annual incomes less than £15,000 do not drive, whilst this also applies to more than half (51%) of the most deprived quintile measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

For many across Scotland, buses are always providing essential services. For a fairer Scotland, and to tackle inequalities that have been exacerbated through the pandemic, bus must be at the heart of a just, green recovery.

Thanks to Chris Cheek for providing this evidence to #lovemybus.

Supported by:

