

News Update - Are Bus Service Cuts Inevitable?

Welcome to the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Users Group "News Update" focusing on the Bus Quality Contracts debate

If you want to comment on any of the issues we raise – or are interested in becoming an active member of Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Users Group and want to campaign on behalf of passengers – please contact us at twptug@phoncoop.coop or by using the 'Contact Us' form on our website <http://www.twptug.org.uk>

We'll keep on commenting about the issues until the Integrated Transport Authority makes a decision to go forward with a Quality Contract. If they did decide to abandon the idea of a Quality Contract and try to negotiate a Voluntary Partnership we'll be watching them closely to ensure that any deal provides real benefits for passengers and isn't just a form of 'business as usual' for the operators.

Once the Integrated Transport Authority make a decision we'll turn our attention to looking at how the voice of passengers will be heard in the future.

Bus Service are being cut in many areas: Does it have to be the same in Tyne and Wear?

Our study of the trade press, and elsewhere, has drawn attention to the many areas of England where 'secured' services are being removed from timetables as a result of cuts in local government funding.

46% of Transport Authorities⁽¹⁾ have been forced to cut their support for bus services. 36% of transport authorities have cut or withdrawn services. NEXUS hasn't yet been forced to cut their support for our buses, but is drawing on reserves to maintain the status quo. Our view is that, in the longer term, Tyne and Wear is in a fortunate position in that it can manage the reduction in local government support by restricting operators to a reasonable level of profit – see our briefing 'The Profits from Running Buses: A Tale of Two Cities'. Only a Quality Contract will allow NEXUS to continue to support a stable network of buses that can benefit all of the communities in Tyne and Wear.

⁽¹⁾ *In many areas the role of the Transport Authority is taken by a single Local Authority. In the large conurbations areas the role is given to a joint authority with representatives from each of the constituent councils in the area. In our case the Transport Authority is Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority. Our representatives on this body come from Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland Councils.*