Bus services in England outside London

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Changes were made to how buses were run in the 1980s.

The Government thought the changes would mean cheaper fares and better services.

But this has not worked. Buses are being used less and less by people.

Lots of buses have stopped running. Some buses run less often.
Buses are not always on time. Sometimes buses run late because there is so much traffic on the roads.

People say that bus routes are far from where they need to get to.

A lot of councils give money to help bus services run.

But because councils don’t have much money, this is hard.
This stops people getting to where they need to go.

People want bus services to run well.

If more people use buses it will mean there are less cars on the roads.

This will help stop so much traffic.

And it will help make the air cleaner.
Councils need to work with bus companies to make sure the best choices can be made about how buses are run.

We think bus services need to think more about passengers.

People need to want to use buses instead of cars. This will help the roads be less busy.

People need better information about using buses.
There needs to be more buses where new houses are built.

There needs to be more buses where services are. Like hospitals.

The Government has tried to improve how buses are run by asking bus companies and councils to work together.

But areas around the country often work in different ways.
We think there should be better laws so each council can decide on the best way to work in their area.

Buses are paid for mainly by passenger fares.

But the Government gives a lot of money too.

Some councils and bus companies think that the money from the Government isn’t managed very well.
We think the Government needs to change how they give money to bus services.

Councils and bus companies need to know how much money they will get in the future.

We think the Government needs to make sure the money it gives is used well.

The money should be used to make sure more buses are used.
Low carbon buses will not save money unless more people use them.

Low carbon buses are buses that cause less pollution or damage to the environment.

We think a plan needs to be put in place to make sure buses are used more.

And to make sure passengers pay a fair price.
The Government needs to show how money given to bus services is going to help. Because this money is from tax.

The plan should think more about passengers.

The plan should look at why people are not using buses and what would change their minds.

The plan could show councils all the different ways to run bus services.
The plan could show how funding can be best used.

The plan could check how well services are working.

The plan could look at the best ways for buses to work.

All councils could use this plan.
A full list of what we think needs to happen

Running bus services

1. Bus services are run in different ways around the country. But the rules are different for each area.

We think all councils in the country should be able to work in the way that is right for them.

2. The Government should make changes so councils can choose how bus services are run.

3. This would mean there is more choice over how bus services are run.
Paying for bus services

4. The Government and councils need to think about the best ways to spend money given to bus services.

It would help bus services if they knew they had help with money for a long time.

We think the Government needs to put a plan in place by 2020 to show how buses will be funded each year.

5. Some money is given to bus services through a grant called the Bus Service Operators Grant. This needs to be improved.
6. We think the Government needs to make a plan to change how this grant works. And it needs to happen soon.

7. Bus services are given money back by the Government or council when people don’t have to pay full fares. This isn’t working very well.

8. We think the Government needs to look at how this works so that bus companies and councils don’t lose money.
9. In the future we want to look into people travelling for free and paying less fares.

10. The Government listened to our idea of trying to give money to transport in a new way. This was called Total Transport.

We have heard good things about working in this way.

We want the Government to write a report about this work by the end of August 2019.
If the report says this work is good then this way of working should carry on in other areas.

11. Some councils don’t know the best ways to apply for money or grants to run bus services.

All councils should be treated in the same way.

The Government needs to make sure councils know what to do.
Also the way this works should be reviewed.

12. The Government should show how much it costs councils to apply for the funding by the end of this year.

If changes are not made it could affect bus services running.

The Government needs to show whether councils are able to afford to give money to bus services. They need to do this by the end of the year.
13. The Government should say which bus services are the most important. And give advice to councils about this. They should do this by the end of the year.

What makes it hard to use buses?

14. It is important to reduce the amount of traffic on the roads. And to make air cleaner.

Buses need to be cheaper to help people who want to use them.
15. We think the Government needs to set goals to make the air cleaner and say how this will happen.

One goal will be to get people to use buses more.

16. The Government needs to show councils what a difference using buses can make and set targets for getting people out of cars and onto buses and show that they help reduce traffic.

17. The advice the Government gives to councils is out of date. This needs to change.
Also, it needs to show the good work being done in different areas.

18. We think the Government needs to change its advice for councils by October 2019.

And it needs to have a website with lots of advice and ideas of good practice for councils to use.

19. There is a law called the Traffic Management Act 2004. Part of this law can help councils to manage traffic and get more money to help get people onto buses.
We think councils need to be able to use this law as soon as possible.

20. We think it is good that money has been given to improve the information about bus services.

But we don’t know when people who use buses will be given this information.

We think the Government needs to say when people will be able to see the information. This will tell them exactly when a bus will turn up.
21. We think it is good that the Government has given advice about using better ways to give people information.

This has been about hearing and seeing information.

Bus companies should make it easier for people to get the information they need.

The Government should make sure bus companies can afford to do this.
22. The Government needs to give advice about how to make information easier to use for people. This is called **accessible information**.

23. They should do this by the end of the year.

24. We think bus drivers should be given more training. This should be about giving passengers the best information.

25. This should happen all over the United Kingdom.
24. Bus drivers have to work long hours. And they don’t earn very much money.

We think the Government needs to look into this. And look into updating the laws about bus drivers’ hours.

25. It must be easier for people to understand the cost of getting a bus ticket and how tickets work.

26. Young people between the ages of 16 and 18 should pay less to use buses. And they should be treated in the same way everywhere.
Planning and buses

27. The different teams in the councils need to work together to help make sure bus services are well run.

28. The staff in the council who decide what new houses are built need to think about transport and how it should run.

29. We think the Government should give advice on how teams in the council should work together to plan bus services.

We also think the Government needs to think about how it will make sure there is enough transport for important services.
A bus plan

30. Bus use is going down every year.

No Government has ever made good plans to deal with this. This needs to change now.

People pay a lot of money in taxes that go towards buses. They must have good services.

They must think more about what passengers want.
The Government needs to make a plan about how to improve things.

The plan should show how councils will be supported.

The Government needs to look at why more people are not using buses.
And look at how to change this.

31. We think the Government should make a plan by the end of 2020.
It should have in it:

- how to make sure more people use buses

- show every council the different ways of running bus services

- allow councils to have more control over which companies can run bus services

- how to work in the best ways

- a better way of managing money and funding
● help for how to apply for funding

● look at what has worked and what hasn’t worked in each area so councils can learn from each other

● goals for how they will change how people think about using buses.

32. The Government should show how long its plan will take and how it will get people’s views.

It should ask people who work in transport what they think.
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