

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales  
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau/ Economy, Infrastructure and Skills  
Committee  
Effeithiau tagfeydd ar y diwydiant bysiau yng Nghymru / Impacts of  
congestion on the bus industry in Wales  
Ymateb gan Bus Users Cymru / Evidence from Bus Users Cymru

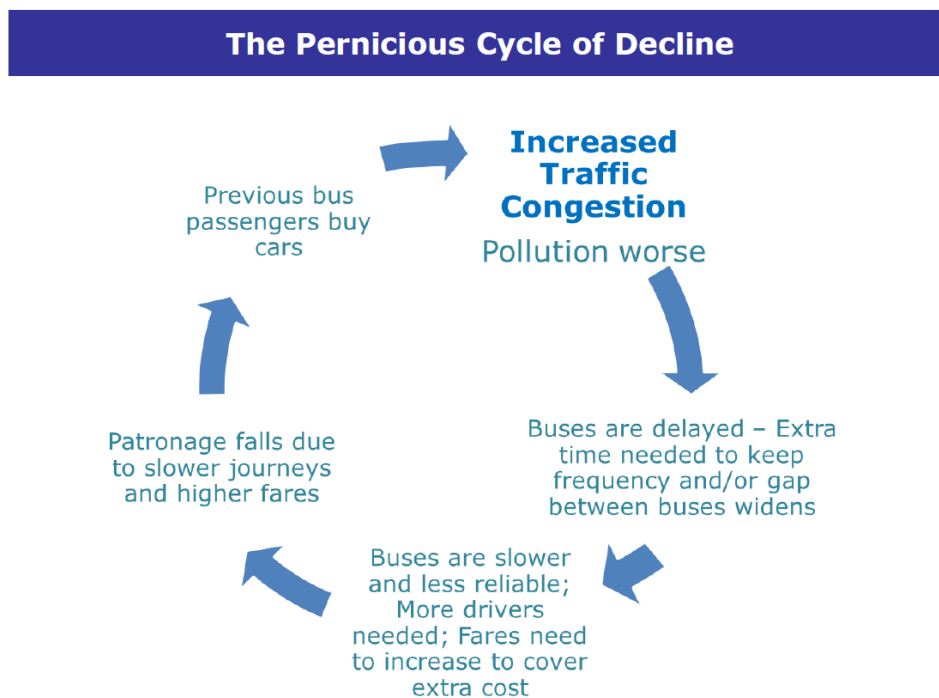
1. The bus carries more passengers than any other form of public transport and it is a vital lifeline for those without access to a car.
2. Bus Users Cymru gathers information from complaints received and from its local representatives and compliance monitors.
3. 13% of complaints received at our events and 20% of complaints received by the office indicate concerns about service reliability. Poor reliability is usually caused by congestion along the route but the passengers are not concerned about the cause, just the effect on their daily lives.
4. In the year ended March 2017 the Bus Compliance Officers have monitoring 43 services and 34 operators for punctuality and reliability across Wales and their work has resulted in operator visits and changes to timetables. Warning letters were also sent to the Operators where monitoring has found that their services were running below the standard of 95% punctuality and compliance.
5. Congestion can be eased by encouraging people out of their cars and the following are some suggestions about how this could be achieved.
6. Suggested measures
  - Provide information
  - Install bus lanes/bus gates to speed up bus journeys
  - Impose workplace levies/increase parking charges
  - Enforce yellow box/bus lane and bus stop parking
  - Improve junctions
  - Create a separate piece of road for the bus
  - Create modal shift by reducing congestion and increasing the attraction of the bus
  - Encourage partnership of local authorities and bus operators
  - Increase the cost of running a private car
  - Develop the Welsh Voluntary Quality Standards Scheme
  - Increase subsidies to enable bus priority measures to enable shorter journey times
7. Bus Users Cymru does not have access to results from across the UK so we have added extracts from publications such as Greener Journeys Report (2016) and Transport Focus survey results (2017) as well as an extract from a paper delivered to the Welsh Bus Summit in Wrexham on January 2017.

Traffic Congestion Is A Disease Which If Left Unchecked Will Destroy The Bus Sector. (Prof David Begg, *The Impact Of Congestion On Bus Passengers* 2016)

Bus speeds declining faster than any other mode of transport (*Greener Journeys Report* (2016) Urban Congestion)

8. The first statement by Prof David Begg sounds very dramatic but the evidence published in his report shows a trend across the most congested urban conurbations in the UK of bus journey times rising by – on average – almost 1% per annum. He says that over the last 50 years, bus journey times have increased by almost 50% in the more congested urban areas.
9. It is very difficult indeed to attract fare paying passengers or new fare paying passengers when you have the following three scenarios (as outlined by Profess Begg):
  - Slower speeds leading to higher costs, higher fares, fewer passengers, service decline, fewer passengers.
  - Slower speeds leading to increased journey time, fewer passengers, service decline, fewer passengers.
  - Slower speeds, punctuality and reliability decline, fewer passengers, service decline, fewer passengers.
10. Buses are vital to the health of local economies. More people commute by bus than all other forms of public transport combined and buses are also the primary mode of access to our city centres (Prof Begg 2016).

**Chris Martin (Director, (The TAS Partnership Ltd, Bus Summit, Wrexham, 2017)** illustrated the issues in his *Pernicious Cycle of Decline* as below:



11. As he says, congestion leads to delays, which lead to people finding other means of transport which results in increased congestion.

Congestion causes:

- Longer journey times
- Makes bus trips unpredictable and puts passengers off
- Increases operating costs
- Increases fares, undermines passenger confidence, and reinforces negative perceptions of the bus (Chris Martin)

12. Transport Focus - "Impact of congestion on bus reliability increasing, say passengers"
13. Transport Focus says "Passengers on their local bus may be generally content with their service but congestion and traffic jams are beginning to impact on their overall satisfaction with their bus journey. More than a quarter of journeys in England were held up by congestion."
14. Transport Focus surveyed bus passengers in England and say (March 2017) that "Passengers on their local bus may be generally content with their service but congestion and traffic jams are beginning to impact on their overall satisfaction with their bus journey. More than a quarter of journeys in England were held up by congestion. The results show that despite satisfaction levels remaining high, increasing road congestion and the impact of road works is hitting the ability to deliver these basics in some of our towns and major cities."
15. "In Scotland, we surveyed over 9,000 passengers from the Highlands to Dumfries and Galloway, with overall passenger satisfaction at 90 per cent. Satisfaction with punctuality since our last survey in 2014 has fallen from 86 to 80 per cent, mainly attributable to traffic congestion and roadworks."

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Bus Users Cymru is funded by the Welsh Government to:

- Handle complaints
- Facilitate "*Your Bus Matters*" Events where the public can meet face to face the local authorities and the operators that provide the services
- Carry out monitoring and mystery travelling
- Employ, direct and lead three Bus Compliance Officers

These combine to deliver our core activities:

- To improve bus services across Wales by monitoring and reporting on bus operations
- To gather the views of users and accurately reflect them to the industry and legislators
- To provide guidance and support for bus users
- To provide advice on proposed transport policy
- To handle bus complaints relating to the European Passenger Rights Regulation. Bus Users UK is the designated UK Body for EPRR