Campaign for
Better Transport

Buses in Crisis

A report on bus funding across England and Wales 2010 - 2018

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Campaign for Better Transport

Foreword

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Buses matter. They carry more people than trains and are a main mode of transport for the quarter of UK households without a car.

Yet buses don't have the high media or political profile of railways or roads. They are treated entirely as a matter for the bus companies or local authorities. Alone of all modes of transport, there is no long term national investment strategies for buses.

But the Government ignoring buses is a mistake. The lack of affordable public transport affects wider Government policies. It stops people getting access to training and jobs. It makes access to healthy food in shops more difficult. It makes it more difficult for people to get to health services, especially more specialist services in hospitals. So cuts in bus services add to poverty and social exclusion, and to isolation and loneliness – research we commissioned in 2012 in two communities in South Hampshire and Teesside which had lost all or most of their bus services showed this effect strongly.[1,2]

In fact the Government's own Social Mobility Commission highlighted the lack of transport as one major contributor to poor social mobility in the most remote rural and coastal areas.[3]

The lack of bus services also feeds into wider transport problems, especially road congestion. Away from the rail network, buses offer the main alternative to car travel for longer distance journeys. Their absence or cutting back translates into increasing road congestion as people are driven into car use and dependence on car travel. There is also a problem with new housing developments, where the design and sometimes the location make it difficult to provide good bus services, leaving people entirely dependent on cars.

At the same time, alternatives to conventional bus services are facing challenges. Community transport services, often touted as a way of replacing bus services, are having their legal status questioned after a European Court ruling.[4] Taxi services, especially outside cities, are under pressure from cost pressures and some more remote rural areas have limited or no taxi services. We are therefore seeing the emergence of 'transport deserts', with limited or no transport apart from individual cars.

It is sometimes argued that new technology will solve all this. Uber and similar ride-sharing platforms, plus autonomous vehicles, are touted as alternatives to conventional bus services, especially outside the big cities. However, it seems unlikely that commercial operations such as Uber can find a business model outside cities where buses and even taxis cannot, and driverless cars are unlikely to appear in English country lanes any time soon. Given all this, we argue here that action is needed to support bus services. There are practical ways forward and we set these out as recommendations.

The new Bus Services Act does offer some help (and we have produced separately a guide to this Act and what can be done with it), but more is needed. Joining up transport funding across different departments will help – and, ultimately, it needs the Governments in England and Wales to take buses as seriously as other transport modes, and recognise their wider value.

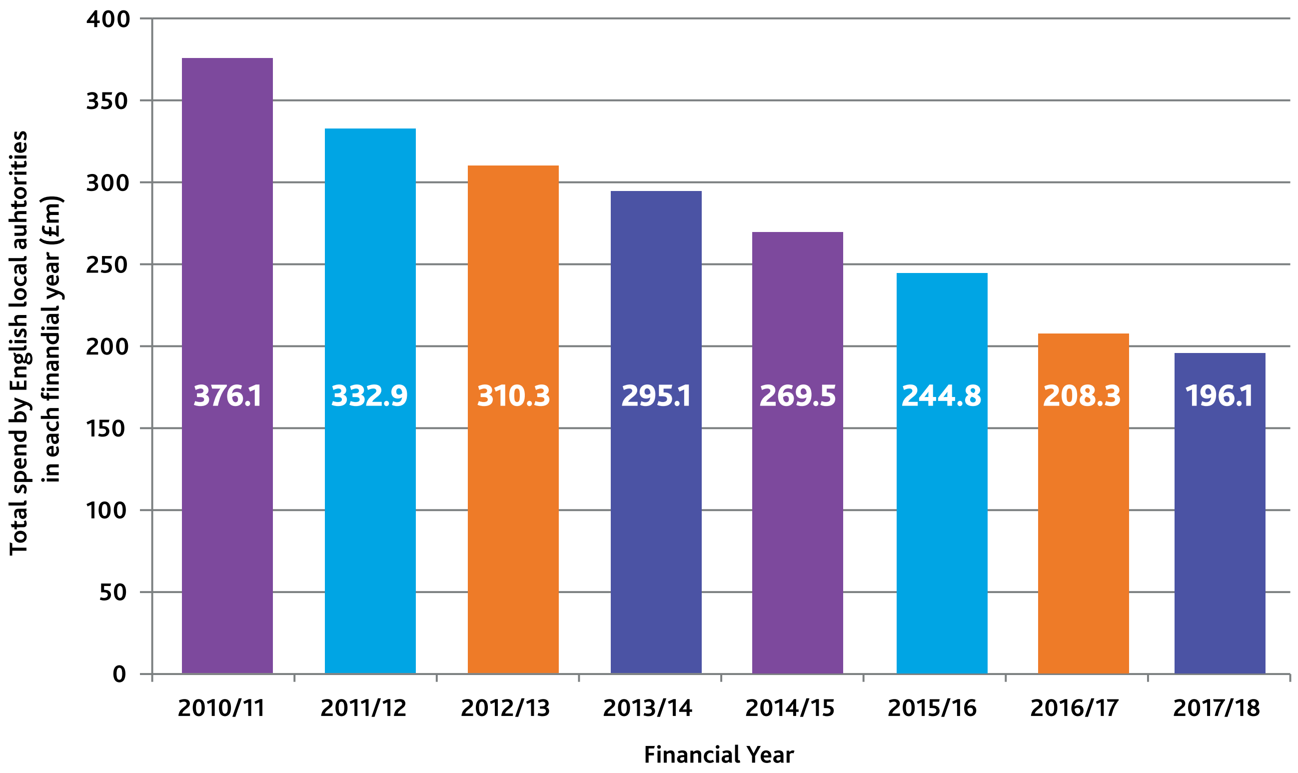
Key findings for England

The key finding from our research is that a **net reduction in funding of £20.2 million** has been made to supported bus services in England in 2017-18.
This is a **9 per cent reduction** since 2016-17.

Since 2010-11 there has been a **net reduction of £172 million** from supported bus services in England, a **reduction of 46 per cent**.

Total spend by local authorities in England on supported bus services

All sums adjusted to 2018 using RPI



36%
(32 of 88 authorities)
increased their spend
on supported bus services
in 2017-18

64%
(56 of 88 authorities)
reduced or spent nothing
on supported bus services
in 2017-18

In 2017-18 **188** bus services have been **reduced, altered or withdrawn**

Since 2010-11 **3,088** bus services have been **reduced, altered or withdrawn**

Key findings for Wales

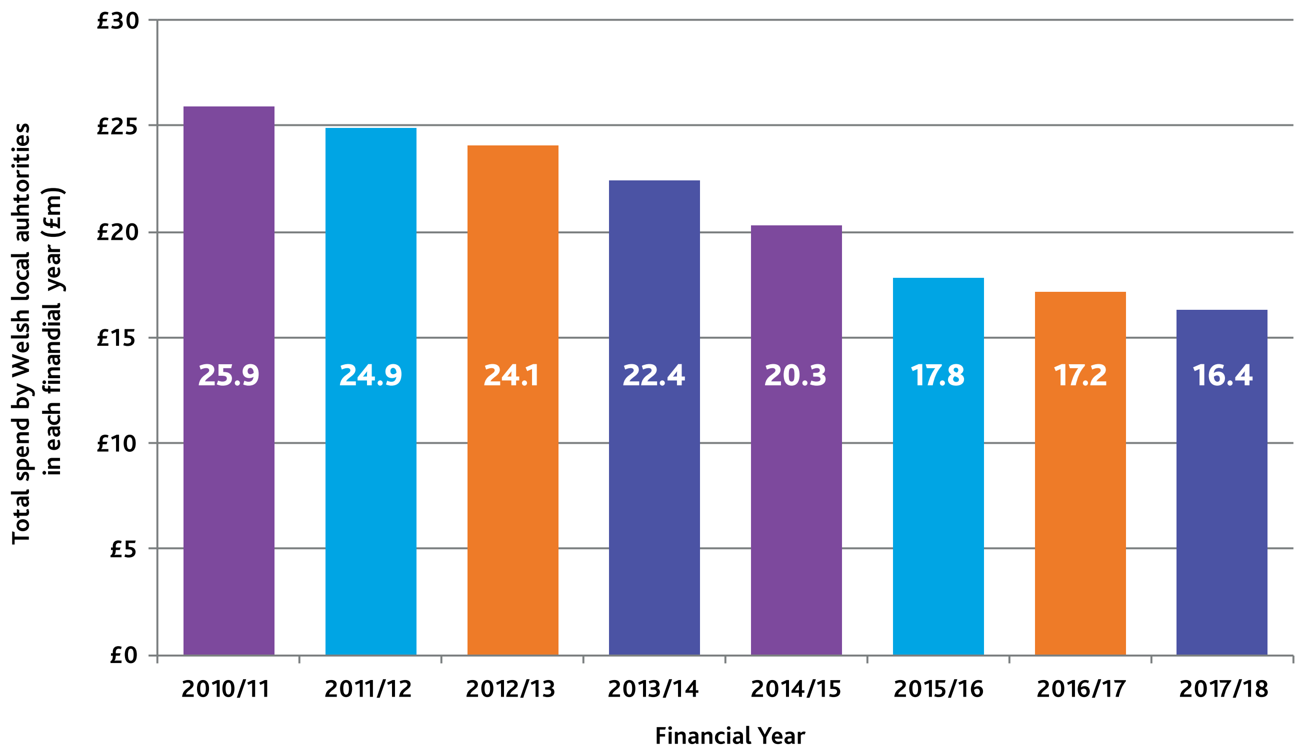
In Wales responsibility for bus services is devolved to the Welsh Assembly.

The key finding from our research is that a **net reduction in funding of £211,819** has been made to supported bus services in Wales in 2017-18.
This is a **1 per cent reduction** since 2016-17.

Since 2010-11 there has been a **net reduction of £10 million** from supported bus services in Wales, a **reduction of 39 per cent**.

Total spend by local authorities in Wales on supported bus services

All sums adjusted to 2018 using RPI



18%
(4 of 22 authorities)
increased their spend
on supported bus services
in 2017-18

82%
(18 of 22 authorities)
reduced or spent nothing
on supported bus services
in 2017-18

In 2017-18 **11** bus services have been **reduced, altered or withdrawn**

Since 2010-11 **259** bus services have been **reduced, altered or withdrawn**

Methodology

The information about funding for supported buses and withdrawn routes has been collected by contacting all 82 local transport authorities in England as well as the combined authorities responsible for public transport within large urban areas. We also contacted all 22 single-tier authorities in Wales.

Freedom of Information requests under the Freedom of information Act 2000 were issued to all local transport authorities in England and Wales and all combined authorities.

The information requested this year asked for the actual spend in the previous financial year 2016-17 and the planned budget in the current financial year 2017-18. Figures previously requested in 2017 for the budgeted spend in the 2016-2017 financial year will have differences with the actual spend figures we requested in 2018.

In previous years this report did not adjust for inflation. As we approach a decade of collecting this data it is now appropriate to compare spending at current prices.

All local authorities responded to our freedom of information requests.

> *"Bus services have been reduced in the village where I live in Lancashire. I'm a guide dog owner so I can get out and about by bus, but the cuts are making me less independent. I now need to ask my parents to pick me up and take me to my doctor's or to their house. Many elderly people and schoolkids are suffering too. We just need our buses back."*
> **– Richard Scott**

> *"Here in Northamptonshire buses to rural areas and town estates are being removed resulting in people who cannot drive for whatever reason being cut off. Buses are really important to me personally, enabling me to get to the town centre and hospital without driving or if I have had treatment."*
> **– David Brede**

> *"Funding cuts mean that we now have no late buses in Hyndburn, Lancashire, where I live. How are we supposed to go out for the evening? Also we have lost buses from my village to a major hospital; we now have to go into Blackburn and get another bus."*
> **– Phil Graham**

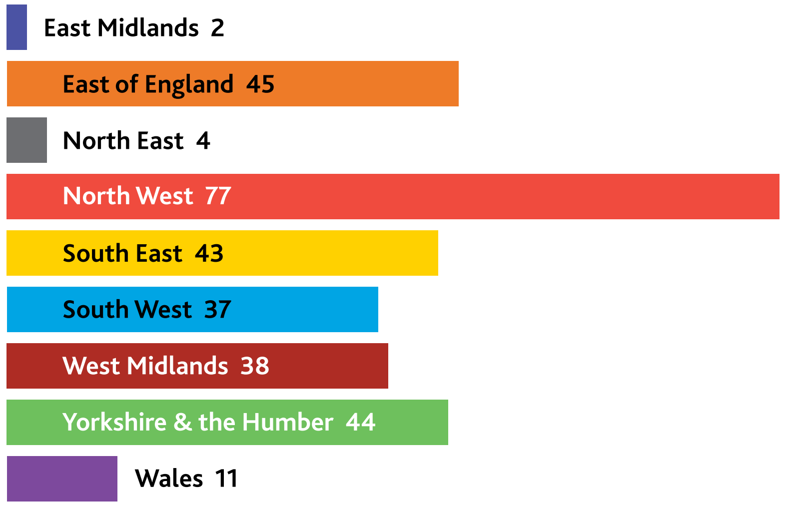
> *"I do not own a car. Thanks to recent bus cuts I can now only get from where I live in Gillingham to Frome once a week. Services generally in Dorset often finish at five o'clock, run so irregularly they are useless and instead of encouraging people onto public transport ensure poorer and older people have to have a car to just get to a doctor or post office or to do basic shopping."*
> **– Andrew Pring**

Summary data

▼45%
reduction in funding for bus services
across England and Wales 2010-11 to 2017-18

▼3,347
bus services reduced or withdrawn
across England and Wales since 2010

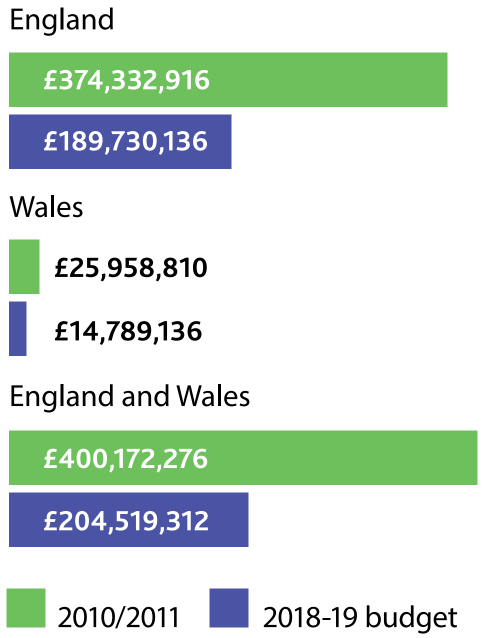
Number of bus routes reduced or withdrawn in 2017/18



▼290
bus routes reduced or withdrawn
in England

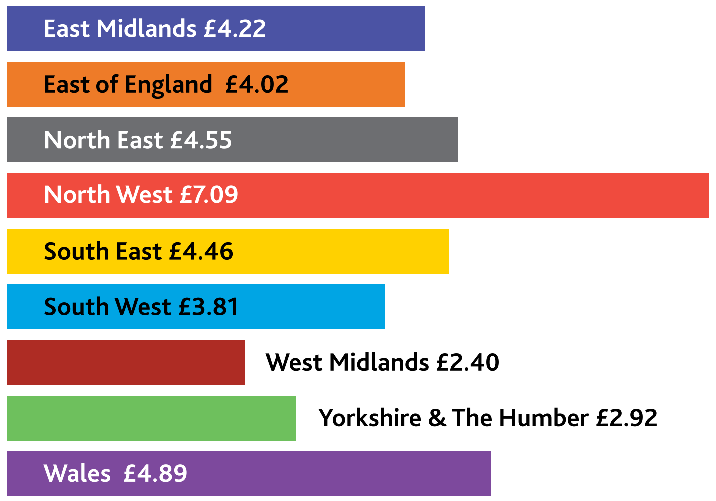
▼301
bus routes reduced or withdrawn
in England & Wales

Planned budget for 2018/19 compared to actual spend in 2010/11



Regional spend on buses per capita

(March 2018 figures – adjusted by RPI)



Detailed data for England

Local authority spend on buses in England

Transport authority	2010/11 spend	2016/17 spend	2017/18 spend	2018/19 budget
Derby City	£285,116	£0	£0	£0
Derbyshire	£7,281,239	£8,870	£8,569	£8,290
Leicester	£1,280,494	£601,344	£482,705	£375,000
Leicestershire	£4,896,005	£1,520,057	£1,449,563	£1,366,770
Lincolnshire	£5,649,237	£5,511,318	£5,203,843	£5,311,866
Northamptonshire	£3,940,657	£1,311,817	£1,203,958	£212,000
Nottingham	£3,264,004	£4,494,821	£4,312,264	£4,312,264
Nottinghamshire	£8,787,702	£4,601,033	£4,093,171	£3,960,000
Rutland	£549,205	£468,729	£446,218	£442,700
East Midlands	**£35,933,658**	**£18,517,989**	**£17,200,290**	**£15,848,591**
Bedford Borough	£5,523,698	£761,020	£716,440	£637,980
Cambridgeshire	£3,123,395	£1,745,588	£1,844,270	£1,770,262
Central Bedfordshire	£2,325,875	£1,501,221	£1,116,319	£1,215,000
Essex	£11,218,550	£10,293,209	£8,546,861	£8,289,510
Hertfordshire	£8,134,901	£1,847,843	£2,030,918	£1,833,897
Luton	£377,243	£0	£0	£0
Norfolk	£5,147,083	£2,751,942	£2,843,276	£2,805,785
Peterborough	£927,666	£680,553	£698,668	£715,116
Southend-on-Sea	£0	£0	£0	£0
Suffolk	£5,474,760	£2,181,922	£1,823,058	£1,750,800
Thurrock	£1,054,937	£316,508	£481,906	£464,860
East of England	**£43,308,109**	**£22,079,806**	**£20,101,716**	**£19,483,210**
Cumbria	£485,656	£0	£0	£0
Dorset	£5,801,540	£2,189,237	£1,829,490	£1,200,000
Hartlepool	£545,134	£0	£0	£0
Middlesbrough	£256,833	£0	£0	£0
North East Combined Authority	£14,436,939	£11,315,301	£10,361,379	£9,618,468
Northumberland	£2,909,872	£1,362,062	£1,128,193	£1,186,600
Redcar and Cleveland	£1,075,965	£95,798	£44,136	£32,000
Stockton-on-Tees	£688,159	£0	£0	£0
North East	**£26,200,098**	**£14,962,397**	**£13,363,198**	**£12,037,068**
Blackburn with Darwen	£897,601	£267,502	£62,018	£10,000
Blackpool	£289,469	£0	£0	£0
Cheshire East	£3,097,040	£3,059,278	£3,126,304	£1,651,974
Cheshire West and Chester	£1,729,975	£681,413	£899,263	£715,923
Durham County	£2,385,233	£3,277,391	£3,194,813	£3,082,437
Greater Manchester	£21,718,178	£22,577,161	£21,086,031	£21,500,000
Halton	£1,076,657	£529,750	£467,841	£459,410
Lancashire	£8,191,394	£2,140,015	£2,429,028	£3,000,000
Warrington	£1,886,155	£388,337	£353,744	£347,294
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	£24,394,661	£22,272,662	£19,900,521	£18,034,000
North West	**£65,666,362**	**£55,193,509**	**£51,519,563**	**£48,801,038**
Brighton and Hove	£1,747,835	£1,110,154	£1,226,582	£1,041,900
Buckinghamshire	£4,012,214	£2,513,448	£2,238,840	£2,100,000
East Sussex	£3,402,598	£630,810	£804,925	£855,935
Hampshire	£9,656,806	£2,951,962	£2,934,833	£2,790,443
Isle of Wight	£625,812	£0	£0	£0
Kent	£8,580,030	£6,045,524	£6,004,531	£5,898,445
Medway	£1,436,769	£1,139,545	£996,705	£953,885
Milton Keynes	£3,083,922	£1,415,620	£1,315,810	£1,231,000
Oxfordshire	£5,771,495	£944,836	£0	£0
Portsmouth	£937,923	£109,837	£55,768	£51,250
Reading	£380,759	£134,435	£96,210	£100,000
Slough	£428,492	£158,137	£174,714	£268,500
Southampton	£1,001,844	£135,170	£217,801	£214,700
Surrey	£12,503,645	£7,843,156	£7,762,554	£7,820,000
West Berkshire	£1,676,613	£1,590,141	£949,227	£689,190
West Sussex	£5,925,507	£1,034,483	£1,010,682	£999,400
Windsor and Maidenhead	£1,038,204	£679,859	£860,618	£835,000
Wokingham	£851,152	£609,904	£589,169	£570,000
South East	**£63,061,620**	**£29,047,022**	**£27,238,968**	**£26,419,648**
Bath and North East Somerset	£1,189,277	£1,252,188	£1,184,232	£1,110,187
Bournemouth	£751,261	£378,292	£313,037	£252,900
Bracknell Forest	£812,498	£582,689	£576,951	£487,460
Bristol	£5,157,188	£0	£0	£0
Cornwall	£5,930,790	£6,473,546	£6,305,137	£6,200,000
Derbyshire	£8,107,848	£3,396,323	£0	£0
Devon	£2,800,013	£4,973,123	£5,374,614	£5,231,112
Gloucestershire	£2,980,743	£2,164,374	£1,589,300	£2,138,536
North Somerset	£1,059,207	£318,480	£455,534	£137,090
Plymouth	£480,348	£281,627	£328,719	£393,874
Poole	£1,225,897	£695,418	£564,106	£382,191
Somerset	£6,991,621	£3,590,971	£3,570,705	£3,477,271
South Gloucestershire	£3,119,634	£1,736,353	£1,728,672	£1,806,494
Swindon	£1,107,089	£175,926	£0	£0
Torbay	£264,299	£0	£0	£0
Wiltshire	£7,077,866	£4,593,562	£0	£2,595,500
South West	**£49,055,580**	**£30,612,873**	**£21,991,006**	**£24,212,615**
Herefordshire	£2,360,126	£679,455	£700,231	£677,449
Shropshire	£4,749,540	£2,982,823	£2,983,060	£2,487,130
Staffordshire	£4,221,863	£2,728,520	£2,082,762	£600,000
Stoke-on-Trent	£510,942	£0	£0	£0
Telford and Wrekin	£1,084,654	£355,201	£380,919	£197,330
Warwickshire	£2,458,046	£2,550,742	£2,400,888	£2,042,942
West Midlands	£10,921,858	£8,098,888	£8,082,979	£8,292,000
Worcestershire	£5,615,982	£1,952,764	£1,896,709	£1,848,000
West Midlands	**£31,923,010**	**£19,348,392**	**£18,527,548**	**£16,144,851**
East Riding of Yorkshire	£2,363,936	£1,470,677	£1,040,946	£831,566
Kingston upon Hull	£781,779	£312,650	£219,956	£219,184
North East Lincolnshire	£158,616	£194,952	£162,950	£162,500
North Lincolnshire	£1,081,202	£1,020,415	£877,964	£757,000
North Yorkshire	£7,939,441	£1,507,960	£1,369,106	£1,486,830
Sheffield City Region Combined Authority	£12,428,321	£6,678,988	£7,083,459	£5,594,000
West Yorkshire Combined Authority	£33,518,806	£21,257,842	£21,395,086	£20,536,000
York City	£912,378	£720,115	£622,245	£618,000
Yorkshire and the Humber	**£59,184,480**	**£33,163,599**	**£32,771,712**	**£30,205,080**
All of England (excluding London)	**£374,332,916**	**£222,925,588**	**£202,714,001**	**£189,730,136**

Transport authority	% change 2016/17 to 2017/18	% change 2010/11 to 2017/18
Derby City	0%	-100%
Derbyshire	-3%	-99.88%
Leicester	-20%	-62.30%
Leicestershire	-5%	-70.39%
Lincolnshire	-6%	-7.88%
Northamptonshire	-8%	-69.45%
Nottingham	-4%	32.12%
Nottinghamshire	-11%	-53.42%
Rutland	-5%	-18.75%
East Midlands Total	**-7%**	**-52.13%**
Bedford Borough	-6%	-87.03%
Cambridgeshire	6%	-40.95%
Central Bedfordshire	-26%	-52%
Essex	-17%	-23.81%
Hertfordshire	10%	-75.03%
Luton	0%	-100%
Norfolk	3%	-44.76%
Peterborough	3%	-24.69%
Southend-on-Sea	0%	0%
Suffolk	-16%	-66.70%
Thurrock	52%	-54.32%
East of England Total	**-9%**	**-56.81%**
Cumbria	0%	-100%
Dorset	-16%	-68.47%
Hartlepool	0%	-100%
Middlesbrough	0%	-100%
North East Combined Authority	-8%	-28.23%
Northumberland	-17%	-61.23%
Redcar and Cleveland	-54%	-95.90%
Stockton-on-Tees	0%	-100%
North East Total	**-11%**	**-49%**
Blackburn with Darwen	-77%	-93.09%
Blackpool	0%	-100%
Cheshire East	2%	0.94%
Cheshire West and Chester	32%	-48.02%
Durham County	-3%	33.94%
Greater Manchester	-7%	-2.91%
Halton	-12%	-56.55%
Lancashire	14%	-70.35%
Warrington	-9%	-81.25%
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	-11%	-18.42%
North West Total	**-7%**	**-21.54%**
Brighton and Hove	*10%*	-29.82%
Buckinghamshire	*-11%*	-44.20%
East Sussex	*28%*	-76.34%
Hampshire	*-1%*	-69.61%
Isle of Wight	*0%*	-100%
Kent	*-1%*	-30.02%
Medway	-13%	-30.63%
Milton Keynes	-7%	-57.33%
Oxfordshire	-100%	-100%
Portsmouth	-49%	-94.05%
Reading	-28%	-74.73%
Slough	10%	-59.23%
Southampton	61%	-78.26%
Surrey	-1%	-37.92%
West Berkshire	-40%	-43.38%
West Sussex	-2%	-82.94%
Windsor and Maidenhead	27%	-17.11%
Wokingham	-3%	-30.78%
South East Total	**-6%**	**-56.81%**
Bath and North East Somerset	-5%	-0.42%
Bournemouth	-17%	-58.33%
Bracknell Forest	-1%	-28.99%
Bristol	0%	-100%
Cornwall	-3%	6.31%
Derbyshire	-100%	-100%
Devon	8%	91.95%
Gloucestershire	-27%	-46.68%
North Somerset	43%	-56.99%
Plymouth	17%	-31.57%
Poole	-19%	-53.98%
Somerset	-1%	-48.93%
South Gloucestershire	0%	-44.59%
Swindon	-100%	-100%
Torbay	0%	-100%
Wiltshire	-100%	-100%
South West Total	**-28%**	**-55.17%**
Herefordshire	3%	-70.33%
Shropshire	0%	-37.19%
Staffordshire	-24%	-50.67%
Stoke-on-Trent	0%	-100%
Telford and Wrekin	7%	-64.88%
Warwickshire	-6%	-2.33%
West Midlands Combined Authority	0%	-25.99%
Worcestershire	-3%	-66.23%
West Midlands Total	**-4%**	**-41.96%**
East Riding of Yorkshire	-29%	-55.97%
Kingston upon Hull	-30%	-71.86%
North East Lincolnshire	-16%	2.73%
North Lincolnshire	-14%	-18.80%
North Yorkshire	-9%	-82.76%
Sheffield City Region Combined Authority	6%	-43.01%
West Yorkshire Combined Authority	1%	-36.17%
York City	-14%	-31.80%
Yorkshire and the Humber	**-1%**	**-44.63%**
All of England (excluding London)	**-9%**	**-46%**

Detailed data for Wales

Local authority spend on buses in Wales

Transport authority	2010/11 spend	2016/17 spend	2017/18 spend	2018/19 budget
Blaenau Gwent	£308,924	£97,151	£92,944	£91,900
Bridgend County Borough	£713,222	£332,757	£321,444	£129,610
Caerphilly	£1,489,003	£1,004,563	£937,758	£935,698
Cardiff	£641,502	£0	£0	£0
Carmarthenshire	£2,104,027	£921,767	£962,184	£930,879
Ceredigion	£1,985,011	£722,255	£612,942	£630,000
Conwy County Borough	£719,698	£475,513	£459,346	£344,903
Denbighshire	£511,935	£202,390	£261,508	£253,000
Flintshire	£2,146,129	£861,733	£1,044,329	£551,352
Gwynedd	£2,582,342	£1,780,243	£1,717,613	£1,674,520
Isle of Anglesey	£741,845	£465,218	£437,483	£439,050
Merthyr Tydfil	£126,794	£89,624	£86,577	£83,760
Monmouthshire	£880,809	£321,002	£308,021	£273,000
Neath Port Talbot County Borough	£382,032	£0	£0	£0
Newport City	£733,499	£144,569	£67,749	£65,545
Pembrokeshire	£1,433,651	£1,318,535	£1,198,778	£1,199,220
Powys County	£4,784,276	£4,529,962	£4,655,567	£4,835,070
Rhondda Cynon Taff	£1,614,213	£1,324,465	£1,306,517	£1,232,510
Swansea	£937,271	£958,234	£906,210	£685,590
Torfaen	£152,529	£98,630	£90,579	£88,609
Vale of Glamorgan	£562,253	£382,414	£351,655	£344,960
Wrexham	£288,394	£0	£0	£0
Wales total	**£25,839,360**	**£16,031,024**	**£15,819,205**	**£14,789,176**

Transport authority	% change 2016/17 to 2017/18	% change 2010/11 to 2017/18
Blaenau Gwent	-4%	-69.91%
Bridgend County Borough	-3%	-54.93%
Caerphilly	-7%	-37.02%
Cardiff	0%	-100%
Carmarthenshire	4%	-54.27%
Ceredigion	-15%	-69.12%
Conwy County Borough	-3%	-36.18%
Denbighshire	29%	-48.92%
Flintshire	21%	-51.34%
Gwynedd	-4%	-33.49%
Isle of Anglesey	-6%	-41.03%
Merthyr Tydfil	-3%	-31.72%
Monmouthshire	-4%	-65.03%
Neath Port Talbot County Borough	0%	-100%
Newport City	-53%	-90.76%
Pembrokeshire	-9%	-16.38%
Powys County	3%	-2.69%
Rhondda Cynon Taff	-1%	-19.06%
Swansea	-5%	-3.31%
Torfaen	-8%	-40.62%
Vale of Glamorgan	-8%	-37.46%
Wrexham	0%	-100%
Wales total	**-1%**	**-39%**

The story behind the statistics

Since 2010, bus services across the country have seen significant reductions in public funding.

These cuts have come from three different directions:

- Bus Service Operators Grant, which goes to all bus operators was cut by 20% in 2012-13, and has not increased since
- Funding for local authorities has been cut in general, and this has fed through to cuts in support for bus services, which have less legal protection than other local authority services
- The free travel scheme for pensioners and the disabled is underfunded by the Government, meaning that operators are having to carry people for free without proper funding to reflect the cost of this.

In addition, buses have faced increased traffic congestion which adds to the costs of operation.

While most bus services are run by commercial bus companies, the services supported by local councils are in most cases vital to local communities and the many people who rely on buses to get to work, school, shops, healthcare etc, as well as giving access to the countryside for those without cars. These supported services often run at times (evenings and weekends) and to places (such as rural and suburban areas) that have no other public transport.

Campaign for Better Transport has been researching the trends in these supported services since 2010. We have found that local authorities have taken very different approaches to supporting local bus services. Some have cut all support entirely – this year, for example, Staffordshire and Blackburn with Darwen have both cut all or nearly all support for services. However, other authorities have protected their services and in a few cases, like Lancashire, authorities have actually increased funding again having made cuts in earlier years. Some of those that have made cuts are starting from a high base, so the impacts are less than in places with smaller cuts but starting from a previously low base.

> *"We now only have one bus into Kendal at 9:30am and one bus back at 2pm. A regular bus service would really help me and other residents to visit the bank in Kendal and do other shopping."*
>
> **- Harry Warner**

Mostly, however, we are seeing a slow reduction in bus subsidy and bus services across England and Wales, and from the questions we've asked about the budget for this year this is expected to continue. We've set out the figures – both the cuts in the last year, and also the longer term trends since 2010. But these cold hard numbers translate into real impacts on real lives – our 'Save our Buses' campaign hears from people who are now isolated and find access to basic services difficult or expensive or both.

It is not just sparsely populated rural areas who are affected. Across the country, smaller towns now find themselves in the firing line, caught in a spiral of lost bus services and other damaging trends such as struggling high streets.

We make below some recommendations to address these problems; we argue that the decline in supported bus services can be reversed and that the Government should take more interest in the issue. For the reasons we've set out in the foreword, buses are important, to wider Government policy not just to their users.

Recommendations

Since 2010, we have been charting a steady decline in the bus services supported by local authorities in England and Wales. This decline has continued in the last year and over 3000 bus routes have been withdrawn or reduced over that period, with signs of more to come. As we've said, this translates to real problems on the ground, where people – and in the worst cases whole communities – are being left isolated, and this contributes to poverty, social exclusion and increased car dependence.

But this isn't inevitable. First, some local authorities have not made cuts, and have adopted creative ways to manage bus services, sometimes as part of wider transport strategies. In some places local authorities need recognise how important local bus services are, and give them a higher priority in funding decisions. Secondly, and crucially, action by central Government is needed. There are things that the Government and the Welsh Assembly Government can do to reverse this decline.

In practice, this means:

Cardiff Bus by Jeremy Segrott on Flickr

> *"Several buses in Porthcawl, South Wales, are at risk. These are the buses that cover the housing estates around the town and bring people into the town centre. Lots of my retired neighbours use them to get into town and access shops and the GP."*
>
> **– Alex Harris**

- **Develop a National Investment Strategy for buses and coaches**

We recommend that the Government develops a National Bus and Coach Investment Strategy with long term funding and targets to reverse the decline in bus use and to increase the use of buses and coaches. Buses are the only form of transport in England not to have a long term investment strategy. The railways, the main roads, aviation, cycling and walking all have long term strategies. These allow the Government to set targets and performance standards for each transport mode, to enable investment and to bring together funding, regulation and policy. If buses had such a strategy it would help bring together funding, set a long term policy framework and link buses into other Government policies – for example within planning policies and the management of trunk roads. It may be said that buses are a matter for local government, but the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy shows that a national strategy can help focus funding and policy across Government, and can support local investment.
A national strategy with long term funding could also help investment in zero emission vehicles. For this and other reasons, it needs to encompass coaches too.

- **Use the Bus Services Act powers**

The Bus Services Act, which was passed last year, contains new powers and provisions which should help improve bus services in England in various ways.
It includes provision for 'open data' on real time service running and on fares, for on-bus audible and visual information, and for multi-operator ticketing. It also enables various types of partnerships between local bus operators and local authorities, and also allows local authorities to franchise bus services.

We recommend that local authorities review the Act and the opportunities it offers for their areas in terms of improving bus services. We have produced a guide to the Act to help authorities and communities work out what it can do for them and make use of the powers it contains.[5] We also recommend that the Government monitors use of the powers in the Act and identifies and seeks to overcome barriers to using them.

- **Go further with 'Total Transport' – bringing together and co-ordinating funding**

It is estimated that in England around £2bn a year of public funding goes to transport services, but this comes from a number of different agencies and different parts of local authorities. Home to school transport, non-emergency patient transport, and staff transport contracts form part of this £2bn, alongside the support for local bus services and Bus Service Operators Grant. The Government funded 37 'total transport' pilot projects from 2015 to 2017 to investigate ways to bring together these different funding streams and make better use of them. These pilots have shown that there is potential to integrate transport contracts. We recommend that the Government builds on these pilots and develops a longer term Total Transport funding stream allowing for 'invest to save' projects joining up transport commissioning. Local authorities should also audit all transport spending, contracts and provision in their areas and identify ways to join them up.

> *"There are a number of cuts to local bus services in the area of Kent where I live. Rural bus services are essential for my children to develop their independence and get out and see their friends. By cutting the rural bus services you are cutting the poor, young and elderly from rural communities off from the outside world."*
>
> **– Liz Garnett**

- **Introduce new and smarter funding for buses**

We recommend that the Government consider new and smarter sources of funding for bus services. The national investment strategy can act as a framework – it can bring together and make better use of the £2bn public spending on bus services across Government. It can also in principle be used to integrate taxis into public transport networks, though this will require changes in legislation, and to integrate buses and coaches into new transport provision and new technologies. There is however, a strong general economic case for increased investment in local buses and local public transport. In fact the Government has recognised this in principle, with the 'Transforming Cities Fund' introduced in the Spring 2018 Budget. This came partly as a result of recommendations from the National Infrastructure Commission, which suggested that in economic terms intra-urban transport was as important as inter-urban transport yet had received much more limited funding and attention.[6] At the other end of the spectrum, there is a strong case for small-scale funding to help community transport initiatives and social enterprises, including 'invest to save' and kickstart funding to get projects up and running. Even very small scale funds could make a difference here – one community enterprise has suggested that a £1m fund ringfenced for public transport services for the 10 English national parks would make a huge difference in the provision of transport for residents and visitors in the Parks.

All this depends on recognising the wider value of good bus services. Current legislation requires councils to assess the need for public transport and show that this need has been provided for.[7] We have previously called for a Connectivity Fund to bring together and ringfence funding for local transport, and we believe this should be considered in any review of bus funding. Ultimately, policies and funding need to give people and communities the transport services to get to the jobs, education and other services they need to access.

Recommendations for Wales

- Develop a National Investment Strategy for Buses and Coaches, linked to the strategy proposed for England and with new and smarter funding for bus services and community and social enterprises, building on and learning from the experience with Bwcabus.
- Total Transport: initiate pilots in Wales bringing together different transport contracts and services
- Use the new Wales and Borders railway franchise to integrate buses and trains more effectively, in particular developing stations as transport hubs for the surrounding areas with integrated timetabling and joint ticketing. This is already being implemented in Cornwall and could happen in Wales too. In particular the TrawsCymru bus network could be integrated with the rail network and with other bus services.
- Introduce new powers to improve bus services, learning from the English experience and debate around the Bus Services Act 2017 and its predecessor the Local Transport Act 2008, and also the current Transport Bill in Scotland. This should include appropriate powers for partnerships, franchising and community enterprises.

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Campaign for
Better Transport

Campaign for Better Transport's vision is a country where communities have affordable transport that improves quality of life and protects the environment. Achieving our vision requires substantial changes to UK transport policy which we aim to achieve by providing well-researched, practical solutions that gain support from both decision-makers and the public.

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