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More buses from this week and tickets can still be used on any operator as the network responds to passenger demand during the coronavirus crisis

Since Monday 1 June, bus services across the North East of England have started to be increased, but operators are still running emergency timetables that reflect the current challenges of reduced demand and social distancing requirements due to the coronavirus crisis.

Through NEbus, the North East Bus Operators' Association, weekly conference calls have been taking place between the region's main bus operators and

Local Authority Officials to ensure that the bus network is co-ordinated and responds in line with the demands of the region.

For the past three weeks, bus operators have been in consultation with Local Authorities on changes to step timetables up that reflect emerging demand and a forward look towards what 'normal' patterns of service might look like in the future.

Some late notice feedback was received from members of the Tyne and Wear Transport Sub Committee on Thursday and this has also been accommodated.

Through NEbus, the region's bus operators have also agreed to accept each other's return, day and season tickets on common sections of route during the crisis. This has been in place for the past nine weeks and is continuing into this next phase.

The available capacity on all public transport is currently reduced owing to social distancing, so customers are encouraged to only travel when they need to and ideally adjust their journeys to quieter times of the day. They are also asked to pay using a contactless bankcard or buy tickets in advance on bus operators' apps, if at all possible, and promptly take a seat when boarding, sit apart and observe the 'stand back' two-metre line from drivers when alighting.

'Bus full' signs will be displayed on the front of buses once they reach the temporary limits, but bus operators are monitoring timetables daily and working to provide extra capacity, where possible, to keep these situations to a minimum. Enhanced cleaning regimes are also in place.

Martijn Gilbert, Chair of NEbus, said: "By working together the region's bus operators and Local Authorities have been able to move fast and work collaboratively to deliver the best possible response during these unprecedented times.

"Co-ordinating timetable change dates, collecting feedback on key worker journeys, sharing best practice and enabling the mutual acceptance of tickets has helped optimise the local bus network.

"This ever strengthening partnership approach will be key to facing the

challenges ahead in delivering the best possible bus services to get people to work, education, retail, leisure and more, as well as supporting jobs and the economy with bus companies being major employers themselves.”

Full timetable and service information can be found on each bus operators' website.

Lead NEbus members are Arriva, Go North East, Stagecoach, Stanley Travel and A-Line coaches.

The operating areas and Local Authorities involved are Nexus, Northumberland, County Durham and the Tees Valley Combined Authority.

[Go North East website](#)