

Aoife Brennan

From: oireachtaslaison <oireachtaslaison@nationaltransport.ie>
Sent: Tuesday 1 November 2022 13:42
To: Aoife Brennan
Subject: RE: Motion Passed - Rathfarnham/Templeogue/Firhouse/Borhernabreena Area Committee Meeting

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Dear Ms Brennan,

I refer to your correspondence dated 13th October 2022 which has been forwarded to the Oireachtas Liaison Unit for a response.

As with many industries, bus operators are experiencing significant challenges in recruiting qualified staff, following the return to economic activity in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The public transport industry has been particularly hard-hit with driver shortages as operators attempt to return to pre-pandemic levels of activity as well as deliver intended service improvements such as the BusConnects Network Redesign in Dublin.

The National Transport Authority is in regular contact with bus operators, who are making every attempt to recruit more drivers so that all services can run as scheduled. Operators have undertaken extensive driver recruitment campaigns in recent months and significant numbers of additional drivers are expected to become available once their required training and tests are complete and licences are issued by the Road Safety Authority (RSA). The National Transport Authority has engaged with the RSA to expedite the testing and licence issue process for new bus drivers. In addition the Authority has undertaken a national advertising campaign to attract bus drivers to the industry.

The impact of shortfalls in driver numbers is felt the most when low-frequency services are cancelled. The Authority and operators have been working to ensure that such cancellations are minimised, that – where possible – consecutive low frequency services are not withdrawn, and that first and last daily services on a route operate.

The Authority formally meets Go-Ahead Ireland on a weekly basis to review performance, associated customer feedback and driver recovery plans. The Authority has raised the issues regarding routes 175 and 17 with Go Ahead Ireland and will continue to monitor and engage closely with the operator in an effort to improve the situation. Where poor reliability and punctuality performance occurs, the Authority imposes financial penalties for bus operators.

Go-Ahead Ireland notified the Authority in September that the wider Go-Ahead group was the subject of a cyber-security alert. The impact of this on IT systems resulted in major difficulties in communicating rosters to drivers across the Go-Ahead group internationally, including Ireland. This resulted in a large number of additional service cancellations across the Go-Ahead Ireland network in September and early October, over and above those associated with driver shortages.

In recent weeks, the Authority has noted a significant improvement in reliability of Go-Ahead services. We will continue to work with Go-Ahead to ensure that insofar as possible, given ongoing driver recruitment and retention issues across the bus industry, these improvements are maintained.

Yours Sincerely
Richard Kelly

From: Aoife Brennan <abrennan@SDUBLINCOCO.ie>

Sent: Thursday 13 October 2022 08:46

To: Hugh Creegan <Hugh.Creegan@nationaltransport.ie>

Subject: Motion Passed - Rathfarnham/Templeogue/Firhouse/Borhernabreena Area Committee Meeting

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Dear Mr Creegan,

At the Rathfarnham/Templeogue/Firhouse/Borhernabreena Area Committee Meeting on 11th October 2022, the following motion was passed by the elected members.

That this Area Committee write to the Minister for Transport and the NTA to demand that improvements are made to the 17, 75 and 175 bus routes following considerable hardship caused to residents in this area recently by late or cancelled bus services.

Any response received will be circulated to the member of the committee at the meeting and will be available to the public as part of the minutes of the meeting.

Kind Regards
Aoife Brennan

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