

Regional Youth Voice & Bus18 Meeting

Thursday 16th August 5pm – 7pm, Leeds Civic Hall

Notes and summary of actions

Background:

During the autumn of 2017, nearly one million 11-18 year olds took part in the annual UK Youth Parliament “[Make Your Mark](#)” ballot. This annual ballot is the largest youth consultation in Europe and gives young people the chance to vote on the issues that are most important to them.

Across West Yorkshire, just under 40,000 local young people participated and voted their top local issue as “Improving Transport – Make public transport cheaper, better and accessible for all”. Since then, young people have been working on the topic in their local, regional and national youth council and youth parliament meetings.

In April this year, young people in Leeds - supported by the [Voice, Influence and Change Team](#) at Leeds City Council and the [Yorkshire and Humber Youth Work Unit](#) – worked with WYCA to invite the Bus18 board to meet with youth representatives to discuss improving bus travel for young people in the region and in turn encouraging more young people to become regular bus users.

“Improved and more connected public transport for young people” is a new priority on the Leeds Children & Young People’s Plan and is a key strand in creating a more “[Child Friendly Leeds](#)”

Bus18 and transport representatives:

Dave Pearson – Director for Transport Services, WYCA	Cllr Kim Groves – Chair of WYCA’s Transport Committee
Paul Matthews – Managing Director, First West Yorkshire	Neale Wallace – Head of Transport Services, WYCA
Alex Hornby – Chief Executive Officer, Transdev	Dwayne Wells – Head of Commercial, Arriva Yorkshire
Andrew McGuinness – Regional Manager (Northern & Yorks) CPT UK & ABOWY	Dane Hiscocks – Communications Officer, Connecting Leeds

Regional youth representatives:

Tommy Schofield – Chair Leeds Youth Council	Blythe McCaul – Leeds Youth Council
Attia Tul-Hayee – Leeds Youth Council	Charlotte Mitchell – Leeds Youth Council
Charlotte Williams – Leeds Youth Council	Codie Edwards – Leeds Youth Council
Farah Mackey – Leeds Youth Council	Gurman Dev – Leeds Youth Council
Jamie Nash – Leeds Youth Council	Liberty Branston – Leeds Youth Council
Manvinder Singh Dev – Leeds Youth Council	Miranda Tekeshe – Leeds Youth Council
Nkosi Yearwood – Leeds Youth Council	Priscilla Adjei – Leeds Youth Council
Sam Williams – Leeds Youth Council	Scarlet Rowe – Leeds Youth Council
Zain Zainuddin – Leeds Youth Council	Jonah Powley – Leeds Youth Council
Brendan Green – Member of Youth Parliament for Barnsley	Daniel James – Barnsley Youth Council
Ali Khasran – Barnsley Youth Council	Edward Turner – Calderdale Youth Council
Leanna Sheety – Calderdale Youth Council	



Summary of discussions from Workshop 1: What is good about current bus travel and what challenges do young people still face?

What is good?	What challenges are still faced?
Wi-fi and USB charge points x2 group responses	Wi-fi and charging is not on all buses. Out of the two, charging points are more useful than wi-fi as increasingly more young people have data on their phones
Audio announcements (particularly good for users with additional needs)	Swapping between bus operators mid journey when they have different ticket types and costs. MyDay pass helps with this but clear that not <i>all</i> drivers know about this ticket type or generally how to ensure customers get the best value. This also includes the Uniform Policy – it is felt not all drivers are aware or fully understand this new policy (2 groups)
Improved reliability x2 group responses	Drivers could be more polite and more helpful – using buses is actually a skill and not all young people have the right knowledge and understanding to be ‘good’ bus users
Text service (in Barnsley)	Young people can often be badly behaved on buses especially to and from school or college and can be seen dropping lots of litter.
More environmentally friendly buses x2 group responses	Need to market environmentally friendly fleet better – use statistics to sell it to young people as it will be a good motivator
More modern buses	Not always clear how to raise an issue with a driver or what to do if you have a problem
More frequent buses x2 group responses	Still too much variance in reliability. It doesn’t take many bad experiences to put people off using buses x2 group responses
MyDay pass is good value	Incorrect timing on “next bus due” display boards – need to be more accurate or you just stop trusting them.
Covering the cost of a taxi home if the last bus is late or cancelled is great for passenger safety especially for young people	Need to be better at advertising and promoting all the improvements you’ve made to both young people AND drivers. MyDay and School Uniform policy are great but need more visibility.x3 group responses
Electronic displays are really good	Schools need to play a greater role in helping young people know about best tickets and how to use network x2 group responses
Great that there are now lots of different ways to pay (but sometimes drivers look unimpressed if you use certain payment types)	Drivers could be trained by young people in person or via a video package
Easy to find bus stops	Under 18s can’t book online or use contactless
	E-payment can’t be used if you don’t have a phone
	A parent should be able to purchase an e-ticket and transfer it to their child
	Use buses as a way to promote cultural attractions on each route
	Young people need to know that can approach the driver for help if they feel unsafe

Summary of discussions from Workshop 2: What are the biggest challenges and what are the possible solutions?

The challenge:	The solution:
<p>Making young people feel safer on the bus -What is the procedure if someone feels at risk? -Young people can often feel vulnerable whilst waiting for a bus on the streets</p>	<p>Have a poster on the bus that says it's OK to approach the driver if you feel safe or want help.</p> <p>If buses have CCTV, advertise the fact they do to reassure people</p> <p>Do partnership work with schools and colleges about how to use buses, stay safe, get good value etc. Schools could nominate sustainable transport ambassadors. This could be a partnership project with local authorities as mutual benefit.</p>
<p>Proving your age and fare entitlements if you forget your photocard</p>	<p>Make sure that ALL drivers are aware of the school uniform policy and that some students will not be in uniform (in which case student ID should suffice)</p> <p>Operators really need to do a big push to drivers that it's more important you have regular paying young customers than being unnecessarily strict which leads to bad experiences that will stop people using buses completely. There should be more discretion as it for the greater good.</p> <p>Having a phone app that can hold photo card information – young people much less likely to forget or lose their phones compared to a photo card.</p>
<p>A lack of sufficient promotion and marketing about ticket types and best value fares</p>	<p>Get schools and colleges involved by working with local councils</p>
<p>Consistency of experience across services</p>	<p>This comes down to communication – making sure all the drivers know the right information and fare types</p>
<p>Payment and getting best value</p>	<p>We hear about young people having to pay a full fare even though they're <i>clearly</i> under 18 but have forgotten their card</p> <p>Drivers should have more discretion and a culture created where they are encouraged to be more lenient in disputes (rather than kicking young people off the bus when that young people has other ID that proves their age but the driver still <i>insists</i> on the specific photo card)</p> <p>Drivers must remember that young people are often 'scared' of adults and it's hard to resolve a dispute. A benefit of the doubt approach is good PR and better for keeping young people using the buses.</p>

	Drivers need better information and or training about young people – communication, understanding, awareness of uniform policy and of MyDay tickets.
<p>Not knowing what ticket to purchase (young people) or what ticket to sell (drivers)</p> <p>Sometimes it is cheaper to get a single – drivers should be knowledgeable about fares and always suggest the best value one available.</p>	<p>Just have one type of ticket – single or return – that covers your travel. What is the difference between MyDay and Dayrider? Why would a young person purchase a Dayrider when MyDay is available? Why would a driver allow them to? Needs more clarity</p> <p>Drivers need a manual or visible display with this information to hand. This is also good for the passengers as it can help solve disputes about which fares do (or don't) exist</p> <p>Advertise discounted youth travel at bus stations and on the Apps</p> <p>Educate young people on HOW to use buses, don't take it for granted that people know the process. Include a behaviour charter for the young people, network maps, ticket types, how to pay, how to stay safe. Work with councils, schools and colleges to get this information out there.</p>
Making compliments and complaints	<p>Young people should be entitled to know how to make a complaint or a compliment.</p> <p>Rate your journey / driver apps, compliments and complaints forms on display.</p> <p>Inform customers what to do if they feel safe or if there was a problem with their experience or journey</p>
A true cross region fare – for example South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire travel)	A South and West Yorks Dayrider equivalent which require operators and executives in different regions to meet
Behaviour of passengers and drivers	<p>Seeing other young people behave badly can put young people off using the bus. Have more signage about appropriate behaviour and to not swear, shout, be rude or drop litter,</p> <p>Drivers should also have reminders that passengers are customers and drivers should be polite – especially to young people</p>
Payment – not all young people have contactless so can lose out. They may have to use cash which can then lead to the 'don't have exact money' problem with drivers.	A card (similar to Oyster) that is linked to your age so it will automatically issue you the right ticket.

Final recommendations:

Based on the feedback from all four groups participating in the workshops, the top recommendations to the Bus18 partnership for increasing bus usage for young people are:

1. **Information to drivers:** to ensure that all drivers on all operators in the region are fully aware of the new discounted travel systems for young people – specifically the ‘school uniform policy’ and the MyDay pass.

We have heard several examples since the launch of these initiatives where drivers have not been aware of these which has led to awkward situations for young people who have been declined a discounted fare or declined travel.

Finally, to encourage drivers to have a ‘benefit of the doubt’ approach to young people’s ticketing. The income from being strict with having to prove your age (even if clearly young looking, in uniform but without photo card) will be negated by putting young people off from using buses at all due to confrontations with drivers.

2. **Information to young people:** to actively seek out ways of working in partnership with schools and colleges (via Local Authorities) to ensure that young people in the region have the correct information to:
 - i. Feel safe and supported whilst using buses
 - ii. Behave appropriately on buses
 - iii. Be aware of best value fares and how to purchase them (MyDay and School Uniform policy)
 - iv. Understand bus timetables
 - v. Know how to make a compliment or complaint and apply for a refund if they have an unsatisfactory experience
3. **Payment:** to be aware that many of the recent innovations in payment methods are not usable by young people and as such to continue to explore alternative ways for young people to pay for their journeys (eg transferable tickets from parents)

What next?

Young people will be continuing with their transport campaign for the rest of the year, including doing a deputation to a full Leeds City Council meeting in September. We are keen to ensure that the young people who attended this meeting – and the peers they represented – are kept up to date on any changes implemented as a result of the feedback left at this meeting

It would be particularly great to receive a written response after the Bus18 partnership has had an opportunity to reflect on the key recommendations outlined above. The young people and teams who support them would be more than happy to continue working with Bus18 to help implement some of these recommendations where applicable.

