

BUS OPERATOR NEWSLETTER



Welcome

Welcome to the festive edition of the Bus Operator Newsletter. This month's newsletter is packed full of information, providing updates on:

- the temporary suspension of card withdrawal over the festive period
- the Digital Travel Data Services project,
- Fair Work First and our next operator engagement sessions

We wish you all a very merry Christmas and New Year and look forward to working with you in 2024!

In the meantime, if there is anything we can help with, please get in touch with us at:

schemesandgrants@transport.gov.scot

Happy Christmas from us all!



Transport Scotland would like to wish our colleagues in the industry, and their families, a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

We couldn't fit the entire organisation into the photo, but the payments team were happy to gather round the tree to represent us all.

We look forward to supporting you and working with you during 2024!

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TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF CARD WITHDRAWAL PROCESS

Due to local authority and card production offices being closed over the festive period, it isn't possible to guarantee the prompt replacement of National Entitlement Cards (NEC's) if they are withdrawn from cardholders during the period.

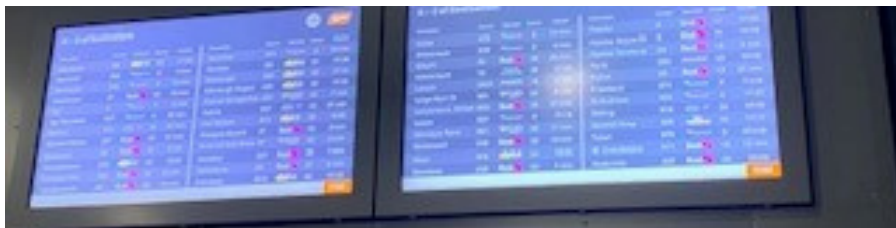
To avoid cardholders being denied free travel during this period, we will suspend the card withdrawal process. Between 14th December 2023 and 3rd January 2024 inclusive, valid NEC's displaying the Orange 'C' that cannot be read by the Electronic Ticketing Machines **should NOT be withdrawn**.

If a card fails to work during this period staff should record a manual transaction but not withdraw the card or issue a 7 day pass. Drivers should continue to withdraw cards that are being used fraudulently and anyone presenting a card that has clearly expired should be asked to pay the full fare as normal. The issue of 7 day passes in exchange for 'faulty' cards should be reintroduced on 4th January 2023.

We would be grateful if this information could be communicated to all frontline staff. It is also helpful if drivers can advise cardholders that they will need to contact their local authority (or SPT) for a replacement card as these are not issued automatically.

Please remind staff not to remove cards relating to the Young Persons' Free Bus Scheme unless the card is being used fraudulently by someone other than the cardholder.

DIGITAL TRAVEL DATA SERVICES (DTDS)



The Digital Travel Data Services (DTDS) project has now started, and we need your input!

Early next year we plan to host workshops to understand what's possible now and in the future. If you'd like to register your interest in joining the workshops or ask us for more information, please [get in touch](#) and let us know.

We've already been running stakeholder engagement workshops with some transport operators and transport data providers, exploring areas such as:

- standardising the use of bus open data
- moving to NeTEX for the exchange of fares
- introducing more real-time SIRI data feeds
- including SIRI VM, and;
- generating Gaelic language translations for bus stops.

But it doesn't stop there! We still want to delve into more topics such as geographical location data, zonal and integrated ticketing.

The DTDS project will progress a Programme for Government commitment to procure and improve the quality of public transport journey planning services across Scotland. By working together, we can help to improve information across all transport modes, including information on fares, accessibility, active travel, emissions, disruptions, and real-time information.

We'll keep in touch with more information on workshops and further project updates.

NETWORK SUPPORT GRANT AND FAIR WORK FIRST

You will now be aware of the mandatory change to the terms and conditions for all public sector grant payments in relation to Fair Work First, which includes Network Support Grant. The grant conditionality strengthens previous Fair Work First policy set out in your current terms and conditions and applies to every Scottish Government Grant.

This means that from **1 April 2024**, all grant recipients are required to pay at least the real Living Wage and provide appropriate channels for ensuring an effective workers' voice.

It applies to all directly employed staff of the grant recipient, including 16-18 year olds and apprentices. It also applies to any UK-based workers who are not directly employed, but are directly engaged in delivering the grant-funded activity, whether by sub-contractors or agency staff.

You will be asked to provide evidence relating to these areas to receive any future grant payments and ensure you are meeting the Fair Work First condition.

More information on [Fair Work First guidance](#) can be found on the Scottish Government website.

We have already held a number of operator engagement sessions, however further dates have been added for you to ask any questions you may have about Fair Work First, and also to gather your input on the impact it will have on your business. The next sessions are planned for:

- [Wednesday 13 December, 3pm-4pm](#)
- [Thursday 11 January 12noon-1pm](#)
- [Tuesday 30 January 12noon-1pm](#)

STAYING IN TOUCH

We're keen to stay in touch with you and are here to answer any questions you may have. You can contact us at:

General

- SchemesAndGrants@transport.gov.scot

Schemes & Payments Team Lead

- Elinor.Ross@transport.gov.scot

Operator Account Managers

- Donna.McEwan@transport.gov.scot
- Heather.Johnston@transport.gov.scot

NEXT SCHEDULED PAYMENT DATE

11 December 2023

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