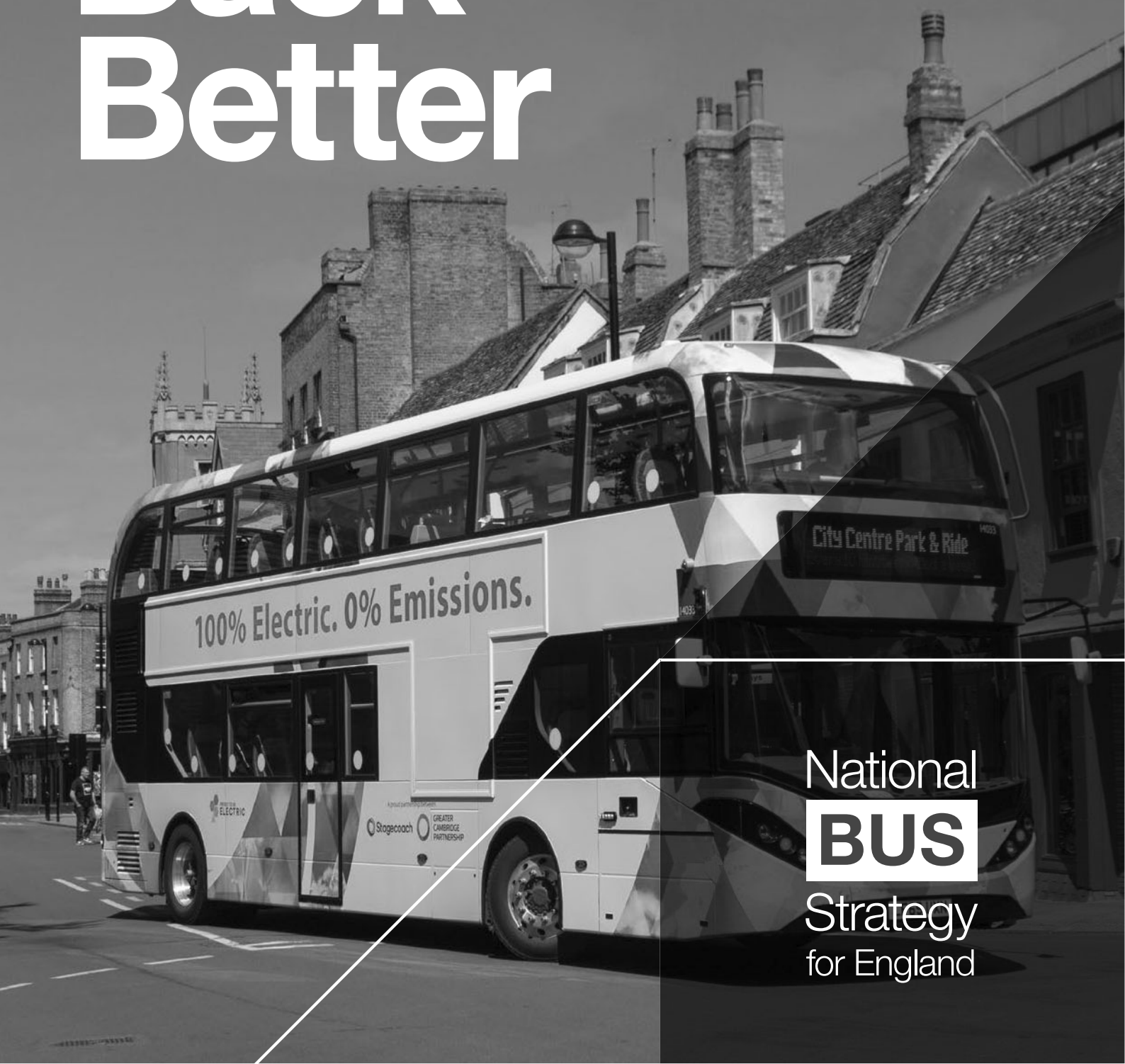




Department  
for Transport

# Bus Back Better



National  
**BUS**  
Strategy  
for England



**Our goal is to get bus use back to what it was before the pandemic. Then we want to increase patronage and raise buses' mode share. We can only do these things by ensuring that buses are an attractive alternative to the car for far more people.**





## That means making them:

- **More frequent:** Turn up and go services, where passengers don't need a timetable, should be provided on major urban routes. Feeder services, using conventional buses or smaller vehicles, can boost the frequency of connections from places away from main roads, connecting to the major routes with integrated ticketing. In low-density areas and at low-demand times of day, demand responsive vehicles can provide much higher levels of service than conventional fixed bus routes.
- **Faster and more reliable:** Buses must have greater priority on urban roads. LTAs will be given new powers to enforce traffic regulations. They will be expected to promote bus reliability, and to implement ambitious bus priority schemes, to receive new funding. These must be planned to complement walking and cycling schemes. We will consult shortly on increasing Metro Mayors' powers over key roads in their areas, where they are not already the highway authority.
- **Cheaper:** We want to see more low, flat fares in towns and cities, lower point-to-point fares elsewhere, and more daily price capping everywhere.
- **More comprehensive:** Overprovision on a few urban corridors with dozens of competing buses every hour should be reduced to boost under provision elsewhere. More services should operate in the evenings, weekends, and at night, and to smaller towns and villages, sometimes using new forms of demand responsive transport.
- **Easier to understand:** All public transport across England – bus, light rail and conventional rail – should be easy to access via journey planning websites and apps, with everything passengers need to know at their fingertips, including times, accessibility information, fares and live running. The data is already available; we want to see it used. Additionally:
  - Bus stops should show accurate information about the services stopping there. Every town, city and rural area should have easy to access, up to date maps, showing all local bus services.
  - Each local area should have a common numbering system, to avoid two routes with the same number in the same place, and bus stops should be named consistently by operators running the same bus routes.
  - Local branding that reflects the community and not the operator should be adopted, though successful existing brands such as Harrogate's 36 should not be sacrificed.
  - Routes should, as far as possible, be the same in the evenings and weekends as they are in the daytime.
  - Routes should be as easy as possible to understand, with simple, high-frequency trunk services rather than lots of low-frequency services combining together.
  - All operators which run the same route should accept the same tickets, use the same route number and be shown on the same timetable.
  - Timetable changes should be minimised and co-ordinated across operators, so they happen at the same time.
  - There should be heavy promotion and marketing to familiarise non-users with their local buses, to demystify the service for non-users, and introductory offers to promote the service to them.





- **Easier to use:** Common tickets, passes and daily capping should be available on all services irrespective of operator, at little or no premium to single-operator fares. All buses should accept contactless payment. Tickets and fares should be simple; flat fares should increasingly be standard in urban areas. Bus stations should be protected from closure and redevelopment and improved.
- **Better to ride in:** Comfortable, high-spec, modern buses will help make using the bus more appealing. Passengers should feel safe on board. Buses should offer end to end accessibility and provide ample areas for pushchairs and luggage in addition to the wheelchair space, so that everybody can travel with confidence. They should also offer audible and visible information, in addition to WIFI and charging as standard – allowing people to work and interact online whilst they travel, and make better use of their time. In holiday and scenic areas, much more should be done to promote buses to visitors, with the views from the top deck an attraction in themselves.
- **Better integrated with other modes and each other:** More bus routes should serve railway stations, as is standard in most European countries, and integrate with cycling and walking routes and networks. Additionally:
  - Railway stations should be hubs for connecting services with high quality stops close to station entrances. Schemes that move buses further away from stations should not be allowed.
  - Passengers should not have to buy a new ticket when changing buses. Easy through ticketing should be available between bus operators and other transport modes.
  - Our ambition is for an integrated ticketing approach to allow you to buy a through journey for local bus, rail and metro with a single tap on your smartphone.
- Full information on local bus services should be posted in railway stations, and the rail industry should promote bus links.
- Park-and-ride schemes should be expanded, and more rural bus services should carry bikes.
- **Greener:** We will support the introduction of at least 4,000 more zero emission buses.
- **Accessible and inclusive by design:** Disabled people must be able to use bus services as easily as other passengers. Making buses more accessible (not just the vehicles themselves, but also bus stops, bus stations, and by providing excellent customer service) will benefit other passengers too. Next stop announcements, for example, will help everyone know where the bus is going and when they've reached their stop.
- **Innovative:** We want to harness the entrepreneurial skills of the best operators to constantly strive for innovation in the market.
- **Seen as a safe mode of transport:** The sector must strive for the highest safety standards, upheld by the Traffic Commissioners. Marketing should emphasise the features that support personal safety, for example CCTV onboard and at bus stops and data that allows passengers to know when a bus is arriving so they do not have to wait in the street. This should be supported by more demand responsive services in the evenings and late at night.

We want bus services that mean fewer journeys are needed by private car. We want buses across the country to become the transport of choice for people with other options, as they already are in some places. Our changes therefore need to tackle negative perceptions by non-users. We will have failed if we do not address the perceptions which deter people from buses: