

Annual Report

May 2020 to April 2021



Ian Kirby

About us



Alex Lewis

Stagecoach in South Wales provides local bus services throughout South East Wales.

We also operate the T4 TrawsCymru services on behalf of TfW and Powys and express coaches on behalf of megabus.com. As a part of the Stagecoach Group plc, every day our staff aim to provide safe, reliable, punctual, clean and comfortable services at an affordable price for our customers. This annual report covers the COVID-19 pandemic year from May 2020 to April 2021.

“providing safe, reliable, punctual, clean and comfortable services at an affordable price”



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Key figures



passenger journeys



miles operated carrying customers on our network



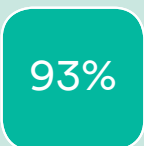
operating on routes throughout South East Wales in the unitary Authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath, Newport, Monmouthshire, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Swansea and Torfaen as well as services into Herefordshire



working across the 8 Stagecoach operating centres in South Wales



service reliability (% of scheduled mileage operated)
– 0.12% due to external factors such as weather, flooding, congestion, accidents/incidents etc



of journeys started on time – service punctuality (% of journeys run within 5 minutes of scheduled times)

Our history

Stagecoach is Britain's original and most successful transport start-up. It was founded in 1980 by Sir Brian Souter, a former bus conductor, and his sister, Dame Ann Gloag, an ex-theatre nurse, in Perth, Scotland.

Backed by redundancy money from their father, a former bus driver, the family business started out with just two buses, initially running intercity services between Scotland and London. Now, four decades later, Stagecoach is recognised as one of the world's most innovative transport groups and is part of the fabric of daily life in Britain. It has operated transport services in five different continents and worked successfully with public and private sector partners in different regulatory and commercial environments.

The Stagecoach history behind bus operations in South Wales can be traced back to the Transport Act 1968; buses were mainly owned and operated by either Local Authorities (e.g. Merthyr Tydfil Corporation, Caerphilly Urban District Council) or larger National Groups of private companies (e.g. Western Welsh, Red & White). The 1968 Act created the state owned National Bus Company. In South Wales this meant the amalgamation of Western Welsh and Red & White to become National Welsh in due course. The municipal companies largely continued unchanged although 1974 boundary changes did see the amalgamation of some smaller companies into larger organisations in order to create more sustainable units.

The 1985 Transport Act deregulated bus operations and in South Wales new operators commenced business operating on routes previously served by National Welsh. Several municipal operators and eventually National Welsh itself went out of business. Western Travel, a medium sized bus group based in Cheltenham bought the bus operations

based at Chepstow, Cwmbran, Brynmawr and Crosskeys from National Welsh in 1991. Twelve months later National Welsh collapsed and Western Travel expanded into Merthyr and the Rhymney Valley as a result. Western Travel was purchased by Stagecoach in 1993 and in 1997 Rhondda Buses was purchased adding depots at Porth and Caerphilly. In 2000 the bus operations of Phil Anslow Travel were purchased in Pontypool and in 2001 the company was renamed Stagecoach in South Wales as part of a re-branding project bringing all the former entities under one clear brand. In February 2006 Crosskeys Coach Hire Ltd was purchased and added to the Stagecoach brand offering network stability, improved integration and connectivity with standard ticketing across the operating area.

<https://bit.ly/2XBv6Vm>



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About us today

The Stagecoach South Wales business has invested over £30m in the last eleven years in new buses ticketing technology, customer payment methods inc contactless on bus, Wi-Fi & USB charging on buses, live bus times and journey planner developed for customer smart phones through the Stagecoach app. A further Stagecoach investment of £6m in a brand new bus Depot at Cwmbran with completion scheduled for summer 2022, and exhaust retrofitment investment taking 29 Euro V emission buses to Euro VI standard for all Stagecoach Cardiff operations.



Our passengers

We carried a total of 6.6 million passengers over the year, a reduction of 68% over the prior year due to the COVID pandemic striking from late March 2020. We received a total of 1,395 passenger comments about our services, many comments referring to customer adherence with COVID regulations whilst travelling on buses, and after the first lock-down easing, many buses were full due to restrictions over the number of seats that may be used on buses due to social distancing. That equates to one comment for every 4,730 passenger journeys, reflecting low patronage and a high level of COVID related feedback from customers. We comply with our industry code of practice, and every observation received is investigated and action taken to avoid repetition, which includes regular dialogue with Welsh Government with regard COVID regulations/restrictions affecting buses. We respond to all of our customers with an initial response within 7 days, and a full response to our customer's comment within 21 days.

Our services

We operated a total of 9.8 million miles over the year, that is 33% less than the prior year operated mileage. Most bus services were maintained at a skeleton service level through to the end of the summer in order to provide keyworkers with access to transport for work and maintaining links to supermarkets for essential shopping.

Although a pandemic year, one of our key measure of performance is the reliability and punctuality of our services. In the past year we operated 99.8% of our scheduled mileage, with 0.12% failure due to external reasons, and 0.10% due to internal reasons such as adverse weather (0.02%), congestion, diversions and road closures etc accounting for the rest. Our reliability is greatly affected by external reasons outside of our control as we share the highway with all other users.

“Although a pandemic year, we continue to seek improvements”

We monitor our services for punctuality and 93% of our services operated within 5 minutes of their scheduled journey start time. Although a pandemic year, we continue to seek improvements both through rescheduling services and where appropriate through consultation with the local highway authorities for new and more effective bus priority measures for the future. We continue to invest in additional resources to maintain as punctual a service as possible.

Our staff

We are a major local employer with at the end of the year 656 drivers (96 less than the prior year as we were unable to recruit and train to replace leavers due to restrictions during the pandemic) but 23 more drivers than required with the reduced service levels, 107 maintenance staff and 19 administrative, supervisory, management and support staff (8 less than the prior year; staffing reduced to cut costs during the pandemic and keep down the need for Welsh Government support). We employed up to 13 apprentices to provide skills for the future, all of whom have been retained throughout the pandemic. Through the year in order to minimise redundancies the Company made a claim for over 27,000 days of financial support from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.



Our Health & Well Being team drove many initiatives to keep staff engaged during the pandemic, including those on furlough who were away from work for months in the initial stages to protect the extremely clinically vulnerable and those with family members in this category. Such initiatives as collectively walking the distance from Lands End to John O'Groats, then around the British Isles and generally encouraging good mental health and fitness activities such as keeping active through local walks.

Staff from all depots collected food and sanitary items for their local food banks to help those most in need during the pandemic. Over 20 staff from Aberdare and Merthyr depots were awarded 'Star of the Month' for their contribution to improve their colleagues mental and physical health during the pandemic. They were awarded shopping vouchers which they used to buy books and art supplies for 'LATCH' Welsh Children's Cancer Charity.



Our achievements

- Were awarded funding for 29 buses to be converted from Euro V to Euro VI emission standard for operations in Cardiff. Once fitted, all Stagecoach buses in Cardiff will be Euro VI emission standard.
- During the pandemic our app features a full bus indicator and journey planner which also informs of the cost of travel and options to buy travel in advance with smartcard or on smart phone helping to reduce the time taken when boarding the bus.
- We invested in upgrading our ticket machines during 2018 on all buses so we are able to provide contactless payment option for our customers, the first network bus operator in Wales to do so.
- We were awarded part of the funding needed to help develop account based ticketing functionality, similar to Oyster in London, for roll out in 2022.
- From the pandemic exact fare system all surplus revenue from customers has been donated to the NHS, it raised over £55K for NHS charities together COVID-19 appeal.
- Throughout the pandemic our staff kept going, providing bus services for key workers and to get people to the shops for food. At the early stages of the pandemic (long before vaccinations), staff were concerned for their safety. We introduced measures to keep staff safe from the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.



Our fleet

We operate a fleet of 340 buses and coaches, of which we successfully bid for 29 to be converted from Euro V emissions to Euro VI for operations in Cardiff. We are fully compliant with PSVAR regulations, which means all our vehicles are easily accessible, replacing non compliant B10M coaches with double deck buses in the autumn of 2019.

All our vehicles are inspected, brake tested and emissions tested by our maintenance teams at 28 day intervals, using DVSA approved test equipment, and maintained to higher standards than the legal minimum to ensure safety and comfort is delivered consistently. During the pandemic, cleaning processes were enhanced, vehicle ventilation improved, all paper including newspaper withdrawn, hand sanitiser provided on buses, social distancing on buses and exact fare system introduced to reduce the risk of spreading the virus on buses. Prior to the pandemic, we have already achieved DVSA Earned Recognition accreditation.

Our fares

Our fares have not changed since 2018/19, other than the temporary exact fare system for the COVID period, to reduce the risk of virus spreading through contact with bank notes and coins.

- Promoted online and mobile tickets to customers to help reduce tickets bought on bus and contact free payments.
- Introduced £1 Cardiff City Centre hop on ticket for connectivity with Cardiff Rail Station.
- 12 trip flexible tickets in Cardiff, Cwmbran and Newport now available to buy as a mobile ticket on the Stagecoach App.

- Offered free travel to NHS staff from March until September 2020.
- You can now gift mobile tickets to another customer or transfer mobile tickets between devices.
- Introduced an exact fare policy on board in May 2020 following COVID safety travel guidance to protect staff and customers, raising over £55K for NHS charities together COVID-19 appeal.

With TfW Rail we offer Bus & Rail ticketing with the Rail Road ticket, buy your day or week ticket for Cardiff on the bus changing onto rail at your nearest station at Aberdare, Porth and Caerphilly. Plus Explore Cardiff & Valleys and Night Rider, in the Aberdare, Caerphilly, Cwmbran and Merthyr Tydfil areas. Train tickets are available for purchase on your local bus for connecting travel by rail to Cardiff. With Bus and Rail ticketing being available across the Stagecoach South Wales network through PLUSBUS:



<http://www.plusbus.info/>

We work with other Bus operators in South East Wales to offer multi-operator bus ticketing with NetworkRider:

<https://goo.gl/fPtPmE>

Keeping bus fares competitive and introducing special offer bus ticket deals are aimed at halting the trend toward travel by car. Plentiful and low cost car parking in the town and city centres are acting to increase traffic congestion which detracts from bus travel and increases the cost of bus travel as more resources are required in order to keep the bus running on time.

Since 1995 bus speeds have reduced by over 20% due to increasing traffic congestion and a lack of effective bus priority measures. This detracts from the customer experience putting pressure on revenue and increasing bus operator costs, forcing fares higher.

The environment

We used just over 4.4 million litres of ultra-low sulphur diesel last year, an average of 10 miles per gallon. We are working to reduce fuel consumption through driver telematics technology, engine management and all our drivers have completed a safe and fuel-efficient driving course which we refresh at regular intervals. Stagecoach has achieved the Carbon Trust Standard for reducing energy consumption, and has announced a challenging CO₂ reduction programme for the years ahead.

We will be increasing the number of Euro VI vehicles in the fleet by 29 through the upgrading of Euro V exhaust systems to Euro VI and by improving MPG efficiency by 5%, we've reduced the amount of nitrous oxide as an emission. All our fleet runs on ultra-low sulphur diesel, with a high-tech additive Envirox™ to reduce pollution and improve fuel consumption. Vehicle engines must meet increasingly higher Euro standards of exhaust emissions. 75% of the fleet are fitted with Euro 5 or Euro 6 engines. We recycle most of our waste, such as paper, cardboard, plastics, used oils, filters, batteries, parts, etc. We recycle bus washing water on most of our sites, and this will increase as bus washing machines are upgraded.



Tudor Thomas

Supporting the Community

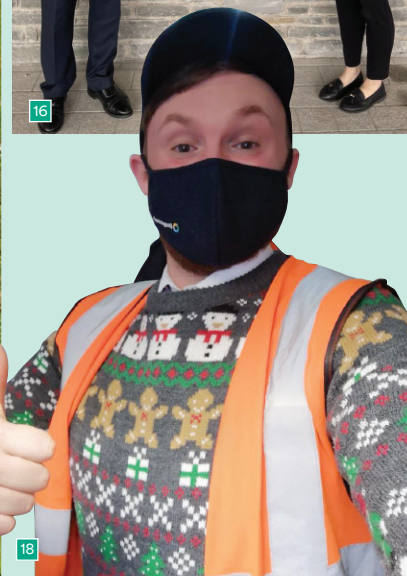
We continue to support the local communities across South Wales. We're not just a servant of the community, we're at the heart of it **#proudtoserve**



1. Merthyr staff clocking their miles for the health & well-being challenge.
2. Porth Electrician Kevin Mathais celebrating the new brand values.
3. A tribute to colleague Kevin Woolley.
4. Porth drivers celebrating the ffelecsi Rhondda service.
5. Blackwood driver Gareth Haywood arranged for Sirhowy Valley Scout Group to have a ride on a gold bus.
6. Porth staff Leanne Lloyd and Richard Brooks proudly wearing their Pride lanyards.

Supporting the Community

7. Marketing Manager Rosa Williams donating exact fare surplus money to NHS charities together COVID-19 appeal. **8.** Staff commendation for Paul Hawkins. **9.** and **18.** Staff Christmas jumper day raising money for LATCH children's charity. **10.** Porth staff collecting food for the local food bank. **11.** and **14.** Merthyr and Aberdare staff awarded 'Star of the Month' for walking challenge raising staff morale during the pandemic. **12.** Merthyr and Aberdare staff donating children's colouring books and pencils to LATCH Welsh Children's Cancer Charity. **13.** Stagecoach celebrating VE day. **15.** Cwmbran driver Mark Williams running to raise money for Prostate Cancer. **16.** Managing Director Nigel Winter presenting star of the month to Marketing Manager Rosa Williams in the new Merthyr Tydfil bus station **17.** Local boy Xavier dressed up as a Stagecoach bus driver for his school play.



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8.00am – 8.00pm

