



Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagair

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**From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
Nichola Mallon MLA**

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PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROVISION – RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The purpose of this letter is to let you know that I have approved a reduction in the level of public transport provision as a response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

As the Committee will be aware, the Government has issued social distancing guidance as well implementing school closures. This reduction in services will have a dramatic impact on our public transport network, but it is the right step to take given the clear guidance on non-essential travel and social distancing in the fight against COVID-19.

I have agreed reduced services from Monday 23 March 2020 as outlined in **Annex A** to this letter. These arrangements will allow Translink to accommodate social distancing while maintaining customer services, matching resourcing with timetable needs and maintaining the geographic coverage of the network. I hope you agree that these measures are critical in these unprecedented times and I will be keeping this situation under constant review and in line with government advice on public health.

I have enclosed an associated press release at **Annex B** which I have issued to announce the service reductions.

NICHOLA MALLON MLA
Minister for Infrastructure

Service Reductions From Monday 23rd March 2020

- Objective** In accordance with guidance to avoid all non-essential travel:
 Introduce restrictions on passenger numbers to accommodate social distancing
 Reduce service provision in line with reduced passenger demand
 Maintain customer service / service resilience
 Reduce Costs
 Match service critical staff availability to the timetable needs
 Enable operational resources to be focused on cleaning activities
 Maintain geographic coverage
- Metro/Glider** The reduced service will be equivalent to a Metro holiday timetable, this will remove services which are heavily used by schools in the morning and evening peaks but otherwise frequency will be maintained throughout the day.
- This can be reduced further to a Saturday service with some enhancements in approx. 2 weeks time
- The 600 service to Belfast City airport will drop to an hourly frequency.
- NIR** Normal Saturday Service, this is a well understood timetable which will maintain a reduced frequency service on all routes. Given the complexity of timetable changes on the Railway it is only possible to move to a timetable which has already been tested from a safety perspective.
- Enterprise will operate a reduced Service, reducing from 16 to 10 Cross Border services. This will be reviewed again with Irish rail in the coming weeks.
- Ulsterbus** The reduced service will be equivalent to an Ulsterbus holiday timetable, this will remove journeys which are heavily used by schools in the morning and evening peaks but otherwise services will be maintained throughout the day. This will continue to provide coverage in rural areas and Ulsterbus Town Services.
- This can be reduced further to a Saturday service with some enhancements in approx. 2 weeks time.
- The last Goldline departures from Belfast will be at 10pm.
- Cross Border Belfast to Dublin bus services will operate a reduced frequency service, reducing to every 2 hours from 7am to 9pm rather than an hourly service and will operate as the X1 providing service to all current stops. This will be reviewed again with Bus Eireann in the coming weeks.
- The Derry/Londonderry to Dublin service will be reduced.

Frequency will be reduced on the 300 Belfast International airport service, which also serves Templepatrick P&R.

Information All Passenger information sources will be updated – Contact Centre, Web site, Journey planner and social media will update

This situation will be kept under constant review and in line with government advice on public health.

Minister announces reduction in public transport services as response to COVID-19 outbreak

Infrastructure Minister, Nichola Mallon, has approved a reduction in the level of public transport provision as a response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

From Monday 23rd March, Translink Bus Services (Ulsterbus, Metro and Glider) will operate a reduced service timetable and NI Railways will operate a Saturday timetable. Translink is also reducing service timetable for cross-border coach and Enterprise rail services.

The Minister confirmed that the changes have been introduced in response to the latest government advice to avoid all non-essential travel and on social distancing.

Minister Mallon said: **“These measures will have a dramatic impact on our public transport network but it is the right step to take given the clear advice from government to avoid all non-essential travel and on social distancing and its effectiveness in the fight against COVID-19. Advice we must all follow.”**

The changes to the timetables will ensure we can continue to provide public transport coverage across Northern Ireland while responding to the impact of reduced demand. The public should be assured for those who need to travel, public transport will continue to operate and we will continue to ensure all those using public transport can do so safely in line with guidance on social distancing.

“Keeping communities across the North safe at this very concerning time is my priority and I want to reassure the public that my Department is doing everything it can to ensure essential services and connections are maintained for those using and reliant on our infrastructure network. I will keep the public transport situation under constant review in line with government advice on public health”

Notes to editors:

Full details of the new timetables are available on Translink's website and journey planner.

Minister Mallon will address the media at today's NI Executive press conference.

All media queries should be directed to the DfI Press Office on 028 9054 0007. Out of office hours please contact the duty press officer on 028 9037 8110.