

# News story: Bus revolution to put power in passengers' hands

Rural bus services could be overhauled thanks to a new digital system pioneered by the government.

Buses Minister Nusrat Ghani has today (26 March 2019) announced £4 million for a platform which will provide location information about services – giving greater certainty to passengers about when their bus will arrive.

The platform enables app developers to use information from GPS trackers, which are already fitted to 97% of buses. This will provide a service which is available in some major cities. It will give people in other areas across the country, including rural and remote areas, the ability to plan journeys more easily.

Research shows that one of the barriers to young people using buses is not having information readily available on their phones but with fares and times at their fingertips, this will cut the uncertainty out of bus travel.

The drive towards improved and open data for bus services across England is the first step in cutting the barriers to introducing mobility-as-a-service, one-stop-ticketing products and applications, in a bid to increase usage.

Buses Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

People expect to turn up to a bus stop knowing when their next service will arrive, particularly in rural areas.

We're investing in systems to make it easier for people to find out where their bus is, how much it will cost and how long it will take.

This will save the time people waste waiting, give more people certainty over services and help increase passenger numbers.

It could help revolutionise bus travel and move us one step closer to [mobility-as-a-service](#) and on-demand public transport systems.

On-demand bus travel is already available in Liverpool, run by ArrivaClick. Routes are not fixed, but are determined by where passengers want to go within a corridor – in Liverpool, 6 luxury 15-seat buses take people in an area between the city centre and John Lennon Airport. These services are driven by high quality data and computer-based algorithms.

The funding announced today builds on the recently published [Future of mobility urban strategy](#), which looks at how people will use transport in the future and how new technology can make journeys better.

The government is also investing in ways to speed up bus journeys. As part of the [first tranche of the £2.5 billion Transforming Cities Fund, Derby and Nottingham, the North East, Portsmouth and Southampton](#) will see the deployment of bus priority traffic lights to speed up trips to the city centres.

This will help unlock productivity and help the economies in these areas to thrive.

The [bus open data regulations are being implemented as part of the Bus Services Act](#), which gives local authorities additional powers to partner with bus operators and shape services in their areas to deliver improvements to passengers.

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## **Press release: Foreign Secretary call with Cuban Foreign Minister**

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Foreign Secretary call with Cuban Foreign Minister – GOV.UK

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Following the call on 25 March, a Foreign Office spokesman said:

The Foreign Secretary spoke to Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez on the first full day of the Royal visit to Cuba by Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall. The Foreign Secretary said this visit was a flagship moment in our longstanding policy of positive engagement with Cuba and is testament to how far our bilateral relationship has developed. He said he hoped this provides opportunities to increase our cooperation in areas of mutual interest that UK and Cuba already enjoy.

The Foreign Secretary also discussed the situation in Venezuela where so many people are suffering at the hands of the Maduro regime. He expressed the UK's deep concern on Cuba's support for Maduro and called on Cuba to play a more constructive role in resolving the Venezuelan crisis.

The call ended with the Foreign Secretary thanking Foreign Minister Rodríguez for hosting Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall and looked forward to strengthening the relationship between the UK and Cuba. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, who has joined the Royal visit to Cuba, will continue discussions on our bilateral cooperation, human rights and Venezuela with senior representatives of the Cuban government.

## **Further information**

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