



## Coronavirus COVID-19

Mr. Jim Meade  
Chief Executive Officer  
Iarnród Éireann  
Connolly Station  
Dublin 1  
25th April 2020

Mr Ray Coyne  
Chief Executive Officer.  
Dublin Bus  
59 Upper O'Connell St  
Dublin 1

Mr. Stephen Kent  
Chief Executive Officer  
Bus Éireann  
Broadstone  
Dublin 7

***Re: Protective face masks for frontline transport workers***

Dear Sirs,

Having previously raised the issue of protective face masks for frontline staff, I note that the global debate about the use and effectiveness of such personal protective equipment has moved on apace, with many employers and Jurisdictions issuing advice and guidelines about their use.

Furthermore, I note from publicly available documents that Irish Rail is in the process of procuring barrier type face masks on behalf of the entire CIÉ Group. The discussions I have had with your HR personnel over recent days (telephone conversations) ran along the lines of the necessity to source such protective equipment in a matter of days, time being of the essence.

I now note that the date advised to potential suppliers is for delivery towards the middle of May. Whilst the timetable, or programme for incremental changes to the current 'lockdown' have yet to be announced, it is anticipated that an increased level of commuter activity will ensue sooner rather than later.

To this end and to ensure that essential frontline transport workers continue to be in a position to provide vital transport links across the Country, it is imperative that the acquisition of these barrier type face masks are not complicated or delayed by cumbersome procurement processes. To quote Michael Ryan of the World Health Organisation (WHO), 'perfection is the enemy of the good when it comes to emergency management.....speed trumps perfection'

Ironically, the conversation in some countries has moved towards the mandatory wearing of face masks as a prerequisite for accessing public transport: our members are observing such debates and are anxious to ensure that they will have the appropriate PPE in advance of any Government announcement which may see more of our Citizens returning to our buses and trains.

I trust that you will give this correspondence due and speedy consideration.

Yours Sincerely

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Dermot O'Leary  
General Secretary



22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020

# NOTICE TO MEMBERS

## FAQ's Dublin Bus – COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme

### Dublin Bus has applied for and been granted access to the Covid-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme

#### What is the COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme?

The new COVID-19 Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme was announced on 24 March 2020. It allows employers to continue to pay their employees during the COVID-19 emergency. The aim is to keep employees registered with their employers, so that they will be able to get back to work quickly after the pandemic.

The COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme applies both to employers that top up employees' wages and those that are not in a position to do so.

The scheme will run for 12 weeks from 26 March 2020.

#### What is an eligible employee?

To be eligible, the employee must be on the payroll on 29 February 2020. There is no age restriction and it includes those employees on fulltime, part-time, temporary and short-time work arrangements.

#### What do I have to do to avail of the scheme?

You do not have to do anything. It is a matter for your employer to register for the Subsidy scheme with Revenue.

#### What if I am already in receipt of a Department of Employment and Social Protection (DEASP) support payment?

Employers must not operate this scheme for any employee who is making a claim for duplicate support (e.g. Pandemic Unemployment Payment, Illness benefit, other DEASP payments) from the DEASP.

#### How much will I receive?

You will receive a subsidy amount from Revenue as per the criteria below and this will be topped up by the Company to your normal net wage.

On 15 April, changes to the Wage Subsidy Scheme were announced.

- The subsidy will increase from 70% to 85% for employees with a previous average take home pay below €412 per week.
- The subsidy will be €350 per week for employees with a previous average take home pay between €412 and €500 per week.
- The subsidy remains the same for employees with a previous take home pay of between €500 and €586 per week.

- A tiered system has been introduced for employees with a previous take home pay of over €586 per week.

The new rates apply from 4 May and will not be backdated.

#### **Will I get insurable PRSI weeks?**

Yes, although no employee PRSI applies, entitlements will not be broken, and you will get insurable weeks or credited contributions.

#### **Is the wage subsidy taxable on the employee?**

The payments are liable to income tax; ***however, the subsidy is not taxable in real-time through the PAYE system during the period of the Subsidy scheme.*** Instead you will be liable for tax on the subsidy amount paid to you by the Company by way of review at the end of the year.

Revenue have not yet clarified how tax due at year end will be collected. This may be in the form of a tax demand or the more likely mechanism of reducing tax credits for subsequent years. Additionally, if an individual has any additional tax credits to claim, for example health expenses, this will also reduce any tax that may be owing.

**Why am I receiving a higher net pay?** Any increase in your earnings arises because Income tax, USC, and PRSI are not deducted from the Temporary Wage Subsidy.

#### **What are the implications of receiving a higher net pay?**

The impact on your income tax and PRSI will vary depending on your individual earnings, tax credits and PRSI class.

Based on calculations using the average earnings of our employees, we estimate that an eligible employee's take home pay could increase by between 15% and 25% during the period of the COVID-19 Wage Subsidy scheme.

The Subsidy portion of an employee's wage is not taxable through the PAYE system now, but it is considered taxable income that will be recouped by Revenue in the future.

Employees will be liable to pay Income Tax and USC and possibly PRSI on the Subsidy by way of review at the end of the year, Revenue has stated that depending on the length of the scheme this may be recouped over future tax years.

#### **Can the Company arrange to deduct PRSI/PAYE/USC as per normal, instead of a temporary freeze and Revenue recouping it later?**

No, Revenue have instructed that all employees in the scheme must remain on current Tax details as provided by Revenue through ROS and that employers should not look to withhold Tax refunds that arise as a result.

The Company suggests that if you receive a higher net pay over the duration of the scheme, you should, where possible, set aside the additional amount of net pay received, e.g. if you are a member of a credit union perhaps you could increase your payroll deductions during this time. You can request a balancing statement from Revenue at year end and at that time transfer any outstanding Tax liability to Revenue. This will minimise the impact of any Tax liability in future years.

#### **Where can I get more detailed information on the scheme?**

You can visit the Revenue website for more detailed information on the scheme

# National Bus & Rail Union



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Mr Allan Grant  
Human Resources Service Manager  
Dublin Bus  
59 Upper O'Connell Street  
Dublin 1

17<sup>th</sup> April 2020

RE: Loss of Earnings

Dear Sir

During these unprecedented times, our members have not been slow putting their shoulder to the wheel and fulfilling every request asked of them, it is therefore with great surprise that with the implementation of a Saturday plus service by the Company some of our members who work either Euro Bogies or Universals have had their earnings reduced.

This we believe is a very unfair act on behalf of the Company to casually annex a Drivers income with no discussion or agreement having taken place

We would request that any Driver who operates any of the fore mentioned duties and has lost monies due to the Saturday plus schedule should be reimbursed as soon as possible.

We hope this clarifies our position

Yours sincerely

Brian Young  
Branch Secretary

Mr Ray Coyne  
Chief Executive Officer  
Dublin Bus  
O'Connell Street  
Dublin 1

Mr Stephen Kent  
Chief Executive Officer  
Bus Éireann  
Broadstone  
Dublin 7

5<sup>th</sup> April 2020

**Re: Covid-19/Additional Measures**

Dear Sirs,

I refer to the above and reports (overnight) from London that at least five bus worker colleagues have unfortunately passed away as a result of contracting Covid-19.

Whilst we do not know the exact details surround these tragic deaths, it has nonetheless served to heighten the concerns of drivers in this jurisdiction regarding their personal safety. What is noteworthy about the media reports from the UK is the fact that the Union representing Bus drivers are in engagement with TFL on the matter of ensuring the safety of drivers, this is in distinct contrast to the position adopted by the NTA which, following a request from the NBRU (9<sup>th</sup> March) to engage, refused point blank to meet with the representatives of the most vital resource (drivers) required to keep essential Public Transport operating during the coronavirus, this is something that will require to be tackled post this crisis.

I am acutely aware that both Companies are continuing to disinfect driver cabs and other touch points onboard buses, whilst this had previously instilled some measure of confidence and comfort to drivers, the reports from the UK has served to further concentrate the minds on the matter of frontline staff safety.

We have also received reports from a significant number of members and colleagues of a certain element of undesirables travelling across the Bus Network, some of whom are being described as 'chasing the dragon', a euphemism for Drug taking. This is unacceptable, particularly in circumstances where travel is restricted to essential travel only.

Following representations from members and their colleagues, no doubt informed by those reports from the UK, the NBRU is now advancing the following additional measures for implementation:

**Dublin Bus/Bus Éireann**

- **Passengers to enter and exit through Centre Doors (Fleet permitting).**

Both Companies should seek a commitment from the NTA that the current public awareness campaign will include advice to commuters in this regard.

- **An outline/schedule of the disinfecting/cleaning regime required (mobile) during the course of Bus operations**

- A commitment that non-essential travel will be eliminated (this will require policing).

#### **Bus Éireann (exclusive)**

- Drivers operating LE/LD/LF type vehicles will load passengers from the rear door with no interaction with the passengers.
- Drivers Operating coaches SE, SP, SC/LC/VE type will ask passengers to board only when the driver has stepped off the bus and applies the Social distancing guidelines recommended by the HSE, the driver will then reembark after the passengers are seated.

The issue pertaining to protective screens is one which the NBRU has previously raised within the context of our campaign on anti-social behaviour. This crisis has now resulted in the matter being brought centre stage, in fact, reports overnight from Northern Ireland are informing us that Translink are **immediately** moving towards installing protective screens to ensure maximum safety for its drivers from the deadly Coronavirus.

Whilst the NBRU understands that the installation of screens may take time (hence the measures requested above), we are aware that some of the recently retired Dublin Bus Fleet, namely, AX, EV, and VG type (2005/07/09) might be suitable to temporarily introduce on some Bus Éireann services.

**Consequently, the NBRU propose the additional exclusive measures for Bus Éireann:**

- Dublin Bus have surplus vehicles (AX, EV, VG, VT) that have security screens and could be deployed on Bus Éireann those routes without height restrictions.
- Immediate duplication of Translink actions in fitting screens to coach type vehicles.

This would assist in alleviating driver exposure and is something that should be examined post-haste.

The above measures are being advanced within the context of Public Transport being an essential and vital service towards combatting Covid-19, the Health/Safety of frontline staff (our heroes) and the Statutory Duty of Care which legally resides with employers, are fundamental to ensuring service continuation during this grave crisis.

The NBRU is also acutely aware that the current protection measures and the advices on which they are informed are moving at pace, the fluidity of the recommendations from such bodies as the HSE, WHO and latterly the CDC (US) from where the current debate on whether to wear Masks or not has originated, is a clear demonstration of how quickly we all need to react in the current environment.

I trust the foregoing will be received in the spirit of its intent:

**Keeping Staff Safe and Operating an Essential Public Transport Service.**

Yours sincerely,



Dermot O'Leary  
General Secretary



Mr Phil Donohue  
Human Resource & Development Manager  
Dublin Bus  
O'Connell Street  
Dublin 1

Ms. Sinead Kilkelly  
Chief People Person  
Bus Éireann  
Broadstone  
Dublin 7

Mr Ciaran Masterson  
Head of Human Resource  
Irish Rail  
Connolly Station  
Dublin 1

5<sup>th</sup> April 2020

***Re: Revenue Covid-19 Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme***

Dear Sirs/Madam,

I refer to the above and the ongoing debate among many within the workforce of your respective Companies regarding so-called wage subsidies.

There does appear to be some confusion abroad in relation to the different interventions announced by Government regarding payment of wages during the Covid-19 crisis.

The NBRU has held the view, from the commencement of the crisis, that the NTA has a fundamental role to play in ensuring that the three CIE Companies would be in a position to meet all obligations to staff at each Company, **inclusive of maintaining staff in full employment.**

Whilst we are aware that each Company may separately apply for the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme, which will be managed by the Revenue Commissioners, it would surely make more sense if the 'Exchequer' contribution came through the State Agency (NTA) that currently has service contracts with each transport provider, including the requirement to fund the wages (through the respective contracts) of all staff currently employed by each Company.

The confusion among workers relates to who can or cannot draw down a wage subsidy, or whether an employee can access a subsidy in a similar fashion to that of say, a worker whose firm has ceased trading for the foreseeable.

It is our contention that the full employment of all staff can and should be maintained across all three of the CIE subsidiaries. Nothing gleaned from our research into the Government wage subsidy measures has diluted or changed our view on this matter, **gambling with the long-term job security of Dublin Bus/Bus Éireann/Iarnród Éireann employees at a time when there is no certainty around what the future may hold is untenable and is something that the NBRU will vehemently resist.**

You will all be aware that my office wrote to you regarding how staff would be treated under the Welfare Scheme, should they become ill with, or are required to self-isolate as a result of Covid-19, your responses essentially dealt with the self-isolation piece, which at the time of my correspondence was particularly topical.

I am now to request that you will apply the same criteria (100% on 'A' Scale) to those that are off ill as a direct result of contracting Covid-19/Coronavirus.

I have written separately (this evening) to the CEO's of Dublin Bus and Bus Eireann regarding further protection measures that should be implemented, particularly in light of the unfortunate news overnight from London, where five Bus colleagues have passed away having contracted the coronavirus.

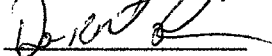
One of the issues which has come to light (particularly on the Bus Network) is the lack of facilities (due to Shop/Café closures) for staff to intermittently wash their hands in line with HSE Guidelines.

Further to those measures outlined in my correspondence to CEO's, I am now to request that you will immediately move towards **splitting duties (rosters) into segments which will see frontline staff spending considerably less time exposed to interacting with commuters**. It may also obviate the requirement for some staff to seek a job share or take unpaid leave in order to spend less time at the coalface.

Furthermore, the ability, (inclusive of Exchequer support) to fund the current wage bill at Dublin Bus should negate the requirement to ask staff to take five days leave as previously advised.

The maintenance of full employment coupled with a reduced service requirement should provide for an ample human and fleet resource to facilitate the foregoing.

Yours sincerely



Dermot O'Leary  
General Secretary



Mr Ray Coyne  
Chief Executive Officer  
Dublin Bus  
O'Connell Street  
Dublin 1

Mr Stephen Kent  
Chief Executive Officer  
Bus Éireann  
Broadstone  
Dublin 7

5<sup>th</sup> April 2020

**Re: Covid-19/Additional Measures**

Dear Sirs,

I refer to the above and reports (overnight) from London that at least five bus worker colleagues have unfortunately passed away as a result of contracting Covid-19.

Whilst we do not know the exact details surround these tragic deaths, it has nonetheless served to heighten the concerns of drivers in this jurisdiction regarding their personal safety. What is noteworthy about the media reports from the UK is the fact that the Union representing Bus drivers are in engagement with TFL on the matter of ensuring the safety of drivers, this is in distinct contrast to the position adopted by the NTA which, following a request from the NBRU (9<sup>th</sup> March) to engage, refused point blank to meet with the representatives of the most vital resource (drivers) required to keep essential Public Transport operating during the coronavirus, this is something that will require to be tackled post this crisis.

I am acutely aware that both Companies are continuing to disinfect driver cabs and other touch points onboard buses, whilst this had previously instilled some measure of confidence and comfort to drivers, the reports from the UK has served to further concentrate the minds on the matter of frontline staff safety.

We have also received reports from a significant number of members and colleagues of a certain element of undesirables travelling across the Bus Network, some of whom are being described as 'chasing the dragon', a euphemism for Drug taking. This is unacceptable, particularly in circumstances where travel is restricted to essential travel only.

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**Consequently, the NBRU propose the additional exclusive measures for Bus Éireann:**

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- **Immediate duplication of Translink actions in fitting screens to coach type vehicles.**

This would assist in alleviating driver exposure and is something that should be examined post-haste.

The above measures are being advanced within the context of Public Transport being an essential and vital service towards combatting Covid-19, the Health/Safety of frontline staff (our heroes) and the Statutory Duty of Care which legally resides with employers, are fundamental to ensuring service continuation during this grave crisis.

The NBRU is also acutely aware that the current protection measures and the advices on which they are informed are moving at pace, the fluidity of the recommendations from such bodies as the HSE, WHO and latterly the CDC (US) from where the current debate on whether to wear Masks or not has originated, is a clear demonstration of how quickly we all need to react in the current environment.

I trust the foregoing will be received in the spirit of its intent:

**Keeping Staff Safe and Operating an Essential Public Transport Service.**

Yours sincerely,



Dermot O'Leary

General Secretary

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Mr Dermot O Leary  
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Mr John Murphy  
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Mr Sean Heading  
Regional Secretary  
T.E.E.U.

Mr Willie Quigley  
Regional Officer  
Unite Union

Mr Pat Mc Cusker  
Senior Irish Organiser  
T.S.S.A.

02/04/2020

**Re: Covid -19 Public Health Emergency  
Interim annual leave measures**

Dear Sirs,

I refer to the above and to discussions and related correspondence regarding the annual leave measures proposed in my letter dated 29 April 2020.

Whilst I fully understand the concerns raised in correspondence and during our discussions, I again wish to clarify the reasoning behind our proposal which was and remains a means of managing the current crisis in a measured way while also retaining all employees in full time employment.

Having reviewed the process outlined in my letter dated 29 March and taking cognisance of the issues and concerns discussed I have revised the proposals for employee annual leave which I have outlined below.

I also propose a joint review will take place on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May to review learnings and agree a process going forward.

## **Drivers:**

From 1 April 2020 to 5 May 2020 all drivers will be allocated one day's annual leave per week up to 5 days for 5-day week drivers and 4 days for 4-day week drivers. The following process will take place in advance locally.

- The annual leave skip for drivers will be suspended until 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020
- Identify employee annual leave accrual pre 2020
- Take cognisance of annual leave taken by each employee from the 2020 allocation and what is remaining for 2020
- Seek volunteers from the driving grade who might want to take annual leave in blocks of 5 days or more
- Seek volunteers who may wish to job- share for a period of time
- All of the above to be considered in the context of ensuring continuity of service on a daily basis

## **Accrued leave – Driver grades**

In addition to the days above, drivers who are carrying accrued days from 2019 in excess of 5 days must take the accrued days between 1 April 2020 and 30 June 2020 as follows:

- Carried forward leave of up to 10 days – take an extra 5 days
- Carried forward leave of 10 to 15 days – take an extra 10 days
- Carried forward leave of 15 plus days must with the help of their line manager endeavour to reduce this figure down to 5 days accrued by the end of the above period.

Accrued leave can be taken in blocks of 5 days or broken down into single days with the agreement of the local manager and business needs.

## **Engineering grades**

From 1 April 2020 to 5 May 2020 all Engineering Grade employees will be allocated one day's annual leave per week up to 5 days for 5-day week employees and 4 days for 4-day week employees. The following process will take place in advance locally.

- Identify employee annual leave accrual pre 2020
- Take cognisance of annual leave taken by each employee from the 2020 allocation and what is remaining for 2020
- Seek volunteers from the Engineering grade who might want to take annual leave in blocks of 5 days or more.
- Seek volunteers who may wish to job- share for a period of time
- All of the above to be considered in the context of ensuring continuity of service on a daily basis

### **Accrued leave – Engineering grades**

In addition to the days above, employees who are carrying accrued days from 2019 in excess of 5 days must take the accrued days between 1 April 2020 and 30 June 2020 as follows:

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- Carried forward leave of 10 to 15 days – take an extra 10 days
- Carried forward leave of 15 plus days must with the help of their line manager endeavour to reduce this figure down to 5 days accrued by the end of the above period.

Accrued leave can be taken in blocks of 5 days or broken down into single days with the agreement of the local manager and business needs.

### **All other grades**

From 1 April 2020 to 5 May 2020 all other grades will be allocated one day's annual leave per week up to 5 days for 5-day week employees and 4 days for 4-day week employees. The following process will take place in advance locally.

- Identify employee annual leave accrual pre 2020
- Take cognisance of annual leave taken by each employee from the 2020 allocation and what is remaining for 2020
- Seek volunteers who might want to take annual leave in blocks of 5 days or more.
- Seek volunteers who may wish to job- share for a period of time
- All of the above to be considered in the context of ensuring continuity of service on a daily basis

### **Accrued leave – All other grades**

In addition to the days above, employees who are carrying accrued days from 2019 in excess of 5 days must take the accrued days between 1 April 2020 and 30 June 2020 as follows:

- Carried forward leave of up to 10 days – take an extra 5 days
- Carried forward leave of 10 to 15 days – take an extra 10 days
- Carried forward leave of 15 plus days must with the help of their line manager endeavour to reduce this figure down to 5 days accrued by the end of the above period.

Accrued leave can be taken in blocks of 5 days or broken down into single days with the agreement of the local manager and business needs.

### **Remote working**

Employees who do not have remote access or who cannot carry out their full role from home will be required to take annual leave from 31 March 2020 to 11 April 2020. A review will take place in advance of 12 April 2020 and further advice will be issued.

Employees who have remote access and can carry out their full role from home, will be required to work from home from 29 March 2020 to 11 April 2020. These employees will be required to take 1 day's annual leave each week and a total of 5 days before 5 May 2020.

## **Overtime and rest day working**

Overtime and rest day working will be suspended in all work areas until further notice. Local managers will need to manage annual leave allocation without the need to default to overtime or rest day working in all locations.

## **Health and safety**

I would also like to advise the following

- We have procured an ample supply of hand sanitiser for our daily needs with a supply continuity for 6 months. We also have procured adequate stock of gloves and equipment wipes. These have been distributed to all locations and are monitored to ensure adequate stock daily
- Effective from 16 March we introduced additional night time cleaning and disinfectant on the full fleet of all frequently touched hard surfaces including drivers cab.
- Effective from 30 March we commenced day-time cleaning in all depots for buses pulling in/out after morning peak approx. 30% of fleet
- We propose to commence on bus cleaning during off-peak times at one city termini effective from Friday 3 April with a roll-out to other locations once the additional resources required become available.
- To help comply with social distancing in the Earl Place and Harristown canteen, two of the seats were removed from each of the tables and a Perspex sheet was fitted to divide the table.
- 30 March – communication sent out to all employees who have certain underlying conditions to contact Human Resources with regards to obtaining a phone assessment with the CMO. Two Human Resources employees will co-ordinate these calls and liaise with both the CMO and line managers.

I trust the above clarifies our position and I will keep you advised of any further developments.

Yours Sincerely

Phil Donohue

Head of Human Resources and Development

Dublin Bus

# National Bus & Rail Union



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Coronavirus  
COVID-19



1<sup>ST</sup> April 2020

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

### Meeting on Dublin Bus proposed Measures to Address Staff Surpluses during the Coronavirus crisis

A meeting took place between both Trade Unions representing the Driving Grade (only) and senior Dublin Bus Management to discuss proposals that Dublin Bus issued on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

Company stated that, as a result of the Government/NTA decision to implement Saturday services, Dublin Bus now has approximately 582 Surplus drivers. Management also informed us of the wider industrial environment, 400,000 job losses, pay cuts in a lot of sectors and expressed concerns about the future viability of the Company, stating that all proposals/suggestions are designed to enable Dublin Bus to have the ability to return to normal when this crisis abates.

The Unions, having consulted and listened to feedback from members over the last number of days, informed Dublin Bus that the proposal for Drivers to take 10 days leave between now and the end of June was unacceptable.

We requested the Company to consider other options before applying the Annual Leave option, i.e. Voluntary Annual Leave, Swap Rest days, Special (unpaid leave), self-isolation, illness, all of which would contingent on the circumstances at each Garage.

After some debate, some of which was acrimonious, the following (final) position was advanced by the Company.



- Staff with accrued leave will be required to take this leave as per previous correspondence.
- Drivers will be required to utilise up to 5 days annual leave between today and 5<sup>th</sup> May.
- The situation will be reviewed on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020.
- The allocation of leave will be flexible and can be added to the beginning and end of long weekend/short weekend.
- Drivers can swap rest day (rest midweek and work Saturday)
- Drivers can take annual leave in block if desired.
- The Holiday Skip will be suspended, pending the review on 5<sup>th</sup> May.

The Company informed the meeting that the measures on Annual Leave are in line with Irish Rail and other Semi-States, i.e. Dublin Airport Authority (DAA). Going on to inform us that: despite being an essential service and supplying Public Transport, Dublin Bus is not immune to the current crisis, and constraints over funding may materialise post crisis.

**Note: We can confirm (having checked with Union colleagues) that the Annual Leave proposal is inline with Irish Rail & DAA.**

We informed the Company that we would not be discussing further measures (May review) that would involve delving any further into Staff Annual Leave,

The NBRU is determined, along with colleagues, to do all that is required to maintain Dublin Bus and all CIE Workers in full employment through these challenging and uncertain times.

We are acutely aware that the 2009 recession resulted in a loss of over 200 marked in positions and recruitment was frozen for several years.

NBRU Representatives remain available to assist members throughout this crisis.

Issued by NBRU  
Tom Darby House



## Coronavirus COVID-19

Mr Phil Donohue  
Head of Human Resource & Development  
Dublin Bus  
O'Connell Street  
Dublin 1

31st March 2020

***Re: Covid-19/Exchange of Correspondence 29th/30th March 2020***

Dear Sir,

I refer to the above and the exchange of correspondence between our respective offices regarding Dublin Bus proposed measures for service continuation.

Whilst I acknowledge that you are prepared to engage with the Principals of the driver unions on the issues outlined in your letter (29th March), I wish, in advance of this proposed engagement, to advise of the feedback received by NBRU representatives from the Shop floor.

Not surprisingly, the notion that the drivers would forfeit Annual Leave to the extent that they may end up with no leave for their family holiday is untenable.

I am extremely conscious of the environment we are currently operating within, I am also aware that alternatives to the Leave proposal might not be palatable to a significant amount of drivers, but, as you will appreciate, my role is to act as a conduit for my members, their views will have to be taken onboard.


I am also aware that I have a role in providing leadership, telling people as it is. I have, in various letters and notices outlined both what's at stake here, and how hundreds of thousands of workers are effectively in limbo, not knowing what the future holds, or if they have will have any employment too return to after the crisis.

Whilst I certainly do not want to see any Dublin Bus employee in a similar situation; but there are times when you have to acknowledge that people are more than capable of reading the tea leaves for themselves. This is one of those occasions.

In addition, I am acutely aware that the passenger numbers are down by up to 92% and we are unsure of the 'next moves' by Government/NTA regarding service requirements.

In view of the foregoing, not least the feedback on Annual Leave, it may be wise to look at all other alternatives at this juncture.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dermot O'Leary', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dermot O'Leary  
General Secretary

# National Bus & Rail Union



Tom Darby House  
54 Parnell Square,  
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Mr Jim Meade  
Chief Executive Officer  
Iarnród Éireann  
Connolly Station  
Dublin 1

30th March 2020

## *Re: Covid-19/Essential Travel*

Dear Sir,

I refer to the above and the Taoiseach's announcement on Friday last regarding further restrictions in order to combat the coronavirus.

One of the fundamental measures was the requirement that travel on Public Transport would be for 'Essential' reasons only.

Unfortunately, the experience to-date, three days in, is that the undesirable element that the NBRU has consistently highlighted throughout our campaign for a dedicated Garda Public Transport Division, are still travelling on our Trains.

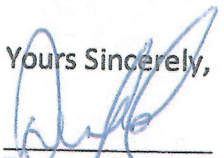
These people have no respect for law and order, consistently travelling up and down and across our Railways, delivering 'mule like', all sorts of substances and concoctions which are as about as legal as a €15 Note.

There is an immediate and urgent requirement to Stop these individuals from Boarding Trains.

It is simply not acceptable, as has been alleged, that management personnel would simply turn a blind eye or wring their hands and allow these people to potentiality terrorise staff and other commuters.

Please indicate by return, that you will immediately put measures in place to Stop this non-essential travel.

Yours Sincerely,

  
Dermot O'Leary  
General Secretary

# National Bus & Rail Union



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---

Mr Phil Donohue  
Head of Human Resources and Development  
Dublin Bus  
59 Upper O'Connell Street  
Dublin 1

30<sup>th</sup> March 2020

***Re: Covid-19 Public Health Emergency/Further Restrictions***

Dear Sir,

I refer to the above and your correspondence from yesterday evening, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

In the first instance, I should acknowledge that our meeting on Friday last (both Driver Unions & Principals/Senior Management), at which we discussed Driver only issues, was informative within the context of what the Company are considering in terms of 'next moves' towards maintaining service levels and more fundamental to us Trade Unionists, the maintaining of employment of all staff at Dublin Bus.

You will of course appreciate (we did inform you on Friday) that there are many views abroad regarding the merits of what it is we are all trying to achieve here, battle our way through the crisis, ensure all staff are protected, staff who need to self-isolate, look after family members etc. No surprise, but there is also a 'Heinz 57' of views on your latest communication.

Again, I appreciate that you took time to consult with Union (Driver) Principals last evening, in advance of issuing your correspondence, I for one, did advise that the measures you were contemplating would need to be discussed with my representatives and ultimately with your Office, before proceeding.

The NBRU did, following our meeting on Friday last, issue a Notice in which we set out a position that you had articulated, namely, that the Holiday Skip would commence as normal, but on a reduced number of days, i.e. ten as opposed to fifteen.

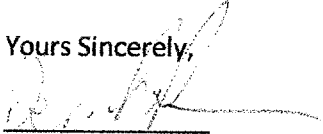
Whilst understanding your rationale for moving from this position to one which would see all Grades treated in an equitable and proportionate manner (employment protection being paramount), the NBRU preference would have been one of direct engagement on the issues outlined in your correspondence.

I am aware that a number of staff, across some of the Grades, have already commenced taking Annual Leave on the basis set out in your correspondence, which in itself may create difficulties in tempering or reducing the impact of expecting staff to take a minimum of ten days Leave between 1<sup>st</sup> April and the 30<sup>th</sup> June, which in many cases would see individuals having little or no Leave to access once we get to the other side of this Crisis. There is an undoubted sense of unfairness in this measure.

Surely it would be reasonable to expect, even in the middle of an unprecedented Crisis, that an element of flexibility would be factored into whatever measures are deemed necessary to maintain full employment for the foreseeable, contingent as that may be, on the Crisis abating in weeks rather than months.

The NBRU, having spoken with our representatives, are to request an engagement to discuss the content of your correspondence.

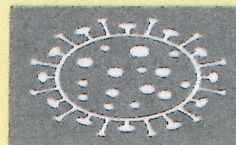
Yours Sincerely,



Dermot O'Leary  
General Secretary



## Coronavirus COVID-19



Coronavirus  
COVID-19  
Public Health  
Advice

27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

### NOTICE TO MEMBERS

#### Reduction of schedules to a Saturday (Plus) Service

Members are advised that both Unions met with the Company this morning to discuss both the implications of, and the Company's proposals in response to the Government decision to reduce the service to what is being described as a **Saturday Plus service**.

#### Background

One of the main objectives of the NBRU from the beginning of this crisis was to ensure that frontline staff are protected within the HSE recommended guidelines whilst at the same time maintaining the employment of staff across the publicly owned transport Companies.

The NBRU is extremely conscious of the unfortunate circumstances in which up to 200,000 (rising) workers are currently without employment because of the coronavirus crisis.

- Dublin Bus informed the meeting that they have received 640 litres of hand sanitizer which is currently being distributed.
- They have also secured a 6-month supply of hand sanitizer which comes in 5 litre/ 1 litre drums; the Company is looking at how they might attach a 500 ml bottle to the driver's cab.
- The Company are also looking at providing a mobile unit to sanitize buses while there at the termini.
- Company informed meeting that any driver whose CPC card has expired, will be awarded a 6-month derogation but outstanding modules must be completed by 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020.
- Dublin Bus have also written to the RSA in relation to drivers driving license being out of date and are awaiting a reply. The NBRU will assist any driver in this regard.

\*\*\*\*\*IMPORTANT DRIVER NOTICE\*\*\*\*\*

## Saturday Plus Service

Company informed meeting that this will reduce the daily operating fleet from circa 900 to 750, which is an amalgam of Saturday requirement plus Universals.

The Company indicated that the Driver requirement would reduce by approximately 250 as a result of the Government decision.

The NBRU, having written to the Company, following our Emergency National Executive meeting (15<sup>th</sup> March) raising concerns regarding Social distancing, was informed that the numbers travelling across public transport (including Dublin Bus) have reduced by over 80%. This equates to approximately 40000 daily passenger journeys as opposed to circa 200,000 in normal times!

Company indicated that such a huge reduction, with the addition of Universals to address current heavy loadings on certain Routes, will enable Social distancing.

Dublin Bus informed the meeting that the maintenance department is working on measures to block off and reduce seating on all Bus types, along with (already introduced) public address announcements on all Buses. The NBRU will maintain a watching brief on Social distancing.

The Company informed the meeting that they were looking at ways and means of trying to match Saturday plus driver requirement (1<sup>st</sup> April) with the current driver requirement:

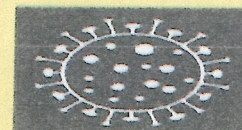
- Local meetings are to take place on Monday to discuss ramifications and Schedule/Roster permutations for all Drivers as a result of Saturday plus service
- Company to consider how best they can reduce the Driver requirement, whilst at the same time maintaining current staffing levels. A component of its consideration will be to look at the level of accrued (stored) annual Leave and establish (with the individual concerned) how many staff will avail of such leave.
- The Company indicated that the Holiday skip will be maintained. But they intend on applying the statutory minimum of ten days as opposed to three weeks.

Members will be updated following local meetings.

The NBRU will continue to demand the recommended protection measure for all Staff operating in the Public Transport arena.

Issued by NBRU  
Tom Darby House

Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**



Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
Public Health  
Advice





27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## NBRU PRESS RELEASE

### ***Scaling Back of Bus & Train Services Covid-19 Crisis/Social Distancing***

General Secretary Dermot O'Leary said:

"NBRU members and frontline colleagues continue to provide critical Public Transport services as determined by Government, they see their role as facilitating access to Hospitals, Doctors, Pharmacies, Supermarkets and other vital services for workers and those that rely on these most vital of facilities. The one overriding principal being that the HSE recommended protection measures are implemented, disinfecting driver cabs, customer/staff interaction areas and touch points being vital."

Mr. O'Leary went on to say:

"The requirement to facilitate Social distancing on Buses and Trains was paramount in our engagements with Transport operators since the HSE advice was first issued, we insisted that the current fleet numbers would be maintained to allow for such measures. However, we now recognise that the major reduction in passenger journeys, over 80%, has provided, literally, enough space to now move to a Saturday plus service, therefore providing for enough capacity to strictly adhere to Social distancing in most circumstances. However, the NBRU remains concerned that up to 40% of the Bus Eireann fleet does not have protective screens and we are asking the Company to immediately introduce measures that will obviate the requirement for driver/commuter interaction. We will continue to monitor Social distancing adherence. Whilst frontline Transport workers have the same concerns as the rest of society, they remain committed, within the extraordinary circumstances that prevail, to continue to serve."



26<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

We would ask members while interacting at your local NBRU Representatives table on a Thursday to adhere to the HSE Guidelines of 2 meter social distancing.

We would appreciate and thank you for your co-operation on this matter during the present Covid-19 Crisis.

Brian Young  
Branch Secretary



25<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

### Re: Conference Call Address by Chief Executive Officer Covid-19/Coronavirus

Members are advised that the NBRU was invited to listen in on a Company-wide call made by the CEO Jim Meade regarding the above, the situation remains fluid and the advices are moving at a very fast pace.

Some of the points raised in the call are outlined in (NBRU) contemporaneous notes below:

- CEO: Regular Briefings are being produced and disseminated, however not all are reaching Frontline Staff.

**NBRU: It is of paramount importance that all staff receive these briefings, members should insist that they receive same from manager/supervisor.**

- CEO: A fresh supply of Hand Sanitisers and Wipes have been delivered, there is a priority for Frontline staff to receive these vital protection items.

**NBRU: We advised the Company, following our Emergency National Executive Meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> March (correspondence circulated), that our members and frontline colleagues would not be able to operate services without this vital equipment.**

- CEO: Service levels will remain as per timetable, for now, this may change, consultation with Department, HSE, NTA and other transport operators is ongoing. Any changes will be communicated.

**NBRU: Maintaining Public Transport at this critical time in our Country's history is vital for access to Hospitals, Doctor Surgeries, Pharmacy's, Food and Supply stores etc.**

- CEO: Social Distancing HSE Guidelines should be adhered to across all services

**NBRU: The reduction in numbers travelling should enable social distancing, however, we are advising frontline staff NOT to place themselves in direct proximity with passengers to effect social distancing, the use of onboard announcements should be used. The NBRU has also today, following local representations, requested that un-stocked dining cars should be made available to Train Hosts and Customer service personnel as both an onboard canteen facility and a place of refuge/safety.**

- CEO: Working from home has been introduced in many locations, reducing the requirement for staff to be at their normal workplace.

**NBRU: This practice also assists frontline staff in that it reduces the amount of staff that might normally congregate in canteen and other staff communal areas. We have made at least two interventions on the issue of reducing staff numbers working in offices, thankfully the message has got through.**

- CEO: Approximately 146 staff are either self-isolating and/or awaiting testing, one colleague is confirmed as having Covid-19.

**NBRU: It is an inevitable consequence of this horrible Pandemic that many of us are going to become ill, or have to self-isolate, or have to take time out to care for family, we are of the view, shared with Management, that all staff should be facilitated with whatever is necessary to get us all through this crisis.**

- CEO: The plans announced by Government (24<sup>th</sup> March) could be with us for several weeks, if not months, we need to pace ourselves through practicing good habits around eating, resting and adhering to the HSE Guidelines on hygiene.

**NBRU: Whilst we concur with these recommendations, it is imperative that the protection measures, disinfecting work areas and the provision of Hand sanitisers are readily available to all staff.**

- CEO: Support for staff is available through the Employee Assistance Programme.

**NBRU: We would encourage any staff member that has concerns to avail of this programme. The NBRU and our representatives are also available, any issue that you wish to raise through you Union will be given prompt attention.**

- CEO: Public Transport is on the second line of defence in the battle against this virus, after the HSE and other Blue Light Services.

**NBRU: This demonstrates the important role that all of us in transport are playing.**

- CEO: Feedback is encouraged, you can use the CEO Feedback facility, there is also provision for staff suggestions to be considered. The Gardai have also suggested that people (staff) should keep a notebook of their movements and contacts during this crisis.

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**There is a certain inevitability around the theory being advanced that quite an amount of us will fall ill with Covid-19, similar to all other advices and opinions, the NBRU is hopeful that, in-line with HSE analysis, it will not have serious health implications for the vast majority of those of us that get the virus.**

**Whilst the NBRU is proud to represent Rail and Bus Workers, whilst we are proud that publicly-owned transport companies are the 'last man standing' in transport provision, and whilst we earnestly hope that we can keep those wheels turning, our core objective is to be available to you, the member, to support you in any way we can.**

**BOTTOM LINE: Keep Yourself and your Family Safe**

**Dermot O'Leary**

# National Bus & Rail Union



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*Branches: Cork, Limerick, Galway, Sligo, Ballina, Donegal, Cavan, Waterford, Tralee, Drogheda, Dundalk, Kilkenny, Rosslare*

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Ms Deirdre Hanlon  
Assistant Secretary  
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport  
2 Leeson Lane  
Dublin 2

24th March 2020

***Re: Operation of Public Transport during the Coronavirus crisis***

Dear Ms Hanlon,

I am corresponding with you in the midst of an unprecedented and extraordinary global tragedy that is escalating at an unforeseen pace each and every day.

As the foremost and largest representative body for frontline transport workers, the National Bus and Rail Union has been inundated over the past number of weeks with an avalanche of concerns from workers in essential transport services.

Despite the grave risk of contagion, Public Service Obligated (PSO) Transport continues to operate, this is in stark contrast to the complete market failure in the entire commercial bus sector, Dublin Bus's Airlink and Bus Éireann's Expressway being the exception and still running (as I write).

The policy of the last number of years which saw the NTA saturate the so-called commercial bus market to such an extent that approximately double the necessary capacity was imposed on some corridors, has now been shown for what it is, inviting in large multinational Bus Companies to use their financial muscle to effectively wipe out the National carrier (Bus Éireann).

The *raison d'être* of these conglomerates, not surprisingly, is to cream as much profit as is possible for their shareholders, service to the State is simply not in the fabric of such Companies.

Those commercial bus operators prioritise profit over public services, effectively dominating the Motorway network, whilst the mis-named Bus Éireann Expressway continues to serve villages and towns the length and breadth of Ireland.

The policy of the commoditization of large swathes of the bus network could have led to a situation (were it not for Bus Éireann), where communities across Ireland would have been cut-off, or isolated at time when access to services are paramount.

Significantly, one would only need to go online and see that practically all of these bus Companies have used the Coronavirus as a fig leaf to close their operations, when the actual and obvious reason is their inability to turn a buck.

In the meantime, Bus Éireann Expressway continues to operate at substantial loss, the Public Service Ethos and Social Contract with Citizens being the sole motivator at this critical period in our Nation's history.

When this crisis has abated, an adult conversation will need to be held between all stakeholders, inclusive of Government, Community and worker representatives, to discuss how our Country's transport needs are served, the balance between Social priorities and a defined commercial sector, with a clear definition and distinction between both, at the top of the agenda.

The Bus Éireann Expressway financial model (ability to wash its own face) is not, nor cannot be compatible with the obvious requirement to serve hundreds of thousands of our Citizens across hundreds of communities. You would have look, needle in a haystack style, to find a multinational Bus operator in non-Motorway Ireland.

I have attached for your convenience, a list of the Hospitals served by Bus Éireann's Expressway, it clearly demonstrates, that left to the vagaries of the 'Market', many of our Citizens would be left stranded and unable to access these Hospitals, and a myriad of other vital Social services.

You may find it strange that I would place stock in any comment or position attributed to the current (acting) Minister for Transport, but he did, back in December 2016, when asked about Expressway say; **'whether certain (Expressway) routes are commercial and what should be done about them will have to be examined (reply to PQ Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016).**

The aftermath of the coronavirus might be a good time to commence such an examination, in the meantime the Company and its Workers will require some comfort with regard to the support it needs to continue operating its Social Contract with the Citizens of the Country during the Covid-19 crisis.

### **Direct Award Contracts**

Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann and Irish Rail signed new direct awards contracts with the NTA in December 2019, those contracts contain penalty and performance clauses that are standard across the industry. The Go-Ahead Ireland tendered contract contains identical clauses. **Such Key performance indicators which are mandatory and normally expected, have now become a grave risk during this pandemic.**

Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann are now operating and running services in a completely different set of traffic conditions as to what would have been envisaged when these contracts were signed.

Working within the HSE guidelines (practically mandatory) on social distancing, both Companies are endeavoring to ensure that passengers are not onboard for any more time than is absolutely necessary, keeping confinement to a minimum.

However, it appears that the NTA are continuing to impose headway (timing-point) penalties as if we are operating in normal circumstances!

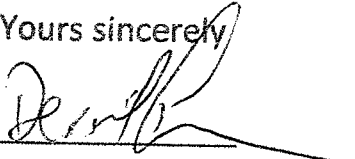
Meanwhile, we are being advised that Go-Ahead Ireland, adhering stringently to the NTA targets, are keeping passengers confined in close proximity, for far longer than is necessary, contrary to that same HSE advice on social distancing.

Surely normal contract clauses should apply in **normal times**, surely the health of commuters, the ability to implement mitigating measures should be a priority?

The NBRU is respectfully requesting that such clauses should effectively be set aside for the duration of this national crisis, to allow Dublin Bus, Bus Eireann and Go-Ahead Ireland operators to transport health workers and those involved in keeping our food stores and essential services functioning, whilst complying with the HSE guidelines on social distancing.

To attempt to carry on with business as usual runs the risk of impacting upon the safe operation of an essential service and risks infectious community transmission on our buses.

Yours sincerely



Dermot O'Leary

General Secretary

Copy/ Mr Graham Doyle Secretary General DTTaS

" Ms Anne Graham Chief Executive National Transport Authority

## ***Bus Éireann Expressway Services and Hospital access***

1. Portlincula Hospital Route: 20 and X 20
2. Cavan Hospital Route 30:
3. Cork University Hospital: Route 40
4. Mayo General: Route 52
5. Ennis: Route 51
6. Kerry General: Routes 13, 40 and 72
7. Letterkenny, Sligo, Derry and Galway: Route 64
8. Letterkenny: Route 32
9. Limerick: Route 51
10. Waterford: Routes 40 and 55
11. Wexford: Route 55
12. Dundalk: Route 100x
13. South Tipperary: Route 55
14. Mallow: Route 51
15. Mullingar: Routes 22 and 23
16. Portlaois: Route X 12
17. Nenagh: Route X 12
18. Drogheda: Route 100x