

**Code of Conduct for Local Bus Services**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct has been developed by Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority (GMITA) and Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE), in partnership with the Greater Manchester Bus Operators Association (GMBOA), to establish a set of partnership working agreements and minimum standards for local bus services operated by Code partners.
- 1.2 It is the intention that the Code will establish a mark of quality service provision, to which all bus operators in Greater Manchester will aspire
- 1.3 Membership of this Code of Conduct Partnership is open to all operators of local bus services in Greater Manchester. Any operator who wishes to become a partner in the Code should apply to:

Bus and Rail Director  
GMPTE  
2 Piccadilly Place  
Manchester  
M1 3BG

- 1.4 The objective of the Code is to grow the overall market for bus travel by increasing the attractiveness of the bus and encouraging modal shift through raising the quality of service to the travelling public, improving operating conditions and standards and working, in partnership, to identify and promote improvements to the operating environment for buses across Greater Manchester. This will also include working with the relevant highway authorities to address issues which impede the operation of buses.
- 1.5 GMPTE's Multi-Modal Tracking Survey (MMTS), highlights that reliable and on-time services are the top priority of both bus users and non-users.
- 1.6 Passengers travelling on buses operated by a Code partner can expect minimum quality standards in respect of:

**Performance** – The Code will set common minimum, Greater Manchester-wide standards for service level punctuality, regularity and reliability. Improvement targets to bring the performance of all Code partners up to these standards will be agreed between GMPTE and individual operators.

**Vehicle** – The Code promotes the use of accessible, low-emission buses, maintained and presented to a high standard and which display the correct route number and destination, and headline tariff information in a manner visible from outside the vehicle.

**Driver behaviour** – The Code promotes safe and courteous driving at all times. Drivers will be expected to recognise passenger needs when boarding and alighting, and to drive with an awareness of both passenger comfort and the need to minimise energy use, in line with wider environmental objectives.

- 1.7 GMPTE is committed, with the support of Code operators, to facilitate and encourage the district highway authorities to identify and develop improvement plans, and address issues on the region's highway network that adversely affect the efficient operation of bus services.
- 1.8 Home to School services and Demand Responsive services are not covered by this Code's standards. Similarly, those bus services for which the main part of the service operates out of Greater Manchester will not, generally, be covered by this Code.
- 1.9 In awarding contracts for supported bus services, GMPTE will work towards compliance with the relevant provisions of this Code of Conduct.

## **2. Bus Service Performance Standards**

### **2.1 Introduction**

- 2.1.1 These bus service performance standards have been developed with reference to, and to be consistent with, the joint Confederation of Passenger Transport/Passenger Transport Executive's Group (CPT/*pteg*) guidelines on partnerships.
- 2.1.2 Based upon evidence collected and analysed by the GMPTE, the best way to drive up the performance of bus services is to focus on reliability, punctuality and the regularity of services. Together these factors most strongly influence the time passengers spend waiting for their bus.
- 2.1.3 The priority, therefore, will be to improve service reliability, punctuality and regularity, through improving operator performance standards and the local highway authorities' management of the road network.
- 2.1.4 The monitoring of the performance of all bus services will be carried out by GMPTE in accordance with GMPTE's Punctuality and Reliability Monitoring System (PRMS), supplemented by data supplied by Code partners, as appropriate.

2.1.5 GMPTE acknowledges that where exceptional operating conditions are experienced which affect the reliability of services (e.g. extreme weather, major disruption arising from motorway closures etc.); service reliability data for the affected routes would normally be excluded from ongoing reporting arrangements. Such “void days” would be agreed with each Code partner.

2.1.6 Punctuality can be measured at the start of a journey (start-point), or at an intermediate point during the journey (en-route).

2.1.7 For scheduled bus services - those with a frequency greater than 10 mins - standards have been agreed for the monitoring of both *reliability* and *punctuality*.

- **Service Reliability for scheduled bus services –**  
Measured as a percentage of observed bus departures from a given location, compared to the service provision promised to the public.
- **Service Punctuality for scheduled bus services -**  
Measured by the percentage of observed ‘on-time’ bus departures from a given, start-point location.  
(The definition of an ‘on-time’ departure is currently one which is less than 60 seconds early and less than 5 minutes and 59 seconds late).

2.1.8 In cases where the operator has registered a “frequent” service – where the service interval is 10 minutes or less with no advertised timetable - passengers are looking for their services to have even intervals (“headway”), as opposed to being ‘on-time’. Therefore, for frequent services, *regularity* is more important than ‘punctuality’.

- **Service Regularity for “frequent” bus services -**  
Measured by the percentage of service gaps over an accepted tolerance of two times the service ‘headway’ (the service frequency), in minutes.

2.1.9 This Code promotes the general principle that both reliability and punctuality at the start of a journey are performance issues that are mainly within the operator’s control, and that much can be done by the operator to ensure the service regularity of their frequent services.

## **2.2 Performance standards for scheduled bus services**

### **2.2.1 Service reliability**

The target minimum standard for reliability for every scheduled bus service is:

**97% of advertised buses will operate,  
based upon PRMS monitoring.**

*(This standard is based upon actual evidence of what level of reliability can be currently achieved in Greater Manchester.)*

### **2.2.2 Service punctuality**

The target minimum standard for the punctuality of buses at the start of their journey for every scheduled bus service is:

**90% of scheduled bus services will depart on-time,  
when compared to the advertised departure time  
in the public timetables.**

*(In this context, the definition of an 'On-time' departure is currently one which is less than 60 seconds early and less than 5 minutes and 59 seconds late).*

*(This standard is based upon actual evidence of what level of start-point punctuality can be currently achieved in Greater Manchester.)*

Subject to the conditions outlined in section 2.5 below, en-route punctuality standards may be set in the future.

### **2.3 Performance standards for frequent bus services**

2.3.1 Operators have much greater flexibility on how to operate frequent services, as they are not tied to delivering a fixed timetable of journeys. In particular, it is possible to manage an even headway en-route through various control methods, including live communication with drivers to hold buses for longer at bus stops.

2.3.2 The Code will adopt a floor target for frequent bus services of 12 buses per hour.

2.3.3 The target minimum standard for the regularity of frequent bus services is:

**97% of all service gaps will be  
less than twice the service headway**

*(This standard is based upon actual evidence of what level of regularity can be currently achieved in Greater Manchester, and will require operators to declare their working timetable for each "frequent service" to permit the calculation to be made).*

2.3.4 Code partners will articulate their service control techniques to GMPTE, so that Best Practice in this area can be identified and shared.

## **2.4 Targets for Reliability, Punctuality and Regularity**

- 2.4.1 Given the current levels of reliability and punctuality achieved in Greater Manchester, operators would not be able to achieve 100% compliance to the performance standards, in the shorter term.
- 2.4.2 Therefore, GMPTE will agree with each Code partner, a series of challenging, yet realistic, performance milestones towards reaching 100% compliance, which will recognise the contribution that the district authorities and GMPTE have to make in improving performance.
- 2.4.3 These interim targets will provide for an increasing proportion of each Code partner's services to reach the performance standards, year on year, but this should not be at the expense of lowering bus operating speeds, which would make the passenger journey less attractive.
- 2.4.4 The aim is to bring all bus services operated by Code partners up to the common performance standards within a 2 year timescale. After this, they will be expected to maintain and improve this standard of performance across all their services, albeit if highway issues cannot be resolved, to recognise that some services will be unable to meet the standard.
- 2.4.5 In line with DfT Guidance on Bus Punctuality Partnerships, future reviews of the Code of Conduct will seek to move these locally agreed targets closer to the nationally published punctuality and reliability targets.

## **2.5 The impact of highway issues on the operation of bus services**

- 2.5.1 The Code recognises that, whilst bus operators have a significant role to play in improving operating standards, the management of the highway network, in terms of traffic congestion, disruption through road works and illegal or indiscriminate parking, are of equal significance.
- 2.5.2 The Code recognises the impact on bus service reliability which en-route disruption may have on subsequent journeys, where terminal capacity is limited and insufficient scope exists to schedule adequate recovery time to enable all next journeys to start on time.
- 2.5.3 This is because both highway works and the unpredictability of traffic congestion mean that the operator, alone, cannot solve all en-route punctuality issues through changes in their schedules. It will not be acceptable to mask the problem through significantly increased journey times.
- 2.5.4 Furthermore, due to the fact that underlying traffic conditions cause a variation in the en-route punctuality that can be achieved on any

particular route, it is not possible to set a Greater Manchester standard for en-route punctuality.

2.5.5 Therefore, rather than focussing on en-route punctuality targets, the Code promotes the spirit of partnership working to solve en-route punctuality issues.

2.5.6 In particular, if a Code partner can demonstrate that they are operating a reliable service, with start-point punctuality meeting, or exceeding, the Code standards, but is still experiencing problems en-route, this would provide very strong evidence for the Highway Authorities to act to improve upon the situation.

2.5.7 Code partners will agree to share operational data with GMPTE that will provide the necessary evidence to underpin partnership work with the Highway Authorities (as outlined in section 15.2), to solve problems impacting on punctuality.

2.5.8 This will include the sharing of data collected from Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) systems, where Code partners have invested in the equipment. Any AVL data sharing will be consistent with DfT and CPT/pteg guidelines for partnership agreements and that required for the claiming of Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG).

### 3. Vehicle Standards

#### 3.1 Emissions

3.1.1 GMPTE's aim is to improve the make up of the entire bus fleet in operation in Greater Manchester, as set out in the following table:

<b>% of mileage operated in Greater Manchester by vehicles of</b>	<b>By 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011</b>	<b>By 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013</b>	<b>By 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015</b>	<b>By 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017</b>
Euro III standard or better	60%	80%	100%	100%
Euro IV standard or better	40%	50%	60%	70%
Euro V standard or better	10%	20%	30%	40%

3.1.2 GMPTE will agree fleet make-up targets with individual Code partners which will bring all operators fleets into line with the targets set out above by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017. Intermediate targets will be agreed in order to track progress in individual operator fleet profiles.

- 3.1.3 This will be monitored through Code partners' annual declarations on fleet profiles, which should be capable of independent audit, as required.

### 3.2 DDA Compliance

- 3.2.1 All buses operated by Code partners should be fully compliant with Disability Discrimination Act requirements, as set out in the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000 (PSVAR) at least 12 months before they are legally required to do so.

(PSVAR requires that **all** full size single deck buses over 7.5 tonnes will be fully accessible from 1 January 2016, and all double deck buses from 1 January 2017. **All** buses weighing up to 7.5 tonnes will be fully accessible from 1 January 2015)

- 3.2.2 GMPTE's aim is to improve the make up of the entire bus fleet in operation in Greater Manchester, as set out in the following table:

% of mileage operated in Greater Manchester by DDA Compliant vehicles		
By	Single Deck buses	Double Deck buses
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2011	70% *	60% *
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2012	80% *	70% *
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013	90% *	80% *
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2014	95% *	90% *
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2015	100%	95% *
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2016	100%	100%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2017	100%	100%

\* vehicles will be low floor and wheelchair accessible, but may not all be fully DDA compliant

- 3.2.3 This will be monitored through Code partners' annual declarations on fleet profiles, which should be capable of independent audit, as required.

- 3.2.4 Code partners will identify in timetables and web pages those bus services which will be wholly operated by low-floor, wheelchair accessible vehicles and will make every effort to ensure that non-accessible vehicles are not allocated to these services.

### 3.3 Information Displayed On-bus

- 3.3.1 The destination displays on the bus should display the correct service number and destination/route information, at all times. Displays for front destination displays and side numbers should comply with the

standards set out in the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000 (PSVAR).

3.3.2 All buses should carry the following information, in a format agreed between GMPTE and GMBOA:-

**Externally**

- Tariff information, (initially, agreed ticket information, for example the price of day and season tickets), in a manner visible from outside the vehicle.

**Internally** (in both upper and lower saloons, as appropriate)

- Information about current System One ticketing products
- Traveline details
- Information about the operator's complaints process, including, as a minimum, the following:-
- contact details for complaints, identifying the primary role for the operator in addressing operational issues and the secondary role of GMPTE on network matters;
- the timescale for responding to complaints.

**3.4 Passenger Experience**

3.4.1 The quality of service experienced by the traveller is a combination of a number of factors including travel time, reliability, comfort and cleanliness. This section of the Code is aimed at securing improvement across a number of in-vehicle factors covering, for example, cleanliness, level of heating and ventilation, minor defects, vandalism and graffiti.

3.4.2 Code partners should maintain consistently high standards of presentation, cleanliness and upkeep of their vehicles. All operators should deliver an effective cleaning regime for all services.

3.4.3 For all buses, Code partners will:

- maintain high standards of internal and external cleanliness, including the removal of litter and graffiti;
- maintain seating and other fittings to a good standard;
- maintain ventilation and heating systems to ensure a comfortable environment appropriate to the outside temperature.

3.4.4 GMPTE and the bus operators, through GMBOA, will work together to develop a consistent and cost effective method for measuring and tracking passenger satisfaction with bus services in general, and with particular aspects of those services, including GMPTE's current monitoring of passenger satisfaction through the use of existing telephone surveys of passengers and the targeted use of mystery

shoppers. The work will include the collection, analysis and presentation, and reasonable cost apportionment of such data.

#### **4. Environmental issues**

4.1 GMPTE and the bus operators collectively recognise that increasing the mode share of public transport can have a positive impact on local Air Quality Management.

4.2 In addition to the specific targets set out in 3.1, GMPTE and the bus operators, through GMBOA, will work together to develop targets for the reduction in carbon, including the proportion of the bus fleet considered to be Low Carbon as defined by the DfT.

4.3 In addition to the provisions of section 12.1 bus operators will use appropriate, company specific, livery variations and branding to identify and promote low carbon buses to the general public.

#### **5. Safety and Security**

5.1 Code partners will work towards full CCTV fitment on all vehicles in their fleet by including CCTV as standard in the specification of new vehicles as part of their fleet replacement policy, identified in section 3.

5.2 Code partners will work collectively, with GMPTE, with the aim of continued development and support for the Crime Reduction on Public Transport initiative (CROPT).

#### **6. Driver Standards**

##### **6.1 General requirements**

6.1.1 The drivers of buses operated by Code partners should be courteous and recognise passenger needs, especially when boarding and alighting, drive with an awareness of passenger comfort, and be mindful of the need to minimise energy use in line with wider environmental objectives.

##### **6.2 Driver training**

6.2.1 Code partners will have a structured driver training programme in place, based on the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence requirements. This must include training based on safe and fuel efficient driving, covering matters such as fuel consumption and pollution.

6.2.2 Driver training programmes should recognise the requirements of disabled passengers and adopt good practice principles. In this

respect, the guidelines set out in the GMPTE booklet "*Easier Access on Greater Manchester's Buses*" are recommended.

### **6.3 Uniform standards**

- 6.3.1 Code partners will have a declared, consistent uniform standard, which will display company identification and will include, as a minimum:
- A collared shirt/blouse
  - Trousers/skirt (not jeans)
  - Appropriate outerwear

Code partner employees will be required to comply with this uniform standard whilst on duty, so that operating staff are presented as smart, tidy and professional.

## **7. Fares and Ticketing**

- 7.1 Code partners will be required to be a member of Greater Manchester Travelcards Limited (GMTL) and participate in countywide, SystemOne ticketing schemes.
- 7.2 Operators will work collectively, with GMPTE, with the aim of developing a countywide fares and ticketing strategy for all modes. The principle of this strategy is simplicity and integration. This will include, at least, the introduction of a maximum of three fare bands by 2014, and participation in the development of a Greater Manchester Smartcard scheme.
- 7.3 In the short term, Code partners will work jointly to examine how information on current staged fares can be best communicated to the customer.

## **8. Passenger Infrastructure**

- 8.1 GMPTE currently provides appropriate passenger waiting shelters at 36% of the bus stops across Greater Manchester and will seek to maintain this proportion. However, GMPTE is willing to consider representations from bus operators for additional locations which might benefit from the installation of a passenger shelter.
- 8.2 GMPTE will clean and maintain bus shelters on a regular basis to provide an attractive environment for waiting passengers with protection from the elements and access to accurate, well presented timetable information. GMPTE's arrangements will provide for shelter damage to be repaired with 48 hours of notification and cleaning on a two weekly cycle.
- 8.3 Currently 96% of the passenger shelters in Greater Manchester are illuminated and GMPTE will seek to maintain this proportion.

However, GMPTE is willing to consider representations from bus operators for additional locations which might benefit from the installation of lighting, by the most appropriate means.

- 8.4 GMPTE will maintain, clean and manage all bus stations and interchanges to provide a safe and attractive waiting area with protection from the elements and access to accurate, well presented timetable information.
- 8.5 GMPTE will maintain accurate and up to date on-street passenger information (bus stop timetables and bus station information regarding departure stands, index to places served, and timetable information) subject to sufficient notification of timetable changes as per Section 9 below.
- 8.6 Any errors in information notified to GMPTE will be rectified within 7 days.

## **9. Network Development**

- 9.1 Code partners will agree to work with GMPTE's service planning function to regularly review their services. Such reviews should consider what changes might be required in response to changes in travel demand arising from new developments, local and national economic trends etc.
- 9.2 In order to maintain bus network stability, Code partners will, in normal circumstances, limit changes to routes and timetables to occur only on the predetermined service change dates published periodically by GMPTE, except by mutual agreement, in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances.
- 9.3 Code partners undertake to notify GMPTE, in confidence, with summary details of any intended service changes at least 21 days in advance of registration in order to allow a reasonable time for meaningful consultation.
- 9.4 Subject to the notice period in paragraph 9.3 being met, GMPTE will display up-to-date route and timetable information at bus stops on the date of change.

## **10. Data sharing**

- 10.1 Effective management of the Code of Conduct and the monitoring of performance standards will depend on the quality of the data available. Code partners will commit to data sharing agreements, which will be reached through bilateral discussions between GMPTE and individual Code partners, based on the model outlined in Annex 1 to the document, "CPT/*pteg* Position Statement 5 – Data sharing, punctuality and monitoring", (or as subsequently amended).

10.2 Although the monitoring of operational performance will be primarily through GMPTE's Punctuality and Reliability Monitoring System (PRMS), Code partners will provide additional data sets in an agreed format, to support monitoring of Code standards in other areas.

10.3 This will include;

- Data on fleet deployment, by vehicle emission standard and miles operated;
- Patronage data;
- Fleet investment programmes;
- Data on vehicle cleaning and maintenance;
- Data on driver training programmes;
- Data on passenger complaints and comments; and
- Additional journey time and punctuality data, as agreed. (through Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) equipment, where available, or other robust methods of data collection).

## **11. Marketing and Promotion**

11.1 Code partners will participate in agreed marketing and promotional campaigns relevant to their services. GMPTE will consult with GMBOA in making recommendations to GMITA for the adoption of a revised Scheme of Information [under s.139 Transport Act 2000] and will form a working group with GMPTE and GMBOA representatives with the aim of agreeing, implementing and monitoring the arrangements for the implementation of the Scheme of Information.

## **12. Livery and Branding**

12.1 Bus operators will maintain a high standard of vehicle presentation and all buses will carry a distinctive livery, so as to be clearly identifiable as being operated by the company.

12.2 All buses should display an identifiable branding to show they are run by a Code partner. The exact nature of this branding will be jointly agreed, and should be prominent but should not detract from the operator's own livery and corporate identity. The branding will apply to vehicles, published information and marketing and promotional material.

12.3 Operators will remove such branding should they no longer be a Code partner or if they redeploy the vehicle elsewhere in their operations where the Code standards do not apply.

## **13. Service information**

13.1 Code partners will establish and maintain company web pages providing details of their services, and multi-journey and season

tickets, including a link to the SystemOne website, and any forthcoming changes/disruptions to their services.

- 13.2 Code partners will inform Traveline and GMPTE of any known disruptions, substantial delays or network disruption in a timely manner.

#### **14. Commitment to Customers**

- 14.1 Code operators agree that it is good business practice to set out a series of commitments that customers can expect when using their bus services. This should include, amongst others, a guarantee to complete designated last journeys, where advertised in public timetables; a commitment to take complaints and comments seriously and act upon them in a timely manner, and to be treated fairly and with dignity.

- 14.2 The Customer Commitment will also recognise the responsibilities of passengers using bus services.

- 14.3 Code Operators will agree to adopt and abide by the Customer Commitment contained in Appendix B, and to display it prominently, in a format to be agreed, on each of their vehicles.

#### **15. Other issues**

##### **15.1 City Plan**

- 15.1.1 Operators who operate bus services within Manchester City Centre will agree to abide by the terms of Manchester City Council's Cityplan for the regulation and control of buses in the City centre.

##### **15.2 Liaison with Highway Authorities and Highways Agency**

- 15.2.1 GMPTE, together with operators, as appropriate, will liaise with the district highway authorities and the Highways Agency, as appropriate, to identify and address issues, that adversely affect the operation of bus services in Greater Manchester.

- 15.2.2 In this respect GMPTE will;

- encourage GM Districts to continue their commitment to enforce traffic regulation orders and work with GMPTE through the Parking Enforcement Group (PEG) to address the adverse impact of indiscriminate parking;
- encourage GM Districts to maintain their support for the Greater Manchester Road Activities Permit Scheme (GMRAPS), to address the impacts of roadworks on the highway network. This scheme presents a significant

opportunity to tackle congestion and provide a better co-ordinated service to lessen the impact on bus services;

- encourage GM Districts to improve Winter Maintenance and, drawing on the lessons learned in January 2010, agree a more co-ordinated approach in terms of salt procurement, contingency planning and communication. Districts will continue to liaise with GMPTE to ensure that bus routes are included within the gritting schedules, together with bus stations and depots;
- provide a quarterly update to Greater Manchester Association of District Engineers (GMADE) on traffic issues which operators have identified. Where operators have provided a detailed description of the issue, GMPTE will seek to identify a solution, where practicable, and engage the relevant District to agree an improvement plan; and
- with Code partners, support Highway Authorities in developing appropriate initiatives to promote cycle safety including raising bus driver and cyclist awareness.

## **16. Review of the Code of Conduct**

### **16.1 General**

16.1.1 The Code of Conduct is intended to be a live document that will continue to be relevant to improving the standards of bus service experienced by the travelling public of Greater Manchester. GMPTE and GMBOA will maintain regular and constructive dialogue over matters relating to the Code.

16.1.2 It is proposed that GMITA and GMPTE will review the Code, at least annually, in discussion with GMBOA and other relevant parties. This review will draw on individual operator performance reviews as set out in section 16.2, below, and changes in legislation, guidance and best practice.

16.1.3 GMPTE will give Code partners at least 3 months notice of any changes to the Code of Conduct, arising from discussions between partners, as set out in paragraph 16.1.2.

### **16.2 Monitoring and review of operator performance and service performance**

16.2.1 GMPTE and the individual operators will undertake annual reviews, or more frequently, if appropriate, to consider performance and agree targets for the following period.

16.2.2 GMPTE will present monitoring reports on the overall performance to the GMITA Bus Network Committee (or its equivalent) at regular intervals.

### **16.3 Publication of Code Standards and Performance of the Partnership**

16.3.1 GMPTE will publish aggregated statistics on the performance of Code partners against targets on its website, together with updates on what is being done to improve the performance should targets fail to be achieved.

16.3.2 Operators agree to display on board their vehicles, in an agreed format, summary statistics on network performance during the previous review period. Such information to be displayed for a period of at least 4 weeks following the publication by GMPTE of the information referred to in 16.3.1.

## **17. Termination**

17.1 GMPTE may revoke the partner status of the Operator if the Operator is in material or persistent breach of the Code of Conduct. GMPTE shall, in making its decision, take into account the results of the reviews carried out under the Code of Conduct. GMPTE may also consider such factors as the amount and severity of complaints received from members of the public and the results of GMPTE's performance monitoring activities.

17.2 Code partners may withdraw from the Code on giving one month's written notice to GMPTE.