



(Interim) UNISON REPORT TO
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL:

**BUS SERVICE PROVISION FOR STAFF OF
SOUTHAMPTON GENERAL / PRINCESS ANNE HOSPITALS**



VERSION 1.2, 19th April 2013



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ABOUT UNISON

UNISON is the UK's largest public sector trade union and represents a wide cross section of society. Its members work on a broad range of activities in the public services and include NHS workers. UNISON is committed to contributing to the debate about the future of transport policy on behalf of its membership reliant on services at the Southampton General Hospital and Princes Anne Hospital. Transport is key to protecting and improving our environment and society.

SCOPE OF REPORT

The report is intended to reflect on the present usage of bus services to and from the hospital sites and on improvements suggested by the passengers. The report focuses exclusively on use of services by staff. The report contains other observations along with the responses received to date from a survey conducted by UNISON. Survey responses are still being received so this interim report may be updated in the future.



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OBSERVATIONS MADE BY UNISON: General Observations

Lateness and infrequency of service

During our conversations with staff, *First Bus* services have, in particular, been criticised heavily by service users for their lateness and infrequency. Bus users are complaining that buses often do not appear on time.

UNISON representatives have witnessed the *First Bus* Number 3 service being late on several occasions, with the bus being over 30 minutes late on one occasion.

Our survey responses list this as one of the most common complaints of respondents.

Electronic bus service update displays

The lateness of buses is emphasised by the poor quality of the electronic bus service update displays, which only reflect the times stated in the set timetable. Buses that are running late disappear from the screen leaving the passenger frustrated that they have been waiting for a bus that was never going to arrive in the first place. UNISON representatives have experienced this on more than one occasion.

The system has limited value and serves as little more than an electronic display of timetabled services.

The system operated by *Bluestar/Uni-Link* in parts of the city provides real-time updates on bus arrivals. Passengers can be assured of the expected arrival time of their bus, reassured that it is coming and make judgements based on this accurate information. The accuracy of this system is of great value and a similar system should be adopted at bus shelters serving the hospital sites.

Bus shelters

One of the most frequently used bus stops is situated close to the junction between Tremona Road and Coxford Road, travelling South. At busier periods, the seating available for waiting customers is insufficient to accommodate those waiting. A large group amasses around the bus stop without adequate shelter.

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Several bus stops along Tremona Road do not appear to have the same high level of customers waiting but these have not been observed on a regular basis.

There are two bus stops at the southern end of Coxford Road, one with a shelter and the other without. The present shelter has no timetables displayed at all and which is thoroughly unhelpful to passengers unfamiliar with the bus routes and times (pictured to left).

Behind this shelter is a building and hedge obscuring clear vision between the shelter and main hospital site (pictured below). The shelter faces residential properties which are set back from the road by a verge. Passengers waiting at this stop would appear to be more vulnerable at this shelter than at other shelters, as the possibility of them being seen should they fall or be attacked, is limited to them being sighted by residents of the properties facing the stop. The stop is of value and generally well positioned to serve the site. Frequent evening bus services would ensure that customers are not waiting too long at the stop at times of higher risk (after dark or when the area is quieter).



Inadequate promotion of bus services

It has been observed that there may not be enough promotion of bus services on the Southampton General hospital site.



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There do not appear to be any obvious route network maps displayed at the bus shelters and the hospital sites may benefit from a large city network route map being displayed in public areas both inside and outside the hospital. Some former bus users expressed to us that they might be encouraged to return to using the bus service if they saw improvement to the services that they previously used. It is possible that staff might be encouraged to use the bus service more if they knew more about where the routes served.

Encouragingly, a *Sustainable Travel Fair* was held on 16th and 17th April at the SGH, promoting a variety of sustainable travel options.

Bluestar/Uni-Link and *First Bus* now display banners directly outside the entrance of the hospital (pictured below).



OBSERVATIONS MADE BY UNISON: UNISON Survey of Bus Users

UNISON has issued an online survey (using the *www.surveymonkey.net* software) to its members who have provided e-mail addresses. It has also issued approximately 1000 paper copies for circulation amongst staff, began 'clipboard' surveys at bus stops frequently used by staff and held three morning/lunchtime information stalls outside *The Spice of Life* Eaterie at the SGH to publicise the survey.

The Trust has assisted by circulating a link to our survey on the staff Intranet.

UNISON staff have handed out paper copies of surveys to staff arriving or departing from hospital bus stops. This activity has been undertaken predominantly around the two bus stops situated close to the junction between Tremona Road and Coxford



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Road (Northbound and Southbound) and the Tremona Road stop closest to these. This activity has taken place on the following dates:

Tuesday 19th March, 8:00-9am

Monday 25th March, 8:15-9am

Thursday 4th April, 7-9am

Monday 9th April, 7-9am

Monday 15th April, 7-9am

We are mindful that we have been unable to provide a physical presence to promote the survey during evenings and weekends to date, which may therefore result in an understatement of use of evening and weekend services.

Our survey was launched to examine staff usage of bus services and passenger concerns but we are aware that it is unlikely to be able to reflect the full staff usage of bus services, due to limitations with regards to our ability to get a response from every staff member or ideally the wider community. We are conscious that many more staff members use the bus services than we will be able to reach with the survey, so ticket sales analysis may also be beneficial.

It is not an easy task encouraging NHS workers to take time out of their busy and important clinical duties to undertake a survey so this is likely to affect the volume of responses. However, we do hope that the information returned will give a basic impression of staff opinions.

We nonetheless hope that the content is of value to you particularly in combination with your own analysis.

UNISON SURVEY OF BUS USERS RESULTS

The survey was launched at the end of March and the responses to date are as follows:



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1. Which bus routes to you use to get to Southampton General Hospital?

	Response Percent	Response Count
2A (First Bus)	26.2%	37
3 (First Bus)	58.2%	82
8A (First Bus)	25.5%	36
10 (First Bus)	21.3%	30
46 (Stagecoach)	0.7%	1
S1 (Velvet Bus)	6.4%	9
UH6 (Bluestar)	16.3%	23
U9 (Bluestar)	5.0%	7
	Other (please specify) Show Responses	11
	answered question	141
	skipped question	1



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2. What is the earliest time that you need to arrive on site in time for your shift (to the nearest half an hour)?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Before 5am	0.7%	1
5am	0.0%	0
5.30am	0.7%	1
6am	1.4%	2
6.30am	3.5%	5
7am	18.4%	26
7:30am	25.5%	36
8am	28.4%	40
8.30am	11.3%	16
9am	4.3%	6
Later than 9am	5.7%	8
answered question: 141		Skipped question: 1



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3. What is the latest time that you need to leave the site for home after your shift (to the nearest half an hour)?

Answered question: 141

Skipped question: 1

	Response Percent	Response Count
Before 6pm	31.2%	44
6pm	17.0%	24
6.30pm	4.3%	6
7.00pm	5.0%	7
7.30pm	3.5%	5
8pm	9.9%	14
8.30pm	14.2%	20
9pm	2.1%	3
9.30pm	4.3%	6
10pm	3.5%	5
10.30pm	2.1%	3



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3. What is the latest time that you need to leave the site for home after your shift (to the nearest half an hour)?

11pm	0.7%	1
11.30pm	0.0%	0
Midnight	0.0%	0
After midnight	2.1%	3



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4. On average which days of the week do you use this service (tick all that apply?)

		Answered question:140	Skipped question: 2
		Response Percent	Response Count
Monday		94.3%	132
Tuesday		91.4%	128
Wednesday		92.9%	130
Thursday		89.3%	125
Friday		90.7%	127
Saturday		35.7%	50
Sunday		28.6%	40
answered question		140	
		skipped question	2



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What improvements would you like to see to the bus service that you use? Examples could include routing, scheduling, safety, ticketing, fare cost or any other issue of your choosing (Open-Ended Response):
<i>Responses grouped by common theme</i>
Being on time!
Buses to run in time
Buses arriving on time
Want the buses to arrive on time.
Bus not appearing on time in the cold.
Buses not appearing on time in the cold.
To guarantee that buses will actually turn up when stated especially buses during dark winter evenings
Make the service run on time it is ALWAYS late!!!!
Buses to actually arrive at scheduled times. Quite regularly, buses do not even turn up!
Improved punctuality.
They are rarely on time and often so delayed that I miss my train. It is a poor and expensive service.
It would help if the bus turned up when the time table says. I have often been left standing around for a phantom bus. When you phone the company they just lie or don't care
Accurate electronic digital displays boards - they frequently are inaccurate to what number bus is actually arriving next.
That buses turn up as per the time table and that the electronic timings (if showing) are accurate and just disappear with no bus in sight.
Many times on Saturday and Sunday , the buses are on display but not coming , this hapend not one time !!!
Just sticking to the time table - and not taking 50 minutes for 10 minutes service!!!
Bus number 3 is always late in and causing disruption to time I get to work. Bus services need to be improved and increased to General not cut.
17a (now No.3) used to be on time but is frequently late.
Arriving on time and not 2 or 3 arriving at the same time
Scheduling improvements so not 3x Number 3's arrive at once!
The 3 can get rather bunched up and the 7:30am one from Central Station is often up to 20 minutes late.



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<p>The number 3 bus is meant to come along every 10-15 minutes but frequently I have had to wait for over 30 minutes for the bus. This has meant I have either been late for work, or have missed my train home because of the number 3 bus being late.</p>
<p>The number 3 First bus doesn't seem to stick to the timetabling, and I have had to wait for 15-20 mins on occasion.</p>
<p>Scheduling to improve on no 3 bus -80% buses arrive late in morning and evening rush hours. 8A is a good route but uses only 30 minutes.</p>
<p>It would be great to have a direct and frequent service between the train station and SGH, at least during peak times (7.30am-9am and 5pm-6.30pm). The number 3 is often busy and full of parents/school children travelling into Shirley so it would be good to have a quick and direct service straight to the hospital. Sometimes I finish work late between 6.30pm and 7.30pm. I then often have to wait half an hour or so for a bus which significantly adds to my travelling time when I am already late. There are various routes which call at the hospital but they all seem to arrive within 5 mins of each other and then there is half an hour with no services at all.</p>
<p>2a and 3 buses never regular. Often arrive in groups 40+ mins late. Service from Thornhill/Bitterne now changed. Concerns over cost, changes to services, and shelter</p>
<p>I find the No. 3 Service which runs from Thornhill to Southampton General Hospital can be unreliable and does not always run to time.</p>
<p>Scheduling especially in the morning Number 3 unreliable so will get a bus into Shirley and walk from there</p>
<p>I already have to walk to Shirley as the bus that goes down my way has been reduced to hourly and this often does not turn up. This has already added an extra 15 minutes to my journey each way. The 2a and 3 often run too close together so you are left waiting if you miss one.</p>
<p>More frequent through Shirley, on time and sufficient capacity at peak times</p>
<p>i would like to see more frequent buses and i would also like them to arrive on time and not have so many buses cancelled.</p>
<p>The only bus I can get where I live is the number 3, sometimes the 7:13 bus doesn't come or 2 number 3 buses arrive at 7:30, in order to start my shift on time I need to catch the 7:13 bus. More buses doing the number 3 route. The bus is always packed, maybe making sure the number 3 is always a double decker would be good. Lower bus fare, I pay for a monthly ticket and I know its discounted but its still quite high for the standard of service being provided. There is talks of our hours changing and working till 8, I have heard that the bus</p>



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<p>service is changing and the last bus is at 8 so I am worried about being stranded at night at the hospital with no bus to get me home.</p>
<p>may put on a single deck bus not a double , more than once per hour , i used to be home at 5.30pm now because of the changes and because it is always late i dont get home sometimes till 7pm</p>
<p>A decent bus for a start we have a clapped out bus just about works more buses, our finishes in th out 5.30pm can't get home after this, only get 1 an hour not good enough, especially as we pay £58 month for bus pass, the no.10 bus is an insult to us as we work at The General. First city needs a good kick up the backside. We hope another service would take over.</p>
<p>Buses being on time and share prices</p>
<p>More frequent service</p>
<p>More frequent.</p>
<p>More frequent buses. I have to wait 25mins between the Blue star 1 and the UH6. My baby is at the onsite nursery so this wait has not been fun in winter and with a baby!</p>
<p>More frequent scheduling.</p>
<p>MORE FREQUENT SERVICES FROM ALL AREAS OF SOUTHAMPTON.</p>
<p>More buses on the number 10 route, instead of 1 per hour perhaps 2 per hour in rush hour. Why are there so many number 3 buses ?</p>
<p>More frequent services in the evenings. e.g. Sunday services when there is one bus every hour</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More frequent, especially on a late shift as every 30 mins and Sunday as well. - Early bus for Sunday as we start at 7:30am and no early bus.
<p>Sunday service frustrating- have to get 6:27am bus for 8am start. The U6 starts at 7 o'clock. Bus 10 runs only 1 per hour and service that I need stops at 5:24pm on Saturdays.</p>
<p>I need to work weekends and bank holidays, the bus times on these days are not always beneficial for me as they do not always run at a time i can use. This good friday i had to get a taxi as the first bus was at 09:30, i needed to be at work at 08:45!</p>
<p>I would like the bus company to recognise that the hospital is not a 9-5 employer, I would like them to recognise that the service to employees living in Totton is appalling - 1 bus per hour with the last bus running from the hospital at 5.25pm.</p>
<p>I took the job here at the hospital as there was a half hourly service from Totton. There is no parking available here for staff like me so I have no other way of getting to work. Within a month the service was cut back to hourly which now</p>



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limits my work day to 8.30 to 4.20 whereas I used to work some days through to 5, 5 30 or 6 which I now can't do - the 5.30 bus from the hospital is so unreliable that I can only catch the 4.30 home which gives no flexibility to me when I have busy work periods and/or need to start /finish earlier/later for any reason.

Also, I buy a monthly ticket via the cash office at the hospital and when we board the bus we show the pass but we are never recognised or counted in any way so First Bus have no exact record of how many passengers use the service - there are 12 of us each day that presumably are not included in any of the First Bus passenger numbers so this is not a true reflection. There are rumours that the current hourly service will be reduced to just morning and evening services - this will not in any way encourage people to attend appointments by bus, visit family members etc and is no good either for hospital staff who choose to have a half day or have to get back to Totton for a Drs appointment etc.

The evening service of 3 bus currently leaves at 5 minutes past and 25 minutes to each hour. But as most shifts finish exactly on the hour (in my case at 20.00 or 21.00 pm) I can hardly catch it at 5 minutes past and have to wait further half an hour for the next one, thus arriving home at 22.00 pm and having to get up at 6.00 am the next morning). It would be easier if it was running at quarter past each hour.

More regular buses in the evenings.

Hopefully, the routing and scheduling will stay at is.

A later service at night, so I don't have to walk home in the dark.

-to route more often especially late hours - route on time

scheduling later buses

more frequent service at night as often have to wait an hour for next bus when finishing late. reduction in fares/ incentive for using the bus instead of driving and parking (like they had for cycling into work).

a bus after 6pm. the s1 does not go the full route after 1720

more buses after 5.30 and up to 7.30

Bus 8A to run after 6pm from SGH

Early buses and late buses would be better, as taxis are used on a daily basis.

It would be good if there was a bus which left Woolston at the Link Road a little earlier than 7.20am. because I have been waiting at the bus stop since 7.00am for a bus to arrive to no avail, although First Bus advertise a service at 7.10am.

it has been suggested that the u6 service be reduced in the evening and stopped on a Sunday this would not be practical for me as i work late shifts and Sundays this would leave me to have to make a 5 mile journey on foot at all times of the year



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<p>at present the last S1 is at approx 6.15pm. When working til 8.00pm especially in winter would be nice if ran later for people on the Lordwood estate rather than having to walk from Lordshill way</p>
<p>I want to see a service! At the moment, my bus runs once an hour from Totton. I work flexible hours (earliest start 8am, latest finish 6pm). There is no bus back to Totton after 6pm and a once an hour service means I have to leave home 90 minutes before I am due to start in the morning- (either 6.30am or 8.30am). This is a journey of less than 10 miles and because of the infrequency of the service, it makes coming to work a total nightmare, and increases my travel costs as my husband has to collect me at 6pm! Also the bus pass has gone up in price yet again, no doubt to subsidise free bus travel for pensioners, which I am not sure I agree with if it is at the expense of those who have to work to pay their travel costs!</p>
<p>Lower fares is always nice. More evening buses - between 18.30 and 20pm there never seems to be a bus - often a wait of up to an hour for the scheduled 18.30 bus. More buses or more reliable buses at core times for work - eg 06 - 09, and 20 - 22</p>
<p>More frequent buses, or buses that run at shift times from Bitterne Park area!</p>
<p>I have to catch 2 buses to get to SGH now. (From Lower Brownhill Road - Sainsburys - Sainsburys to SGH & reverse). The fares have doubled since they took off the number 17 direct to SGH.</p>
<p>The 8A is the only bus from Hedge end all the way to the hospital as a direct bue. If the frequency of the bus in the rush hour time that is from 7:30 to 9 am and 3:30 to 5 pm could be increased it would help. the 8 A also has a new route from Southampton city to the hospital, that goes around a lot of small roads and residential areas which increases time remarkably but does not increase connectivity to those areas as not a lot of people seem to get on or off the bus from these stops.</p>
<p>There has been a lot of speculation that the S1 First Bus service will revert to a 90 min service. this is absolutely ridiculous. We had two buses an hour, dropped to one and now this! More clarity please!!!!!!</p>
<p>One bus on a more direct route. 8a is too long winded so I get two buses. Continue reduced monthly bus pass. Heating on early morning buses.</p>
<p>more frequent no 10 with less crazy detours to get to the hospital. it used to only take 20 mins and now it takes 45mins!</p>
<p>SGH is almost the last stop and my home in Harefield is the first. I would love a more direct route that did not take so long.</p>
<p>I would like the number 10 service to run more than once an hour. I would like</p>



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cheaper fares for NHS staff.
Earlier buses from Harefield to SGH. Shorter route; it currently takes me 1h 20-30mins to get home mid afternoon; dread to think how long it will take at 5pm!! Even the drivers comment on how long my journey is! They also change drivers when the bus arrives in the city centre which lengthens the journey.
cheaper fares and more regular and on time
Fare cost, availability of service
Fare cost should be less. Atleast the return tickets must cost less.
Bus times & prices.
Cost of the fare to be reduced
route and times
Scheduling
better scheduling
Scheduling Routing Cost
Scheduling, fare cost - £50 per month!!
One bus that goes from hosp to Adanac Park instead of changing at Lordshill- which means catching two buses which is £1.95 per journey! Total: £7.80 per day.
Shortening the unnecessary route via Winchester Road and Dale Valley Road where no one ever gets onto the no. 8A bus at least early in the morning. The bus could simply take Dale Road as before, saving around 5-10 mins journey for Hospital workers while those who live on Dale Valley Road could get on at the bus stop on Dale Road.
Through-ticketing / passes that work on ALL Southampton area buses regardless of operator More cross-city routes that don't go via the city centre (ie similar to U9) and/or U9 running more often Fares frozen in line with public sector pay "Express" services that go across the city without serving every bus stop on the way, just one stop in each suburb / key location
I would be very grateful if they could put back the bus that used to go along Romsey Road and up Bakers Drove.
Route too long- could be quicker to West End.
Direct route through from Sholing (as opposed to having to change in City Centre). Perhaps 1/2 of the No.18 service from Thornhill could be re-routed from Millbrook to SGH (currently every 6-7 mins between Thornhill and Millbrook).
I would like to be able to get a bus from midanbury which goes more or less straight to the General Hospital and not take nearly an hour, as the U9 does, i currently catch the U6H but have to drive to the bus stop, however this is a good



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service.
Shortage of buses from New Forest / Dibden.
Heating and shelter overcrowding at bus stops.
There is only 1 bus for me to get to and from work which is First bus #10.
Currently have a car parking space but may have to return to coming in by bus shortly.

Summary of survey results:

Over half of those surveyed used the *First Bus* No.3 service (formerly No.10).

A quarter of those surveyed used the *First Bus* No.2A or 8A service.

The core arrival times at the hospital are between 7-8am.

Over 38% of those surveyed require a bus service after 8:00pm.

The majority of staff surveyed use the service(s) on weekdays.

A third of staff surveyed use buses to get to work on Saturdays and slightly less on Sundays.

Main suggestions for improvements to bus services (in order of frequency of reference) taken from survey:

- **Punctuality** and particularly that of the *First Bus* No. 3 service which appears to have a very poor reputation for lateness.
- **Frequency** of services increased, particularly during evenings, rush hour, early mornings, weekends and Bank Holidays.
- **Scheduling** – the timing of the services to coincide with the needs of the passengers and the shift patterns of staff
- **Routing** – criticisms that some services are being delayed due to long routes or travel through areas without demand, when staff are trying to get to work
- **High fare cost**- at a time when public sector pay has been frozen for several years and particularly when multiple buses are required to make a journey



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We would like to draw your attention to the following statements provided by those surveyed:

'I would like the bus company to recognise that the hospital is not a 9-5 employer.'

'The evening service of 3 bus currently leaves at 5 minutes past and 25 minutes to each hour. But as most shifts finish exactly on the hour (in my case at 20.00 or 21.00 pm) I can hardly catch it at 5 minutes past and have to wait further half an hour for the next one, thus arriving home at 22.00 pm and having to get up at 6.00 am the next morning). It would be easier if it was running at quarter past each hour.'

'More frequent service at night as often have to wait an hour for next bus when finishing late.'

'A bus after 6pm. The S1 does not go the full route after 1720.'

'I need to work weekends and bank holidays, the bus times on these days are not always beneficial for me as they do not always run at a time i can use. This good friday i had to get a taxi as the first bus was at 09:30, i needed to be at work at 08:45!'

'Sunday service frustrating- have to get 6:27am bus for 8am start. The U6 starts at 7 o'clock. Bus 10 runs only 1 per hour and service that I need stops at 5:24pm on Saturdays.'

'Early bus for Sunday as we start at 7:30am and no early bus.'

If the bus operators invest time in identifying the common working shifts of staff at the site, they may realise that demand remains high for services at times of the day when demand for services in other parts of the city falls. There is still a demand for services during evenings, early mornings and weekends.

'It would be great to have a direct and frequent service between the train station and SGH, at least during peak times (7.30am-9am and 5pm-6.30pm). The number 3 is often busy and full of parents/school children travelling into



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Shirley so it would be good to have a quick and direct service straight to the hospital.'

'The 8A also has a new route from Southampton city to the hospital, that goes around a lot of small roads and residential areas which increases time remarkably but does not increase connectivity to those areas as not a lot of people seem to get on or off the bus from these stops.'

'The bus is always packed, maybe making sure the number 3 is always a double decker would be good.'

These considerations to routing and to bus capacity could make a significant improvement to the journey of staff and patients and possibly encourage more to use the service. With passengers using other connecting bus services from across the city, reliant on the No.3 bus to make the final leg of their journey, this section of the journey appears to be worth investment.

'Through-ticketing / passes that work on ALL Southampton area buses regardless of operator More cross-city routes that don't go via the city centre (ie similar to U9) and/or U9 running more often Fares frozen in line with public sector pay "Express" services that go across the city without serving every bus stop on the way, just one stop in each suburb / key location.'

'One bus that goes from hosp to Adanac Park instead of changing at Lordshill- which means catching two buses which is £1.95 per journey! Total: £7.80 per day.'

The above comment suggests that simpler ticketing arrangements would benefit passengers along with more direct services across the city. A maximum price for the journey fare and combined bus company tickets could resolve this.

'First city needs a good kick up the backside. We hope another service would take over.'

The above comment is reflective of comments expressed and articulated in a manner of ways whilst staff completed their surveys. We found that passengers were often vocally critical of *First Bus*. This suggests that their reputation is poor amongst



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hospital staff that use the service. *Bluestar/Uni-link* customers appeared to be less critical of their service and in some instances positive about their service.

We encountered fewer passengers using *Velvet Bus* or *Stagecoach* services so gained no overall impression of their general feelings towards their service.

We came across staff who had given up using their buses due to confusion over route changes, fare increases and reductions in services. If *First Bus* stops running evening services to the hospital, arguably their reputation as an operator may struggle to recover amongst staff.

One disabled hospital volunteer (not included in the survey results as he was not staff) reported that he had great difficulty getting on and off *First Bus* vehicles in his wheelchair but that the *Bluestar/Uni-link* vehicles were better adapted to his needs.



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UNISON'S CONCERNS ABOUT PRESENT AND FUTURE BUS SERVICES:

Primary concern: reductions in bus services (particularly early morning, evenings and weekends)

Southampton General Hospital and Princess Anne Hospital operate around the clock services and many of these are seven days a week. We understand that there are between 7,500-10,000 staff contracted to work at either Southampton General Hospital or the Princess Anne Hospital.

As a result, shift patterns include early morning starts, late evening finishes, weekend and Bank Holiday working. The number of staff undertaking these shifts is likely to increase as there are increasing calls to encourage the NHS to operate services during evenings and weekends. In the future, the appointments of some of the 100's of thousands of patients who visit the site each year may as a result, start to take place during the expanded opening hours.

UNISON representatives understand that the University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust, responsible for managing the hospital has a tendency now to operate around fewer and longer working shifts rather than frequent short shifts. This requires staff to start work earlier and finish work later. We understand that this may be partly due to concerns over transport for staff. These points may need to be clarified by the Trust.

Our survey is suggesting that staff are already struggling to get to and from work due to infrequent services before 6am, after 6pm, and weekends and particularly on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

A bus service which is not fit for purpose could impact on the operations of the hospital. If staff reliant on the bus service are required to work shifts during periods that bus services are reduced or stopped, this may prevent them from fulfilling their contractual requirements. As a result the hospital may lose staff or become unattractive to potential recruits.

The parking facilities on site are already under high demand and UNISON representatives understand that the hospital management is likely to want to encourage staff to use alternative methods of transport to their car.



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If buses are not provided for return journeys after 8pm, there is a potential risk that staff will decide against using bus services, resulting in a reduction of overall custom. A return ticket bought in the daytime is of no use to anyone if there is no bus available for the return journey in the evening. The reputation of bus services provided by *First Bus* appears already to be poor amongst staff surveyed. This is despite a subsidy being received by *First Bus* from Southampton City Council. Staff have effectively been paying twice towards this service; firstly in bus fares and secondly in Council Tax, which has gone towards subsidising services.

Local Government funding has been cut by central government. This has forced Local Authorities such as Southampton City Council to take difficult decisions on what they spend these reduced funds on.

The main rate of Corporation Tax in the UK has fallen and will continue to fall (26% in 2011, 24% in 2012, 23% in 2013 and 21% in 2014). Providing the bus companies serving the hospital are paying this tax, the UK central government will receive less revenue from these companies and these companies will be able to retain more of their profits. We believe that the reduction in Corporation Tax will go some way to offsetting the loss of state subsidy via Southampton City Council.

A move to cut vital bus services provided by any bus company, following the removal of the subsidy from Southampton City Council, would be a deeply unpopular and could cause lasting damage to their reputation in the city of Southampton.

Municipal bus services used to be operated on the principle of cross-subsidisation. Profitable busy or peak time routes used to pay for unprofitable quieter or off-peak routes. Buses were also operated as valued public services not profit-seeking ventures. These principles appear to be lost on some bus companies. The impact on Southampton's economy, environment and traffic congestion in the city could be significant if the city bus service deteriorates.

Other concerns:

It is concerning that bus companies do not previously appear to have communicated with passengers in a manner which would have identified and possibly addressed



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their concerns. A 'Passenger Forum' similar to that recently set up in Gosport and Fareham might improve this, if actively supported by customers.

Consideration of the common shift patterns of hospital staff when setting (already infrequent) evening, early morning, weekend and Bank Holiday timetables, could make a huge difference as to whether services are used. Buses leaving the site minutes before shifts end or are about to begin are of little value to staff.

If implemented, suggestions to consider more direct routing, frequency and capacity of services to the site at peak times might encourage more to use the services.

City network maps, fare prices and timetables should be displayed at larger bus shelters. Timetables and basic route maps must be displayed on every bus stop.

There appears to be significant problems with the highly used *First Bus* No. 3 service, which should be addressed.

Improvements could be made to fares to create a maximum fare to and from the site, regardless of the number of buses or variety of bus companies used to complete a journey.

Consideration may need to be given to increasing the capacity and seating areas of bus shelters. Wind shields on both ends of the shelters would also offer protection from the elements.

Electronic bus service update displays should be replaced with real-time information.

The hospital sites may benefit from a large city network route map being displayed in public areas both inside and outside the hospital.

Promotion of bus service pricing and routes to staff and patients may encourage greater use of the services, particularly if improvements to the service can be cited.

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