



Fares Determination Notice

**Dublin City Bus Nitelink services
in the Greater Dublin Area**

Effective from 2nd September 2022

August 2022

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The National Transport Authority (the Authority) has statutory responsibility for securing the provision of public transport services as outlined in the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008. The Act gives the Authority responsibility for the setting of public transport fares on contracted services. To fulfill this responsibility in respect of Public Service Obligation (PSO) services operating in the greater Dublin area, the Authority entered into a new Public Service Contract with Dublin Bus in December 2019 for a period of 5 years. The Authority has also entered into a contract with Go Ahead Ireland for the provision of bus services in the Outer Dublin Metropolitan Area (ODMA). Where reference is made to Dublin city bus in this document it also includes Go Ahead Ireland.

All public transport contracts must, among other things, provide for “fares to be charged and provision for the variation, including increase or decrease, of fares”. The Authority periodically examines existing fares and associated structures, subsequently issuing determinations in this regard. This fares determination notice sets out the fares for Dublin city bus services operating in the greater Dublin area.

1.2 Summary

In light of public health restrictions arising from the COVID-19 global pandemic and the impact on passenger confidence, the Authority decided not to implement a full fares determination in 2021, opting to focus on making the small number of remaining adjustments necessary to support the roll out of BusConnects in Dublin. This focused on the implementation of a new fares structure for Leap and cash on Dublin city bus services and for Leap initially on rail and Luas light rail services in the Dublin area. The fare system comprises a short distance fare and a 90 minute fare. The Authority further determined that fares on premium services including Dublin Bus Nitelink and Xpresso bus services along with longer distance rail journeys outside of the 90 minute fare boundary (Zones 5 & 6), remained as part of the new structure with no adjustment to fare levels.

The recent 2022 fares determination followed a similarly focused remit, delivering on the government’s 20% cost of living fares reduction this year and the introduction of Young Adult Leap fares, offering a 50% fares reduction on equivalent Adult fares, for those aged between 19 and 23. Despite the timely delivery of these technically challenging initiatives resulting in other structural changes being deferred to future determinations, the Authority was able to bring forward a number of other changes to fares structures for the benefit of passengers including the introduction of Mallow to the commuter fares zone in Cork; a new flat bus fare for all children in regional cities in line with that introduced in Dublin; and proposals for Tax saver products to incentivise a return to public transport for commuters.

A key component of the BusConnects programme has been the innovation of the fares system in Dublin to provide a simpler fares structure, allowing for seamless movement between different transport services without financial penalty. This fares determination notice will take another step towards achieving these objectives, through the commencement of the incorporation of Nitelink bus services into the new short distance and TFI 90 minute fares structure. This will take place over two phases, the first of which will see Nitelink fares reduced to align with that of Xpresso services, effective from 2nd September 2022.

1.3 Determination of fares & need for fares adjustments

This fares determination notice sets out the fares for PSO bus services operating in the greater Dublin area, specifically Nitelink services operated by Dublin Bus, under contract to the Authority. It will address the structure and price of cash and Leap fares on the aforementioned bus services, with all other fares on PSO services remaining unchanged.

The Authority has been working over many years now to simplify the fares across all PSO public transport services and to introduce a fairer distance based structure. The 2021 and 2022 fares determinations have taken a significant step forward in relation to achieving these objectives in Dublin city and the wider Dublin metropolitan area, with the introduction of the TFI 90 minute fare.

There are a number of overriding principles and objectives, which the Authority takes into account as part of the determination of cash, Leap and prepaid fares, namely;

- to facilitate the restructuring and simplification of fares structures as envisaged by BusConnects
- to continue to encourage a transfer from cash to Leap
- the consolidation of ticket types within the Short Hop Zone (SHZ) to facilitate greater interchange

The Authority is also increasingly aware that as the economy emerges from the impacts of the pandemic and the use of public transport returns to pre-pandemic levels, the needs of passengers are changing. This has been seen through the introduction of hybrid or blended working practices where attendance at a physical office is not required 5 days a week, as well as differing travel choices resulting from recent increases in the cost of living. One such change has seen greater levels of demand for late night services at weekends. The introduction of 24 hour bus services has helped significantly in meeting passenger demand for late night bus services, however, there is a need to further disperse demand across a greater number of these services, facilitating passenger journeys out of the city centre.

Accordingly, the Authority have determined that all existing Nitelink services will transition to the 90 minute fares structure, providing passengers with equivalent value to that of regular services. This integration supports the Authority's objectives in relation to the consolidation of ticket types and simplification of fares structures.

Due to the complexity involved and requirement for a review of stopping patterns and route alignments, the Authority have determined that Nitelink services will see fares reduced to that of Xpresso services as an interim measure, thus providing significantly better value for passengers while this transition takes place.

1.4 Nitelink fares

Nitelink bus services operate in a somewhat similar manner to Xpresso services, in that they are designed to allow for faster and more efficient bus travel with routes having fewer stops and therefore, reduced journey times between destinations. These services typically operate on a Friday and Saturday night, departing from the city centre and serve a wide variety of locations across the full extent of the greater Dublin area. As with Xpresso services, when passengers use their Leap e-purse balance to pay for journeys on Nitelink, they also have the added benefit of free onward transfer within 90 minutes on any mode within the Dublin 90 minute fare boundary.

As Nitelink services are intended to be faster and more direct than regular services, this is reflected in a slightly higher fare than that of regular services. To ensure Nitelink Xpresso services have remained affordable for passengers, the Authority determined in 2018 that Leap fares were reduced from €5.29 to €4.50, a decrease of almost 15%. The cash fare of €6.60 remained, in order to encourage the switch from cash to Leap. Due to the onset of the pandemic, fares on Dublin city bus services remained at 2018 prices until April 2022, when the 20% cost of living fares reduction seen them reduce further to €3.60 on Leap and €5.30 on cash. The introduction of Young Adult fares in April 2022 now means that passengers aged between 19 and 23 can travel on Nitelink for as little as €1.80 when paying on Leap.

As previously alluded to, Nitelink services operate in a similar pattern to that of Xpresso, with limited stops on a more direct route alignment. Whilst it is the intention of the Authority to transition Nitelink fares into the short distance and 90 minute fares structure now in place on the majority of Dublin city bus services, there is a requirement for the Authority in conjunction with the operator to make a series of adjustments to the nature of existing Nitelink routes, to move to a more regular stopping pattern and in turn provide an improved service which better serves the needs of passengers. This process has commenced and will take a number of months to complete. Therefore, as an interim step, the Authority have determined that the appropriate fares for Nitelink services will be the current discounted Xpresso fares, for all passengers on cash and Leap. This means that the current Adult Nitelink Leap fare of €3.60 will be reduced to €2.40 in line with Xpresso services, representing a 33% fares reduction. Similarly, Young Adults will also see a comparable fares reduction from €1.80 to €1.20. Adult cash fares will also be reduced by 46.7% on Nitelink services from €5.30 down to €3.00, offering excellent value for passengers. As with existing Nitelink fares, passengers will continue to be able to avail of a free transfer to and from Nitelink and other PSO services in the greater Dublin area, without financial penalty, when paying by Leap e-purse.

In furtherance of the Authority's commitment towards a simplified and consistent fares structure on PSO bus services, the Authority has determined that a new Nitelink fare category should be created for children for the first time. As with Adults and Young Adults, this new fare will be equivalent to the existing child Xpresso fare on Leap priced at €1.00. A new child cash Nitelink fare will also be created, priced at €1.30.

It is the intention of the Authority to fully migrate all Nitelink fares to the 90 minute fares structure as part of future fares determinations, the timing of which will be dependent upon the successful restructuring of Nitelink services in the coming months.

A full list of Dublin city bus fares including Nitelink can be found in **Appendix A - Dublin city bus fares**, below.

2. Appendices - Detailed Fare tables

Appendix A - Dublin city bus Fares

| Dublin City Bus Leap fares | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Passenger type | Ticket Type | Fare / product type | NTA Approved Fare |
| Adult | Short | Leap | €1.30 |
| Adult | 90 minute | Leap | €2.00 |
| Adult | Xpresso | Leap | €2.40 |
| Adult | Nitelink | Leap | €3.60 |
| Young Adult | Short | Leap | €0.65 |
| Young Adult | 90 minute | Leap | €1.00 |
| Young Adult | Xpresso | Leap | €1.20 |
| Young Adult | Nitelink | Leap | €1.80 |
| Child | 90 minute | Leap | €0.65 |
| Child | Xpresso | Leap | €1.00 |

| Dublin City Bus Cash fares | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Passenger type | Ticket Type | Fare / product type | Current Fare |
| Adult | Short | Cash | €1.70 |
| Adult | Long | Cash | €2.60 |
| Adult | Xpresso | Cash | €3.00 |
| Adult | Nitelink | Cash | €5.30 |
| Child | Long | Cash | €0.90 |
| Child | Xpresso | Cash | €1.30 |

| Dublin City Bus Leap fares | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Passenger type | Ticket Type | Fare / product type | NTA Approved Fare |
| Adult | Short | Leap | €1.30 |
| Adult | 90 minute | Leap | €2.00 |
| Adult | Xpresso/Nitelink | Leap | €2.40 |
| Young Adult | Short | Leap | €0.65 |
| Young Adult | 90 minute | Leap | €1.00 |
| Young Adult | Xpresso/Nitelink | Leap | €1.20 |
| Child | 90 minute | Leap | €0.65 |
| Child | Xpresso/Nitelink | Leap | €1.00 |

| Dublin City Bus Cash fares | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Passenger type | Ticket Type | Fare / product type | Current Fare |
| Adult | Short | Cash | €1.70 |
| Adult | Long | Cash | €2.60 |
| Adult | Xpresso/Nitelink | Cash | €3.00 |
| Child | Long | Cash | €0.90 |
| Child | Xpresso/Nitelink | Cash | €1.30 |

| Dublin City Bus Cash fares | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Passenger type | Ticket Type | Fare / product type | NTA Approved Fare |
| Family | 1 Day Rambler | Cash | €12.00 |
| Adult | 5 Day Rambler | Cash | €26.00 |
| Adult | 30 Day Rambler | Cash | €132.00 |
| Student | 5 Day Rambler | Cash | €19.00 |
| Student | 30 Day Rambler | Cash | €96.00 |

| Dublin City Bus Cash fares | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Passenger type | Ticket Type | Fare / product type | NTA Approved Fare |
| Family | 1 Day Rambler | Cash | €12.00 |
| Adult | 5 Day Rambler | Cash | €26.00 |
| Adult | 30 Day Rambler | Cash | €132.00 |
| Student | 5 Day Rambler | Cash | €19.00 |
| Student | 30 Day Rambler | Cash | €96.00 |

| Dublin City Bus Leap fares | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Passenger type | Ticket Type | Fare / product type | NTA Approved Fare |
| Visitor/Foreign Student | 1 Day - 24hr | Leap | €8.00 |
| Visitor/Foreign Student | 3 Day - 72hr | Leap | €16.00 |
| Visitor/Foreign Student | 7 Day - (168hr) | Leap | €32.00 |
| Visitor/Foreign Student | 2 week | Leap | €60.00 |
| Visitor/Foreign Student | 3 week | Leap | €80.00 |
| Visitor/Foreign Student | 4 week | Leap | €100.00 |

| Dublin City Bus Leap fares | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Passenger type | Ticket Type | Fare / product type | NTA Approved Fare |
| Visitor/Foreign Student | 1 Day - 24hr | Leap | €8.00 |
| Visitor/Foreign Student | 3 Day - 72hr | Leap | €16.00 |
| Visitor/Foreign Student | 7 Day - (168hr) | Leap | €32.00 |
| Visitor/Foreign Student | 2 week | Leap | €60.00 |
| Visitor/Foreign Student | 3 week | Leap | €80.00 |
| Visitor/Foreign Student | 4 week | Leap | €100.00 |

| Dublin City Bus Leap fares | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Passenger type | Ticket Type | Fare / product type | NTA Approved Fare |
| Adult | Travelwide (Bus Only) | Monthly | €115.00 |
| Adult | Travelwide (Bus Only) | Annual | €1,150.00 |

| Dublin City Bus Leap fares | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Passenger type | Ticket Type | Fare / product type | NTA Approved Fare |
| Adult | Travelwide (Bus Only) | Monthly | €115.00 |
| Adult | Travelwide (Bus Only) | Annual | €1,150.00 |