



National Transport Authority

**Republic of Ireland National Enforcement Body
Activity Report 2025**

**Rights of Passengers travelling by Bus and Coach
Regulation (EU) No 181/2011**

June 2025

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Introduction

Under the provisions of Article 29 of the Regulation (EU) 181/2011, the National Enforcement Bodies (NEBs) of each EU Member State are required to publish a report on their activities in the previous two calendar years.

The National Transport Authority (NTA) is the designated NEB for Bus and Coach Passenger Rights in Ireland. The NTA's role as the Irish NEB is prescribed in national regulations (S.I. no 152 of 2013). These regulations also set out the penalties that can be imposed in cases of non-compliance

The Irish National Enforcement Body

The National Transport Authority (NTA) was established in December 2009 on foot of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008. It was originally conceived as a transport authority for the Greater Dublin Area under the 2008 Act. However, it was subsequently renamed the National Transport Authority in the Public Transport Regulation Act 2009, which extended NTA's functions to include the licensing of buses and small public service vehicles nationally.

NTA is a statutory non-commercial State body, which operates under the aegis of the Department of Transport.

The remit of NTA is primarily concerned with the planning, development and funding of sustainable transport modes, that is public transport, cycling and walking, on a national basis. NTA's remit also extends to the regulation of commercial public bus services as well as the small public service vehicle sector and vehicle clamping.

The NTA is also the national enforcement body responsible for the rights of passenger travelling by rail or on sea and inland waterways and bus and coach. The Commission for Aviation Regulation is responsible for air passenger rights in Ireland.

NTA manages the capital investment programme nationally for public transport, cycling and walking, funding transport operators, local authorities and other bodies for approved projects on behalf of the Department of Transport.

NTA is also the approving authority for the three mega public transport projects supported by the current National Development Plan 2021 – 2030. These are;

- BusConnects Dublin
- MetroLink
- DART+ Programme

NTA's remit includes meeting the demand for sustainable transport services across Ireland as well as working with stakeholders to reduce carbon emissions from a transport perspective.

The Bus Market in Ireland

EU Regulation 1370/2007 and the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 requires that Public Service Obligation (PSO) Services should be provided through a Public Service Contract with a competent Authority which in the case of this state is the National Transport Authority. PSO services are socially necessary transport services which may not be commercially viable and as such they usually require a state subsidy to operate.

There are two types of public transport services contract. They are:

- Net cost contracts under which the operator retains all fare revenue.
- Gross cost contracts under which the NTA retains all fare revenue. All competitively tendered contracts currently fall into this category.

The NTA also contracts with a large number of operators to provide rural transport services nationally through the Local Link Programme. These are a mixture of gross cost contracts which are competitively tendered as well as a small number of net cost direct award contracts with fleet-owning Local Link groups to provide transport services.

Operator / Programme	Service Type	Contract Type	Operational Area / Route
Dublin Bus	Bus	Direct Award	Dublin Metropolitan
Bus Éireann	Bus	Direct Award	National (Excluding Dublin)
Go Ahead	Bus	Tendered	National
Rural Transport Programme	Bus / Demand Responsive Transport	Various	National
Tendered Services	Bus	Tendered	Various

Direct Awards

Public Service contracts have been delivered under direct contract awards by the two state owned bus companies, Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann, since 2009. The NTA is statutorily obliged to consult with stakeholders including operators and users of the bus services in question in advance of any decision to directly award bus contracts.

NTA's contracts with Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann expired in November 2024. Following the decision to enter into further direct award contracts with Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann for a five-year period from December 2024, NTA subsequently entered into negotiations with both transport operators for the replacement direct award contracts, which included measures to improve operational performance across these contracts. These contracts were signed in late November and came into effect in December.

Competitively Tendered Contracts 2024

The procurement and mobilisation of a number of significant contracts progressed during 2024. The Outer Dublin Metropolitan Area (ODMA) contract, currently operated by Go-Ahead Ireland, was retendered under three lots, North, South or the combined North and South package of routes. Following the tender process Go-Ahead Ireland were identified as the preferred tenderer and a Letter of Intent to enter into a new contract was issued in late 2024, with mobilisation commencing shortly thereafter, including the sourcing of a new depot to the north of Dublin City.

Route 139 was awarded to incumbent JJ Kavanagh, with the new contract commencing in April, including an increase in frequency to hourly.

A tender competition for the operation of route 245x between Cork and Dublin was undertaken during 2024, with Bus Éireann being awarded the contract.

A tender competition for the operation of new bus services in Portlaoise was undertaken during 2024, with City Direct being awarded the contract.

The retendering of bus services in Kilkenny City commenced in late 2024, including service enhancements to the current timetable.

NTA extended the terms of a number of existing contracts as follows:

- The Dublin Commuter Contract provided by Go-Ahead Ireland was extended for 1 year to November 2026.
- Contract with City Direct in respect of services in Kilkenny City to January 2025.
- The Waterford City Contract provided by Bus Éireann was extended for one year to June 2026.

2023

Mobilisation progressed on three significant tenders during 2023.

The first was for the new W4 from the Square in Tallaght to Blanchardstown and the W61 and W62 routes linking West Dublin with North Kildare. These services are a key part of the BusConnects Dublin Network Redesign project and were launched in June.

The second was for the Eastern Coastal Commuter Corridor, currently operated under the Bus Éireann Direct Award Contract as routes 101 and 133. This will enhance connectivity from Co. Louth and Co. Wicklow into Dublin. Services commenced operating under this tendered contract by Bus Éireann in May.

Bus Éireann commenced operating regular bus services in Carlow Town in July also following a tender competition.

Also route 139 from Naas to Blanchardstown was re-tendered in late 2023 with the incumbent JJ Kavanagh being successful at tender stage and was notified just before year end to progress to mobilisation.

NTA extended the terms of a number of existing contracts as follows:

- The Outer Dublin Metropolitan Area Contract provided by Go Ahead Ireland Limited was extended a second time for 1 year to October 2025
- The Dublin Commuter Contract provided by Go-Ahead Limited was extended for 1 year to November 2025.
- Contract with City Direct Limited in respect of city services in Kilkenny to January 2024.

Passenger Numbers

There was exceptional growth in the use on contracted and commercial bus services in 2023. PSO contracted bus services grew from 175.2 (million) to 216.4 in 2023 and 239 in 2024. While commercial bus services grew from 18.6 (million) in 2022 to 22.4 in 2023.

Commercial bus service figures will publish in Q.4 in 2025; therefore, they are unavailable at present.

Bus Service Passenger Trips (in millions)				Percent of Total	
Year	Commercial Bus Services	Total PSO Bus Services	Total Bus Passengers	Commercial Bus Passengers	PSO Bus Passengers
2023	22.4	216.4	238.8	20%	23.5%
2024		239			

Dublin Bus provides the bulk of city services in Dublin and support the most passenger journeys in Ireland. Bus Éireann provide the majority of PSO services outside of Dublin. This includes PSO local bus services throughout Ireland, city and town bus services, and commuter bus services radiating from Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway, and Waterford.

The Rural Transport Programme provides bus services in many isolated areas of rural Ireland with journeys tending to be local in nature. The NTA took over the management of the programme, which is grant aided by the State, in 2012. Rural Transport figures increased from 2.8 (million) in 2022 to 4.4 in 2023 and 5.8 in 2024.

Commercial Services

Under the Public Transport Regulation Act 2009 (PTR Act 2009), the National Transport Authority is responsible for the licensing of public bus passenger services. Licensed public bus passenger services are often called ‘commercial bus services’, as they are operated without any public subsidy from the NTA. They are also called ‘route licences’ as different routes are individually licensed by the NTA.

Year	Commercial Bus Services-Total Passenger Journeys (in millions)
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2023	22.4
2024	Not available at time of writing

Passenger Rights

The NTA is the designated enforcement body in Ireland for EU Regulations concerning the rights of passengers when travelling by rail, sea and bus / coach. Those rights include non-discrimination and assistance for disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility, provision of information to all passengers before and during their journey, assistance to all passengers in the event of delays and, in certain circumstances, compensation for delays and cancellation of journeys.

There are 15 regular bus services that operate in Ireland where the scheduled distance of the service is 250 km or more.

Complaint Handling

The NTA acts as an appeals body only and passengers are obliged to make their complaint to the relevant operator in the first instance. If the individual is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint or if they do not receive a response, they can bring their complaint to the attention of the NTA. The NTA will decide if it is a valid complaint under the regulations and if so, conduct a full investigation. Passengers can submit their complaint in writing, by email or by filling out the online complaint form on the NTA's website. The NTA also facilitates complaints which are outside of its jurisdiction by passing them on to the relevant NEB's in other countries.

The NTA did not receive any complaints under the Regulation in the period 2023 – 2024.

Statistical Data:

Year	Number of complaints	Reason for complaint (e.g. cancellation, delay, discrimination, lack of assistance)
From 1 January 2023 – December 31 st 2023	0	-
From 1 January 2024 – December 31 st 2024	0	-

Guidance and Enforcement

Passenger rights form an integral part of the PSO contracts between operators and the NTA. Monitoring of the contractual obligations is carried out on a quarterly basis, with operators reporting directly to the NTA.

Monitoring of licenced services is carried out by the Transport Regulation Bus Compliance team. This team undertakes on-going monitoring, both overt and covert, of licensed services throughout the State.

Our website provides a comprehensive summary of the regulations and where to go for additional information. It also contains a link to our online complaint form for passengers who wish to submit a complaint to us.

Accessibility

The NTA works closely with the Department of Transport’s Accessibility Consultative Committee on issues relating to accessible transport. The main stakeholders representing passengers with reduced mobility and other transport interest groups are represented on the committee. In addition, the NTA liaises with the accessibility officers in each of the main transport operators.

Accessibility Funding

Under the Accessibility Retrofit Funding Scheme, funding was approximately €7 Million between 2019 to 2021 each year. This funding increased to €15 million in 2022 and to €24 Million in 2025. It includes funding for projects to increase accessibility for people in wheelchairs, but also for people with vision impairments, hidden disabilities and for older people. There has been additional funding invested over the years which has helped to improve the public transport service for all passengers including people with disabilities too.

The approved projects include accessible bus stops, bus station upgrades, travel assistance programme and education and training. Funding for 2023 and 2024 was as follows:

2023	Accessibility Retrofit Funding	€20 million
2024	Accessibility Retrofit Funding	€15 million

Conclusion

The period 2023–2024 marked significant progress in Ireland’s bus and coach transport sector, with notable growth in passenger numbers, expanded service coverage, and enhanced accessibility. The National Transport Authority continued to fulfil its role as the National Enforcement Body, ensuring compliance with EU regulations and upholding passenger rights. Through a combination of direct awards and competitive tendering, the NTA maintained and improved service delivery across urban, rural, and intercity routes. The Authority’s commitment to accessibility and sustainability remains central to its operations, reflecting its broader mission to provide inclusive, efficient, and environmentally responsible public transport for all.