



Office of the Traffic Commissioner

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Mr K McNally
Confederation of Passenger Transport

(by email to: keith.mcnally@cpt-uk.org)

19 September 2025

Dear Mr McNally

Local Bus Service Registrations

I am writing on behalf of the Senior Traffic Commissioner and the Traffic Commissioner Board.

The Traffic Commissioners are aware of a backlog in the processing of local bus registration applications received into the Office of the Traffic Commissioner. It now appears that a large number of these applications have exceeded their intended effective date. This means that operators who have submitted applications for registration, variation and cancellation in good time of the statutory period cannot make the requested changes whilst they are awaiting confirmation of acceptance from a traffic commissioner.

The reasons for the performance of the service are varied and OTC management is working on rectifying the situation through the following measures:

- Additional permanent staff are being allocated to the PSV team, including a dedicated middle manager to oversee the PSV and bus registration function.
- Four temporary staff have been recruited to assist in the clearance of the backlog.
- Incomplete applications do not assist the efficient processing – the OTC have worked with CPT on providing information and messages to operators on common issues found in applications.
- Traffic Commissioners have agreed a measure with DVSA/OTC managers that applications are processed or referred to a Traffic Commissioner within 10 working days of a complete application to ensure that DVSA are held to account for the service provided.

The failure of the OTC to formally register services by the effective date means that the service cannot be introduced, varied or cancelled without the operator breaching section 6 of the Transport Act 1985 and the relevant Regulations. It is recognised that either option is sub-optimal and presents challenges to operators, local authorities and the travelling public

Traffic Commissioners seek to regulate in a proportionate manner. In order to assist operators and stakeholders in light of the failings of the administrative support provided to Traffic Commissioners, the Traffic Commissioners consider that it would be disproportionate for a Traffic Commissioner to make an adverse finding against an operator who operates a service contrary to an existing registration provided the following criteria has been met regarding registrations submitted to a Traffic Commissioner:

- The correct local authority pre-notification has been given
- Applications have been properly received within the OTC with all registered particular information
- The full 42-day notice period (or 56 days in Wales or 112 days for franchise transition areas) has passed
- Short notice applications are **not** included in this measure
- That the registration (or change) is due to commence on or before 31 October 2025

I hope this will give your members some reassurance whilst the service provision returns to acceptable levels.

Yours sincerely

(by email)

John Furzeland
Office of the Traffic Commissioner