

Issued by the Coach Tourism and Transport Council of Ireland (CTTC)
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Scheduled private bus services to continue as normal during bus strike

Private bus operators call for full review of public bus transport

The organisation representing private coach and bus operators in Ireland has today reassured customers that all services operated by its members will continue as normal during the industrial action by Bus Éireann workers.

The Coach and Tourism Transport Council of Ireland (CTTC), has said that the strike will not affect any of the 292 scheduled commercial services across the country operated by private bus companies.

CTTC hopes that the dispute can be resolved to reduce disruption for the travelling public, and said it is a matter between Bus Éireann management and its employees.

National Director Kevin Traynor said that the private bus sector provides approximately two thirds of the scheduled commercial Bus and Coach Services across Ireland without any form of State subsidisation. It's members also deliver the majority of school transport services (under sub-contract from Bus Éireann), coach tourism services and private hire.

CTTC highlighted that the European Commission has mandated full liberalisation of the Irish bus market by 2019, while the Government has to date opened just 10% of Public Service Obligation (PSO) routes to open competitive tender.

Mr. Traynor said that a Comprehensive Review of public bus transport in Ireland is needed and the future needs to be planned for. "An overall review should include input from all stakeholders: – private operators, Bus Éireann and Dublin Bus and the relevant Statutory Bodies, to form a cohesive and viable plan.

"It should integrate the roles of both the private and public sectors to work together to meet future growing demand for bus transport in rural and urban Ireland. It must also include how to deliver non-commercial routes which service the public good and ensure connectivity in rural communities, and how both commercial and non-commercially viable services can work together to provide a national network."

"The private bus sector provides high quality, safe, cost efficient and commercially viable services to passengers and communities on a daily basis," he said.

The private transport sector also operates the majority of the country's coach tourism services which is a substantial market segment within the Irish Tourism industry. It is estimated that almost 1.2 million overseas visitors took coach tours and day trips in 2016.

CTTC's vision for the future of public bus services includes:

- There should be **equal and open tendering to both the public and private sectors on all PSO services**. This should be without the barrier on private operators of requiring a huge turnover, which restricts the majority of indigenous operators, and leaves it mainly accessible to large multinational or State owned companies.
- There is a need to review **the current PSO subvention routes** to ensure value for money for both the consumer and taxpayer. Shifts in population density, **greater use of affordable park and ride facilities and feeder services should be considered**
- Private sector bus operators do not have an agenda to 'cherry pick' urban artery routes. They also operate many rural routes and **would like to operate more, including PSO routes, and integrate these effectively** with other licensed scheduled routes.

Further Information

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Information for Editors

CTTC represents 68 member companies providing safe, efficient and good value transport services across the Republic of Ireland.

Members are engaged in commercial scheduled services, school transport services, coach tourism and private hire.

CTTC members operate in excess of 1,500 coaches and employ more than 2,500 people. CTTC incorporates the Private Association of Motor Bus Owners (PAMBO).