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## Bus Payment, Ticketing and Pricing in Major UK Cities

### 1. The Issue

Payment and ticketing are the fastest changing aspects of the bus industry in the UK. Operators and local transport authorities have in the last few years begun to modernise outdated payment and ticketing processes.

In the UK, London is seen as the beacon of light with Oyster and Pay as You Go Contactless well established but there is more going on in some other UK cities than is generally realised.

*busreinvented.com* has taken a snapshot of the status of Bus Payment, Ticketing and Pricing in major UK provincial cities to establish how much has been achieved and how much remains to be done.

Like all benchmarking exercises, it begs some interesting questions.

### 2. Methodology

We behaved like customers and took the information for this Status Report from the websites of the operators and the local transport authorities and discovered it can, sometimes, be hard work being a customer !

So, just to be safe, we showed the results in each area to the relevant operators to verify. Most responded, some didn't, and there was enough change from what the website search told us to make that exercise worthwhile.

There may still be some misrepresentations despite those efforts but the data is now live, and will be regularly updated on, [www.busreinvented.com](http://www.busreinvented.com) so operators and transport authorities should simply drop us a note if they find any and we'll correct them.

We identified the kind of payment methods and ticket types which customers would like to see and used a traffic light system of green where each payment method or ticket type is available, amber where, whilst it is available, it is restricted or constrained in some way, red where it is simply not available and blue where it would not be relevant to the city in question.

We then calculated a 'Red Score' for each city with one point for each red and half a point for each amber. Interestingly, contrary to popular illusion, London did not win outright. Take a bow Leeds as joint lowest Red Score !

Glasgow should blush as the highest although we know stuff is about to happen on several fronts there to narrow the gap.

Full results are on the table attached.

On multi operator and multi modal pricing, we identified prices for each ticket type in each city designed to be reasonably comparable and highlight in red on the table those which appear to be highly priced outliers.

None of this is designed to be judgemental but rather a factual, comparable set of data. Every Red has its reason as, too, does every outlying price and we will happily publish on the website any comments any operator or local transport authority wishes to make to explain them and correct anything which is simply factually wrong.

### 3. The Next Frontier

The two most consistent gaps across the country relate to 'Account Based Payment and Ticketing' and 'Pay as You Go capping on SMART and Contactless'.

Plugging those gaps can most easily come through the successful delivery by Transport for the North and the 5 Major Bus Groups of an Account Based and Contactless Back Office for the UK bus industry.

In London, it's also about 'Account Based Payment and Ticketing' but also M Ticketing which has simply taken a back seat whilst all the effort went into Oyster and Contactless.

Oh, and it gets a Red for not accepting good old fashioned cash for payment on buses. We well understand the reasons for that and, indeed, think the time has come for other cities to follow suit as part of a concerted effort to make bus speeds truly car competitive on core corridors, but there will be some customers who see it as a time honoured, valid way to pay.

It's not about getting a Red Score of zero but keeping it as low as possible and having a good story to justify any splashes of red !

### 4. Going forward

All comments, corrections and ideas welcome ! The Table will evolve and develop on the website to reflect both them and future developments in each city.

Hopefully, we will all find it useful.

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