

What is Bus Reform?



In Cumbria (and most other places in the UK) the bus network is generally made up of a mix of bus services that are run commercially and determined by private operators, or otherwise partially or fully-supported by local transport authorities. Community and Demand Responsive Transport often fills in gaps in the network for rural, socially necessary and protected groups.

Following a steady decline in bus services and patronage over recent decades, it is recognised something needs to be done to reverse this decline.

Alternative forms of delivery models is one of the aspects being considered.

Reforming delivery of the bus network could give authorities, like Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness, the opportunity to have more control over where buses are operated and who they serve. It can also extend to fares and ticketing, integration with other modes (i.e. rail services) and branding and identity of the network.

Typical bus reform options to be considered as part of the Department for Transport’s Reform Pilot are outlined below.

Model	Model Description
Enhanced Partnership Plus	A legally binding agreement between authorities and operators, securing deeper commitments from each party, going beyond the standard EP.
Shared Risk	Where operators and authorities share the risk, incentivising better performance and increased patronage.
“Grow it out”	A gradual expansion of a small subset of franchised services.
Phased	Changes introduced in specific towns, corridors & problem areas, then applied to wider areas over time.
Micro	Model applied to a tightly defined corridor or small networks to manage bus flows and maximise bus priority infrastructure.
Hybrid	Different models are combined across different parts of the same authority, best fitting local needs