Public Transport: Love It or Loathe It?

Public transport—it's one of those topics that seems to split people right down the middle. For some, it's a lifeline: affordable, accessible, and environmentally friendly. For others, it's a daily struggle filled with delays, discomfort, and claustrophobia. So why does public transport, particularly buses, cause such strong reactions? And more importantly, what can be done to make it a more effective option for everyone in our community?

Let's start with the bus. In the UK, buses are often stereotyped as red, noisy, overcrowded, and—let's be honest—not always the cleanest mode of travel. They're the backdrop of countless commuter frustrations: standing room only, erratic timetables, and that sinking feeling when your bus sails past without stopping. These aren't just myths, these are true tales of the daily struggles of our community.

 According to recent data, approximately 30% of buses in 2024 were classified as "late," meaning they arrived more than six minutes after their scheduled time. That might not sound catastrophic, but for someone relying on that bus to get to work, school, or a medical appointment, it can be the difference between being on time and being in trouble. When delays become routine, trust in the system lowers more and more, soon this could mean no one gets the bus due to punctuality issues, this is unfair on many who simply cannot afford to drive.

This unreliability is one of the main reasons people turn away from public transport. Why risk being late when you could drive, cycle, or even walk with more certainty? And when buses are late, they tend to be more crowded, which only adds to the discomfort. Cramped conditions, limited seating, and uncleanliness make the experience feel more like a chore than a convenience.

So what does the future hold for bus users—and for public transport more broadly?

Trains are often seen as the more affordable and reliable option to the bus, but they're not without their own problems. As a student who relies on trains to get to college, I've noticed how unpredictable they can be—one day they're smooth and efficient, the next they're delayed or cancelled with barely any warning. It's frustrating when you've planned your whole morning around a specific train, only to find out it's been scrapped due to "signalling issues" or "staff shortages." And don't even get me started on overcrowding during peak hours—trying to get home safely while squashed between people makes me feel unsafe as a female, I always feel like I'm going to be pickpocketed or touched unwantedly. Trains have the potential to be a brilliant way to travel, especially for students who don't drive, but they need to be more reliable and affordable if they're going to be a real solution.

I spoke to an avid user of public transport about their views on this issue and this is how it went.

How often do you use public transport?

"I use public transport nearly every day"

Would you say that it is normally late or normally on time?

"They r meant to be every 15 min but recently they have been every 30 min or out of service so you'd be nearly late nearly every time"

What is your main concern about public transport

"If you're a girl. The concern is the guys there's a lot of weirdos on buses but you'd rarely see them or have to interact with them"

Would you say that public transport needs to improve and why

"The only thing I'd say needs to improve would be the bus schedule"

In conclusion I feel like the public's views on public transport whether it be a bus or a train are the same as mine, hopefully in due course the councils and the government will do something about this ongoing issue however for now… we can all but hope.