



## **Dear stakeholder**

I am writing to update you on the action Nexus is taking as the Passenger Transport Executive for Tyne and Wear to make sure we continue to deliver local public transport for the region, in light of the current Covid-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak.

The safety of passengers and our employees is paramount. We follow advice from Public Health England and our Local Resilience Forum. We are also in touch with colleagues from the UK rail industry and other city regions globally to make sure we stay in step and share best practice.

Public transport plays a vital role in getting employees to work, not least in key public services, as well as allowing people to get to shops, health facilities and other amenities. Our role is to do everything we can to make sure public transport continues to run, and we will do this for as long as it is safe to do so, or the Government instructs otherwise. Our actions include:

### **Metro**

We are reducing the timetable in a planned way so passengers can be certain when trains will run, should we see a reduction in available staff. The additional peak time services between Pelaw and Monkseaton/South Gosforth will be cancelled until further notice from Wednesday, 18 March. All other services will operate as planned, maintaining a 12-minute frequency through the day and trains every six minutes through Newcastle city centre, but we will continue to review this. Fewer people are now travelling so this reduced timetable will meet demand, although some passengers may have to wait a few minutes longer at stations.

We have taken on extra people to make sure Metro trains and stations are cleaned constantly. New cleaning regimes were introduced at the start of March, focused on points touched more frequently by passengers, such as handrails, grab poles and ticket machine screens. Metro trains and stations are all cleaned at least daily, or more frequently at busy locations. On-board cleaners also work on trains as they travel round the system.

Key control facilities in Metro are 'locked down' to essential staff only, and meetings across Nexus paired back to the minimum needed to provide daily services. We cannot operate without our employees, who we are supporting where they need to self-isolate or feel unwell.

### **Shields Ferry**

We will probably need to reduce the Ferry timetable in the coming days – suspending evening crossings or only operating for parts of the morning or afternoon. If this happens we will use our website, media and the Ferry's Facebook page to advise passengers.

### **Buses**

We are in constant touch with commercial bus companies in the region to monitor the impact on local bus services of reduced staff availability and reduced demand. Planned timetable changes will help manage a shortage of drivers while giving passengers confidence when their bus will come – we will help bus companies to plan and communicate should these be needed.

## Wider transport networks

Our partners in the rail industry are providing updates via their own websites and you will find these via the following links:

**Northern**

[click here](#)

**Transpennine Express**

[click here](#)

**Grand Central**

[click here](#)

**Cross Country**

[click here](#)

**LNER**

[click here](#)

Should operation of the Tyne Tunnel be affected details will appear here.

You will appreciate the national situation is changing fast. We are taking every action possible to anticipate and plan to sustain vital services. The fall in demand we are starting to see will create a financial challenge for Nexus as a public body, although we are confident we have the cash reserves needed to keep services going for the immediate future. We are, at the same time, writing to government to ask its financial support so we may continue to provide good levels of accessibility for the local area and its essential workers.

We will keep our stakeholders updated as things change in the coming weeks and months, and please refer to the Nexus website for the latest information for our passengers.

Yours sincerely



**Tobaugh Hughes**

Managing Director, Transport North East