

FOI 16446 Late Night Buses

Request:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am requesting information relating to the provision and funding of late bus services used on Saturday nights for people travelling to and from Plymouth city or town centre for social or leisure purposes.

Please provide the following information for the most recent full financial year available:

1. The total cost to the council or relevant authority of providing, supporting or subsidising Saturday night late bus services.
2. A breakdown of those costs, including:
 - a. direct subsidies or payments to bus operators
 - b. security or enforcement costs
 - c. marketing or promotional costs
 - d. any other associated operational costs
3. The routes, times and frequency of any Saturday night late bus services funded or supported by the authority.
4. Any estimates, assessments or reports held regarding passenger numbers using these services on Saturday nights.
5. Any documents, reports, business cases or correspondence which explain the purpose of these services, including whether they are intended to support the night-time economy, reduce drink-driving, improve public safety, or assist people travelling after a night out.
6. Details of any income received in relation to these services, including fares, external funding, grants or contributions from third parties.
7. If available, any assessment of value for money or cost per passenger for these Saturday night services.

Schedule of Response Information:

Following receipt of your request, I can confirm the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) holds information relevant to your request.

Please note that as this Freedom of Information Request was received on the 16th March 2026, the financial year for 2025/26 had not yet finished. As per the FOIA Section 1(4), the information the authority must provide to the requester is “the information in question held at the time when the request is received”.

Therefore, the data below does not cover the full financial year of 2025/26 for the following reasons:

- The services for the night buses did not commence in Plymouth until the 24th May 2025.



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Your voice in policing

- The request for information was made on the 16th March 2026, before the end of the financial year.

We have therefore provided the information we hold for the time period of 24th May 2025 – 14th March 2026 (the last night bus service before the request for information was made).

Please see the requested information below.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am requesting information relating to the provision and funding of late bus services used on Saturday nights for people travelling to and from Plymouth city or town centre for social or leisure purposes.

Please provide the following information for the most recent full financial year available:

1. The total cost to the council or relevant authority of providing, supporting or subsidising Saturday night late bus services.

£26,685.93

2. A breakdown of those costs, including:

a. Direct subsidies or payments to bus operators

For 2025 (32 nights from May 24th¹ – December 31st 2025)

Tavistock= £331 per night x32 = £10,592

Saltash= £330 per night x32= £10,560

For 2026 (from 11th January 2026²)

Tavistock= £214.51 per night x10 (up until 14th March) = £2,145.10

Saltash= £201.72 per night x10 (up until 14th March) = £2017.20

b. Security or enforcement costs

Not applicable

¹ The services in Plymouth began on 24th May 2025.

² There were no services running between the 31st December 2025 and the 11th January 2026.

c. Marketing or promotional costs

Posters- £21.63

Social media- £350 (funded by Vision Zero South West)

Drake Circus advertising- £1,000

d. Any other associated operational costs

None

3. The routes, times and frequency of any Saturday night late bus services funded or supported by the authority

This can be viewed at [Night Buses | Devon & Cornwall Police](#)

4. Any estimates, assessments or reports held regarding passenger numbers using these services on Saturday nights.

From 31st May 2025 to 14th March 2026- total of 3,509 passengers.

5. Any documents, reports, business cases or correspondence which explain the purpose of these services, including whether they are intended to support the night-time economy, reduce drink-driving, improve public safety, or assist people travelling after a night out.

Please see the attached disclosure document. This briefing note was developed to provide an annual update to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable on the progress to date and potential impact of the night bus to the nighttime economy and Violence Against Women and Girls.

6. Details of any income received in relation to these services, including fares, external funding, grants or contributions from third parties.

The Police/OPCC have received no income in relation to the services.

Any fares received have been retained by Stagecoach and has contributed to the reduction in funding required to support the scheme in 2026.

Contributions towards the scheme have been received as follows for the financial year 2025/26 and paid directly to Stagecoach (this is not specific to the area of Plymouth as the contributions below were made towards the whole of the service, and not just for the services in Plymouth) –

Devon County Council - £1000

Plymouth Waterfront BID - £1000

Cornwall Council -£1000

Cornwall Air Ambulance Trust - £250



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7. If available, any assessment of value for money or cost per passenger for these Saturday night services.

Reported crime and ASB data has been analysed for the period in 2025 (Sunday mornings between 0000-0500hrs) when the buses were in operation, compared to the same period in 2024.

It has found that reported crime decreased by 2.76%, although there was a slight increase in ASB of 5 more reported incidents during this period.

The number of Drink drive procedures carried out at Plymouth Custody Centre has reduced by 12.6% in the times the buses were in operation in 2025 compared to the same period in 2024.

A passenger survey was sent out in January and February 2026 to assess feedback in relation to the night buses. The relevant results are as follows –

There were 47 responses from passengers who had used the Night Bus in Plymouth.

Reasons for using the bus –
2% - couldn't get taxi
89% - for a night out
9% - for getting to/from work

Number of times respondents had used the buses -
68% had used it 1-5 times
11% had used it 6-10 times
21% had used it more than 10 times
100% of users felt safe and 100% would recommend it to others.



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Night Bus Briefing January 2026

1. Background

The Night Bus scheme, led by the Alcohol Licensing Team, first launched at Christmas 2023 with a 10-week single route in North Devon. It has grown over the past 2 years to become a year-round service, every Saturday night (plus factory Friday and New Year's Eve), covering 9 routes in Devon, and a 16-week summer service in Newquay.

The current routes are as follows –

- Barnstaple to Bideford and Ilfracombe (2 routes)
- Exeter to Crediton, Exmouth, Cullompton and Cranbrook (4 routes)
- Plymouth to Tavistock and Saltash (2 routes)
- Torquay to Brixham (1 route)
- Newquay (1 route)

The aims of the Night Bus are to reduce –

- Violence against Women and Girls,
- Alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour, and
- Drink driving

It provides a safe, reliable and affordable means of travel home for those working in or enjoying a night out in the evening and nighttime economy in Devon and Cornwall.

From May 2025, funding was secured for an initial 32 weeks to enable a more consistent service in Devon (provided by Stagecoach) and an extended summer service for 16 weeks in Newquay. Due to its success and impact over this period, the Devon services have now become a year-round service for 2026 and beyond, with significant financial investment from the OPCC, a grant from the Hotspot Policing fund, and our partners –

- Devon County Council
- Cornwall Council
- Torbay Council
- Plymouth Waterfront BID
- Ilfracombe Town Council
- North Devon District Council
- Torridge District Council
- Cornwall Air Ambulance
- Crimestoppers

As well as support from Newquay BID, Cornwall Air Ambulance and Cornwall Council for the Newquay summer service (provided by First Bus).

2. Activity

Following a review of the 2025 Night Bus service, the impact of the service can be evaluated by the following results.

- a) Total Passenger Numbers –

- 16,201 passengers used the buses during 2025

b) Crime data -

Crime data analysis in the relevant towns comparing the period the buses were running in 2025 with the same period in 2024 showed –

- In Devon reported ASB fell by 1.39%
- In Devon reported crime fell by 8.6%
- In Newquay, reported public order and sexual offences fell by 50%
- Drink drive arrests across the force fell by 15%

c) Passenger Survey -

A passenger survey has been sent out with 115 respondents. The highlights of the results are as follows -

Of the 80 respondents (69.5%) who had used the bus -

- 27.5% used the bus as it reduced the temptation to drink drive
- 97.5% felt safe using the bus
- 96% would recommend the service

Of the remaining 35 respondents (30.5%) who had not used the bus, their reasons for not using it were –

- 34% said it didn't go where they needed it to
- 43% said they hadn't heard about it

3. Plan for 2026/27

For 2026/27, funding has been contributed from a number of partners to cover the cost of the bus services and support its long-term sustainability and maximise the opportunity for it to become a commercially viable service which would require no financial support from the OPCC or Devon and Cornwall Police. Further discussions are required with partners, specifically local authorities, to express the need for their future financial investment in the night bus post March 2028 when the OPCC will be abolished.

Further routes are being discussed based on passenger and survey feedback and this includes amending the Torquay route to include Newton Abbott, plus a potential new route from Barnstaple to South Molton. The Newquay summer route is also being planned with a new provider, Go Cornwall, following First Bus withdrawing from their services in Cornwall, as well as expanding the Newquay service to include a second route to Perranporth.