

Customer Services
Diamond Bus Ltd
Hallbridge Way
Tipton Rd
Tividale B69 3HW

DO YOU REALLY
THINK THAT I WOULD
BE STUPID ENOUGH TO
LEAVE MY ADDRESS?
ON! 8HR?

10th September 2025

Dear Customer Service Manager;

I am a resident who lives in Lower Gornal, Dudley, West Midlands where your Diamond Bus services trio of the 17/27/223 has a monopoly on my immediate Local Area. Whilst the folks at National Express West Midlands do run a service from Gornal Wood to Birmingham, it is but once an hour 6 days a week.

I rely on buses, due to having severe diabetic neuropathy, combined with a number of serious health conditions. This means that my mobility is limited, and unless I want to play the game of how many Tramadol can I pop in a day (Which my doctors have strongly advised me against), I can only stand for a short amount of time. On top of my physical ailments, I also have a number of mental health conditions including Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder, and am also Autistic.

All this means that all in all, whilst I understand that your services won't be as well serviced or running as smoothly as those in Japan (The whole German transport efficiency thing is a myth), I would expect something that would get me from A-B without putting myself in severe physical & / Mental pain every time I leave the house to get somewhere, for example my Doctors. They do enough in terms of my pain, and I've heard that if you get to a coffee shop on time, they do some excellent service.

With this in mind, can you please tell your corporate overloads at Rotala that the game of 'Timetables & drivers optional', combined with breaking down busses and the drivers who show up not caring about passengers on the 27/27a

between Dudley and Wolverhampton via Lower Gornal and Sedgley isn't fun, and in fact if they want to carry on as such, they should hand the bus franchise back to Transport for the West Midlands. Or, just be honest and say that "we'll turn up whenever we want, and just because your 37 and not 70 we'll take up at full pelt even if you have a mobility aid before you can sit down'.

I know your corporate overloads won't like the financial hit, but you do say on your website:

Our aim is to provide you with the best service possible on Diamond Bus, but if you have experienced any problems let us know and we will try to make it better.

In terms of specific examples to help you understand the scale of the problem.

- Just today (10th September 2025), I had to wait 42 minutes for a bus, meaning that one must have either broken down or transported in a Tardis. I chose the specific service so that I could beat the school rush. When a bus did finally turn up, it was indeed full of kids, and your bus driver did not care one iota. I had to sit on one of the drop down seats, as the rear 70% of seats were all school kids, which surprisingly *wouldn't* have been the case of the previous bus arrived.
- On the 22nd August 2025 there was a 1 hour wait for a bus, because the incoming bus had decided it wanted to go to bus heaven, then we had to wait for a driver to man the replacement service. The new bus, with new driver made it three whole stops before it decided too to break down and go to bus heaven.
 - o Not only did the driver not give a flying monkey's care in the world, he decided to get off the bus, make a call to get an engineer, and then just play YouTube / whatever else on his phone.
 - o He didn't update the passengers as to what was going on, shrugged his shoulders at me when I asked what **was** going on, and couldn't even be bothered to let passengers know that there were two alternative busses arriving within the next few minutes.

- Currently Dudley is refurbishing its bus station, but made some route changes which for the 27/27A makes sense to not do a pointless loop. As the terminus stop, a bus driver will complete their paperwork, get off the bus, and have a break. That makes sense. It's fair, and safety *is* important with driver fatigue.
 - o In terms of a new driver getting onto the bus to start the next service, this has ranged from instant to 'whenever I can be bothered'. This means that so many services are already 10-15 minutes late before we even set off. The drivers' attitude is *laissez-faire* at best, just shovelling passengers onto the bus without a care like a 1990s Ryanair flight.
 - o On a side note, I understand that a bus driver should do a visual check of the bus and check for tidiness. This rarely happens. Most just sit in their jumpseat; perhaps this explains half the failures on your busses.
- Constantly, the bus driver will pull off before I've had the chance to sit down, even if I'm using a walking cane. As mentioned before, just because I'm not an OAP, doesn't mean that my clearly visible mobility issues should be ignored. In fact, this would be a clear breach of the equalities act.
 - o I have almost ended with my face tasting your delicious looking floor on at least three times, and again, if you challenge a driver, they act as if you're supposed to get the same level of service as at Karen's diner.
- Your busses seem to come with the best headache perfecting device since the invention of the screaming baby. I don't know what makes your busses want to cry out in agony, but I'm lucky that I only have to endure this for small periods of time, say 20 minutes. It does however fall foul of the 'If I can hear it over my nouse cancelling in ear headphones, it's a bit too loud'. I could argue that this is the bus equivalent of being on a Jet 2 holiday to *anywhere*, with that constantly looping song, but on a bus, it's a bit much.
- Missed stops, route changes when the official route is clearly open, this all adds to the so called 'Diamond' experience.

As a bus provider in the West Midlands, you come under the Transport for West Midlands purview, who's responsibility it is to ensure that public transport is:

- safe
- reliable

- affordable
- accessible for everyoneⁱ

When talking about the West Midlands Bus Alliance, which this is all part and parcel of, they state that “*The alliance has committed to 50 goals. Our main aims are to:*

- tackle congestion
- make bus journeys quicker
- improve bus emissions standards
- make bus travel attractive for young people
- make bus journeys better value
- make it easier to buy a ticket
- make it easier to catch the bus
- make it more pleasant to travel by busⁱⁱ

The last two here seem to be the most important in this matter. For me, my bus journeys are neither easier / more pleasant compared to where I previously lived in Dudley, and in fact your own corporate overlords seem to want to make this possible, by:

“[sic] make it as easy as possible for everybody to get on and off the bus, have a comfortable journey and feel confident about using our services for their day to day needs.”ⁱⁱⁱ

You are putting my physical and mental health on the line every time I want to use a bus, especially during core service hours. I will be honest and say that some of your evening drivers are far better, and this issue does largely feel confined to the 27/27a compared to the 17 or especially where the 223, where I’ve had largely positive experiences. The only reason I use these services however are for a single stop from Gornal Wood Village to close to Five Ways roundabout, as it is well known that going up that hill is only possible with the consumption of two bottles of Vodka / 9 pints. Sadly, I don’t consume alcohol, and my mobility issues would preclude me from walking that route anyway.

Hopefully, a full regional-nationalisation of all bus services in the West Midlands will be completed soon. The BOCs (Bus Operating Companies) have a responsibility even now, both locally, regionally and nationally. For example if I were to fall over completely because of your reckless drivers, I most certainly will be seeking damages formally for negligence and a breach of the Equalities Act. Similarly, if I need medical intervention because of the actions of your company, your busses and drivers (Which include non-physical, which are also covered under the Act), I would seek similar.

I shall be sharing a copy of this letter with both my councillor and MP, as well as the relevant person at Dudley MBC. I've written about you already on my personal blog at www.wilv.click/diamond , and would not be against naming and shaming your company via various forms of media for your recklessness, incompetence and negligence; I know that will upset your corporate overlords, as it will affect the share price of the company which was 63.00p at time of writing.

Most importantly however, I'd love to just use your services without fear of having a panic attack, anxiety attack, or feet that feel like 1000 needles were stuck into them. I'm sure that other residents in the Gornal area would love the same, especially as there are many whom are older and therefore *more* socially isolated than myself. I am the youngest person in the small little block where I live, and I know two people rely on your service for daily meetings with friends and the like. When Tim Martin's pub of horrors chain is doing a better job than yourselves, surely there *must* be an issue.

As a great many people have said, the key to this is simple: "Get The Basics Right". I don't think anyone would expect service levels like the No.50 bus in Birmingham, and the app *can* be helpful for journey planning and checking, but would it be too hard for some:

- Bus services that are reliable, within what would be the industry margin of error?
- Drivers who have even a basic level of customer service and accountability for their work with Diamond?

- Yes. I think we all know that the bus driver doesn't own your company, but customer service and accountability go a long way to customers being calmer, and *enjoy* their experience somewhat more.
- If the same standards were in place at say Tesco, whatever a P45 is in 2025 would be on the cards within weeks at the most. And they have broken freezers and no multipacks of beer left to contend with.
- Bus service mapping that takes into account what would be your most likely pinch points and delays through a day, and build this into route planning and service delivery? You already have timing points if you are too early, and yours seem to be over a small distance than National Express West Midlands.
- Proper scheduling of services on the day. I would understand if a driver was doing a double loop and used the Dudley terminus for a comfort break if services are late, but with a new driver, either build in more time for delay >> driver starting route, or schedule your drivers in such a way that problem needn't exist.
 - It is cumbersome and creating of a passenger movement issue if you have a bus sat idle at a stop the same way Thomas was sat idle in a tunnel in the cartoon, and frankly, I'd say it's a company pride issue also.

As mentioned at the top of this letter, if this is too much for your corporate overlords, then please, please do hand the routes to another BOC. In an area with age related social mobility, and you having a monopoly on all but one route within a 30+ minute walk, this could be the least you can do.

I look forward to a response from yourself or an appropriate member of your regional company at the earliest opportunity. I hope that these concerns are taken with the seriousness they deserve, and you recognise the negative impact you do to people's lives with these behaviours.

Yours;

[YEAH YOU CAN FIND MY SIGNATURE ONLINE IF YOU LOOK HARD ENOUGH, BUT I'M STILL NOT THAT STUPID]

Wil Vincent MA BSc (Hons) FHEA FRGS

ⁱ <https://www.tfwm.org.uk/who-we-are/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.tfwm.org.uk/who-we-are/what-we-do/west-midlands-bus-alliance/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.diamondbuses.com/about-us/accessibility-on-our-buses/>