

UK Bus Awards 2024

Categories, Criteria and Entry Process

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What's New for 2024 and Entry Process

There are three fewer categories in this year's scheme and the additional category added in 2023 is being retained.

Categories rested for this year

- Buses for Leisure
- Enriching the Customer Experience
- Top Express Service

Categories will be reviewed again for 2025.

The 20 categories returning

- Bus and the Community
- Culture Change
- Engineer of the Year – small change to criteria
- Environmental Innovation
- Going for Growth
- Lifetime Contribution to the Bus Industry
- London Bus Garage of the Year
- Luke Rees-Pulley Award for Top London Bus Driver
- Manager of the Year
- Marketing Campaign of the Year
- Partnership for Excellence
- Recruitment and Retention
- Top National Bus Depot
- Top National Bus Driver
- UK Bus Operator of the Year:
 - Top City Operator
 - Top Independent Operator
 - Top Shire Operator
- Unsung Hero
- Young Manager of the Year

'Fast and Easy' entry

There are no entry forms. Instead please write an e-mail of between 300 and 500 words describing your project, scheme, employee, company or organisation and why the entry should win. Make the subject line of your e-mail the category you want to enter and include your contact information. Attach three pictures of the person or something visual that best illustrates your project or scheme. See the 'How to enter' section below for more information.

The judging process

Judging, interviews and mystery travelling will take place in August and September. Operator categories will also be subject to our team of Mystery Travellers who will check service delivery on the road.

Candidates in three of the people categories – Engineer, Manager and Young Manager of the Year - will be invited for a discussion with the judges and to give a ten minute presentation. These sessions will take place in central London towards the end of September.

Finalists will be announced online in mid October and the winners at the presentation ceremony on Tuesday 26th November at Troxy in London.

How to enter

- Write an e-mail of between 300 and 500 words describing the person / project / organisation and why he / she / it should win. Please read the description of the category and what the judges are looking for. Some categories require certain information to be sent in the e-mail, which is not included in the word count.
- Make the subject line the name of the category.
- Attach three pictures of the person or something that illustrates your entry. Do not send long documents, media files or presentations.
- Make sure that you include your contact details, including a telephone number, as we may need to contact you if we have a query.
- Send the e-mail to enter@ukbusawards.org.uk by 5pm on Friday 2nd August. The closing date for the two London categories is 5pm on Friday 30th August.

You can enter as many times as you like. Entries cover the period from July 2023 until the closing date.

If very relevant to your entry, you can include links to a small number of videos or news stories on websites, but links to supporting documents or presentations will not be viewed. You may be contacted for additional information to assist the judging process.

You will not be penalised for going slightly over the word count, but excessively long entries may be disqualified. In the few categories that require certain information to be sent in the e-mail, this is not included in the word count. We want to make this a 'fast and easy' entry process for all!

Any questions?

E-mail: admin@ukbusawards.org.uk Telephone: 0330 010 3450

Bus and the Community

This award is designed to recognise and reward a scheme, project or other activity which has provided benefits to the community in which the bus company operates. We're looking for nominations which place the bus industry (in its widest sense) at the heart of the local community in the area served, having achieved one or more of the following:

- raised funds for a local charitable project
- helped the local community to achieve an objective of its own, examples of which could include:
 - fund-raising
 - provision of community facilities
 - other means to make life better for one or more groups of people in the community.
- provided demonstrable benefits to the staff or team and/or for their employers.

We welcome nominations from, or about, depots where staff have worked together, or from smaller teams of staff or exceptional individuals.

Judging criteria

The judges will be looking for entries that demonstrate that the bus operator has placed itself at the heart of its local community. Successful entries will show how staff have undertaken a scheme, project or other activity to benefit the community and the benefits it has brought to local people.

Culture Change

The general environment for bus companies has been changing rapidly for some years. Customers have come to expect the high standards of service which they find elsewhere and so the traditional skills in bus companies of providing reliable operations and properly maintained buses, crucial though they are, brings businesses to the starting grid and not much further on. Increasingly bus companies must change the way they work to match up operational excellence with innovation and fresh ideas created and brought to life by engaged, motivated and fully trained employees.

The Culture Change award is intended to recognise particular efforts to change the outlook of a whole company towards the way it has done things traditionally. This may include:

- initiatives to improve the business and the way it works such as team building, breaking down silos, awareness of internal customers and working smarter
- programmes designed to change the way customers perceive the business and hence their enthusiasm to use its services - customer care training and campaigns to influence attitudes would be examples
- specific measures to reduce costs or improve revenue without compromising service delivery, such as accident reduction schemes and effective ways for all employees to identify opportunities, highlight waste and be listened to
- employee development programmes
- any other initiatives and/or practices designed to engender employee engagement and better working.

Judging criteria

The judges will be looking for entries that clearly set out the aims of the initiative or project, which groups of employees it covered and how it was delivered, including how far the aims were achieved. They will consider the timescales over which the project is being delivered alongside the size of organisation and number of people involved. All projects, big or small, are of interest and the judges will weigh up the degrees of challenge with the actual outcomes in arriving at their decision.

Engineer of the Year

This award is designed to recognise, reward and inspire management talent in the engineering disciplines of the UK bus industry. It's open to all people employed at, or above, the supervisory grade in the engineering function of bus operation, maintenance or manufacturing companies or organisations, for a continuous period of not less than twelve months at the closing date of the competition.

Self-nomination is not appropriate for this category.

Judging criteria

The judges will be looking for entries that demonstrate an ability to manage complex tasks, people and processes, effective communication skills and a commitment to mentoring or other leadership activities. They will consider a candidate's ability to perform to a budget and to deliver measurable outputs. Judges will also be looking for candidates that demonstrate the importance of the link between what engineers do and the end user passenger on the bus.

Short-listed finalists will be invited for a discussion with the judges and be asked to give a ten minute presentation on a topic of their choosing relevant to their work. These sessions will take place in central London in late September.

You must include

- specified vehicle availability targets
- specified PSV test targets
- numbers of roadside prohibitions or defect notices.

You must also confirm in the entry e-mail that the person being nominated has given their consent to being entered and that they meet the criteria set out in the description of the category. These confirmations will not be included in the word count for the entry.

Environmental Innovation

Although the bus is intrinsically a green form of travel, the industry has made great strides to improve its environmental credentials even further. In recent years there has been a huge investment in new electric, CNG and hydrogen powered buses as the industry switches away from pure diesel propulsion.

Now the environment category moves into the next phase as we search for innovative environmental initiatives. We're not looking for a scheme that introduces a fleet of electric vehicles, but a project that brings something new – or new to the bus industry – to further improve the environmental credentials of the bus or improves the environment in which buses operate. Such improvements might be reductions in noise levels and vehicle emissions, improvements in air quality and energy efficiency (in vehicles or premises) or a reduction in waste, alongside waste management policies. It might also be a piece of infrastructure that helps power vehicles, extends their life, or otherwise reduces the environmental impact of the bus or it's necessary support infrastructure. What it must be is an approach that's new to the bus industry.

Judging criteria

The judges will be looking for entries that can provide evidence of reducing their environmental impact. They will assess the size of the impact and consider how the improvements might be delivered across the industry. Most important of all, the judges will consider how innovative the changes are, absolutely and within the bus industry.

Going for Growth

Since the pandemic when passenger numbers fell dramatically, increasing customer numbers and growing the bus network has never been more important. This new category is to recognise the efforts of bus operators, transport authorities and other bodies responsible for commissioning and operating bus services, that can show a demonstrable increase in passenger numbers. It might be growing the market as a whole, in a particular geographical area, along a specific route, or growing a particular sector of bus passengers. The growth might be over a short period or over a sustained length of time, but must be backed up by before and after customer numbers.

Judging criteria

The judges will be looking for entries that can provide evidence of the growth. As well as assessing how significant the growth is, they will consider how sustainable the increase in passenger numbers might be, what scope there could be for further increases, and if the scheme could be implemented elsewhere in the industry.

Lifetime Contribution to the Bus Industry

The Lifetime Contribution Bus Industry award was re-named in 2023 to emphasise that this is for a contribution over a sustained period of time. It recognises a significant and sustained contribution to the success of the industry by an individual who has consistently gone beyond the call of normal duty to improve and promote the bus industry for its users or the wider community over a period of years. This means that the recipient is likely to hold/have held a fairly senior position in the industry. Self-nomination is not appropriate.

Nominations for this category should include a brief description of why the nominee should win and include what the nominee has done for the wider bus industry.

Judging criteria

This award is made by the UKBA Management Committee which will assess the nominee's length of service and record of achievement. It will also consider what their contribution has been to the wider bus industry, over and above the organisations they have worked for during their career.

London Bus Garage of the Year

This Award is open to garages that operate buses on contract to TfL. Performance and monitoring data will be used by TfL London Buses to compile a short-list of garages reaching high levels of recorded performance, which includes:

- Driver Quality Monitoring (driving standards)
- Customer Experience Survey (mystery shopping)
- lost mileage
- EWTs and % On Time (reliability figures)
- engineering standards
- levels of public complaints

Each short-listed garage will be challenged to submit its own assessment of its achievements, emphasising the impact of local initiatives on customer service, staff well-being and the communities served.

Judging criteria

The most important factor the judges will consider is your approach to customer service in its fullest sense, including all the team that are involved in ensuring buses are clean and in good condition, that they are reliable, and above all, that they are safely driven by friendly drivers. It's a team effort. They will also consider the development and maintenance of team spirit in the garage and the role the garage plays in the local community.

You must include

Please begin your entry by summarising what it is about your garage that has delivered such top performance results.

* The closing date for this category is 5pm on Friday 30th August *

Luke Rees-Pulley Award for Top London Bus Driver

This Award is presented to the London bus driver who has best demonstrated excellent performance from the customer perspective in the twelve-month period up to the closing date.

All London bus garages are eligible to submit nominations for their best-performing drivers based on:

- public commendations
- BCES (mystery shopping) assessments
- DQM (driving standards) assessments – external or internal if external not available
- accident record

If necessary other areas of performance, including discipline and attendance, will be considered.

The winner of the Top London Bus Driver prize will be the individual who best represents the customer's ideal; a driver who is friendly, helpful, conscientious and mindful of passengers' safety, comfort and well-being – in short, a true professional and worthy ambassador for the job.

Judging criteria

The judges are looking for entries that really sell the abilities of the nominated driver. They will expect this to be backed up with commendations from customers and managers. If available, it's also useful to have results from internal or external surveys.

You must include

You must confirm in the entry e-mail that the person being nominated has given their consent to being entered. This confirmation will not be included in the word count for the entry.

* The closing date for this category is 5pm on Friday 30th August *

Manager of the Year

This award is designed to recognise and reward outstanding performance in middle management in the UK bus industry. The category is open to middle managers who are over the age of 30 at the closing date of the competition and who have worked in their current capacity for a continuous period of not less than twelve months. The candidate should:

- lead a department or business unit in a professional capacity, or
- operate their own business employing more than five people, or
- work in a transport authority, government department or quasi non-governmental organisation with functional responsibility for more than five staff.

Self-nomination is not appropriate for this category. The consent of the person nominated must be obtained to their name being put forward.

Judging criteria

The judges will consider the context in which the individual is operating and the challenges they have met and overcome. High scoring entries will demonstrate that the nominee has:

- a commitment to ethical behaviour, respecting diversity and delivery of organisational objectives
- an appetite for continuous learning
- a commitment to support staff and colleagues with help, advice and mentoring
- an ability to use their own initiative in order to get the job done
- a willingness to question and to use a critical eye
- a track record of innovation or adoption of new ideas
- an ability to identify and focus on the key issues in a problem or situation
- a forward-looking approach which enables the nominee to foresee future opportunities and problems even if these have not yet become obvious
- a capacity to exercising judgment in decision-making - making the right decision and sticking to it.

Short-listed finalists will be invited for a discussion with the judges and be asked to give a ten minute presentation on the role of their organisation in the community and the wider transport market, or a topic of their choosing relevant to the bus industry. These sessions will take place in central London in late September.

You must include

You must confirm in the entry e-mail that the person being nominated has given their consent to being entered and that they meet the criteria set out in the description of the category. These confirmations will not be included in the word count for the entry.

Marketing Campaign of the Year

This award recognises marketing excellence through particular campaigns and initiatives which demonstrate flair, imagination and original approaches that lead to demonstrable outputs. As such entrants should include before and after comparisons or some other way to bear out the effectiveness of the marketing activity.

The activity might may be an initiative to change attitudes towards bus travel or to win new custom. Entries are welcomed from bus operators, local authorities, and any other organisation that markets bus travel.

Judging criteria

The judges will consider the scope and level of difficulty of the activity along with its effectiveness, especially in terms of increased customer numbers – so it's essential to include before and after comparisons. They will also consider how innovative and imaginative the scheme was, and any scope for continuation and expansion in the future.

Partnership for Excellence

The Peter Huntley Memorial Award

The importance of partnerships in the bus industry has steadily increased in recent years, especially with local authorities. This category is designed to recognise and reward initiatives, projects or innovations which add value to, or improve the attractiveness and effectiveness of, buses or bus services through partnerships with other organisations.

Such organisations might be public, private or voluntary sector bodies, other transport operators and manufacturers or other suppliers. Entries are welcomed from any of these organisations.

Entrants will need to describe the nature of the improvement being delivered and show how each partner contributed to it. It's also useful to include whether this is a one-off or ongoing arrangement, and any plans for the future.

Judging criteria

The judges will be looking for entries that demonstrate the effectiveness of the partnership in delivering measurable results that benefit existing and/or potential bus users. They will also consider the number of partners involved and the potential for what further enhancements the partnership could deliver, as well as how it might provide a model for similar schemes elsewhere.

This category is dedicated to the memory of Peter Huntley, former MD of Go North East and co-founder of the T.A.S. Partnership.

Recruitment and Retention

The twin issues of how to recruit good quality staff and retain existing colleagues has become more important since the pandemic, with many operators having to cut back services due to the lack of drivers.

Although there has been a particular challenge with recruiting enough drivers, this category recognises successful and innovative initiatives to recruit new staff in all roles, as well as ways to keep existing staff on board.

Entrants will need to identify the particular issue being addressed and demonstrate the effectiveness of the initiatives in terms of numbers recruited or how a retention policy has stemmed the flow, or potential flow, of staff leaving. One-off campaigns and ongoing initiatives can be entered.

Judging criteria

The judges will be looking for entries that clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of the scheme as well as how innovative the policy or initiative is. They will also consider the scope for replicating the scheme by other operators.

Top National Bus Depot

This category is designed to recognise and reward excellence by a particular bus depot whose staff work together to deliver excellent services, maintaining high operational, safety and customer service standards, and which plays an active role in the community in which the depot serves. Particular attention should be paid to the objectives of the depot and how the team deliver services within the company's objectives.

For the purposes of this award, a bus depot is defined as an authorised operating base from which buses operate on local bus services outside London, and where vehicles are both stabled overnight and maintained. A depot must have an allocation of not less than ten vehicles with a minimum of 500,000 kilometres per year on registered local bus services. Additionally, the entered depot must represent less than 75% by mileage of the company's operation.

Judging criteria

The judges will be looking for evidence of a well-run and safe depot at the heart of the community which it serves. Service punctuality and well turned out vehicles will also be considered, alongside excellent employee relations, and importantly, a good team spirit that delivers services for customers.

Short-listed depots may be subject to spot checks during the judging process and the routes they operate subject to mystery travelling to check on delivery standards.

You must include

You must include the following information in the entry e-mail:

- annual scheduled kilometres
- allocated fleet
- peak vehicle requirement
- number of platform staff employed
- number of maintenance staff employed
- number of administrative and management staff employed
- how staffing levels have been managed
- lost mileage (% of scheduled)
- punctuality (% of journeys on time)
- PSV Annual Test pass rate (past 12 months)
- number of prohibitions/warnings (past 12 months)
- number of complaints received.

The information provided will not be included in the word count for the entry. Please answer concisely.

Top National Bus Driver The Chris Moyes Memorial Award

This Award is presented to the bus driver who has best demonstrated excellent performance from the customer perspective in the past twelve months.

To win the title of Top National Bus Driver, entrants need to go that extra mile to provide the customer's ideal; a driver who is friendly, helpful, conscientious and mindful of customers' comfort and well-being – in short, a true professional and worthy ambassador for the job.

Any licensed PCV driver in full-time employment on registered local bus services outside London, and who has been in continuous employment for the twelve months at the closing date of the competition, can be nominated.

Self-nomination is not appropriate for this category. The consent of the person nominated must be obtained to their name being put forward.

Judging criteria

The judges will be looking for evidence of an excellent driving and customer service record. They will consider the nominee's accident record and commendations from customers, mystery travellers and colleagues. This will be put together with the scores from our mystery travellers to determine the winner.

Short-listed drivers will be assessed by mystery travelling to check on delivery standards.

You must include

You must confirm in the entry e-mail that the person being nominated has given their consent to being entered and that they meet the criteria set out in the description. You must also include the number, and type, of accidents in past three years. This information will not be included in the word count for the entry. Please answer concisely.

This category is dedicated to the memory of Chris Moyes, one of the founders and Chief Executive of the Go-Ahead Group.

UK Bus Operator of the Year

The bus operator awards are divided into three sub-categories, each of which carries a prize and title. The winners of each sub-category are then judged against each other for the overall title of UK Bus Operator of the Year.

The winners of these awards will demonstrate consistently high customer service and excellent service delivery. The judging criteria for each sub-category is the same.

Judging criteria

The judges are looking for high quality bus operators which can demonstrate that they:

- have policies to make their services as accessible as possible to as wide a cross-section of the community as possible
- identify with, and respond to, the communities they serve
- always strive to sustain and grow the bus market
- invest in their fleet and staff
- are financially sound
- form effective partnerships, especially with local authorities
- maintain high operational and engineering standards
- are innovative
- give priority to the health and safety of staff and passengers through comprehensive risk management.

Additionally, this year the judges will be paying particular attention to what operators have done to encourage customers back onto the bus since the pandemic.

Mystery traveller assessments will be carried out on a selection of the services provided by the entrants that are short-listed for each of the Awards.

You must include

You must include the following information in the entry e-mail:

- proportion of pre-Covid-19 customer numbers currently being carried:
 - paying customers (%)
 - National Concessionary Travel Scheme (%)
- how staffing levels have been managed
- lost mileage (% of scheduled)
- punctuality (% of journeys on time)
- PSV Annual Test pass rate (past 12 months)
- number of prohibitions/warnings (past 12 months)
- number of complaints received.

The information provided will not be included in the word count for the entry. Please answer concisely.

The following page shows the criteria for each of the three sub-categories, each of which carries its own Award.

Top City Operator

This Award is open to operators of registered local bus services based in, or operating wholly or mainly in:

- Greater London
- The PTE areas of:
 - Greater Manchester
 - Merseyside
 - South Yorkshire
 - Tyne and Wear
 - West Midlands
 - West Yorkshire
- Other major cities or conurbations with populations of over 250,000 and a population density greater than 15,000 persons per hectare. These are:
 - Belfast
 - Brighton & Hove
 - Bristol
 - Cardiff
 - Edinburgh
 - Glasgow
 - Kingston-upon-Hull
 - Leicester
 - Nottingham
 - Plymouth
 - Stoke-on-Trent.

Top Independent Operator

This Award is open to operators of registered local bus services which are independently owned and with operators' ('O') licences for up to 100 vehicles. Judges will be flexible in accepting entries for otherwise eligible companies with larger numbers of discs within a margin of 10-15%.

In this context, 'independently owned' means not in the sole or majority ownership of a public limited company (plc), a local authority, or a holding company which owns three or more bus operating subsidiaries.

Subsidiaries of the public companies or holding companies should enter one of the categories for City or Shire Operators, as appropriate.

Top Shire Operator

This Award is open to bus companies operating service networks wholly or mainly outside the major conurbations. Operators who are not subsidiaries of a group, or holding company owning three or more subsidiaries and who hold 'O' licences for fewer than 100 vehicles, are recommended to enter the Independent Operator category.

The Grand Prix: UK Bus Operator of the Year

The winner of the UK Bus Operator of the Year will be selected from the highest-scoring contestants of the City Operator, Independent Operator and Shire Operator Awards. Separate entries are therefore not sought for this category.

In selecting the overall winner, the UK Bus Operator of the Year, judges will consider the different circumstances of operators of varying sizes and operating terrains in reaching their overall conclusion. Mystery traveller assessments will be important and may well be a deciding factor.

Unsung Hero

This category is for one or more individuals who perform supervisory or junior management roles in the bus industry and who are known for their hard-work, loyalty and devotion to duty. An Unsung Hero is someone who keeps the wheels turning against all the odds. They often work for years with no recognition, save their own satisfaction in a service delivered and a job well done.

Anyone who has worked for a bus operator or local transport authority continuously for twelve months at the closing date of the competition, and who can show service in a management and/or supervisory role for more than five years, is eligible to be nominated. Nominations should come from senior managers as self-nomination is not appropriate for this category.

Judging criteria

The judges will be looking for nominations for exceptional individuals or teams which detail the nature and extent of the nominee(s) current responsibilities, and demonstrate a consistent record of achievement and commitment over an extended period of time. They want to know what makes the nominee(s) stand out from other employees and why they deserve the Unsung Hero title.

You must include

You must confirm in the entry e-mail that the person(s) being nominated has/have given their consent to being entered, and the length of time the nominee(s) have been in their current role. This information will not be included in the word count for the entry.

Young Manager of the Year

This award is designed to recognise, reward and inspire management talent in the UK bus industry. Nominees must be able to demonstrate:

- an ability to manage complex tasks, people, processes and the environment in which their organisation operates
- effective communication skills with both staff and stakeholders
- a commitment to mentoring or other leadership activities
- the ability to perform to a budget.

The category is open to all managers who are under the age of 30 at the closing date of the competition and who have worked in their current capacity for a continuous period of not less than six months. Additionally, a young manager should:

- lead an organisation or major business unit in a professional capacity, or
- operate their own business employing more than five people, or
- work in a transport authority, government department or quasi non-governmental organisation with functional responsibility for more than five staff.

We welcome nominations from all eligible organisations, both of their own employees and of outstanding young managers with whom they work in partnership or as stakeholders. Self-nomination is not appropriate for this category. The consent of the person nominated must be obtained to their name being put forward.

Judging criteria

The judges will be looking for exceptional young managers who can effectively manage people and processes and use excellent communication skills and financial control. They will seek evidence of successful mentoring and other leadership activities, and entries that demonstrate that the nominee has shown excellence in management and leadership. The judges will also be looking for potential to be one of the future leaders of the bus industry.

Short-listed finalists will be invited for a discussion with the judges and be asked to give a ten minute presentation on the role of their organisation in the community and the wider transport market, or a topic of their choosing relevant to bus industry. These sessions will take place in central London towards the end of September.

You must include

You must confirm in the entry e-mail that the person being nominated has given their consent to being entered and that they meet the criteria set out in the description of the category. These confirmations will not be included in the word count for the entry.

‘None of the Above’

This category was created during the pandemic and proved to be very popular, so once again we would like to hear about anything in the bus industry that deserves recognition and which is not covered by one of the preceding categories. We may decide that it does fit elsewhere, in which case we’ll move it to the relevant category. If not, we’ll leave it for the judges to consider alongside the other entries received. We want to hear about exceptional work in the bus industry and ensure it is recognised, rewarded and put forward to inspire others. This could be a one-off action by an individual or organisation, for example.

Judging criteria

The judges will consider all the entries, putting one against the other, and considering the wide range of nominations received, decide if one or more awards should be given and on what basis.

Entries may be moved into other categories more relevant to the entry.

Conditions of Entry

1. The decision of the judges will be final. No correspondence will be entered into with entrants concerning the decision of the judges on any matter associated with the scheme.
2. The right is reserved to refuse any entry, or to disqualify an entry from consideration for any reason. No discussion or correspondence concerning such a decision will be entered into.
3. The premature disclosure of an entry's status as a short-listed or winning nomination will render the entry liable to disqualification.
4. Entries may be moved from one award category to another, or duplicated into one or more other categories, if it is considered the nomination to be more appropriate for another category.
5. By submitting an entry in a category for employees, you are confirming that you have obtained your employee's consent to their name being put forward and have made sure that they understand that this may result in them and their family receiving media coverage and press enquiries.
6. Material from any entry may subsequently be published by UK Bus Awards, and submission of material with the entry will be taken as granting copyright for The Bus Industry Awards Ltd to publish and use in any way it sees fit without reference to the nominee.