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Smart, Multi-Operator Travel Launched for North East Bus Passengers

- **Region's bus users to benefit from innovative smart ticketing initiative**
- **Seamless multi-journey travel across the major bus operators of the North East - Stagecoach, Go North East and Arriva**
- **Unlimited travel with any bus operator from less than £2 per day**

Bus passengers across the north east of England will benefit from smart, multi-operator travel from today.

Bus operators Go North East, Arriva and Stagecoach North East have

introduced a new multi-operator smart card – “SmartZone” which allows travel on buses operated by all three major bus companies in Sunderland, Newcastle and North Tyneside, providing unlimited travel from less than £2 per day.

Today’s announcement follows a pledge made last year by the country’s major bus companies to deliver multi-operator smart ticketing to millions of bus customers across England during 2015 as part of the government’s Smart Cities initiative.

Regionally, this new initiative follows the launch of the South Tyneside SmartZone scheme last December. Since then bus companies have worked together across the country and made a multi million pound investment to deliver smarter ticketing for millions of bus passengers.

The new SmartZone products can be loaded onto either a StagecoachSmart Card, a Go North East Key Card and Arriva Connect Card and will be accepted on any Stagecoach, Go North East or Arriva services in Tyne and Wear, within the SmartZone boundaries*.

Once purchased, customers can catch the first bus that comes along, making their journeys even easier and more convenient. Passengers simply hold their card over the ticket reader when boarding the bus to record their journey.

The new tickets offer unlimited travel from as little as £13.50 a week or £52 for 4 weeks in Sunderland, £14.30 a week and £55 for 4 weeks in North Tyneside and £14.50 a week and £56 for 4 weeks in Newcastle.

Tyne and Wear already has one of the highest levels of bus use in the country, along with high customer satisfaction, and it is hoped the new smart ticketing will encourage even more people to get on board the region’s buses.

In a joint statement, the managing directors of the bus companies involved (Phil Medicott, Stagecoach North East, Kevin Carr, Go North East and Nick Knox, Arriva North East) said: “Our buses are used by millions of people every year across the North East. Collectively we are investing millions of pounds in new digital technology to make it easier for people to use the bus. Smart ticketing, better information and easier ways to buy travel are at the heart of

our strategy and support the government's wider objectives to make buses better through effective partnership working.”

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