

Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Environment & Transport  
Dirprwy Arweinydd y Cyngor ac Aelod Arweiniol yr Amgylchedd a Chludiant  
**Councillor David A Bithell /Y Cyngorydd David A Bithell**

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DAB/ACW  
25 November 2019  
Councillor David A Bithell  
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By E-Mail -  
HomeToSchoolExemptions@dft.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000**

I write in response to the letter issued on 21 November 2019 concerning the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 and temporary exemptions. It is noted that the only exemption relates to those mixed home to school services whereby no more than 20% of the seats on the vehicle are sold.

This was not what was expected and falls short of the requirements needed to ensure continuity of home to school services for students beyond 31 December 2019. Unfortunately, this exemption will only allow apply to a very limited number of existing services, mainly those statutory services provided by the Council and where spare seats are made available, at a cost, to 'non-qualifying students' (ie concessionary travel passes). For the current academic year, the Council has only granted 13 concessionary travel passes.

Of significant concern are the number of privately procured service contracts between schools and local operators for the transport of 'non-qualifying' Home to School students. These services will not meet the DFT exemption criteria and will, therefore, cease to operate as from 31 December 2019. The impacts of which are such that it is anticipated that a significant number of students will be left with no viable means of accessing their current place of education.

Whilst Wrexham Council is fully supportive of the regulations governing the requirement for public service vehicles to be accessible, it is evident that the industry has not evolved to ensure compliance with PSVAR and the capacity does not currently exist to meet the impending demands. The late notice of this decision by the DFT has afforded very little time for those schools affected to mitigate the impacts and communicate effectively with the parents/guardians of those students affected. This coupled with the fact that the timing of announcement has been made during the pre-election period.



Wrexham Council is requesting that the DFT urgently consider extending the exemption criteria to allow for those identified services to continue to operate from 1 January 2020. I have raised this immediate concern with both the Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association and will be co-ordinating a collective North Wales response to emphasise the scale of the impact across the region.

Yours faithfully



**Councillor David A Bithell**  
**Deputy Leader of the Council and**  
**Lead Member for Environment and Transport**

cc Ken Skates, Minister for Economy and Transport  
Tim Peppin, Director of Regeneration and Sustainable Development, Welsh Local Government Association  
Iwan Prys Jones, North Wales Economic Ambition Board

