

Hello Emma.

Within a local bus services journeys will be classed as open where general members of the public and school and college students mix and travel together.

In the case of service 6 closed journeys are where duplicate vehicles operate on top of the normal timetabled journeys which are clearly marked for students only. Taking into account Government guidance these closed journeys can be loaded more that the open services available to the general public.

Damien

Head of the Transport Co-ordination Service
Devon County Council

From: Emma James <townclerk@okehampton.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 October 2020 12:41
To:
Cc:
Subject: RE: Service 6 - Holsworthy - Okehampton - Exeter

Dear Damien

Thank you for the response to the queries raised by the Town Council.

Please can you clarify whether or not the service is question is 'open' or 'closed'. It is my understanding, having used it myself previously at differing times, that it is an open service and therefore social distancing should be applied.

Kind regards

Emma James
Town Clerk

From:
Sent: 08 October 2020 11:49
To: Emma James <townclerk@okehampton.gov.uk>
Cc:
Subject: Service 6 - Holsworthy - Okehampton - Exeter

Dear Emma,

Thank you for your letter of 30 September to Dave Black. He has asked me to respond. The local County Councillor, Kevin Ball, has also been in touch on this matter and continues to bring representations to ourselves and Stagecoach.

The Government has issued guidance for transport which stipulates that social distancing applies on local bus services. However, distancing does not apply when the vehicle is dedicated solely to school or college students. This can take the form either of a separate

contract vehicle or a local bus service designated solely for school or college travel. Such operations are termed 'closed' services. In many cases they operate as duplicates to the normal service bus.

At the same time, Government have given financial assistance to local authorities to enable additional vehicles to be bought in so as to provide sufficient overall capacity on 'closed' and public services.

It is apparent that the several service changes, in particular the college measures, had in a few instances caused communication problems amongst staff on the ground. Ideally, the main bus and the duplicate should run together, or very close to one another, but in reality, especially in city traffic, with differing passengers boarding at various stops, this does not always work. It's all the more important therefore that driving staff are fully aware of what is scheduled to operate and can advise passengers accordingly.

We are aware of specific issues on Stagecoach's Service 6/6A.

In the morning, Exeter-bound, it does appear that there is sufficient capacity for students, provided everything operates as scheduled and passengers are advised correctly. This has been set out clearly with Stagecoach.

In the afternoon, out of Exeter the following additional measures are relevant:

- The 1540 departure was duplicated as far as Tedburn St. Mary to relieve pressure on the 1640. This has now been extended to Okehampton;
- The 1640 departure is already duplicated. The duplicate should run a few minutes in front of the main bus so that students are clear as to which vehicle they should board. This should resolve the issue students had on the occasion to which you refer when they were unable to travel on the service bus;
- From after October half term thanks to adjustments to the school travel vehicle commitment elsewhere, we have also been able to agree the addition of a bus at 1710.

We are continuing to work with Stagecoach to keep things under review.

With regard to rail and the potential reopening of the line. This is being progressed by Network Rail and there are a number of processes to go through before there is likely to be any announcement.

Please do not hesitate to come back to me if you want any further points of clarity.

Yours sincerely

Head of the Transport Co-ordination Service
Devon County Council