



**A RED NETWORK ARTICLE
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Public transport throughout Ireland leaves a lot to be desired.

Anne Wall writes about the massive failings in Ireland's public transport system.

Public Transport in Ireland is a shambles. Much more thought and investment is needed to bring it up to a standard worthy of the public that need to use it. All over the country, in rural and urban areas, many people depend on public transport for lots of reasons (work, school, attending hospital appointments, visiting relatives etc.) and they deserve a service they can rely on to fulfil their needs.

So, what happens when the public transport company starts to let its customers down, when buses and trains don't operate as per published timetables with little or no notice and no way of letting passengers know what is going on? A notice to check Twitter or the website isn't good enough when in many parts of rural Ireland, there is still limited access to the internet and even where there is, many people do not use the internet. Too often in the past few months scheduled buses and even entire routes have been cancelled, either at short notice, or no notice at all. Whatever the reason, be it staff shortages or lack of buses, a state-owned statutory corporation like CIE (CIE is the parent company of Bus Eireann, Dublin Bus and Irish Rail) should have a back-up plan for these situations.

Our government should be aware that the chaos caused in these situations sends out a negative message to potential customers, tourists and employers alike. We need much more investment in our Public Transport systems, better and more reliable Public Transport will encourage tourists to visit and employers to set up businesses outside our major cities, thereby creating employment in many parts of rural Ireland. At the same time this would encourage people to leave cars at home, thereby helping the environment by reducing our carbon emissions. With a decent, well run and funded public transport system, that people would be confident using, knowing that they will arrive at their destinations on time, we would have a win-win situation. The continuous neglect by successive governments and under investment in rural Public Transport is having far reaching consequences for people and communities throughout Ireland.

Now there are talks of projects to extend and improve public transport in both Dublin and Cork cities and although this to be commended, more investment in rail and bus links in rural Ireland are desperately needed. There are viable rail tracks all over the country, that if upgraded and decent timetables put in place together with affordable fares would be used by many people.

As Socialists we want to see free, frequent, and reliable public transport across rural and urban Ireland.

Spain, Germany, and others have followed the long tried and tested Luxembourg model of free or almost free public transport by rail and road because it dramatically benefits society and people. We should adopt a similar system and in so doing make good use of public money while benefitting one and all.

The **RED** Network (incorporating Rebel Telly) are a network of radical socialists within the political party People Before Profit, a 32-county people power movement on the island of Ireland.

www.rednetwork.ie