

# Richard Bros

## TomTom WORK tracking helps keep the buses on time

A tracking system from TomTom WORK installed by South Wales bus operator Richards Bros is helping to maintain good timekeeping, leading to fewer passenger complaints, as well as enabling excessive speeding to be monitored with benefits in reduced fuel consumption.

Bus and coach company in South Wales running 65 vehicles

### The Company

Richards Bros is a long-established, family-owned bus and coach company in South Wales running 65 vehicles. It operates a network of scheduled bus services, several with the support of Pembrokeshire County Council, as well as school contracts and coach day trips, short tours and private hires.

Its bus services cover a large rural area from St David's in the East to Aberyswyth in the North. Some 20 scheduled bus services connect scattered communities with the larger towns and many users depend on them to get to and from work, education, leisure and medical facilities. Punctuality and reliability are therefore essential.

Careful monitoring of performance

### The Challenge

Running bus services is a highly competitive business with margins tight and the need to contain costs paramount. There's not only competition between operators but also with private transport. Careful monitoring of performance, particularly by the public bodies that provide subsidies on some routes, adds further to the pressures to achieve maximum efficiency and reliability.

For Richards Bros the problems are further compounded by the nature of the terrain in which they operate. It's a largely rural area, with many routes following minor roads. In the summer months the influx of tourists can bring traffic congestion as well as higher passenger numbers.

### The Solution

Richards Bros needed a simple system that would enable them to determine the location of their buses at all times. This would help to ensure that drivers were keeping to the schedules on which passengers depended.



Buses running ahead of schedule could leave people stranded and late running could result in late arrival at work or college, or a missed appointment. Either situation could lead to complaints and even claims for the cost of alternative travel arrangements.

Solution fitted to 27 service buses

To improve the situation TomTom LINK 300 devices from TomTom WORK have been fitted to 27 service buses. This plots the position of each vehicle and transmits it back continuously to the traffic office in Cardigan where staff can see the precise location of each bus in real time and know if it is running to schedule or not.

Late running has been eliminated

As a result of using the tracking system, late running has been virtually eliminated and customer complaints have fallen dramatically. The system provides useful evidence to refute incorrect complaints because the company is able to quickly determine the exact time at which a bus reached a particular pick-up point on the route.

The system also calculates the speed at which the buses travel and this helps to reduce incidents of speeding. This brings a safety benefit as well as helping to reduce fuel consumption and maintenance downtime because it ensures that the buses are operating well within their engine power ratings.

Occasionally buses break down and when this happens the tracking system can pinpoint its position, speeding up the arrival of assistance and recovery. Road closures also occur from time to time and may require a diversion off a route. The system identifies any deviation and the traffic office can determine the reason and keep passengers better informed.

Solution undoubtedly improved efficiency and reliability

Malcolm Richards, a partner in the business, says that fitting the TomTom WORK tracking system has undoubtedly improved the efficiency and reliability of their bus services. "Better information allows us to act more speedily to resolve issues," he says, "whether that's dealing with passenger complaints or with drivers who speed. It's also contributing to lower costs and increasing our overall competitiveness."