

45 new or enhanced bus services introduced in 2024 under the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan

Since the introduction of the Plan in October 2021 to date, over 150 new or enhanced bus routes have been rolled out nationwide under the operation of TFI Local Link, Bus Éireann and a variety of Commercial Bus Operators (CBO's). In 2024, 45 new/enhanced bus services were introduced under the Connecting Ireland Plan.

Since the roll out of the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan passenger journey numbers have seen significant growth across the country. The patronage on new/enhanced Connecting Ireland services grew 110% by the end of 2023, compared to 2019. The number of passengers using Connecting Ireland services in rural Ireland increased by 70% year-on-year from 2022 to 2023. As a result of the new or enhanced routes added to the TFI Public Transport Network in 2022 and 2023 combined, around 500,000 people now have access to Public Transport.



In 2024, patronage continued to grow as TFI Local Link Regular Rural Services (RRS) carried 4.7 million passengers which is up on 2023 figures of 3.2 million. In October 2024 specifically, TFI Local Link reached an outstanding achievement of carrying 100,000 passengers a week through the vast interconnected network. Similarly, since the end of 2023, passenger journey figures have grown 38% across Connecting Ireland Bus Éireann services.

In 2023, the services launched provided 190 new connections for towns and villages across rural Ireland, 34 college connections, 42 hospital connections and provided 49 connections to rail services meaning it is easier to access education and healthcare opportunities and connect to the wider TFI Network.

In 2024, a further 54 new towns and villages were connected to the TFI Public Transport Network, 22 rail connections, 19 hospital connections and 7 new higher education connections to colleges were created through the introduction of the new/enhanced services.



Enhanced Services in Action – *Route 973 Cionn Fhánada to Letterkenny*

As part of the Connecting Ireland Plan, the National Transport Authority (NTA) and TFI Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim identified a requirement for an enhancement of the existing bus service between Cionn Fhánada and Letterkenny to improve connectivity and mobility for the communities of Baile Láir, Portsalon, Kerrykeel, Rathmullan and Ramelton. The implementation of an enhanced bus service in these areas would greatly improve access to essential services and resources for residents living in these areas.

The enhanced Route 973, launched in October 2024, which was formerly known as Route 300 operates ten daily return services Monday to Sunday between Letterkenny and Kerrykeel with up to six daily return services to Baile Láir and four daily return services extending to Cionn Fhánada. The enhanced timetable now offers a convenient 2-hourly service between Letterkenny and Kerrykeel, 7 days a week.

The enhanced route improves connectivity to the towns and villages of Baile Láir, Portsalon, Kerrykeel, Rathmullan and Ramelton and provides peak-time and evening services for passengers and connectivity to ATU Donegal and regional bus services. In its first week the enhanced service carried over 900 passengers and continues to carry over 1,010 passengers a week.

Speaking on the success of Route 973, **TFI Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim General Manager, Fiona O'Shea** said "Route 973, now operates up to 10 daily return services between Letterkenny and Kerrykeel. This enhanced service has gone from strength to strength since its relaunch in October. The enhancements allow for improved connectivity to villages in the Fanad Peninsula, onward travel and peak-time services for students and commuters."



New or Enhanced Services implemented in 2024

Route Number	Route Name/ Description	Operator	Implementation Date
292	Donegal – Ballyshannon	TFI Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim	04/01/2024
831	Rathdowney – Portlaoise	TFI Local Link Laois Offaly	06/01/2024
189	Enfield – Navan	TFI Local Link Louth Meath Fingal	29/01/2024
880	Naas – Carlow	TFI Local Link Kildare South Dublin	29/01/2024
192	Balbriggan – Swords	TFI Local Link Louth Meath Fingal	19/02/2024
163	Brú na Bóinne – Drogheda	TFI Local Link Louth Meath Fingal	26/02/2024
800/885	Baltinglass – Sallins	TFI Local Link Carlow Kilkenny Wicklow	11/03/2024
170	Cavan – Dundalk	Bus Éireann	24/03/2024
884	Wexford – Gorey	Commercial Bus Operator	12/04/2024
359	Enniscorthy – New Ross	TFI Local Link Wexford	15/04/2024
892	Dunlavin/Kilcullen – Newbridge	TFI Local Link Kildare South Dublin	07/05/2024
280	Waterville – Killarney	TFI Local Link Kerry	01/06/2024
276	Castlemaine – Dingle/Daingean Uí Chúis	TFI Local Link Kerry	03/06/2024
273	Brandon – Tralee	TFI Local Link Kerry	24/06/2024
100	Dundalk – Drogheda	Bus Éireann	30/06/2024
354	Carrick-on-Suir – Dunmore East	Bus Éireann	30/06/2024
278	Fenit – Tralee	TFI Local Link Kerry	01/07/2024
523	Mitchelstown – Mallow	TFI Local Link Cork	28/07/2024
367	Dungarvan – Tramore	TFI Local Link Waterford	19/08/2024
316	Sixmilebridge – Shannon	Bus Éireann	25/08/2024
317	Limerick – Ennis	Bus Éireann	25/08/2024
330	Limerick – Shannon	Bus Éireann	25/08/2024
343	Ennis – Shannon – Limerick	Bus Éireann	25/08/2024
567	Carrick-on-Shannon – Manorhamilton	TFI Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim	26/08/2024

Route Number	Route Name/ Description	Operator	Implementation Date
934	Gort – Loughrea	TFI Local Link Galway	16/09/2024
973	Cionn Fhánada – Letterkenny	TFI Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim	07/10/2024
953	Greencastle – Letterkenny	TFI Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim	14/10/2024
971	Ailt an Chorráin – Letterkenny	TFI Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim	14/10/2024
186	Cavan – Baile Ghib via Kells	TFI Local Link Cavan Monaghan	21/10/2024
952	Carndonagh – Derry	TFI Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim	21/10/2024
954	Malin Head – Carndonagh	TFI Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim	21/10/2024
957	Greencastle – Derry	TFI Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim	21/10/2024
959	Greencastle – Letterkenny via Buncrana	TFI Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim	21/10/2024
966	An Fál Carrach – An Clochán Liath	TFI Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim	21/10/2024
187	Virginia – Kells	Bus Éireann	27/10/2024
109B	Athboy via Kildalkey	Bus Éireann	27/10/2024
265	Skibbereen – Mizen Head	TFI Local Link Cork	28/10/2024
815	Athlone – Tullamore	TFI Local Link Laois Offaly	02/12/2024
177	Kells – Ardee	TFI Local Link Louth Meath Fingal	09/12/2024
266	Baltimore – Union Hall – Castletownshend	TFI Local Link Cork	16/12/2024
897	Kilkenny – Athy	TFI Local Link Carlow Kilkenny Wicklow	19/12/2024
439	Gort – Loughrea	TFI Local Link Galway	23/12/2024
806	Portarlinton – Monasterevin	TFI Local Link Laois Offaly	23/12/2024
818	Collinstown – Castlepollard – Mullingar	TFI Local Link Longford Westmeath Roscommon	23/12/2024
282	Kenmare – Castletownbere	TFI Local Link Kerry	30/12/2024