

Press Statement – 24th March 2000

Dublin Bus Strike:

Decent basic pay for bus drivers is the solution

De-regulation/privatisation of public transport in Dublin would worsen the service

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Opportunist politicians and business representatives have been using the Dublin Bus strike to call for de-regulation of public transport in Dublin. This is a dishonest attempt to cover up the real issue at the heart of this strike, which is the disgracefully low basic pay for bus drivers.

That endemic low wages in Dublin Bus should, in effect, have been used for years to subsidise public transport in Dublin is immoral. This is especially the case in view of the stressful, difficult working conditions and hours that bus drivers have to work in order to make a reasonable income. To add insult to injury, Dublin Bus management wants to increase to up to 13 hours the split shift time currently worked by many drivers and, at the same time, to do away with shift allowances.

The experience of cities in Britain and elsewhere in Europe where de-regulation/privatisation of public transport has been implemented is that the service for the public worsens rather than improves. Private operators pick the most lucrative route and there is often uncertainty as to changing bus companies and schedules.

The correct approach is for the Government to pay a sufficient subsidy to Dublin Bus to allow the service to be hugely improved. On the one hand, this means paying bus drivers a decent basic pay and on the other, putting more resources into capital investment.

ENDS

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