South Yorkshire People's Network

Service Permits:

Scheme Variation Summary

SYPN

1. Overview

South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) shall introduce bus franchising as part of the South Yorkshire People's Network (SYPN) in phases from September 2027. Most services in South Yorkshire shall run under contract to SYMCA as the Franchising Authority. However, where a service is neither franchised nor exempted (including interim arrangements during the transition period between roll-out in phase one and completion in phase three), the operator shall require a **service permit**.

The role of permits is to benefit passengers travelling to, from and within South Yorkshire by:

- Ensuring consistently high standards across all services, whether franchised or not
- Maintaining essential cross-boundary connections and specialised local services
- Protecting the franchised network whilst allowing some commercial operations to continue

2. Proposed Changes to the Scheme

SYMCA is consulting with bus operators, authorities and other stakeholders on proposals to vary its Franchising Scheme where the requirement for service permits is concerned.

Introduction of Permits

In the current franchising Scheme, non-franchised services require permits in-line with the phased roll-out of franchising. This means that any bus service (unless exempt) with stops in Sheffield or Doncaster would require permits from September 2027, whereas the remaining services with stops elsewhere in South Yorkshire would not require permits until September 2028.

However, we propose to vary this Scheme, so that **all** non-franchised services (unless exempt) become liable for permits at the same time from September 2027.

Services Awaiting Franchising

Some services due to move into franchise contracts in later phases are currently temporarily exempt from these requirements. We propose to remove that exemption. These services could continue operating during the transition under interim permits until the relevant franchise contracts begin.

SYMCA proposes a straightforward approach to interim permits, using information already available wherever possible to minimise additional administration. We expect requirements to be limited, principally relating to ticketing and relevant data sharing. The detailed permit conditions will be considered through a separate consultation.

SYMCA would work directly with affected operators on these arrangements. No permit fees are proposed for these transitional services.

Simplifying the Description of Franchised Services

The existing Scheme includes a detailed list of routes intended for franchising. We propose to replace this with a more general description of the network, including principal, local and school services. This avoids the need to maintain a lengthy route list as services develop. The geographical area and planned phases of franchising would not change. Local services outside franchise contracts may operate under permits, subject to statutory requirements.

3. Next Steps

Following this consultation, SYMCA shall review the responses it receives and the Mayor, on behalf of SYMCA, will decide whether to vary the Scheme. The decision will be published, followed by a separate consultation on the detailed permit arrangements and conditions.

4. Get in Touch

You can send any comments on the proposed changes during the formal consultation period, which begins 26/10/26 and closes 25/11/26. Comments during consultation can be shared to busfranchising@southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk. Operators and other consultees may also contact SYMCA to discuss the proposals before responding.