

Save time, buy tickets in advance – with the weekly top-up shop

4 February 2013 - It's just got easier to buy your bus tickets as First Hampshire & Dorset, the region's biggest operator, has joined forces with PayPoint, the local network of high street retailers, to enable customers to buy bus tickets over the counter at more than 500 outlets in the region. From today people will be able to get First Week, FirstMonth and First3Month tickets, from their local shop at the same time as picking up a loaf of bread or pint of milk, or topping up their gas or electricity.

The move means that people will be able to buy their bus travel in advance at their own convenience. It will encourage more people to buy their tickets off the bus, which in turn may speed up boarding times, and it will mean even more people will be able to take advantage of the cheaper deals on bus travel that are available to those who buy weekly or monthly tickets in advance.

First Month tickets offer a very economical way to pay for regular bus travel and start from just £56 for Southampton and £60 for Portsmouth, for 31 days unlimited travel, which is equivalent to just £1.80 and £1.94 a day, respectively. For £76 customers can also buy a FirstMonth Hampshire ticket, which covers unlimited travel for 31 days on all First buses in the county.

Talking about the new payment method, Marc Reddy, Regional Business and Commercial Growth Director for First in the South West and Wales, says: "We're always on the lookout for ways to improve our services for our customers so when they told us they wanted an easier and more convenient way to buy their tickets in advance of travel we identified PayPoint as the perfect solution. Under this new arrangement, customers will be able to buy their weekly or monthly bus tickets while at the local newsagent, garage, supermarket or convenience store – many of which are open long hours and often seven days a week.

"Many customers already enjoy the convenience of paying utility bills, telephone charges, rents and council tax using PayPoint, so the facility to buy their bus ticket fits perfectly.

"Obtaining tickets in advance helps speed up boarding time at the bus stop, enabling us to improve reliability and punctuality, and it also removes the need for customers to carry lots of change with them."

Seamus Smith, Managing Director of PayPoint UK, adds: "We are delighted to be partnering with First Hampshire and Dorset so that bus users in the region are now able to ease their journeys by purchasing their bus tickets in advance of travel, within more convenient locations, even while they do their shopping."

FirstMonth and FirstWeek tickets will still be available to buy on the bus from the driver, and they can also be bought online from www.firstgroup.com/etickets.

PayPoint is the UK's leading branded retail network for the convenient local payment of household bills, mobile top-ups and now, bus tickets. First Hampshire and Dorset customers will be able to buy or renew their four-weekly bus tickets at any of around 500 PayPoint outlets in the area. Their locations can be found at <http://www.paypoint.co.uk>.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- For more information contact: Alex Cater, Assistant Press Officer (South West & Wales), First UK Bus, on 0117 373 6421 / 07711 388933 or email: alexander.cater@firstgroup.com.
- **First Hampshire and Dorset** is a major provider of local bus services in the two counties. In Hampshire it provides services in Southampton, Portsmouth, Fareham and Gosport, operating 290 buses and employing 628 drivers. In Dorset, it provides services in Weymouth and Bridport, operating 89 buses and employing around 210 staff, including 150 drivers.
- **FirstGroup plc** is the leading transport operator in the UK and North America with revenues of over £6.4 billion a year. It employs approximately 125,000 staff and transports some 2.5 billion passengers a year. Website: www.firstgroup.com.
- **Group** is one of Britain's largest bus operators, running more than one in five of all local bus services. A fleet of nearly 8,000 buses carries approximately 2.5 million passengers a day in more than 40 major towns and cities (website: www.firstgroup.com/ukbus).