

A Cumbrian coach company is creating 15 jobs by launching two new public bus services in Carlisle.

Wigton-based Reays has invested more than £3/4 million in buying eight brand new buses to operate the 63 and 64 City Hopper routes, which will link all Carlisle's major housing estates with the city centre and Cumberland Infirmary.

Twelve drivers are among the 15 new staff being taken on to run the seven-days-a-week services, which will start operating on Friday October 1.

Four buses will operate the 63 circular service from the Cumberland Infirmary via Botcherby, Harraby and Upperby. Four more will run the 64 route from the Royal Scot on Morton Park to Asda at Kingstown via the Cumberland Infirmary.

The modern low-access Primo buses will carry up to 43 fare-paying or pass-holding passengers from early morning to early evening.

Reays have successfully operated the 75 City Hopper service from Dalston to Cotehill via Carlisle city centre since last March when it took over an already established route – but this is the first time the family-run firm has launched new City Hopper routes of its own.

Managing director Chris Reay said: "We are making a massive commitment to these two new routes in terms of staff and vehicles but we believe we can offer the people of Carlisle exactly what they want - a quality, reliable bus service with affordable fares.

"We are a local company who want to provide first-class public transport for local people. We think it is wrong that many bus passengers at present face having to make two separate journeys just to get to the Cumberland Infirmary."

Two of Reays' new City Hopper buses will be parked in Carlisle city centre's central pedestrianised shopping area on Thursday September 30 from 9am to 5pm for an open day to launch the route. Free gifts will be handed out along with timetables and there will be children's entertainment and the chance to win free coach holidays.

Passes for use on all three City Hopper services – 63, 64 and 75 – are available as follows: Day Hopper £2.95; Weekly hopper £8.95; Family Day Hopper £4.95 (2 adults and 2 children). The minimum fare is 65p. All concessionary passes will be valid.

Reays employ more than 70 people, operating a range of transport services, from private coach and limousine hire to school services. Earlier this year, the company won the contract to provide internal staff transport at the giant Sellafeld site in West Cumbria.

Ends

NOTE: Chris Reay is available for interview on 016973 49999.