Department for Transport

Annual bus statistics: England 2019/20

About this release

This statistical release presents the latest annual statistics on the local bus sector. Local bus services use public service vehicles (PSVs) to carry passengers paying separate fares over short distances. Most of the data are derived from the Department for Transport's (DfT) annual survey of local bus operators. Figures are presented for England, in line with coverage of DfT bus policy. Statistics for Scotland and Wales are available online.

In this publication

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to bus.statistics@dft.gov.uk

The number of local bus passenger journeys in England fell by 238 million or 5.5% to 4.07 billion in the year ending March 2020.

The fall can largely be attributed to the effects of passenger journeys from COVID-19 in the last quarter of 2019/20. While the national lockdown only began on 23rd March and covered a small proportion of the year, bus companies reported they started seeing declines in journeys in the preceding weeks.

Bus mileage in **England** decreased by 3.1% when compared with 2018/19. This is smaller than the decline in passenger journeys.

Local bus passenger journeys

4.07 **billion journeys** ↓5.5% since 2018/19

in England in 2019/20

Vehicle miles on local bus services

1.13 **billion vehicle miles** ↓3.1% since 2018/19

in England in 2019/20

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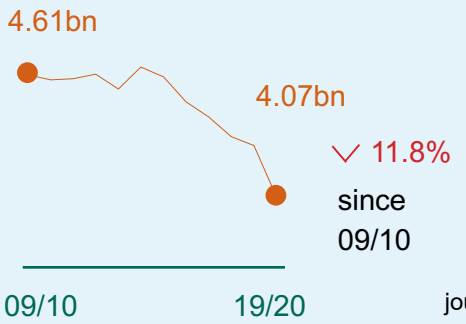
Infographic

Passenger journeys (BUS0103)

Passenger journeys on local bus services: England



51% of journeys occurred in London

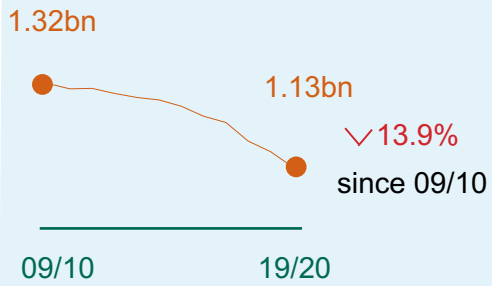
1.98 bn journeys in England outside London

2.09 bn journeys in London

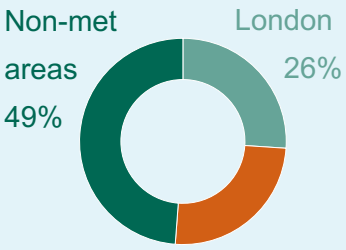
Passenger journeys on local bus services: England outside London and London

Bus mileage (BUS0203)

Vehicle miles on local bus services: England



26% of mileage occurred in London



Bus Satisfaction (Transport Focus)

89% overall satisfaction with the journey

64% satisfaction with value for money (fare-payers)

Bus fleet (BUS06 tables)

46% Met Euro VI emissions standards

2% were zero emission

84% were diesel engined (excl hybrid)

42% provided audio visual information

32,300 buses used by local operators in England

Of which... **29%** were in London

94% had CCTV

98% had an AVL device

32% had free WiFi

84% were enabled for payment by contactless bank card

93% of buses in England outside London were ITSO smart enabled

**AVL - Automatic Vehicle Location device. ITSO - sets a common technical standard for smart ticketing.*

Summary

Table 1 summarises the annual figures for bus passenger journeys and mileage for the 2019/20 financial year. Figures for England are broken down into England outside London (metropolitan areas and non-metropolitan areas) and London.

Table 1: Local bus passenger journeys and mileage by area type: England, 2018/19 to 2019/20 (tables BUS0103 and BUS0203)

	Passenger journeys		Vehicle mileage	
	2019/20 figures in billion / billion miles and change compared with 2018/19			
London	2.09	↓ 4.9%	0.30	↓ 0.2%
English metropolitan areas *	0.84	↓ 6.3%	0.28	↓ 5.3%
English non-metropolitan areas	1.13	↓ 6.1%	0.55	↓ 3.4%
England outside London	**1.98**	**↓ 6.2%**	**0.84**	**↓ 4.1%**
England	**4.07**	**↓ 5.5%**	**1.13**	**↓ 3.1%**

* Greater Manchester mileage likely under reported due to changeover of operators

Concessionary Travel and Punctuality surveys

To reduce burden on Local authorities dealing with COVID-19 we postponed the concessionary travel and punctuality surveys. We are therefore unable to provide updated figures in these areas. DfT's Concessionary Travel Survey collects more detailed information for Travel Concession Authorities on concessionary passholder numbers, total expenditure on concessionary travel and discretionary concessions offered.

Things you need to know

The statistics presented here on the local bus sector in England provide information for monitoring trends in usage and provision for a mode of transport used for about 51% of public transport journeys.

The figures in this release relate to local bus services. These are timetabled services using public service vehicles to carry passengers over relatively short distances, and are usually eligible for Bus Services Operators Grant. Long distance coach services, private hire work and closed contracts are excluded but school services accessible to the general public are included.

The majority of bus services in England are provided by private companies since deregulation of the industry in 1986 in England outside London. Services can be operated on a purely commercial basis or with financial support from local authorities (supported services). London services are operated by private companies but regulated by Transport for London (TfL). There are two broad passenger types: concessionary and non-concessionary passengers.

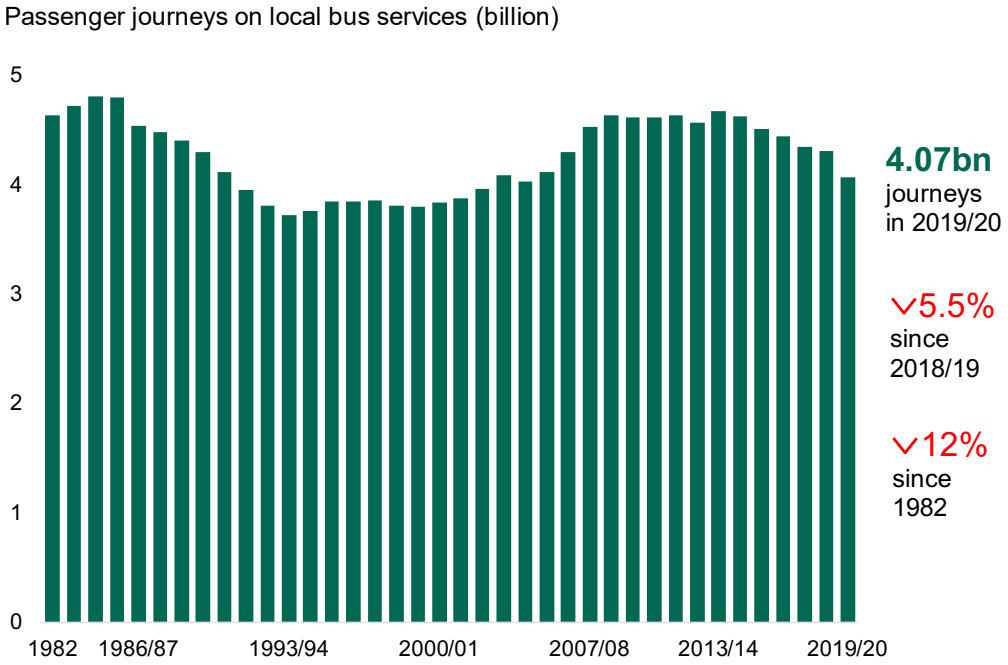
The figures have been affected by coronavirus. Due to the way we collect the data (aggregate full year figures), we are unable to pinpoint its impact exactly. However our quarterly panel survey showed that passenger journeys reduced by about 13% in the January to March quarter of 2020 compared to a year earlier. There are also daily estimates based on data from a bus ticketing company supplied in response to the pandemic.

Passenger journeys

England

In 2019/20, 4.07 billion passenger journeys were made by local bus in England, down 238 million journeys or 5.5% when compared with 2018/19. **Chart 1** shows the trend in local bus journeys in England between 1982 and 2019/20. Bus use fell in the early 1990s before starting to increase to 2007/08, then remained relatively stable to 2014/15 since when it has fallen. The fall in journeys in the last year has mainly been caused by falls in the last quarter of 2019/20 due to COVID-19. Passenger journeys in 2019/20 remain above lows seen in the 1990s.

Chart 1: Local bus passenger journeys in England, 1982 to 2019/20 (table BUS0103)

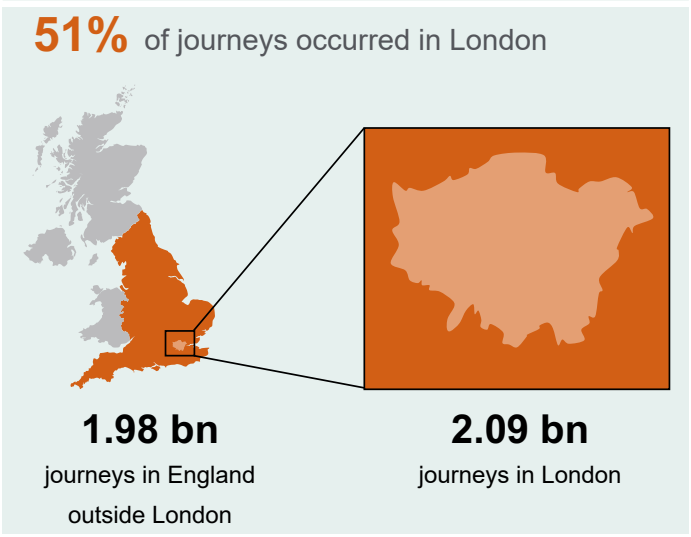


What is a bus passenger journey?

Each boarding of a bus is counted as one journey. The number of passenger journeys are an important measure of bus demand. These statistics relate to passengers on local bus services. The main source of information on non-local bus use (e.g. long distance coach services) is the National Travel Survey.

Quarterly bus statistics

Local bus passenger journeys and local bus fares are updated every quarter. The latest quarterly statistics are available for April to June 2020. Information on passengers are estimated using a smaller sample size than the annual statistics.



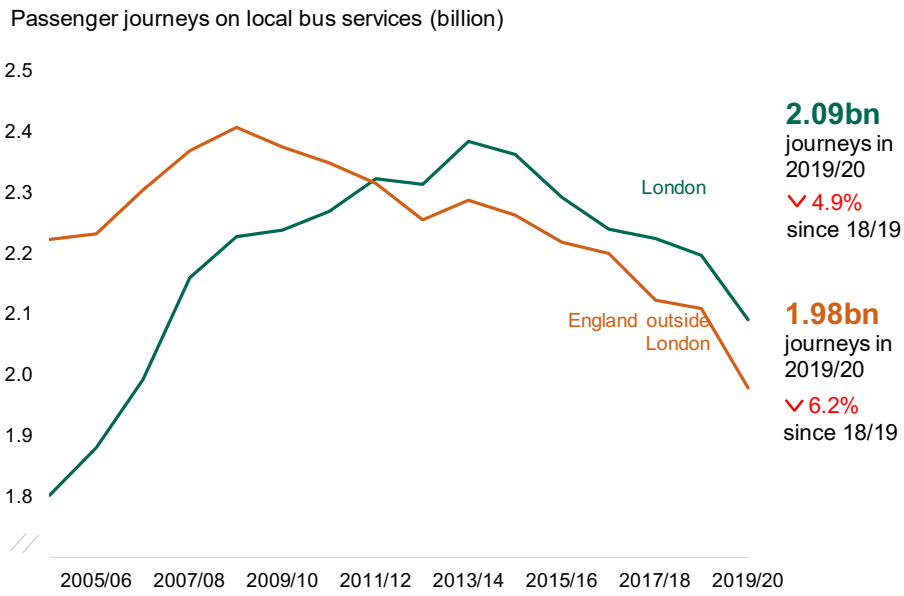
London

Passenger journeys in London accounted for around a half of all passenger journeys made by local buses in England in 2019/20. There were 2.09 billion passenger journeys made by local bus in London in 2019/20, a decrease of 4.9% compared with 2018/19. This is the sixth consecutive year in which passenger journeys in London have fallen (see **chart 2**). Before 2012/13, bus use in London increased every year since 1998/99. Bus use in London in 2019/20 is still 16% higher than in 2004/05.

England outside London

In 2019/20, 1.98 billion passenger journeys were made by local bus in England outside London, down 6.2% when compared with 2018/19. Bus use in England outside London has been on a downward trend since the peak of 2.41 billion passenger journeys in 2008/09 (see **chart 2**).

Chart 2: Local bus passenger journeys in England outside London and London, 2004/05 to 2019/20 (table BUS0103)



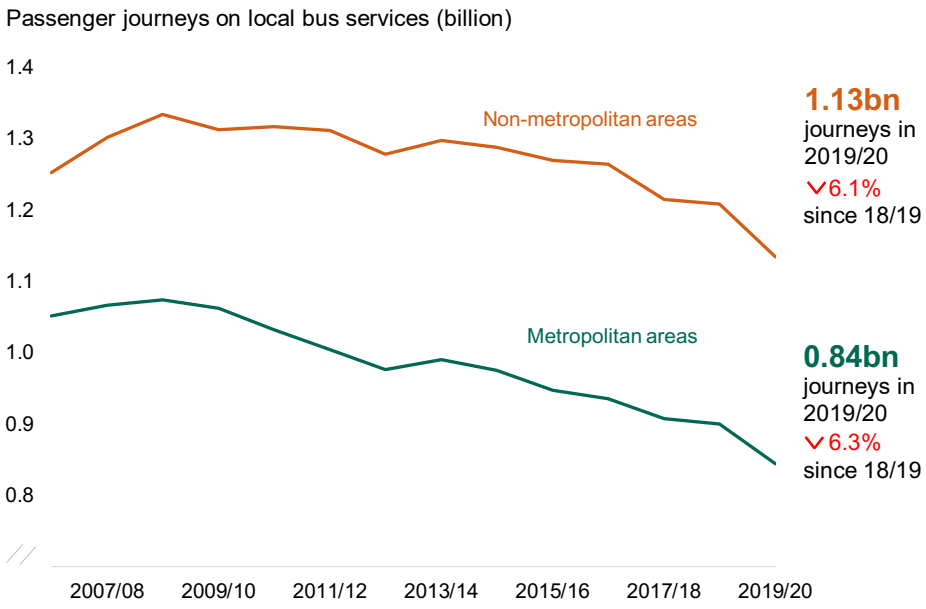
Why the distinction between London and England outside London?

Buses in London, through Transport for London, operate under a different regulatory framework to the rest of England. The size of the bus market in London and differing trends in bus use also makes it sensible to disaggregate these two area types. Different disaggregations are available online including local authority level and for urban and rural areas.

Metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas

In metropolitan areas, there were 0.84 billion passenger journeys, a decrease of 6.3% from 2018/19. However much of this decrease occurred in Greater Manchester where there was a switch of major operators. In non-metropolitan areas, there were 1.13 billion passenger journeys, a decrease of 6.1%.

Chart 3: Local bus passenger journeys in England outside London by area type, 2006/07 to 2019/20 (table BUS0103)



England outside London

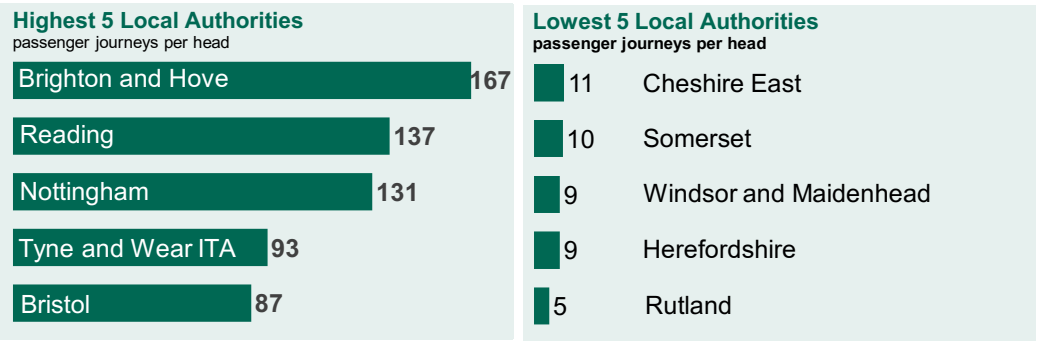
Figures for England outside London can be disaggregated further into metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. Metropolitan areas are the six former metropolitan counties: Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire. Non-metropolitan areas cover the remaining county councils and unitary authorities in England outside London.

Bus use by local authority

The two tables in Chart 4 of bus passenger journeys per head of population in 2019/20 in England outside London show the difference in bus use across local authorities. In general, more urban local authorities have above average levels of bus use when compared with rural areas.

The average number of bus passenger journeys per head in England outside London was 42 in 2019/20, down from 54 in 2009/10. There were falls in all but 5 local authorities between 2018/19 and 2019/20 with coronavirus a big factor in this.

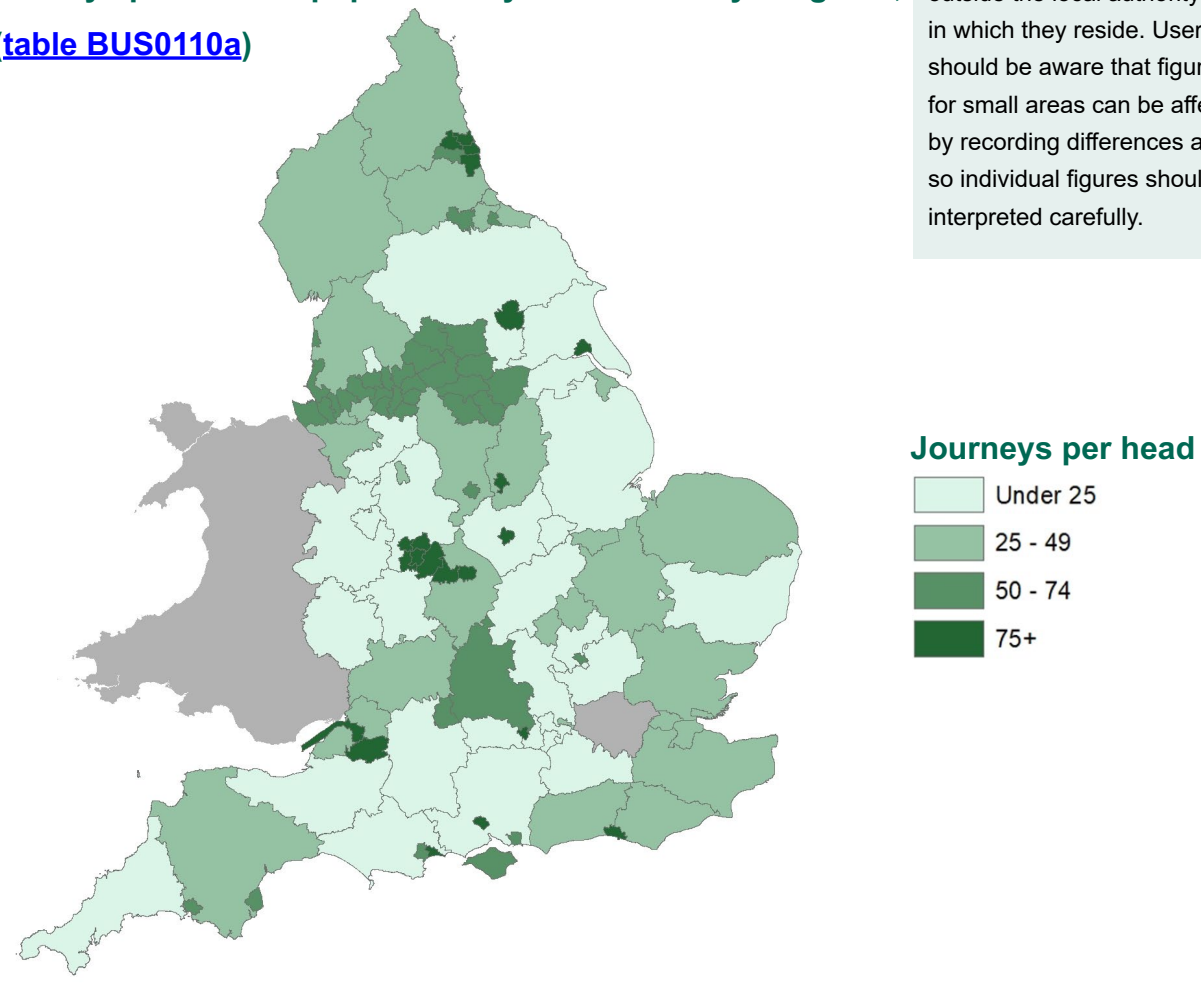
Chart 4: Local bus passenger journeys per head by local authority highest and lowest 5: England outside London, 2019/20 (table BUS0110a)



About the data

The bus passenger journeys per head figures presented here are estimates based on returns provided by bus operators. Mid-year population estimates from Office for National Statistics are used but do not account for bus passengers using the bus outside the local authority in which they reside. Users should be aware that figures for small areas can be affected by recording differences and so individual figures should be interpreted carefully.

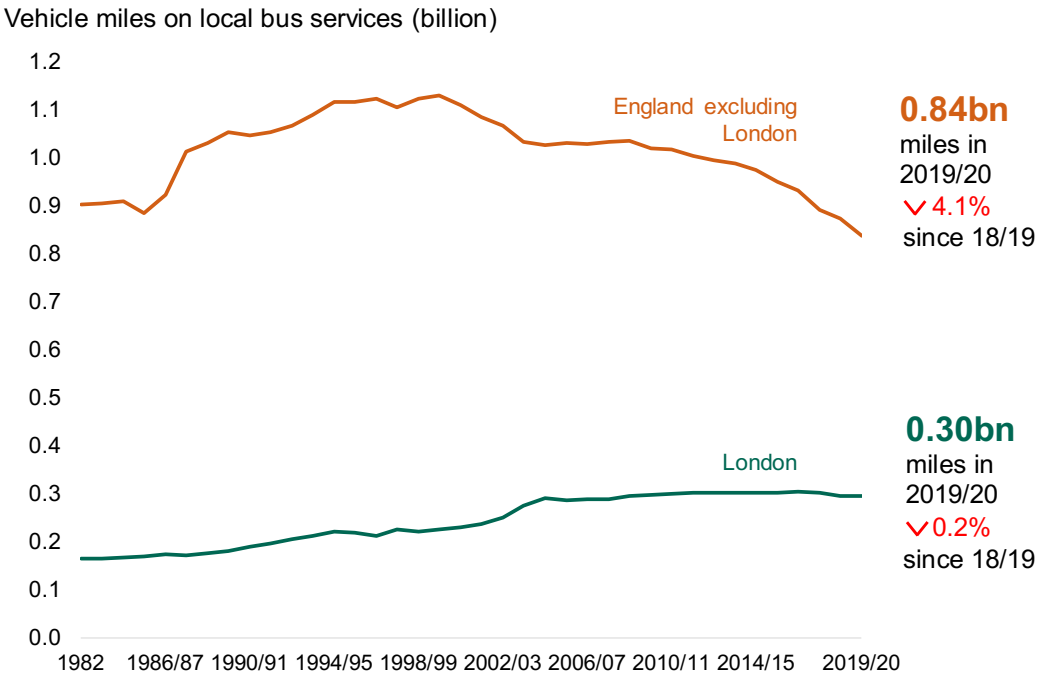
Map 1: Journeys per head of population by local authority: England, 2019/20 (table BUS0110a)



Bus mileage

In 2019/20, 1.13 billion bus service miles were run in England, a decrease of 3.1% when compared with 2018/19 (see **chart 5**). In England outside London, bus mileage continued its decline, decreasing by 4.1% when compared with 2018/19. In London bus mileage decreased by 0.2% compared to 2018/19 and has changed very little since 2008/09 at around 300 million vehicle miles.

Chart 5: Vehicle miles on local bus services by area type: England, 1982 to 2019/20 (table BUS0203)



About bus mileage

Mileage run by buses in service excludes 'dead running' (for example mileage between the start and end of routes and the depot). Mileage is split into the amount ran on services which are operated on a **commercial** basis or with financial support from local authorities (**supported** services).

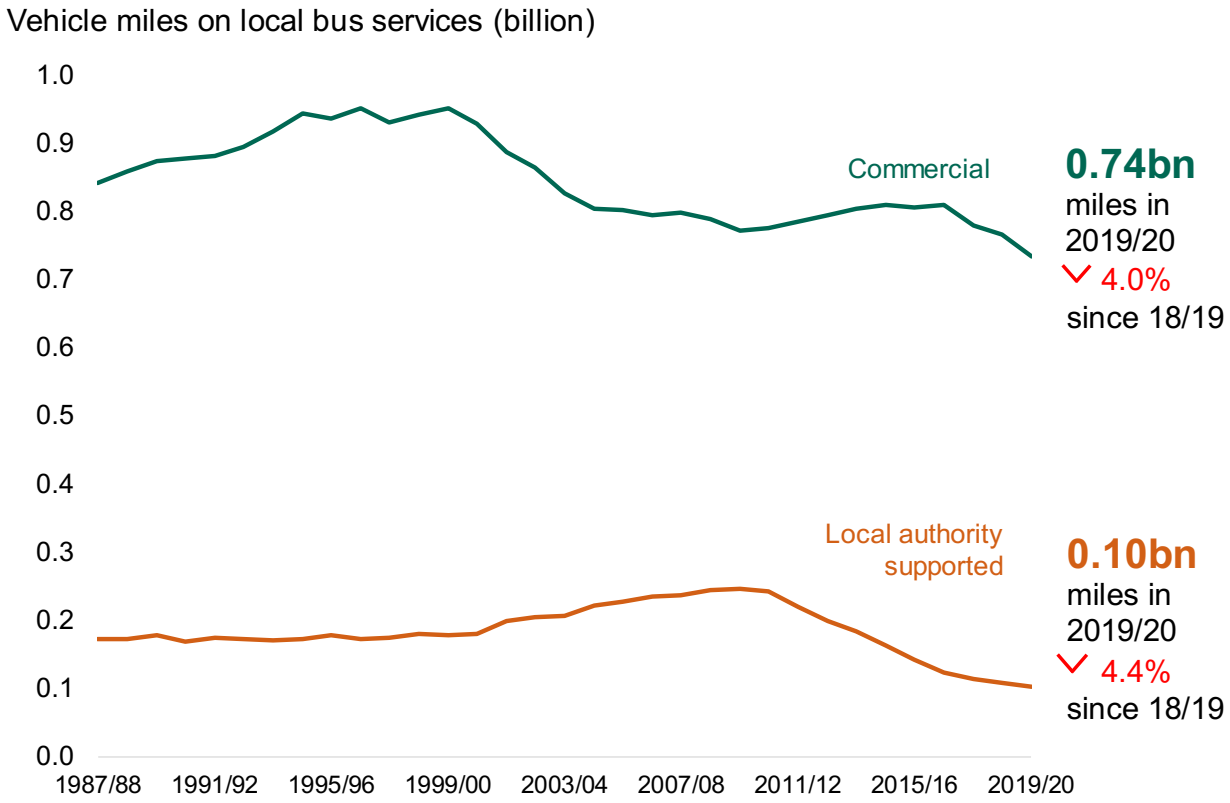
For supported services, operators receive payment from a local transport authority for running the service. They are usually considered socially necessary but not commercially viable. Supply of services is likely to be affected by similar factors to bus use. Operating costs and local authority support for supported services are also likely to be important.

Commercial and local authority supported bus mileage

In England outside London bus mileage has declined by 18.3% since 2004/05. This has been driven by a decrease of 54% in local authority supported mileage, in particular in non-metropolitan areas. Although commercial mileage increased by 0.6% from 2004/05 to 2016/17, it has decreased in the last 3 years and is down by 4% over the year to 2019/20.

Supported mileage in England outside London as a percentage of total mileage was 17% in 1987/88. Supported mileage reached its highest proportion in 2009/10 at 24.2%. **Chart 6** shows the decrease in supported mileage since 2009/10 and it is now 12.3% of total mileage. The chart also shows the increase in commercial mileage to 2014/15 and a fall in the last few years.

Chart 6: Vehicle miles on local bus services by service type: England outside London, 1987/88 to 2019/20 (table BUS0205)



Overall, the decline in supported mileage has not been fully matched by an increase in commercial mileage and in the latest year commercial mileage decreased by 4%.

Another part of the public transport network in a local authority is flexible or demand responsive modes of transport, including community transport. These forms of transport are unlikely to be captured in these statistics because the annual bus survey is completed by operators holding a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) licence rather than the Section 19 and 22 permits that the majority of community transport organisations operate under. There is also a large amount of home to school transport which is undertaken by PSV operators, but is not included in these local bus statistics. More information on these can be found on your local authority website and the Department for Education publishes expenditure on school transport.

Vehicles

The below graphic summarises the annual figures for the number of buses used by local operators in England in 2019/20.

Summary

32,300 buses used by local operators in England in 2019/20

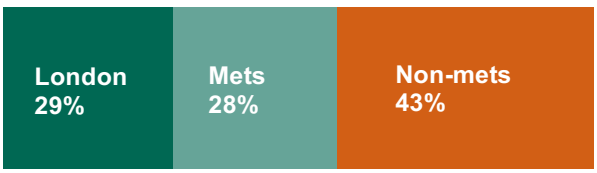
Of which...

- **29%** were in London
- **94%** had CCTV
- **16%** had charging points
- **32%** had free WiFi
- **84%** were enabled for payment by contactless bank card
- **93%** of buses in England outside London were ITSO smart enabled
- **99%** had been issued with an accessibility certificate
- **46%** met Euro VI emission standards
- **84%** were diesel engines (excl. hybrid)
- **98%** had an AVL device
- **42%** Provided audio visual information

Bus fleet

The number of buses used by local bus operators in England has fallen 3.8% from 33,600 in 2018/19 to 32,300 in 2019/20. 29% of buses were in London (see **chart 7**). The average age of a bus in England in 2019/20 was 8 years and 99% of all buses had been issued with an accessibility certificate in 2019/20.

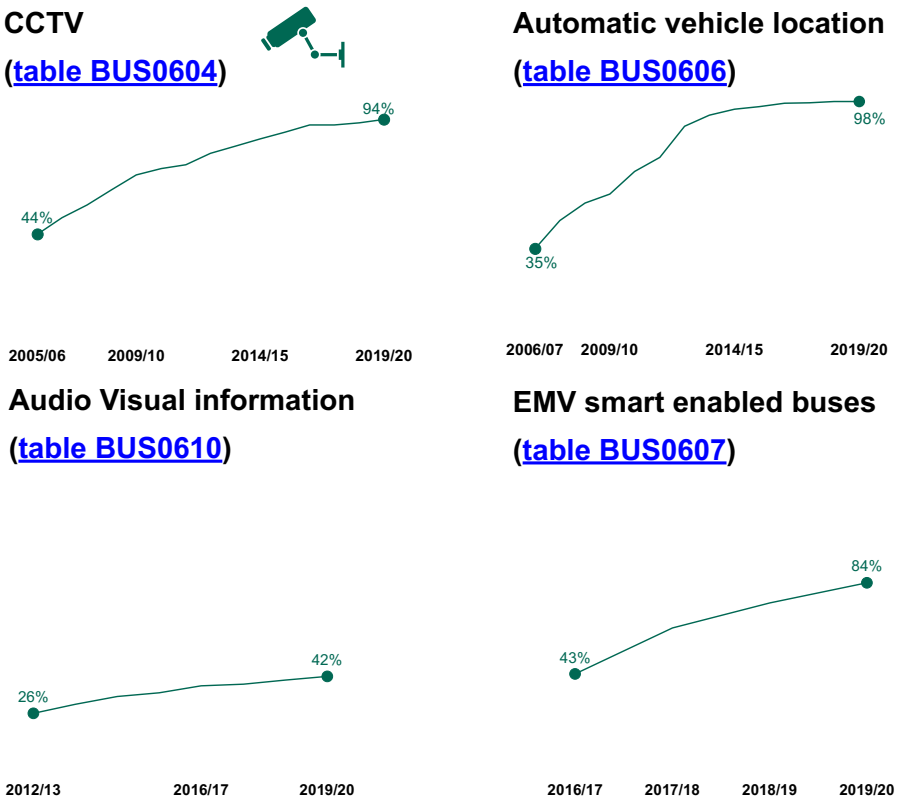
Chart 7: Proportion of buses used by local bus operators by area type: England, March 2020 (table BUS0602)



Accessibility regulations

The Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000 (PSVAR) set out standards for public service vehicles to ensure they would be accessible to disabled people from 1 January 2017 at the latest (depending on bus type). Buses that comply with the accessibility regulations are issued with an accessibility certificate. Some buses are suitable for wheelchair access through low floor designs.

Chart 8: Percentage of buses fitted with CCTV, AVL, Audio Visual and EMV smart enabled: England, 2019/20 compared with previous years



AVL, ITSO and EMV

Automatic Vehicle Location is used to track vehicle location in order to monitor punctuality and provide real time service information to customers.

ITSO is an organisation which sets a common technical standard for smart ticketing. Further information can be found at: www.itso.org.uk.

EMV enabled for payment by contactless bank card (or mobile phones emulating these e.g. Android Pay or Apple Pay)

Equipment on buses

In 2019/20, 94% of buses used by local operators in England were equipped with CCTV, up from 44% in 2005/06. Almlost all buses were also fitted with an Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) device (98% of buses in England, compared with 35% in 2006/07). Of the buses in England with an AVL device in 2019/20, 99% of AVL devices were being used to monitor punctuality and 95% used the AVL device to provide real time service information to customers.

In 2019/20, 32% of buses in England had free WiFi up from 31% the year before, and 84% were EMV smart card enabled (or mobile phones emulating these e.g. Android Pay or Apple Pay) up from 75% in 2018/19. In 2019/20, 93% of buses used by local bus operators in England outside London were ITSO smart enabled, up from 25% of buses which were ITSO enabled for payment in 2010/11. 82% of buses were enabled for both ITSO and EMV (see **chart 8**).

In 2019/20, 42% of buses provided Audio Visual information to passengers. However, this total varies greatly in different parts of the country. 98% of buses in London provide Audio Visual information, while only 20% of buses in England outside London provided Audio Visual infromation. The figure for England outside London has risen every year since 2012/13 when it was 7%. From 2016/17 we asked the additional question on whether the Audio Visual information provided route/ direction, next stop and diversion information to passengers. In 2019/20 24% of buses in England provided all this information to passengers.

Bus fuel type and Emissions

New questions were added this year on the type of fuel used by buses, as well as the emissions standards to which buses adhere. They showed that 46% of buses met the latest Euro VI emissions standards and a further 2% of buses were zero emission. 23% and 11% of buses met older Euro V and Euro IV standards, respectively. London had higher emissions standards than the rest of England with 87% meeting Euro VI standards. In addition 84% of all buses are diesel fuel engined, with a further 14% diesel-hybrid engine (see **charts 9 and 10**).

Chart 9: Percentage of local buses by Emissions standards in England, 2019/20 (table BUS0609)

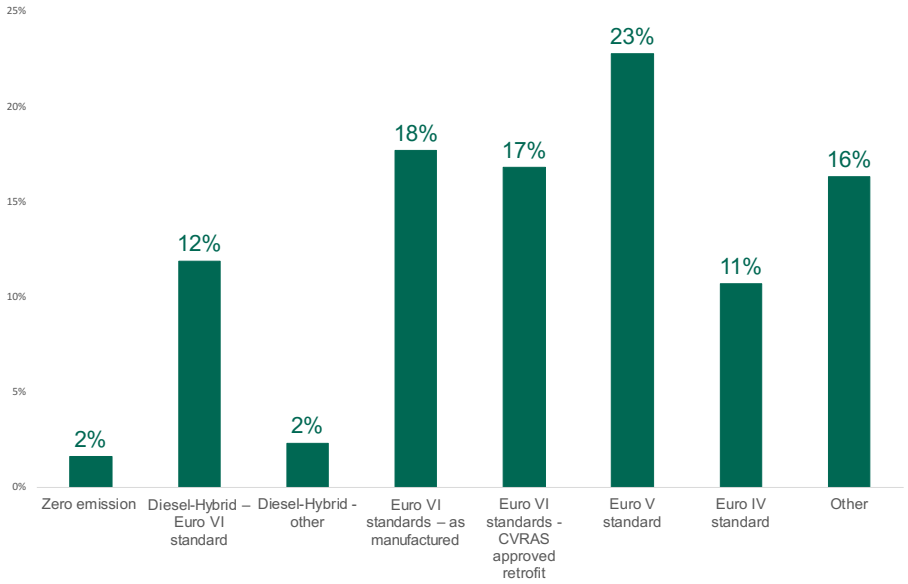
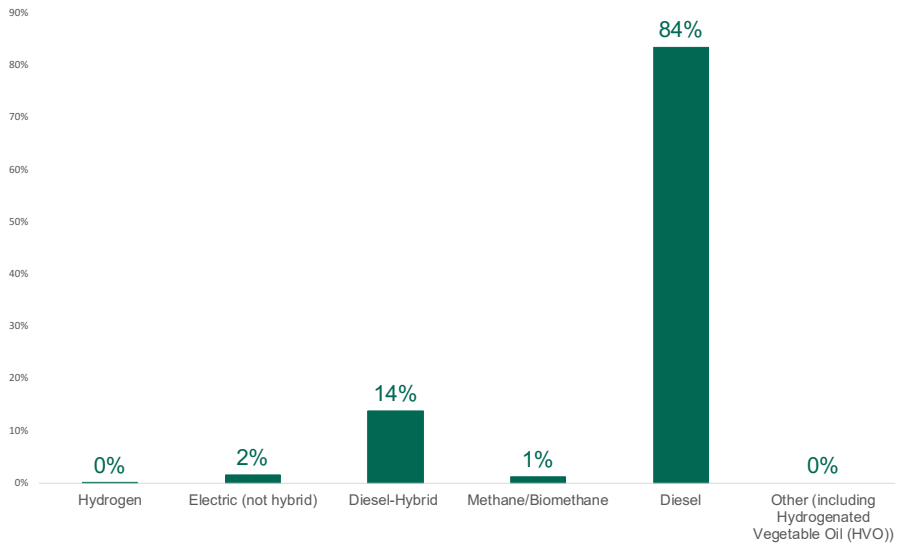


Chart 10: Percentage of local buses by fuel type in England, 2019/20 (table BUS0609)



Emissions Standards

The emission standards for trucks (lorries) and buses are defined by engine energy output in g/kWh; this is unlike the emission standards for passenger cars and light commercial vehicles, which are defined by vehicle driving distance in g/km - a general comparison to passenger cars is therefore not possible.

Euro VI is currently the highest regulated emissions standard for buses. For more information and the levels of emissions for each category see here.

Office for Low Emission Vehicles

The Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) is a team working across government to support the early market for ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV).

See their website for more information on regulation and statistics.

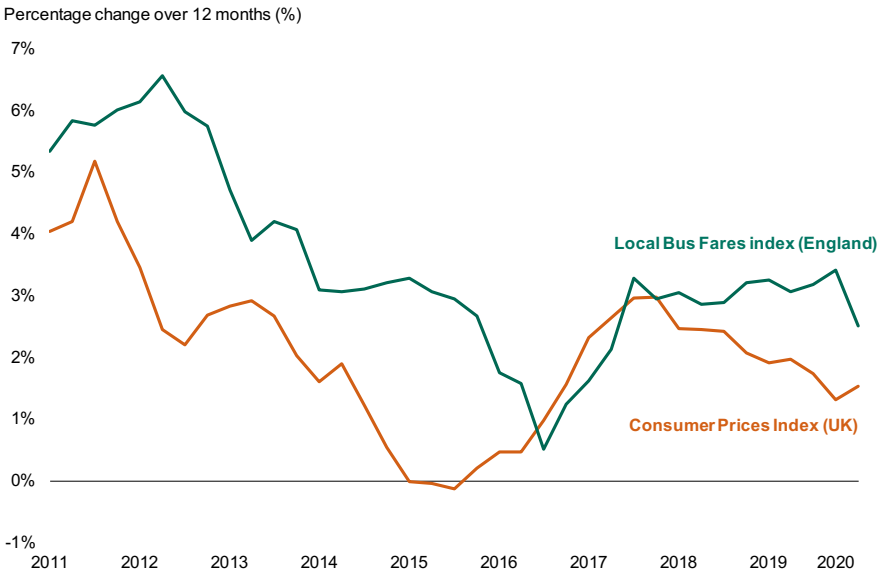
Additional statistics on fuel consumption and emissions are available from DfT.

Financial outlook

Bus fares

In the year to March 2020, local bus fares in England have increased by 2.5%, faster than the annual all items Consumer Prices Index rate of inflation (1.5% increase), meaning bus fares have risen in real terms. Local bus fares in England increased by 77% between March 2005 and March 2020. Bus fares have risen at a faster rate in metropolitan areas (95%) than in non-metropolitan areas (74%) and London (68%). The all items Consumer Prices Index (CPI) has increased by 40% over the same period. See quarterly releases for more detail.

Chart 11: Percentage change in Local Bus Fares index and CPI: England and UK, quarterly since March 2011, current prices (table BUS0415a)



Government support

Central and local government support for local bus services consists of payments for supported services, Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) and concessionary travel reimbursement (effectively a subsidy to concessionary passengers). In 2019/20, estimated total net support paid in England was £1.97 billion, of which £1.06 billion or 53% was for concessionary travel.

Data for government support comes from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Only provisional data has been published as at 28th October 2020 and only a total figure for England is available. We are unable to provide further local breakdowns at this time, with updated tables to be published later in year once published by MHCLG. The breakdowns for London, Met and non-Met areas for 2018/19 are available last year's release under Chart 10.

Quarterly stats release

We currently publish 4 quarterly releases on bus stats containing information on fare changes and provisional estimates of the number of passenger journeys. These can be found from the bus stats home page.

BSOG

One form of central government support for buses. The rate at which BSOG is paid was cut by 20% from April 2012. From October 2013, BSOG for London was devolved to Transport for London.

Operator revenue

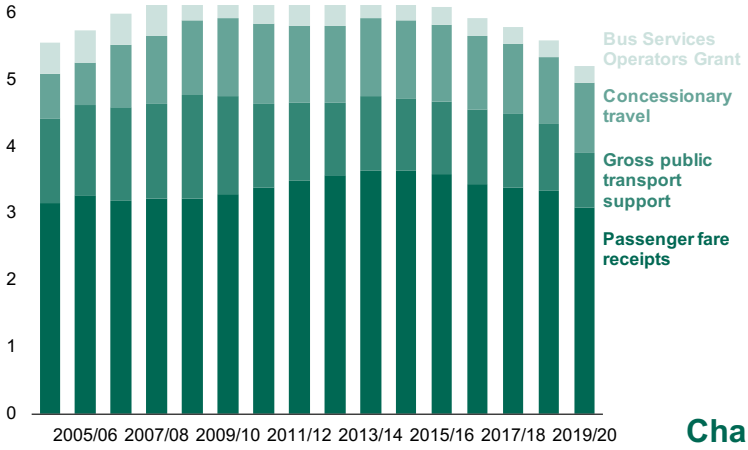
In 2019/20, the total estimated operating revenue for local bus services in England was £5.20 billion. Passenger fare receipts made up the largest proportion of operating revenue: £3.09 billion or 57% of operating revenue (see **chart 12**). Revenue from passenger receipts had been increasing on average each year in real terms between 2004/05 and 2018/19, but has fallen to its lowest level in 2019/20 in part due to coronavirus.

BSOG has decreased by 48% in real terms between 2004/05 and 2019/20. In 2004/05, BSOG made up 9% of operating revenue but in 2019/20 this proportion had fallen to 5%. Some of this decrease will be due to BSOG in London being devolved to Transport for London. Operating revenue from concessionary fare reimbursement has increased by nearly 60% in real terms over same period from £0.66 billion to £1.06 billion. This increase reflects the wider coverage of the concessionary travel scheme (moving from a local authority to a national scheme) and a larger proportion of elderly people in the wider population.

Types of revenue for operators

Fare receipts: on and off bus fares
Public transport support: payments from local authorities, mostly for running supported services
Concessionary reimbursement: paid by local authorities for carrying concessionary passengers
BSOG: fuel duty rebate from DfT.
Other sources of income excluded.

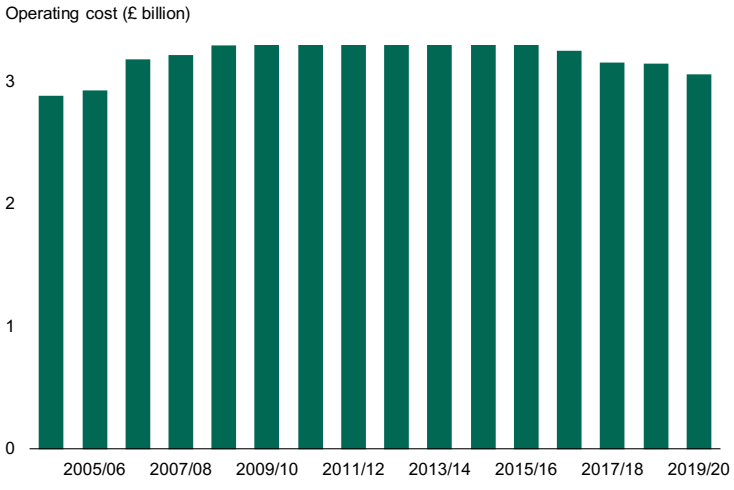
Chart 12: Operating revenue for local bus services by revenue type: England, 2004/05 to 2019/20 (2019/20 prices) (table BUS0501b)



Operator costs

In England outside London, between 2018/19 and 2019/20, operator costs for local bus services decreased from £3.15 billion to £3.06 billion in real terms (see **chart 13**). There was an average annual real terms increase of 0.7% between 2004/05 and 2018/19. However, operator costs have been falling since a high of £3.45 billion in 2011/12. A more detailed index of bus industry cost is compiled by the Confederation of Passenger Transport.

Chart 13: Operating cost for local bus services: England outside London, 2004/05 to 2019/20 (2019/20 prices) (table BUS0406b)



Bus and coach staff and drivers

Bus staff

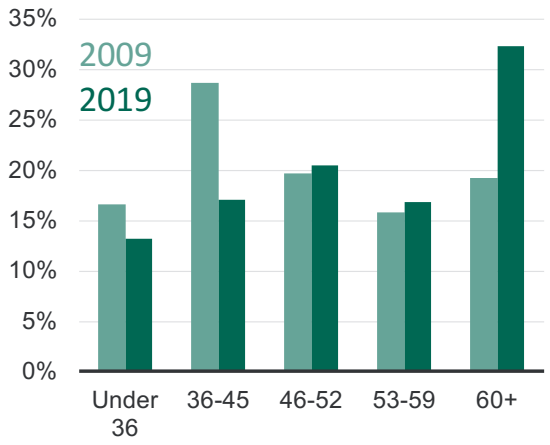
Local bus operators in England employed an estimated 97 thousand full-time equivalent staff, including maintenance and admin staff, as at March 2020 (see table BUS0701(area)). This was 2% lower than the 2019 figure and is based on PSV survey figures.

Figures from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings state that bus drivers work on average 41.9 hours a week, more than the national average of 37.5, and earn £523 a week, below the national average of £585.

The Labour Force Survey indicated 93% of bus and coach drivers were men in 2019. The LFS also indicated 79% of drivers were white, most were employees (94%) and most worked full time (72%)

The average age of bus and coach drivers in 2019 was 52, a little higher than 10 years before, 47 in 2009. Over the 10 years from 2009 to 2019 there was an overall increase in the proportion of drivers aged 60 or over, accounting for 32% of drivers in 2019.

Chart 14: Age range of bus and coach drivers, England, 2009 compared with 2019 (Labour Force Survey)



Staff disability awareness training

New legislation that requires drivers to be trained in disability awareness came into effect from March 2018. As at March 2020, 97% of bus operators required drivers to meet this requirement and 100% (rounded) of all drivers and on bus staff are required to meet this requirement.

97%

Of operators require drivers are trained in disability awareness

100%

Of all drivers and on bus staff

ONS survey data

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a large study of the employment circumstances of the UK population, run by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The data are defined using the Standard occupational classification system, SOC 2010, as "Bus and coach drivers" (code 8213), which will contain both bus and coach drivers. As the sample size for bus and coach drivers within the LFS is relatively small, it is subject to high variability and error range. As such caution should be used when using this data. These figures are based on January to March 2019 responses.

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) provides information on working hours and earnings.

% of bus drivers

93% **7%**

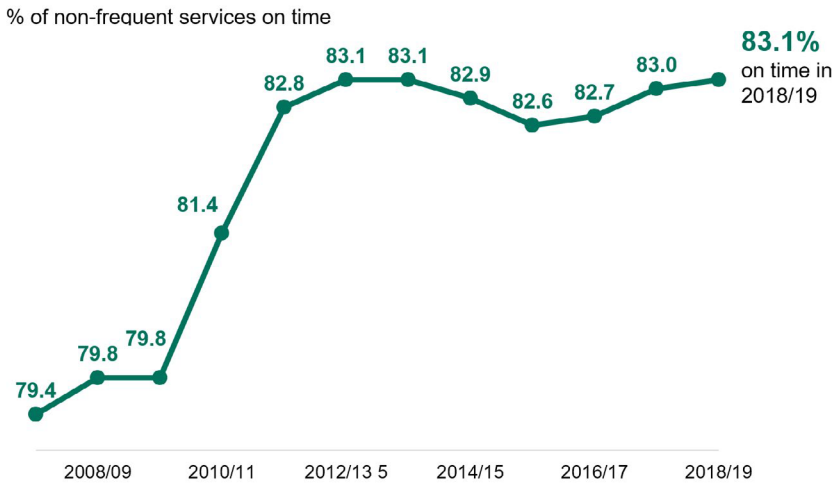
Staff disability training background

From March 2018, Article 16 of Regulation (EU) 181/2011 requires that drivers are trained in disability awareness, consistent with Part A of Annex II to that Regulation. Such training may be provided as part of Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (DCPC) or separate to it. More information can be found here.

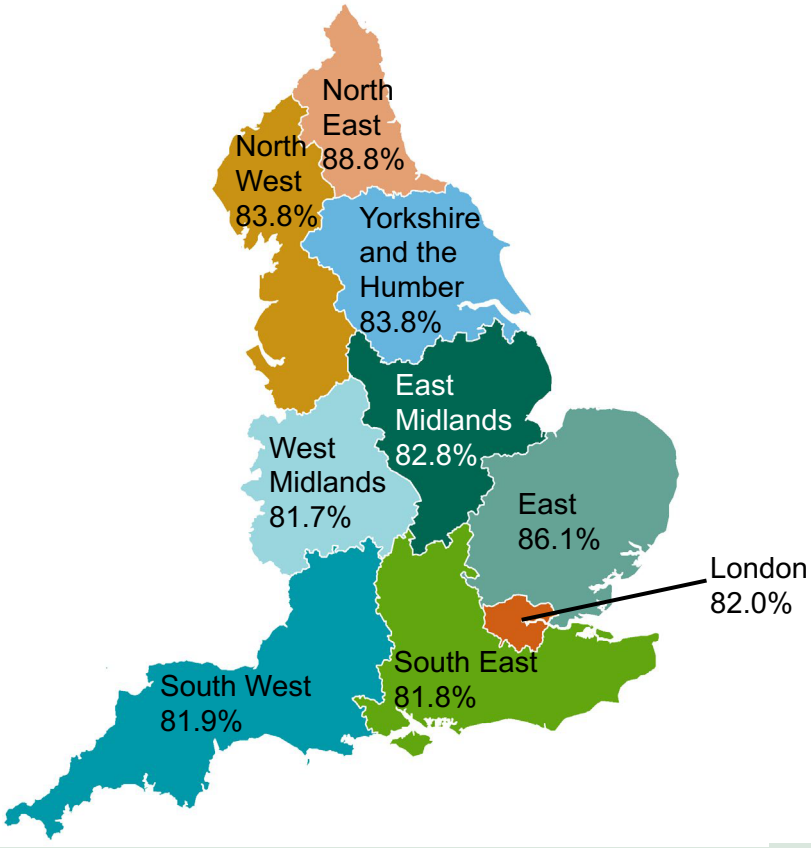
Bus punctuality

Details are from last year, as we were unable to run our usual survey to local authorities. In 2018/19, 83.1% of non-frequent services in England ran on time. This is very similar to the level seen since 2011/12 (see **chart 15**). 'On time' is defined as between 1 minute early and 5 minutes 59 seconds late. At the regional level bus service punctuality varied between 81.7% and 88.8%. At the local authority level there was greater variation ranging between 63% and 97%.

Chart 15: Percentage of non-frequent services running on time: England, 2007/08 to 2018/19 (table BUS0902)



Map 2: Percentage of non-frequent services running on time: England, 2018/19 (table BUS0902)



Bus punctuality data

Bus punctuality statistics provide one measure of the performance of local bus services based on data reported by local authorities who monitor punctuality using manual surveys or data from electronic systems. There are different measures of punctuality for frequent and non-frequent services: a frequent service is one that has six or more buses per hour. Several areas have no frequent services.

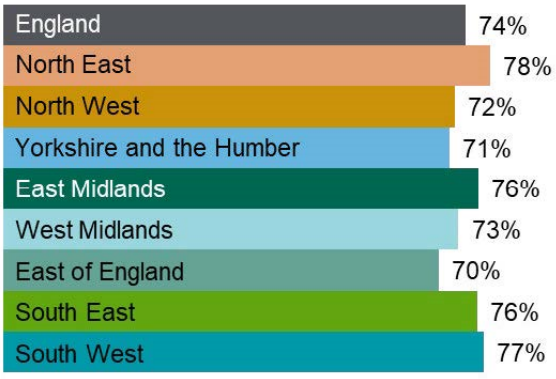
Bus timetable data

Timetable data provides more detailed information on when and where bus services run, and who operates them than the other sources in this publication. An analysis of bus timetable data from the Traveline National Dataset was included in the 2016 publication (see page 12 of the release).

Frequent services

Data on the average excess waiting time for frequent services by local authority in England can be found in table BUS0903.

Chart 16: Passenger satisfaction with bus punctuality: England, 2019 (Transport Focus Bus Passenger Survey)



Other Sources of Bus Data

The following pages contain data on buses from sources other than the PSV or punctuality survey. It comes from a mix of Department for Tranport and external sources and is published to different timescales and therefore is not new data. Below is a brief outline of some of the data sources.

Bus passenger satisfaction

England Outside of London

The Transport Focus Bus Passenger Survey gathers information on levels of satisfaction of bus users with their most recent journey.

In 2019, 89% of bus passengers in England outside London were satisfied with their journey. This is virtually unchanged from 2018 when journey satisfaction was at 88%. Since around 2014, levels of satisfaction in the four areas below have broadly remained static, with the exception of satisfaction with punctuality which has decreased from 77%.

89% overall satisfaction with the journey

63% satisfaction with value for money (fare-payers)

74% satisfaction with punctuality

85% satisfaction with length of time for journey

Bus Passenger Survey

Data from the Bus Passenger Survey (BPS) is managed by the independent transport user watchdog Transport Focus. Note that the statistics from the BPS are not National Statistics.

The 2019 survey was conducted in 50 authority areas in England outside London, including the six metropolitan counties, a mix of unitary county councils and bus operators' divisions. The survey does not cover all areas, and varies slightly from year to year, but covers around three quarters of bus passenger journeys within Transport Focus's remit.

For information on your area, see the full BPS report here.

London

Transport for London collects satisfaction data on a wide range of bus service features from a sample of passengers every quarter, based on the journey they have just made. In 2019/20, 85% of bus passengers in London were satisfied with their journey, the same as in 2018/19.

85% overall satisfaction with the journey

81% satisfaction with value for money (fare-payers)

81% satisfaction with reliability

TfL Customer Satisfaction Survey

More information on bus satisfaction can be found on the TfL website.

National Travel Survey

The National Travel Survey (NTS) gathers data on personal travel behaviour across England. Data from the NTS can be used to analyse the users of local bus services.

On average people:
- make 50 local bus trips per person per year
- travel 231 miles by local bus per person per year
- spend 36 minutes per local bus trip

These represent:
- 5% of trips across all modes of transport.
- 4% of the distance travelled across all modes of transport

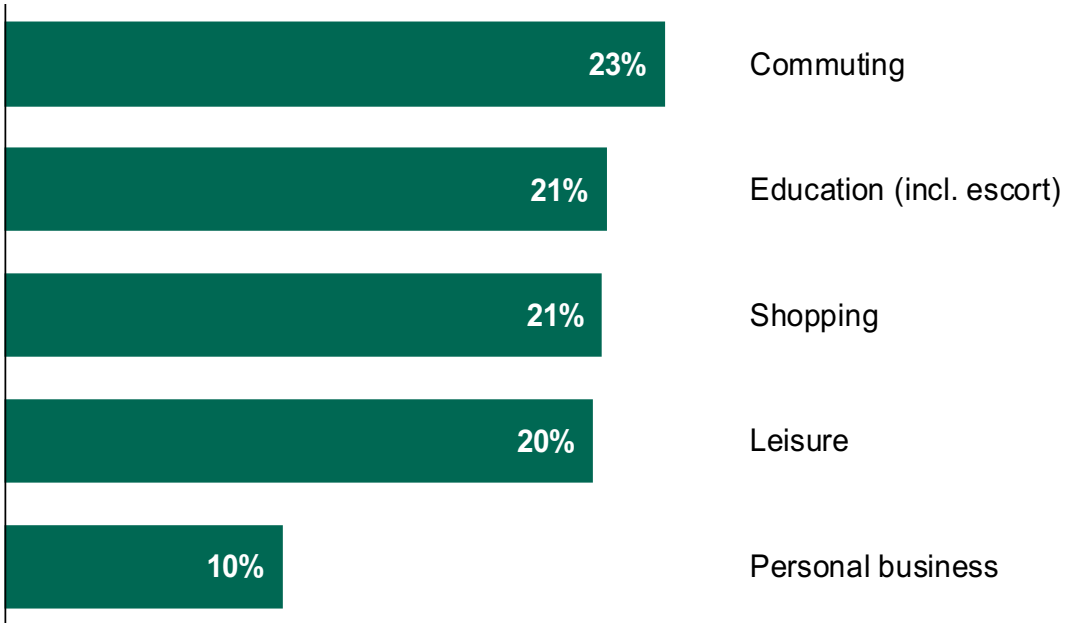
National Travel Survey

The National Travel Survey is a household survey carried out on over 16,000 individuals in England every year. The results in this release will be based on the 2019 results. For more information see here.

Why do people travel by local bus?

The most common purpose for local bus travel in 2019 was commuting (23%) closely followed by education (21%), shopping (21%) and leisure (20%). This differs from the previous year when shopping (25%) was the most common purpose for local bus travel.

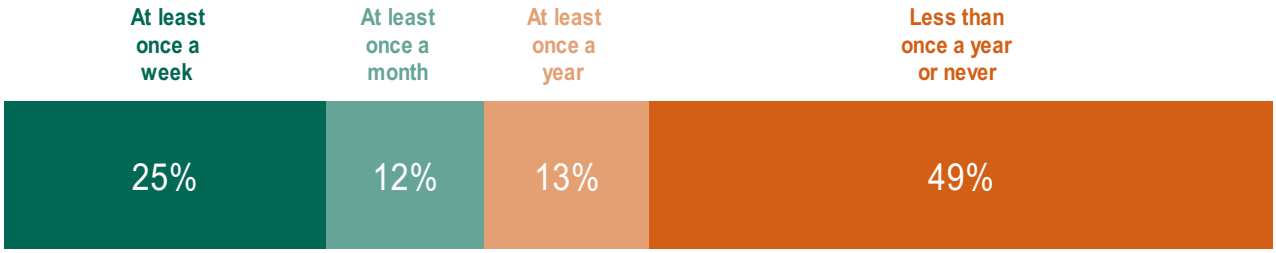
Chart 17: Purpose share of local bus trips, 2019 (NTS0409)



How often do people use local bus services?

Almost half of people (49%) rarely use a local bus (less than once a year) whereas over a third (37%) travel by local bus at least once a month and a quarter of people travel by local bus on a weekly basis.

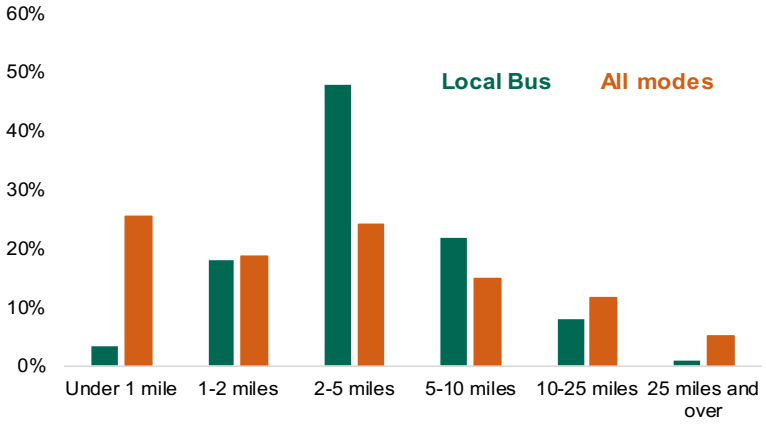
Chart 18: Frequency of local bus usage, England, 2019 (NTS0313)



How long are local bus trips?

In 2019, 48% of local bus trips were between 2 and 5 miles. This was double the proportion of trips of the same distance travelled by all modes (24%). In contrast, the 43% of all trips under 2 miles were by bus as a main mode while just under a quarter (21%) of local bus trips were under 2 miles.

Chart 19: Trip length distribution, for local bus trips and all modes, England, 2019 (NTS0308)

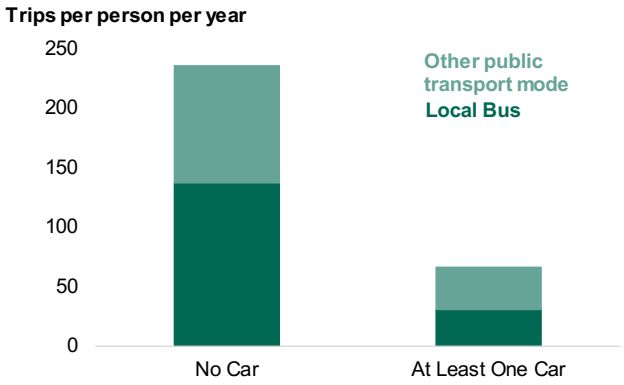


Who uses local bus services?

Car access

In 2019, on average, people in households without access to a car made over 4 times as many local bus trips than those with access to a car (138 trips per person vs. 30 trips per person respectively). Local bus services account for over half of all public transport trips made by people in households without access to a car (58%) and under half of all public transport trips made by people in households with access to a car (46%).

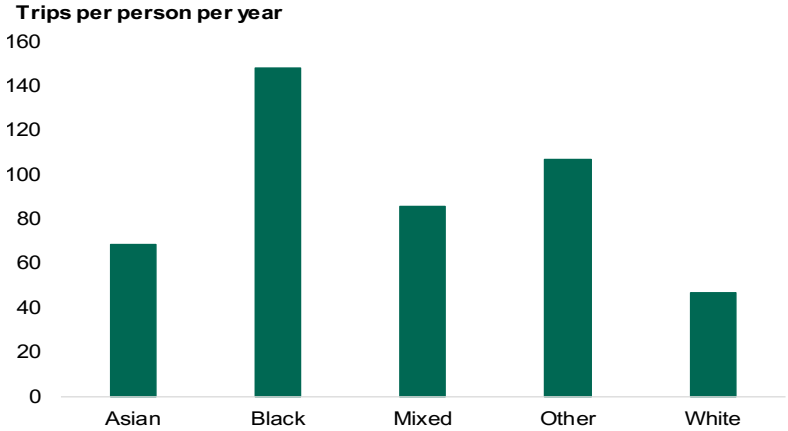
Chart 20: Local bus trips by car ownership, England, 2019 (NTS0702)



Ethnicity

In the five year period of 2015-2019, on average, black people made the most local bus trips (148 trips per person per year). Local bus trips accounted for 19% of all trips made by black people, the highest percentage out of all ethnic groups.

Chart 21: Local bus trips by ethnicity, England, 2015 to 2019 average

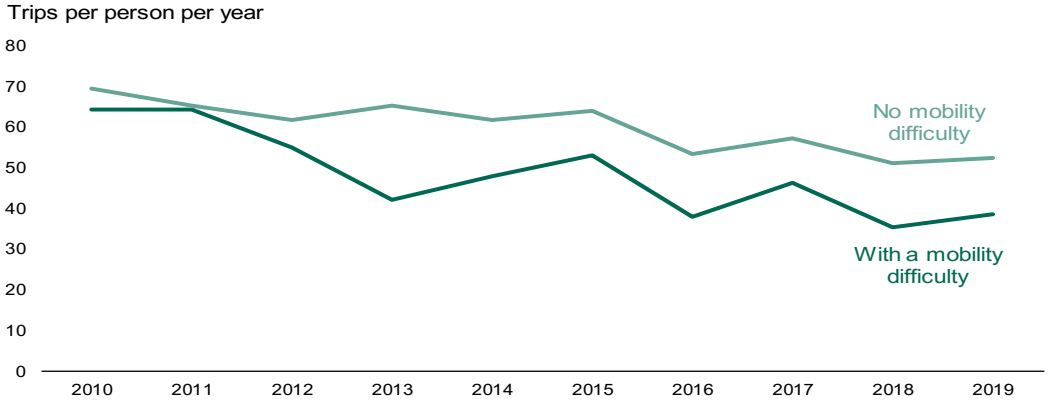


Mobility difficulties

In 2019, the number of local bus trips made by adults aged 16 or over with mobility difficulties had decreased from 64 trips per person per year in 2010 to 39 trips per person per year. Adults with mobility difficulties use local buses less than people who do not (39 trips per person vs. 53 trips per person).

Local bus usage makes up 6% of all trips for adults with mobility difficulties, compared to 5% for those who do not. These figures have decreased from 10% and 7% respectively in 2010.

Chart 22: Local bus trips per person per year, by mobilty difficulty, England, 2019 (NTS0709)



Mobility difficulties

The NTS definition of having a mobility difficulty is based on those adults who responded to say they have difficulties travelling on foot, by bus or both.

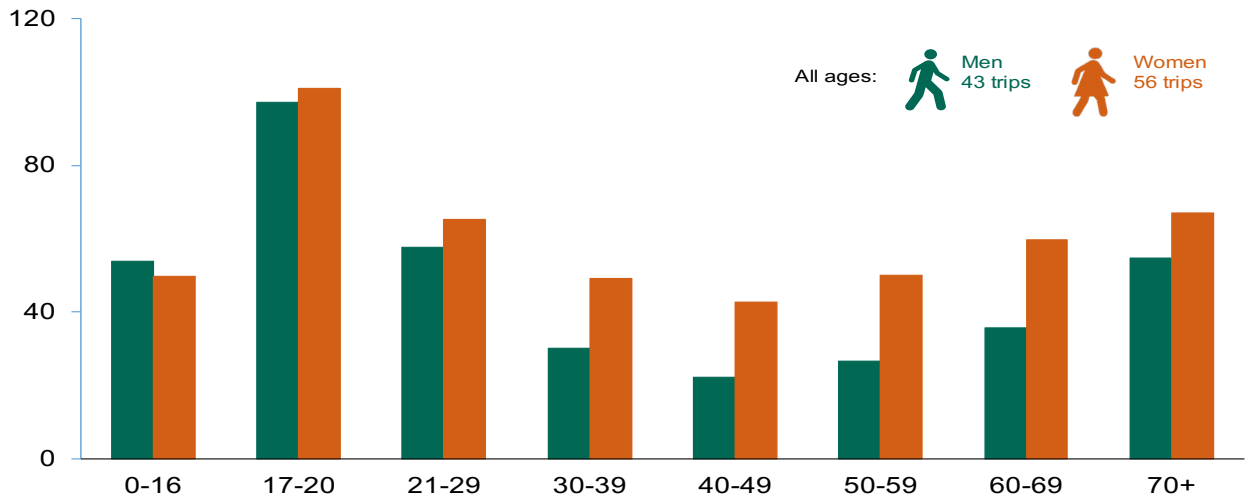
Household income

In 2019, people in the lowest real income quintile made 75 local bus trips on average, more than any other income quintile, while those in the highest income quintile made the least (31).

Age and gender

In 2019, on average, women made more local bus trips than men (56 trips per person per year compared with 43 trips per person per year respectively). Until age 29 men and women made roughly the same number of trips per year, however from age 30 upwards women made significantly more trips per year than men. For both men and women most trips per year were made by the 17-20 age group.

Chart 23: Local bus trips per person per year, by age and gender, England, 2019 (NTS0601)

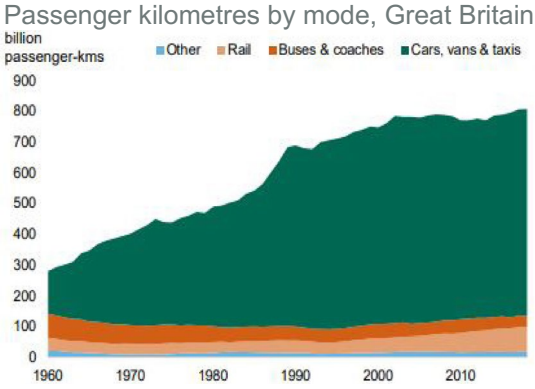


Other DfT sources containing bus data

Transport Stats Great Britain

Buses share of all passenger kilometres travelled has decreased to 4%. This is as a result of increased travel by rail and more notably car.

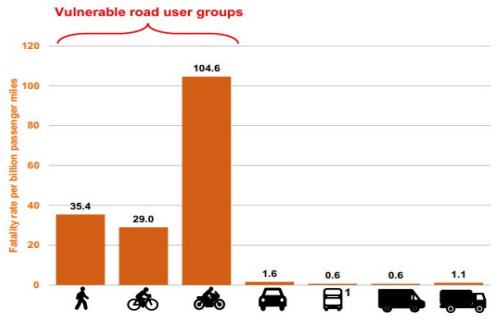
Passenger kilometres by mode, Great Britain



Transport Stats Great Britain (TSGB)

contains additional modal comparisons, as well as providing a single publication containing statistics across all transport themes and modes. Link

Fatality rate per billion passenger miles by road user type, 2019



Road accident statistics

The fatality rate per billion passenger miles by bus is the lowest of any mode. Bus passenger miles is based on 2018 mileage figure as no 2019 figure is available at the time of publication.

Road Accidents and Safety Statistics

These provide detailed statistics about personal injury road accidents, vehicles and casualties involved. Link

Speed Compliance statistics

Buses are more likely to comply with speed limits on 30mph roads, than any other mode. The bus category includes coaches.

Road Type	Cars	LCVs (Vans)	Articulated HGVs	Rigid HGVs	Short Buses	Long Buses	Motorcycles
Motorways	50%	51%	99%	..	..	47%	47%
National Speed Limit Single Carriageways	91%	..	73%	66%	64%	66%	74%
30mph Roads	46%	45%	56%	53%	63%	67%	37%

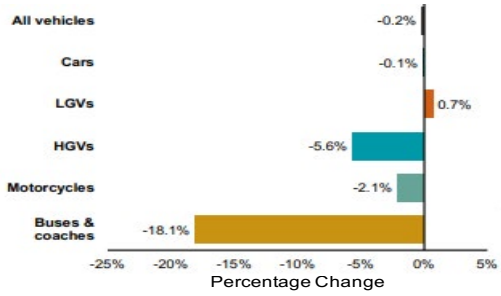
.. Data is not available

Complying With Speed Limits

Vehicle Speed Compliance

contains information on speed compliance with a variable for long and short buses. Also includes distance to vehicle in front. Link

Annual change in licensed vehicles by body type, Great Britain to March 2020



Vehicle statistics

There has been an 18.1% decrease in the number of buses and coaches licensed in the year to March 2020. This coincides with increases in SORN stock following the announcement of the UK lockdown.

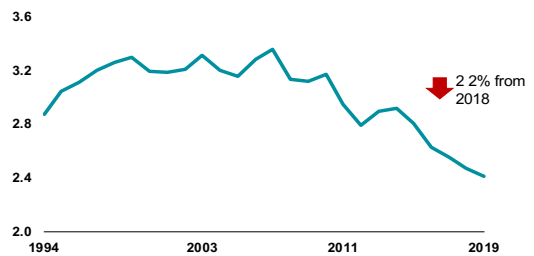
Vehicle Statistics

contains statistics on licensed vehicles and new vehicle registrations derived from data held by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). Link

Road Traffic statistics

Buses make up 0.7% of all motor vehicle traffic in 2019. This has been on a downward trend since 2007 and has reduced 2.2% in the last year.

Trend in bus and coach traffic
(billion miles)



Road Traffic

Road traffic statistics provide estimates of the vehicle miles travelled each year in Great Britain by vehicle type, road category and region. Link

Other Sources of Bus Data

There are many other data sources available on buses. Below is a selection of some of the sources with links to their websites. We do not take responsibility for the quality or content of these sources, nor is this a fully exhaustive list.

Traffic Commissioners publish data on the number of bus routes registered and bus route variations in their annual reports. Caution should be used when using this data to make judgements on the overall bus market, as routes are changed for many operational reasons and can vary greatly in length and frequency. Traffic Commissioners also publish changes to local routes and provide notices to changes at local bus route level. In addition they provide search tools to find your local operator and find your local registered bus routes.

Traveline is a partnership of transport companies, local authorities and passenger groups which have come together to bring you routes and times for all travel in Great Britain by bus, rail, coach and ferry. As well as this Traveline offers several open data options.

The **NHT Network** is a service improvement organisation providing a range of benchmarking services for the Highways & Transport sector. They perform a large public satisfaction survey each year across multiple modes including public transport with data available at local authority level.

The **TAS partnership** is a transport consultancy and provides data and research including undertaking a fares survey to identify bus ticket prices across the UK every 2 years.

Bus Times is an unnofficial source for bus times and useful website to find local bus route times and information. It utilises other open data sources and contains contact details for most bus operators.

Transport for London covers half of all local bus passenger journeys in England. They are responsible for bus registrations in London. As such they publish many additional reports and information on buses in London as well as for other public transport. Many local authorities also publish information on buses in their area, but this varies by local authority.

The department is **not** responsible for complaints about bus operators or services. As well as providing the bus passenger satisfaction survey on page 15, **Transport Focus** produce other bus research and information and provide additional information and help including for **bus complaints.**

Bus Open data

The Bus Open Data England Regulations 2020 provide powers for the Secretary of State (Transport) to legally require operators of local bus services across England (outside London) to openly publish timetable data by the end of 2020 and fare, ticket and location data by January 2021.

In 2020, DfT launched the Bus Open Data Service (BODS) allowing operators to become 'early adopters' and now have four big operators publishing data onto BODS. Data consumers, including researchers and application developers, are now able to find and use this data online. Bus open data will support the innovation of new journey planning apps and has already been used for green research and urban planning.

A Reporting, Analytics and Archiving Service (RAAS) module will be released to provide historic punctuality reports based on location data to help operators meet statutory punctuality reporting and support compliance monitoring by DVSA.

Bus operators and local authorities in England must use this service to publish bus timetable data through the 'Publish bus data' service. Data consumers can now access information on timetables, followed by location and fares data during 2021 within the 'Find bus data' service.

To get in touch, email us at busopendata@dft.gov.uk. Follow us on Twitter @busopendata for updates.

Background information

Users and uses of these statistics

These statistics provide key information on trends in the bus sector. Within the Department for Transport they are used for:

- Ministerial briefing and to answer public enquiries;
- As background to policy development;
- Monitoring trends in the bus sector, for example in relation to accessible buses;
- The bus punctuality figures are used to monitor progress for the DfT business plan indicator related to the proportion of buses running on time (www.gov.uk/government/publications/input-and-impact-indicators); and
- By economists in modelling policy options.

Outside DfT known uses include:

- Passenger journeys figures are used as a measure of the overall health/state of the industry, for example by private research organisations, and are occasionally reported in the trade press;
- Local authorities may use these statistics to compare trends in their area with the national picture;
- These statistics have also provided background information for recent reports by the Transport Select Committee and Competition Commission;
- Bus fares data are used by the Office for National Statistics in calculating the Retail and Consumer Price Indices and in the National Accounts.

National Statistics

These statistics were designated as National Statistics in June 2012. The continued designation was confirmed in February 2013.

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs: https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/. For details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release: www.gov.uk/government/collections/bus-statistics

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

These statistics are derived from a number of sources, with the main source being the DfT annual Public Service Vehicle (PSV) survey of over 300 local bus operators which provides data on passenger journeys, vehicle miles, revenue and costs, and vehicles and staff. However, certain statistics (for example annual statistics on bus fares) are derived from smaller surveys of the larger bus operators, or from local authorities. Information on passenger journeys and bus mileage for London is provided by Transport for London.

Local Authorities

Local authority areas match the Travel Concession Authorities as set out in the concessionary travel publication, covering 90 areas: the 89 TCAs outside London and London.

Many of these statistics have been collected on a broadly comparable basis from operators for many years. However, following revisions to the methodology used to compile the published figures, 2004/05 is the earliest year for which figures are comparable on exactly the same basis.

This year's survey has been more difficult than usual due to the coronavirus and many of the respondents to our survey being forced to work from home or furloughed. We also ask for data for multiple questions, for example staff, as at 31st March, which this year occurred during the national lockdown and may have affected figures slightly.

Next update to bus statistics

Quarterly bus statistics for July to September 2020 will be released in December 2021. The next annual bus statistics will be published in Autumn 2021.

Improvements and changes have been made to several aspects of the data collection this year. The sampling methodology has been updated and now uses the Office for Traffic Commissioner admin database of bus service registrations as a starting point for identifying whether a PSV operator is a local bus company. Changes have also been made to the imputation process to limit how far back previous data points are used for imputation. The PSV survey uses imputation techniques to derive key figures for operators who were either not selected in the sample for that year, or who did not respond. On occasion, imputations for earlier years can be improved using directly-reported data for later years. Minor revisions to back-data can occur as a result, although trends are rarely affected substantively.

For the key indicators (passenger journeys and vehicle miles operated) the data provided by operators covers around 95% of the total figure, with the remainder imputed. This will also have an impact on previous year's data, where more up to date information is used to impute data, usually limited to the two preceding years and changes of under 1% to previously reported figures. In rare occurences we receive corrections to previous data which may change figures to a more significant level particularly at local authority level, including reallocations across local authority boundaries.

Comparison with other sources suggests that, at aggregate (national) level, the statistics provide a reasonably robust measure of levels and broad trends. However, figures representing smaller groups of operators and single year on year changes should be treated with caution as these are more susceptible to measurement errors (for example, an inaccurate return by an operator, or a change in an operator's method of producing the figures) which are more likely to even out at the national level. This has been more relevant in recent years as many companies have switched to ticketing machines and data solutions to record key data. As such regional, and particularly local authority level figures should be interpreted with caution. Local authority level data will change between boundaries and it is not always possible to backdate the changes. Further details of the data sources and methods used in the production of these statistics can be found in the Background Quality Report at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/buses-statistics-guidance.

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