



Annual Bus Statistics: Great Britain 2011/12

This statistical release presents the latest annual statistics on the local bus sector in Great Britain. Local bus services use public service vehicles to carry passengers paying separate fares over short distances (with stopping places less than 15 miles apart).

This publication covers passenger journeys, vehicle miles, vehicles operated and staff employed. The latest figures usually relate to the 2011/12 financial year. Most of the data are derived from the department's main annual survey of bus operators.



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Key findings include:

Passenger journeys

- There were 5.2 billion bus passenger journeys in Great Britain in 2011/12, a slight (0.6 per cent) increase on the previous year, with 4.7 billion of these journeys in England.
- The 2011/12 figures broadly show a continuation of recent trends, with patronage increasing in London and the south of England but falling elsewhere. Journeys in London now account for half of all bus passenger journeys in England.

Vehicle miles

- Bus vehicle miles in Great Britain fell slightly, by 1.3 per cent, between 2010/11 and 2011/12 with a 0.8 per cent fall in England.
- Mileage on services financially supported by local authorities in England outside London fell by 9 per cent over the same period.

Vehicles and staff

- Local bus operators in Great Britain operated 42 thousand buses and employed 124 thousand staff in 2011/12.
- The proportion of buses which are disability accessible or low floor designs continues to increase steadily, to 88 per cent for Great Britain in 2011/12.

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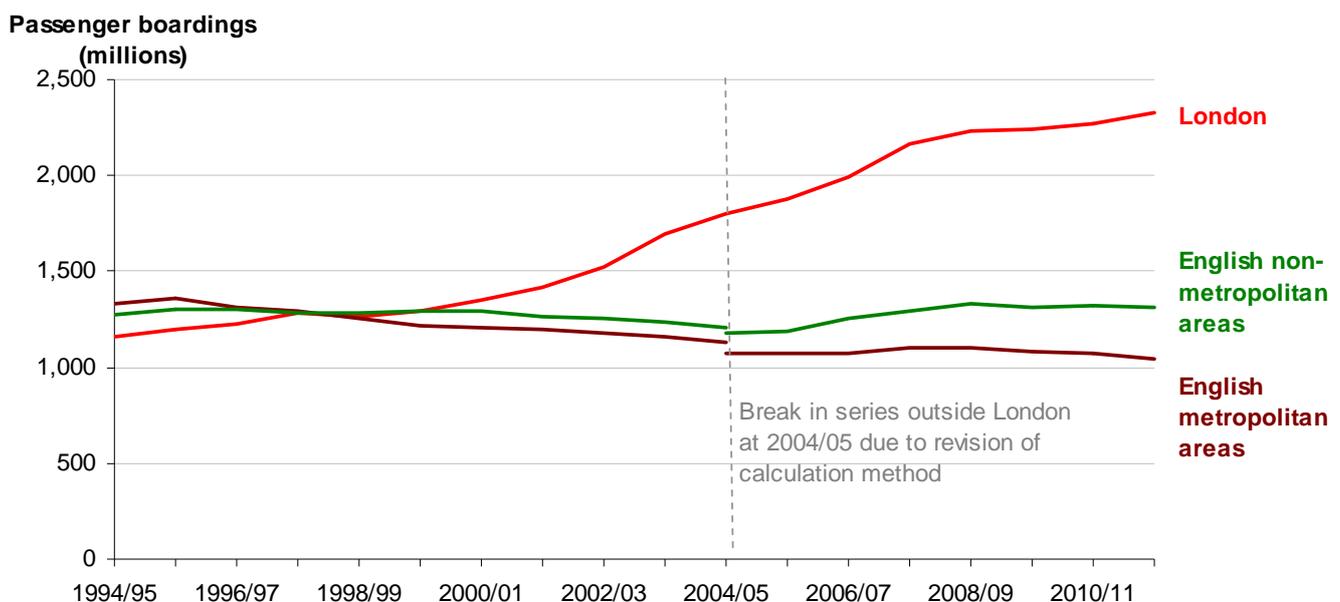
1. Bus passenger journeys

These figures count the number of passenger journeys on local buses, with each boarding of the bus counted as a separate journey. Local bus services are as defined above and include school services accessible to the general public. Figures for England are broken down into London, metropolitan areas and non-metropolitan areas. Metropolitan areas cover the six former metropolitan counties of Merseyside, Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire.

Recent trends in bus patronage

- Bus passenger journeys in Great Britain increased by 14 per cent between 2004/05 and 2008/09, reaching the highest total for 20 years. This was driven by growth of 24 per cent in London, (where public funding for buses has increased considerably from 2000 levels) and 13 per cent in English non-metropolitan areas. This period saw the introduction of the English National Concessionary Travel¹ Scheme which is likely to have contributed to the latter increase in particular.
- Since 2008/09 overall bus patronage in Great Britain has remained broadly flat. A continued, but slower, increase in London has been offset by decreases in other areas notably English metropolitan areas, Scotland and Wales (see chart showing trends for England).
- The latest figures, for 2011/12, show a broad continuation of recent trends, with 50 per cent of all bus journeys in England now being made in London.

Annual bus passenger journeys in England, from 1994/95 (Table BUS0103)



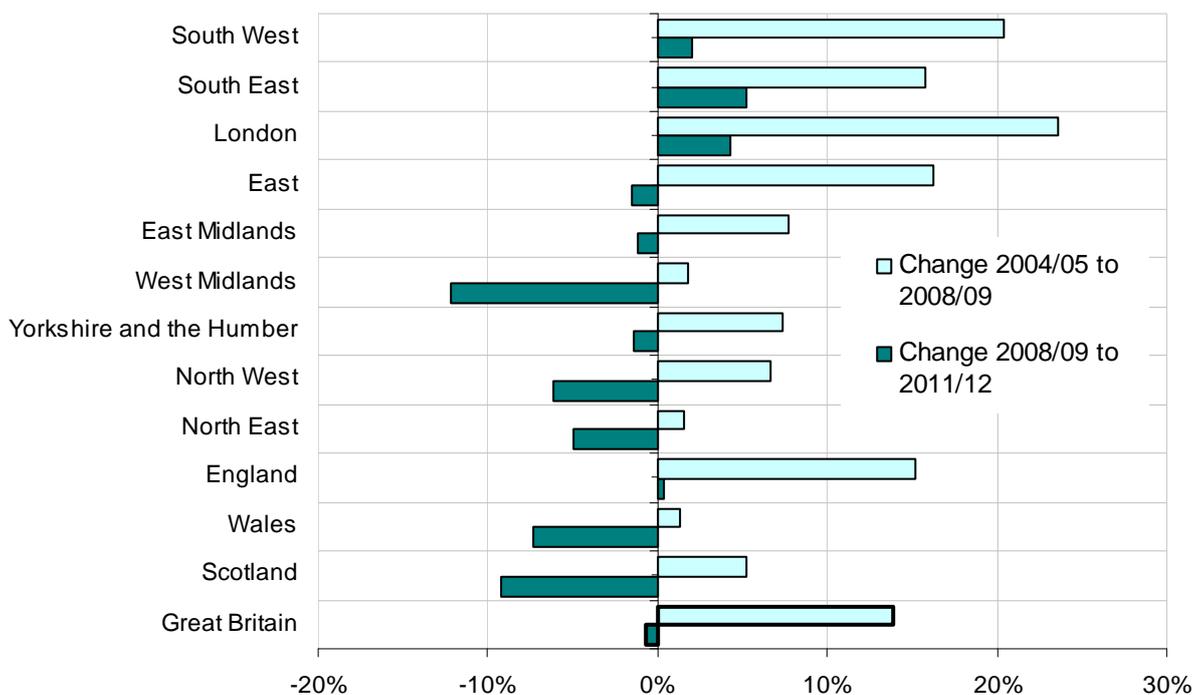
¹ This scheme extended the existing statutory minimum half fare concession for older and disabled people travelling on buses in their local area to a full fare (i.e. free) concession in 2006. The concession was further extended to free bus travel anywhere in England in 2008.

| Bus passenger journeys (billions) | 2004/05 | 2008/09 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | Change 10/11 to 11/12 |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------------|
| England | 4.05 | 4.66 | 4.66 | 4.68 | 0.5% |
| London | 1.80 | 2.23 | 2.27 | 2.32 | 2.4% |
| English metropolitan areas | 1.07 | 1.11 | 1.07 | 1.04 | -2.7% |
| English non-metropolitan areas | 1.18 | 1.33 | 1.32 | 1.31 | -0.3% |
| Scotland | 0.46 | 0.48 | 0.43 | 0.44 | 1.8% |
| Wales | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0.0% |
| Great Britain | 4.63 | 5.27 | 5.20 | 5.23 | 0.6% |

Regional variation

- The chart below illustrates the regional variations in bus patronage in recent years. Regions in the south of England showed the strongest growth in the period between 2004/05 and 2008/09, with patronage continuing to grow in London, the South East and South West after 2008/09 despite falling elsewhere.

Change in bus passenger journeys in Great Britain by region from 2004/05 (Table BUS0108)



- Bus patronage varies considerably between local authorities, and is generally higher in more urban areas. Within England outside London, Brighton and Hove and Nottingham have the highest number of bus journeys per head of population (168 and 164 respectively in 2011/12, compared to the England average, including London, of 89 journeys per head).

Concessionary journeys (including youth schemes)

Concessionary journeys² count the number of bus boardings made by elderly and disabled people under the statutory schemes in England, Scotland and Wales. These figures also include youth concessionary boardings in areas where discretionary schemes are offered.

- Concessionary journeys made up 35 per cent of all bus passenger journeys in Great Britain in 2011/12, compared with 32 per cent in 2007/08³. In England outside London, the number of concessionary journeys has increased (by 10 per cent) from 2007/08, with non concessionary journeys falling by 6 per cent over the same period (see table BUS0105).
- Within England, the proportion of bus journeys which were concessionary in 2011/12 was lowest in London (33 per cent) and slightly higher in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas (both 36 per cent), though over half the concessionary journeys in London are youth concessions⁴.
- Further statistics on concessionary travel covering pass use, expenditure and reimbursement of bus operators, are published separately by DfT (see related information section below).

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on bus passenger journeys can be found in the Bus Statistics web tables, table numbers BUS0101 to BUS0111.

2. Bus vehicle miles and occupancy

The following figures relate to mileage run on local bus services whilst carrying passengers, excluding any 'dead running' (for example mileage between the start and end of routes and the depot, or for driver training).

Recent trends in bus vehicle miles

- Overall vehicle mileage on local bus services in Great Britain has generally changed relatively little since the mid 1990s, with annual mileage run in each of the last 20 years ranging between 1.59 and 1.66 billion miles. Mileage in England has been between 1.30 and 1.36 billion miles over the same period.
- However, in recent years there has been a slight decline in mileage, of 3 per cent for Great Britain as a whole since 2008/09, with the greatest falls in Scotland (12 per cent) and Wales (7 per cent). Mileage in England fell 2 per cent over this period.
- Within England, between 2010/11 and 2011/12, the latest estimates suggest bus mileage fell by nearly 2 per cent in non-metropolitan areas, largely due to reductions in mileage on supported

² A concessionary journey is defined as one where the bus operator receives reimbursement from the local authority.

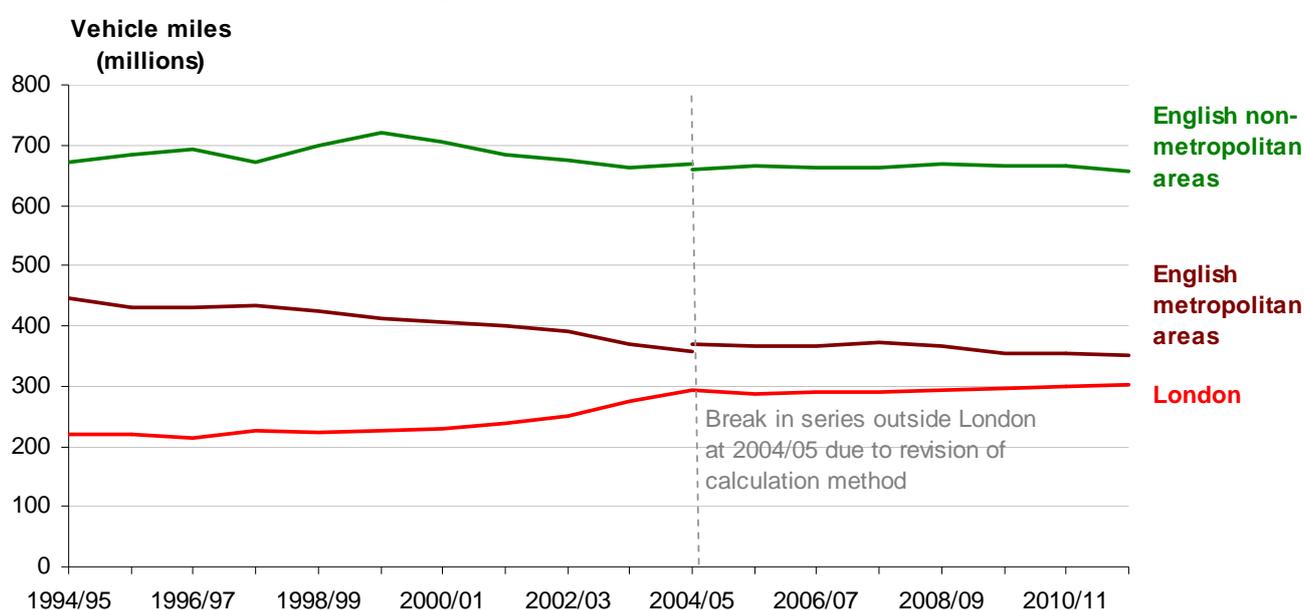
³ 2007/08 is the first year in which the number of concessionary journeys was reported.

⁴ Table BUS0821 shows number of elderly and disabled concessionary journeys within England by area type.

services (see below). Estimated mileage in metropolitan areas was 1 per cent lower than in 2010/11, whilst London bus mileage continued to grow slightly (by 1 per cent).

| Bus vehicle miles (billions) | 2004/05 | 2008/09 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | Change 10/11 to 11/12 |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------------|
| England | 1.32 | 1.33 | 1.32 | 1.31 | -0.8% |
| London | 0.29 | 0.29 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.8% |
| English metropolitan areas | 0.37 | 0.37 | 0.35 | 0.35 | -0.8% |
| English non-metropolitan areas | 0.66 | 0.67 | 0.67 | 0.66 | -1.5% |
| Scotland | 0.22 | 0.24 | 0.22 | 0.21 | -2.5% |
| Wales | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.07 | -5.8% |
| Great Britain | 1.62 | 1.65 | 1.61 | 1.59 | -1.3% |

Annual bus vehicle miles in England, from 1994/95 (Table BUS0203)



Mileage on local authority supported services

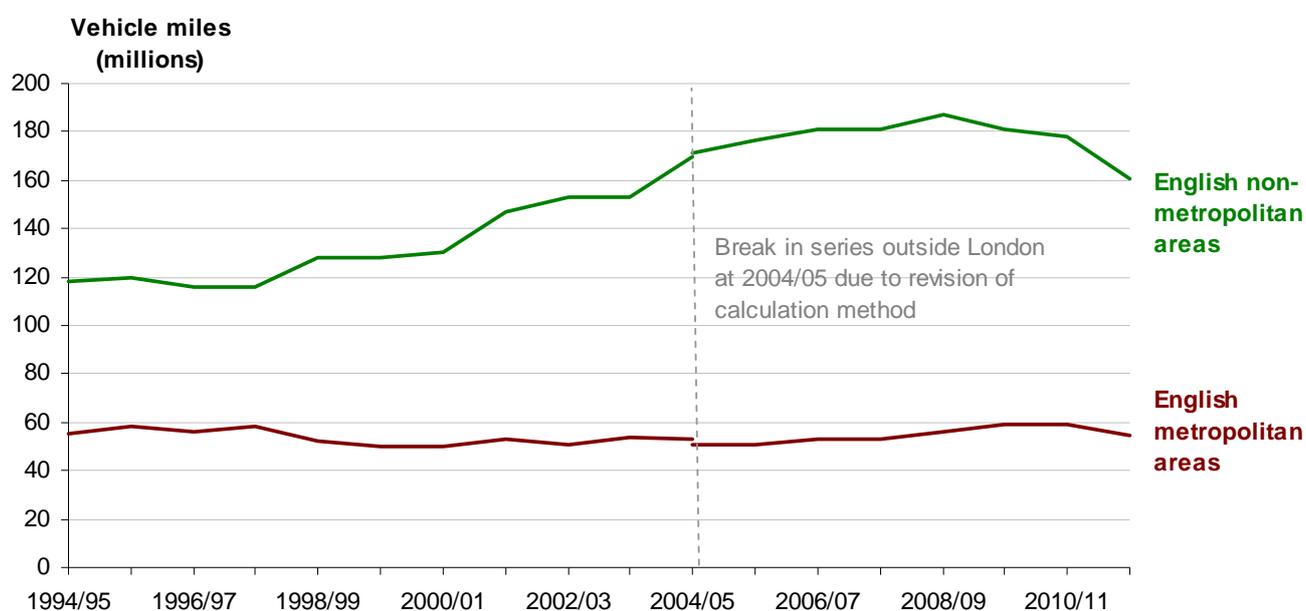
Local authority supported services are those where the bus operator receives payment from the local authority to run the service (as opposed to services provided on a purely commercial basis). Typically these are services which the authority considers socially necessary, but which may not be commercially viable.

- In 2011/12, an estimated 21 per cent of all bus mileage in Great Britain outside London was on local authority supported (rather than commercial) services, compared with 23 per cent in 2010/11. The proportion was 21 per cent in England outside London, 17 per cent in Scotland and 30 per cent in Wales.
- In England outside London, mileage on supported services in non-metropolitan areas increased steadily over the decade to 2008/09 but has since fallen, with a drop of 10 per cent in the latest year. Supported mileage in metropolitan areas has shown a flatter trend over the same period, but fell by an estimated 7 per cent between 2010/11 and 2011/12 (see chart).

- These patterns are likely to reflect to changes in local authority funding for buses. Formula Grant to local authorities in England outside London fell by 10 per cent for 2011/12 ⁵.

| | 2004/05 | 2008/09 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 10/11 to 11/12 |
|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Supported bus miles (millions) | | | | | |
| England outside London | 223 | 243 | 237 | 215 | -9.3% |
| English metropolitan areas | 51 | 56 | 59 | 55 | -7.2% |
| English non-metropolitan areas | 171 | 187 | 178 | 160 | -9.9% |
| Supported miles as % of total | | | | | |
| England outside London | 22% | 24% | 23% | 21% | |
| English metropolitan areas | 14% | 15% | 17% | 16% | |
| English non-metropolitan areas | 26% | 28% | 27% | 24% | |

Bus vehicle miles on local authority supported services: England outside London, annual from 1994/95 (Table BUS0203)



- Mileage on commercial (i.e. non-supported) services in England has remained broadly flat in recent years, but in 2011/12 was slightly (1 per cent) higher than in the previous year 2010/11 (see table BUS0205).

Passenger miles and bus occupancy

- Recent trends in bus passenger mileage have tended to mirror trends in patronage, as data from the National Travel Survey suggests that the average length of a bus journey has been relatively unchanged since 2004.

⁵ See www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/1112/grant.htm for details.

- In 2011/12, estimated average bus occupancy (passenger miles divided by vehicle miles) in Great Britain was 11.1. Within England, estimated average occupancy in London (19.3) was more than double the equivalent figure for England outside London (9.1).

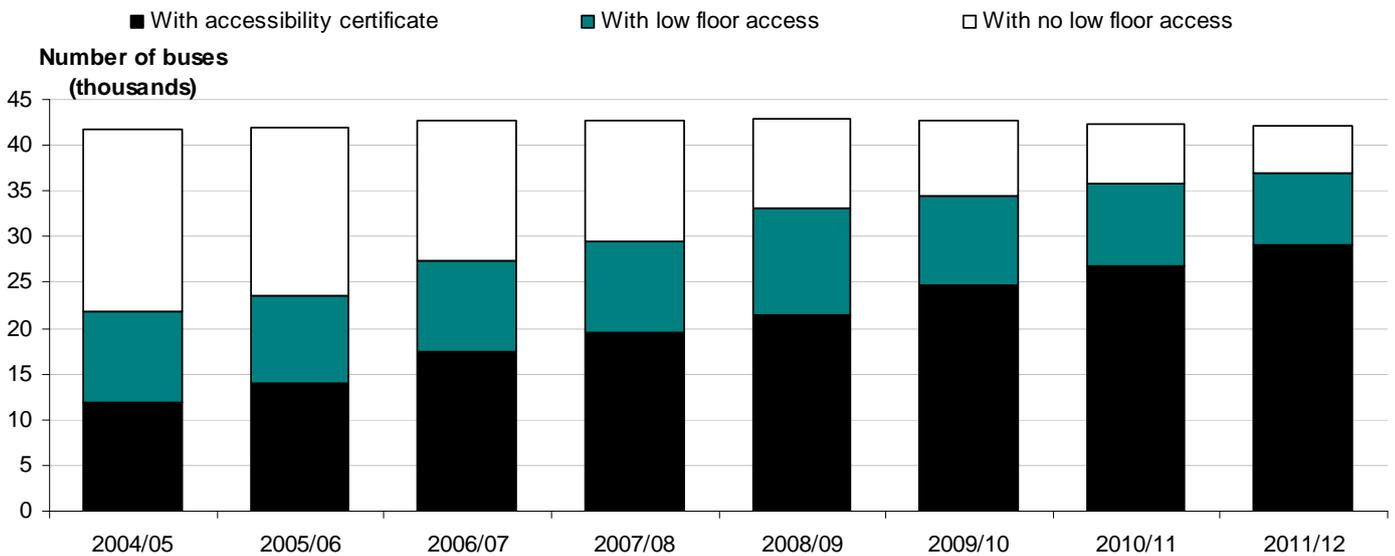
Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on bus vehicle miles and passenger miles can be found on the Bus Statistics web tables, table numbers BUS0201 to BUS0303.

3. Vehicles and staff

Vehicles operated by local bus operators

- In 2011/12, local bus operators⁶ in Great Britain operated 53 thousand public service vehicles, of which the majority (80 per cent, or 42 thousand) were buses and the remainder coaches and minibuses. These figures have varied little in recent years.
- The proportion of buses which are accessible has steadily increased in recent years (see chart). The Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) requires that all buses used for local services have an accessibility certificate by 2015⁷. In 2011/12, 69 per cent of all buses in Great Britain were issued with a certificate and a further 19 per cent had low floor access (but no certificate).

Disability accessible or low-floor buses: Great Britain from 2004/05 (Table BUS0603)



- The proportion of buses fitted with automatic vehicle location systems and CCTV has also increased considerably in recent years (see table). London buses are now almost fully

⁶ This means all operators operating some local bus services (as previously defined), even if they also operate other services which may include long distance coach services, private hire work or school buses operated under contract to the local authority which are not open to the general public.

⁷ See www.dft.gov.uk/publications/bus-coach-accessibility-faqs/ for further information about PSVAR.

equipped; outside London a higher proportion of buses are fitted in metropolitan than non-metropolitan areas.

| Percentage of buses having: | | London | English metropolitan areas | English non-met areas | England | Great Britain |
|------------------------------------------|---------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------|---------------|
| PSVAR certificate ⁷ | 2004/05 | 68% | 18% | 21% | 31% | 28% |
| | 2011/12 | 94% | 67% | 61% | 71% | 69% |
| Accessible (certificate or low floor) | 2004/05 | 93% | 49% | 42% | 56% | 52% |
| | 2011/12 | 99% | 93% | 81% | 89% | 88% |
| Automatic Vehicle Location | 2006/07 | 23% | 51% | 33% | 36% | 34% |
| | 2011/12 | 98% | 76% | 57% | 73% | 73% |
| CCTV | 2005/06 | 95% | 38% | 25% | 45% | 41% |
| | 2011/12 | 97% | 79% | 59% | 74% | 72% |
| Live ITSO ⁸ smart-card reader | 2011/12 | <i>n/a</i> | 52% | 54% | 53% | 60% |

Staff employed

- In 2011/12, local bus operators employed a total of 124 thousand full time equivalent staff in Great Britain, the majority of these (98 thousand) being drivers. These numbers have remained relatively unchanged since 2004/05.
- In the UK, bus and coach driver wages are lower than the average for all occupations, with median gross weekly earnings in 2011 of £430 compared to £498 for all occupations. Bus and coach driver weekly earnings have increased by 14 per cent in real terms since 2001 (compared to 2 per cent for all occupations), but fell 5 per cent between 2010 and 2011 (see table BUS0703).
- Bus and coach drivers worked 41.2 hours per week on average in 2011 in the UK, compared with an average of 37.5 hours for all occupations. This represents a reduction from 45.6 hours in 2001 (see table BUS0704).

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on bus staff and vehicles can be found in the Bus Statistics web tables, table numbers BUS0601 to BUS0704

⁸ ITSO is an organisation which sets a common technical standard for smart ticketing. See www.itso.org.uk/ for further details.

4. Other topics

Revenue, costs and government support

- Statistics on bus operating revenue and costs and government support for the bus industry to 2011/12 will be published in December 2012.

Bus fares

- Average bus fares paid by passengers in England increased by 33 per cent between March 2007 and June 2012, with a greater increase in metropolitan areas (40 per cent) than in London (31 per cent) and in non-metropolitan areas (28 per cent increase). This compares with an 18 per cent increase in the all items retail prices index (RPI), which means that bus fares have increased in real terms over this period.
- Comparing June 2012 with June 2011, there was an increase in bus fares of 6.5 per cent in England (5.4 per cent in London, 6.8 per cent in metropolitan areas and 7.6 per cent in non-metropolitan areas). The all items retail prices index increased by 2.8 per cent over this period (see tables BUS0405 and BUS0415).
- Bus Service Operators Grant, a central government subsidy to bus operators based on fuel consumption, was cut by 20 per cent in England in April 2012. The recent fare increases may reflect some operators anticipating the effect of this reduction.

Bus punctuality

- In 2011/12, an estimated 82.7 per cent of non-frequent bus services in England ran on time (defined as between 1 minute early and 5 minutes 59 seconds late). This represents an increase from 79.4 per cent in 2007/08⁹.
- Frequent services do not operate in all areas. However, the proportion of non-frequent buses on time varies by local authority. In 2011/12 the proportion ranged from 64 per cent (Darlington) and 95 per cent (Gloucestershire).

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on bus support, fares, costs and revenue can be found on the Bus Statistics web tables, table numbers BUS0401 to BUS0504.

Detailed statistics on bus punctuality can be found in tables BUS0902 and BUS0903

⁹ Trends over time should be interpreted with caution as they can be affected by changes in methods used or reflect random variability arising from the nature of the data collection

5. Related statistics

These statistics present the key annual trends in the bus sector. Information on the mode share of buses, and other modes of public transport, can be found in Transport Statistics Great Britain.

- Modal comparisons: www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/tsgb-2011-modal-comparisons/
- Public transport: www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/tsgb-2011-public-transport/

Further information on **concessionary travel**, including pass use, spend and concessions offered, is included in the Department's official concessionary travel statistics:

www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/concessionary-travel-2010-11-and-2011-12/

Information on characteristics of **bus users** is available from the Department's National Travel Survey:

www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/national-travel-survey/

Information on personal injury road accidents involving bus and coaches is included in the Road accidents and safety statistical series: www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/road-accidents-and-safety/

For links to further sources of bus statistics, please refer to the main series page for buses:

www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/buses/

6. 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.dft.gov.uk/publications/dft-business-plan-indicators-impact-03/); and
- by economists in modelling policy options (for example related to reform of bus subsidy).

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.

Further details of the uses of these statistics, and a summary of feedback from users, can be found at:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/buses/bus-statistics-feedback.pdf>

7. 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 700 bus and coach 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 boardings and bus mileage for London is provided by Transport for 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.

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, or above, 90 per cent of the total figure, with the remainder imputed. Comparison with other sources suggests that, at aggregate (national) level, the statistics are likely to 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 required) which are more likely to even out at the national level. Regional, and particularly local authority, level figures should be interpreted with caution.

Further details of the full range of data sources and methods used in the production of these statistics can be found in the notes and definitions document (see link below).

8. Background notes

1. The web tables give further detail and regional breakdowns of the key results presented in this statistical release and statistics on other related topics. They are available here:

www.dft.gov.uk/statistics?post_type=table&series=buses

2. Full guidance on the sources and methods used to compile these statistics can be found here:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/buses/bus-notes-definitions.pdf>

3. 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.

4. Details of Ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here: <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/buses/pre-release.pdf>

5. The next Quarterly Bus Statistics release will be published on Thursday 13th December. It will contain estimates for 2012 Q3 (July to September) together with annual figures for costs, revenue and Government support for buses. The next Annual Bus Statistics will be published in Autumn 2013.