

# Bus Statistics: Concessionary Travel

## Statistical Release

15 November 2012



Department  
for Transport

## Concessionary Travel: England 2011/12 and 2012/13

This Statistical Release presents information on Concessionary Travel on buses in England during 2011/12 and 2012/13 (financial years). The main focus of this release is free bus travel for older and disabled people, but it includes information about concessions on other transport modes and concessions for young people.

Most of the data are derived from the Department's survey of Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs) in England, undertaken in Summer 2012. Figures for 2010/11 and 2011/12 are outturn and figures for 2012/13 are forecasts provided by local authorities.

***This release was updated in December 2012 to include additional data relating to total expenditure on concessionary travel from the Department for Communities and Local Government.***

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### Key findings include:

- In 2011/12, there were around 9.8m older and disabled concessionary bus passes in England, with an average of 109 bus journeys per pass per year.
- Pass numbers in England are forecast to increase by 3 per cent in 2012/13, according to forecasts by Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs).
- Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs) paid £898m in 2011/12 to reimburse bus operators for concessionary journeys by older and disabled people, a fall of 2 per cent in real terms from 2010/11.
- The **average reimbursement per concessionary journey** in 2011/12 was 84 pence, a fall of 3 pence per journey in real terms, compared to 2010/11. Non-metropolitan areas reported the largest decrease in reimbursement per journey - 7 pence per journey between 2010/11 and 2011/12.
- In 2012/13, 87 of the 89 TCAs outside London offer some discretionary travel concessions, most commonly concessions for companions to disabled people and extensions to the statutory travel time period.
- In 2012/13, in all but 5 TCAs in England, some travel concession is available for young people, offered by either the TCA or on a commercial basis by bus operators.

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# 1. Concessionary Travel by older and disabled people

The statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) allows for free travel for older and disabled people on local bus services anywhere in England, between 0930 and 2300 during weekdays and anytime at weekends and bank holidays. At local level, the scheme is administered by Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs) – county councils, unitary authorities and Integrated Transport Authorities. Some TCAs offer concessions in addition to the statutory ENCTS scheme, such as free or reduced travel before 0930 or on other transport modes.

In London, the statutory concession for London residents covers the whole London Local Transport Network, including underground and trams.

## Concessionary bus passes and journeys

- There were around 9.8m older and disabled concessionary passes<sup>1</sup> in England in 2011/12, an increase of around 140,000 since 2010/11. London accounted for around 12 per cent of passes in 2011/12.
- Around 9.0m (92 per cent) of passes in 2011/12 were for older people, corresponding to 80 passes per hundred eligible older persons.
- According to TCAs' own forecasts, the number of older and disabled passes in England will rise by 3 per cent between 2011/12 and 2012/13, with the largest increase in London (7 per cent). Disabled pass numbers are forecast to rise faster than older passes between 2011/12 and 2012/13, which reflects the gradual increase in the age of eligibility for older passes.
- Outside London, there were an average of 89 concessionary journeys per pass per year in 2011/12<sup>2</sup>. In London, there were 250 journeys per pass per year. This includes all concessionary bus journeys made by older and disabled pass holders – those offered under the statutory ENCTS scheme and discretionary journeys offered by individual TCAs, such as journeys outside the statutory time period.
- Journeys per pass are forecast to decrease in all areas in 2012/13, according to TCA forecasts. In most area types, this is due to an **increase in passes**, rather than a decrease in total concessionary journeys.

Data relating to concessionary passes and journeys is in tables <a href="#">bus0820</a> and <a href="#">bus0821</a> of the web tables. The underlying TCA-level pass data (where supplied) is in <a href="#">bus0890</a> .
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<sup>1</sup> Note that pass numbers are as reported by TCAs and are known to include a small number of inactive passes, issued to people who are now deceased or no longer resident in the area, but which remain on TCA databases.

<sup>2</sup> These averages are derived by dividing total journeys by total passes. In practice, concessionary journeys are unlikely to be evenly distributed across all passes. In addition, pass holders resident in one area type may be making passenger journeys in another area type – e.g. journeys by non-London pass holders form part of London's total journeys, but the figures available do not disaggregate these.

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## Expenditure on concessionary travel

- Outside London, TCAs spent £810m on concessionary travel in 2011/12, a real-terms decrease of 5 per cent since 2010/11 and close to the level of expenditure seen in 2008/09. The largest decrease in expenditure was amongst non-metropolitan TCAs, which saw a 6 per cent decrease between 2010/11 and 2011/12, in real terms.
- London's expenditure on concessionary travel was around £299m in 2011/12, an increase of 11 per cent in real terms compared to 2010/11.

Data relating to total expenditure is in tables [bus0811 to bus0812](#) of the web tables.

- In 2011/12, 82 per cent of English TCAs' expenditure on concessionary travel was on the statutory ENCTS concession, with the remainder spent on discretionary concessions, such as non-bus modes or concessions for young people. The proportion spent on statutory concessionary travel is largely unchanged from 2010/11 and is forecast to be similar for 2012/13.
- Metropolitan areas spent 22 per cent of concessionary travel expenditure on discretionary concessions, a much higher proportion than in non-metropolitan areas (8 per cent). This reflects the higher prevalence of additional transport modes, such as light rail and trams, in metropolitan areas. These modes fall outside the statutory bus concession, but they may be offered as an additional non-statutory discretion in the areas where they run.

Data relating to the proportion of expenditure on statutory concessionary travel is in table [bus0810](#) of the web tables.

## Reimbursement of bus operators for concessionary journeys by older and disabled people – costs and methods

The expenditure figures in the previous section cover **all** expenditure on concessionary travel, including administration and pass production costs. The data in the following section relates specifically to the **cost of reimbursing bus operators** for carrying older and disabled concessionary passengers.

- In 2011/12, TCAs paid £898m (in 2011/12 prices) to bus operators in reimbursement for carrying older and disabled concessionary passengers, a reduction of 2 per cent in real terms compared to 2010/11. Reimbursement is set to increase by 2 per cent to £912m in 2012/13, according to TCA forecasts. This reimbursement covers **all concessionary bus journeys** made by older and disabled people – both statutory and discretionary journeys.
- The average reimbursement cost per concessionary journeys fell from 87 pence to 84 pence between 2010/11 and 2011/12 (in 2011/12 prices), a real-terms decrease of 3 per cent. TCA forecasts suggest an increase to 85 pence per journey for 2012/13.
- **Non-metropolitan areas** saw the largest decrease in reimbursement cost per journey in 2011/12, decreasing 7 per cent in real terms compared to 2010/11. Costs in non-London

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**metropolitan areas** decreased by 2 per cent, whilst London saw an **increase** of 5 per cent over the same period.

- The Department for Transport publishes guidance on concessionary travel reimbursement for TCAs. At least **66 TCAs** (81 per cent of those who responded to the survey) are using this guidance, either as a starting point for negotiating with bus operators, or for calculating the reimbursement due in 2012/13.
- At least **50 TCAs** (62 per cent of survey respondents) have a fixed term arrangement for reimbursement with at least one of the bus operators in their area.

Data relating to reimbursement costs and methods is in tables [bus0830](#) and [bus0831](#) of the web tables.

## Discretionary travel concessions

- In each of the years 2010/11 to 2012/13, at least 87 (98 per cent) of the 89 TCAs outside London were offering some sort of discretionary travel concessions over and above the statutory minimum ENCTS.
- The most commonly offered discretionary concessions are free or reduced travel for companions to disabled people (57 TCAs in 2012/13), extensions to the statutory time period (71 TCAs) and concessions on on-demand or community transport (54 TCAs), including taxi tokens, travel vouchers, Dial-a-Ride and other community transport schemes.
- There have been some **small reductions** in the number of TCAs offering certain discretions. For example, in 2012/13, 71 TCAs offered an extension to the statutory time period, down from 77 in 2010/11.

Data relating to discretionary concessions is in tables [bus0840](#) and [bus0841](#) of the web tables.

## 2. Travel concessions for young people

Concessions for young people fall into two categories – those offered by TCAs and those offered by bus operators on a commercial basis. One or both of these types of concessions may be available to young people in a given TCA.

- In 28 of the 89 TCAs outside London (around one third), a youth concession is offered by the TCA. In 80 TCAs outside London (around 90 per cent), a commercial concession is offered by at least one bus operator in the area.
- There are 5 TCAs where there is neither a commercial nor a TCA concession available to young people.

Data relating to youth concessions is in table [bus0842](#) of the web tables.

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## 3. Related information

### Background to concessionary travel in England

A statutory bus concession for older and disabled people<sup>3</sup> has been in place since 2001. This initially provided for a minimum half-fare concession for older and disabled people travelling on buses within their local authority of residence, extended to a full fare (i.e. free) concession in 2006. In 2008, the concession was extended further to cover free local bus travel between 0930 and 2300 to older and disabled people **anywhere** in England. This statutory concession is referred to as the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS).

At local-level, concessionary travel schemes are administered by Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs). Prior to 2011, TCAs were lower tier local authorities (e.g. district councils), but this moved to upper tier in April 2011 (e.g. county councils). TCAs are required by law to reimburse bus operators for concessionary journeys made under the ENCTS. TCAs may also offer their residents discretionary enhancements over and above the statutory scheme, including free or reduced travel outside the statutory time period or on other transport modes.

In London, the statutory concession for London residents also covers off-peak travel on the whole London Local Transport Network, including tram and underground travel. The scheme is administered by London Councils, on behalf of the 32 London Boroughs.

More details, including a full history of the concessionary travel policy, can be found in the Notes and Definitions document that accompanies this release.

### Other statistics on concessionary travel

The Department for Transport's **National Travel Survey** collects some information about concessionary travel, including the demographic characteristics of pass holders. These statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts06-age-gender-and-modal-breakdown>

Figures for concessionary bus journeys are also collected via the Department for Transport's Survey of Public Service Vehicle Operators (**PSV Survey**). This data, which includes youth concessionary journeys is a time series back to 2007/08 and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus01-local-bus-passenger-journeys>

Data relating to concessionary travel on **light rail and tram systems**, including journeys and operator revenue, can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/light-rail-and-tram-statistics>

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<sup>3</sup> From 2002, concessionary travel passes were available to all those aged 60 and above. Since April 2010, the eligible age has been increased, to gradually re-align with State Pension age. Passes are available to disabled people of any age who meet the eligibility criteria, which are listed here: <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/guidance-for-travel-concession-authorities-on-the-england-national-concessionary-travel-scheme/travelconcession.pdf>

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Data relating to a range of other aspects of bus travel, including overall patronage and operator finance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/bus-statistics>

## 4. Users and uses of these statistics

Within the Department for Transport, these statistics are used to understand the impact of changes to the concessionary travel scheme and reimbursement guidance, for ministerial briefing and to answer public enquiries. Outside the Department, users include TCAs and others with an interest in concessionary travel, such as campaign groups, bus operators and specialist transport press.

### Request for feedback

We welcome any feedback on these statistics, to ensure future releases best meet user needs. Feedback can be provided by email to [bus.statistics@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:bus.statistics@dft.gsi.gov.uk).

## 5. Strengths and weaknesses of the data

### Response rate and imputation

These statistics are derived from the two most recent DfT surveys of Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs) undertaken in Summer 2011 and Summer 2012, covering the 89 TCAs outside London and London Councils. Of these 90, 76 (84 per cent) responded to the survey in 2011 and 80 (89 per cent) in 2012, although not all respondents answered all questions in full. The response rate achieved is comparable with that achieved in other DfT surveys of local authorities.

The data was imputed for item and survey non-response using data from other authorities within the survey, concessionary journey data from the DfT survey of PSV operators, and information from TCA websites (for discretionary and youth concessions). For 2011/12 and 2012/13, around 10 per cent of the totals for passes and reimbursement were imputed and 7 per cent of total journeys.

### Revisions

In light of information received in the most recent survey, some revisions have been made to the figures for 2010/11. For example, where a TCA did not respond to survey in 2011 but did respond in 2012, we have used the 2012 survey as a basis for imputing figures for 2010/11. In addition, a small number of TCAs reported that the figures supplied last year for pass holders, journeys and expenditure were inaccurate and as such, these have been revised. A minor error was discovered in the methodology for calculating total reimbursement costs for non-metropolitan areas in 2010/11, which has been corrected as part of the revisions. The combined impact of these revisions on the totals presented was minor – less than 3 per cent in all cases.

### TCA-level data versus national-level totals

A number of TCAs reported weaknesses in specific aspects of the data they supplied. Most commonly reported were inaccuracies in the split between statutory and discretionary expenditure on concessionary travel. Some TCAs were unable to separate pre-0930 journeys or companion journeys from the statutory expenditure figure supplied. Others excluded scheme administration



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costs.

Inaccuracies were also reported in number of passes, with some TCAs stating that the figures from their pass databases may include inactive passes held by deceased people or those who have moved away from the area. In addition, as TCAs operate different policies on pass entitlement for those who qualify under both age and disability criteria, the figures for disabled passes are not necessarily comparable between TCAs.

These issues are unlikely to have a substantial effect on the overall national totals reported here, but they will affect the robustness of some TCA-level figures. The **TCA-level figures** for pass numbers are presented in table bus0890, where these were supplied by TCAs. These are **not official statistics** and should be used with the caveats above in mind, particularly where the “passes per hundred older people” measure exceeds 100, implying that some inactive passes have been counted.

### Further information

Further information on the response rates and imputation methods used can be found in the Notes and Definitions document accompanying this release (the link is provided in the next section).

## 6. Background notes

1. The web tables give further detail of the key results presented in this statistical release and statistics on other related topics. The Concessionary Travel tables are numbered starting **bus08**. They are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus08-concessionary-travel>
2. The accompanying Notes and Definitions document, including details of the imputation methods used to derive the national-level totals, is here, along with a copy of the questionnaire sent to TCAs: <https://www.gov.uk/technical-guidance-for-transport-stats>
4. Tables bus0830, bus0811 and bus0812 adjust for inflation using the HM Treasury GDP Deflator, as 27 September 2012, which can be found here: [www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/data\\_gdp\\_fig.htm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/data_gdp_fig.htm)
5. These figures have not been assessed by the UK Statistics Authority, and so are not National Statistics. However, they have been produced in compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.
6. Details of Ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/technical-guidance-for-transport-stats>
7. The next Concessionary Travel Statistics are due to be published in Autumn 2013.