



Department for Transport

Annual bus statistics: England 2020/21

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](#).



The number of local bus passenger journeys in England fell by 2.5 billion or 61% to 1.57 billion in the year ending March 2021.

In this publication

Factsheet	2
Effect of the coronavirus pandemic	3
Summary	5
Passenger journeys	6
Bus mileage	9
Vehicles	11
Financial outlook	14
Bus and coach staff	16
Bus punctuality	17
Walking distance to bus stops	18
Passenger satisfaction	19
National Travel Survey	20
Other DfT data sources	23
Background information	24

The fall can largely be attributed to nationwide movement restrictions introduced throughout 2020/21 in response to the coronavirus pandemic. More detailed analysis of the effects of the coronavirus pandemic is shown from page 3.

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

Bus mileage in **England** decreased by 16% when compared with 2019/20. Bus mileage was less severely impacted than passenger journeys, largely due to the COVID-19 bus service support grant (CBSSG) which was introduced to keep services running that may have otherwise operated at a loss, or not operated at all.

Local bus passenger journeys



Vehicle miles on local bus services



Factsheet - 2020/21

Passenger journeys (BUS0103)

Passenger journeys on local bus services: England



54% of journeys occurred in London



0.72 bn

journeys in England outside London



0.86 bn

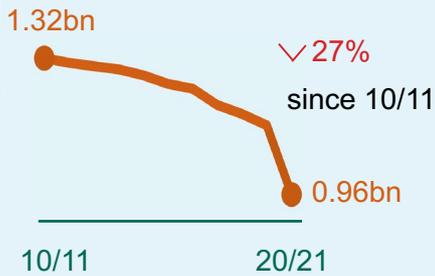
journeys in London

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

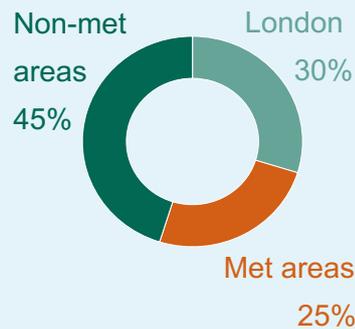


Bus mileage (BUS0203)

Vehicle miles on local bus services: England



30% of mileage occurred in London



89%



overall satisfaction with the journey in 2019

64%



satisfaction with value for money (fare-payers) in 2019

Bus fleet (BUS06 tables)

52%

Met Euro VI emissions standards

2% were zero emission

79%

were diesel engine (excl hybrid)

49%

provided audio visual information



32,600 buses used by local operators in England

Of which...



29% were in London



95% had CCTV



98% had an AVL device



27% had free WiFi



88% were enabled for payment by contactless bank card



94% of buses in England outside London were ITSO smart enabled

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

Effect of the coronavirus pandemic

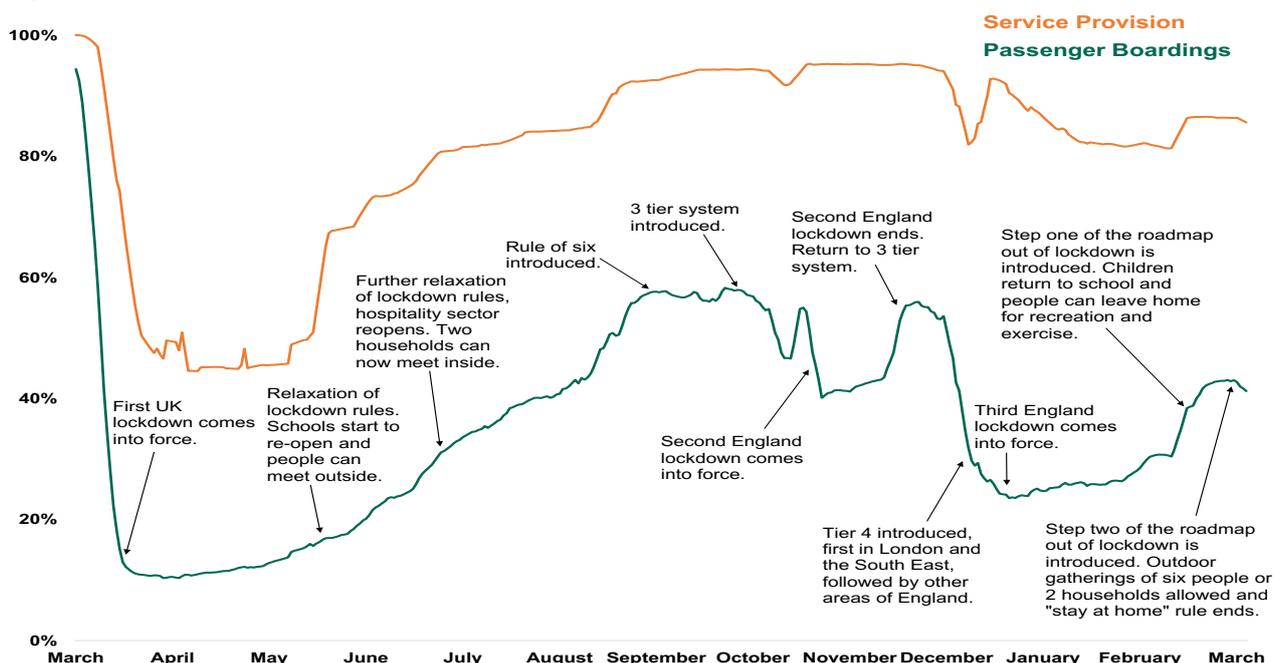
Daily passenger boardings and service provision

Data provided by Ticketer showed that during the first UK lockdown (March 2020), passenger boardings in England excluding London fell to approximately 10% of those on the same day of the January reference week. As restrictions were eased passenger boardings increased, peaking at approximately 55% when children returned to school in September 2020.

During the second English lockdown (November 2020) the decrease in passenger boardings was less severe, falling to approximately 42% of those on the same day of the January reference week. The application of Tier 4 restrictions to large parts of England during December 2020 and the subsequent third English lockdown in January 2021 had a larger impact, with passenger boardings falling to approximately 27% of those on the same day of the January reference week.

Following an initial decrease between March and June 2020, service provision remained consistently high. The introduction of the COVID-19 bus service support grant (CBSSG) is thought to have played a large part in this alongside the return of children to schools in September.

Chart 1: 7 day average of passenger boardings and service provision in England, excluding London, compared to the same day in the 3rd week of January 2020: March 15th 2020 to March 31st 2021



Ticketer

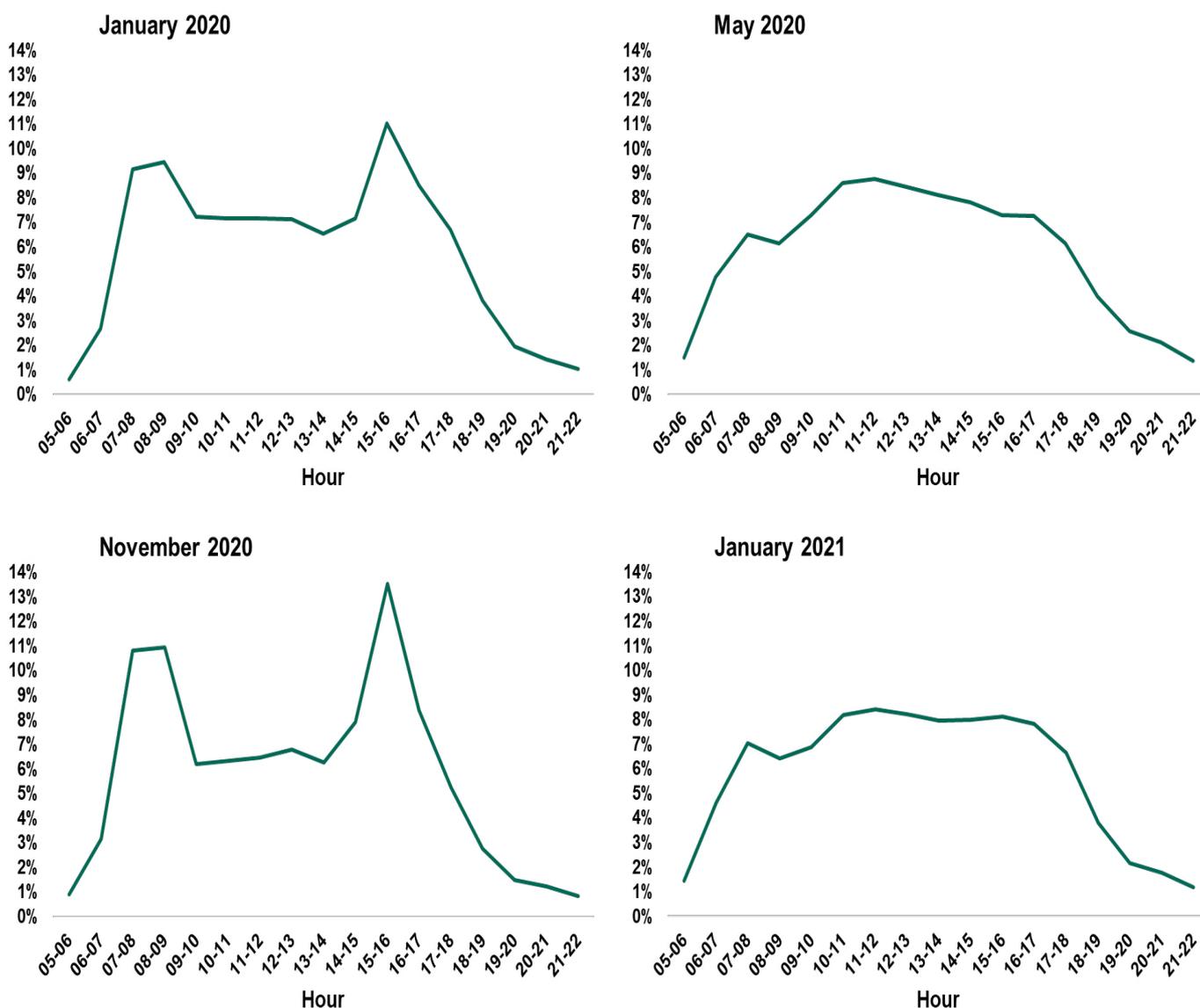
Daily passenger boardings and service provision compared to the January 2020 reference week (3rd week of January 2020) have been provided by Ticketer, one of the largest providers of Electronic Ticketing Machines (ETMs) in the UK. It is thought that, outside of TfL, West Midlands National Express, and Stagecoach, Ticketer is used by around 70% of operators. We are confident that these figures are robust enough to indicate overall trends at England outside of London level. Passenger boardings will include physical ticket sales, as well as smart cards, QR tickets, and where the driver counts passengers (such as school runs). Service provision represents numbers of services run by an operator for a specific vehicle, direction and driver. A service that has been cancelled would not be included. A figure of 100 means the same level as that seen on the same day the reference week. A figure higher than 100 shows an increase. A figure less than 100 shows a decrease.

Daily passenger boardings by time of day

As well as impacting on overall passenger boardings, the introduction of movement restrictions also affected the distribution of passenger boardings throughout the day in England excluding London.

Chart 2 shows that in January 2020 passenger boardings were at their highest during the peak times of 7-10am and 3-6pm. During the first UK lockdown (represented by the May 2020 graph below) the distribution shifted, with passenger boardings at their highest in the middle of the day. During the second English lockdown (November 2020), in which schools remained open, passenger boardings were again at their highest during peak times, however a higher percentage of passengers travelled during the peak hours than in January 2020. During the third English lockdown, with schools closed the pattern again shifted, with passenger boardings at their highest in the middle of the day.

Chart 2: Distribution of daily passenger boardings by time of day in England, excluding London, second Tuesday of the month



Summary

Table 1 summarises the annual figures for bus passenger journeys and mileage for the 2020/21 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, 2019/20 to 2020/21 (tables [BUS0103](#) and [BUS0203](#))

	Passenger journeys		Vehicle mileage	
	2020/21 figures in billion / billion miles and change compared with 2019/20			
London	0.86	↓ 59%	0.29	↓ 2%
English metropolitan areas	0.32	↓ 62%	0.24	↓ 16%
English non-metropolitan areas	0.40	↓ 65%	0.43	↓ 23%
England outside London	0.72	↓ 64%	0.67	↓ 21%
England	1.57	↓ 61%	0.96	↓ 16%

Concessionary travel

Total concessionary journeys (elderly or disabled, and youth concessions) made up **31%** (491 million passenger journeys) of all local bus passenger journeys in England. In England outside London, **26%** of journeys were elderly or disabled concessionary journeys, nearly twice the share as in London. 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 in this release on the local bus sector in England provide information for monitoring trends in usage and provision for a mode of transport used for about 49% 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. Concessionary passengers are either older or disabled people (free to travel anywhere in England since April 2008) or young people in local authorities where such discretionary travel schemes exist. More detailed statistics on concessionary travel are published separately by DfT and available online.

Passenger journeys

England

In 2020/21, 1.57 billion passenger journeys were made by local bus in England, down 2.5 billion journeys or 61% when compared with 2019/20.

Chart 3 shows the trend in local bus journeys in England between 1982 and 2020/21. 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 steep fall in journeys in the last year is thought to be because of movement restrictions introduced throughout the year to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Chart 3: Local bus passenger journeys in England, 1982 to 2020/21
([table BUS0103](#))

Passenger journeys on local bus services (billion)



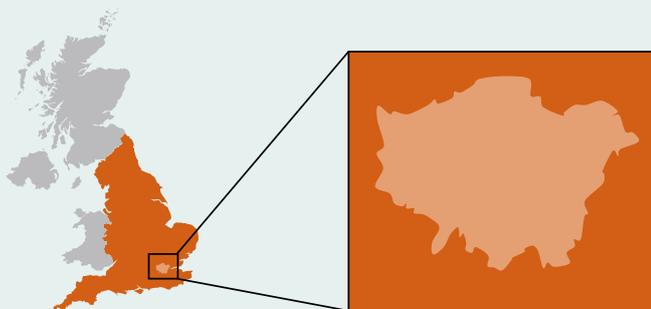
What is a bus passenger journey?

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 [here](#). Information on passengers are estimated using a smaller sample size than the annual statistics.

54% of journeys occurred in London



London

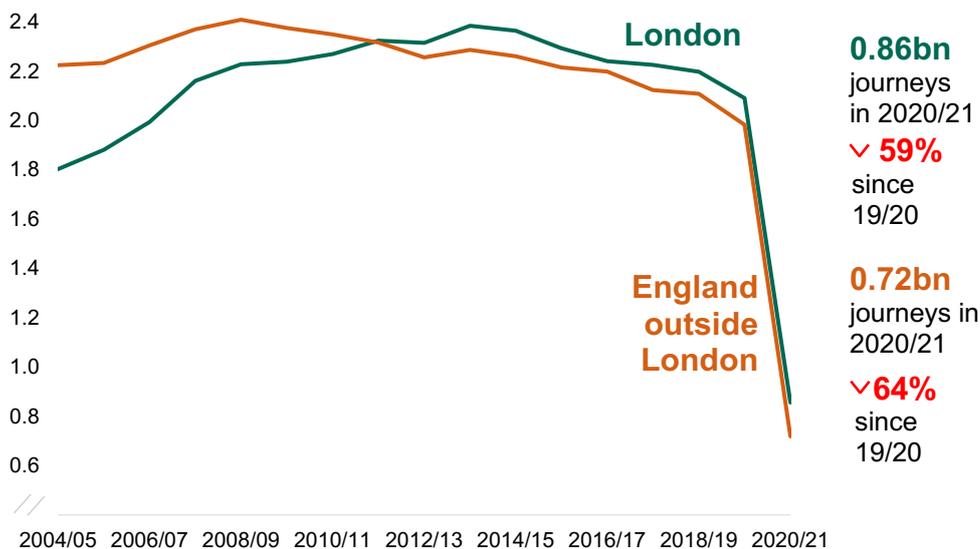
Passenger journeys in London accounted for over half of all passenger journeys made by local buses in England in 2020/21. There were 0.86 billion passenger journeys made by local bus in London in 2020/21, a decrease of 59% compared with 2019/20 (see [chart 4](#)). Before 2012/13, bus use in London increased every year since 1998/99.

England outside London

In 2020/21, 0.72 billion passenger journeys were made by local bus in England outside London, down 64% when compared with 2019/20. 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 4](#)).

Chart 4: Local bus passenger journeys in England outside London and London, 2004/05 to 2020/21 ([table BUS0103](#))

Passenger journeys on local bus services (billion)



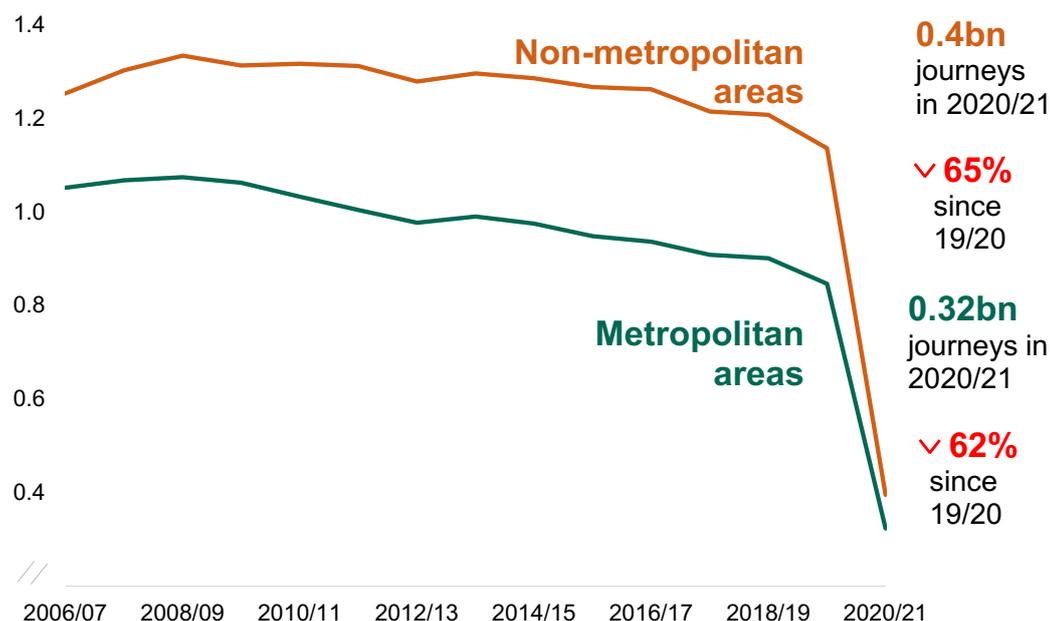
2004/05 2006/07 2008/09 2010/11 2012/13 2014/15 2016/17 2018/19 2020/21

Metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas

In metropolitan areas, there were 0.32 billion passenger journeys, a decrease of 62% from 2019/20. In non-metropolitan areas, there were 0.4 billion passenger journeys, a decrease of 65%.

Chart 5: Local bus passenger journeys in England outside London by area type, 2006/07 to 2020/21 ([table BUS0103](#))

Passenger journeys on local bus services (billion)



2006/07 2008/09 2010/11 2012/13 2014/15 2016/17 2018/19 2020/21

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.

England outside London

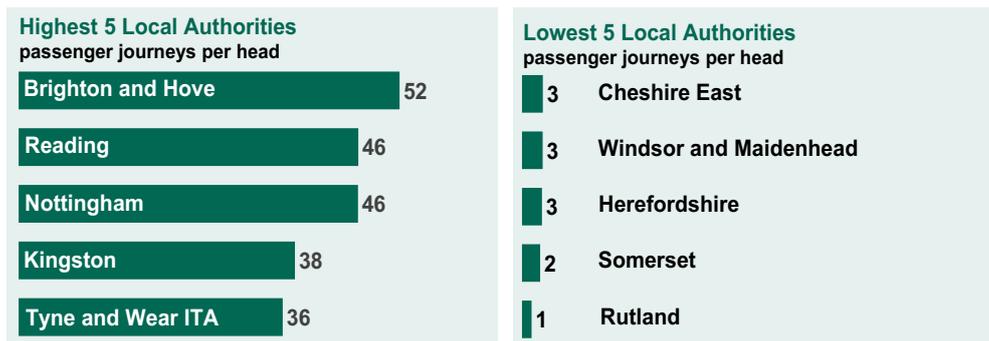
Figures for England outside London can be disaggregated further into metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. Metropolitan areas are the six former metropolitan counties: Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire. Non-metropolitan areas cover the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

Bus use by local authority

The two tables in **chart 6** of bus passenger journeys per head of population in 2020/21 in England outside London show the difference in bus use across local authorities. In general, 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 15 in 2020/21, down from 54 in 2009/10. There were falls in all local authorities between 2019/20 and 2020/21 with coronavirus the main factor in this.

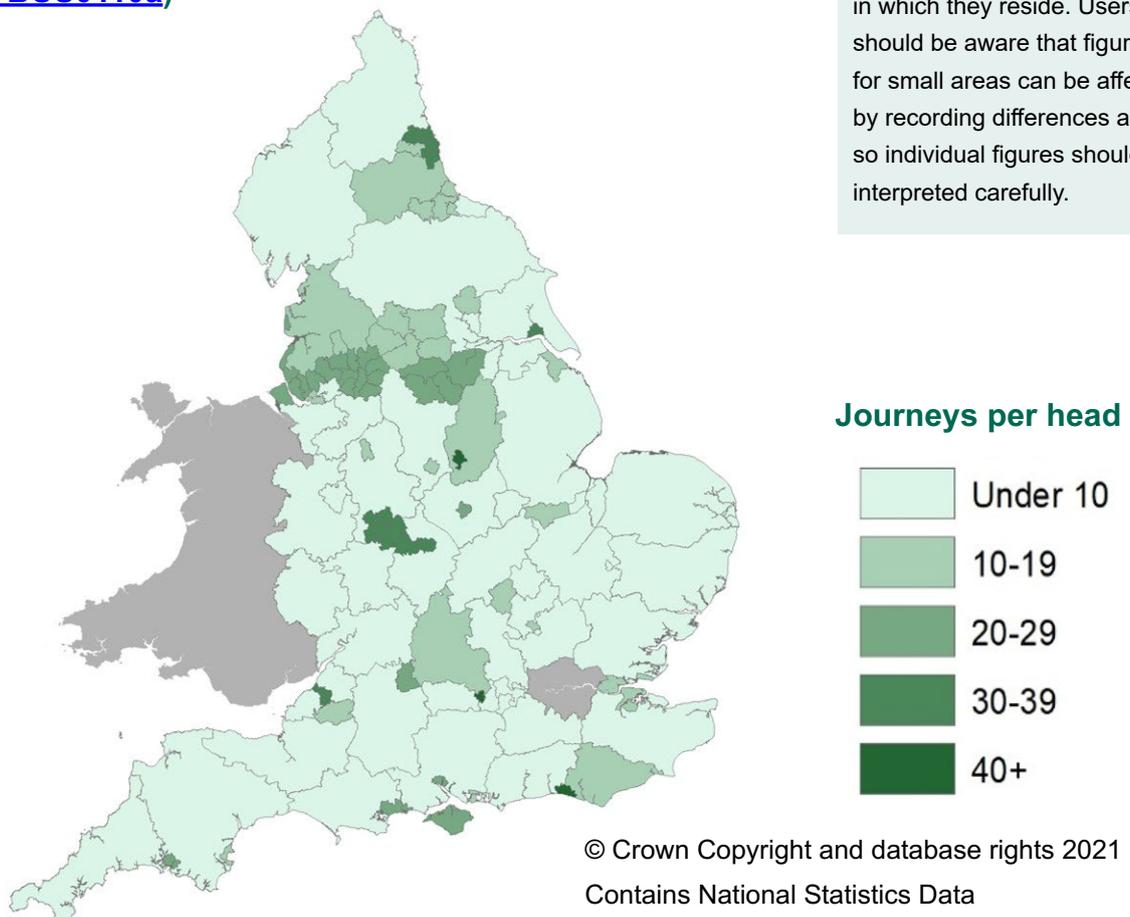
Chart 6: Local bus passenger journeys per head by local authority highest and lowest 5: England outside London, 2020/21 ([table BUS0110a](#))



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, 2020/21 ([table BUS0110a](#))



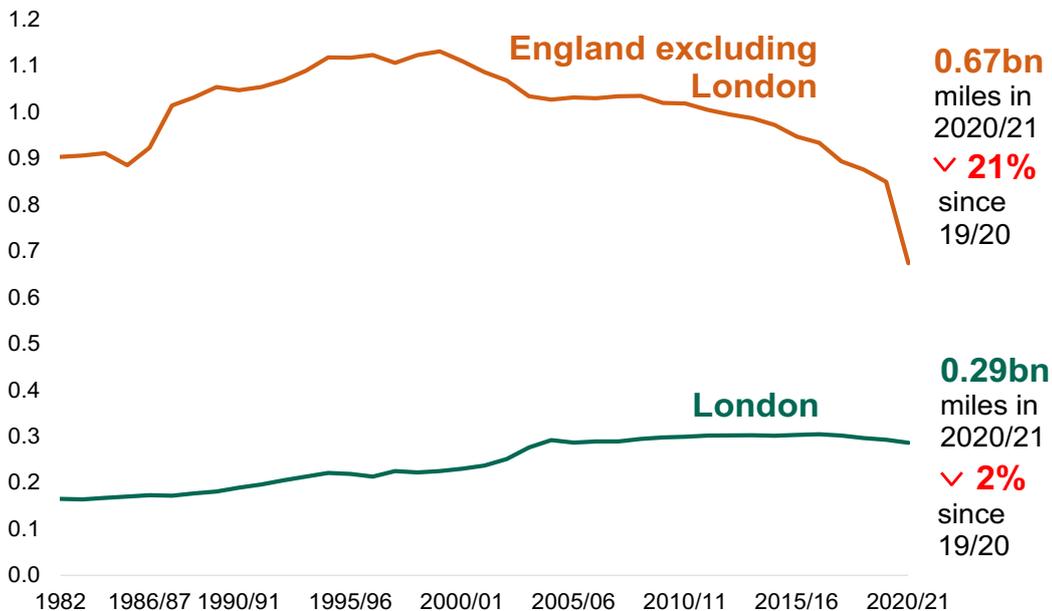
Bus mileage

In 2020/21, 0.96 billion bus service miles were run in England, a decrease of 16% when compared with 2019/20 (see [chart 7](#)). In England outside London, bus mileage, decreased by 21% when compared with 2019/20. In London, bus mileage decreased by 2% compared to 2019/20 and has changed very little since 2004/05, remaining in the range of 285-300 million vehicle miles.

Bus mileage was less severely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic than passenger journeys, largely due to the COVID-19 bus service support grant (CBSSG) which was introduced to keep services running that may have otherwise operated at a loss, or not operated at all.

Chart 7: Vehicle miles on local bus services by area type: England, 1982 to 2020/21 ([table BUS0203](#))

Vehicle miles on local bus services (billion)



About bus mileage

Bus mileage is an indicator of the level of service provision. 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.

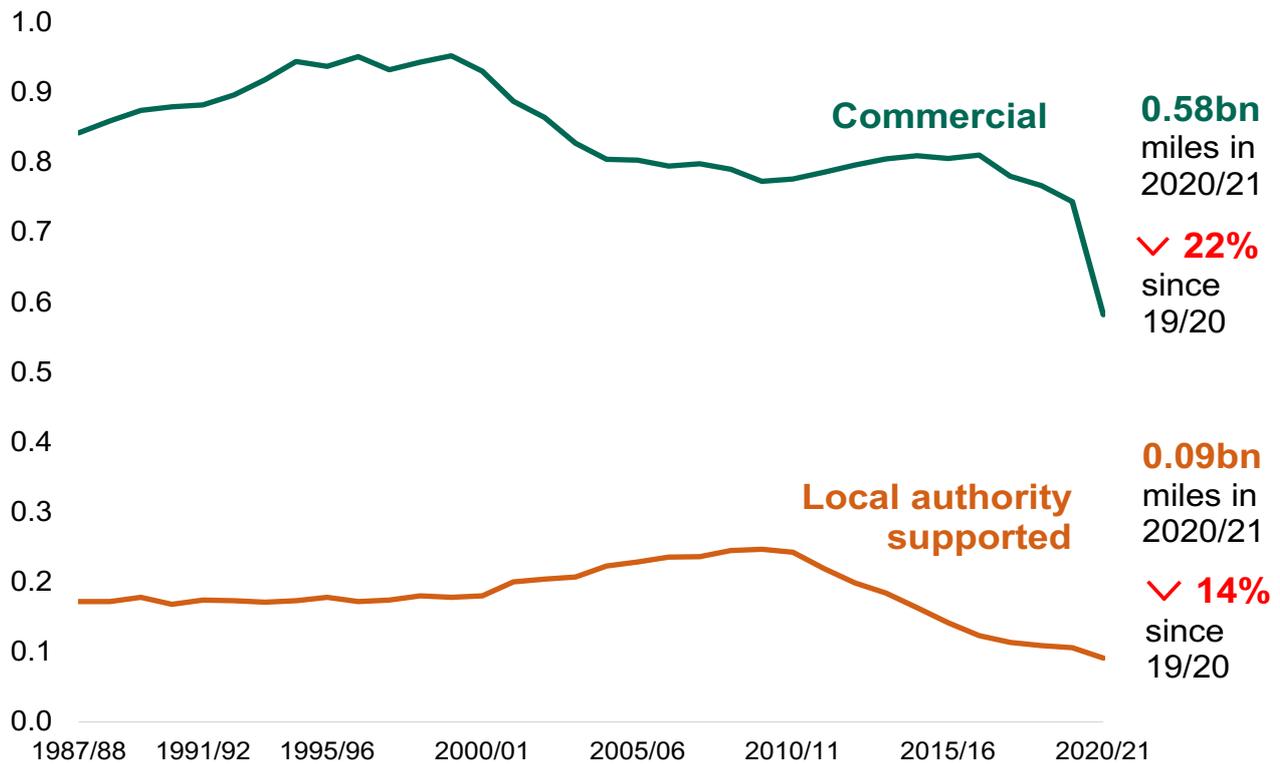
Commercial and local authority supported bus mileage

In England outside London bus mileage has declined by 34% since 2004/05. This has been driven by a decrease of 59% in local authority supported mileage, in particular in non-metropolitan areas. Although commercial mileage increased by 0.8% from 2004/05 to 2016/17, it decreased slightly in the following 3 years before decreasing by 22% over the year to 2020/21. This latest decrease is largely due coronavirus pandemic.

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 8](#) shows the decrease in supported mileage since 2009/10 and it is now 13.6% of total mileage. The chart also shows the increase in commercial mileage to 2014/15 and a fall in the last few years.

Chart 8: Vehicle miles on local bus services by service type: England outside London, 1987/88 to 2020/21 ([table BUS0205](#))

Vehicle miles on local bus services (billion)



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 2020/21.

Summary



32,600 buses used by local operators in England in 2020/21

Of which...



29% were in London



95% had CCTV



18% had charging points



27% had free WiFi



88% were enabled for payment by contactless bank card



94% of buses in England outside London were ITSO smart enabled



99% had been issued with an accessibility certificate



52% met Euro VI emission standards



79% were diesel engines (excl. hybrid)



98% had an AVL device



49% Provided audio visual information

Bus fleet

The number of buses used by local bus operators in England has risen slightly by 0.5% from 32,500 in 2019/20 to 32,600 in 2020/21. 29% of buses were in London (see [chart 9](#)). The average age of a bus in England in 2020/21 was 8.5 years and 99% of all buses had been issued with an accessibility certificate.

Chart 9: Proportion of buses used by local bus operators by area type: England, March 2021 ([table BUS0602](#))



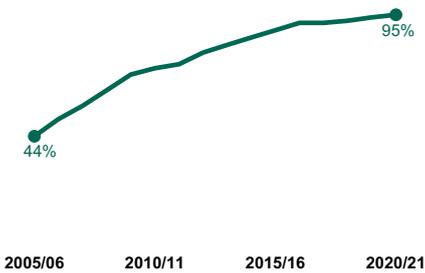
Accessibility regulations

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 10: Percentage of buses fitted with CCTV, AVL, Audio Visual and EMV smart enabled: England, 2020/21 compared with previous years

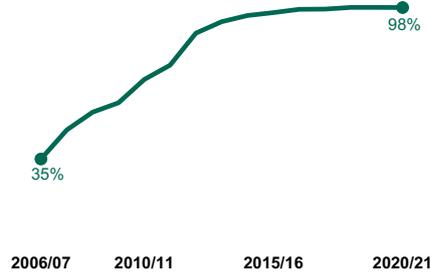
CCTV

([table BUS0604](#))



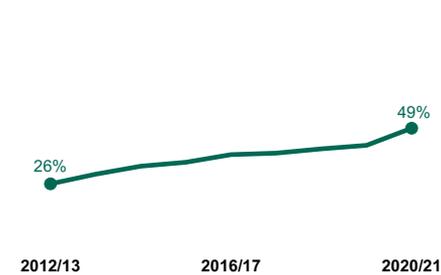
Automatic vehicle location

([table BUS0606](#))



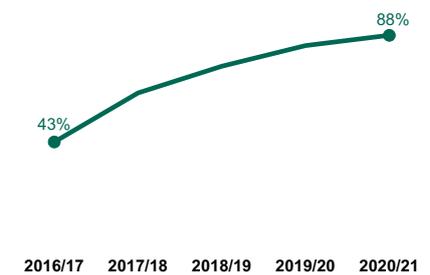
Audio Visual information

([table BUS0610](#))



EMV smart enabled buses

([table BUS0607](#))



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 the last 15 years, the provision of CCTV and Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) devices on buses has greatly improved. In 2020/21, 95% of buses used by local operators in England were equipped with CCTV, up from 44% in 2005/06. Almost all buses were also fitted with an AVL device (98% of buses in England, compared with 35% in 2006/07). Of the buses in England with an AVL device in 2020/21, 99% of AVL devices were being used to monitor punctuality and 95% used the AVL device to provide real time service information to customers.

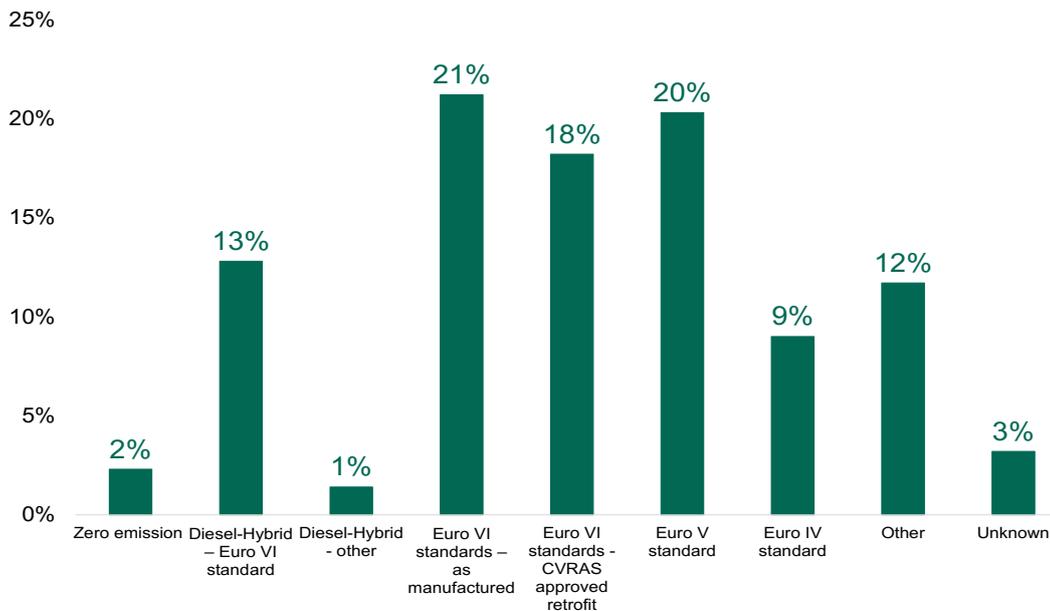
In 2020/21, 27% of buses in England had free WiFi, down from 31% the year before. 88% were EMV smart card enabled (or mobile phones emulating these e.g. Android Pay or Apple Pay) up from 84% in 2019/20 (see **chart 10**). In 2020/21 94% of buses used by local bus operators in England outside London were ITSO smart enabled for payment, up from 25% in 2010/11. 81% of buses were enabled for both ITSO and EMV.

In 2020/21, 49% of buses provided Audio Visual information to passengers. However, this total varies greatly in different parts of the country. 97% of buses in London provide Audio Visual information, while only 30% of buses in England outside London provided Audio Visual information. The figure for England outside London has risen every year since 2012/13 when it was 7%. In 2020/21 38% of buses in England used the Audio Visual information system to provide route/ direction, next stop and diversion information to passengers.

Bus fuel type and emissions

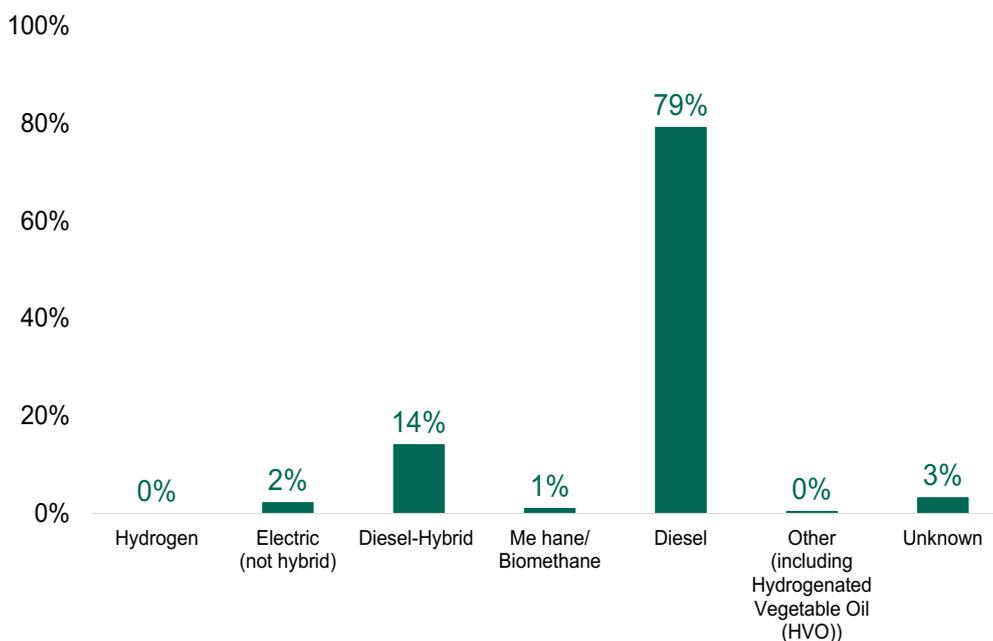
In 2020/21 52% of buses in England met the latest Euro VI emissions standards and a further 2% of buses were zero emission. 20% and 9% of buses met older Euro V and Euro IV standards, respectively. London had higher emissions standards than the rest of England with 91% meeting Euro VI standards ([chart 11](#)).

Chart 11: Percentage of local buses by Emissions standards in England, 2020/21 ([table BUS0609](#))



79% of all buses are diesel fuel engined. A further 14% were diesel-hybrid engine and 2% were electric ([chart 12](#)).

Chart 12: Percentage of local buses by fuel type in England, 2020/21 ([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

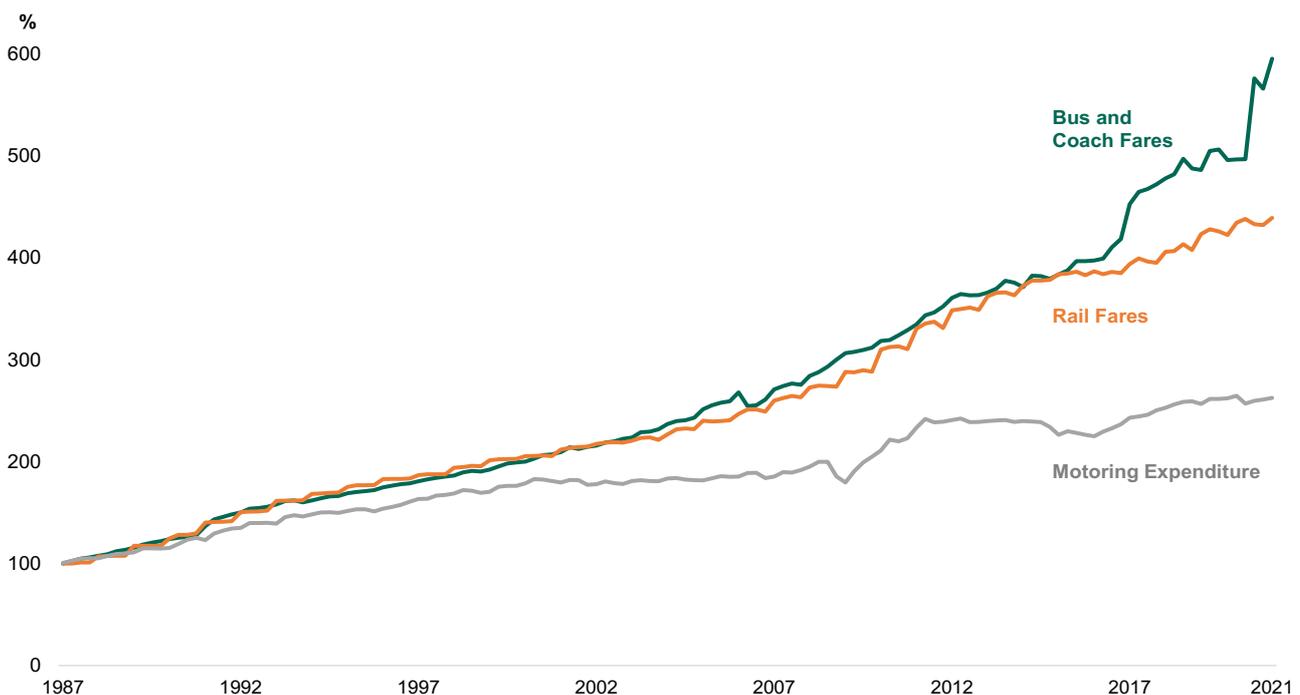
In the year to March 2021, local bus fares in England increased by 1.7%, faster than the annual all items Consumer Prices Index rate of inflation (0.7% increase), meaning bus fares have risen in real terms. The increase in local bus fares in England was largely driven by a 3.3% increase in London. In England outside London, local bus fares increased by 0.3%. Local bus fares in England increased by 80% between March 2005 and March 2021. Over this period bus fares have risen at a faster rate in metropolitan areas (96%) than in non-metropolitan areas (75%) and London (73%). The all items Consumer Prices Index (CPI) has increased by 44% over the same period. See [quarterly releases](#) for more detail.

Quarterly Bus Statistics Release

We currently publish 4 quarterly releases on bus statistics, containing information on fare changes and provisional estimates of the number of passenger journeys. These can be found from the bus statistics [homepage](#).

Retail Price Index (RPI) figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) show that at March 2021 average bus and coach fares have increased by 496% since 1987, compared to 340% for rail fares and 163% for motoring costs. It should be noted that these figures do also include coach fares which tend to see a seasonal trend for price rises in summer and December. This has contributed to some of the increases observed in the index at times when local bus fares have remained fairly constant, for example the large increases in 2017 and 2020.

Chart 13: Retail Price Index for bus and coach fares, rail fares and motoring expenditure, UK, quarterly since March 1987, (ONS series [DOCX](#),[DOCW](#),[CHBK](#))



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).

Data for government support comes from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC). Only provisional data has been published as at 3rd November 2021 and there were 66 local authorities who had not submitted their revenue outturn (RO) return one month after the deadline. Due to this it is not currently possible to produce estimates for public transport support and concessionary travel reimbursement. We plan to publish updated tables at a later date once final revenue outturn data has been published by DLUHC (currently scheduled for December).

Operator revenue

Due to the unavailability of estimates for public transport support and concessionary travel reimbursement outlined above, it is not currently possible to produce estimates of operating revenue for local bus services in 2020/21. In 2019/20 the total estimated operating revenue for local bus services in England was £5.2 billion and passenger fare receipts made up the largest proportion of operating revenue: £3.2 billion or 61% of operating revenue. In 2020/21 passenger fare receipts decreased by 60% to £1.3 billion.

Operator costs

In England outside London, between 2019/20 and 2020/21, operator costs for local bus services decreased from £3.27 billion to £2.96 billion in real terms (see [chart 14](#)). Operator costs have been falling since a high of £3.66 billion in 2009/10, however the decrease was slightly faster in 2020/21 due to effects of the coronavirus pandemic. A more detailed index of bus industry cost is compiled by the [Confederation of Passenger Transport](#).

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.

Types of revenue for operators

Fare receipts: on and off bus fares

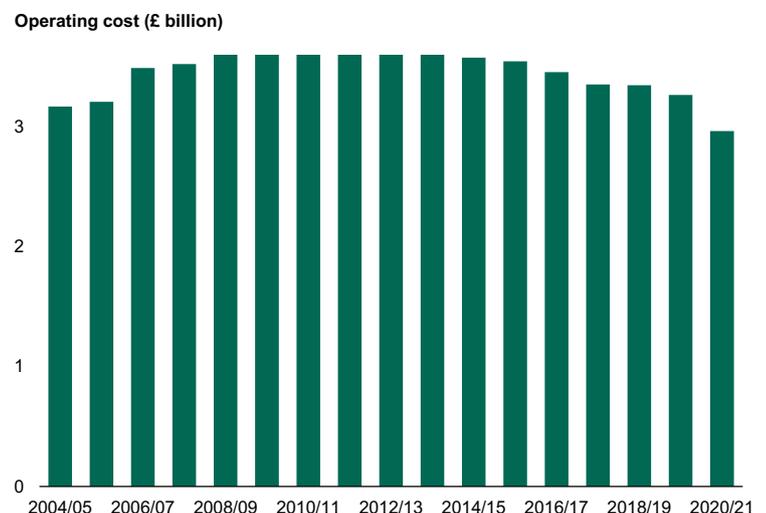
Public transport support: payments from local authorities, mostly for running supported services

Concessionary reimbursement: paid by local authorities for carrying concessionary passengers

BSOG: fuel duty rebate from DfT.

Other sources of income, including CBSSG excluded.

Chart 14: Operating cost for local bus services: England outside London, 2004/05 to 2020/21 (2020/21 prices) ([table BUS0406b](#))



Bus and coach staff and drivers

Bus staff

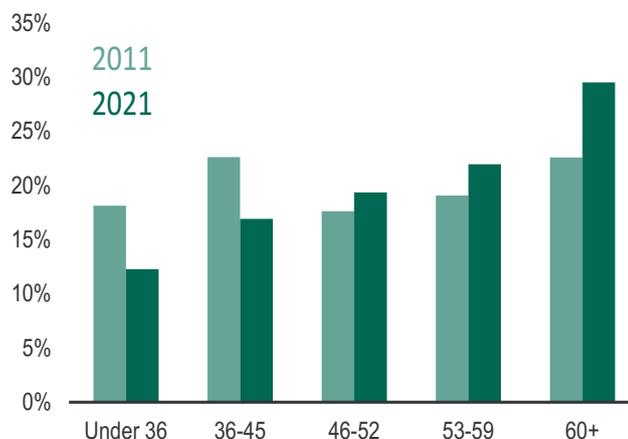
Local bus operators in England employed an estimated 95 thousand full-time equivalent staff, including maintenance and admin staff, as at March 2021 (see table [BUS0701\(area\)](#)). This was 3% lower than the 2020 figure and is based on PSV survey figures.

Figures from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings in 2020 state that bus drivers work on average 39.0 hours a week, more than the national average of 36.9, and earn £441 a week, below the national average of £479.

The Labour Force Survey indicated 84% of bus and coach drivers were men in 2021. The LFS also indicated 78% of drivers were white, most were employees (96%) and most worked full time (82%)

The average age of bus and coach drivers in 2021 was 56, higher than 10 years before, 48 in 2011. Over the 10 years from 2011 to 2021 there was an overall increase in the proportion of drivers aged 60 or over, accounting for 30% of drivers in 2021.

Chart 15: Age range of bus and coach drivers, England, 2011 compared with 2021 (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 2021, 96% 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.

96%

Of operators require drivers are trained in disability awareness

100%

Of all drivers and on bus staff are trained in disability awareness

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 2021 responses.

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

% of bus drivers



84%



16%

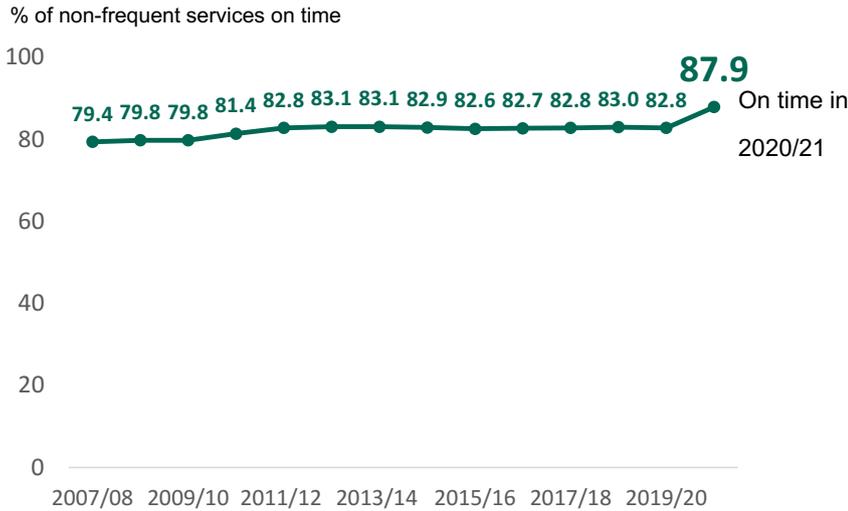
Staff disability training background

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](#).

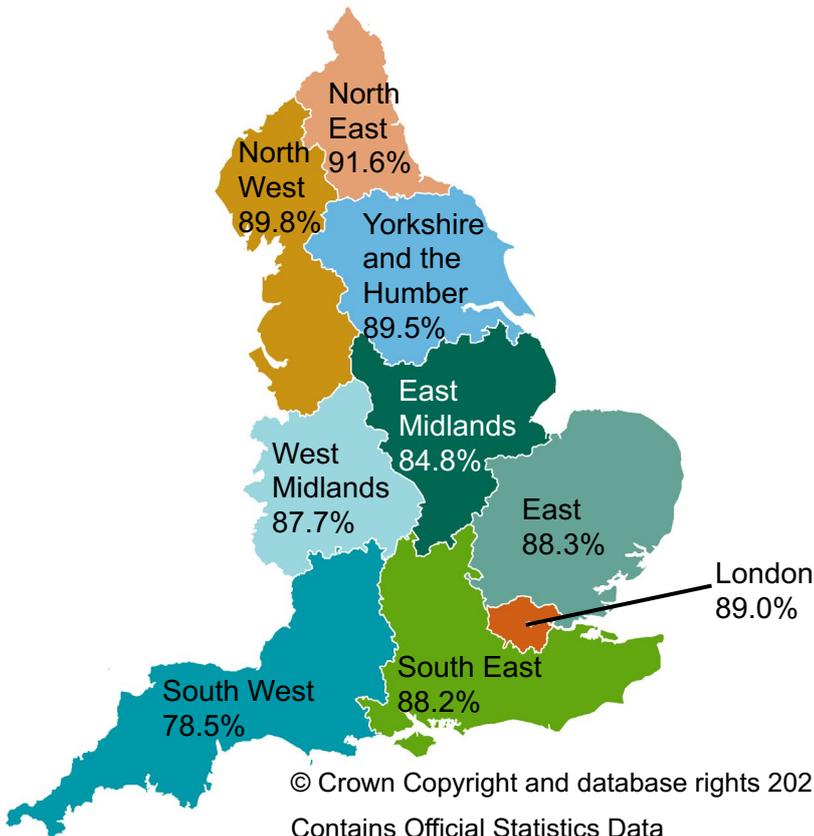
Bus punctuality

In 2020/21, 87.9% of non-frequent services in England ran on time. This is the highest level since the first data was published (see [chart 16](#)). 'On time' is defined as between 1 minute early and 5 minutes 59 seconds late. At the regional level, bus service punctuality varied between 78.5% and 91.6%. At the local authority level, there was greater variation ranging between 71% and 99%.

Chart 16 Percentage of non-frequent services running on time: England, 2007/08 to 2020/21 ([table BUS0902](#))



Map 2: Percentage of non-frequent services running on time: England, 2020/21 ([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 17: Passenger satisfaction with bus punctuality: England outside London, 2019 ([Transport Focus Bus Passenger Survey](#))



Walking distance to bus stops

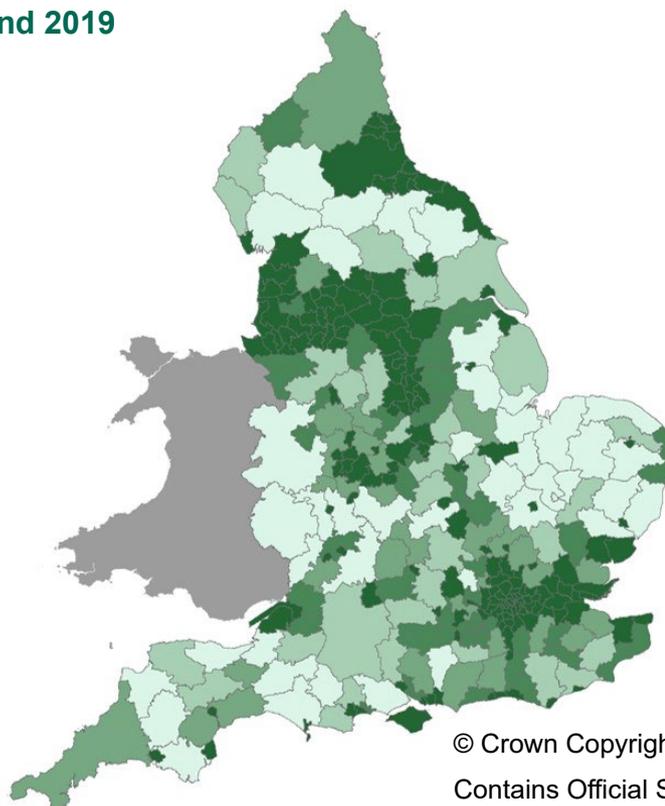
In 2019, 88% of the population of England lived within 1km walking distance of a bus stop with at least one bus service per hour. In urban and rural areas, the proportion of the population living within 1km walking distance of a bus stop were 97% and 49% respectively.

Chart 18 shows local authorities with the highest and lowest proportion of their population within 1km walking distance of a bus stop with at least one bus service per hour in England outside London. This shows the difference in access to regular bus services across local authorities.

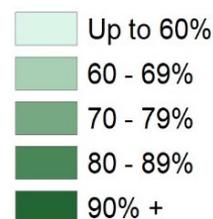
Chart 18: Proportion of population within 1km walking distance of a bus stop with at least one bus service per hour between 7am and 7pm, by local authority, highest and lowest 5: England, 2019 (table BUS1004)



Map 3: Proportion of population within 1km walking distance of a bus stop with one bus service per hour between 7am and 7pm, by district, England 2019



Percentage of Population



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Contains Official Statistics Data

Methodology

Walking distances to bus stops were calculated by specialist software (currently DfT uses TRACC software owned by Basemap) for 171,372 Output Areas (OAs) from the 2011 Census to bus stops from the National Public Transport Data Repository (NPTDR) from October 2019. Only bus stops with a bus service at least once an hour for each and every hour between 7am and 7pm were used. Walking distance was calculated rather than just distance to take into account that while some OAs may be within 1km of a bus stop as the crow flies, the walking route needed to access the bus stop may be longer. More information can be found in the Department's Journey Time Statistics information [here](#).

Urban and rural definitions

This analysis uses the Defra Rural-Urban Classification, based on 2011 Output Areas. The Rural-Urban Classification is used to distinguish rural and urban areas. The Classification defines areas as rural if they fall outside of settlements with more than 10,000 resident population.

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 Transport and external sources and is published to different timescales. Below is a brief outline of some of the data sources.

Bus passenger satisfaction

England Outside of London - 2019/20

The Transport Focus Bus Passenger Survey gathers information on levels of satisfaction of bus users with their most recent journey. Due to the coronavirus pandemic and a significant drop in the numbers of people using public transport, the Bus Passenger Survey has been paused.

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



64% 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 - 2020/21

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 2020/21, 77% of bus passengers in London were satisfied with their journey, a decrease from 85% in 2019/20.



77% overall satisfaction with the journey



79% satisfaction with length of time for journey



74% satisfaction with punctuality

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 22 local bus trips per person per year.
- travel 107 miles by local bus per person per year.
- spend 38 minutes per local bus trip

These represent:

- 3% of trips across all modes of transport
- 2% of the distance travelled across all modes of transport

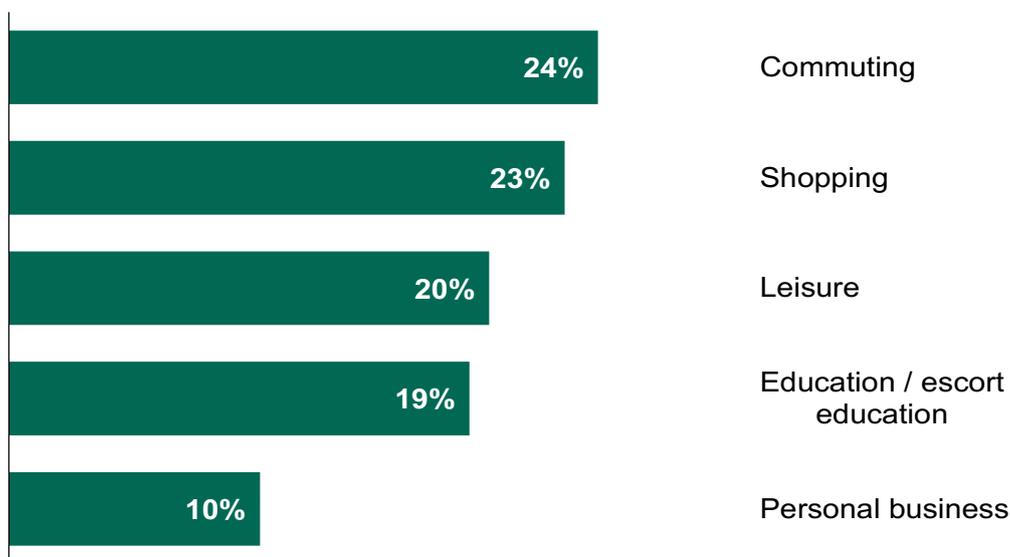
National Travel Survey

The National Travel Survey is a household survey carried out on over 16,000 individuals in England every year. However the results in this release will be based on the 2020 results from a survey of just under 7,000 individuals. The coronavirus pandemic has had a substantial impact on the travel trends in this period. For more information see [here](#).

Why do people travel by local bus?

The most common purpose for local bus travel in 2020 was commuting (24%) closely followed by shopping (23%), leisure (20%) and education (19%). This follows a similar trend to the previous year when commuting (23%) was the most common purpose for local bus travel.

Chart 19: Purpose share of local bus trips, 2020 ([NTS0409](#))



How often do people use local bus services?

Over half of people (60%) rarely use a local bus (less than once a year) whereas just under a third (29%) travel by local bus at least once a month and almost a fifth of people travel by local bus on at least a weekly basis.

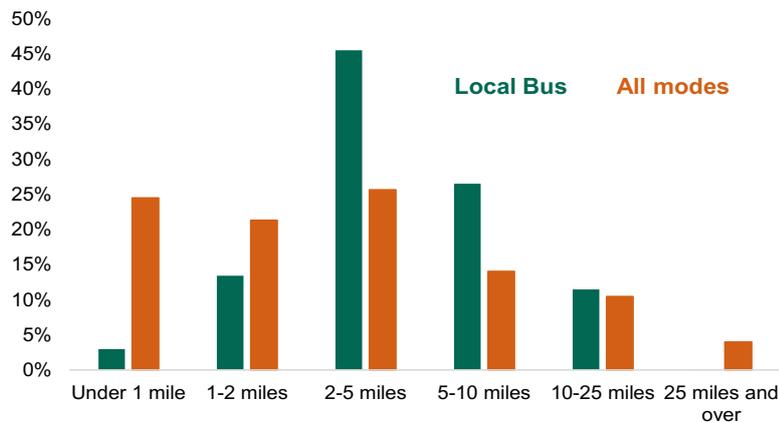
Chart 20: Frequency of local bus usage, England, 2020 ([NTS0313](#))



How long are local bus trips?

In 2020, 46% of local bus trips were between 2 and 5 miles. This was almost double the proportion of trips of the same distance travelled by all modes (26%). In contrast, 46% of trips by all modes were under 2 miles while 16% of local bus trips were under 2 miles.

Chart 21: Trip length distribution, for local bus trips and all modes, England, 2020 ([NTS0308](#))

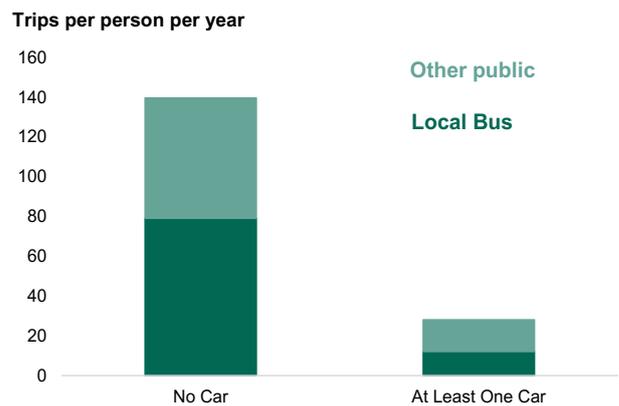


Who uses local bus services?

Car access

In 2020, 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 (79 trips per person vs. 12 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 (57%) and under half of all public transport trips made by people in households with access to a car (43%).

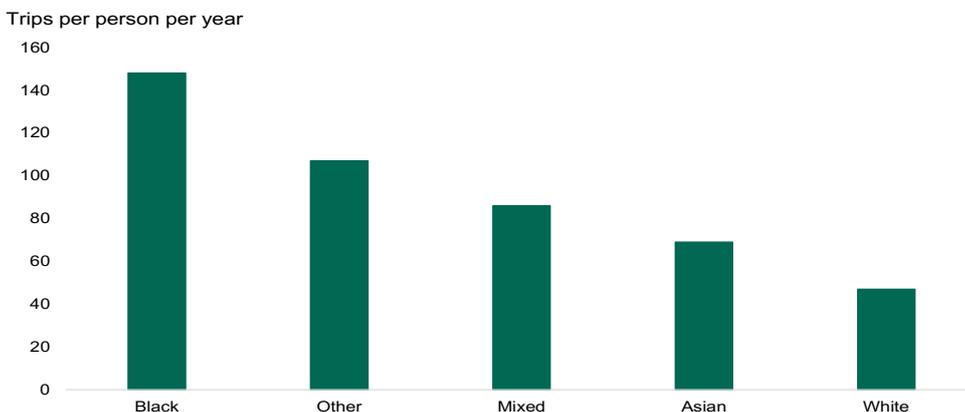
Chart 22: Local bus trips by car ownership, England, 2020 ([NTS0702](#))



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



Ethnicity Data

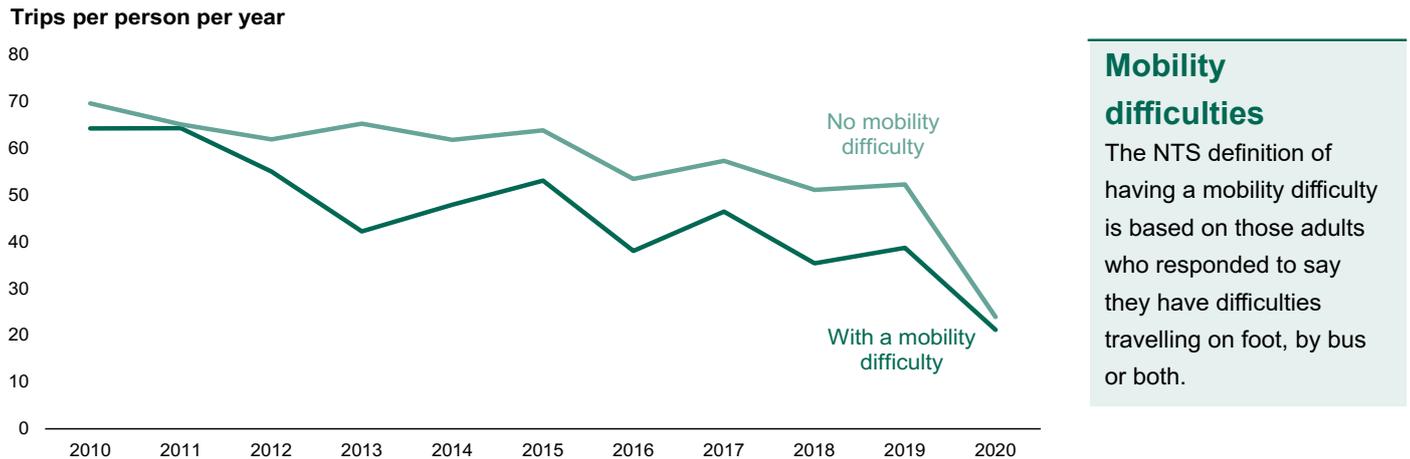
Due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, the decision was taken not to combine National Travel Survey data from 2020 with previous years. Due to sample sizes, figures on travel behaviours by people of different ethnic groups are produced using averages from 5 years of data. As a result the figures presented here are for 2015-2019.

Mobility difficulties

In 2020, 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 2011 to 21 trips per person per year. While this has been steadily decreasing over this period, a large decrease was seen between 2019 and 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. Adults with mobility difficulties use local buses less than people who do not (21 trips per person vs. 24 trips per person in 2020).

Local bus usage makes up 5% of all trips for adults with mobility difficulties, compared to 3% for those who do not. These figures have decreased from 10% and 6% respectively in 2011.

Chart 24: Local bus trips per person per year, by mobility difficulty, England, 2020 ([NTS0709](#))



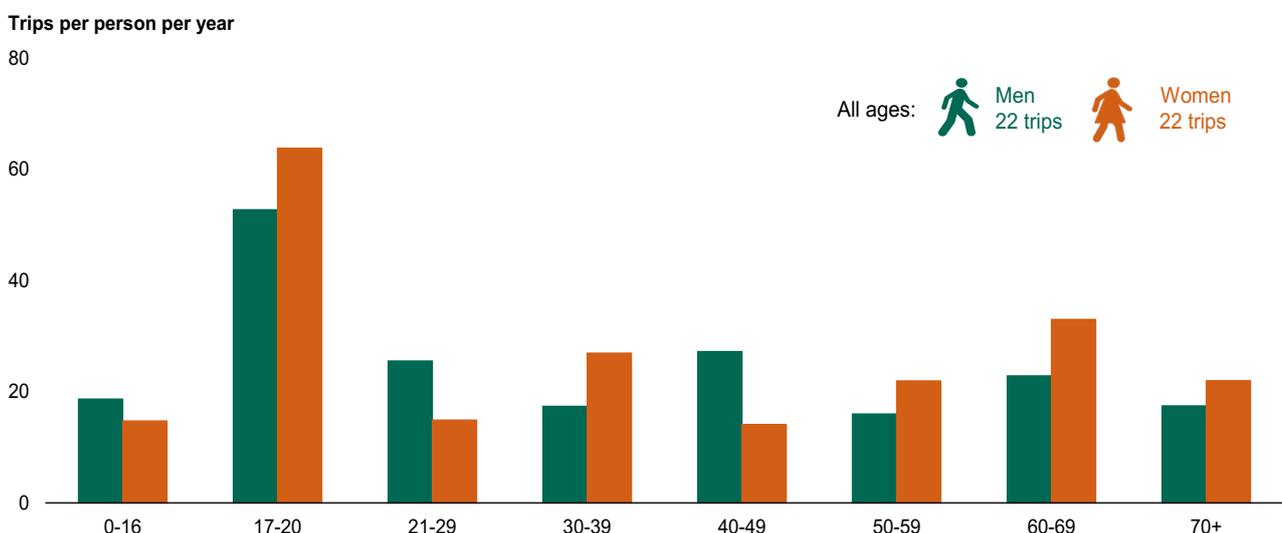
Household income

In 2020, people in the lowest real income quintile made 41 local bus trips on average, more than any other income quintile, while those in the highest income quintile made the least (16).

Age and gender

In 2020, on average, women and men made the same number of local bus trips (22 trips per person per year). For both men and women most trips per year were made by the 17-20 age group.

Chart 25: Local bus trips per person per year, by age and gender, England, 2020 ([NTS0601](#))

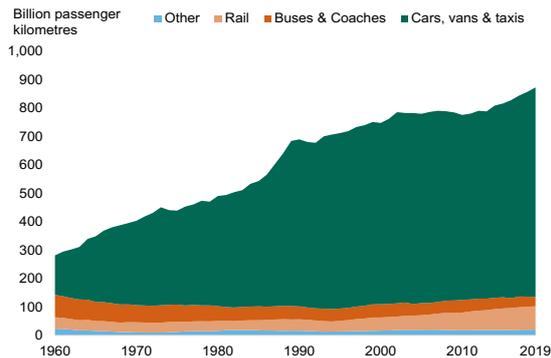


Other DfT sources containing bus data

Transport Statistics 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.

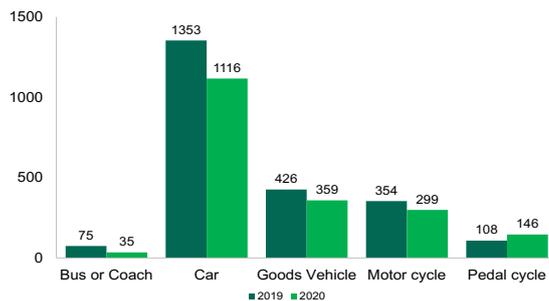
Passenger kilometres by mode, Great Britain



Transport Statistics Great Britain (TSGB)

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

Fatalities in accidents involving different types of vehicle in Great Britain



Road accident statistics

There were less fatalities in accidents involving buses than any other type of vehicle in Great Britain in both 2019 and 2020.

Road Accidents and Safety Statistics

provides detailed statistics about personal injury road accidents, vehicles and casualties involved. [Link](#)

Speed Compliance statistics

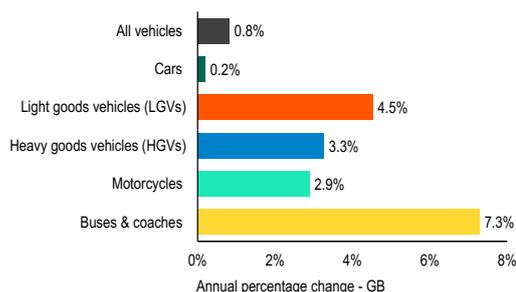
Buses are less likely to exceed speed limits on 30mph roads, than any other mode. The bus category includes coaches.

Road Type	Cars	LCVs (Vans)	Articulated HGVs	Rigid HGVs	Short Buses	Long Buses	Motorcycles
Motorways	53%	55%	2%	58%
National Speed Limit Single Carriageways	12%	..	35%	41%	45%	48%	29%
30mph Roads	56%	58%	46%	49%	29%	24%	67%
.. Data is not available	Exceeding 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 2021



Vehicle statistics

There has been an 7.3% increase in the number of buses and coaches licensed in the year to March 2021. This coincides with decreases in SORN stock following the lifting of coronavirus restrictions.

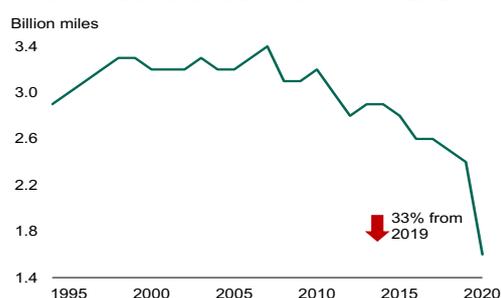
Vehicle Statistics

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 0.6% of all motor vehicle traffic in 2020. This has been on a downward trend since 2007 and has reduced 2.2% in the latest year.

Trend in bus and coach traffic 1995-2020



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](#)

Background information

National Bus Strategy

In September 2019, the government set out how it would launch a revolution in bus services – delivering a better deal for bus users and committing to publishing a National Bus Strategy. In February 2020, the Prime Minister announced that bus services across the country would be transformed with simpler fares, thousands of new buses, improved routes and higher frequencies.

[Bus Back Better](#), the national bus strategy for England was published in March 2021 and sets out the vision and opportunity to deliver better bus services for passengers across England, through ambitious and far-reaching reform of how services are planned and delivered.

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

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.

Next update to bus statistics

Quarterly bus statistics for July to September 2021 will be released in December 2021. The next annual bus statistics will be published in Autumn 2022.

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 500 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.

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 while many restrictions were still in place and may have affected figures slightly.

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 occurrences 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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