



Department
for Transport

Light Rail and Tram Statistics: England 2013/14

Main findings

Passenger
journeys and
vehicle miles on
light rail reach
highest figure ever
recorded.

Light rail usage increased in 2013/14. Passenger journeys and vehicle miles reached the highest figures recorded in the modern era, continuing two decades of growth.

- ▶ Across the 8 light rail systems in England there were 227 million passenger journeys in 2013/14, a 2% increase on the previous year.
- ▶ Almost 60% of these journeys were inside London, on Docklands Light Railway and Croydon Tramlink. Additional services during the 2012 Olympics led to a rise in passenger journeys on the Docklands Light Railway that has been maintained in 2013/14.
- ▶ Vehicle mileage in England has increased 10% on the previous year to 17.8 million vehicle miles, largely a result of increases in Manchester (though see note on page 2).
- ▶ The rising passenger journeys and vehicle miles can at least in part be attributed to network expansion, for example route miles on the Manchester Metrolink increased by 15% from 2012/13 to 2013/14.



Photo: Supated/Alamy

About this release

This statistical release presents the latest annual information on light rail and tram systems in England during the 2013/14 financial year, covering usage, infrastructure and revenue.

This publication covers 8 urban systems that are predominantly surface-running, see table on p2 for a list of systems covered. Smaller systems (e.g. heritage railways and airport transit systems) are *not* included. The London and Glasgow underground are also not included, however tables on these are published alongside this release.

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Summary figures

	Passenger journeys	Vehicle miles	Passenger revenue
<i>2013/14 figure (m=millions) and change compared to the previous year</i>			
	<i>Revenue % change in 2013/14 prices</i>		
England	227.1m ↑ 2.1%	17.8m ↑ 10.3%	£289.8m ↑ 5.9%
London systems	132.8m ↑ 2.0%	5.5m ↑ 3.0%	£156.6m ↑ 4.3%
Docklands Light Railway	101.6m ↑ 1.5%	3.6m ↑ 0.7%	£133.1m ↑ 4.6%
Croydon Tramlink	31.2m ↑ 3.7%	1.9m ↑ 7.6%	£23.5m ↑ 2.6%
Non-London systems	94.4 ↑ 2.2%	12.3m ↑ 14.0%	£133.2m ↑ 7.9%
Nottingham Express Transit	7.9m ↑ 6.1%	0.7m ↔ 0.0%	£8.3m ↓ 3.7%
Midland Metro	4.7m ↓ 2.6%	1.0m ↓ 2.8%	£7.9m ↔ 0.0%
Sheffield Supertram	12.6m ↓ 12.7%	1.4m ↓ 9.4%	£13.9m ↓ 5.8%
Tyne and Wear Metro	35.7m ↓ 3.6%	3.4m ↓ 0.2%	£45.2m ↑ 1.7%
Manchester Metrolink	29.2m ↑ 16.7%	5.2m ↑ 43.6%	£51.8m ↑ 21.3%
Blackpool Tramway	4.3m ↑ 17.4%	0.6m ↑ 20.4%	£6.1m ↑ 21.1%

Note the following factors may impact on the figures shown:

- In Sheffield rail replacement engineering works between July and November 2013 meant that trams were replaced by buses in certain areas of the tram system.
- In Tyne and Wear there were line closures for a month over August to facilitate major track renewals.
- Lastly the Midland Metro line was shut for two weeks in April for programmed system repair.
- Expansion of the network in Manchester and the reopening of the Blackpool tramway after closures for renovation at least in part explain the larger increases on these systems.

Additionally note that mileage figures for Manchester Metrolink represent total mileage of each tram 'set'. Where two sets are joined to form one train, the kilometres run will therefore be counted twice. The proportion of double sets has increased in recent years and we estimate that this contributes around a third of the overall increase in vehicle mileage shown for this system since 2011/12, meaning that figures for later years are not directly comparable with earlier ones (or with other systems).

The table...

summarises the latest annual figures (2013/14) compared to the previous year (2012/13).

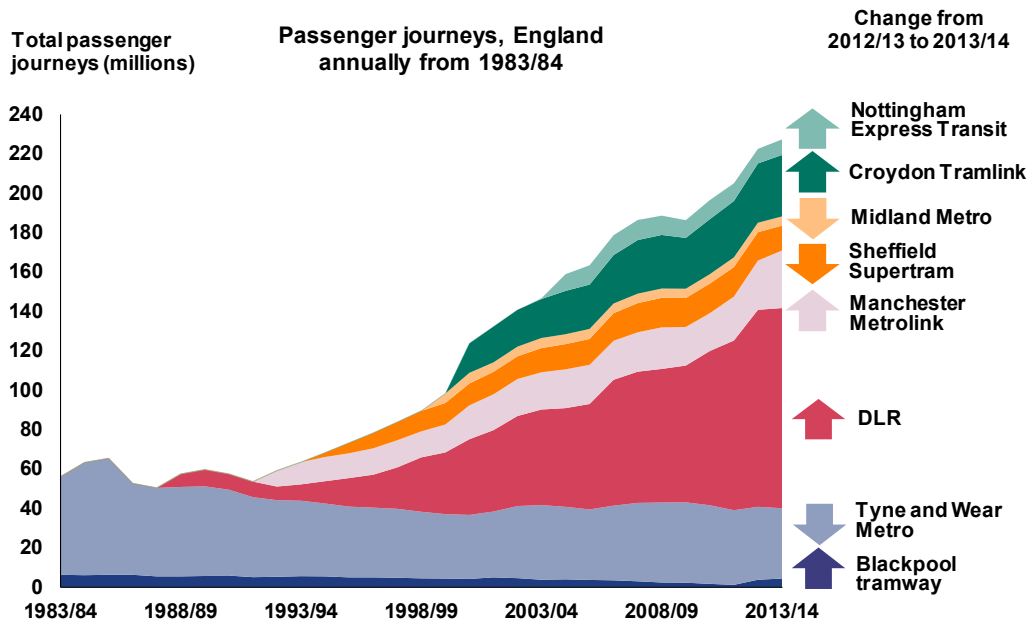
Further Statistics...

on the London underground and Glasgow subway are available in tables [9901](#) and [9902](#) respectively.

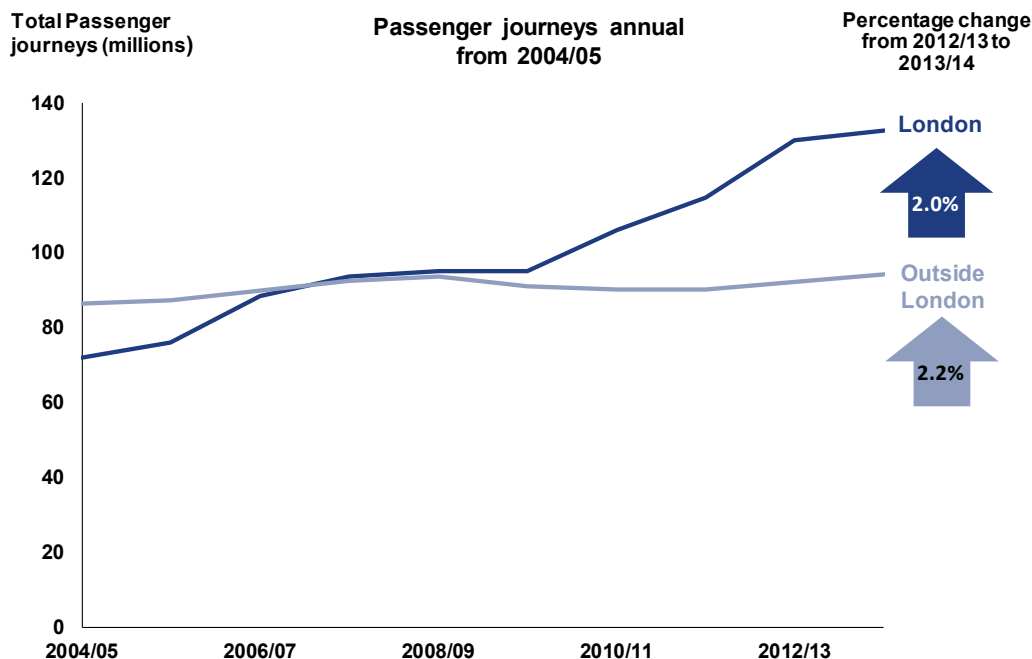
Information on accidents involving light rail vehicles where they run on the public highway is covered by the Department's reported road casualty statistics. For further information please contact roadacc.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Passenger journeys

Passenger journeys on light rail systems increased 2% in 2013/14 compared to the previous year, to 227 million. This represents a 43% increase since 2004/05, the first year Nottingham Express Transit ran (the latest system to open).



Growth has been greater in London than outside London; in London passenger journeys have increased by 84% since 2004/05 whilst outside London they increased by 9% over the same period. In the past year, however, increases in London have steadied to a similar rate of increase as outside London, with the largest increases in Manchester where the network has expanded.



In context...

these 8 light rail systems accounted for 2.7% of all journeys made by public transport in Great Britain in 2012/13 (table [TSGB0102](#)).

Detailed statistics...

on passenger journeys can be found in table [LRT0101](#).

Figures for passenger kilometres and passenger miles annually from 1983/84 can be found in tables [LRT0103](#) and [LRT0104](#) respectively.

Some details of characteristics of users of light rail systems can be obtained from the National Travel Survey. Figures are available on request from national.travelsurvey@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Journey Length

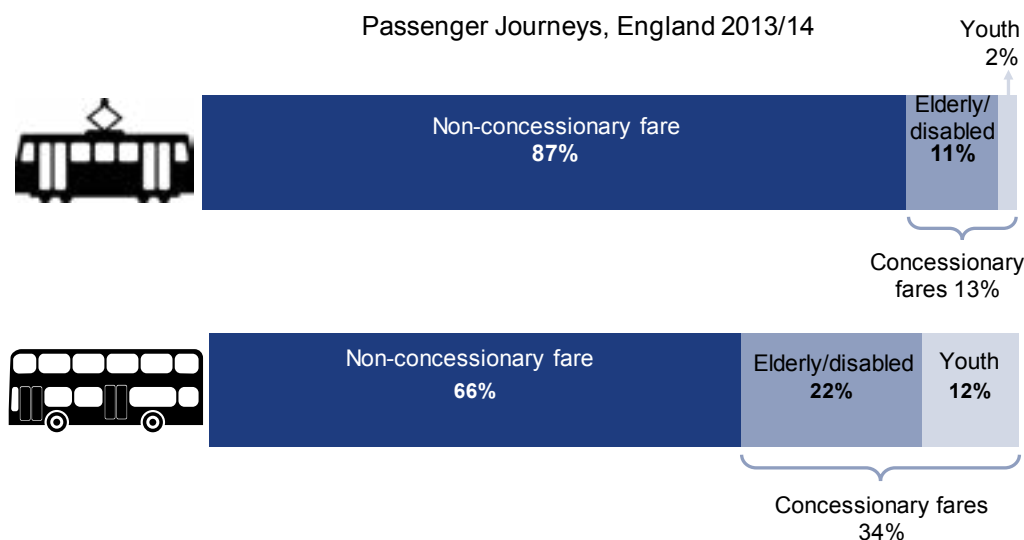
The average light rail journey is just over 4 miles, this is lower on the two London systems (3.3 miles) than outside London where the average is 4.6 miles.

In 2012/13 the Docklands Light Railway put on additional services for the 2012 Olympics resulting in increased vehicle mileage and passenger journeys. In 2013/14, demand on The Docklands Light Railway remained at the high levels seen in 2012/13.

Concessionary journeys

Concessionary journeys made up 13% of all light rail passenger journeys nationally in 2013/14; the same proportion as in the previous year.

This varies across systems from 5% on the Docklands Light Railway to 34% and 35% on the Sheffield Supertram and Blackpool Tramway respectively.



This is a relatively small proportion compared to buses, where concessionary journeys account for a 34% of all passenger journeys. All the light rail and tram schemes in England currently offer free off-peak travel to older and disabled residents in their local authority area; this is on a statutory basis in London and a discretionary basis elsewhere. This compares to buses where free concessionary travel for older and disabled people is statutory anywhere in England.

Detailed statistics...

on concessionary light rail journeys can be found in table [LRT0102](#).

Further information on concessionary revenue can be found in table [LRT0302](#).

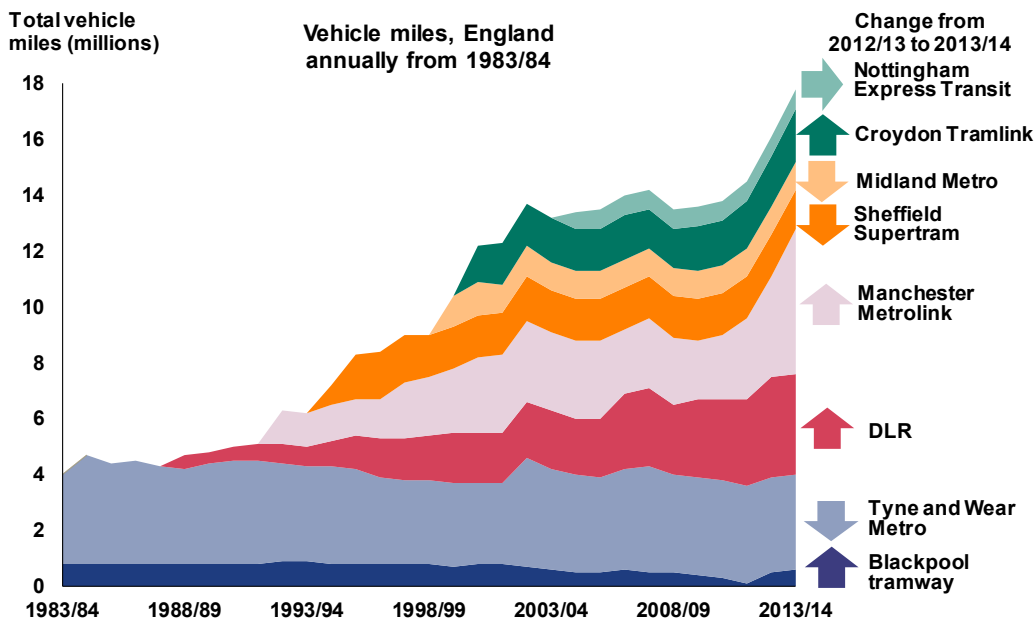
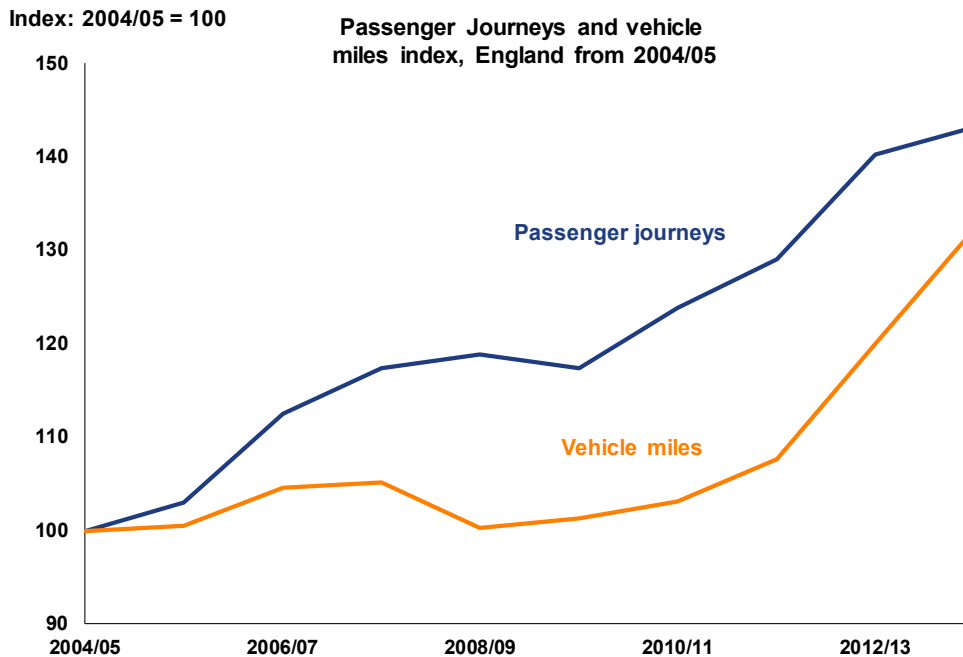
Detailed statistics...

on concessionary bus journeys can be found in table [BUS0105](#).

Vehicle miles

Increases in usage (passenger journeys) broadly reflect changes to services. In London vehicle mileage has increased by 56% since 2004/05 to 5.5 million miles in 2013/14.

Outside London mileage run has increased 24% over the same period to 12.3 million miles. This is consistent with the larger passenger journey increases in London compared to elsewhere in England.



Detailed statistics...

on vehicle miles can be found in table [LRT0106](#) and also in kilometres in table [LRT0105](#).

On route length open for passenger traffic by system can be found in kilometres in table [LRT0203](#) and in miles in table [LRT0204](#).

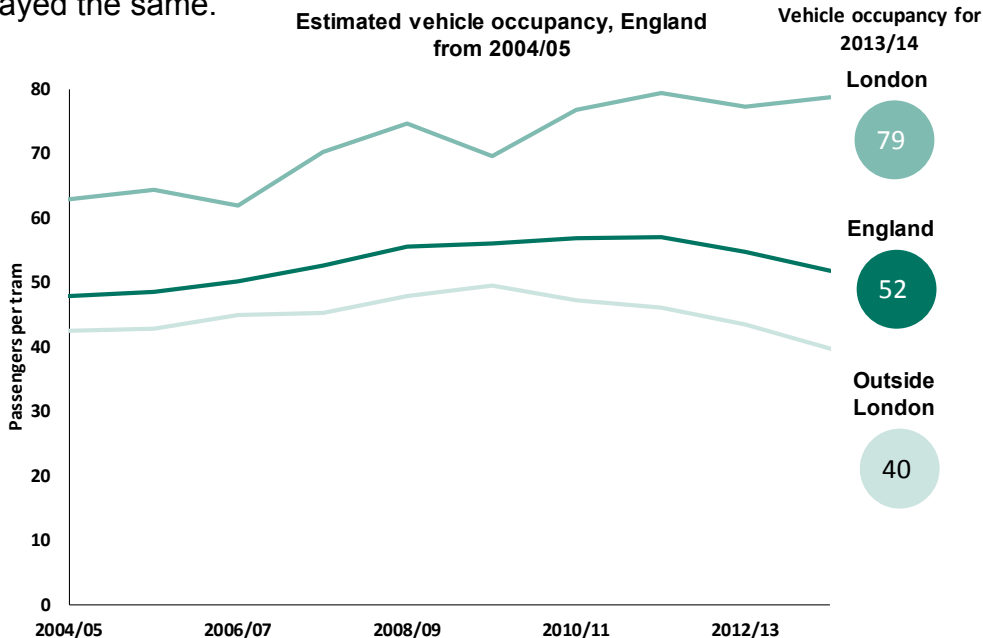
Infrastructure

188 route miles 3.5%
 352 stations 3.5%
 432 carriages 2.6%

All increases from 2012/13 to 2013/14 come from expansion in Manchester, all other systems were unchanged during the last year.

Average vehicle occupancy

Average occupancy of trams across England has fallen for the past two years from the highest figure in modern records of 57 passengers per tram in 2011/12 to 52 in 2013/14. This overall trend however, masks differences across the systems, in 2013/14 occupancy decreased in four systems while 3 systems saw increases and Midland Metro occupancy stayed the same.



Between 2004/05 and 2009/10, vehicle occupancy on light rail systems increased, both inside and outside London, suggesting that passenger demand was increasing at a faster rate than service provision. While occupancy continued to increase in London after 2009/10, it has steadily fallen elsewhere. This broadly coincides with the economic downturn, which may be a factor.

Vehicle occupancy figures also illustrate the contribution of additional services to the growth in passenger numbers in recent years. Expansion in Manchester and the reopening of Blackpool (after closures for improvement works) mean that vehicle mileage has increased and although passenger journeys have also increased in response to this, they have done so at a slower rate.

Revenue

Light rail and tram revenue increased by 6% in real terms to £290 million in 2013/14 compared to 2012/13. Average revenue per journey has increased 4.6 pence (3.8%) in real terms to 128 pence between 2012/13 and 2013/14. (This is roughly in line with equivalent figures for buses, table [BUS0402](#)).

Detailed statistics...

on average vehicle occupancy can be found in table [LRT0108](#).

Average vehicle occupancy is calculated as passenger miles divided by vehicle miles to estimate persons per vehicle.

Detailed statistics...

on average vehicle occupancy can be found in table [LRT0108](#).

Vehicle occupancy

has fallen for two years as passenger miles have increased at a slower rate than the increase in vehicle miles.

Detailed statistics...

on passenger revenue at 2013/14 prices by system can be found in table [LRT0301](#).

Background information

Users and uses of these statistics

These statistics are collected to provide information on light rail systems within England to enable monitoring of trends in passenger journeys, service provision and revenue. They help to provide a comprehensive picture of public transport usage in Great Britain. Within DfT they are used as background information in the development of light rail policy (for example passenger journeys figures were included in the DfT review 'Green Light for Light Rail' published on the DfT website in 2011), for ministerial briefing and to answer public enquiries. Outside DfT, known users include researchers, academics and Parliamentary groups with the main known use as context for reports related to light rail.

Feedback received from users suggests that they are generally satisfied with these statistics, in relation to their uses. However, we welcome feedback on the content, format or timing of the statistics by email to bus.statistics@dft.gsi.gov.uk or on (020) 7944 3094.

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

These figures are compiled from data provided by operators of the 8 light rail and tram systems in England. Passenger journey figures are derived from different sources (most commonly ticket machine data), vehicle mileage is based on scheduled timetables less known lost mileage, and revenue figures are from operators' financial records.

A complete response has been received for many years. Data requested should be readily available to operators, or easy for them to extract. Returns are validated by comparison with previous years and seeking explanation where differences are large or unexpected. This means that figures for each system should be broadly comparable over time, and therefore we consider them appropriate for the uses outlined above.

As the figures are provided by 8 operators, there are some differences in the methods used to count journeys or to estimate passenger or vehicle kilometres, which may affect comparisons between different systems. Although the effect of this is difficult to assess we consider it is unlikely to materially affect comparisons. On occasions operators may revise their methodology which could impact on the trends shown. As a result year-on-year changes should be treated with caution, though the effect on broad patterns is likely to be minimal.

Next release

The next Light Rail Statistics release is due to be published summer 2015.

Further information...

On the methods used to compile these statistics and background information about the systems covered can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/light-rail-and-tram-statistics-guidance

National statistics

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: www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html

For details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release: www.gov.uk/government/publications/light-rail-and-tram-statistics-guidance