In 2014/15, light rail usage in England continued to rise with record numbers of passenger journeys and vehicle miles since comparable records began in 1983.

In 2014/15, 239.8 million passengers journeys were made on the eight light rail and tram systems in England, a 5.6% increase on the previous year.

59% of these journeys were inside London, on Docklands Light Railway and London Tramlink.

Vehicle mileage in England has increased by 3.4% on the previous year to 18.4 million mostly due to development of the Manchester Metrolink.

239.8 million passenger journeys
5.6% since 2013/14

59% Passenger journeys:

London

18.4 million vehicle miles
3.4% since 2013/14
Table 1 summarises the latest light rail annual figures. Figures for England are shown for each tram system in London and England outside London.

**Table 1: Summary of the latest annual light rail figures (2014/15) compared with the previous year (2013/14)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Passenger journeys</th>
<th>Vehicle miles</th>
<th>Passenger revenue</th>
<th>Revenue % change in 2014/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014/15 figure (m=millions) and change compared with the previous year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>England</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>239.8m ↑ 5.6%</td>
<td>18.4m 3.4%</td>
<td>£307.6m 4.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>London systems</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Docklands Light Railway</td>
<td>110.2m ↑ 8.5%</td>
<td>3.6m 1.1%</td>
<td>£143.8m 6.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Tramlink</td>
<td>32.3m ↑ 3.5%</td>
<td>2.0m 2.6%</td>
<td>£24.4m 2.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>England outside London systems</strong></td>
<td>97.3m ↑ 3.1%</td>
<td>12.8m 4.0%</td>
<td>£139.4m 2.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham Express Transit</td>
<td>8.1m 2.9%</td>
<td>0.8m 14.9%</td>
<td>£8.8m 3.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midland Metro</td>
<td>4.4m -6.1%</td>
<td>1.0m -1.4%</td>
<td>£7.7m -4.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield Supertram</td>
<td>11.5m -8.5%</td>
<td>1.4m -1.2%</td>
<td>£12.6m -10.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyne and Wear Metro</td>
<td>38.1m 6.7%</td>
<td>3.5m 2.2%</td>
<td>£47.9m 4.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester Metrolink</td>
<td>31.2m 6.6%</td>
<td>5.6m 7.8%</td>
<td>£56.8m 7.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackpool Tramway</td>
<td>4.1m -5.9%</td>
<td>0.5m -6.5%</td>
<td>£5.6m -10.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Passenger journeys on light rail systems increased by 5.6% in 2014/15 to 239.8 million when compared with the previous year (see chart 1). Since 2004/05 passenger journeys have increased by 51%.

**Chart 1: Light rail passenger journeys by system: England annually from 1983/84 (table LRT0101)**

Factors impacting on the figures shown in table 1, can be found in background information (p7).

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.

**In context**
These eight light rail systems accounted for 2.7% of all journeys made by public transport in Great Britain in 2013/14 (table TSGB0102).
The increase in passenger journeys has mainly occurred in London with a 97.6% rise in passenger journeys to 142.5 million since 2004/05 (see chart 2). In England outside London there has been a 12.4% increase in passenger journeys over the last 10 years with network expansions in Manchester counteracting declines in passenger journeys in Nottingham, Midlands and Sheffield. Some of these areas where passenger journeys have declined have been affected by engineering works.

Passenger journeys on Docklands Light Railway (DLR) in London have been increasing since the early 1990s and increased by 8.5% in 2014/15 to 110.2 million, 10.2% above the level reached for the 2012 Olympics.

In England, the average number of light rail journeys per head was 14.2 in 2014/15, a 37% increase since 2004/05. The main factor for this increase has been a 74% increase in London caused by an almost doubling of passenger journeys per person on the DLR. As a result average passenger journeys per head in London was 47% higher than in England outside London (see chart 3).

Some characteristics of light rail systems users can be obtained from the National Travel Survey. Figures are available on request from national.travelsurvey@dft.gsi.gov.uk.
Average passenger journeys per head outside London have remained constant. However the underlying 48% increase on Manchester Metrolink counteracts decreases in three systems and ranges between 34 journeys on Tyne and Wear Metro to 1.6 journeys per head on Midland Metro.

**Light rail concessionary journeys**

In England, 12% of all light rail passenger journeys were concessionary. Concessionary journeys as a share of all passenger journeys have declined by 1 percentage point from 2013/14. The decline is mainly due to a 80% reduction in concessionary passenger journeys in Blackpool due to concessionary boardings being restricted to Blackpool Borough residents only.

The proportion of journeys that were concessionary ranged from 32% in Sheffield to 5% on the DLR.

Concessionary travel represents a relatively small proportion of passenger journeys when compared with buses (34%). All light rail and tram schemes in England currently offer free off-peak travel to older and disabled residences in their local authority area; this is on a statutory basis in London and a discretionary basis elsewhere whereas this is statutory on buses everywhere in England.

**Light rail vehicle miles**

Vehicle mileage on light rail systems has also increased over this period as a 51% increase in passenger journeys has been meet by 37% increase in vehicle miles since 2004/05 (Chart 4).

![Chart 4: Light rail passenger journeys and vehicle miles index: England annually from 2004/05 (tables LRT0101 and LRT0106)](image)
In London vehicle mileage has increased by 59% in the last 10 years to 5.6 million miles whereas in England outside London mileage has increased by 29% to 12.8 million miles (see chart 5).

Chart 5: Light rail vehicle miles: England annually from 1983/84 (table LRT0106)

In London vehicle mileage has increased by 59% in the last 10 years to 5.6 million miles whereas in England outside London mileage has increased by 29% to 12.8 million miles (see chart 5).

Light rail revenue

Light rail and tram revenue increased by 4.4% in real terms to £307.6 million in 2014/15 compared with 2013/14. Average revenue per journey has decreased by 1.5 pence (1.2%) in real terms to 128 pence in 2014/15 prices between 2014/15 and 2013/14.

Average vehicle occupancy on light rail and tram systems

The average tram occupancy increased by 4.6% from 2013/14 to 54 passengers per tram, but is still 4.9% lower than the record reached in 2011/12 (57 passengers per tram). This increase in occupancy is driven mainly by London (see chart 6) with 9.4% and 7.0% increases in average occupancy on DLR and Tramlink. In England outside London, three tram systems have reduced vehicle occupancy, Manchester has remained the same and both Midlands and Tyne and Wear Metro had increased average occupancy in 2014/15.
Vehicle occupancy figures reflect infrastructure development to accommodate growing passenger numbers. Similar levels of increase in vehicle mileage and passenger numbers results in steady vehicle occupancy.

The Department for Transport collects information on light rail and tram system usage, infrastructure and revenue. Transport Focus measures the passenger experience of using light rail systems, gathering satisfaction levels at both overall and individual level. Comparing these two datasets allows a more complete understanding of light rail systems as a whole.

English passenger experience on five light rail systems outside of London were surveyed by Transport Focus in both 2013 and 2014. The five systems surveyed were: Blackpool Tramway, Manchester Metrolink, Midland Metro, Nottingham Express Transit and Sheffield Supertram.

In 2014, overall journey satisfaction across all systems surveyed was high at 90% and ranged from 85% in Manchester Metrolink to 96% in Nottingham, which was higher than both the National Rail Passenger Survey (81%) and Bus Passenger Survey (88%).

Value for money satisfaction (61%) was at an similar level to bus passengers (63%) and much higher than rail passengers (46%) in 2014.

Transport Focus

Transport Focus is an independent transport user watchdog. For more information see [http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/](http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/).

Transport Focus statistics are not National Statistics.

Detailed statistics

Transport Focus Tram Passenger Survey can be found [here](http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/).

Table 2: Passenger satisfaction, passenger journeys and passenger journeys per head by light rail system in 2014 (table LRT0109)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Light rail system</th>
<th>Overall journey satisfaction¹</th>
<th>Passenger journeys (millions)</th>
<th>Passenger journeys per head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham Express Transit</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackpool Tramway</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield Supertram</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midland Metro</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester Metrolink</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Source: Transport Focus

Overall journey satisfaction tended to increase with both decreasing total passenger journeys and increasing passenger journeys per head. Therefore, light rail systems used more often by a smaller number of people had the highest overall journey satisfaction. Furthermore, high value for money satisfaction tended to be associated with higher passenger journeys per head and lower total passenger journeys.

### Background information

#### Factors impacting on annual light rail figures

The figures for Midlands Metro, Manchester Metrolink and Sheffield Supertram are likely to be affected by the following factors:

- Midlands Metro underwent rail replacement works from September 2014 to March 2015 resulting in restricted services.
- The extension to Manchester Airport Opened on 3rd November 2014, adding 15 stops and 9 route miles to the network. Furthermore, Manchester Metrolink’s Victoria station re-opened in February 2015 after being closed for a year for renovation.
- In Sheffield engineering works between April and September 2014, as part of a 5 year £32 million rail replacement project, meant that trams were replaced by buses in certain areas of the tram system.

Manchester Metrolink mileage figures represent total mileage of each tram ‘set’ and when one train is formed of two sets, the kilometres travelled will be counted twice. Therefore, figures for the years after 2011/12 are not directly comparable with earlier ones (or with other systems) as the proportion of double sets has increased in recent years.
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 eight 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 eight 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 2016.