

Light Rail and Tram Statistics: England 2011/12

This Statistical Release presents information on light rail and tram systems in England during the 2011/12 financial year. Figures are updated annually and cover usage, infrastructure and revenue. This publication relates to urban systems that are predominantly surface-running, and covers:

Blackpool Tramway	Croydon Tramlink
Docklands Light Railway	Manchester Metrolink
Midland Metro	Nottingham Express Transit
Sheffield Supertram	Tyne and Wear Metro

The London Underground, which is classified as an underground system, is not included in this release but data is published separately (see section 4). Also excluded are many other smaller systems, such as funiculars, airport transit and tourist railways.



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The key findings from Light Rail and Tram Statistics 2011/12 include:

- In 2011/12 there were 204 million passenger journeys on light rail and tram systems in England, the highest annual figure recorded and continuing the upward trend of recent years.
- The overall increase in journeys has been driven by strong growth in London (Docklands Light Railway and Croydon Tramlink) of nearly 60 per cent since 2004/05, with growth of 8 per cent between 2010/11 and 2011/12.
- Patronage outside London has been broadly stable since 2004/05. Between 2010/11 and 2011/12 there was overall reduction in journeys of 1 per cent, with growth on the expanding Manchester Metrolink offset by falls in other areas.
- In 2011/12 there were 14.5 million vehicle miles run on light rail and tram systems in England, an increase of 4 per cent from the previous year, with growth of 8 per cent overall since 2004/05.

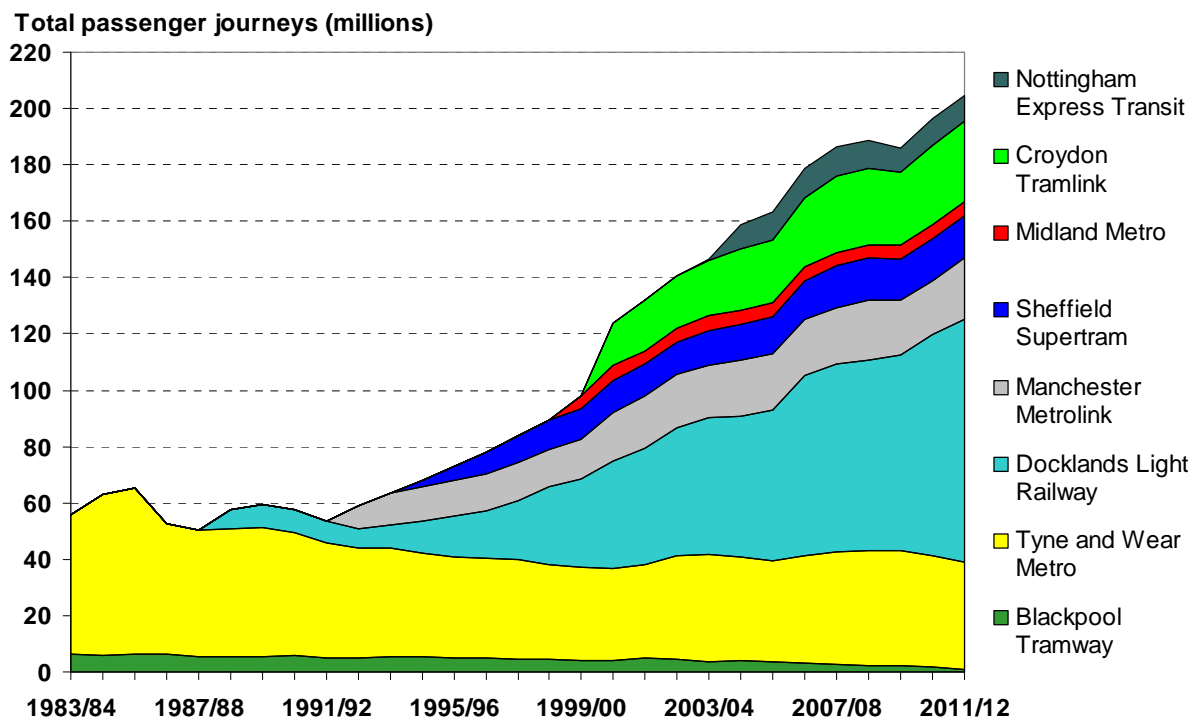
1. Light rail and tram usage

Passenger journeys

- In 2011/12 there were 204 million passenger journeys on light rail and tram systems in England, the highest annual figure recorded and continuing the upward trend of recent years – with an increase of nearly 8 million journeys (4 per cent) from 2010/11 and growth of 29 per cent since 2004/05 when the most recent system was opened (in Nottingham).

Annual Share of Passenger Journeys: England, 1983/84 to 2011/12

(Light rail and tram web table LRT0101)



- The overall increase in journeys has been driven by strong growth in London of nearly 60 per cent since 2004/05, with patronage outside London broadly stable over the same period. In 2011/12, over half (56 per cent) of light rail and tram journeys were in London.
- Passenger journeys in London increased by 8 per cent between 2010/11 and 2011/12. The Docklands Light Railway (DLR) showed the largest total increase in journeys between 2010/11 and 2011/12, partly due to the expansion of the network and increased capacity on existing services. DLR now accounts for 42 per cent of total light rail and tram journeys.
- Outside London, the latest figures show a mixed picture, with growth in the latest year on the Manchester Metrolink (where the network is expanding) but decreases in other areas, including Tyne and Wear and Nottingham, contributing to an overall reduction in journeys outside London of 1 per cent between 2010/11 and 2011/12.
- The Blackpool tramway showed a large decrease in passenger journeys of 33 per cent, largely due to ongoing refurbishment work which partially closed the tramway during 2011/12, though

journeys on Blackpool trams account for less than 1 per cent of total light rail journeys.

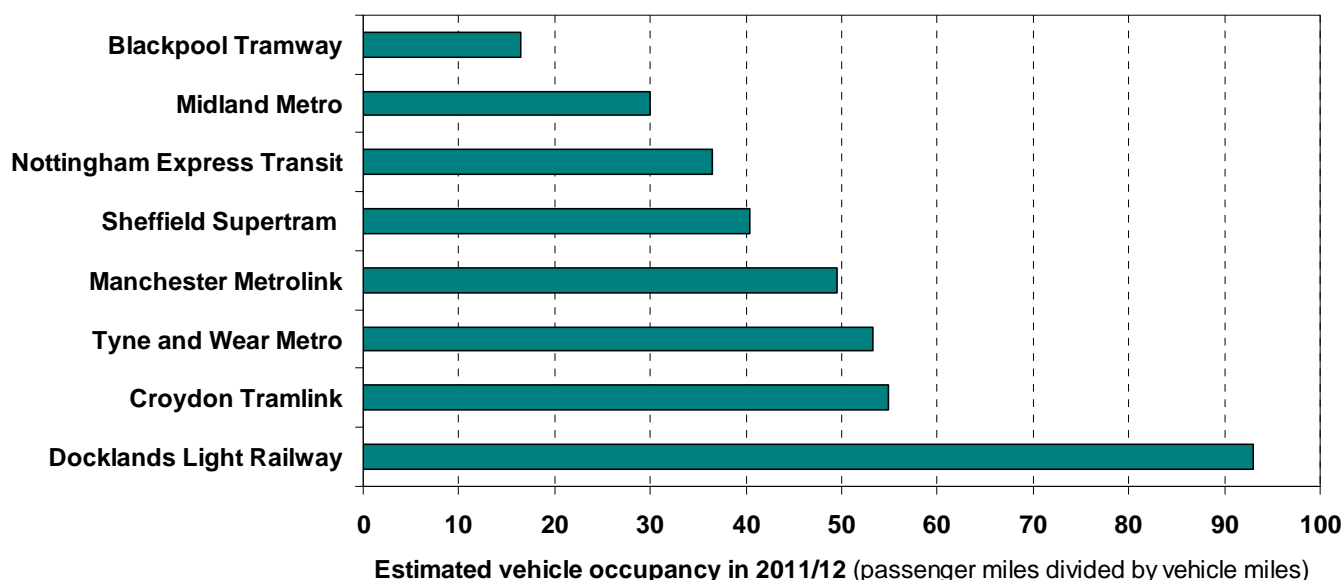
- 12 per cent of all light rail journeys in 2011/12 were concessionary, a total of nearly 25 million. Most light rail and tram schemes in England currently offer free off-peak travel to older and disabled residents in their local authority area; this is on a statutory basis in London and a discretionary basis elsewhere.

Vehicle miles

- In 2011/12 there were 14.5 million vehicle miles run on light rail and tram systems in England, an increase of 4 per cent from the previous year, with growth of 8 per cent since 2004/05.
- The growth between 2010/11 and 2011/12 reflects an increase in mileage of 23 per cent on the Manchester Metrolink and 5 per cent on the DLR. Both these systems opened extensions during 2011/12 and reported increases in service frequency or capacity. In contrast the Blackpool Tramway showed a decrease of 65 per cent over the same period due to the partial track closure for refurbishment. Mileage on other systems was largely unchanged.
- The two London systems (DLR and Croydon) accounted for a third of total vehicle miles in 2011/12, compared with more than half of passenger journeys. This reflects differences in average vehicle occupancy¹, which is considerably higher on the DLR than for any other light rail system. For comparison, average bus occupancy in Great Britain is around 11.

Estimated light rail and tram average vehicle occupancy: England, 2011/12

(Light rail and tram web table LRT0108)



Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on “light rail and tram usage” can be found on the Light Rail Statistics web tables¹, table numbers [LRT 0101 to LRT 0107](#)

¹ Calculated by dividing passenger miles by vehicle miles to estimate persons per vehicle

2. Light rail and tram infrastructure

- At March 2012, there were 406 passenger cars on light rail systems in England, a slight increase on March 2011 due to an increase in passenger cars on the Manchester Metrolink from 47 to 56. Since 2004/05, there here has been an increase of around 9 per cent, with increases on the DLR and Metrolink partially offset by a large fall in the number of Blackpool trams where the old fleet has been largely replaced by a smaller number of higher capacity, accessible vehicles as part of the refurbishment work.
- Route miles and number of stations or stops show broadly similar patterns, with the (temporary) closure of part of the Blackpool tramway meaning both were slightly lower in 2011/12 than 2010/11, with a total of 159 miles and 311 stops.

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on “light rail and tram network” can be found on the Light Rail Statistics web tables¹, table numbers [LRT0201 to LRT0204](#).

3. Light rail and tram revenue

- Overall light rail and tram passenger revenue in England increased by 9.1 per cent in real terms between 2010/11 and 2011/12, with two systems (Metrolink and DLR) showing increases in excess of 15 per cent. Light rail and tram concessionary fare reimbursement from concessionary boardings in England increased by a similar proportion, 8.5 per cent, in real terms between 2010/11 and 2011/12.
- After being broadly flat between 2004/05 and 2008/09, revenue per journey on light rail and tram systems has increased in real terms from 102 pence (2011/12 prices) to 115 pence in 2011/12. Revenue per journey is now around a similar level as the closest equivalent figures for buses².

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on “Light Rail and Tram Revenue” can be found on the Light Rail Statistics web tables¹, table numbers [LRT0301 to LRT0302](#).

² Figures for buses are available in table BUS0402: <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/tables/bus0402.xls>

4. Related information

Light rail in context

These statistics help to provide a comprehensive picture of public transport usage in Great Britain, and they are shown alongside other modes in the annual Transport Statistics Great Britain publication. Light rail systems account for around 2.5 per cent of total public transport journeys in Great Britain.

The public transport section is available on the DfT website:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/tsgb-2011-public-transport/>

Table TSGB0102 shows passenger journeys on public transport by mode, including light rail:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/tables/tsgb0102.xls>

Underground systems

Data on the two underground systems in Great Britain not covered within this release are available separately on the DfT website:

London Underground in table LRT9901: <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/tables/lrt9901.xls>

Glasgow Underground in table LRT9902: <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/tables/lrt9902.xls>

Costs

Information on operating costs is not collected. The Department for Transport published a report in September 2011³ which includes information on construction costs of the systems covered by these statistics.

Accidents

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

5. 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. Within the Department for Transport they are used as background information in the development of light rail policy (for example passenger journeys figures were included in the recent DfT review 'Green Light for Light Rail' published on the DfT website in 2011³), 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 rail⁴.

Request for feedback

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 which can be provided by email to bus.statistics@dft.gsi.gov.uk or on (020) 7944 3094.

³ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/green-light-for-light-rail/>

⁴ For example, the 'Light Rail & the City Regions Inquiry' published by the All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group and PTEG in February 2010 <http://www.pteg.net/PolicyCentre/LightRail/LRInquiry>

6. 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 (see the notes and definitions document for further details).

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.

Further information is available in the notes and definitions document (link below).

7. Background notes

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

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/light-rail-tram-statistics-2011-12>

2. Guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics and further background information about the systems covered can be found here:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/light-rail-and-tram/light-rail-notes.pdf>

3. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs:

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

4. Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/light-rail-and-tram/pre-release.pdf>

5. The next Light Rail Statistics release is due to be published in the summer of 2013 and will contain statistics for 2012/13.