



Department
for Transport

Quarterly Bus Statistics: England, April to June 2020

About this release

This quarterly release covers local bus passenger journeys and fares.

This release relates largely to England, in line with the coverage of DfT bus policy. Statistical tables that cover the whole of Great Britain are available online.

Quarterly passenger journey figures are based on data collected from a panel survey of the largest bus operators, and are seasonally adjusted. The Local Bus Fares index is compiled from data provided by a representative sample of around 100 operators and Transport for London (TfL).

The number of local bus passenger journeys in England was 3.25 billion in the year ending June 2020, a 24.7% decrease when compared with a year earlier.

In the year to June 2020, local bus fares in England increased by 1.9%, faster than the all items Consumer Prices Index rate of inflation (1.1%).

Table 1: Summary of latest quarterly and year ending local bus passenger journeys (seasonally adjusted) and Local Bus Fares index

	Local bus passenger journeys (billions)		Bus Fares Index
	Year ending June 2020 (compared with previous year)	Q2 (Apr-Jun) 2020 (compared with Q2 2019)	June 2020 (compared with June 2019)
London	1.65 ↓ -24.7%	0.11 ↓ -80.2%	0.0%
English metropolitan areas	0.68 ↓ -24.6%	0.04 ↓ -82.3%	↑ 2.5%
English non-metropolitan areas	0.91 ↓ -24.9%	0.04 ↓ -86.7%	↑ 3.5%
England	3.25 ↓ -24.7%	0.19 ↓ -82.5%	↑ 1.9%
England outside London	1.59 ↓ -24.7%	0.08 ↓ -84.8%	↑ 3.1%
Scotland	0.29 ↓ -25.1%	0.01 ↓ -85.0%	↑ 2.8%
Wales	0.07 ↓ -27.1%	0.00 ¹ ↓ -87.1%	↑ 1.7%
Great Britain	3.61 ↓ -24.8%	0.21 ↓ -82.8%	↑ 2.0%

¹ Figure below five million journeys rounds to zero

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Statistical tables

Additional tables are available online as part of the bus statistics series. Passenger numbers can be found in table [BUS0103](#) (annual) and [BUS0106](#) (quarterly). Bus fares index can be found in tables [BUS0405](#) (annual) and [BUS0415](#) (quarterly).

Comment on coronavirus (COVID-19) impact

This publication covers April to June 2020, which coincides with the application of movement restrictions due to coronavirus (COVID-19) in Great Britain.

The previous release for January to March 2020 also included some time after movement restrictions were announced. The collection of passenger data is not granular enough to distinguish numbers of passenger journeys before and after changes in the restrictions.

An indication of changes in bus passenger volume during this period can be found in separate datasets provided to monitor the use of the transport system during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Figures are available throughout the period for Great Britain excluding London. Figures for London are available for March to mid April and from early June. These figures are derived from a different source to this publication, but for April to June they indicate usage trends that are broadly in line with the figures in this release. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-use-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic>

Transport for London have also released information on bus services during this period <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/buses-performance-data>

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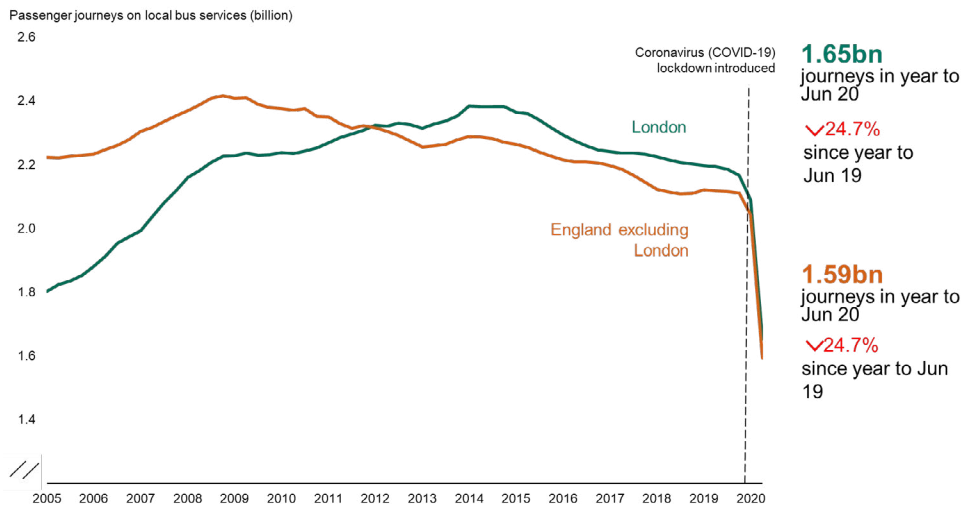
Local bus passenger journeys

Chart 1 shows that the number of local bus passenger journeys in England outside London in the year ending June 2020 decreased by almost 524 million or 24.7% compared with the previous year, to 1.59 billion. Bus use decreased in London by 541 million passenger journeys or 24.7% to 1.65 billion. The year ending June 2020 included around three months during which movement restrictions had been applied due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

Bus usage

The number of bus passenger journeys (with each boarding of a bus counted as one journey) is the key measure of bus demand.

Chart 1: Local bus passenger journeys (seasonally adjusted) in England outside London and London, year ending March 2005 to year ending June 2020 (table [BUS0106a](#))



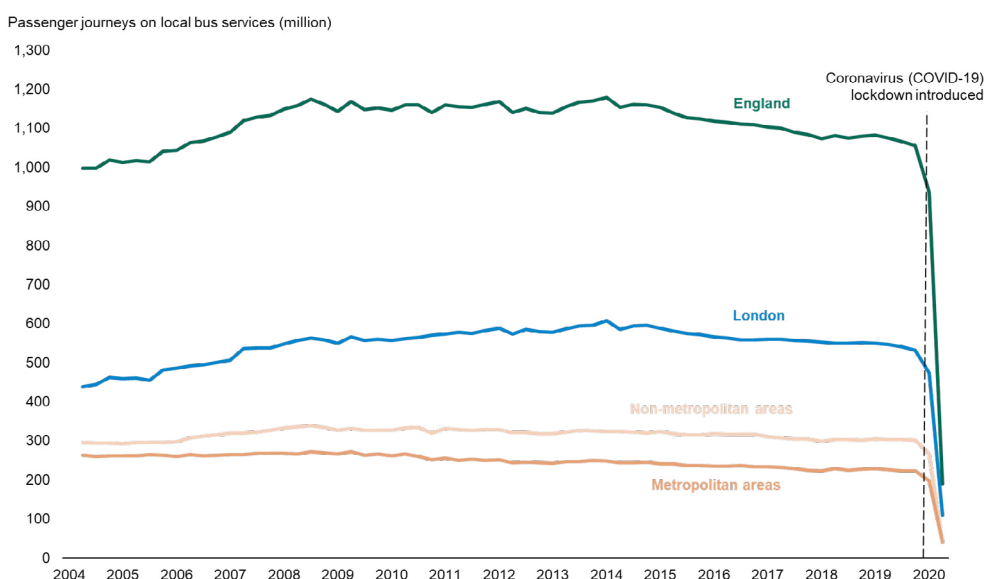
Seasonal adjustment

Estimates of the number of bus passenger journeys are seasonally adjusted. This removes the effects of seasonal factors and the arrangement of the calendar so that quarterly comparisons can be made.

For the first time we are publishing non seasonally adjusted results alongside the adjusted figures.

In April to June 2020, bus use decreased sharply in London by 80.2% when compared with the same quarter in 2019. **Chart 2** shows a period of declining bus use in London since early 2014. Bus use in England outside London decreased by 84.8% compared with the same quarter in 2019. Bus use decreased at the fastest rate in English non-metropolitan areas. These decreases followed the announcement of movement restrictions due to COVID-19 in March 2020.

Chart 2: Local bus passenger journeys (seasonally adjusted) by metropolitan area status: England, quarterly from April to June 2004 to April to June 2020 (table [BUS0106a](#))



Local passenger journeys in different areas

Figures for England are disaggregated into London, metropolitan areas (the six former metropolitan counties of Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire) and non-metropolitan areas (covering shire counties and unitary authorities).

Local bus fares

Local bus fares in England have increased by 1.9% in the past year to June 2020, faster than the CPI (1.1%). **Chart 3** shows that between 2016 and 2018, the increases in local bus fares and the CPI were relatively similar, but then diverged until recently. Between June 2005 and June 2020, bus fares have risen at a faster rate in metropolitan areas (90.8%) than in non-metropolitan areas (71.4%) (**Chart 4**), while fares in London rose at similar levels up until 2016, before flattening to an increase of 67.6% over the whole period. The all items Consumer Prices Index (CPI) increased by 39.0% over the same period, meaning bus fares have risen in real terms.

Chart 3: Percentage change in Local Bus Fares index and CPI: England and UK, quarterly since March 2011, current prices (table [BUS0415a](#))

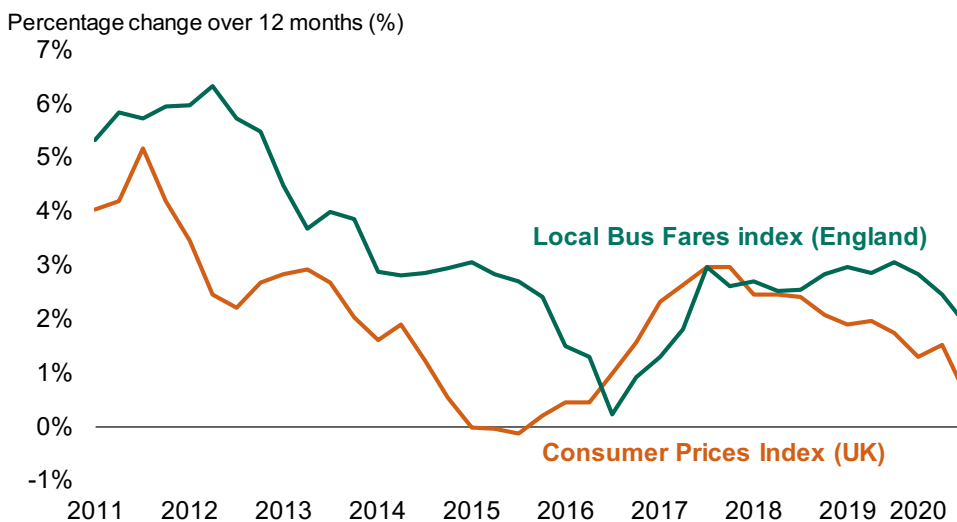
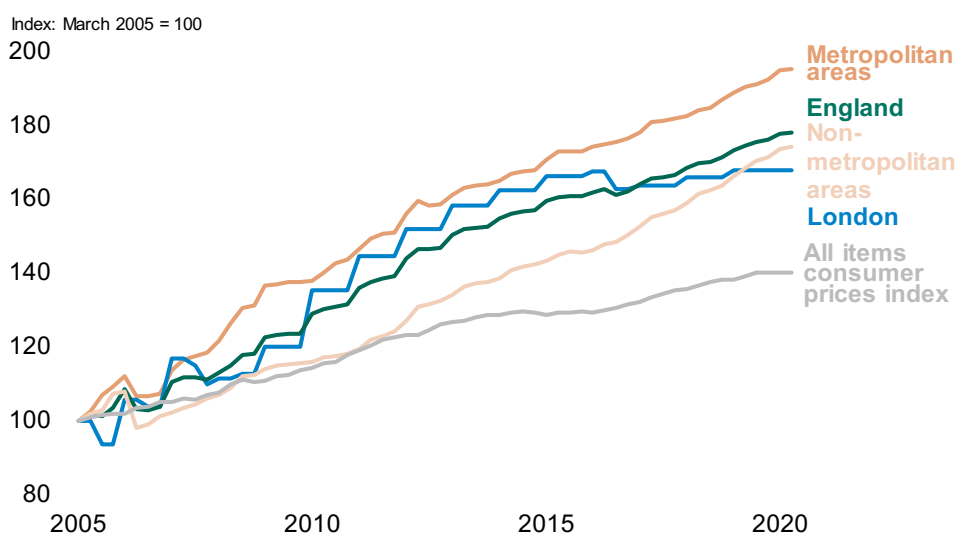


Chart 4: Local bus fares index (at current prices) by metropolitan area status: England, from March 2005 (table [BUS0415a](#))



Revisions to the data in this release

This release includes a revised time series from 2011. The calculation of the index from this point included an adjustment for changes in state pension age and resulting concessionary travel eligibility. This has been improved to better account for changes over time and differences in local policies on concessionary travel. This change results in lower index values. The change in overall levels is small, with the largest effect for London. Further information can be found in the [Background Quality Report](#).

Local bus fares index

The percentage change in bus operator receipts from passengers as a result of any fare changes. These figures provide an estimate of the change in the average cost of bus travel to the passenger but not the actual fare levels paid.

Related information

A longer time series of annual figures is available in table [BUS0405](#).

Monthly inflation figures are published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), with a detailed breakdown by category including bus/coach fares, rail fares and motoring costs.

An annual summary of the ONS transport indices is available in table [TSGB1308](#).

Background information

Data sources, strengths and weaknesses

Estimates of local bus passenger journeys are based on a quarterly panel of the 18 largest non-metropolitan operators, Passenger Transport Executives (for metropolitan areas) and Transport for London (TfL). Data from the quarterly panel is scaled to annual figures from the department's main annual survey of over 500 public service vehicle (PSV) operators, and figures are then seasonally adjusted.

For April to June 2020, data was received from 15 panel members, covering around 85% of the bus journeys made in GB. Quarterly figures are subject to revision due to the nature of the seasonal adjustment and scaling to annual figures. However, these will typically be minor and not affect overall patterns shown. Figures are also subject to revision if a member changes their methodology for collecting bus patronage data. Figures for West Yorkshire, Manchester and GoAhead have been estimated for this release due to changes in collection methodology and issues with data availability.

The quarterly local bus fares index is based on a sample survey of over 100 bus operators and TfL, who supply data each quarter. The index measures change in the 'gross yield'. This is the change in passenger receipts (excluding concessionary fare reimbursement and subsidies from government), which would result from a fares change, assuming no change in passenger numbers. In total the operators selected cover over 90% of passenger receipts in Great Britain, and the sample design ensures operators in each type of area are adequately represented. The survey response rate is high, almost 100% for the last four quarters.

Data on actual fare levels are **not** collected. The index assumes no change in passenger behaviour and therefore may not reflect changes in the average fare actually paid (for example if passengers switch to a different ticket type, or choose not to travel, as a result of fare changes).

Users and uses of these statistics

Within DfT, quarterly bus statistics are used to inform bus policy decisions, for ministerial briefing and to answer public enquiries. Outside DfT, passenger journey figures are used to measure the overall health of the industry and often reported in the trade press. Bus fares data are used by the Office for National Statistics in calculating the Consumer Price Indices.

Next update

A statistical release will now accompany data tables for each quarter.

Quarterly bus statistics for July to September 2020 will be released in December 2020.

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 Code of Practice for Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs. Details of Ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/buses-statistics-pre-release-access-list>.

Further details

The Background Quality Report is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/buses-statistics-guidance>.



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