Department for Transport

Light Rail and Tram Statistics, England: 2019/20

About this release

This statistical release presents the latest annual information on light rail and tram systems in England during the 2019/20 financial year. The release covers light rail and tram use, infrastructure, revenue and passenger experience.

This publication covers eight urban systems that are predominantly surface-running (see table 1 for a list of systems covered). Smaller systems, e.g. heritage railway and airport transit systems, are not included. London and Glasgow undergrounds and Edinburgh Trams are also excluded but statistics for these systems are included in the tables.

In this publication

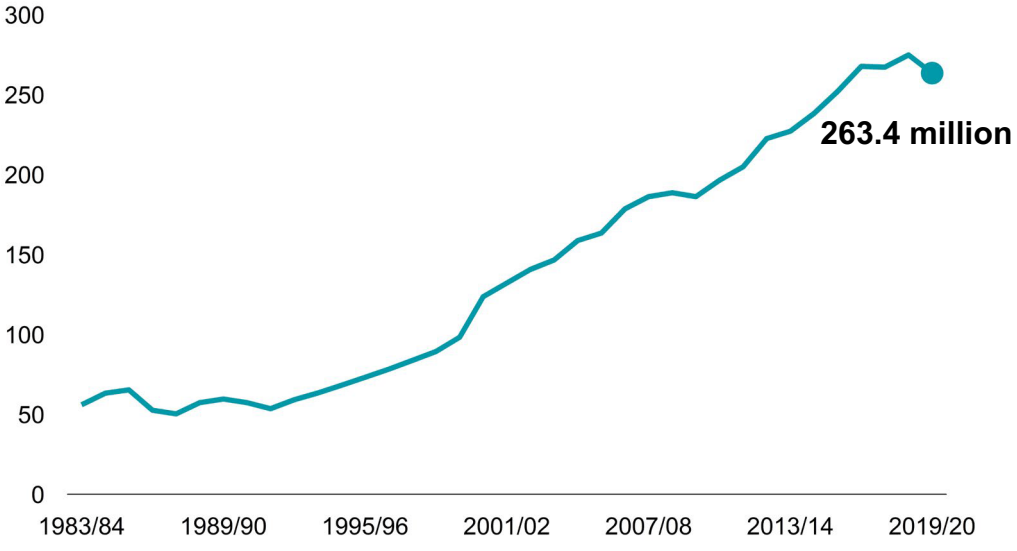
Light rail and tram use in England has seen the biggest decrease in almost 30 years, down 4.2% in 2019/20. The number of passenger journeys has fallen below 2016/17 levels.

263.4m
passenger journeys

↓4.2%
since 2018/19

There were 263.4 million passengers journeys made on the eight light rail and tram systems in England, a 4.2% decrease (11.4 million passenger journeys) compared with the previous year. Outside London passenger journeys decreased by 4.0% to 119.4 million and in London by 4.3% to 144.0 million in the year ending March 2020.

Chart 1: Light rail and tram passenger journeys (millions): England, annually 1983/84 to 2019/20 (table LRT0101)



Comment on Coronavirus (COVID-19) impact

The period covered by this release includes the first few weeks of nationwide movement restrictions in March 2020. Please refer to the Quality Report for details regarding the effects of the restrictions on networks.

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Passenger journeys

263.4 million passenger journeys

14.9 passenger journeys per head

Passenger journeys decreased by 4.2% in 2019/20.

Concessionary journeys

33.8 million passenger journeys

12.8% of all light rail passenger journeys were concessionary.

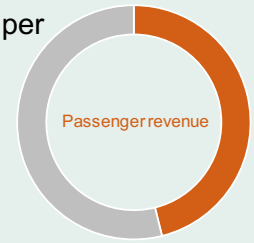
Revenue

£377.2 million revenue from passenger journeys

of which **£31.9 million** concessionary revenue

£1.43 average revenue per passenger journey

£0.94 average revenue per concessionary journey



45% of passenger revenue came from Docklands Light Railway

Revenue decreased by 1.1% in 2019/20 (actual prices).

Mode Share

Light rail stages account for

1% of stages on all modes

5% of stages on public modes

In areas where a light rail system operates.

The distance travelled on light rail accounts for

1% of the distance travelled on all modes

3% of the distance travelled on public modes

See page 7 for the definition of a stage

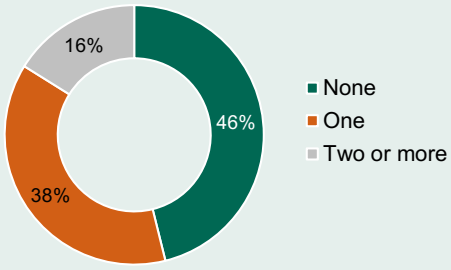
Source: National Travel Survey

Passengers

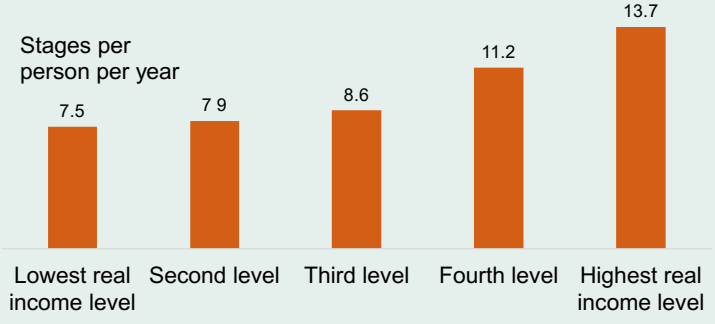
Households without access to a car account for a larger share of trips by light rail.

Higher income households tend to make more trips by light rail.

Journey stages by household car access



Journey stages by household income



See page 7 for the definition of a stage

Source: National Travel Survey

Passenger satisfaction

87-97% of passengers are satisfied with their overall journey

59-91% of fare paying passengers are satisfied with the value for money for their journey

85-93% of passengers are satisfied with the punctuality of the tram

68-89% of passengers are satisfied with the availability of seating or space to stand

Blackpool Tramway (2018), Midland Metro (2018), Manchester Metrolink (2019), Sheffield Supertram (2019)

Source: Transport Focus

Summary Figures

Passenger journeys decreased on all but one of the eight light rail systems, Manchester Metrolink. Vehicle miles decreased for all but three systems, London Tramlink, Midland Metro and Blackpool Tramway. Details of factors impacting on annual figures including Coronavirus (COVID-19), planned closures, weather related closures and technical equipment failures can be found in the Quality Report.

Table 1: Summary of the latest annual light rail and tram figures (2019/20) compared with the previous year (2018/19)

	2019/20 figure (millions) and change compared with previous year								
	Passenger journeys			Vehicle miles			Passenger revenue £ (change in 2019/20 prices)		
England	**263.4**	↓	**-4.2%**	**22.3**	↓	**-0.9%**	**377.2**	↓	**-3.0%**
London systems	**144.0**	↓	**-4.3%**	**5.7**	↓	**-0.3%**	**191.6**	↓	**-3.7%**
Docklands Light Railway	116.8	↓	-4.1%	3.8	↓	-0.5%	168.8	↓	-3.5%
London Tramlink	27.2	↓	-5.3%	2.0	↑	0.2%	22.7	↓	-5.0%
England outside London systems	**119.4**	↓	**-4.0%**	**16.5**	↓	**-1.2%**	**185.7**	↓	**-2.2%**
Nottingham Express Transit	18.7	↓	-0.5%	1.9	↓	-0.6%	21.3	↑	1.5%
Midland Metro	8.0	↓	-2.8%	1.2	↑	8.2%	11.3	↑	3.5%
Sheffield Supertram	10.5	↓	-11.9%	1.5	↓	-4.9%	13.8	↓	-3.3%
Tyne and Wear Metro	33.1	↓	-9.2%	3.3	↓	-4.7%	49.9	↓	-5.5%
Manchester Metrolink	44.3	↑	1.3%	7.9	↓	-0.6%	82.6	↓	-1.3%
Blackpool Tramway	4.8	↓	-7.6%	0.7	↑	2.1%	6.7	↓	-6.1%

The average light rail and tram journey was 4.3 miles in England. In London average journey length was shorter at 3.3 miles, compared to 5.5 miles in England outside of London. These figures have remained unchanged since 2018/19.

Light Rail and Tram Safety

The Office of Rail and Road publish information on passenger injuries on trams, metros and other non-Network Rail networks in Great Britain. In 2018/19 there were 45 injuries, similar to the number in 2017/18 (49). This represents a steady return to the level prior to the London Tramlink derailment in 2016 (44 in 2015/16, 109 in 2016/17).

Office of Rail and Road

For more information on passenger injuries please see the latest ORR release for 2018/19 here.

Infrastructure

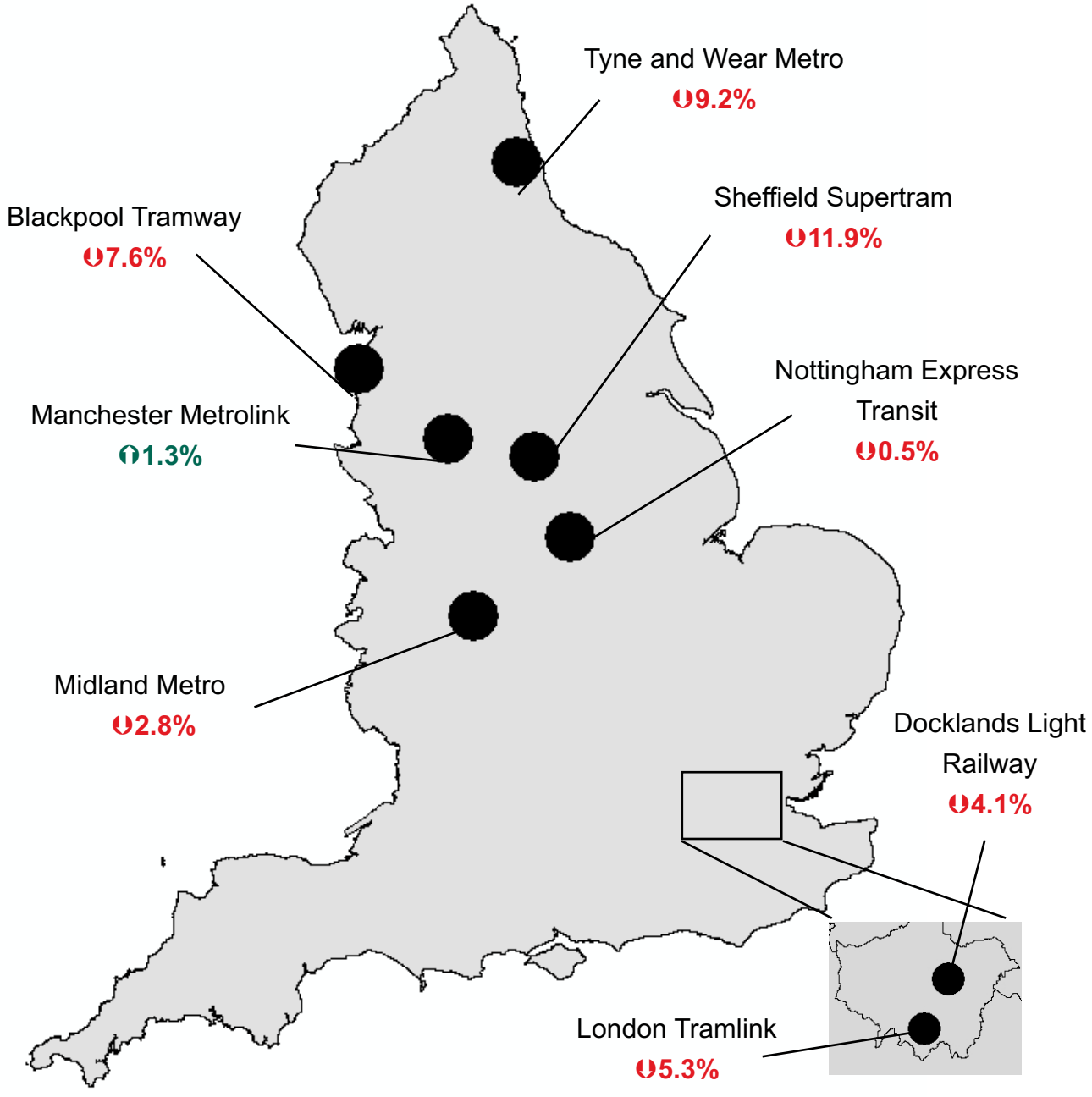
Between 2018/19 and 2019/20 there were an additional two stations and 0.4 route miles for Midland Metro. There were also and additional six stations and 3.4 route miles for Manchester Metrolink. The number of carriages stayed the same on all but one of the light rail and tram systems, Tyne and Wear Metro, which saw a reduction of one.

219 route miles	↑	2%
410 stations	↑	2%
511 carriages	↓	<0.1%

Table 2: System summary (2019/20)

	Length of system (miles)	Number of stops	Number of tram vehicles	Passenger journeys (millions)	Average journey length (miles)
England	**219**	**410**	**511**	**263.4**	**4.3**
London systems	**41**	**84**	**184**	**144.0**	**3.3**
Docklands Light Railway	24	45	149	116.8	3.3
London Tramlink	17	39	35	27.2	3.2
England outside London systems	**178**	**326**	**327**	**119.4**	**5.5**
Nottingham Express Transit	20	50	37	18.7	4.1
Midland Metro	14	28	21	8.0	6.5
Sheffield Supertram	21	50	32	10.5	4.0
Tyne and Wear Metro	48	60	89	33.1	5.4
Manchester Metrolink	64	99	120	44.3	6.5
Blackpool Tramway	11	39	28	4.8	2.7

Map 1: Location and latest annual change in passenger journeys of each light rail and tram system in England

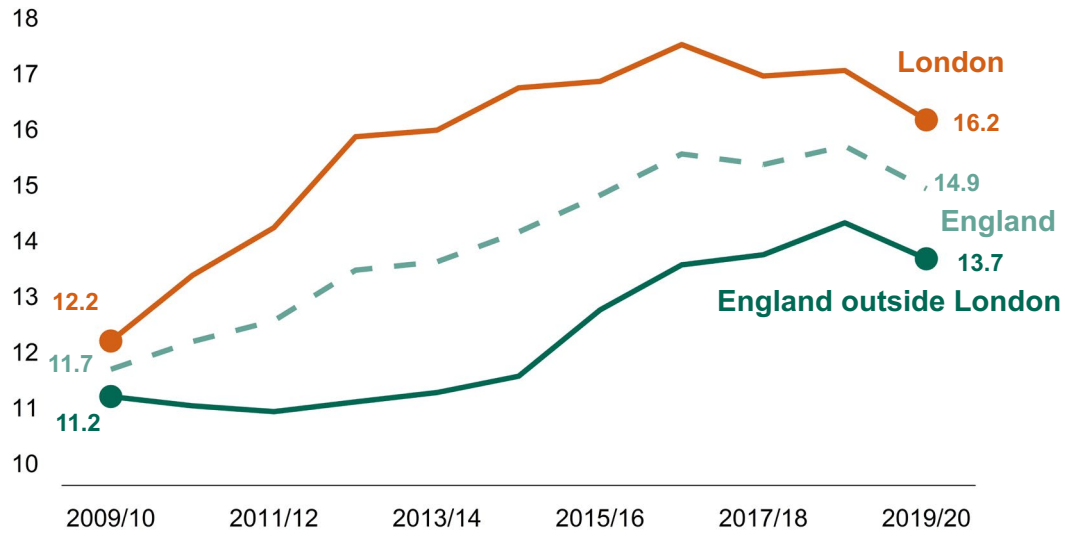


Passenger Journeys

In England, in 2019/20, passenger journeys on light rail and tram systems decreased to 263.4 million, a decrease of 4.2% (11.4 million passenger journeys) when compared with the previous year (chart 1). However, since 2009/10, light rail and tram passenger journeys have increased by 41% .

The average number of light rail and tram journeys per head was 14.9 in 2019/20 compared with 11.7 journeys per head in 2009/10, a 27.8% increase.

Chart 2: Light rail and tram passenger journeys per head: London and England outside London, annually from 2009/10 (table LRT0109)



How are passenger journeys per head calculated?

Passenger journeys per head were calculated as passenger journeys divided by the number of people in the respective Passenger Transport Executives/higher tier authority. Population figures were based on the ONS mid-year population estimates.

Concessionary Journeys

In England, in 2019/20, there were 33.8 million concessionary journeys on light rail and tram systems. This is a decrease of 1.7% when compared to the 2018/19 figure of 34.4 million.

12.8% of all light rail and tram passenger journeys in England were concessionary, similar to last year (12.6%).

Concessionary travel on light rail and trams represents a relatively small proportion of passenger journeys when compared with local bus passenger journeys in England (33%).

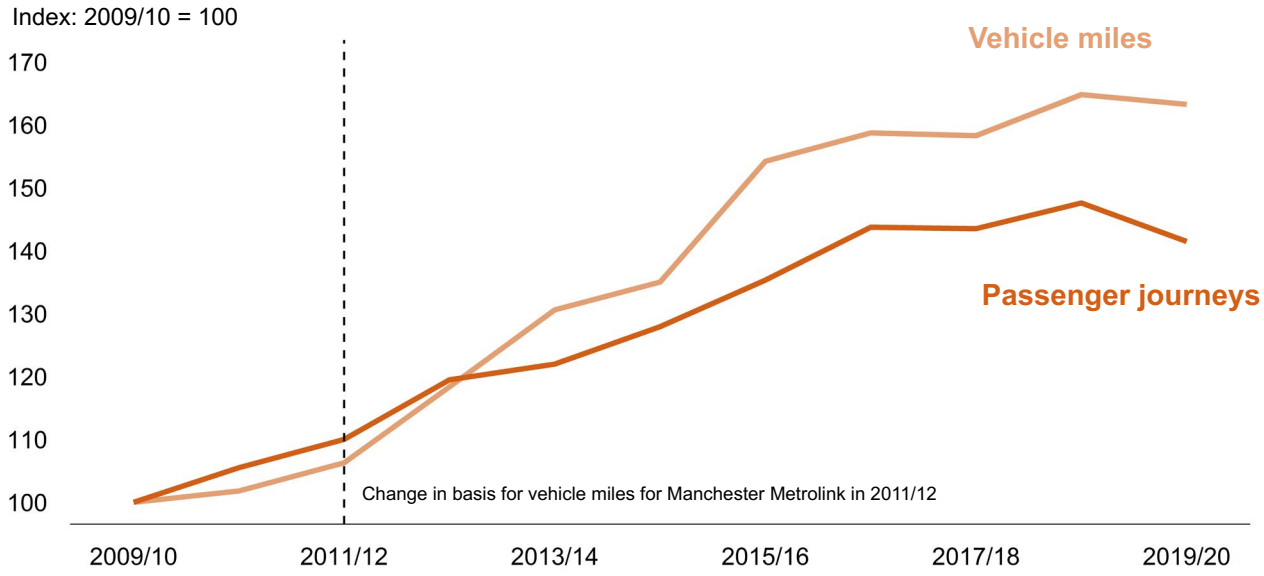
What is a concessionary journey?

Concessionary journeys are those carried out by holders of a concessionary travel pass. These are issued by local authorities for use on buses as part of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme. Local authorities outside of London can offer free travel on light rail systems as a discretionary extra to this scheme. In London, this is a statutory requirement.

Vehicle Mileage

In England, vehicle mileage decreased by 0.9% to 22.3 million miles in 2019/20 compared to 2018/19 (22.5 million miles). Vehicle mileage and passenger journeys on light rail and tram systems have increased since 2009/10 by 63% and 41% respectively.

Chart 3: Light rail and tram passenger journeys and vehicle miles index: England, annually from 2009/10 (tables LRT0101 and LRT0106)

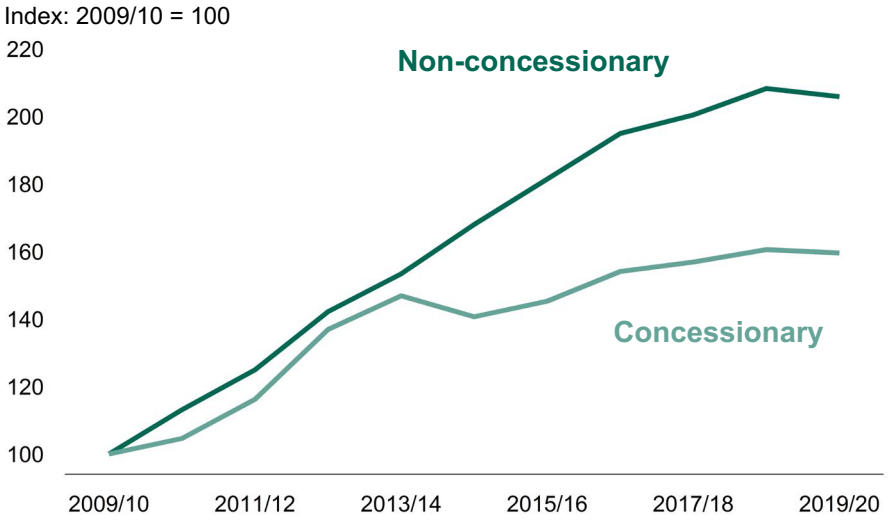


In London, vehicle mileage was 5.7 million miles in 2019/20, down 0.3% from the previous year figure of 5.8 million miles. In England outside London, vehicle mileage decreased by 1.2% from 16.7 million miles in 2018/19 to 16.5 million miles in 2019/20. Since 2009/10, vehicle mileage in London has increased by 29% and in England outside London by 80%.

Revenue

Light rail and tram revenue has decreased for the first time since 1990/91, down by 1.1% (in actual prices) from the previous year to £377.2 million in 2019/20. Concessionary revenue decreased by 0.6% (in actual prices) from the previous year to £31.9 million (chart 4). Average concessionary revenue per journey increased from £0.93 to £0.94 between 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Chart 4: Light rail and tram non-concessionary and concessionary revenue index: England, annually from 2009/10, at actual prices (tables LRT0301a and LRT0302a)



The National Travel Survey (NTS) gathers data on personal travel behaviour across England and can be used to analyse users of light rail and tram systems in areas where such systems exist.

Purpose of trip

Commuting, leisure and shopping are the most common purposes for journeys using light rail systems.

In England, 17.2 miles are travelled per person per year for commuting purposes, 9.7 miles for leisure and 7.2 miles for shopping.

Light rail systems are used more for commuting in London than systems in England outside London (55% of stages compared with 28%).

National Travel Survey

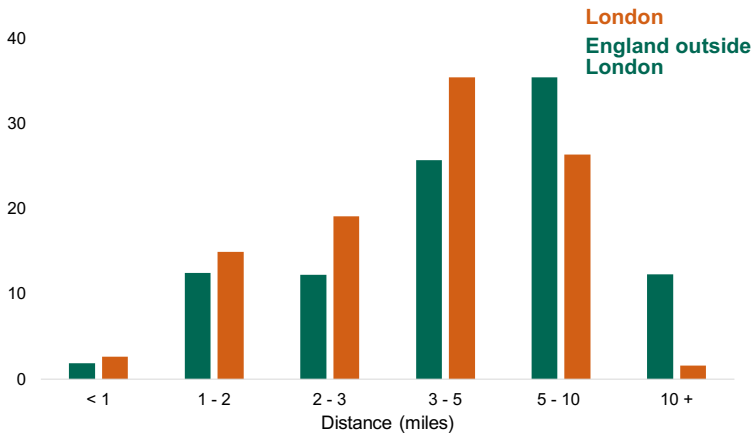
The National Travel Survey is a household survey carried out on over 16,000 individuals in England every year. For more information, please click here.

Detailed Statistics can be found in table LRT0401.

Distance travelled

The distance travelled in a light rail or tram journey is longer in England outside London, with 47% of journeys over 5 miles, compared to just 28% in London (chart 5).

Chart 5: Percentage of light rail and tram stages by stage distance, London and England outside London (LRT0401g)



Time spent

More time is spent travelling on light rail systems in England outside London (222 minutes per person per year) than in London (183.1 minutes per person per year).

Comparison to other modes

In areas where a system operates, light rail and tram use accounts for around 5% of public transport stages, and around 1% of stages on all modes per person per year.

Light rail and tram use accounts for around 3% of the distance travelled by passengers on public transport, and also around 3% of time spent on public transport, in areas of England where a system operates.

What is a stage?

Every trip can consist of one or more stages. A new stage is defined when there is a change in the mode of transport.

Transport Focus surveyed passenger experience across Manchester Metrolink and Sheffield Supertram in the winter of 2019. In 2018, Blackpool Tramway and Midland Metro were also surveyed. Table 3 shows the most recent passenger satisfaction data for each of these networks.

Overall satisfaction was between 87-97%. Satisfaction remained high across all systems.

Detailed statistics

Transport Focus Tram Passenger Survey can be found here.

Table 3: Summary of passenger satisfaction on light rail and tram systems in 2018 and 2019, and the change compared with the previous year.

	Latest data	Overall journey satisfaction		Value for money		Punctuality	
Blackpool Tramway	2018	97%	0%	91%	3%	93%	2%
Midland Metro	2018	87%	-3%	71%	3%	87%	-5%
Sheffield Supertram	2019	96%	-1%	76%	-1%	89%	2%
Manchester Metrolink	2019	87%	-2%	59%	-1%	85%	-4%

Source: Transport Focus

Transport for London

Transport for London (TfL) publish London Underground performance data. For more information see here.

Transport for London also publish data on DLR performance. For more information see here

Across the last few years, the key factors found to have made light rail and tram journeys great are:

- Value for money
- On tram environment and comfort
- Timeliness
- Boarding and alighting the tram
- Cleanliness and condition of the tram
- Smoothness and speed of the tram

Overall journey satisfaction on Sheffield Supertram is 96%, higher than the same measure on the Autumn 2019 Bus Passenger Survey for South Yorkshire (89% satisfaction). On Manchester Metrolink it is 87%, the same level as that measured on the Bus Passenger Survey for Greater Manchester.

Background Information

These statistics were designated as National Statistics 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.

Further information on data quality, including the methods used to compile these statistics and background information about the systems covered can be found in the Quality Report.

Users and uses of these statistics

These statistics are collected to provide information on light rail and tram systems within England to monitor trends in passenger journeys, service provision and revenue. They help to provide a comprehensive picture of public transport use in Great Britain.

Within DfT, they are used as background information in the development of light rail and tram policy, 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.

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

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.

As the figures are provided by different operators there are some differences in the methods used, which may affect comparisons between different systems, although the effect of this is difficult to assess.

Next update

The next Light Rail and Tram Statistics release is due to be published in summer 2021.

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