



Department for Transport

Concessionary Travel Statistics: England, 2014/15

About this release

This release covers concessionary bus travel in England. It provides the most up to date statistics on the number of older and disabled concessionary passes, the number of concessionary bus journeys, and the reimbursement for concessionary fares to Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs).

These statistics are derived from a DfT survey of TCAs undertaken in July 2015, covering 90 areas: the 89 TCAs outside London, and London Councils.

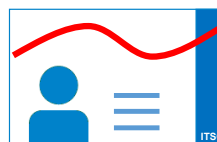
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There were 9.8 million older and disabled concessionary travel passes in England in 2014/15, an increase of 1.2% over the year. Total concessionary bus journeys fell by 1.3% over the same period.

There were **9.0 million older passes in England** in 2014/15, an increase on 2013/14 of 1.1%.



↑ 1.1%

There was also an **increase in the number of disabled passes: by 1.3% to 892,000.**



↑ 1.3%

There were about **1.0 billion concessionary bus journeys** in England in 2014/15, down 1.3% on 2013/14



↓ 1.3%

Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs) spent an estimated **£1.2 billion** on providing statutory and discretionary concessions.



£1.2bn

Summary table

Figures are shown for London, metropolitan areas (Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire) and non-metropolitan areas (shire counties and unitary authorities).

Table 1: Concessionary travel figures by area: England, 2014/15 compared to 2013/14

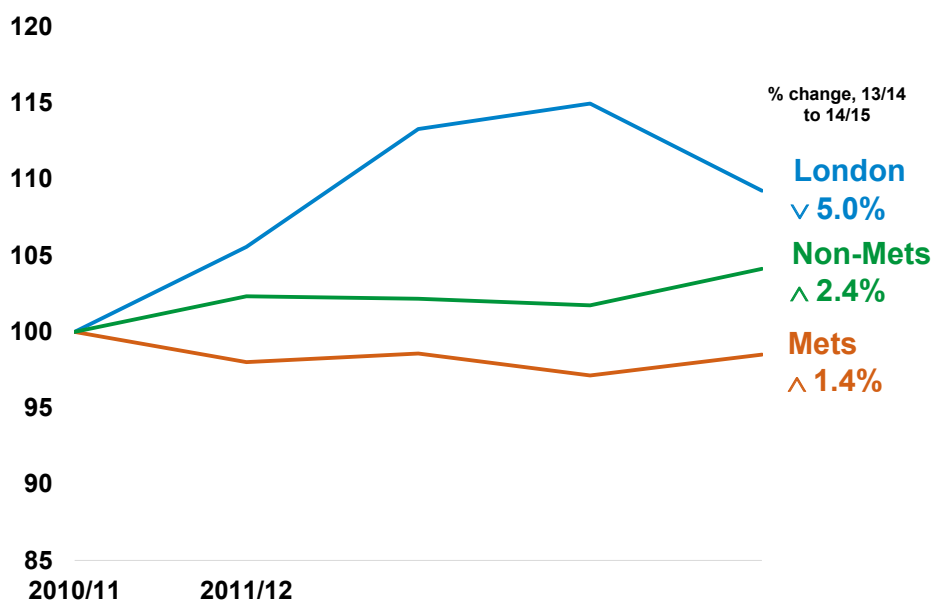
	Total passes ¹ of which:			Journeys ¹	Reimbursement for concessionary bus journeys (2014/15 prices)	% spent on statutory scheme	
	Older	Disabled					
	2014/15 (millions) and % change since 2013/14						% in 2014/15
England	9.84 ↑ 1.2%	8.95 ↑ 1.1%	0.89 ↑ 1.3%	1,004 ↓ 1.3%	£943 ↓ 0.7%	80%	
London	1.26 ↓ 5.0%	1.10 ↓ 4.6%	0.16 ↓ 7.5%	296 ↓ 1.2%	£239 ↑ 0.7%	69%	
Outside London	8.58 ↑ 2.1%	7.85 ↑ 2.0%	0.73 ↑ 3.5%	708 ↓ 1.3%	£703 ↓ 1.2%	85%	
Metropolitan areas	2.20 ↑ 1.4%	1.95 ↑ 1.6%	0.25 ↔ 0.0%	282 ↓ 1.5%	£253 ↓ 2.1%	74%	
Non-metropolitan areas	6.38 ↑ 2.4%	5.91 ↑ 2.1%	0.48 ↑ 5.4%	426 ↓ 1.2%	£450 ↓ 0.7%	93%	

¹ Older and disabled passholders and journeys

Concessionary passes

There were 9.8 million older and disabled concessionary passes in England in 2014/15, an increase of 112,000 (1.2%) since 2013/14. There were increases in the metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, but in London the number of passes decreased by 5.0% to 1.3 million. It is thought this decrease was mainly due to some older people moving out of London and not renewing their passes. England outside of London had the highest total of passes seen in the 5 years of the survey.

Chart 1: Concessionary pass holders by area: England, index 2010/11 = 100 (table [BUS0820](#))



The ENCTS

A statutory bus concession for older and disabled people has been in place since 2001. In 2008, the concession was extended to cover free local bus travel between 0930 and 2300 to older and disabled people anywhere in England. This statutory concession is referred to as the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS).

Older and disabled people holding an ENCTS pass are allowed to travel for free on local bus services anywhere in England, between 0930 and 2300 during weekdays and anytime at weekends and bank holidays. The scheme is administered by Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs). Some TCAs offer discretionary concessions in addition to the statutory ENCTS scheme, such as free or reduced travel before 0930 or on other transport modes

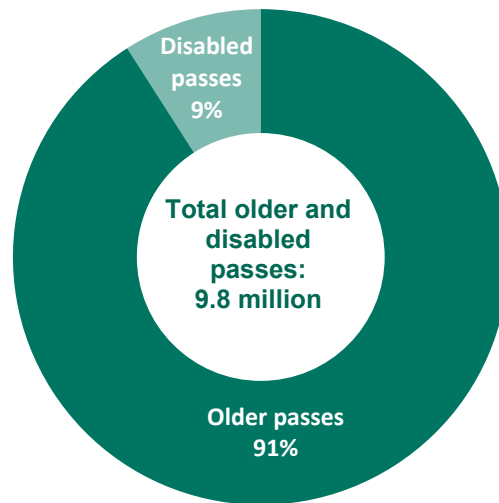
In London, the statutory concession for London residents covers the whole London Local Transport Network.

Detailed statistics

are available online as part of the bus statistical series:

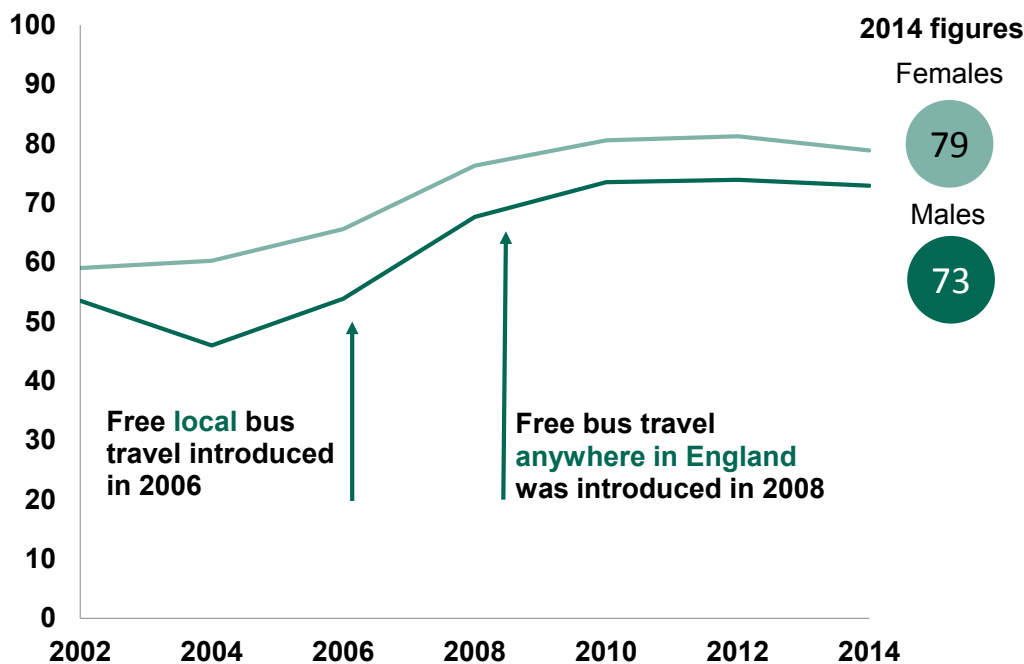
- Concessionary passholders in table [BUS0820](#)

Of the total number of passes, around 9.0 million (91%) were for older people and 9% for disabled people. The proportion does vary by area type, however. In London and the metropolitan areas, the proportion of older passes was slightly lower (at 87% and 89% respectively). In non-metropolitan areas it was slightly higher (93%). For each year since 2010/11, these proportions have been broadly similar in each of the area types.



There were about 80 older passes per 100 eligible population in England in 2014/15. This proportion has increased each year since 2010/11. The figures are broadly comparable with the National Travel Survey (NTS) which has a longer time series of concessionary travel take up rates, and allows for more detailed analysis of the people who hold them.

Chart 2: Eligible older people who hold a concessionary pass: England, National Travel Survey since 2002 (table [NTS0620](#))



The NTS estimated that in 2014 76% of people held an older person's concessionary pass. The proportion was higher for women (79%) than men (73%). The proportions have risen from 58% and 47% respectively in England in 2005, the year before the introduction of free local bus travel.

Detailed statistics

are available online as part of the bus statistical series:

- Concessionary passes in table [BUS0820](#)
- Concessionary passes by Travel Concession Authority (TCA) in table [BUS0822](#)

Eligible population

Since April 2010, the eligibility age has been tied to the State Pension age for women. The pensionable age for women is rising, to reach 65 by 2018 and 66 for both men and women by 2020. See tables for ages used to estimate the eligible population.

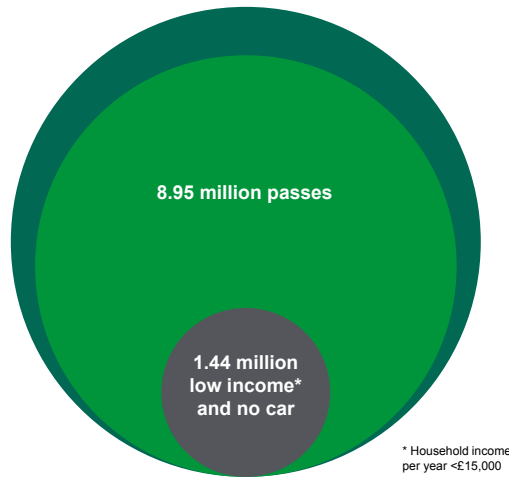
The National Travel Survey

The NTS is a household survey and the primary data source on personal travel patterns in Great Britain. The NTS celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2015.

- concessionary travel schemes take up by area in table [NTS0619](#)
- Concessionary travel schemes take up by gender in table [NTS0620](#)
- Frequency of bus use by people aged 60 years or over in table [NTS0621](#)

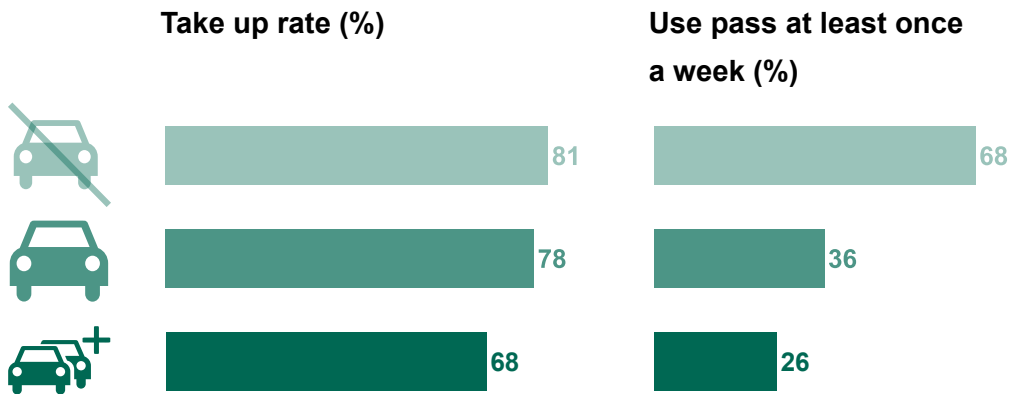
There were 9.0 million passes out of an estimated 11.1 million people who were eligible for a pass. The NTS estimates that about 42% of older passholders used their pass at least once a week.

11.12 million eligible population

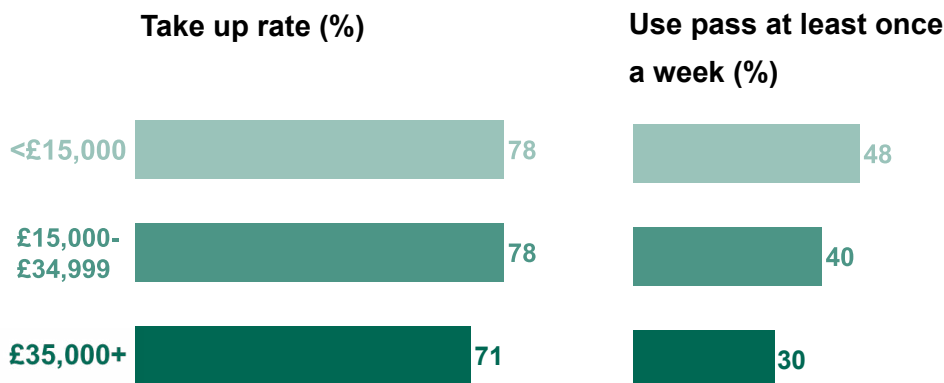


The NTS also estimates that 1.4 million (16%) of those people with a pass were on a low income (defined as household income less than £15,000 per year) and had no car.

The take up rate and use of a concessionary pass differs for older people in these two groups. For example, older people with no car access are more likely to have and use a pass (81% and 68% respectively) than older people with two or more cars (68% and 26%)



Similarly, older people with lower incomes (less than £15,000 per year) are more likely to have and use a pass (78% and 48% respectively) compared to 71% and 30% for older people with an income of £35,000 or more per year.



Overall, the NTS estimates that there 940,000 older people with a low income and no car access used their pass at least once a week.

Passes vs passholders

The Concessionary Travel Survey aggregates the number of **passes** reported by TCAs from their administrative databases. While this provides a reasonable proxy for the number of **passholders**, the returns are known to include a number of inactive passes, issued to people who are deceased or no longer resident in the area.

The National Travel Survey is a sample survey that asks respondents whether they are a concessionary **passholder**.

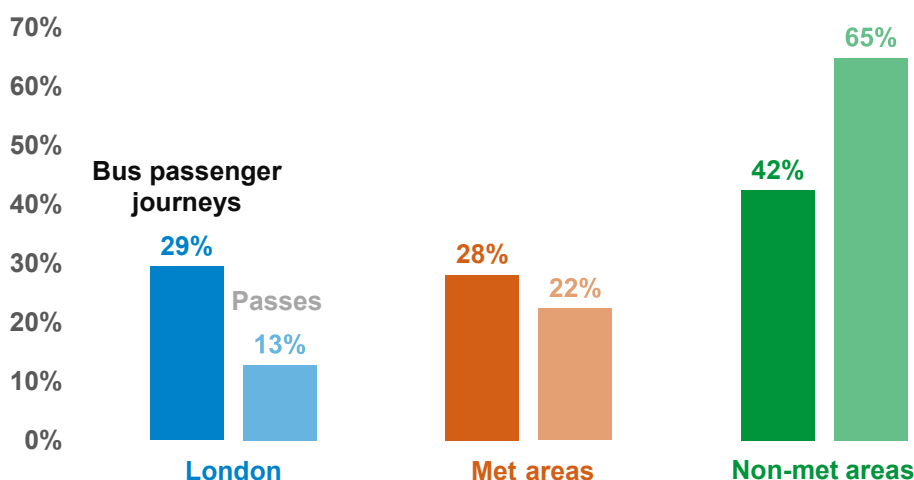
This means that are differences between estimates of passholders depending on which of the two sources is used. However, the two sources produce broadly comparable totals.

Concessionary bus journeys

There were 1.0 billion concessionary bus passenger journeys in 2014/15, a decrease of 1.3% (about 13 million journeys) on the previous year. In London, metropolitan areas and non-metropolitan areas the percentage decrease was similar.

London accounted for 29% of the journeys, but only 13% of the passes (Chart 3). A similar proportion of journeys were in metropolitan areas, and the remaining 42% were in non-metropolitan areas.

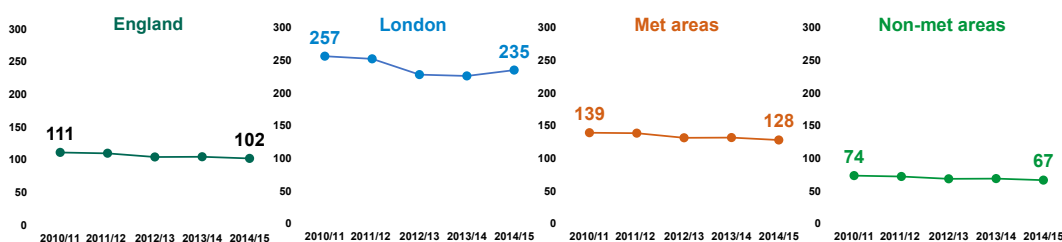
Chart 3: Distribution of concessionary passes and bus journeys: England 2014/15



This means the highest numbers of concessionary bus journeys per pass were in London, at around 235 journeys per pass in 2014/15. This is more than three times the 67 journeys per pass in non-metropolitan areas (Chart 4).

With pass numbers increasing and the number of journeys staying level or decreasing over the last few years, this has meant that in England as a whole (and in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas) there has been a declining trend in journeys per pass. Only in London, where journeys have decreased at a slower rate than passes, was this trend reversed in the last year.

Chart 4: Concessionary journeys per pass by area status: England, 2010/11 onwards (table [BUS0821](#))



Statistical tables

- Concessionary journeys and concessionary journeys per pass by metropolitan area status in table [BUS0821](#)

- Total bus passenger journeys (including fare paying passengers and concessions) in table series [BUS01](#)

Journeys per pass

These averages are derived by dividing the total number of journeys by total passes. In practice, concessionary journeys are unlikely to be evenly distributed across all passes and passholders resident in one area type may make journeys in another area. For example journeys by non-London passes form part of London's total journeys, but the figures available do not disaggregate these.

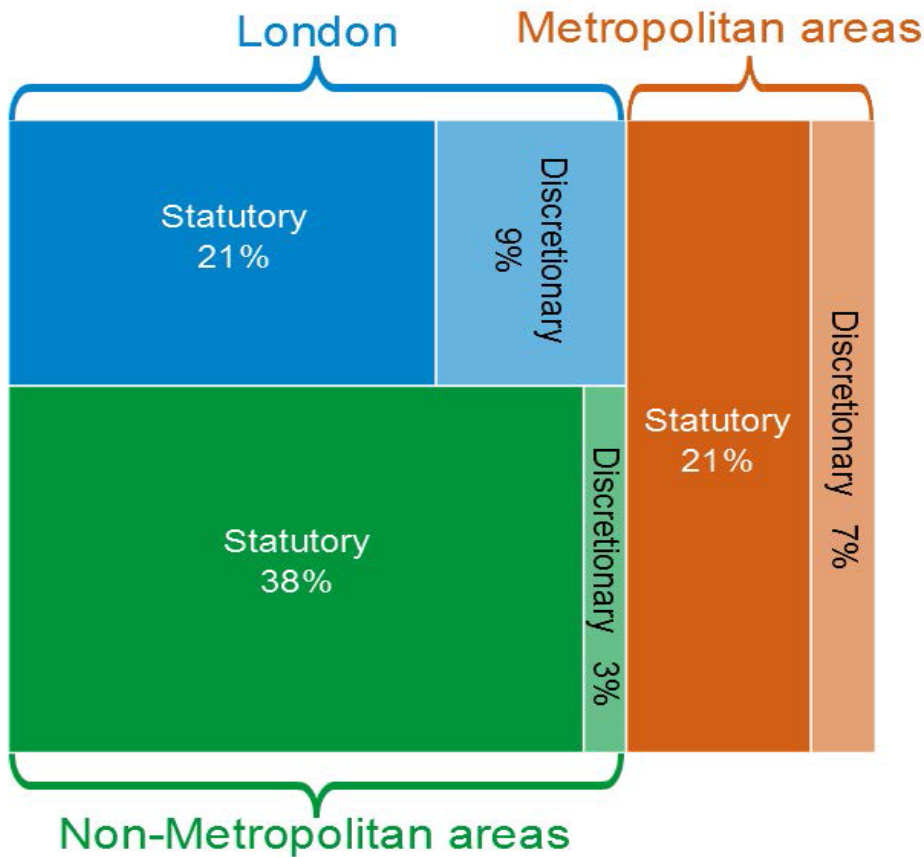
Statistical tables

- The number of disability accessible and low floor buses can be found in table [BUS0603](#)

Expenditure on concessionary travel

In 2014/15, English TCAs estimated they spent around £1.2 billion on concessionary travel. Nearly 40% of this was spent on the statutory ENCTS scheme in non-metropolitan areas.

Chart 5: Distribution of net concessionary expenditure by area: England, 2014/15



Overall, English TCAs spent 80% of their concessionary travel net expenditure on the statutory ENCTS scheme. The remaining 20% was spent on discretionary concessions such as youth and non-bus concessions.

Over the last 5 years the proportions spent on the statutory scheme for each of the three areas types (London, metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas) have varied little over time, although for non-metropolitan areas there has been a downward trend in the amount spent on discretionary concessions. The figure has decreased from 11% in 2010/11 to 7% in 2014/15.

There is variation between the areas. Metropolitan areas spent 26% of their concessionary travel expenditure on discretionary concessions, compared to the 7% figure in non-metropolitan areas. In London, the figure was even higher at 31%. These figures reflect the prevalence of different types of transport in metropolitan areas such as trams, which may be offered as discretionary concessions.

Net expenditure

Net current expenditure is the expenditure that local authorities spend on running the concessionary travel scheme in their area. It covers all aspects of the scheme for both the statutory and discretionary elements (if offered by the authority), including reimbursement to bus operators (the largest element), administration, pass production costs and employee costs.

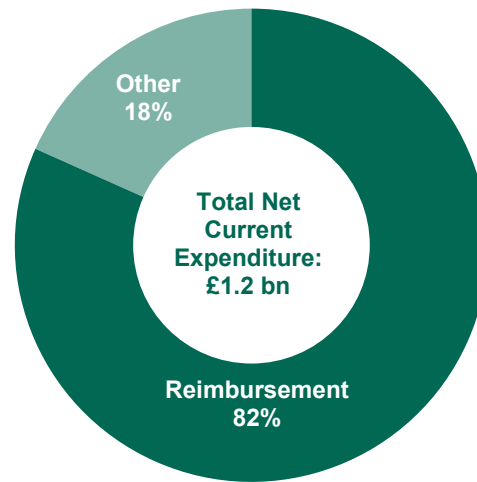
Data on total concessionary travel expenditure by TCAs is also collected by the Department for Communities and Local Government as part of the revenue outturn (RO2 data collection). The latest data for 2014/15 will be published later in the year.

Statistical tables:

- Expenditure on ENCTS as a proportion of total expenditure on concessionary travel in table [BUS0810](#)
- The most recent DCLG Net Current Expenditure figures are available in table [BUS0811](#)

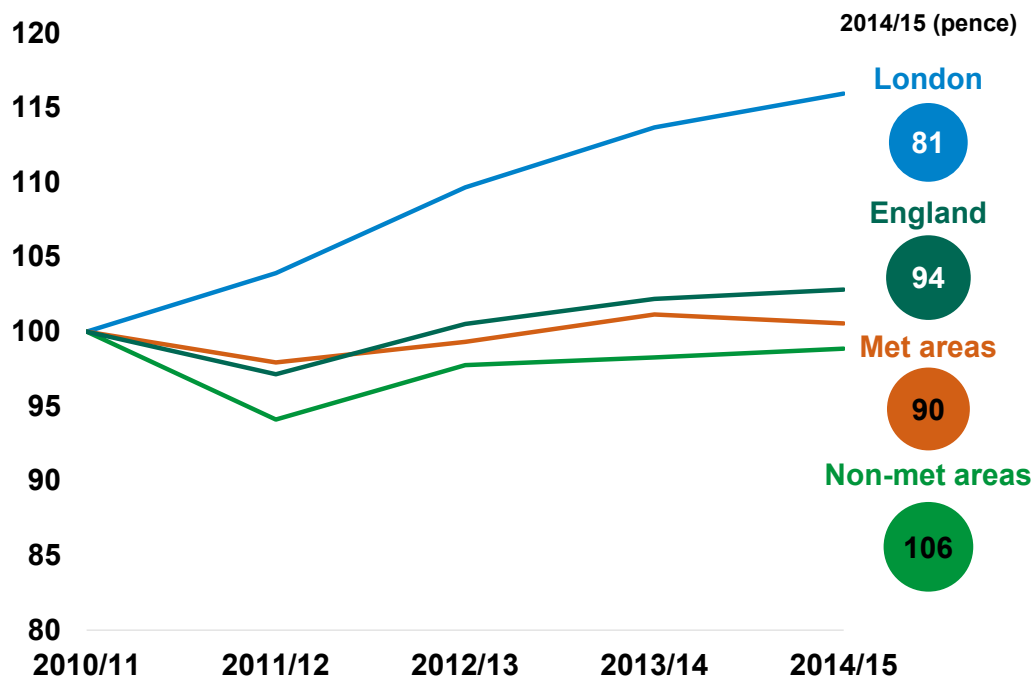
Distribution of expenditure

The expenditure figures in the previous section cover the total expenditure on concessionary travel, including reimbursement and administration (see Box on page 6). The data in this section concentrates on how that expenditure is distributed. The figures focus on cost of reimbursing bus operators for carrying older and disabled passengers, both statutory and discretionary.



Reimbursement is the largest element of a TCAs concessionary expenditure. In 2014/15, TCAs estimated they spent 82% of their total concessionary net expenditure on reimbursement. This was a total of £943 million and was a decrease in real terms (i.e. adjusted for inflation) of 0.7% on the £950 million reimbursed in 2013/14.

Chart 6: Reimbursement per concessionary journey: England, index =2010/11



Average reimbursement was 94p per journey across England in 2014/15. It varied in different areas: in London it was lower at 81p per journey. In non-metropolitan areas it was 106p per journey. In London, the average reimbursement per journey has risen by 16% in real terms since 2010/11. Outside of London it has remained broadly level.

Reimbursement

The Department publishes guidance on the ways TCAs can calculate the cost of reimbursement to bus operators in their area.

The underlying principle which underpins reimbursement is set out in domestic Regulations which state that operators should be left 'no better and no worse off' as a result of the existence of concessionary travel schemes.

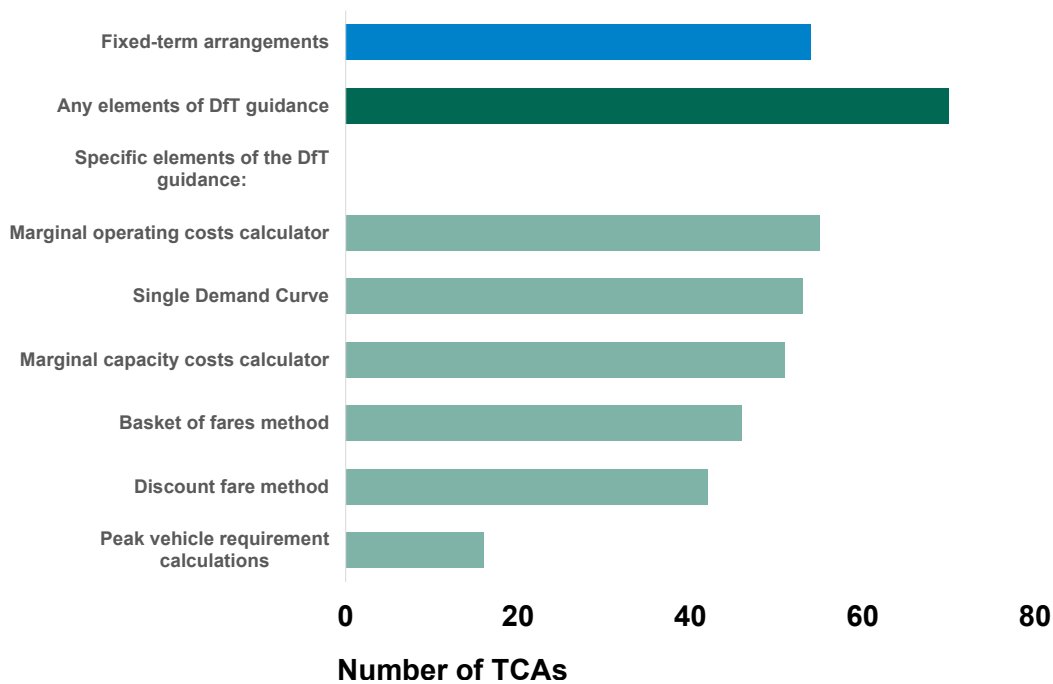
TCAs need to estimate the various components of reimbursement. These include an estimate of the revenue that would have been received in the absence of a scheme ("revenue foregone"), based on journeys and fares that would have been made and received.

They also need to estimate additional costs that the operator would have incurred, such as scheme administration costs; marginal operating costs (the costs of carrying additional passengers assuming service levels are held constant) and Peak Vehicle Requirement (PVR) costs – the costs associated with the requirement to run additional vehicles in the peak period due to generated concessionary travel.

Reimbursement of bus operators

The Department publishes guidance on the ways TCAs can calculate the cost of reimbursement to operators in their area. At least 70 TCAs stated they were using the guidance, either as starting point for negotiating with bus operators, or for calculating the reimbursement due in 2015/16. TCAs can use different methods for different operators in their area. At least 54 TCAs had an arrangement that pays a fixed cost for concessionary journeys with at least one of the bus operators in their area.

Chart 7: Bus operator reimbursement methods: England, 2014/15



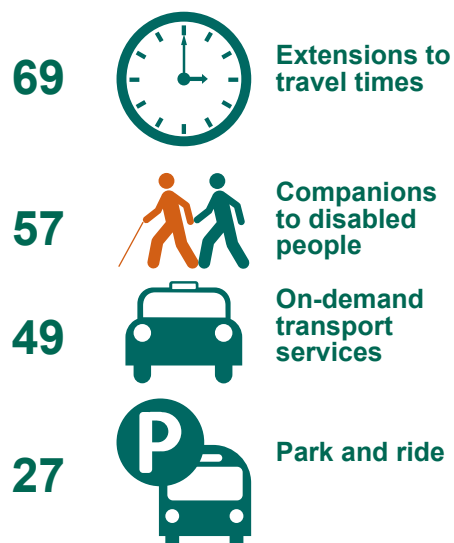
Statistical tables:

- Reimbursement to bus operators in table [BUS0830a](#) (not adjusted for inflation)
- Reimbursement to bus operators in table [BUS0830b](#) (adjusted for inflation)
- Reimbursement methods in table [BUS0831](#)
- Table BUS0830b adjusts for inflation using the HM Treasury GDP deflator as at 27 June 2014 which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gdp-deflators-at-market-prices-and-money-gdp-june-2014-quarterly-national-accounts>

Discretionary concessions

Since 2010/11 almost all of the 89 TCAs outside London have offered some discretionary travel concession over and above the statutory minimum ENCTS. The most commonly offered discretionary concessions are extensions to the statutory time period (69 TCAs in 2015/16), free or reduced travel for companions background information on to disabled people and concessions on on-demand or community transport. This discretion includes taxi tokens, travel vouchers, Dial-a-Ride and other discretionary travel community transport schemes.

Number of authorities offering discretion:



Discretionary concessions

TCAs may offer residents discretionary enhancements over and above the statutory scheme, including free travel outside the statutory time period or on other transport modes (on trams, for example)

Detailed statistical tables

- Discretionary travel enhancements in table [BUS0841](#)

Travel concessions for young people

Concessions for young people fall into two categories – those offered by TCAs and those offered by bus operators on a commercial basis. One or both of these types of concessions may be available to young people in a TCA.

In 22 of the 89 TCAs outside London, a youth concession is offered by the TCA. A youth concession is offered by at least one commercial bus operator in 74 TCAs outside London.

Detailed statistics

on concessions for young people can be found in table [BUS0842](#)

Background information

Detailed information, including a full history of the concessionary travel policy, can be found in the Notes and Definitions document that accompanies this statistical release.

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

Many of the the statistics in this report are derived from the annual DfT survey of Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs) covering 90 areas: the 89 TCAs outside London plus London Councils. However, in each of these years, not all respondents answered all questions in full. The response rate achieved is comparable with that achieved in other DfT surveys of local authorities.

Where data were missing, information from adjacent years and from TCA websites (for discretionary and youth concessions) was used to impute for non-response.

The accompanying Notes and Definitions document, including details of the imputation methods used to derive the national-level totals, is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/buses-statistics-guidance>

Furthermore, in light of information received in the most recent survey, some revisions have been made to the figures for previous years. For example, where a TCA has not previously responded but did respond in 2015, we have used the 2015 survey as a basis for imputing figures for the previous years. In addition, a small number of TCAs provided revisions to figures supplied last year.

Further information and statistics on concessionary travel

These figures have not been assessed by the UK Statistics Authority, and so are not National Statistics. However, they have been produced in compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

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/organisations/department-for-transport/series/bus-statistics>

The Department for Transport's National Travel Survey collects some information about concessionary travel, including the demographic characteristics of pass holders. These statistics can be found here in tables NTS0620 and NTS0619: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts06-age-gender-and-modal-breakdown>

The Department for Transport's Survey of Public Service Vehicle Operators (PSV Survey) also collects figures for concessionary bus journeys. These data, which includes youth concessionary journeys as well as older and disabled journeys can be found in the bus statistics series along with data relating to a range of other aspects of bus travel, including overall patronage and operator finance and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/bus-statistics>

Users and uses of these statistics

Within the Department for Transport, these statistics are used to understand the impact of changes to the concessionary travel scheme and reimbursement guidance, for ministerial briefing and to answer public enquiries. Outside the Department, users include TCAs and others with an interest in concessionary travel, such as campaign groups, bus operators and specialist transport press.

Feedback

We welcome any feedback on these statistics, to ensure future releases best meet user needs. Feedback can be provided by email to bus.statistics@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

Next update

The next Concessionary Travel Statistics are due to be published in autumn 2016.