



Bus Statistics: Concessionary Travel in England, 2012/13

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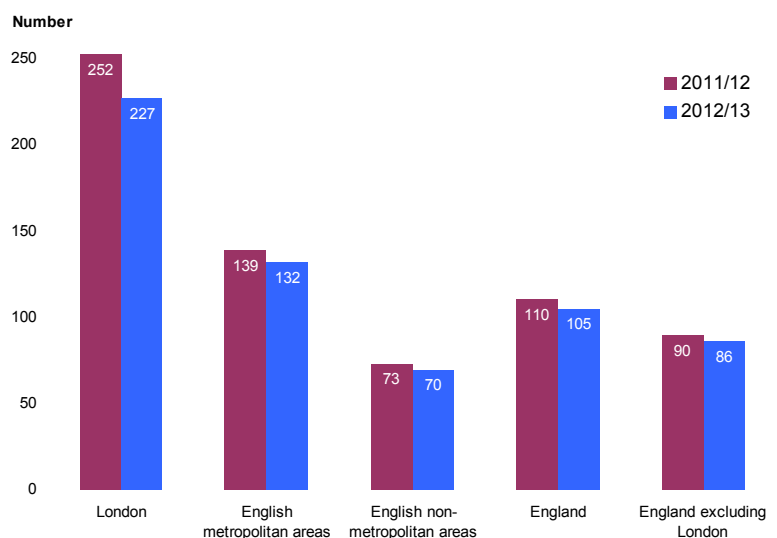
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Main findings: Small increase in concessionary passes, concessionary journeys down

There were 9.7 million older and disabled concessionary passes in England in 2012/13 and about 1.0 billion older and disabled concessionary bus journeys over the same period, statistics from the Department for Transport suggest.

- The number of older and disabled passes increased by about 1% on 2011/12 levels, while the number of journeys decreased by about 4% compared to 2011/12.
- The number of concessionary **older passes** was broadly level between 2011/12 and 2012/13, with an increase of 73 thousand in London offsetting a similar fall in areas outside London.
- The number of **disabled passes** rose by 7% to 853 thousand in 2012/13. This was a proportionately larger increase than the growth in older passes which reflects the gradual increase in the age of eligibility for older passes.
- With concessionary passes staying at a broadly similar level over the year to 2012/13, the reduction in the number of journeys has meant a drop in the average number of journeys per pass. In 2012/13, this average stood at 105 journeys per pass per year in England, down from 110 in 2011/12.

Average number of bus concessionary journeys per pass, by area: England, 2011/12 and 2012/13 [table BUS0821]



About these statistics

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 and August 2013, covering 90 areas: the 89 TCAs outside London, and London Councils.

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Summary figures

The table summarises the latest annual figures.

Figures for England are broken down into London (London Councils), metropolitan areas (which are the six Integrated Transport Authorities of Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire) and non-metropolitan areas (the remaining Travel Concession Authorities).

	Total older and disabled concessionary passes	Older and disabled concessionary journeys	Reimbursement for concessionary bus journeys (2012/13 prices)
	2012/13 Compared to 2011/12	2012/13 Compared to 2011/12	2012/13 Compared to 2011/12
England	9.70 million; ▲ 0.6%	1,016 million; ▼ 4.4%	£906 million; ▼ 0.3%
London	1.31 million; ▲ 7.3%	296 million; ▼ 3.5%	£225 million; ▲ 4.9%
Outside London	8.40 million; ▼ 0.4%	720 million; ▼ 4.7%	£680 million; ▼ 1.9%
Metropolitan areas	2.20 million; ▲ 0.6%	290 million; ▼ 4.6%	£248 million; ▼ 3.1%
Non-metropolitan areas	6.19 million; ▼ 0.7%	431 million; ▼ 4.8%	£432 million; ▼ 1.2%

Detailed statistical tables are available online as part of the [bus statistics series](#)

- Concessionary passholders in table [BUS0820](#)
- Concessionary journeys in table [BUS0821](#)
- Reimbursement to bus operators in table [BUS0830](#)

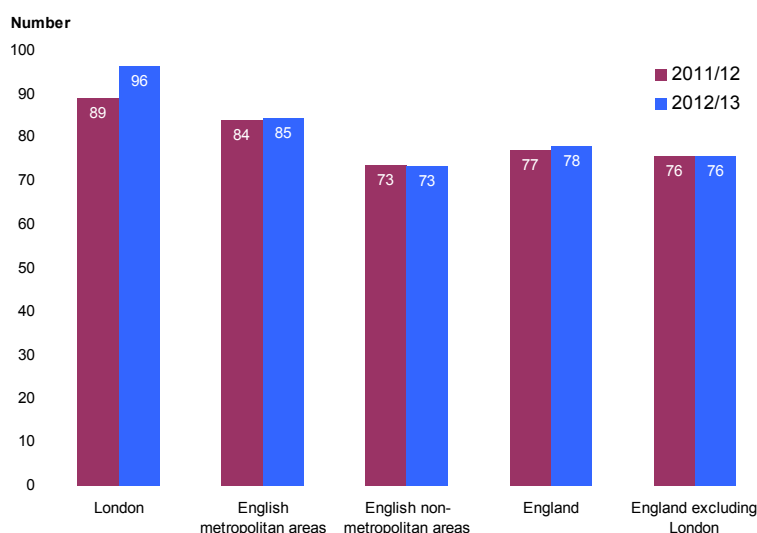
Concessionary passholders and concessionary bus journeys

Older and disabled people holding a statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (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 at a local level 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, including the London underground and trams.

- There were around 9.7m older and disabled concessionary passes¹ in England in 2012/13, an increase of around 59 thousand since 2011/12.
- Around 8.8m (91 per cent) of passes in 2012/13 were for older people. The growth in London of about 73 thousand older passes offset a

Concessionary passes per 100 eligible older people, by area: England, 2011/12 and 2012/13 [table BUS0820]



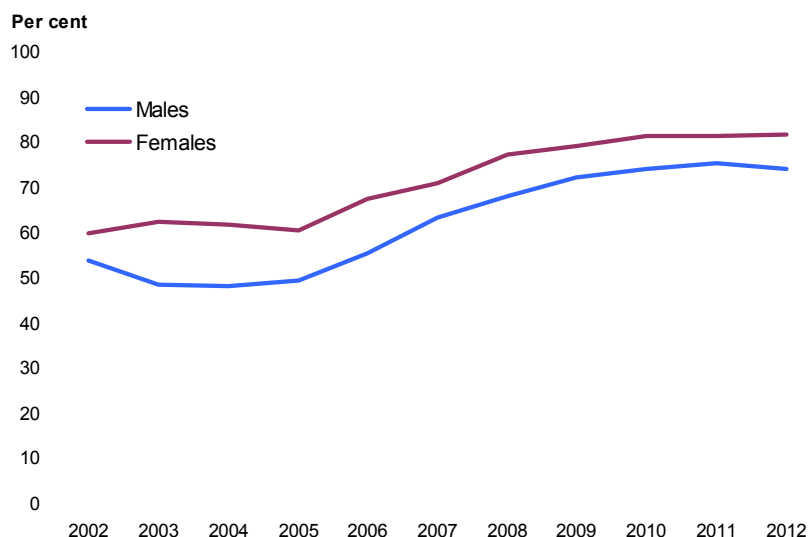
¹ Note that pass numbers are as reported by TCAs and are known to include a small number of inactive passes, issued to people who are now deceased or no longer resident in the area, but which remain on TCA databases.

reduction of 70 thousand older passes in the rest of England, so there was little overall change in the number of older passholders across England as a whole.

- There were about 78 passes per 100 eligible older people in 2012/13². This figure increased from 77 passes per 100 older people in 2011/12. There was a decrease in the eligible population over that period of about 1% (due to the increasing eligible age for an older concessionary pass) coupled with the number of older concessionary passes in England remaining broadly level.

- These figures are broadly similar to those reported in the National Travel Survey (NTS). The NTS further disaggregates these figures for men and women for a longer time series. In Great Britain in 2012, around 82 per cent of women and 74 per cent of men held a concessionary travel pass.

Percentage of eligible older people holding a concessionary travel pass, by gender: Great Britain, 2002 to 2012 [table NTS0620]



- These proportions have risen from 61 per cent and 50 per cent respectively in 2005, the year before the introduction of free local bus travel, but as the level of take up has increased in recent years, along with the rising eligibility age, the rate of growth has slowed.
- The number of concessionary bus passenger journeys in England decreased by 47 million over the year to 2012/13, to around 1.0 billion with decreases in London, metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas³. There may be several reasons for the decrease, but the weather may have been a factor. Several of the months through 2012/13 were significantly colder and wetter than comparable months in 2011/12, and 2012 was the second wettest year on record⁴.
- Although London passholders accounted for about 13 per cent of the total passes in England, 29 per cent of concessionary journeys were in London. A similar proportion of journeys were in metropolitan areas. The remaining 42 per cent were in non-metropolitan areas.
- Outside London, there was an average of 86 concessionary bus journeys per pass per year in 2012/13⁵. This includes all concessionary bus journeys made by older and disabled pass

² The eligible populations have been estimated to be people aged 60.75 and over in 2011/12 and 61.25 and over in 2012/13. See notes and definitions for further details.

³ This decrease (reported by TCAs) is consistent with figures reported by PSV operators in the Annual PSV Survey run by the Department for Transport. See Table BUS0105.

⁴ Further analysis of the weather in 2012 can be found in the *Reported road casualties in Great Britain: main results 2012* release here: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/208736/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-main-results-2012.pdf

⁵ These averages are derived by dividing total 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 passenger journeys in another area – e.g. journeys by non-London pass holders form part of London’s total journeys, but the figures available do not disaggregate these.

holders – those offered under the statutory ENCTS scheme and discretionary journeys offered by individual TCAs, such as journeys outside the statutory time period. In London, there were 227 journeys per pass per year. Both of these figures had decreased compared to 2011/12, as a consequence of the decrease in the number of concessionary journeys and pass levels staying broadly level.

Related information includes:

- Concessionary passholders in table [BUS0820](#)
- Concessionary journeys in table [BUS0821](#)
- 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](#)

Expenditure on concessionary travel

- In financial year 2012/13, 81% of English TCAs' expenditure on concessionary travel was on the statutory ENCTS concession, with the remainder spent on discretionary concessions, such as non-bus modes or concessions for young people. The proportion spent on statutory concessionary travel across England as a whole, and also within London, the metropolitan areas and non-metropolitan areas has been largely unchanged over the last three financial years.
- Metropolitan areas spent 24% of concessionary travel expenditure on discretionary concessions, a much higher proportion than in non-metropolitan areas (8%). This reflects the higher prevalence of additional transport modes, such as light rail and trams, in metropolitan areas. These modes fall outside the statutory bus concession, but they may be offered as an additional non-statutory discretionary concession in the areas where they run.
- Data on total concessionary travel expenditure by TCAs is collected annually by the Department for Communities and Local Government as part of the Revenue Outturn data collection. The latest data for 2012/13 are due to be published in November 2013. **This release will be updated to report the latest trends when this data set is available.**

Related information includes:

- Expenditure on ENCTS as a proportion of total expenditure on concessionary travel in table [BUS0810](#)

Costs and methods for concessionary journey reimbursement

The expenditure figures in the previous section cover all expenditure on concessionary travel, including administration, pass production costs and concessions on other forms of transport. The data in the following section relates specifically to the cost of reimbursing bus operators for carrying older and disabled concessionary passengers.

- In 2012/13, TCAs paid £906m to bus operators in reimbursement for carrying older and disabled concessionary passengers. At 2012/13 prices, this was about the same level as 2011/12 and a 3% decrease on the reimbursement cost in 2010/11. This reimbursement covers all concessionary bus journeys made by older and disabled people – both statutory and

discretionary journeys.

- The average reimbursement cost per concessionary journeys increased from 85 pence to 89 pence between 2011/12 and 2012/13 (in 2012/13 prices). This increase was mostly driven by the decrease in passenger journeys, rather than an increase in reimbursement.
- London saw the largest increase in reimbursement cost per journey in 2012/13, increasing by 9% in real terms compared to 2011/12. Reimbursement cost per journey in non-London areas increased by 3%.
- The Department for Transport publishes guidance on concessionary travel reimbursement for TCAs. At least 71 TCAs (of the 86 who responded to the questions) were using this guidance, either as a starting point for negotiating with bus operators, or for calculating the reimbursement due in 2013/14. This was an increase on the 66 who were using the guidance in 2012/13.
- At least 51 TCAs had an arrangement that pays a fixed cost for reimbursement of concessionary journeys with at least one of the bus operators in their area.

Related information includes:

- 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](#)

Discretionary travel concessions

- In each of the years 2010/11 to 2013/14, nearly all of the 89 TCAs outside London were offering some sort of discretionary travel concessions over and above the statutory minimum ENCTS, for example companion passes or extensions to travel times.
- The most commonly offered discretionary concessions are free or reduced travel for companions to disabled people (57 TCAs in 2013/14), extensions to the statutory time period (68 TCAs) and concessions on on-demand or community transport (61 TCAs), including taxi tokens, travel vouchers, Dial-a-Ride and other community transport schemes.
- There have been some small reductions in the number of TCAs offering certain discretions. For example, in 2013/14, 68 TCAs offered an extension to the statutory time period, down from 77 in 2010/11.

Related information includes:

- 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 given TCA.

- In 28 of the 89 TCAs outside London in 2013/14, a youth concession is offered by the TCA. In 85 TCAs outside London, a commercial concession is offered by at least one bus operator in

the area.

- There are 4 TCAs where there is neither a commercial nor a TCA concession available to young people.

Related information includes:

- Concessions for young people in table [BUS0842](#)

Background information

Background to concessionary travel in England

A statutory bus concession for older and disabled people has been in place since 2001. This initially provided for a minimum half-fare concession for older and disabled people travelling on buses within their local authority of residence, extended to a full fare (i.e. free) concession in 2006. In 2008, the concession was extended further 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).

At local-level, concessionary travel schemes are administered by Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs). Prior to 2011, TCAs were lower tier local authorities (e.g. district councils), but this moved to upper tier in April 2011 (e.g. county councils). TCAs are required by law to reimburse bus operators for concessionary journeys made under the ENCTS. TCAs may also offer their residents discretionary enhancements over and above the statutory scheme, including free or reduced travel outside the statutory time period or on other transport modes.

In London, the statutory concession for London residents also covers off-peak travel on the whole London Local Transport Network, including tram and underground travel. The scheme is administered by London Councils, on behalf of the 32 London Boroughs.

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

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

Response rate, revisions and imputation

These statistics are derived from the three most recent DfT surveys of Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs) undertaken in the summers of 2011, 2012 and 2013, covering 90 areas: the 89 TCAs outside London plus London Councils. Of these 90, 76 (84%) responded to the survey in 2011, 80 (89%) in 2012, and 88 (99%) in 2013. 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.

The data was imputed for item and survey non-response using data from other authorities within the survey, concessionary journey data from the DfT survey of PSV operators, and information from TCA websites (for discretionary and youth concessions).

The accompanying Notes and Definitions document, including details of the imputation methods used to derive the national-level totals, is here: assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/buses/CT-notes-definitions.pdf

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 did not respond to a survey in 2011 and 2012, but did respond in 2013, we have used the 2013 survey as a basis for imputing figures for the previous two years. In addition, a small number of TCAs reported that the figures supplied last year for pass holders, journeys and expenditure were inaccurate and these have also been revised. This means that figures for 2010/11 and 2011/12 may have changed since the previous publication.

For 2012/13, the net difference between raw totals received from TCAs and the totals published were 2 per cent different for total passes, 3 per cent for passenger journey totals and 2 per cent for reimbursement totals. These differences were due to imputation of missing data and, in a small number of cases, some revision to figures.

TCA-level data versus national-level totals

A number of TCAs reported weaknesses in specific aspects of the data they supplied. Most commonly reported were inaccuracies in the split between statutory and discretionary expenditure on concessionary travel. Some TCAs were unable to separate pre-0930 journeys or companion journeys from the statutory expenditure figure supplied. Others excluded scheme administration costs.

Inaccuracies were also reported in the number of passes, with some TCAs stating that the figures from their pass databases may include inactive passes held by deceased people or those who have moved away from the area. Some TCAs noted they had recently carried out data cleaning exercises to remove inactive passes and this can produce proportionately large year-on-year changes for some TCAs. Where possible, DfT has revised figures to account for some of these known issues, but this should be borne in mind when using the data.

In addition, as TCAs operate different policies on pass entitlement for those who qualify under both age and disability criteria, the figures for disabled passes are not necessarily comparable between TCAs or within a TCA across years.

These issues are unlikely to have a substantial effect on the overall national totals reported here, but they will affect the robustness of some TCA-level figures.

Forecasts

Figures published for 2012/13 are outturn figures and replace the forecasts that were published in the 2012 statistical release. The method of forecasting varied between TCAs and the resulting figures were not considered robust or consistent, and did not justify the significant burden that providing these data placed on TCAs. As a result, following a consultation of data suppliers and users, forecasts were removed from the survey this year.

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 web tables give further detail of the main results presented in this statistical release and statistics on other related topics. The Concessionary Travel tables are numbered starting BUS08. They are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/bus-statistics>

Table BUS0830 adjusts for inflation using the HM Treasury GDP Deflator, as at 27 June 2013, which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gdp-deflators-at-market-prices-and-money-gdp-march-2013>

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 (NTS0620):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts06-age-gender-and-modal-breakdown#table-nts0620>

and in table NTS0619 here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts06-age-gender-and-modal-breakdown#table-nts0620>

Figures for concessionary bus journeys are also collected via the Department for Transport's Survey of Public Service Vehicle Operators (PSV Survey). These data, which includes youth concessionary journeys as well as older and disabled journeys, is a time series back to 2007/08 and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus01-local-bus-passenger-journeys>

Data relating to concessionary travel on light rail and tram systems, including journeys and operator revenue, can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/light-rail-and-tram-statistics>

Data relating to a range of other aspects of bus travel, including overall patronage and operator finance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/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.

Request for 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 2014.