



Annual Bus Statistics: England 2012/13

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Main findings: Bus passengers and mileage decrease but more low floor buses

Local bus passenger journeys in England fell 1.4% in 2012/13, with a 0.6% reduction in mileage run, according to the latest annual bus statistics from the Department for Transport.

- **Outside London, passenger numbers fell by 2.5% over the latest year continuing the downward trend since 2008/09**, the first full year of free national bus travel for older people. 4.6 billion passenger journeys were made on local buses in England in 2012/13, with half of these in London where numbers were broadly unchanged over the latest year, following consistent growth since the 1990s.



Photo: Transport for London

- **Bus service mileage is estimated to have fallen by 0.6% over the latest year, again continuing a gradual decline from 2008/09.** Outside London, overall mileage fell by 0.9% and is now around 4% lower than the 2008/09 level. Mileage on services financially supported by local authorities, which now accounts for 20% of the total, has fallen more – by an estimated 8% over the latest year and 17% in the last two years – though this has been largely offset by increases in mileage on services operated on a purely commercial basis. London mileage was at the same level as in the previous year.
- **92% of the 36 thousand buses in England are now low floor**, with over three-quarters (78%) having the accessibility certificate required for all buses on local services by 2017 at the latest, with the upward trend of recent years continuing. The proportion of buses with CCTV, automatic vehicle location and ITSO smartcard readers also increased over the latest year.

IN THIS PUBLICATION:

- Summary figures – p2
- Passenger journeys – p4
- Bus vehicle mileage – p8
- Fleet and staff – p10
- Other statistics – p11
- Background – p12

About this release

This statistical release presents the latest annual statistics on the local bus sector. Local bus services use public service vehicles to carry passengers paying separate fares over short distances. The latest figures usually relate to the 2012/13 financial year. Most of the data are derived from the department's main annual survey of bus operators.

This document presents the figures for England, in line with the coverage of DfT bus policy. However the statistical tables cover the whole of Great Britain, including figures for Wales and Scotland.

Summary figures

The table summarises the latest annual figures compared to the previous year and other relevant time points. 2008/09 is used for comparison as it was the first year after the introduction of free national bus travel for older and disabled people. 2004/05 is the earliest year for which figures are available on a consistent basis.

The statistical tables published alongside this publication on the gov.uk website provide more detailed figures and also cover Wales, Scotland and the whole of Great Britain.

2012/13 unless stated	London	England outside London		England	Link to table	
		Met areas	Non-met areas			Total
Passenger journeys, millions	2,315	1,002	1,282	2,284	4,598	BUS0103
<i>Compared to previous year</i>	-0.4%	-2.6%	-2.4%	-2.5%	-1.4%	
<i>Compared to 2008/09</i>	3.9%	-9.3%	-3.5%	-6.2%	-1.4%	
<i>Compared to 2004/05</i>	28.4%	-6.3%	8.9%	1.7%	13.6%	
Proportion that are concessionary	33%	37%	35%	36%	34%	BUS0105
Vehicle mileage run, millions	302	344	652	995	1,298	BUS0203
<i>Compared to previous year</i>	0.2%	-1.8%	-0.4%	-0.9%	-0.6%	
<i>Compared to 2008/09</i>	2.6%	-6.0%	-2.7%	-3.8%	-2.4%	
<i>Compared to 2004/05</i>	3.5%	-6.5%	-1.2%	-3.1%	-1.6%	
Supported vehicle mileage, millions	n/a	50	149	199	n/a	BUS0205
Proportion of total mileage	n/a	14%	23%	20%	n/a	
<i>Compared to previous year</i>	n/a	-7.0%	-8.8%	-8.3%	n/a	
<i>Compared to 2008/09</i>	n/a	-10.6%	-20.7%	-18.3%	n/a	
<i>Compared to 2004/05</i>	n/a	-1.9%	-13.1%	-10.5%	n/a	
Bus fleet, end March 2013, thousands	9	10	17	26	36	BUS0602
Average age in years	5.4	7.7	8.6	8.3	7.5	BUS0605
% with accessibility certificates	97%	76%	69%	71%	78%	BUS0603
% low floor	2%	18%	18%	18%	14%	BUS0603
% with CCTV	98%	86%	65%	73%	79%	BUS0604
% with AVL/GPS devices	98%	89%	80%	83%	87%	BUS0606
% with ITSO smartcard readers	n/a	90%	74%	80%	n/a	BUS0607
Staff employed, end March 2013, thousands	30	28	47	75	105	BUS0701
Punctuality: % non-frequent buses 'on time'	83%	81%	84%	83%	83%	BUS0902
Fares: annual % change to March 2013	4.6%	3.3%	5.7%	4.7%	4.7%	BUS0405

Detailed statistical tables including figures for other areas of Great Britain are available online via the [bus statistical series](#). Aside from the areas covered above, other statistics updated as part of these release include:

- Bus passenger mileage and estimated bus occupancy, tables [BUS03](#)
- Bus operating costs, tables [BUS04](#)
- A summary of other bus and coach statistics available from other Government data sources, tables [BUS99](#)

Tables on bus operator revenue ([BUS04](#)) and government support ([BUS05](#)) will be updated in **December 2013**.

Introduction

These are the main annual national statistics on the local bus sector in England, providing key information for monitoring trends in usage and provision for a mode of transport used for 4.6 billion passenger journeys in England in the latest year.

- Within Department for Transport (DfT) figures are used as background to policy development, and to monitor industry progress, for example in relation to low floor buses. They contribute to two DfT [business plan indicators](#).
- These statistics may also be used by local authorities for comparison purposes and by academics, researchers and others with an interest in public transport.

Buses in context

Although overall the bus accounts for only 6% of trips made ([NTS0301](#)), nearly two-thirds of journeys on public transport in Great Britain are made by bus ([TSGB0102](#)).

Most figures relates to **local bus services**. These are timetabled services using public service vehicles to carry passengers over relatively short distances, and usually eligible for [Bus Service Operators Grant](#). This excludes long distance coach services, private hire work and closed contracts but includes school services accessible to the general public.

In addition to the information contained in this publication, official statistics on buses, bus users and the wider bus and coach sector are available from a range of sources, particularly the [National Travel Survey](#) (NTS). A summary of many of these sources is available as a separate document.

Area classification. Figures for England in these statistics are often disaggregated by broad area type into **London, metropolitan areas** (which are the six former metropolitan counties of Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire) and **non-metropolitan areas** (the rest of England, covering shire counties and unitary authorities).

Bus services in England. The majority of bus services in England are provided by private companies, which has been the case outside London since deregulation of the industry in 1986. Services can be operated on a purely commercial basis, or with financial support from transport authorities ('supported services'). London services are operated by private companies but regulated by Transport for London (TfL).

Concessionary travel. Bus travel for older and disabled people has been free anywhere in England since April 2008. The Transport Act 2000 required all local authorities to provide a minimum standard of a half fare for travel by older and disabled people on buses. From April 2006, statutory free bus travel in the local area was introduced, and from April 2008 this was extended to free travel by bus anywhere in England. Local authorities can, at their own discretion, offer extensions to the statutory scheme or concessionary travel for young people.

The number of concessionary journeys has been collected as part of these statistics from 2007/08. More detailed [concessionary travel statistics](#) are published separately by DfT.



Photo: Graeme Hall Snaps/Alamy

Bus passenger journeys

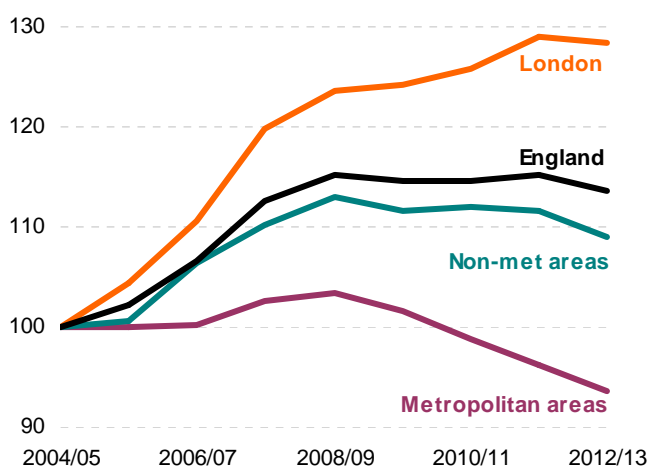
These figures count the number of passenger journeys on local buses, with each boarding of the bus counted as a separate journey¹.

Latest figures: Overall bus usage down, with bigger fall in concessionary journeys

There were 4.6 billion journeys by bus in England during the year to March 2013, a fall of 1.4% compared with the previous year, or nearly 70 million fewer journeys over the year.

- Around half of all bus journeys in England are made in **London**, where the 2012/13 total was broadly unchanged from the previous year at 2.31 billion, following years of growth. More detailed data collected by TfL shows that, compared to the previous year, journeys fell towards the end of the financial year, due to the colder than average weather and the timing of Easter.
- **Outside London**, bus journeys fell 2.5% over the latest year, continuing the downward trend since 2008/09, the first full year of free national concessionary travel and the start of the economic downturn. The number of bus journeys outside London in 2012/13 was an estimated 2.28 billion, 6% (150 million) below the 2008/09 total which was the highest in the last decade.

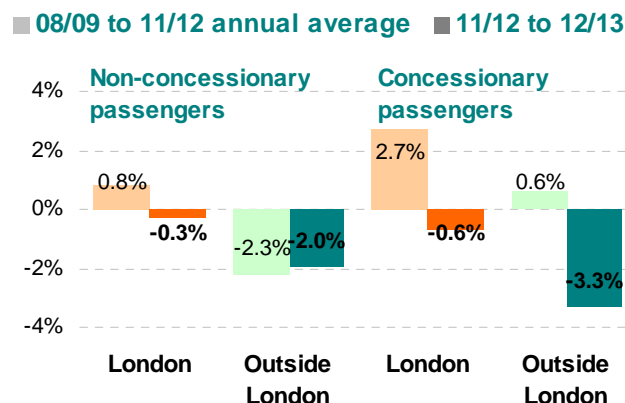
Bus passenger journeys by area type, England to 2012/13: index, 2004/05=100



Whilst factors affecting levels of bus use are well established², these statistics are not sufficiently detailed to provide clear reasons for changes over the relatively short term. It is likely that the recent changes will reflect a range of factors including weather (as in London), wider economic conditions, population structure and changes in the availability and attractiveness of bus services relative to other modes.

- In contrast to recent years, **concessionary journeys fell proportionately more** in the latest year, both inside and outside London (see chart, right).
- This may reflect the impact of the colder weather having a greater impact on concessionary journeys, although this cannot be determined with certainty from these statistics.³

Percentage change in bus passenger journeys



¹ Figures represent all bus boardings. Where boardings per head of population are calculated, the numerator will include boardings by non-residents. Figures for bus use by residents are available from the National Travel Survey.

² See for example [research on factors affecting the decline of bus use in metropolitan areas](#)

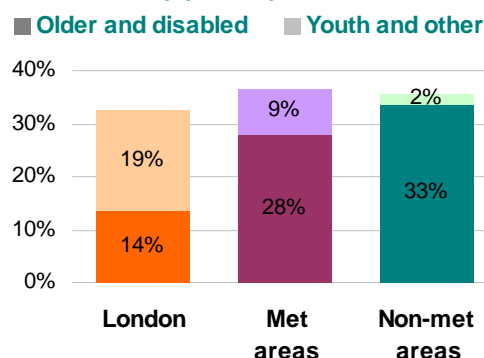
³ In addition, changes in how operators record figures can have an impact. Whilst we believe that this rarely impacts on national trends, the increased use of smart tickets for concessionary journeys outside London may have affected the consistency of recording of these journeys, though as yet we have no evidence to confirm this.

Concessionary travel: Over a third of all bus journeys are concessionary

In 2012/13, 34% of bus journeys in England were concessionary (including youth concessions), with the proportion broadly similar across area types though the type of concession varies:

- 33% of London bus journeys are concessionary, with more than half of these being youth or other non-statutory concessions. Bus travel for under-16s has been free in London since 2006.
- 36% of journeys outside London are concessionary; this is mostly free travel by older and disabled people but includes some youth concessions, particularly in the metropolitan areas.

Concessionary journeys as % total



These statistics show that the number of concessionary journeys in England:

- rose almost a tenth between 2007/08 and 2009/10, likely to be due to the national extension of free bus travel for older and disabled people, increasing from 32 % to 34% of all bus journeys over this time (table BUS0105).
- have shown a broadly flat trend since 2008/09, though total concessionary journeys fell nationally by 2% in 2012/13.

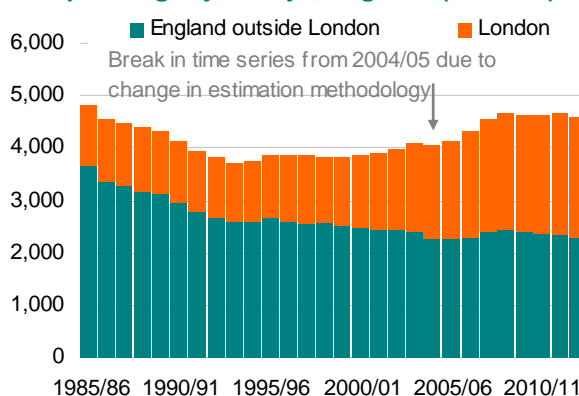
These trends are broadly consistent with data from the National Travel Survey (NTS), which also shows that the proportion of bus journeys made by older persons concessionary pass-holders increased from around 20% prior to the introduction of statutory free travel to nearly 30% following the full roll-out. Therefore the introduction of free concessionary travel is a key factor explaining the growth in overall bus use outside London between 2005/06 and 2008/09.

Longer term trends: Rapid growth in London, decline elsewhere

Whilst many factors affect bus usage, over the long term trends are strongly associated with levels of car ownership – data from the NTS shows that people in households with no car access make around four times as many journeys by bus compared to people with at least one household car. Journeys by bus declined steadily in the post-war decades as car ownership grew.

- In recent decades, **London** has shown a different trend to the rest of England, with rapid growth in bus usage following increased public funding for buses from the mid-1990s. Over the same period the proportion of households with no car increased in London. In 2012/13 the number of bus passenger journeys in London was double the level of the mid-1980s.
- Conversely, bus patronage has continued to decline **outside London** and in 2012/13 was a third lower than in the mid-1980s. The number of journeys fell fairly steadily between 1985/86 and 2005/06 (a period in which the proportion of households without a car fell from 38% to 25% nationally). There was growth in journeys between 2005/06 and 2008/09, coinciding with the introduction of

Bus passenger journeys, England (millions)



free concessionary travel, but since then decline has resumed as the number of concessionary journeys has levelled off.

Regional and local variations: Higher bus use, and greater decrease, in the north...

As bus use is strongly associated with car availability:

- Bus journeys per head of population are higher in more urban areas compared to more rural areas, where there are more households without access to a car (table BUS0111)
- Similarly bus use is higher in regions in the north of England compared to the south, outside London, where car availability is lower (see chart, and table BUS0108).

Bus journeys and car availability by region



Whilst bus usage has fallen overall outside London since 2008/09, the fall has been greater in regions in the North and West:

- Over this period, concessionary journeys increased in the South East and South West (though they fell in all regions in 2012/13; table BUS0108)
- The South East is the only region outside London to show an increase in non-concessionary journeys over the same time, with growth continuing into 2012/13. Population growth is likely to account for some of this increase.

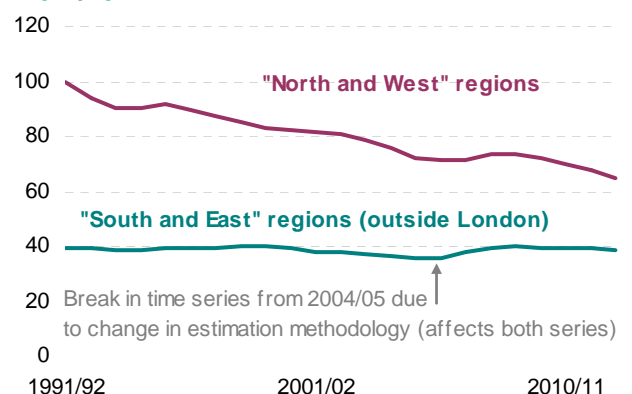
Change in bus passenger journeys between 2008/09 and 2012/13 by region of England



In broad terms, the regions of the North and West have shown a much greater decline in bus passenger journeys than those in the South and East, both since 2008/09 and over the longer term.

- Over the past decade the proportion of no-car households has fallen more in the North and West, and bus mileage has reduced (whilst it has grown in the South and East over this period).
- In the latest year, there was a 2% fall in bus journeys in the South and East compared to 3% in the North and West, in line with this longer term pattern.

Bus passenger journeys per head: 1991/92 to 2012/13



At **local authority level** there are considerable variations in bus use across the country:

- Brighton and Nottingham have the highest levels of bus journeys per person at around 160 journeys per head of population in the latest year – around 10 times the level of more rural areas such as Somerset and Herefordshire, and more than three times the average outside London (tables BUS0109 and BUS0110)⁴
- At this level year on year figures can be less robust. However some areas, mostly in the South, notably Brighton, Oxfordshire and Poole, have shown fairly consistent growth in bus passenger journeys in recent years.
- Compared to 2009/10, 25 out of 88 local authorities in England have shown an increase in bus patronage with 59 showing a fall.

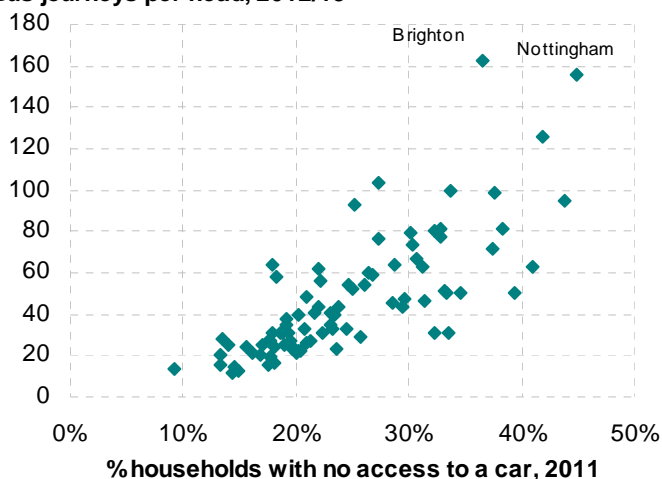


Photo: Roger Bamber/Alamy

Though there a number of other factors which impact on bus patronage at the local authority level, for example population structure and density, and availability, quality and relative cost of bus services, bus use is again well correlated with car availability at this level of disaggregation (see chart)⁵. Note that this does not demonstrate a causal relationship – in some areas good public transport may mean people choose not to own a car.

Bus patronage and car availability by local authority, England outside London

Bus journeys per head, 2012/13



Related information includes:

- Journeys by **area type** in table [BUS0103](#)
- **Concessionary** journeys in table [BUS0105](#)
- Total and concessionary journeys by **region** in table [BUS0108](#)
- Journeys by **local authority** in tables [BUS0109](#) (number) and [BUS0110](#) (per head of population)
- Journeys by **urban/rural classification** in table [BUS0111](#)
- Further statistics on **concessionary travel** including pass-holders, journeys, expenditure and reimbursement to bus operators are published by DfT tables [BUS08](#)
- The [National Travel Survey](#) contains a wide range of information on bus users and concessionary travel. A selection of figures with the same broad area classification as these statistics can be found in table [BUS9902](#).

⁴ Local authority level passenger number estimates are produced by DfT for all areas based on bus operator returns. However in many areas local authorities also record patronage figures. Both sets of figures are shown in the tables.

⁵ Figures for individual areas can also be affected by how operators record journeys, particularly for multi-trip tickets, though this is unlikely to affect the broad patterns it may impact on the relative ranking of individual areas. The chart is based on local authorities' own figures where available, or from operator returns to DfT otherwise.

Bus vehicle mileage

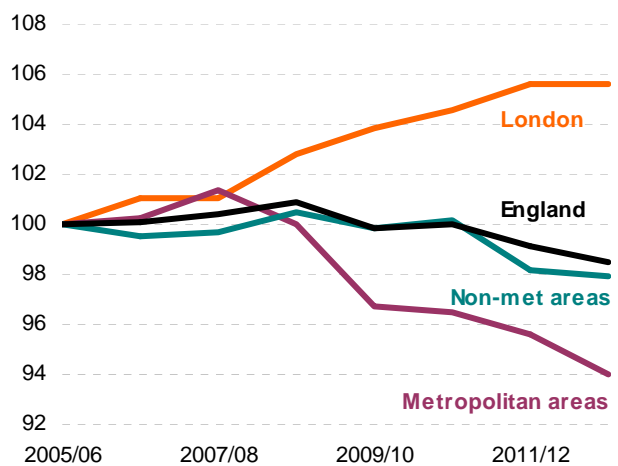
The following figures relate to mileage run on buses in service (i.e. whilst carrying passengers), excluding any 'dead running' (for example mileage between the start and end of routes and the depot, or for driver training)

Latest figures: Slight overall reduction, driven by fall in supported services

Bus mileage in England is estimated to have fallen slightly in 2012/13, continuing a gradual decline since the start of the economic downturn in 2008/09:

- Mileage in **London** levelled off, following years of growth
- Mileage **outside London** – which accounts for around three quarters of the total – fell by 1% and is now 4% lower than in 2008/09, with a proportionately bigger fall in the metropolitan areas over this period.

Bus vehicle mileage by area type, England to 2012/13: index, 2005/06=100

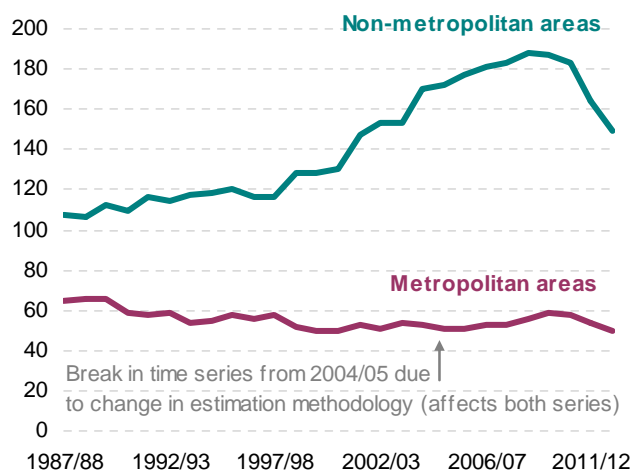


The majority of mileage outside London – 80% in 2012/13 – is run by operators on a purely commercial basis, with the remaining 20% on services which are financially supported by local authorities (these are usually services considered as socially necessary but not commercially viable⁶). The proportion of mileage supported is higher in more rural areas (table BUS0207).

The fall in mileage outside London in the latest year is largely the result of **reductions in supported service mileage**.

- Trends in supported mileage have broadly followed trends in public funding support to bus operators, increasing through the 2000s but falling sharply in the two years following the 2010 spending review, which reduced central government grants to local authorities.
- Over the latest year, supported mileage is estimated to have fallen by 8% outside London overall, with a total reduction of around 17%, or around 40 million miles, over the last two years.
- Around half of this reduction has been offset by increased mileage on commercial services in non-metropolitan areas. In part this will be due to some operators continuing to operate some services commercially once subsidy has been removed, however changes in the classification of services by some operators

Estimated mileage on supported bus services, England outside London (millions)



⁶ Authorities have a duty under section 63 of the 1985 Transport Act to secure provision of services considered appropriate to meet passenger transport requirements in their area where these would not otherwise be met.

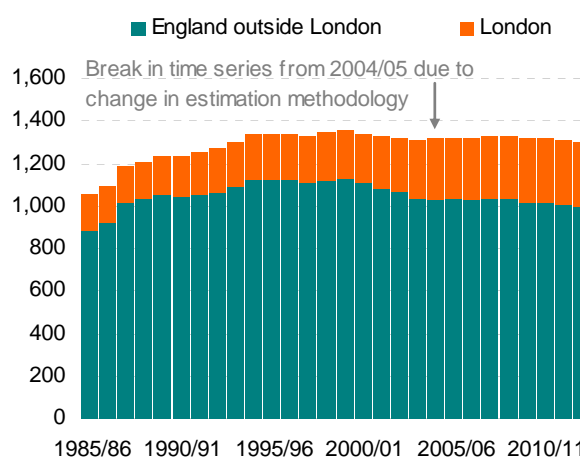
also affect the trends and we estimate this to affect at least 6 million miles⁷.

Longer term trends: Non-London mileage lowest since de-regulation

Overall bus mileage in England has been broadly stable over the past two decades, though the trends within and outside London have been different.

- In **London**, mileage has grown steadily, with particular growth in the early 2000s – a period of rapid growth in public funding (see table BUS0502). In recent years growth has slowed, and in the latest year levelled off, whilst support to operators has fallen in real terms after peaking in 2008/09.
- **Outside London**, bus service mileage grew sharply immediately after de-regulation of the industry during 1986/87 and then more slowly over the following decade to 1999/00, driven by growth in commercial mileage. However, by 2004/05 it had fallen back to the level of the late 1980s, with increases in supported mileage offset by bigger reductions in commercial services. Overall mileage then remained broadly stable between 2004/05 and 2008/09, as the rate of decline in commercial mileage slowed whilst supported mileage continued to increase.
- Since 2008/09 overall mileage outside London has fallen 4%, largely due to reduced commercial mileage in metropolitan areas and less supported miles in non-met areas, and the 2012/13 estimate is the lowest since the year in which de-regulation occurred (1986/87).
- Despite considerable reductions in the last two years, the proportion of mileage on supported services remains broadly in line with the average level over the previous decade, and above the level of the 1990s.

Bus service mileage, England (millions)



% mileage on supported services

	Met areas	Non-met areas	England (non London)
1990s	13%	18%	16%
2000s	14%	25%	21%
2012/13	14%	23%	20%

Related information includes:

- Vehicle mileage by **area type** in table [BUS0203](#)
- Mileage by **service type** (supported or commercial) in table [BUS0205](#)
- Mileage by **region** in table [BUS0206](#)
- Mileage by **urban/rural classification** in table [BUS0207](#)

⁷ In part this relates to reform of the Bus Service Operators Grant system, which requires operators to calculate commercial and supported mileage according to a [particular definition](#). In some cases this has led to operators revising the method used to estimate supported mileage for the statistical survey used to produce the figures shown here.

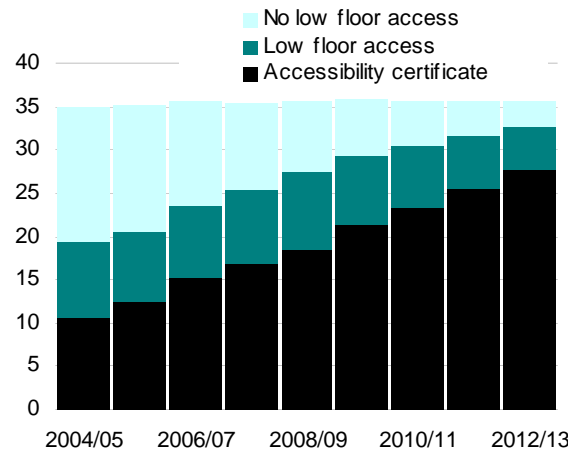
Vehicle fleet: number of low floor buses continues to increase

At the end of March 2013, local bus operators in England owned around 36 thousand buses in total, with around a quarter of these (9 thousand) in London. The total fleet size has varied little in recent years.

All buses used for local services are required to have an accessibility certificate (under the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations, PSVAR⁸) by January 2017 or earlier depending on the type of vehicle.

- At end March 2013, 92% of buses in England had low floor designs, with 78% of the total fleet having the accessibility certificate⁹. These proportions have grown steadily in recent years, though the rate of increase is slowing as the proportion increases.
- The London fleet is almost entirely low floor; outside London the proportion of accessible buses is higher in the metropolitan (generally more urban) areas than the rest of England so that it is likely that considerably more than 92% of bus passenger journeys will be on low floor buses.

Disability accessible or low floor buses: England from 2004/05 (thousands)



The proportion of buses fitted with other equipment – CCTV, Automatic Vehicle Location (which is used to track vehicle location and can be used to feed real time passenger information systems) and ITSO smartcard readers¹⁰ – also continues to increase. Again, a higher proportion of buses in metropolitan areas are equipped than elsewhere in England – outside London, where nearly all buses have CCTV and AVL.

Bus operators have been able to claim an uplift to Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) payments for buses fitted with AVL and ITSO smart readers since April 2010, which may have contributed to some of the increase seen.

% buses fitted, England as at end March 2013:

CCTV

79% up from 44% in 2006

AVL

87% up from 35% in 2007

ITSO Smart readers

80% up from 25% in 2011

⁸ The regulations set minimum standards for low floor vehicles. Level step free access, space for at least one wheelchair/buggy and step free access to a set percentage of the passenger area (depending on vehicle type) are among the items specified. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-coach-accessibility-faq> for further information about PSVAR.

⁹ These figures will include buses which may not be used for local services which therefore will not necessarily need to have a certificate.

¹⁰ ITSO is an organisation which sets a common technical standard for smart ticketing. See www.itso.org.uk/ for further details.

Staff employed: Over 100 thousand people employed by local bus operators

Local bus operators in England employed an estimated 105 thousand full time equivalent staff at end March 2013, with the majority (84 thousand) being drivers. Across Great Britain as a whole, the local bus sector employs around the same number of people as the rail and aviation sectors combined, and around 1 in 4 people working in road transport¹¹ (table BUS0702).

Figures are only available on a consistent basis from 2004/05, since when the numbers have been broadly flat, though there has been a slight reduction in staff employed of around over the last 5 years 2012/13, of around 5%. Staff numbers for London-based operators have remained broadly stable at around 30 thousand, whilst numbers outside London have fallen.

Data from the Office for National Statistics shows that full-time bus and coach drivers work longer hours and have lower weekly wages than the average across all occupations, though the gap has narrowed slightly over the past decade.

Weekly earnings, 2012 (median) BUS0703	
Bus and coach drivers	All occupations
£437 up 14% on 2002 (real terms)	£506 up 2%
Weekly hours worked, 2012 (median) BUS0704	
Bus and coach drivers	All occupations
42.0 down 4% on 2002	37.5 unchanged

Related information includes:

- Bus fleet by **area type** in table [BUS0602](#)
- Accessible buses (with certificate and other low floor) by **area type** in table [BUS0603](#)
- Other equipment by area type in [BUS0604](#) (CCTV), [BUS0606](#) (AVL) and [BUS0607](#) (Smartcard readers)
- **Average bus age** in table [BUS0605](#)
- Staff employed by local bus operators by **area type** in table [BUS0701](#)
- Employee jobs in transport industries in table [BUS0702](#)

Other statistics

Bus operator revenue and operating costs: Costs steady in real terms

Full figures for bus operator revenue and government support for the bus industry in 2012/13 will be published in December 2013, though operating costs are available at this point.

- Operating costs for local bus services in England have increased by an estimated 13% in real terms in England outside London since 2004/05, though have fallen 2% since 2008/09. As mileage has fallen, costs per mile have increased by a greater amount over this period, by 20% since 2004/05.
- Total costs in 2012/13 were at broadly the same level as in the previous year, in real terms.

These statistics provide no breakdown of operating costs. An alternative measure of bus industry costs is the Confederation for Passenger Transport [costs index](#), which provides further details.

¹¹ Figures for the local bus sector are from the annual DfT operator survey. Figures for rail and aviation are from Office for National Statistics employment surveys. See table BUS0702 for further details.

Bus fares: Continued above inflation increases

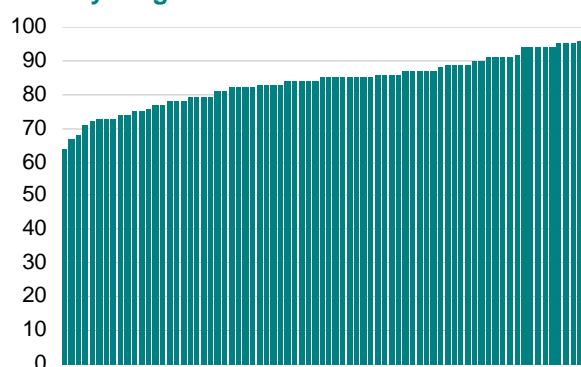
Data on bus fares are collected quarterly and published separately as part of the quarterly bus statistics. The latest figures show that bus fares continued to increase at a rate greater than inflation in the year to March 2013 (i.e. the most recent period covered by the annual statistics described above).

Bus punctuality: Steady increase in the proportion of buses on time in recent years

Bus punctuality statistics provide one measure of the performance of local bus services. They are based on data reported by local authorities who monitor punctuality either using manual surveys or data from electronic systems. There are different measures of punctuality for frequent and non-frequent services (a frequent service is one which has 6 or more buses per hour), though many areas have no frequent services.

- In 2012/13, nearly 83% of non-frequent services in England ran on time (defined as between 1 minute early and 5 minutes 59 seconds late), an increase from 79% in 2008/09.
- At regional level between 82% and 85% of buses were on time, except in the West Midlands (77%). There was greater variation at local authority level, ranging from 64% in Darlington to 96% in Gloucestershire and Rutland (see chart).
- 53 local authorities had a higher proportion of non-frequent buses on time in 2012/13 than 2008/09, with 18 showing a decrease.

% Non-frequent bus services on time by local authority: England 2012/13



Related information includes:

- Operating **costs** in table [BUS0406](#), [BUS0407](#) (cost per journey) and [BUS0408](#) (cost per mile)
- Bus **fares index** in table [BUS0405](#) (annual) and [BUS0415](#) (quarterly)
- Bus **punctuality** statistics by local authority in table [BUS0902](#) (non-frequent services) and [BUS0903](#) (frequent)

Background information

Users and uses of these statistics

These statistics provide key information on trends in the bus sector.

Within the Department for Transport they are used for:

- ministerial briefing and to answer public enquiries;
- as background to policy development;
- monitoring trends in the bus sector, for example in relation to accessible buses;
- the bus punctuality figures are used to monitor progress for the DfT business plan indicator related to the proportion of buses running on time (www.dft.gov.uk/publications/dft-business-plan-indicators-impact-03/); and
- by economists in modelling policy options (for example related to reform of bus subsidy).

Outside DfT known uses include:

- passenger journeys figures are used as a measure of the overall health/state of the industry, for example by private research organisations, and are occasionally reported in the trade press;
- local authorities may use these statistics to compare trends in their area with the national picture;
- these statistics have also provided background information for recent reports by the Transport Select Committee and Competition Commission;
- bus fares data are used by the Office for National Statistics in calculating the Retail and Consumer Price Indices and in the National Accounts.

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

These statistics are derived from a number of sources, with the main source being the DfT annual Public Service Vehicle (PSV) survey of over 500 local bus operators which provides data on passenger journeys, vehicle miles, revenue and costs, and vehicles and staff. However, certain statistics (for example annual statistics on bus fares) are derived from smaller surveys of the larger bus operators, or from local authorities. Information on passenger journeys and bus mileage for London is provided by Transport for London.

Many of these statistics have been collected on a broadly comparable basis from operators for many years. However, following revisions to the methodology used to compile the published figures, 2004/05 is the earliest year for which figures are comparable on exactly the same basis.

The PSV survey uses imputation techniques to derive key figures for operators who were either not selected in the sample for that year, or who did not respond. On occasion, imputations for earlier years can be improved using directly-reported data for later years. Minor revisions to back-data can occur as a result, although trends are rarely affected substantively.

For the key indicators (passenger journeys and vehicle miles operated) the data provided by operators covers around, or above, 90% of the total figure, with the remainder imputed. Comparison with other sources suggests that, at aggregate (national) level, the statistics are likely to provide a reasonably robust measure of levels and broad trends.

However, figures representing smaller groups of operators and single year on year changes should be treated with caution as these are more susceptible to measurement errors (for example, an inaccurate return by an operator, or a change in an operator's method of producing the figures required) which are more likely to even out at the national level. Regional, and particularly local authority, level figures should be interpreted with caution.

Further details of the full range of data sources and methods used in the production of these statistics can be found in the notes and definitions document available via:

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

National Statistics

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:

www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html

For details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/bus-statistics>

Next Release

The next Quarterly Bus Statistics release will be published in December 2013, and will contain estimates for 2013 Q3 (July to September) together with annual figures for costs, revenue and Government support for buses and concessionary travel. The next Annual Bus Statistics will be published in Autumn 2014.