



Quarterly Bus Statistics: Great Britain Q3 (Jul-Sep) 2014

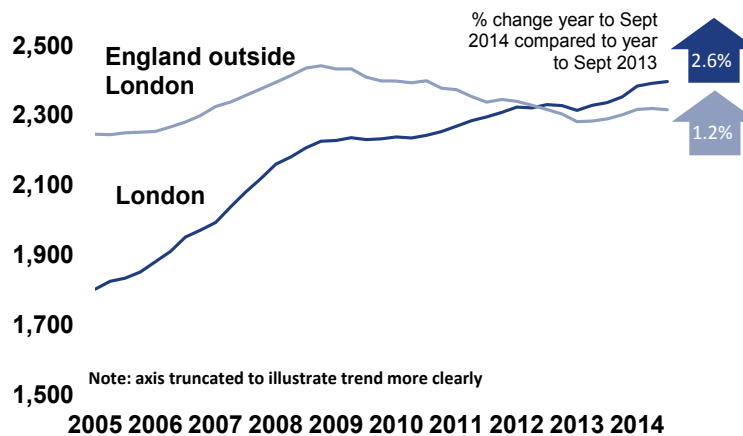
Total bus passenger journeys in England increased by 1.9% in the year to September 2014, compared to the previous year.

Passenger Journeys



► An estimated 4.71 billion bus passenger journeys were made in the year to September 2014, around 87 million more than during the previous year.

Bus passenger journeys in England (millions) – rolling year totals from 2005



About this release

This quarterly release covers local bus passenger journeys and fares. It provides the most up to date statistics for monitoring key trends in the local bus sector.

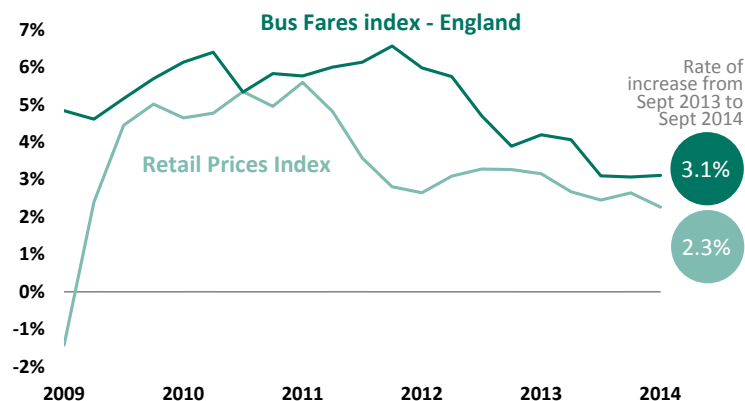
This release relates largely to England, in line with the coverage of DfT bus policy. However the statistical tables cover the whole of Great Britain, including figures for Wales and Scotland.

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

Bus fares **£**

► Bus fares rose 3.1% in the year to September 2014. This was the same rate of increase as the previous two quarters, and the slowest rate of increase since June 2008. It remains above the rate of inflation (inflation measured by the Retail Price Index (RPI) was 2.3% in September 2014).

Rate of annual increase in bus fares and RPI inflation since 2009



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Summary figures

Figures for England are broken down 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, covering shire counties and unitary authorities).

The table summarises the latest quarterly and rolling annual figures. Figures for individual quarters should be interpreted with caution, as they can be affected by sustained periods of bad weather or the timing of public holidays.

	Passenger Journeys		Bus Fares index
	Year to end Sept 2014	Q3 (Jul-Sep) 2014	Sept 2014
	Compared to previous year	compared to Q3 2013	Change on Sept 2013
Great Britain	5.24 billion: ▲ 1.7%	1.30 billion: ↔ 0.0%	▲ 3.0
England	4.71 billion: ▲ 1.9%	1.17 billion: ▲ 0.2%	▲ 3.1
London	2.40 billion: ▲ 2.6%	0.60 billion: ▲ 0.9%	▲ 3.1
Outside London	2.32 billion: ▲ 1.2%	0.57 billion: ▼ 0.6%	▲ 3.1
Metropolitan areas	1.01 billion: ▲ 0.7%	0.25 billion: ▼ 0.3%	▲ 2.5
Non-metropolitan areas	1.30 billion: ▲ 1.5%	0.32 billion: ▼ 0.8%	▲ 3.5
Scotland	0.43 billion: ▲ 1.2%	0.11 billion: ▼ 0.2%	▲ 2.3
Wales	0.11 billion: ▼ 2.5%	0.03 billion: ▼ 4.6%	▲ 3.6

Detailed statistical tables...

are available online as part of the bus statistics series.

- Passenger numbers can be found in table [BUS0103](#) (annual) and [BUS0106](#) (quarterly).
- Bus fares index can be found in tables [BUS0405](#) (annual) and [BUS0415](#) (quarterly).

Passenger journeys

Quarter on quarter changes

Since 2008/09, total passenger journeys in England have remained broadly stable overall, as growth in London has offset a gradual decline in passenger numbers outside London. This quarter passenger journeys increased in London and decreased outside of London. Overall, there was

a 0.2% increase overall in England compared to the same quarter in 2013/14.

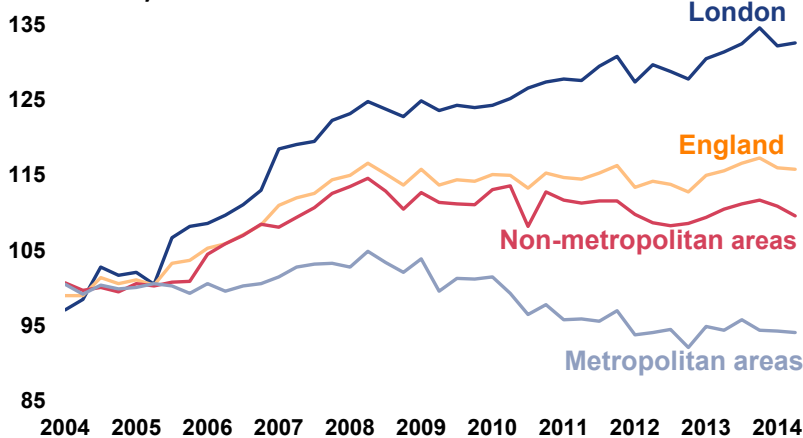
Year on Year changes

For the year to end September 2014 all areas showed at least some increase

compared to the year to September 2013. The highest increase was in London (2.6%) and the lowest was in metropolitan areas (0.7%).

Passenger Journeys, England, quarterly from 2004/05

Index: 2004/05 = 100



Bus usage...

measured by the number of bus passenger journeys (with each boarding of a bus counted as one journey), is the key measure of bus demand and is likely to be affected by many factors.

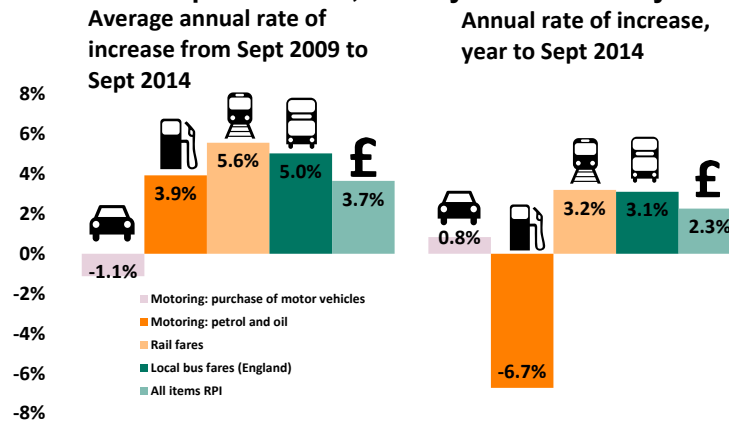
While medium and longer-term trends can be explained to some extent, it is not usually possible to attribute causality to short-term movements which may reflect fluctuations in patronage, or result from the method of seasonal adjustment applied to the data.

Bus fares

The local bus fares index measures percentage change in bus operator receipts from passengers as a result of any fare changes. These figures provide an estimate of change in the average cost of bus travel to the passenger, but not the actual fare levels paid (which can vary due to changes in the mix of journeys made and other factors).

Over the past five years from September 2009 to September 2014 the average annual growth rate for bus fares was 5.0%, slightly slower than for rail fares at 5.6% per year. In the past year to September 2014 local bus fares and rail fares increased at similar rates, 3.1% and 3.2% respectively and both above the rate of inflation (2.3%).

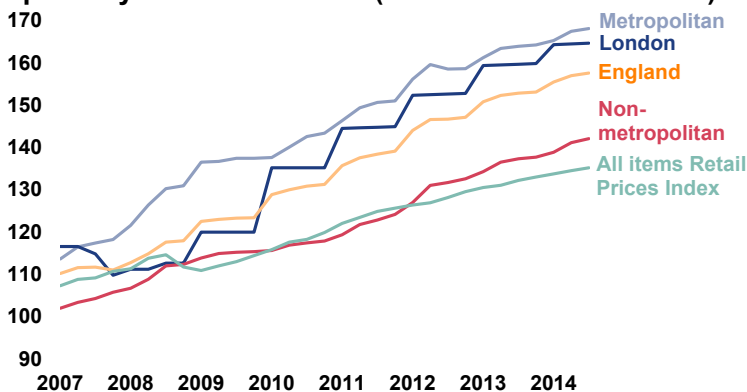
RPI and transport indices, latest year and last 5 years



Both bus and rail fares have increased at a higher rate than the price of motoring over the past year to September 2014, the price of purchasing a motor vehicle increased by 0.8% and the price of petrol and oil dropped by 6.7%.

Average bus fares increased by 43% in England between March 2007 and September 2014¹. Bus fares have risen at a faster rate in metropolitan areas (48%) than in non-metropolitan areas

Local bus fares index (at current prices):England quarterly from March 2007 (Index: March 2005 = 100)



(39%). The all items Retail Prices Index has risen 26% since March 2007 which means that bus fares have risen in real terms during this period.

Factors affecting fares...

Outside London, fare changes will largely reflect the commercial decisions of bus operators, which in turn may in part reflect changes in public funding. For example, Bus Service Operators Grant, a central government subsidy to bus operators based on fuel consumption, was cut by 20% in England in April 2012. Bus fares in London are set by TfL.

Related information

- A longer time series of annual figures is available in table [BUS0405](#)
- Monthly inflation figures are published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), with a detailed breakdown by category including bus/coach fares, rail fares and motoring costs.
- An annual summary of the ONS transport indices is available in table [TSGB1308](#).

¹ The launch of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) in April 2006 resulted in some passengers who had previously paid fares being able to travel for free. As the Bus fares index reflects changes in the average costs of bus travel across all users of bus services, the ENCTS launch resulted in a one-off downward step-change in the index between March 2006 and June 2006. However, passengers who were fare-payers both before and after the launch of the ENCTS would not have seen a reduction in the cost of bus travel. Therefore changes are reported from March 2007, after this one-off change.

Background information

Data sources, strengths and weaknesses

Estimates of local bus passenger journeys are based on a quarterly panel of the 18 largest non-metropolitan operators, Passenger Transport Executives (for metropolitan areas) and Transport for London (TfL). Data from the quarterly panel is scaled to annual figures from the Department's main annual survey of over 500 PSV operators, and figures are then seasonally adjusted. For Q3 2014, responses were received from all of the 18 panel members, covering over 90 per cent of the journeys made in Great Britain. However, quarterly figures are less precise than the annual statistics which aim to report on all journeys, including those made with smaller operators.

Quarterly figures are subject to revision due to the nature of the seasonal adjustment, and scaling to annual figures. However, these will typically be minor and not affect overall patterns shown.

The quarterly bus fares index is based on a sample survey of around 100 bus operators and TfL, who supply data each quarter. The index measures change in the 'gross yield'. This is the change in passenger receipts (excluding concessionary fare reimbursement and subsidies from government) which would result from a fares change, assuming no change in passenger numbers. In total the operators selected cover around 85 per cent of passenger receipts in Great Britain, and the sample design ensures operators in each type of area are adequately represented. The survey response rate is high, almost 100% for the last four quarters. The index has been compiled in the same way for many years and so should measure trends consistently.

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

Users and uses of these statistics

Within DfT these figures are used to inform bus policy decisions, for ministerial briefing and to answer public enquiries. Outside DfT, passenger journeys figures are used as a measure of the overall health of the industry, for example by private research organisations, and are often reported in the trade press. Bus fares data are used by the Office for National Statistics in calculating the Retail and Consumer Price Indices and in the National Accounts.

Further details...

can be found in the notes and definitions document: 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.

Details of Ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here: www.gov.uk/transport-statistics-notes-and-guidance-buses

Feedback...

We welcome user feedback on any aspects of the Department's bus statistics including content, timing and format, by email to bus.statistics@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Next update...

statistics for Q4 (October - December) 2014 are due to be published in March 2015.