



Department for Transport

Concessionary Travel Statistics England, 2015/16

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 2016, covering 90 areas: the 89 TCAs outside London, and London Councils.

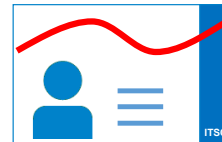
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There were 9.9 million older and disabled concessionary travel passes in England in 2015/16, an increase of 0.9% over the year. Total concessionary bus journeys fell by 3.1% over the same period.

There were **9.0 million older passes in England** in 2015/16, an increase on 2014/15 of 0.7%.



↑ 0.7%

There was also an **increase in the number of disabled passes: by 2.6% to 912,000.**



↑ 2.6%

There were **0.97 billion concessionary bus journeys** in England in 2015/16, down 3.1% on 2014/15



↓ 3.1%

Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs) spent an estimated **£1.15 billion** on providing statutory and discretionary concessions.



£1.15bn

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, 2015/16 compared to 2014/15

	Total passes	Journeys	Reimbursement for concessionary bus journeys (2015/16 prices)	% spent on statutory scheme
	2015/16 (millions) and % change since 2014/15			% in 2015/16
England	9.9m ▲ 0.9%	968m ▼ 3.1%	£942m ▼ 0.5%	81%
London	1.2m ▼ 4.2%	289m ▼ 2.5%	£238m ▼ 0.8%	67%
Outside London	8.7m ▲ 1.6%	679m ▼ 3.3%	£704m ▼ 0.4%	87%
Metropolitan areas	2.3m ▲ 3.1%	267m ▼ 3.7%	£258m ▲ 1.6%	77%
Non-metropolitan areas	6.4m ▲ 1.2%	412m ▼ 3.1%	£445m ▼ 1.5%	94%

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

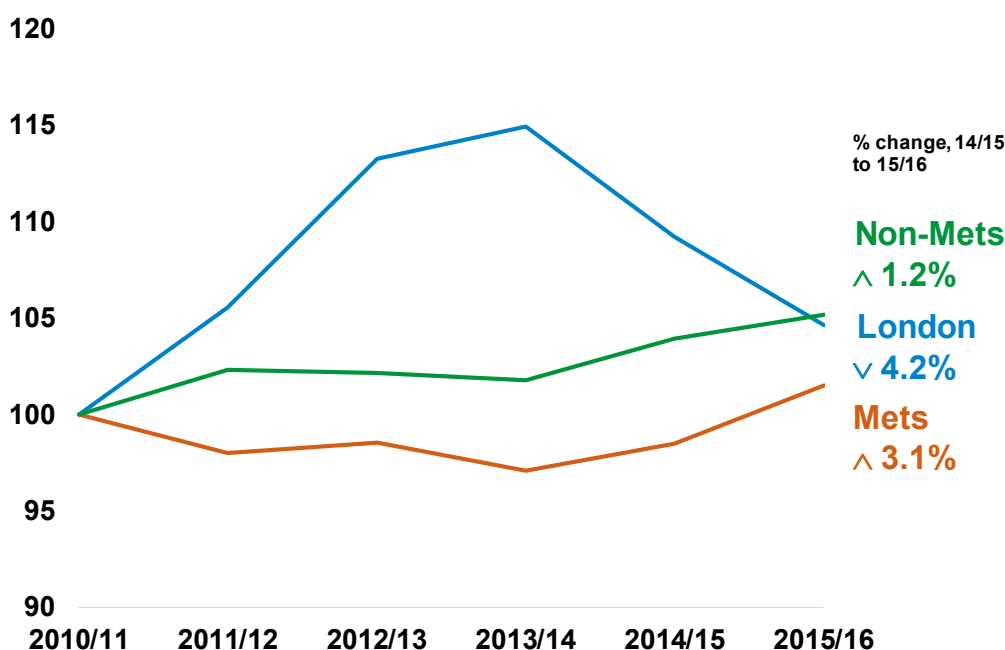
are available online as part of the bus statistical series:

- Concessionary passholders in table [BUS0820](#)

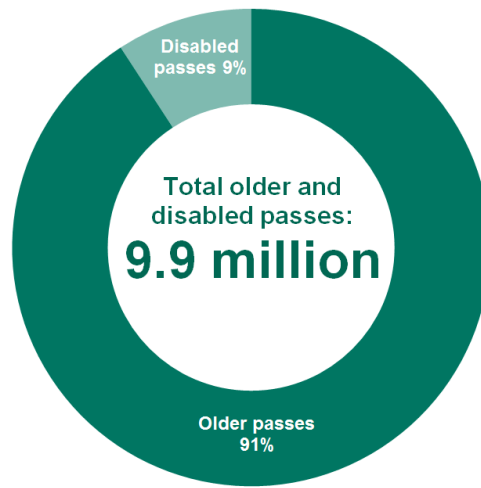
Older and disabled concessionary passes

There were 9.9 million older and disabled concessionary passes in England in 2015/16, an increase of 88,000 (0.9%) since 2014/15. There were increases in the metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, but in London the number of passes decreased by 4.2% to 1.2 million. Total passes in England outside of London were at their highest level seen in the 6 years of the survey.

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

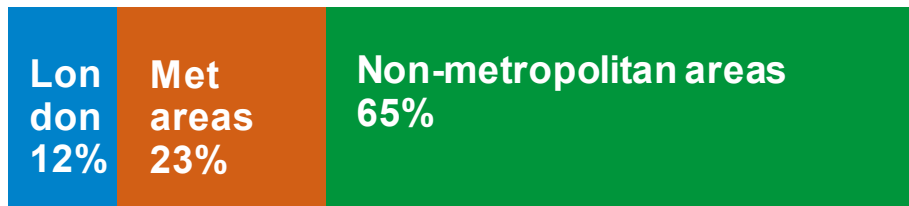


Of the total number of passes, around 9.0 million (91%) were for older people and 9% for disabled people. The proportion varies by area type. In London and metropolitan areas, the proportion of older passes was slightly lower (at 87% and 88% respectively). In non-metropolitan areas it was slightly higher (92%).



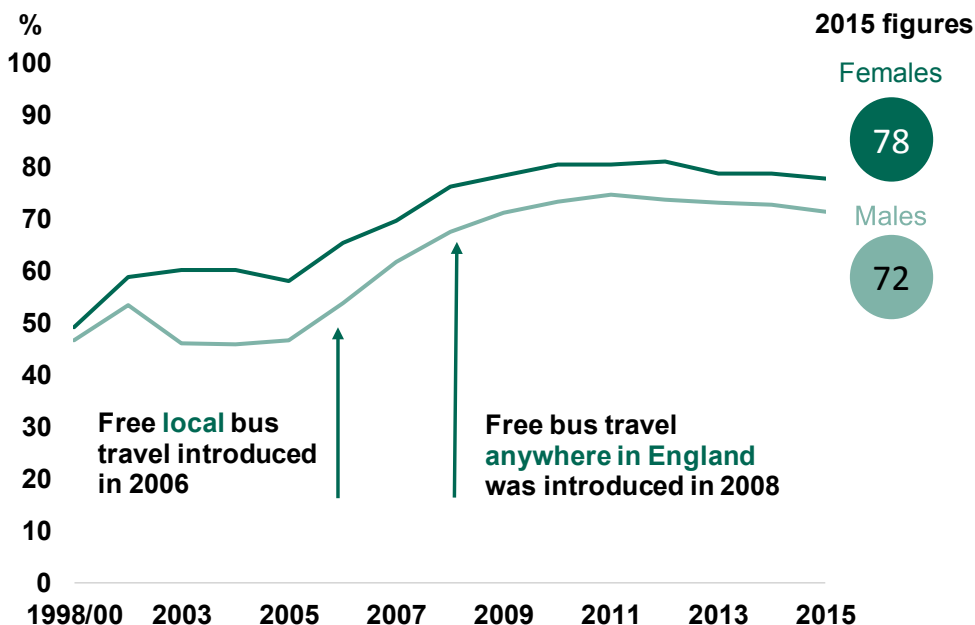
65% of older and disabled passes were held in non-metropolitan areas.

Distribution of older and disabled passes by area: England, 2015/16



The National Travel Survey provides a long time series of the take up rates of older concessionary travel passes, and allows for more detailed analysis of the people who hold them.

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



The NTS estimated that in 2015 75% of people held an older person's concessionary pass. The proportion was higher for women (78%) than men (72%). 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.

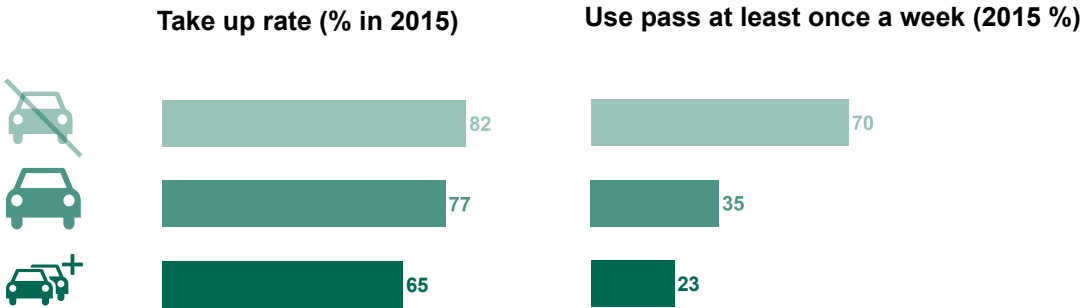
- concessionary travel schemes take up by area in table [NTS0619](#)
- Concessionary travel schemes take up by gender in table [NTS0620](#)
- Frequency of bus use by people aged 60 years or over in table [NTS0621](#)

Factors affecting concessionary pass take up and use

Further analysis of the National Travel Survey (NTS) for 2015 shows how different factors affect take up and use of older concessionary passes. The proportion of people holding a disabled concessionary pass is not available from the NTS.

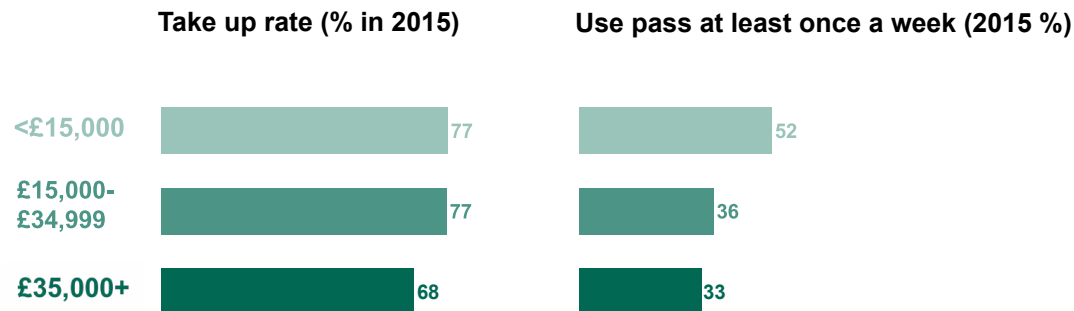
Car ownership

Older people with no car access are more likely to have and use a pass (82% and 70% respectively) than older people with two or more cars (65% and 23%)



Household income

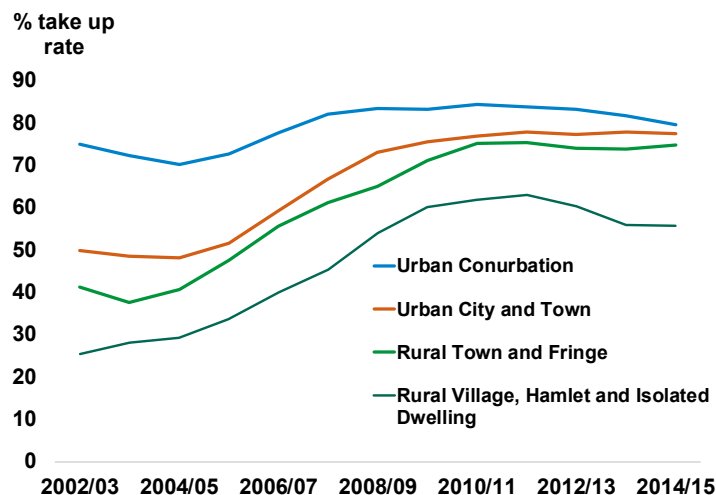
Similarly, older people with lower incomes (less than £15,000 per year) are more likely to have and frequently use a pass (77% and 52% respectively) compared to 68% and 33% for older people with an income of £35,000 or more per year.



Rural and urban areas

Take up rates of older concessionary passes are highest in urban conurbations. However, all types of areas have shown an increase in the rate since 2002/03 and for the latest year there was relatively little difference between urban areas and rural town and fringe areas.

Chart 3: % of people holding older concessionary pass by area: England, NTS since 2002 (table [NTS9915](#))



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 can include a percentage of inactive passes, issued to people who are deceased or no longer resident in the area.

It is difficult to estimate what this proportion is, but it means a return from a local authority can decrease or increase year-on-year if the authority has undertaken 'cleaning' of these inactive passes, or not. Some authorities clean their pass database every three years, for example.

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

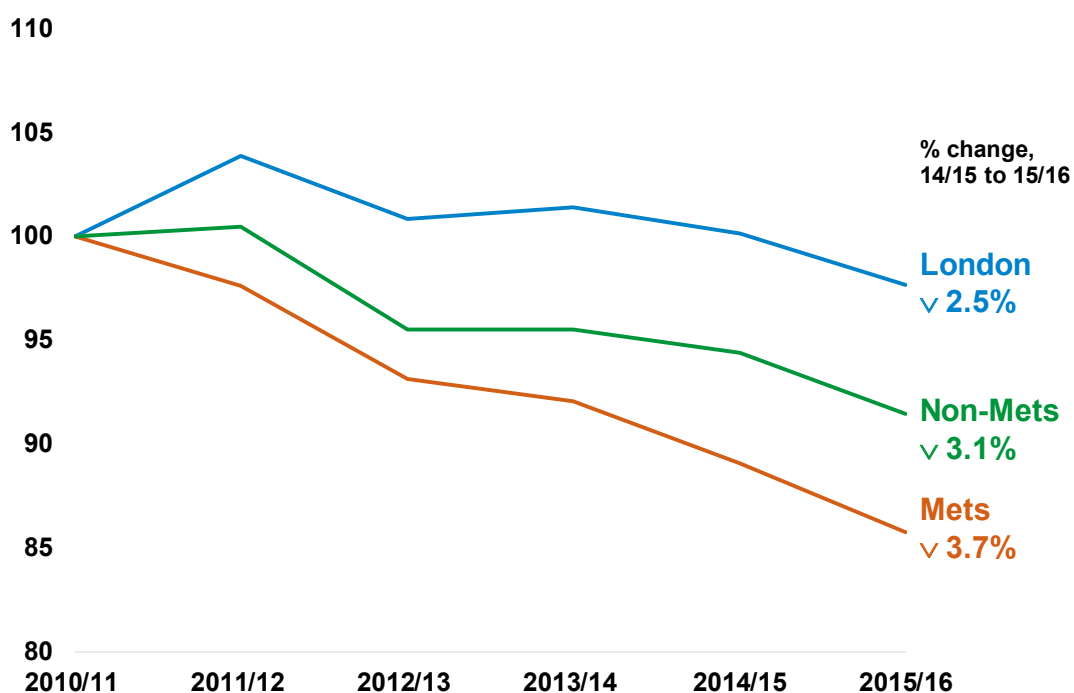
This means that there are differences between estimates of passholders depending on which of the two sources is used. However, the two sources do produce broadly comparable totals.

Concessionary bus journeys

There were 0.97 billion concessionary bus passenger journeys in 2015/16, a decrease of 3.1% (about 31 million journeys) on the previous year. The percentage decrease was lowest in London (down 2.5%) and greatest in the metropolitan areas (down 3.7%) (chart 4)

The latest year continued the decrease in concessionary journeys in recent years. Concessionary bus journeys outside of London have decreased by 10.9% since 2010/11 and decreased by 2.3% in London over the same period.

Chart 4: Concessionary bus journeys by area: England, index 2010/11 = 100 (table [BUS0821](#))



The highest numbers of concessionary bus journeys per pass were in London, at around 239 journeys per pass in 2015/16. This is nearly 4 times the 64 journeys per pass in non-metropolitan areas (Chart 5 over).

With the number of passes increasing and the number of journeys generally 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 concessionary bus journeys per pass. In 2015/16 the journeys per pass figures of 118 in metropolitan areas and 64 in non-metropolitan areas were the lowest since this survey started in 2010/11.

Only in London, where journeys have decreased at a slower rate than passes, was this trend reversed over the last two years.

Statistical tables

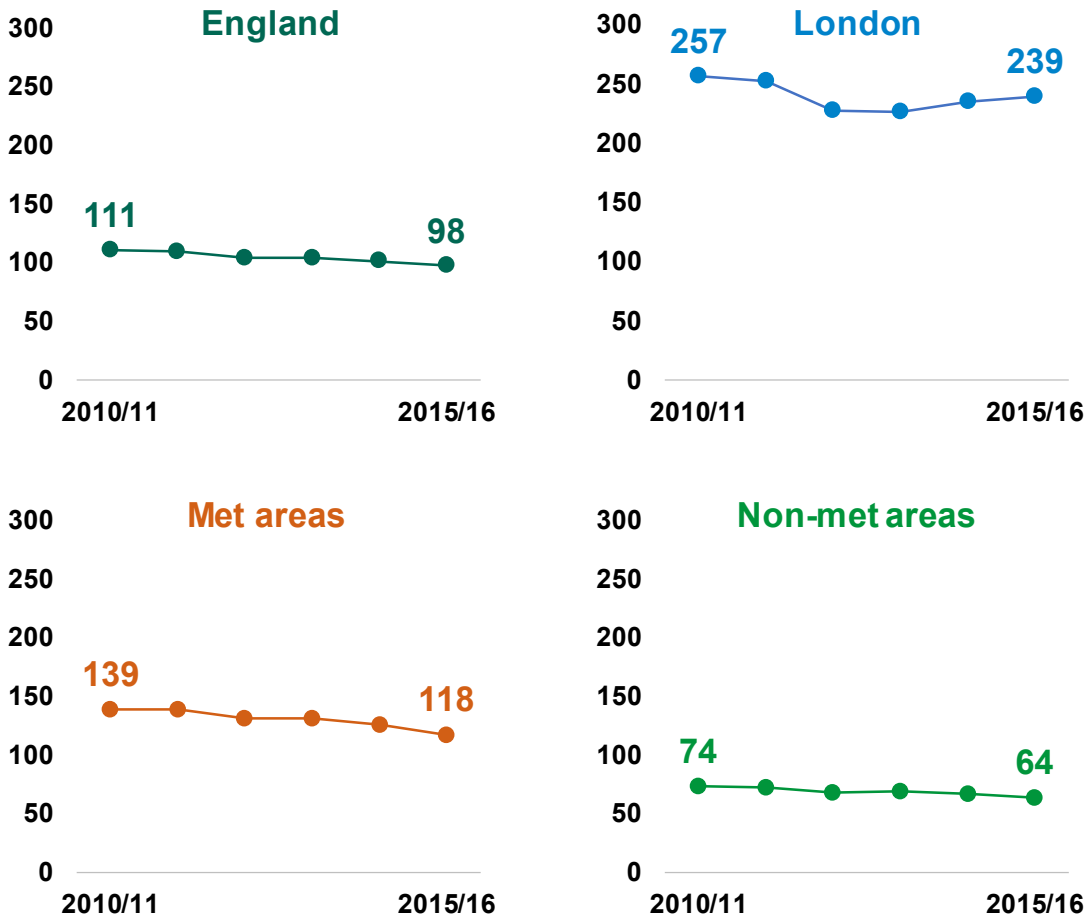
- Concessionary journeys and concessionary journeys per pass by metropolitan area status in table [BUS0821](#)

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

Statistical tables

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

Chart 5: Concessionary journeys per pass by area status: England, 2010/11 onwards (table [BUS0821](#))



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.

The NTS can also differentiate trips by people with and without an older person's concessionary pass. Those people with a older person's pass make more trips in total than those without; they also make far more bus trips than those without a pass. For the average of the years 2012-2014, passholders made 94 local bus and London bus trips compared to 9 by those without.

Similar to the number of bus trips derived from the Concessionary Travel Survey, the National Travel Survey is showing a broad decrease in the number of bus journeys in recent years (chart 6).

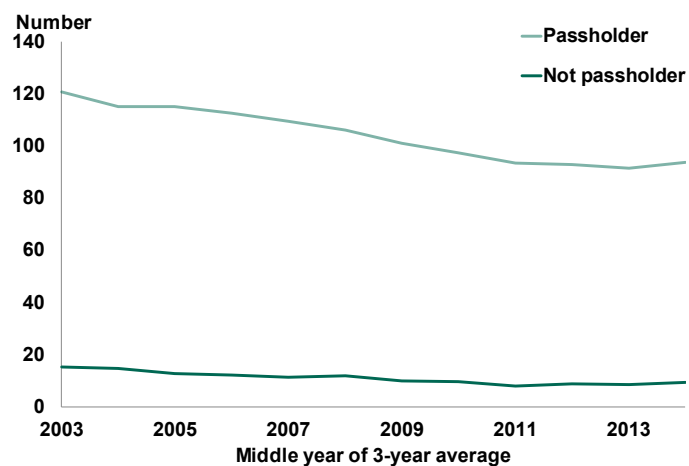


Chart 6: Bus journeys by older concessionary passholders and non-passholders: England, 3- year averages for 2002-2004 onwards (source: National Travel Survey)

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](#)

Bus satisfaction of concessionary passholders

The Transport Focus Bus Passenger survey gathers information on levels of satisfaction of bus users, and within that, satisfaction of fare paying users and satisfaction of passengers travelling with free tickets.

Of the sample of passengers travelling with free tickets, at least 85% were using either an older or disabled concessionary pass. Some 3% were using another type of free or complimentary pass and the remaining 11% a mixture of both. This means that the levels of satisfaction quoted below for free passengers are broadly representative of concessionary passholders.

The Transport Focus Bus Satisfaction Survey figures for 2015 show that across all of the indicators, passengers using a free pass had higher levels of satisfaction than fare-paying passengers. Across the regions in the survey, the percentage of concessionary passengers who were very or fairly satisfied with the journey ranged from 87% to 98%, compared to a range of 73% to 93% for fare paying passengers.



Bus Passenger Survey

Data from the [Bus Passenger Survey](#) (BPS) is managed by the independent transport user watchdog Transport Focus. Note that the statistics from the BPS are not National Statistics.

For the 2014 survey, the BPS was conducted in 24 authority areas in England outside London covering the six metropolitan counties and a mix of unitary and county councils.

The sample was around 40,000 bus passengers in those areas.

The survey does not cover all areas but covers around two thirds of bus passengers within its England outside of London remit area. Bus satisfaction data was available for certain local authorities only back to 2011.

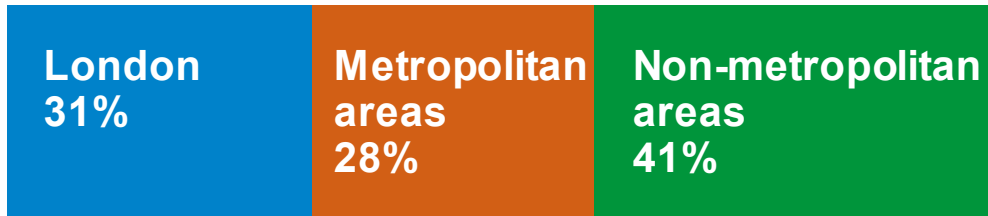
Chart 7: % of bus passengers 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with aspects of their bus journey: ranges for selected areas of England, 2015 (source: Transport Focus)

For the 6 indicators shown that might have relevance for people who were older or disabled, non-fare paying passengers were more satisfied than fare-paying passengers; there was less variation in the levels across the areas; but the relative levels were quite similar - for example, both non-fare and fare paying passengers rated bus punctuality as lower than other indicators.

Expenditure on concessionary travel

In 2015/16, English TCAs estimated they spent around £1.15 billion on concessionary travel. 41% of this was spent in non-metropolitan areas (chart 8).

Chart 8: Distribution of net concessionary expenditure by area: England, 2015/16 (table BUS0810)

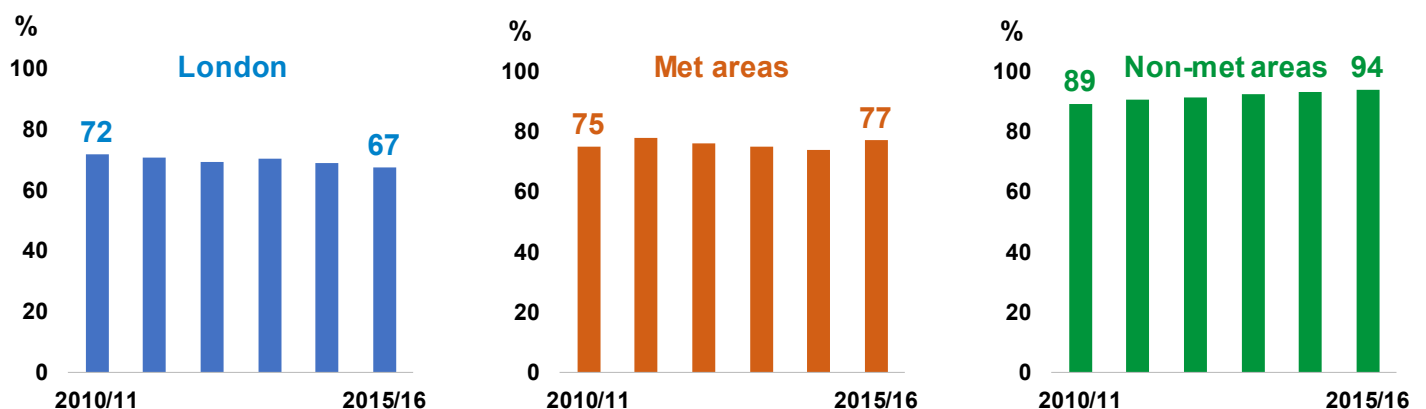


Overall, English TCAs spent 81% of their concessionary travel net expenditure on the statutory ENCTS scheme. The remaining 19% was spent on discretionary concessions such as youth and non-bus concessions.

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 6% in 2015/16 (chart 9)

There is variation between the areas. Metropolitan areas spent 23% of their concessionary travel expenditure on discretionary concessions, compared to the 6% figure in non-metropolitan areas. In London, the figure was even higher at 33%. These figures reflect the prevalence of different types of transport in metropolitan areas such as trams, which may be offered as discretionary concessions.

Chart 9: % of net concessionary expenditure spent on ENCTS by area: England, 2015/16 (table BUS0810)



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, administration, pass production costs and employee costs.

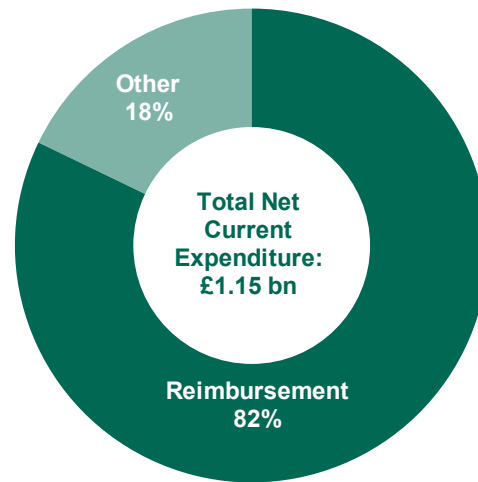
Data on total concessionary travel expenditure by TCAs is also collected by the Department for Communities and Local Government as part of the revenue outturn data.

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](#)

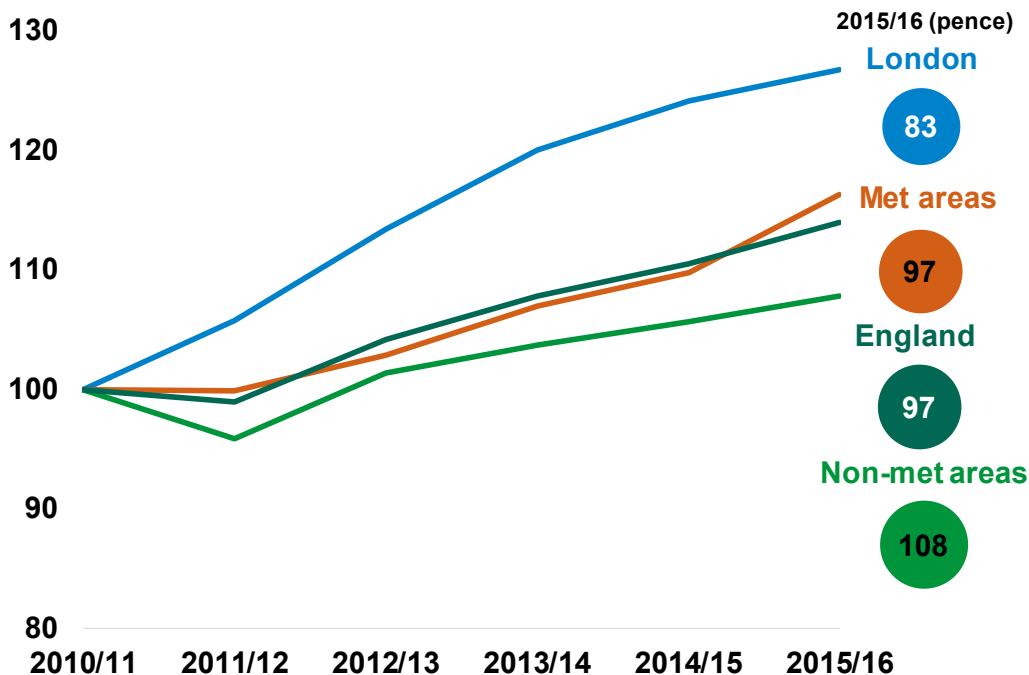
Distribution of expenditure

The expenditure figures in the previous section cover the total expenditure on concessionary travel, including reimbursement and administration (see Box on page 8). 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 2015/16, TCAs estimated they spent 82% of their total concessionary net expenditure on reimbursement. The remaining 18% was spent on administration, for example pass production costs. This was a total of £942 million and was a decrease in real terms (i.e. adjusted for inflation) of 0.5% on the £947 million reimbursed in 2014/15.

Chart 10: Reimbursement per concessionary journey (not adjusted for inflation): England, index =2010/11



Average reimbursement was 97p per journey across England in 2015/16. It varied in different areas: in London it was lower at 83p per journey. In non-metropolitan areas it was 108p per journey. In London, the average reimbursement per journey has risen by 18% 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.

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](#)

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 (67 TCAs in 2015/16), free or reduced travel for companions background information on to disabled people and concessions on community transport (including Dial-a-Ride).

Some of the concessions offered are very specific to the local authority. For example concessions for travel on light rail systems or ferries.

Number of authorities offering discretion:

67



Extensions to travel times

54



Companions to disabled people

43



Community Transport or Dial-a-Ride

31



Park and ride

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](#)

Detailed statistics

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

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 16 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 77 TCAs outside London.

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 2016, we have used the 2016 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@df.t.gsi.gov.uk.

Next update

The next Concessionary Travel Statistics are due to be published in autumn 2017.