



Department for Transport

Quarterly Bus Statistics: Great Britain Q2 (April - June) 2015

About this release

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

This release relates largely to England, in line with the coverage of DfT bus policy. Statistical tables which cover the whole of Great Britain, are available online.

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).

User feedback

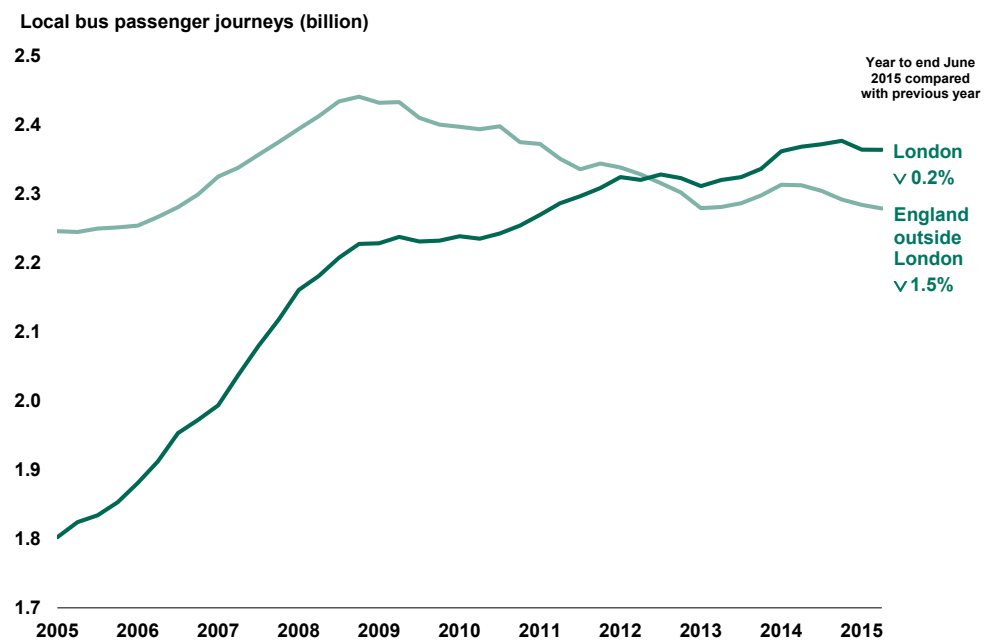
In the Q1 2015 Quarterly Bus Statistics release published in June 2015, we ran a user feedback exercise asking for views on the continuation of the quarterly bus statistics presented here. The results are detailed in our annual PSV survey statistical release for 2014/15 here: www.gov.uk/government/collections/bus-statistics

The provisional number of local bus passenger journeys in England was 4.64 billion in the year to end June 2015, a 0.8% decrease compared with a year earlier.

In the same period, bus use decreased both in London and in England outside of London. These changes broadly maintain the general trend since 2012/13 of bus use in London being higher bus use in England outside of London (see chart 1).

In the past year to June 2015, local bus fares have increased by 3.1%, faster than the annual all items Retail Prices Index rate of inflation (1.0%). Between June 2010 and June 2015, the average annual percentage change in bus fares was 4.5%. This was higher than the average annual rate of inflation (2.9%).

Chart 1: Local bus passenger journeys in England outside London and London, year to end March 2005 to year to end June 2015



Summary

Figures for England are broken down into London, metropolitan areas (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).

Table 1: Summary of latest quarterly and year to end local bus passenger journeys in England and bus fares index

	Local bus passenger journeys		Bus Fares index Jun 2015 (compared with Jun 2014)
	Year to end Jun 2015 (compared with previous year)	Q2 (Apr-Jun) 2015 (compared with Q2 2014)	
London	2.36 billion: ⬇️ 0.2%	0.59 billion: ↔️ 0.0%	⬆️ 2.7%
English metropolitan areas	0.99 billion: ⬇️ 1.6%	0.25 billion: ⬇️ 1.4%	⬆️ 3.6%
English non-metropolitan areas	1.28 billion: ⬇️ 1.3%	0.32 billion: ⬇️ 0.5%	⬆️ 3.0%
England	4.64 billion: ⬇️ 0.8%	1.16 billion: ⬇️ 0.5%	⬆️ 3.1%
England outside London	2.28 billion: ⬇️ 1.5%	0.57 billion: ⬇️ 0.9%	⬆️ 3.3%
Scotland	0.41 billion: ⬇️ 2.8%	0.10 billion: ⬇️ 1.5%	⬆️ 3.5%
Wales	0.10 billion: ⬇️ 5.9%	0.02 billion: ⬇️ 4.7%	⬆️ 1.1%
Great Britain	5.15 billion: ⬇️ 1.1%	1.29 billion: ⬇️ 0.6%	⬆️ 3.1%

Statistical tables

Additional 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).

Local bus passenger journeys

Since 2008/09, bus passenger journeys in England have remained broadly stable with growth in London offsetting a gradual decline outside of London (see chart 2). In April to June 2015, bus passenger journeys decreased in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas while remaining flat in London when compared with the same quarter in 2014/15.

Index: 2004/05 = 100, seasonally adjusted

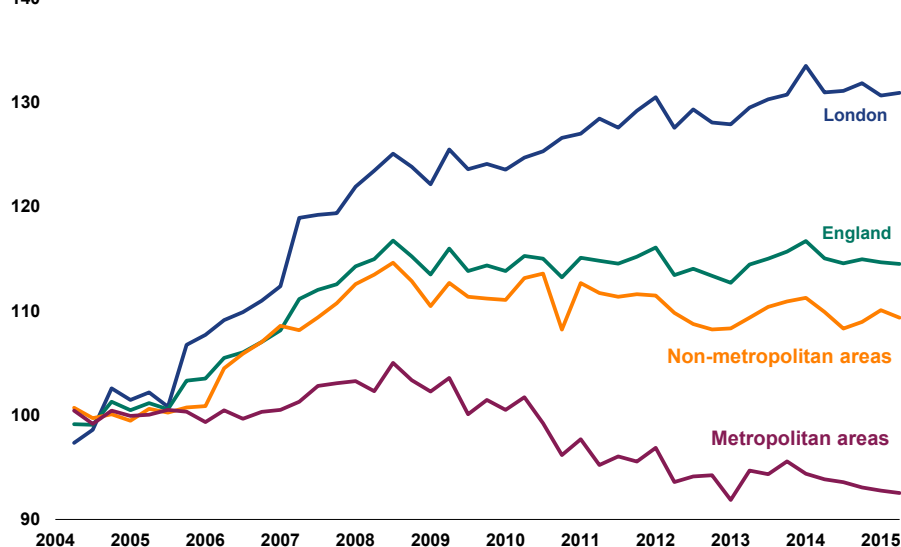


Chart 2: Local bus passenger journeys by metropolitan area status: England, quarterly from April-June 2004 to April to June 2015 (table [BUS0106b](#))

Bus usage

The number of bus passenger journeys (with each boarding of a bus counted as one journey) is the key measure of bus demand.

Seasonal adjustment

Estimates of the number of bus passenger journeys are seasonally adjusted. This removes the effects of seasonal factors and the arrangement of the calendar so that quarterly comparisons can be made.

Local bus fares

Local bus fares in England increased by 60% on average between June 2005 and June 2015¹. Chart 3 shows that bus fares have risen at a faster rate in metropolitan areas (70%) than in non-metropolitan areas (43%). The all items Retail Prices Index has risen by 35% over the same period, which means that bus fares have risen in real terms.

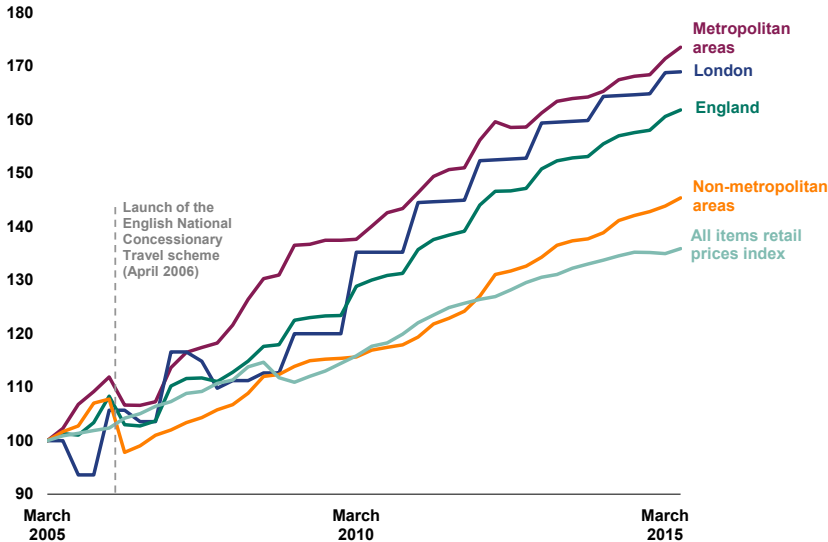


Chart 3: Local bus fares index by metropolitan area status: England, quarterly since March 2005, current prices (table [BUS0415a](#))

Local bus fares index

The local bus fares index measures the percentage change in bus operator receipts from passengers as a result of any fare changes. These figures provide an estimate of the change in the average cost of bus travel to the passenger but not the actual fare levels paid.

Bus fares in London are set by Transport for London.

Outside London, fare changes will largely reflect the commercial decisions of bus operators, which in turn may 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.

The average annual percentage change in bus fares was 4.5% between June 2010 and June 2015, similar to the average annual increase in rail fares (4.2%), as shown in chart 4. In the past year to June 2015, local bus fares and rail fares have increased by 3.1% and 1.5% respectively and both faster than the rate of inflation (1.0%). Bus fares have also increased at a higher rate than the price of motoring over the past year to June 2015. The price of purchasing a motor vehicle decreased by 2.0% and the price of petrol and oil dropped by 10.4%.

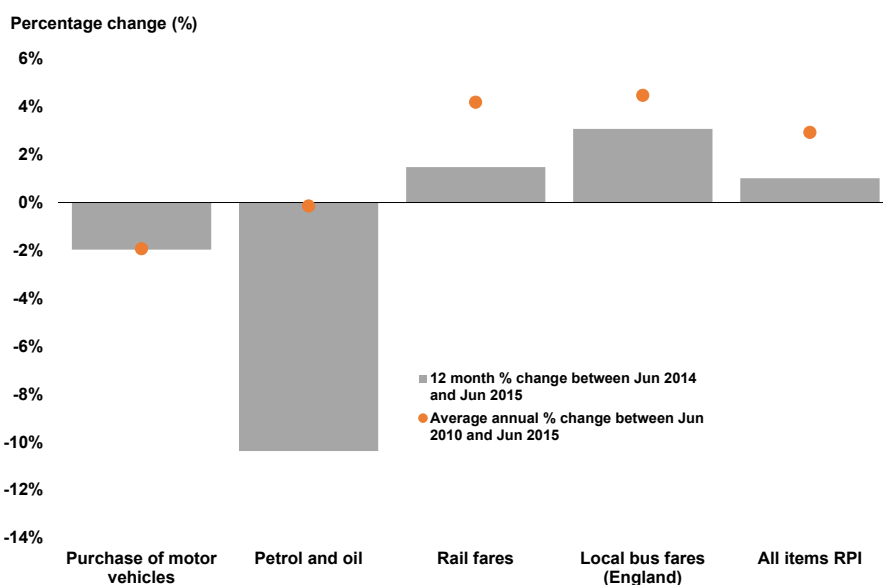


Chart 4: Percentage change in RPI and transport indices: UK, June 2010 to June 2015

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.

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 April to June 2015, responses were received from 17 of the 18 panel members, covering over 90% of the bus journeys made in Great Britain. 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 local 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% 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.

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, quarterly bus statistics 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

The notes and definitions document is available at: 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

Next update

Statistics for July to September 2015 are due to be published in December 2015.