



Department for Transport

Annual bus statistics: England 2014/15

The number of local bus passenger journeys in England fell by 27 million or 0.6% to 4.65 billion in the year to end March 2015, while the split between commercial and local authority supported services continued to diverge.

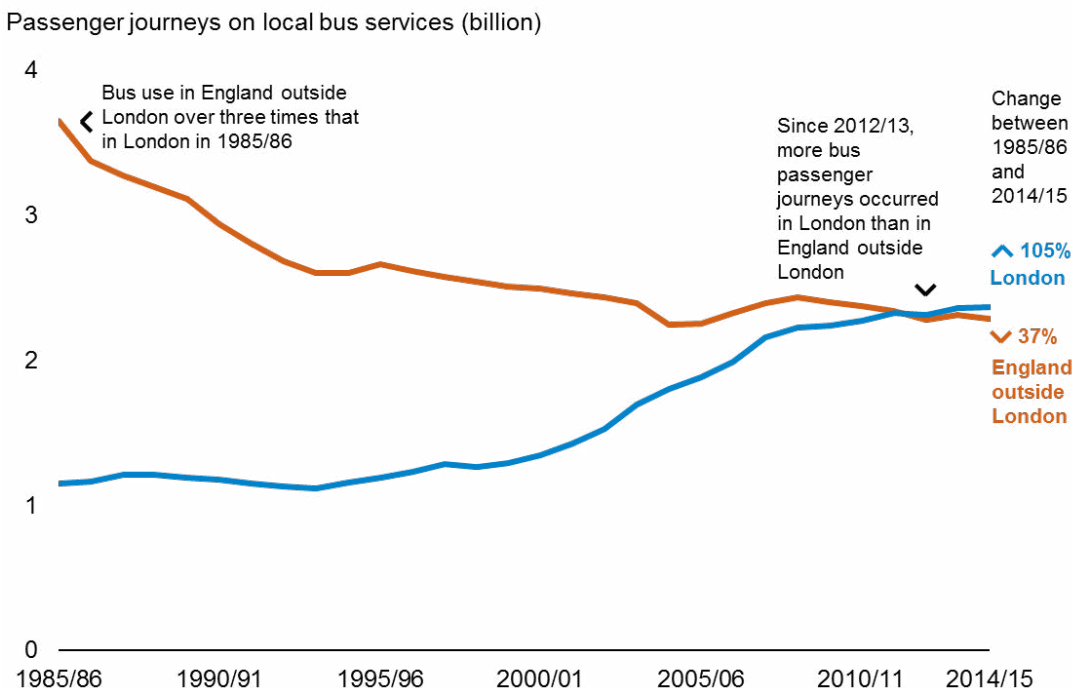
Since 2012/13, bus use in London has been higher than in 'England outside London'. These latest statistics show a continuing trend of increasing bus use in London and gradual decline in England outside London (see chart 1).

Bus mileage in England as a whole decreased by 0.6% when compared with the previous year. This was largely due to a 10% reduction in mileage on local authority supported services in

England outside London; commercial mileage increased by 1.4%.

Over the last decade in England outside London, local authority supported mileage has decreased by 55 million miles and commercial mileage has increased by 13 million miles. The percentage of bus mileage on supported services has decreased from 22% in 2004/05 to 17% in 2014/15.

Chart 1: Local bus passenger journeys in England outside London and London, 1985/86 to 2014/15 ([table BUS0103](#))



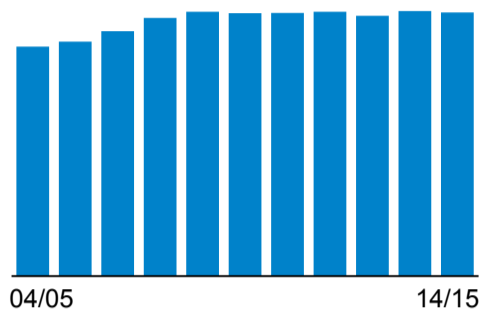
About this release

This release presents the latest annual statistics on the local bus sector. Local bus services use public service vehicles (PSVs) to carry passengers paying separate fares over short distances. Most of the data are derived from the Department for Transport's (DfT) survey of bus operators.

Figures are for England, in line with coverage of DfT bus policy. Statistics for Scotland and Wales are available [online](#).

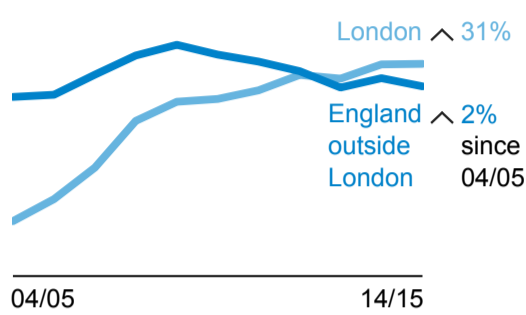
Local bus statistics England 2014/15

Bus use in England



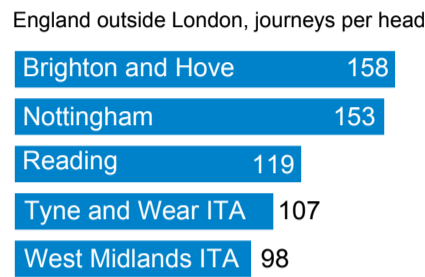
4.65 billion journeys in England in 2014/15 \uparrow **15%** since 2004/05

Over half of bus use in London



2.28 billion journeys in England outside London in 2014/15 \downarrow **2%** since 04/05
2.36 billion journeys in London in 2014/15 \uparrow **31%** since 04/05

Top 5 LAs for bus use



50 bus journeys per head average for England outside London in 2014/15

Concessionary journeys

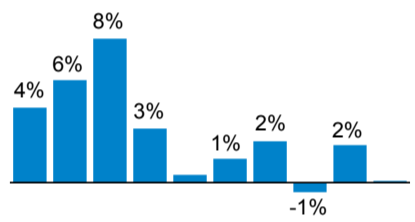
34% of all local bus journeys in 2014/15 were concessionary journeys (elderly, disabled and youth)



9.8 million older and disabled concessionary travel passes in 2014/15
102 average number of older and disabled bus concessionary journeys per pass in 2014/15

Bus use in London

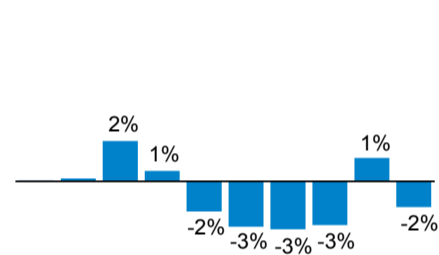
Annual percentage change in bus journeys



2.36 billion journeys in London in 2014/15 \uparrow **31%** since 2004/05

Bus use in met areas

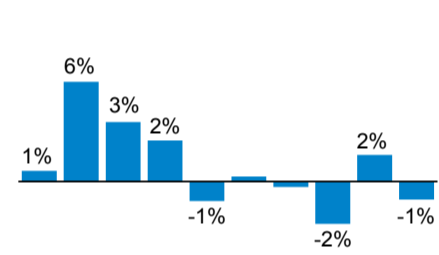
Annual percentage change in bus journeys



1.00 billion journeys in metropolitan areas in 2014/15 \downarrow **7%** since 2004/05

Bus use in non-met areas

Annual percentage change in bus journeys



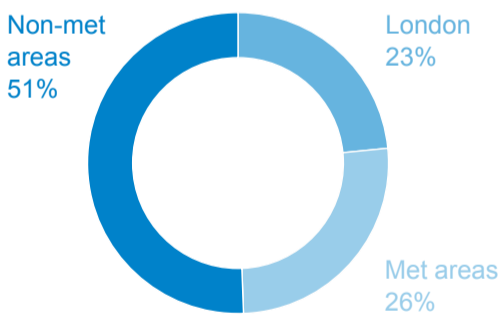
1.29 billion journeys in non-metropolitan areas in 2014/15 \uparrow **9%** since 2004/05

Local bus fares index



61% Local bus fares index since March 2005
35% All items Retail Prices Index since March 2005

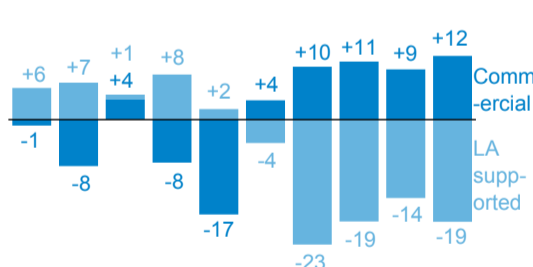
Bus mileage in England



1.29 billion vehicle miles in England in 2014/15 \downarrow **2%** since 2004/05

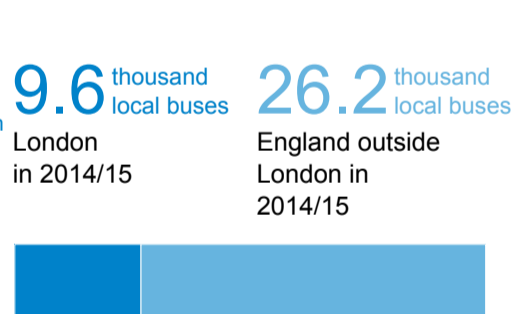
Change in bus mileage by type

Year-on-year change in vehicle bus miles (million) England outside London, 2004/05 to 2014/15



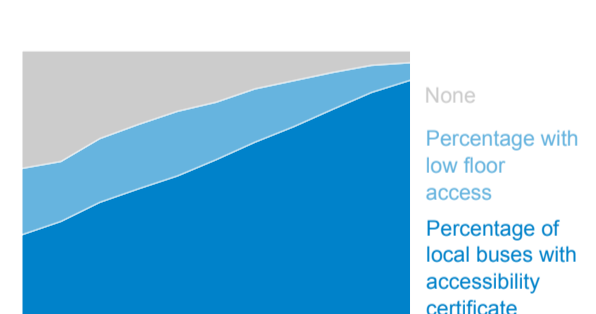
13 million vehicle miles change in commercial bus mileage \uparrow since 05/06
55 million vehicle miles change in local authority supported bus mileage \downarrow since 05/06

Number of buses



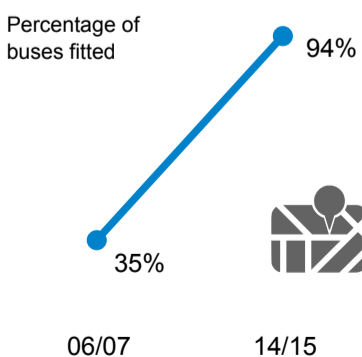
9.6 thousand local buses in London in 2014/15
26.2 thousand local buses in England outside London in 2014/15

Bus accessibility



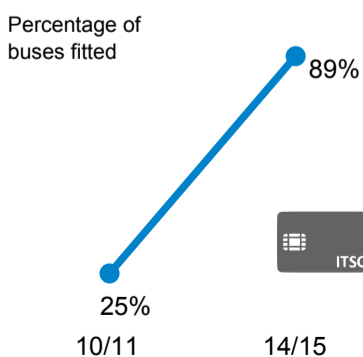
89% of local buses in England with an accessibility certificate in 2014/15

Automatic vehicle location



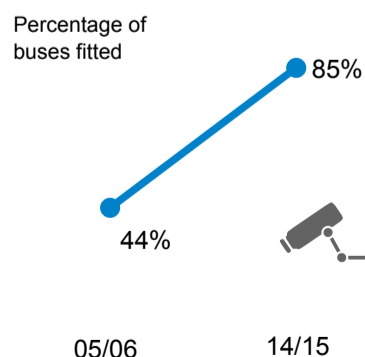
To track vehicle location and for real time passenger information systems

ITSO smart enabled buses



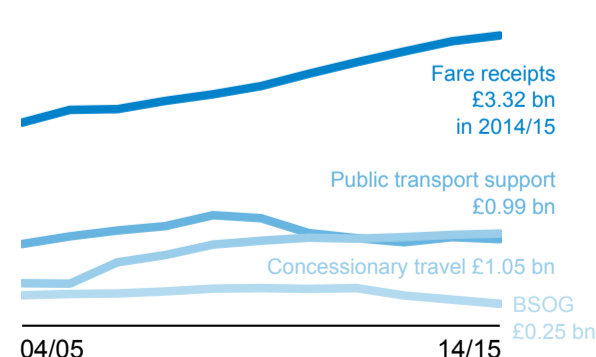
Common technical standard for smart ticketing

CCTV on buses



Percentage of buses fitted

Operating revenue for local bus



£5.61 billion bus operator revenue for local bus services in England in 2014/15

Summary

The statistics presented here on the local bus sector in England provide information for monitoring trends in usage and provision for a mode of transport used for nearly two-thirds of public transport journeys.

Table 1 summarises the annual figures for bus passenger journeys and mileage for the 2014/15 financial year. Figures for England are broken down into London, metropolitan areas and non-metropolitan areas.

Table 1: Local bus passenger journeys and mileage by area type: England, 2013/14 to 2014/15 (tables [BUS0103](#) and [BUS0203](#))

	Passenger journeys		Vehicle mileage	
	2014/15 figures in billion / billion miles and change compared with 2013/14			
London	2.36	↑ 0.1%	0.30	↓ -0.2%
English metropolitan areas	1.00	↓ -1.5%	0.33	↓ -1.8%
English non-metropolitan areas	1.29	↓ -1.1%	0.65	↓ -0.1%
England outside London	2.28	↓ -1.3%	0.98	↓ -0.7%
England	4.65	↓ -0.6%	1.29	↓ -0.6%

In this publication

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Bus service punctuality	p14
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Local bus services and concessionary travel

Most figures in this release relate to local bus services. These are timetabled services using public service vehicles to carry passengers over relatively short distances, and usually eligible for Bus Services Operators Grant. Long distance coach services, private hire work and closed contracts are excluded but school services accessible to the general public are included.

services in England are provided by private companies since deregulation of the industry in 1986 in England outside London. Services can be operated on a purely commercial basis or with financial support from local authorities (supported services). London services are operated by private companies but regulated by Transport for London (TfL).

passenger types: concessionary and non-concessionary passengers.

Concessionary passengers are either older or disabled people (free to travel anywhere in England since April 2008) or young people in local authorities where such discretionary travel schemes exist.

More detailed statistics on concessionary travel are published separately by DfT and available [online](#).

The majority of bus

There are two broad

Why the distinction between London and England outside London?

Buses in London, through Transport for London, operate under a different regulatory framework to the rest of England.

The size of the bus market in London and differing trends in bus use also makes it sensible to disaggregate these two area types.

Different disaggregations are available online including local authority level and for urban and rural areas.

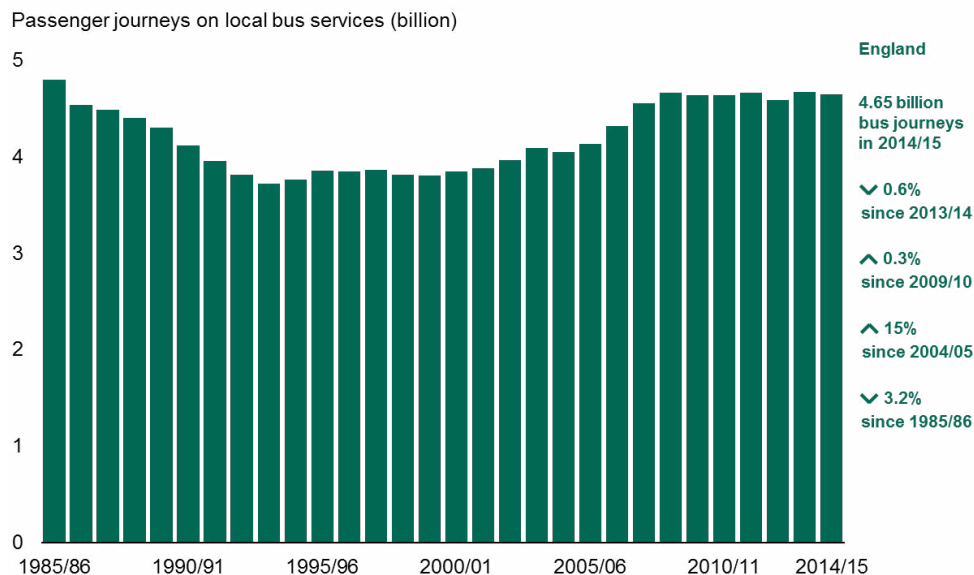
Passenger journeys on local bus services

In 2014/15, 4.65 billion passenger journeys were made by bus in England, down 27 million journeys or 0.6% when compared with 2013/14.

Chart 2 shows the trend in bus journeys between

1985/86 (year before deregulation of the bus market) and 2014/15. Bus use fell in the early 1990s before starting to increase and has remained fairly constant over the last five years, and is now 3.2% lower than in 1985/86.

Chart 2: Local bus passenger journeys in England, 1985/86 to 2014/15
([table BUS0103](#))



What is a bus passenger journey?

Each boarding of a bus is counted as one journey. The number of passenger journeys are an important measure of bus demand

These statistics relate to passengers on local bus services. The main source of information on non-local bus use (e.g. long distance coach services) is the [National Travel Survey](#).

Bus use in London and England outside London

Levels of bus use in London and England outside London has changed since the mid-1980s. In 2014/15, 51% of bus passenger journeys were in London compared with 24% in 1985/86 (see chart 3). Bus use in England outside London has increased by 1.7% over the last decade and by 31% in London (doubling since 1985/86). The increase in bus use in England as a whole over the last ten years has come from the increase in bus use in London.

Chart 3: Proportion of local bus passenger journeys in England outside London and London: 1985/86 and 2014/15 ([table BUS0103](#))



Concessionary travel

Total concessionary journeys (elderly or disabled, and youth concessions) made up 34% of all bus passenger journeys in England (see chart 4). In England outside London 30% of journeys were elderly or disabled concessionary journeys, twice the share as in London.

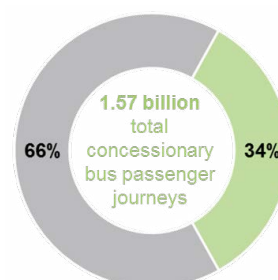


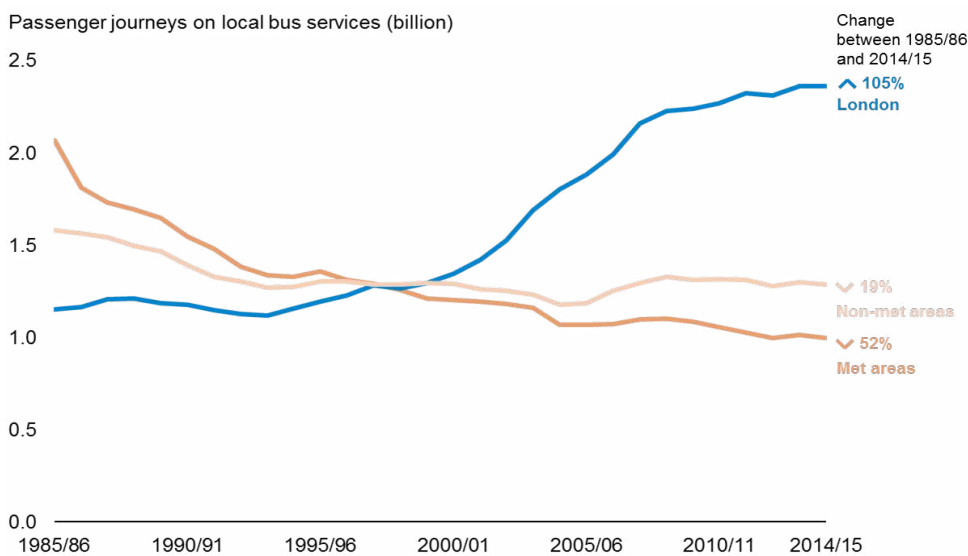
Chart 4: Total concessionary journeys as a proportion of local bus journeys: England, 2014/15
([table BUS0105](#))

Bus use by metropolitan area status

Figures for England outside London can be disaggregated further into metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. Metropolitan areas are the six former metropolitan counties: Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire. Non-metropolitan areas cover the remaining county councils and unitary authorities in England outside London.

Since 1985/86, bus use in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas has decreased by 52% and 19% respectively. Chart 5 shows the fall in bus use in these two areas and the increase in London. More bus passenger journeys have occurred in London than in metropolitan areas since 1998/99 and non-metropolitan areas since 2000/01.

Chart 5: Local bus passenger journeys by area type: England, 1985/86 to 2014/15 (table BUS0103)



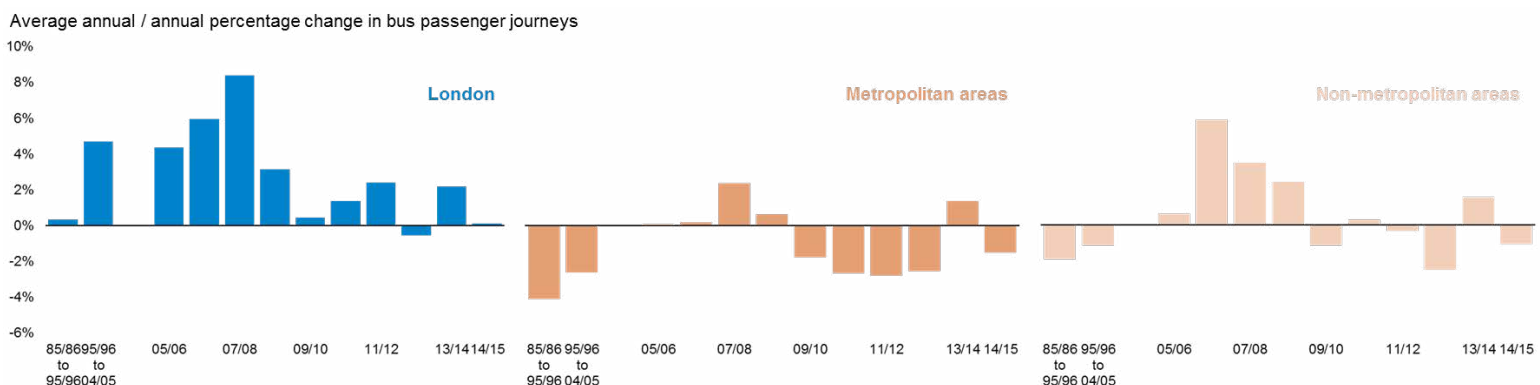
Buses in context

The [National Travel Survey](#) shows that 6% of all journeys in England in 2014 were by local bus compared with 2% of journeys by rail. [Transport Statistics Great Britain](#) shows that local bus trips account for nearly two thirds of public transport journeys. [Bus use](#) is highest amongst those aged 17-20 and 60+ years, and decreases as household income increases.

In London, metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, the introduction of free concessionary travel in local authority areas from 1 April 2006 and nationally from 1 April 2008 led to annual increases in local bus passenger journeys (see chart 6). After 2008/09, bus use in England

outside London has continued to decline although at a slower rate than between 1985/86 and 1995/96. Annual increases in London have also slowed since 2008/09 when compared with the average annual growth rate between 1995/96 and 2004/05.

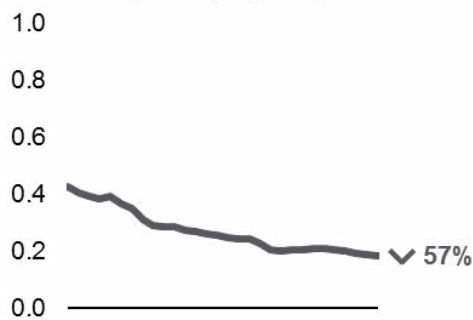
Chart 6: Average annual (1985/86 to 1995/96, 1995/96 to 2004/05) and annual (2004/05 to 2014/15) percentage change in bus journeys by area type: England, 1985/86 to 2014/15 (table BUS0103)



Bus use by region in England outside London

North East

Local bus journeys (billion)



North West

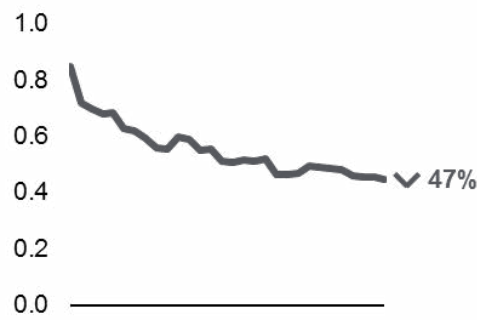
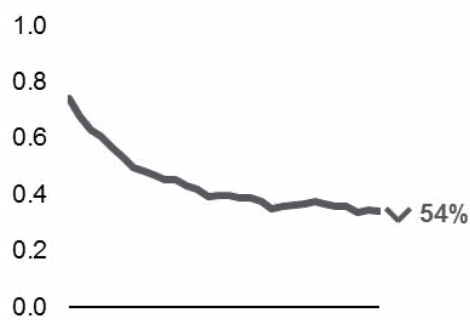


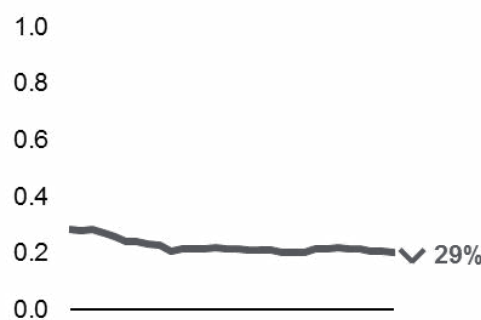
Chart 7: Local bus passenger journeys by region: England outside London, 1985/86 to 2014/15 ([table BUS0108](#))

All charts: change between 1985/86 and 2014/15

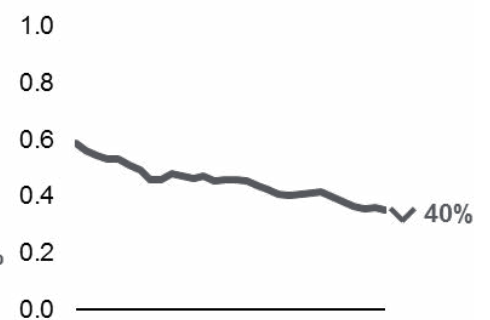
Yorkshire and The Humber



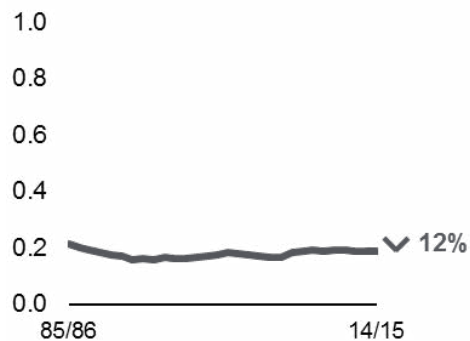
East Midlands



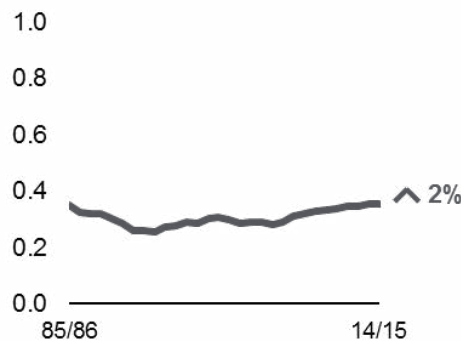
West Midlands



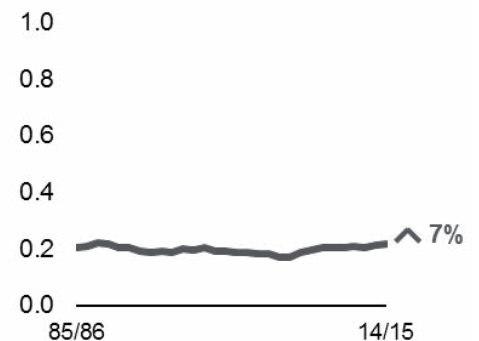
East of England



South East



South West



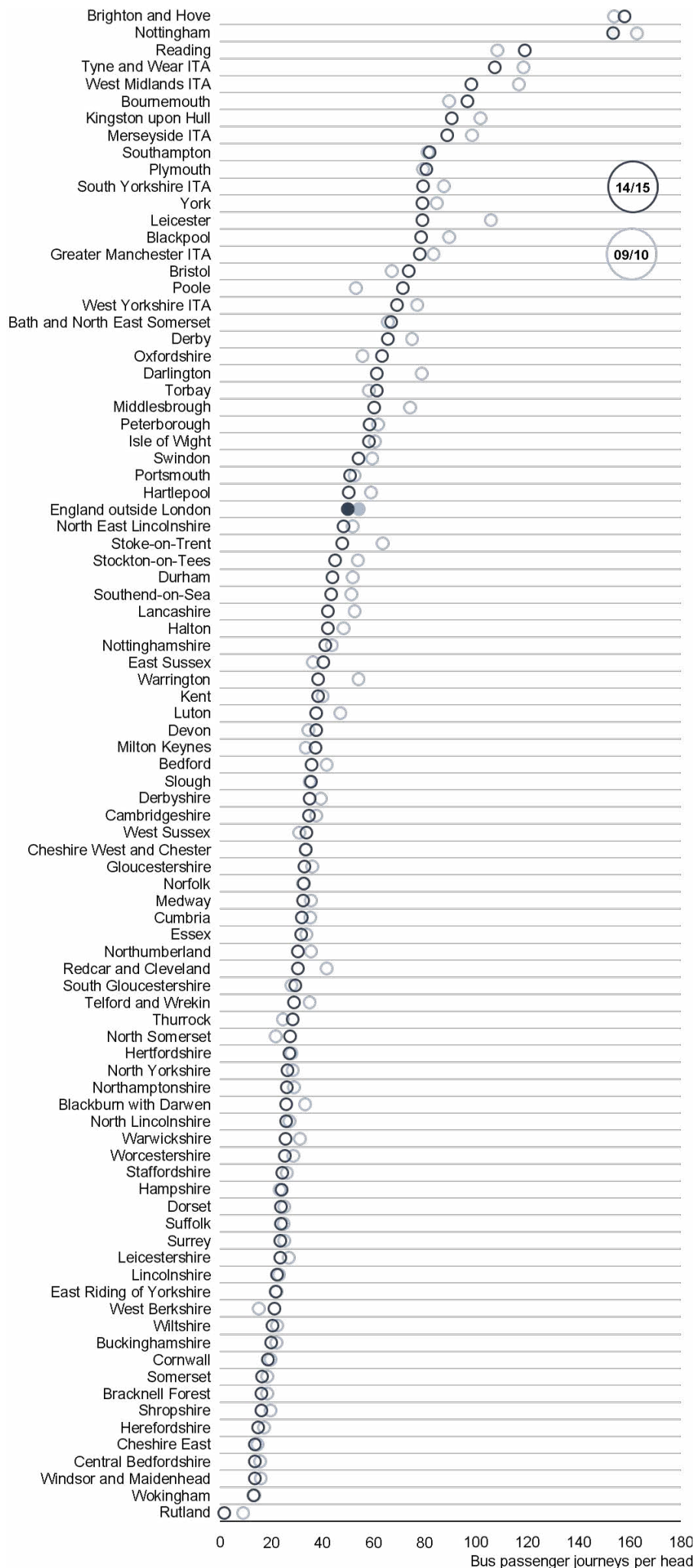
Bus use in England outside of London has decreased since 1985/86 but this change has not been uniform across all regions.

The decline in bus use in metropolitan areas can be seen in their respective regions (see chart 7) but bus use in the South East and South West has in recent years been flat or showing a small increase.

Bus use in urban and rural areas

[Table BUS0111](#) shows passenger journeys on local bus services by urban / rural classification. As you move from urban to rural areas the number of bus journeys declines (find out more about [Defra's urban and rural classification](#)).

The [National Travel Survey](#) shows that [household car ownership](#) and the [number of trips by car](#) is highest in rural areas. The factors that affect bus use, such as household car ownership will be explored further below.



Bus use by local authority

This snapshot of bus passenger journeys per head in 2009/10 and 2014/15 in England outside London shows the difference in bus use across local authorities.

Chart 8 has been ranked by bus journeys per head in 2014/15. The average number of bus passenger journeys per head in England outside London was 50 in 2014/15 down from 54 in 2009/10.

In general, more urban local authorities have above average levels of bus use when compared with rural areas.

Out of 88 local authorities in England outside London, 66 had a decrease in bus use per head from 2009/10 to 2014/15.

Note that the bus passenger journeys per head figures presented here are estimates. Mid-year population estimates from Office for National Statistics are used but do not account for bus passengers using the bus outside the local authority in which they reside.

Chart 8: Local bus passenger journeys per head by local authority: England outside London, 2009/10 and 2014/15

([table BUS0110a](#))

Bus use and bus passenger satisfaction

Data on bus use is derived from DfT's survey of bus operators. This gives information on the number of bus passenger journeys but no perspective on the views of bus passengers.

local authority information was used, the focus was on the relationship between bus satisfaction and bus use overall and not the change in bus satisfaction with bus use over time for specific areas.

head. The number of bus journeys per head in England outside London in 2014/15 was 50, showing that the local authorities analysed covered high and low levels of bus use.

Data from the Bus Passenger Survey, managed by Transport Focus, can be used to measure bus passenger satisfaction.

Chart 9 shows that there was no evidence to suggest a correlation between overall bus satisfaction and bus use. For a small (and relatively high) range of bus passenger satisfaction the level of bus use varied largely from 23 to 116 bus journeys per

Further investigation would be needed to see if other measures of bus satisfaction such as value for money are correlated with bus use. Comparing the views of non-bus users with the decline in bus use (at least in England outside London) could also be of benefit.

Overall bus satisfaction was compared with the number of bus passenger journeys per head. Although

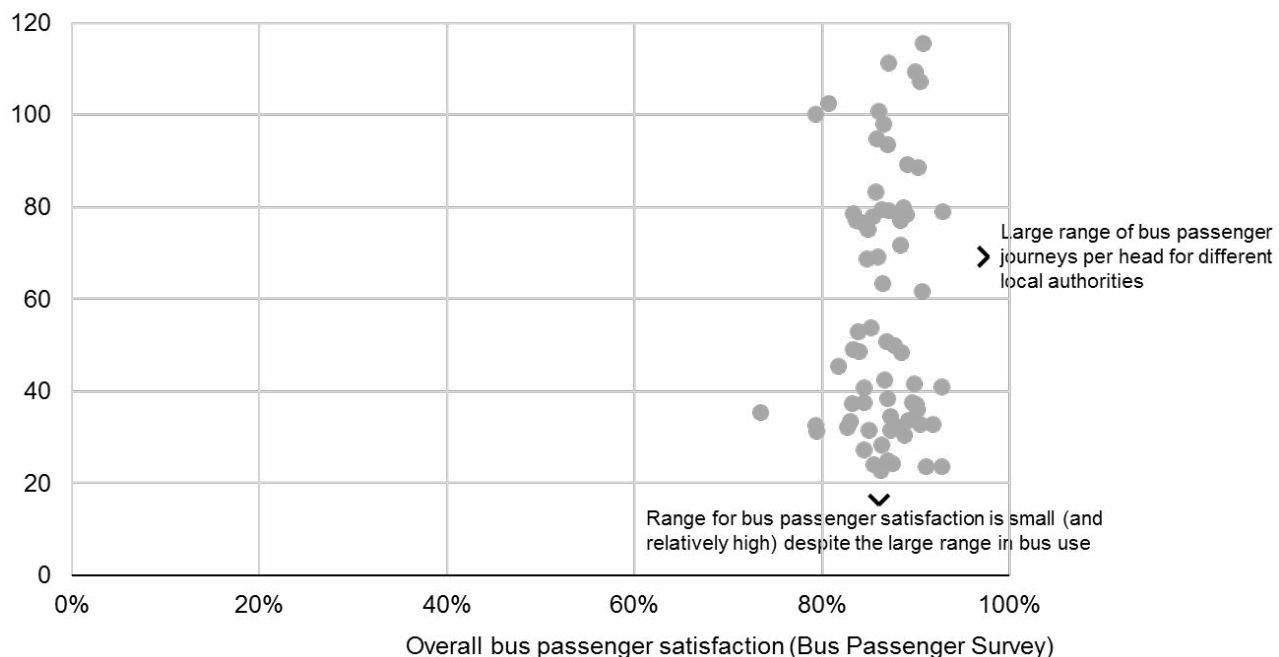
Bus Passenger Survey

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 23 authority areas in England outside London covering the six metropolitan counties and a mix of unitary and county councils. 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 9: Bus passenger journeys per head compared with overall bus passenger satisfaction ([table BUS0110a](#) and [BPS](#))

Bus passenger journeys per head



Bus use and household car availability

Several factors could contribute to the difference in bus use between local authorities, one of which is household car availability.

Chart 10 compares the number of bus passenger journeys per head in 2014/15 with the proportion of households with no cars or vans from the 2011 Census for each local authority.

The chart provides evidence that suggest there is a correlation between bus use and household car availability. As the proportion of the households without a car or van increases, the level of bus use increases.

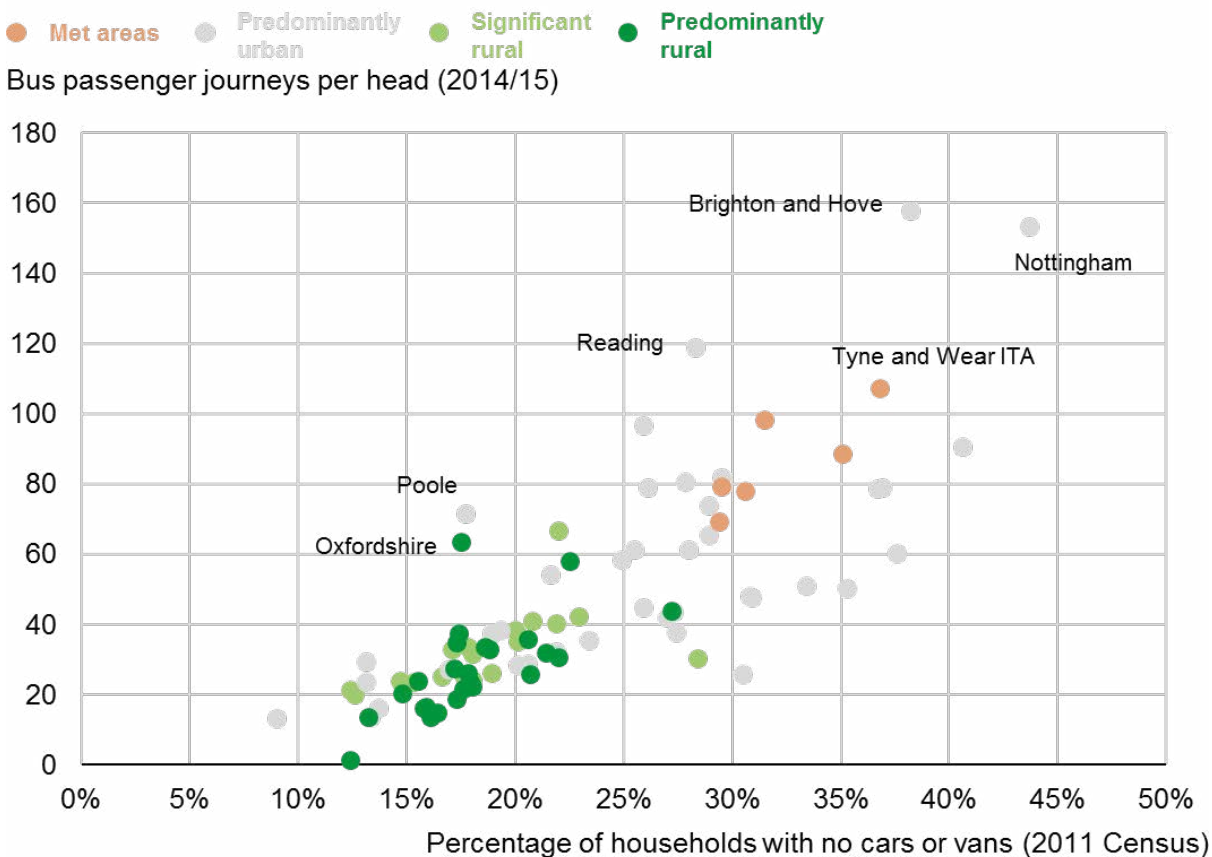
The proportion of households without a car increases as you move from rural to urban areas. Metropolitan areas have amongst the highest levels of bus use and proportion of

households without a car. Of the most rural areas, Oxfordshire, Isle of Wight and Durham had the highest levels of bus use.

Other factors that could affect bus use in a local authority are:

- population density
- income
- demographics
- availability, quality and cost of bus services
- local and national economic conditions
- weather

Chart 10: Bus passenger journeys per head compared with household car availability
([table BUS0110a](#) and [2011 Census](#))

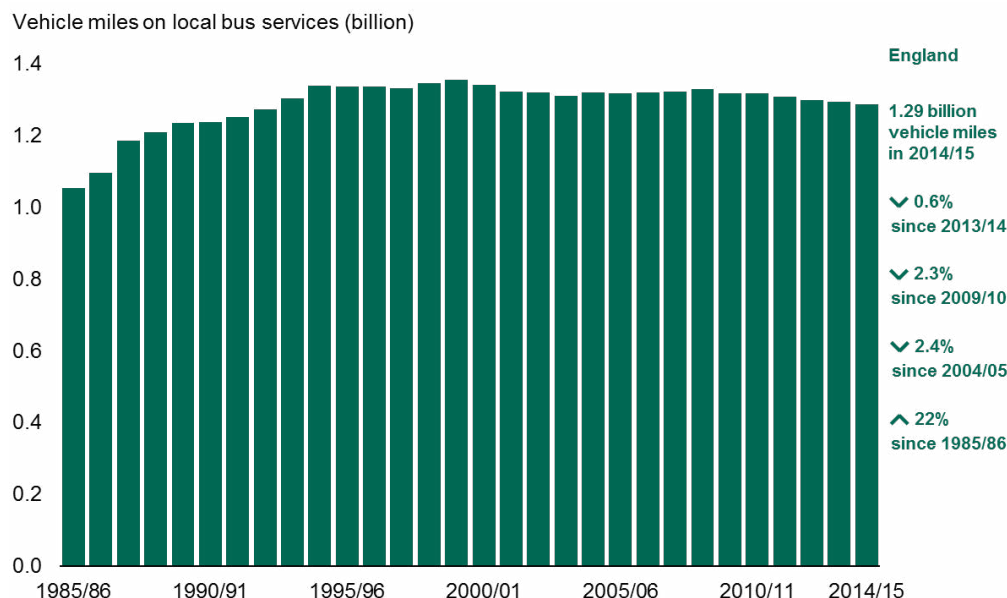


Bus mileage

In 2014/15, 1.29 billion bus service miles were run in England, a decrease of 0.6% when compared with 2013/14.

Bus service mileage, since 1985/86, peaked in 1999/00 at 1.36 billion miles but has gradually declined since 2004/05 (see chart 11).

Chart 11: Vehicle miles on local bus services: England, 1985/86 to 2014/15 ([table BUS0203](#))



Bus mileage by metropolitan area status

In England outside London, bus mileage continued its decline, decreasing by 0.7% when compared with 2013/14. The decrease

has been larger in metropolitan areas with bus mileage decreasing by 9% over the last ten years.

In London, bus mileage remained at levels seen since 2011/12 at over 300 million vehicle miles (see chart 12).

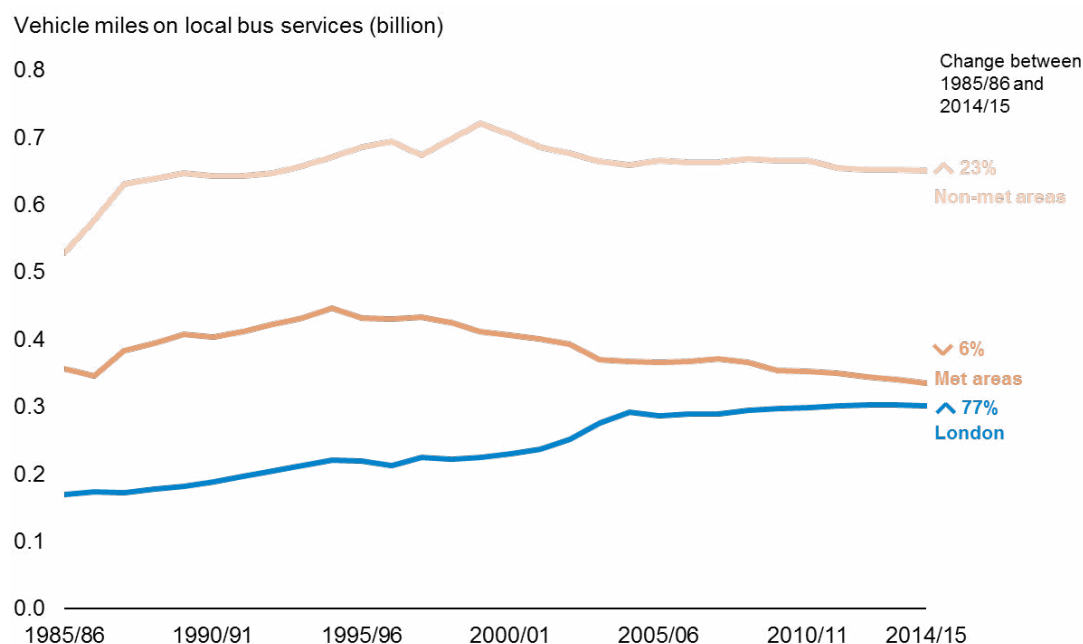
About bus mileage

Mileage run by buses in service, which excludes 'dead running' (for example mileage between the start and end of routes and the depot).

For supported services, bus operators receive payment from a local transport authority for running the service. They are usually considered socially necessary but not commercially viable.

Supply of bus services is likely to be affected by similar factors to bus use such as population density and demographics. Bus operating costs and local authority support for supported services are also likely to be important.

Chart 12: Vehicle miles on local bus services by area type: England, 1985/86 to 2014/15 ([table BUS0203](#))



Commercial and local authority supported mileage

In England outside London bus mileage has declined by 4% since 2004/05. This has been due to a decrease of 25% in local authority supported mileage, in particular in metropolitan areas.

Supported mileage in England outside London as a percentage of total mileage was 17% in 1987/88. Supported mileage reached its highest proportion in 2009/10 at 24%. Chart 13 shows the decrease in supported mileage since 2009/10 and is now 17% of total mileage.

Overall, the decline in supported mileage since 2004/05 has not been fully matched by an increase in commercial mileage.

Chart 14: Year-on-year change in commercial and local authority supported mileage by area: England outside London, 2004/05 to 2014/15 ([table BUS0205](#))

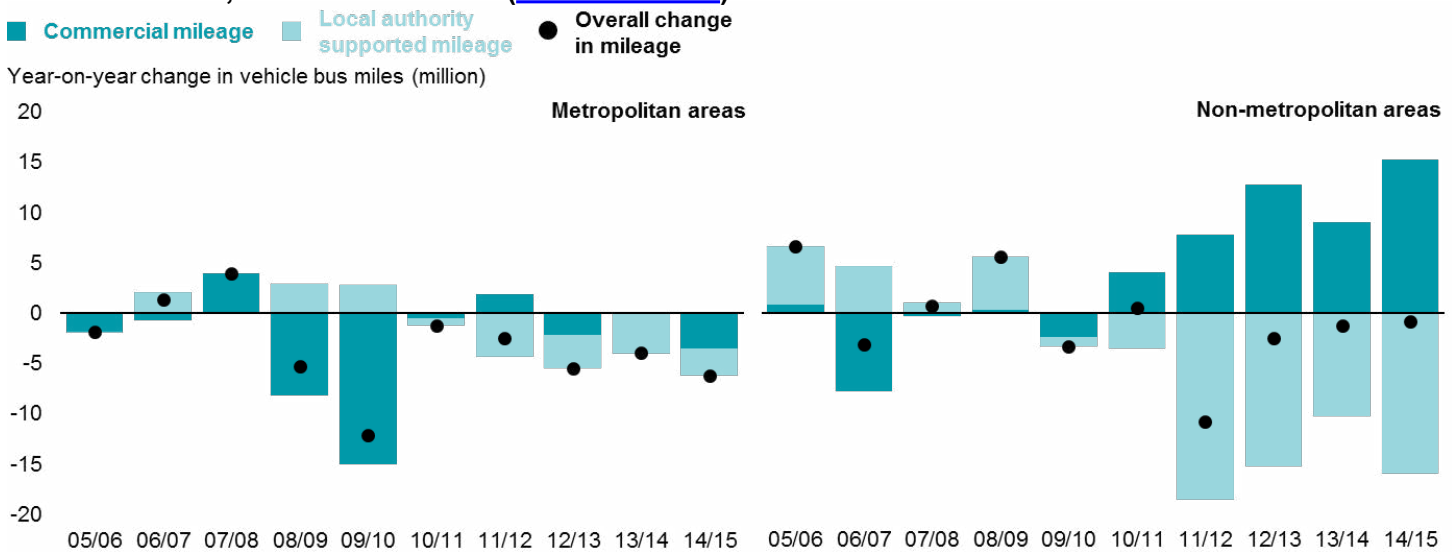
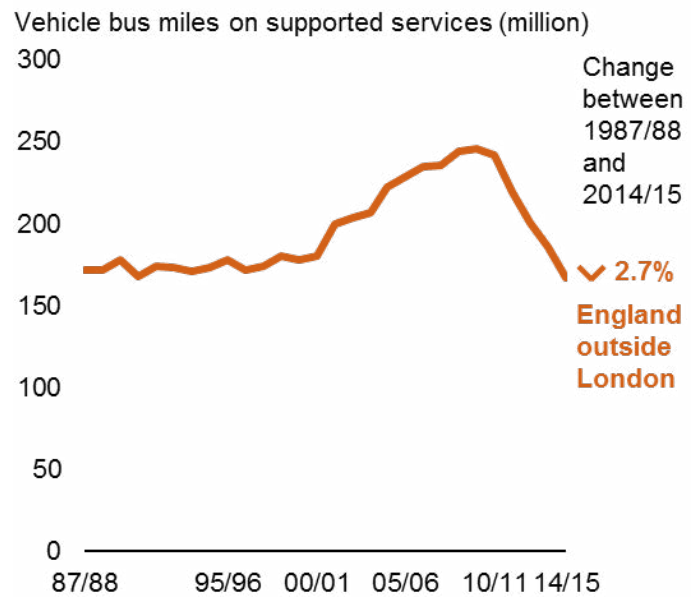


Chart 14 shows the year-on-year change in vehicle bus miles in terms of commercial and supported mileage. The black dots show the overall change in mileage.

Supported mileage in **metropolitan areas** has decreased from 51 to 43 million vehicle miles (a 15% decrease) between 2004/05 and 2014/15. Commercial mileage has declined by 26 million vehicle miles or 8%. In 2014/15, supported mileage made up 13% of total bus mileage,

Chart 13: Vehicle bus miles on supported services: England outside London, 1987/88 to 2014/15 ([table BUS0205](#))



compared with 17% in 2009/10 and 14% in 2004/05.

For **non-metropolitan areas**, supported mileage has declined by 48 million vehicle miles or 28%. The decline in supported mileage has partially been matched by an increase in commercial mileage. Since 2004/05, commercial mileage has increased by 39 million miles or 8%. Overall, bus mileage has decreased by 8 million vehicle miles since 2004/05.

Vehicles and staff

Bus fleet

The number of buses used by local bus operators has remained at similar levels over the last 10 years at around 36,000 buses. Around a quarter of buses were in London (see chart 15). The average age of a bus in England in 2015 was 7.7 years .

Chart 15: Proportion of buses used by local bus operators by area type: England, March 2015
([table BUS0602](#))

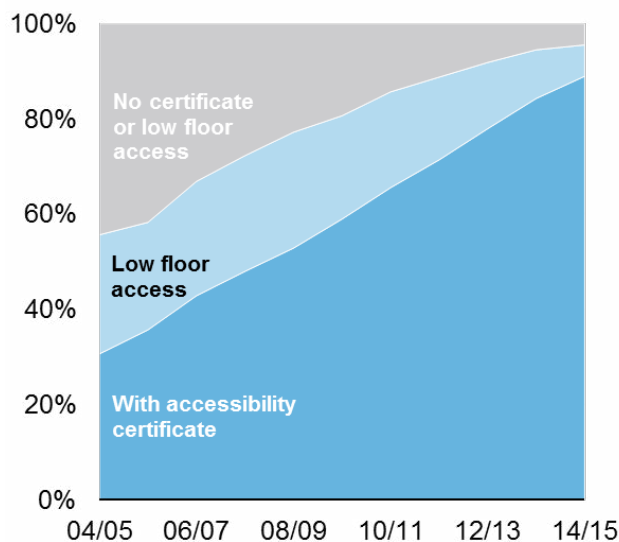


Bus accessibility

In March 2015, 89% of buses in England had been issued with an accessibility certificate, rising to 99% of buses in London. Chart 16 shows that the proportion of buses in England with an accessibility certificate has increased each year since 2004/05.

Chart 16: Accessible or low floor buses: England, March 2015
([table BUS0603](#))

Percentage of local buses with low floor access or accessible



Accessibility regulations

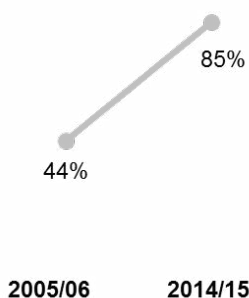
The [Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000 \(PSVAR\)](#) set out standards for public service vehicles to ensure they are accessible to disabled people by 1 January 2017 at the latest (depending on bus type). Buses that comply with the accessibility regulations are issued with an accessibility certificate. Some buses are suitable for wheelchair access through low floor designs.

Equipment on buses

CCTV

([table BUS0604](#))

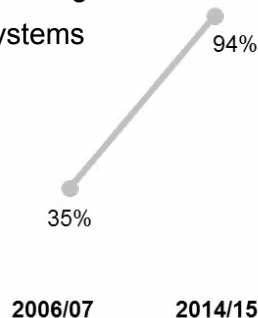
(All charts: percentage of buses fitted)



Automatic vehicle location

([table BUS0606](#))

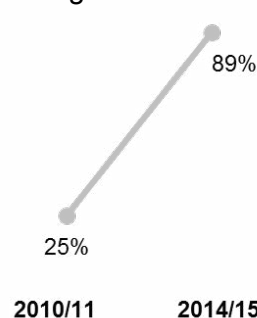
To track vehicle location and for real time passenger information systems



ITSO smart enabled

([table BUS0607](#))

Common technical standard for smart ticketing



Bus staff

Local bus operators employed an estimated 105,000 full time equivalent staff as at March 2015 (see [table BUS0701\(area\)](#))

Data on weekly wage and hours worked from the Office for National Statistics is available for bus and coach drivers in tables [BUS0703](#) and [BUS0704](#).

Bus fares

In the past year to March 2015, local bus fares in England have increased by 3.3%, faster than the annual all items Retail Prices Index rate of inflation (0.9%). Between March 2010 and March 2015, the average annual percentage change in bus fares was 4.5% higher than the average annual rate of inflation (3.1%).

Local bus fares in England increased by 61% on average between March 2005 and March 2015. Chart 17 shows that bus fares have risen at a faster rate in metropolitan areas (71%) than in non-metropolitan areas (44%). The all items Retail Prices Index has risen by 35% over the same period, which means that bus fares have risen in real terms.

Government support

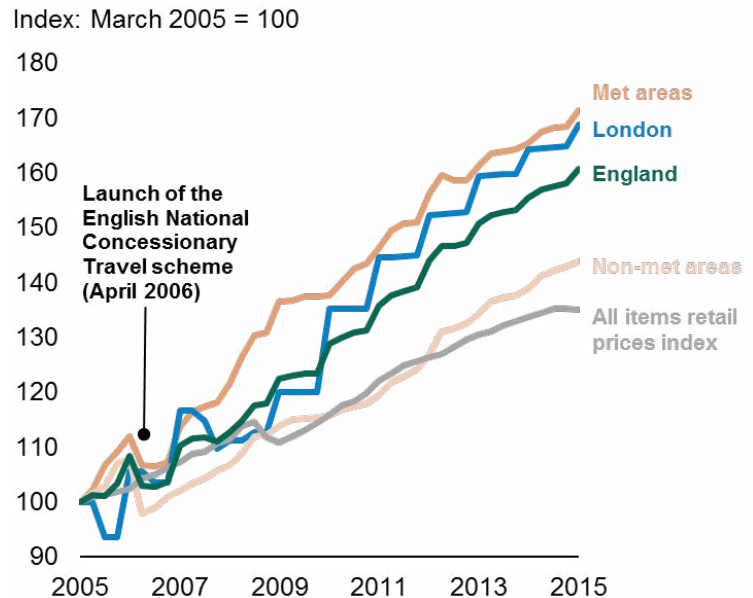
Central and local government support for local bus services consists of payments for supported services, Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) and concessionary travel reimbursement (effectively a subsidy to concessionary

passengers).

In 2014/15, estimated total net support paid England was £2.21 billion, of which £1.04 billion or 47% was for concessionary travel.

Chart 18 shows that in real terms total net

Chart 17: Local bus fares index by metropolitan area status: England, quarterly March 2005 to March 2015, current prices ([table BUS0415a](#))

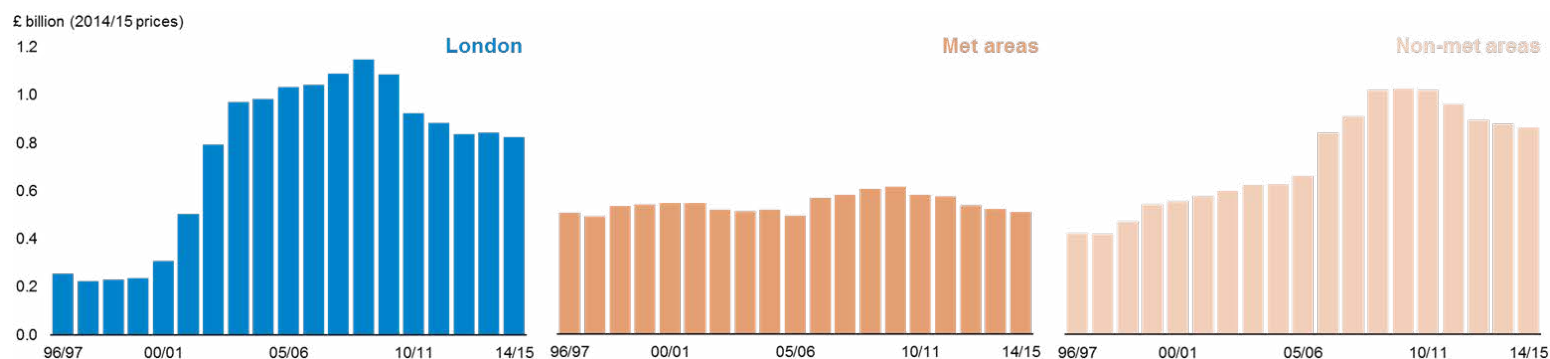


support in metropolitan areas has remained at a similar level since 1996/97. Non-metropolitan areas and London have seen increases in support but both have declined from the 2008/09 peak.

BSOG per passenger journey

A [DfT business plan indicator](#) measuring central government support for buses. The rate at which BSOG is paid was cut by 20% from April 2012. From October 2013, BSOG for London was devolved to Transport for London.

Chart 18: Total net support by central and local government for local bus services and concessionary travel by area type: England, 1996/97 to 2014/15 (2014/15 prices) ([table BUS0502b](#))



Operator revenue

In 2014/15, the total estimated operating revenue for local bus services in England was £5.61 billion.

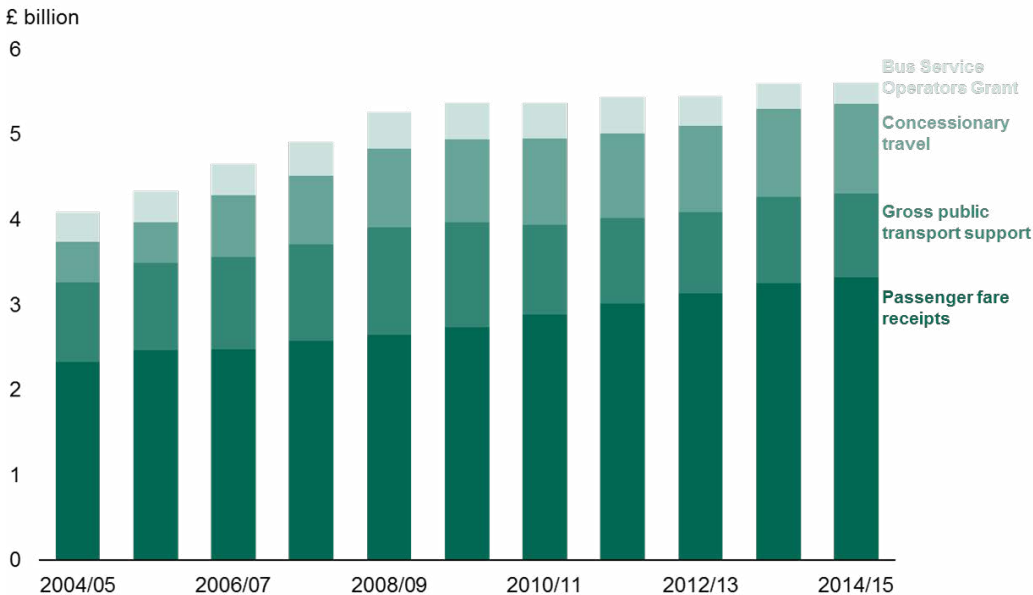
Passenger fare receipts made up the largest proportion of operating revenue: £3.32 billion or 59% of operating revenue (see chart 19). Revenue from passenger receipts has increased on average each year by 1.2% in real terms between 2004/05 and 2014/15.

BSOG has decreased by 43% in real terms. In 2004/05, BSOG made up 9% of operating

revenue but in 2013/14 this proportion had fallen to 4%. Some of this decrease will be due to BSOG in London being devolved to Transport for London.

Operating revenue from concessionary fare reimbursement has more than doubled over the same period from £0.49 billion to £1.05 billion. This increase reflects the wider coverage of the concessionary travel scheme (moving from a local authority to a national scheme), increased eligibility and a larger proportion of elderly people in the wider population.

Chart 19: Operating revenue for local bus services by revenue type: England, 2004/05 to 2014/15, current prices ([table BUS0501a](#))



Types of revenue for operators

Fare receipts: on and off bus fares

Public transport support: payments from local authorities, mostly for running supported services

Concessionary reimbursement: from LAs for carrying concessionary passengers

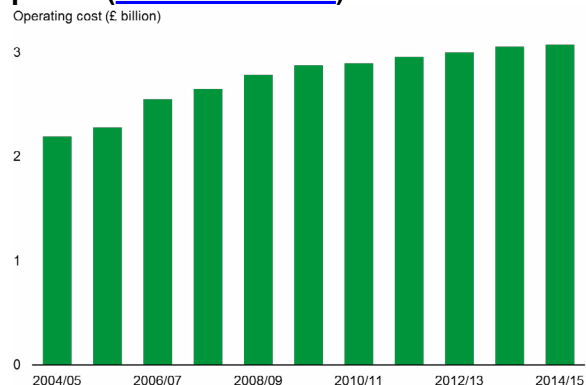
BSOG: fuel duty rebate from DfT

Other sources of income excluded.

Operator costs

In England outside London, between 2004/05 and 2014/15, operator costs for local bus services increased from £2.19 billion to £3.08 billion (see chart 20). This is an average annual real terms increase of 1.3%. A more detailed index of bus industry cost is compiled by the [Confederation of Passenger Transport](#).

Chart 20: Operating cost for local bus services: England outside London, 2004/05 to 2014/15, current prices ([table BUS0406a](#))

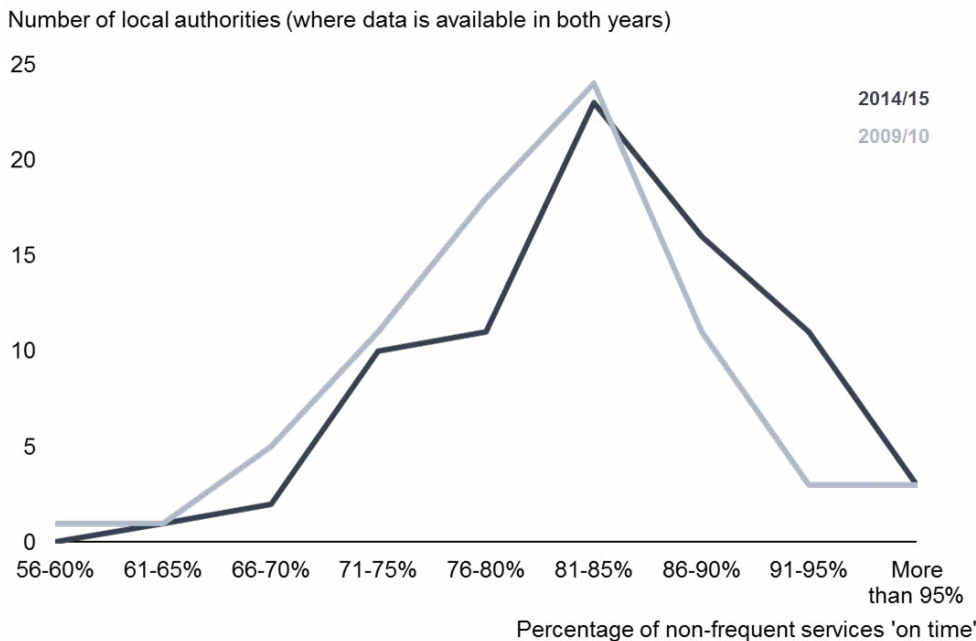


Bus service punctuality

In 2014/15, 83% of non-frequent services in England ran on time compared with 80% in 2009/10. 'On time' is defined as one between 1 minute early and 5 minutes 59 seconds late.

At the regional level bus service punctuality varied between 82% and 86%. At the local authority level there was greater variation ranging between 63% and 96% (see chart 21).

Chart 21: Percentage of non-frequent services 'on time': England, 2009/10 and 2014/15 ([table BUS0902](#))



Bus punctuality data

[Bus punctuality statistics](#) provide one measure of the performance of local bus services based on data reported by local authorities who monitor punctuality 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 that has six or more buses per hour. Several areas have no frequent services.

Quarterly bus feedback outcome

Following the [user feedback exercise](#) on the continuation of the quarterly bus statistics, the Department for Transport has concluded to continue collecting and publishing quarterly bus data from bus operators.

The Department is very grateful to those that took the time to respond to the feedback exercise. A total of eight responses were received from local or transport authorities, transport planners and a major bus operator.

All respondents favoured the continuation of the quarterly bus statistics in some form. The majority of respondents used the quarterly bus

statistics for monitoring local and national bus market trends. Several users commented on the timeliness of the data as being a particular benefit.

DfT will continue to publish quarterly bus data in online spreadsheet tables and review the frequency that we publish an accompanying statistical release. We will move to publishing an accompanying release every six months (rather than every quarter). A statistical release will accompany data tables in Q1 January to March (for release in June) and Q3 July to September (for release in December).

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.gov.uk/government/publications/input-and-impact-indicators); 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.

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to bus.statistics@dft.gsi.gov.uk by completing a [short online feedback form](#).

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

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) 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: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/buses-statistics-guidance

Next update to bus statistics

Quarterly bus statistics will be released in December 2015, and will contain estimates for Q3 2015 (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 2016.