

### Recent trends in bus use

- During 1999/2001 the average person made 1,019 trips per year in total, of which 92 were using some form of public transport. Of these 58 were made by any type of bus (equivalent to 63% of the public transport share), but mostly on local buses at 57 trips per person per year.
- The number of trips made by local bus has declined by 22% since 1989/1991 when an average of 73 trips per year were made. The average length of a local bus trip increased by 12%, from 3.9 miles to 4.3 miles, over this period. As a result the total distance travelled by local bus decreased less than trips, by 11%, from 274 to 245 miles per person per year.
- Non-local bus travel (express, excursion and tour bus) has fallen since 1989/1991 from about 2 trips per person per year to about 1½ trips in 1999/2001. The average length of a non-local bus trip was 63 miles, much the same as in 1989/1991. However, non-local bus distance travelled decreased by 22% over the same period from 124 miles per person per year to 97 miles.

### Car availability and bus use

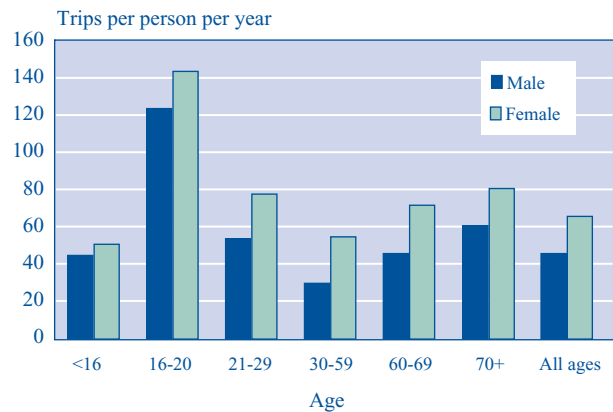
- Unsurprisingly, bus use is heavily influenced by a person's access to a car. People in households without cars made 20% of their trips by bus compared with 3% in households with one or more cars.
- In households with a car, the 'main drivers' made only about a sixth and 'other drivers' only about two-thirds of the number of local bus trips made by non-drivers.

### Who uses buses?

- Women use buses more than men: 22% of men and 32% of women in the National Travel Survey (NTS) sample reported that they use a local bus at least once a week. In contrast, 48% of men and 38% of women reported using a local bus less than once a year.
- Differences can be seen in all age groups. (Chart 1). Bus use is greatest amongst those aged 16-20, where men made 124 trips per year and women 144 compared with averages of 46 and 66 respectively for all age groups. Women made more trips than men in every age group.

*Note: Unless otherwise stated the figures quoted are an average of the years 1999-2001, are derived from the National Travel Survey for Great Britain, and relate to local bus services only. All figures exclude private hire bus.*

**Chart 1 Bus trips by age and sex: 1999/2001**



### Bus use by income

- People in low income groups made most bus trips. On average, people living in the lowest income quintile households made 98 bus trips a year (12% of all trips made by these people), whereas those in the highest income quintile made only 29 trips a year (2% of all trips).

### Bus use in urban and rural areas

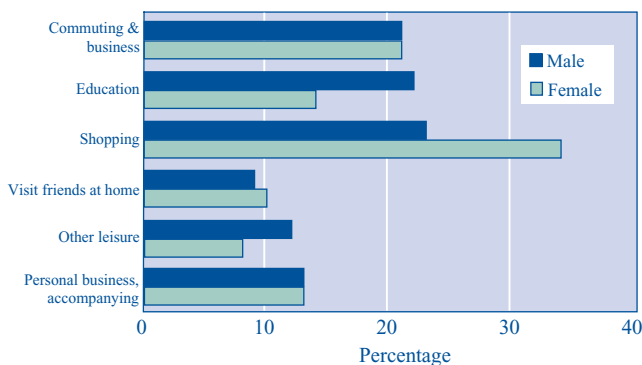
(figures have been revised since earlier publications)

- For Great Britain as a whole, 89% of households had reasonable access to a bus service (within 13 minutes walk of a bus stop with a service of at least once an hour), about the same level as 1989/91. In rural areas the proportion of households with this level of service has risen from 37% in 1989/91 to 50% in 1999/2001.
- In England, 48% of households had this level of service in 1999/2001, compared with 35% in 1996/1998 (10 Year Transport Plan indicator).
- Travel by bus was most predominant in built-up areas, with those living in London and the other metropolitan areas making an average of 94 local bus trips a year compared with 43 for those living elsewhere. Bus use for those living in the Scottish, North East and West Midland metropolitan areas was higher than in London, probably because many trips in London were made by London Underground and surface rail.

## Why do people use buses?

- The main reasons for using a bus were shopping (30% of bus trips), commuting (20%), education (17%) and visiting friends at home (10%).
- Although men and women's trip purposes varied, the same proportion of bus trips were for commuting (Chart 2). Over a third (34%) of women's bus trips were for shopping, compared with less than a quarter (23%) of those trips made by men. The apparently high use of buses for educational purposes by men reflects the fact that bus use is highest in younger age groups for men.

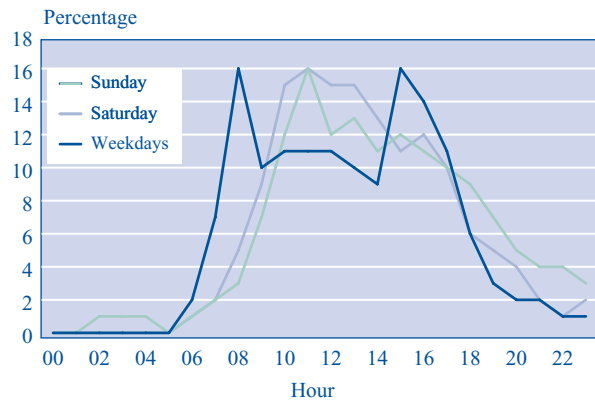
**Chart 2 Bus trips by sex and purpose: 1999/2001**



## Bus use by time and day

- Bus use was evenly spread over weekdays with an average of 17% of bus trips being made each day. The majority of these trips were work, education and shopping related. 13% of a week's trips were made on Saturdays and 5% on Sundays, when most trips were for shopping and leisure purposes.
- Patterns of bus use during the day varied between weekdays and the weekend (Chart 3).
- Bus trips peaked in weekdays during the periods 8–9 am and 3–5 pm. The evening peak was flatter than the morning one because trips home from school and work were staggered. These trips tended to bunch together more during the morning. The majority of trips during the middle of the day (9am–3pm) were for shopping purposes. At weekends, there was a single peak in bus trips around midday.

**Chart 3 Bus trips by time of day: 1997/2001**



## Concessionary Fare Schemes

- In 2001, all local authorities offered at least a half-fare bus travel concessionary fare scheme to the elderly and disabled, as required by the Transport Act 2000. Over half of local authorities had a more generous scheme for elderly and disabled people in 2001 compared with the position before the Act took effect. Time of travel restrictions were often specified, particularly in the morning peak.
- In 1999/2001, 97% of people of pensionable age lived in areas offering some form of concessionary fare scheme to the elderly. 34% lived in areas offering half fares and 19% in areas offering free fares.
- Take-up rates by those eligible were over 70% in London and the metropolitan areas. The take up rate fell to just 31% for rural areas.

## Buses used as part of trips by other modes

- In addition to the 57 'main mode' local bus trips per year, 4 bus stages were made on average as part of a trip with another main mode. Nearly three quarters (74%) of these were part of a rail trip (surface and underground) and 13% part of a car trip.

## Bus costs

- Returns from local bus operators show that local bus fares in GB, when adjusted for inflation using the retail prices index, rose by just over 26% between 1989/90 and 2001/02. Over the same period average earnings also rose by 26% in real terms.
- About 40% of bus stages involved the use of some form of special pass or ticket. Season tickets and travel cards were used for 17% of trips made, concessionary passes for older people another 15% and other concessionary tickets or passes 9%.

Data on bus industry statistics are available in the Transport Statistics Bulletin 'A Bulletin of Public Transport Statistics: GB 2002 Edition' available free from 020-7944 3076, on the DfT website at <http://www.transtat.dft.gov.uk> or e-mail [bus.statistics@dft.gov.uk](mailto:bus.statistics@dft.gov.uk)

The text and charts are available from the DfT website at [www.transtat.dft.gov.uk/personal](http://www.transtat.dft.gov.uk/personal). Other NTS publications include 12 further factsheets on a number of topics; the main results of the NTS in "National Travel Survey: Update 1999/2001" and in "Focus on Personal Travel: 2001 Edition" (1998/2000 data) and the Technical Report. These are also all available from the website. For further information, copies of the factsheets, Bulletin and any queries please contact [national.travelsurvey@dft.gov.uk](mailto:national.travelsurvey@dft.gov.uk) or telephone on 020 7944 3097.