

Use of public buses

Personal Travel Factsheet - March 2010

Introduction

This Factsheet summarises findings on levels of bus use and public attitudes to buses. It is mainly based on data from the [National Travel Survey \(NTS\)](#) the [Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey](#). The findings cover Great Britain unless otherwise specified. The NTS covers adults and children; the [Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey](#) adults aged 16 and over.

All results are based on 2008 data unless stated otherwise.

NTS Definitions:

Trip: a one-way course of travel with a single main purpose. Outward and return halves of a return trip are treated as two separate trips.

Stage: a trip consists of one or more stages. A new stage is defined when there is a change in the form of transport or when there is a change of vehicle requiring a separate ticket.

Boarding: a boarding is a change of vehicle of the same mode, using the same ticket. E.g. change from bus to bus or from train to train.

Analysis in this factsheet has been done using bus stages unless stated otherwise. The ratio of bus stages to boardings is **1:1.12** using 2002 to 2008 estimates. Local buses include London buses and other local buses.

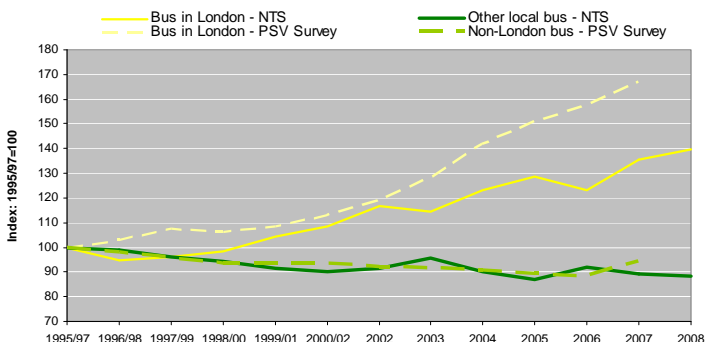
Trends in local bus use

Trends in the number of trips and distance travelled made by buses in London has increased by 40 per cent and 60 per cent since 1995/97. Growth has been fairly consistent despite dips in 2003 and 2006. This growth may reflect the increased investment in bus services in London, particularly since 2000. The trend shown in the NTS is mirrored in the Public Service Vehicle (PSV) survey. However, for London since 2002 the PSV survey shows a greater percentage growth in trips (passenger journeys), and distance (passenger kilometres).

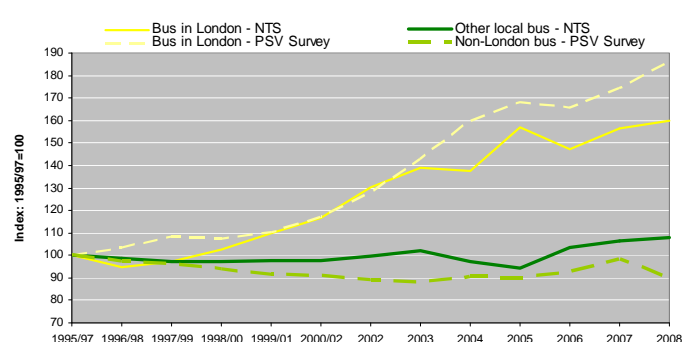
Other local buses in the rest of Great Britain have experienced a decline in trips made by over 10 per cent since 1995/97. However, distance travelled on local buses has increased by around 8 per cent over this period.

Chart 1: Trips and distance by local stage bus (NTS and PSV Survey comparison): 1995/97 to 2008

(a) Trips

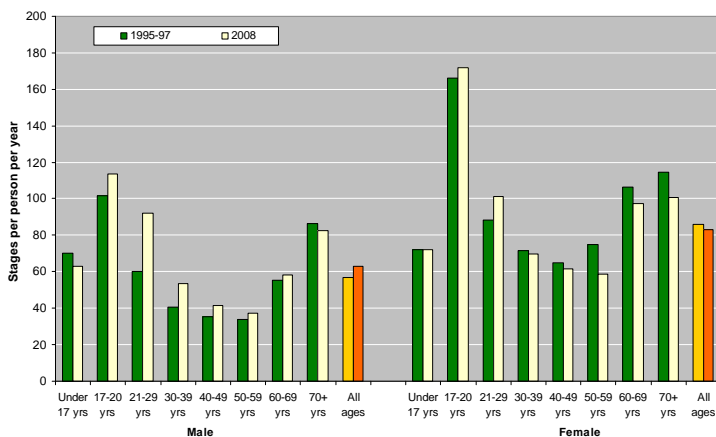


(b) Distance



Who uses local buses?

Chart 2: Bus stages by gender and age – 1995-97 and 2008



Women are more likely to use local buses than men. Women make on average 83 local bus trips per year compared with 63 among men in 2008 (Chart 1 – orange bars).

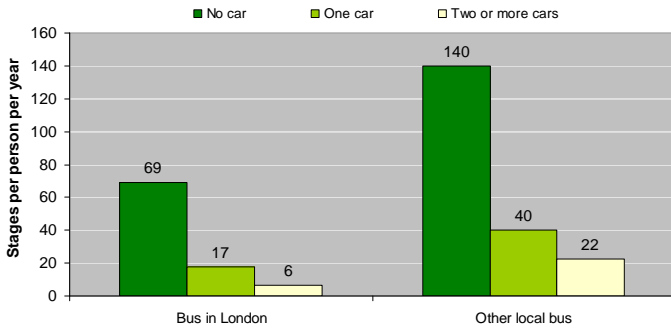
In terms of age, women aged in the 17-20 year group make the most trips, with those aged over 60 also making around 100 trips per person per year in 2008.

This pattern reflects patterns in driving licence holding and, for the older age group, the availability of concessionary bus fares.

Effect of car ownership

In 2008, adults (aged 17 and over) living in households without a car make, on average, three times as many London stage bus trips per year as adults in households with at least one car. For other stage buses it is over twice as many.

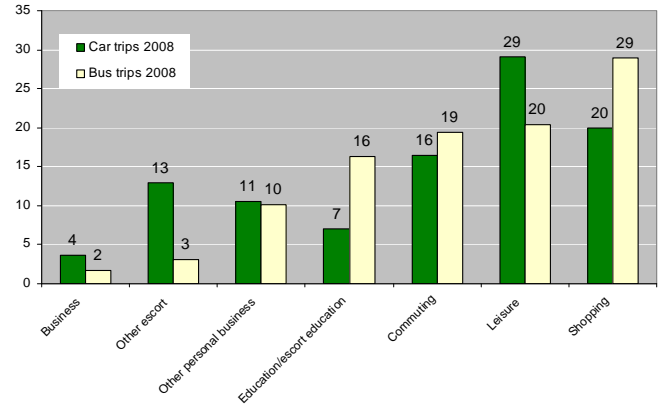
Chart 3: Local bus stages, by car ownership – 2008



Why do people use buses?

Around 30 per cent of car trips are for leisure purposes, compared to 20 per cent of bus trips. For shopping trips the opposite is true. 20 per cent of car trips are for shopping, compared to almost 30 per cent of bus trips.

Chart 4: Proportion of bus and car trips per person per year by purpose – 2008



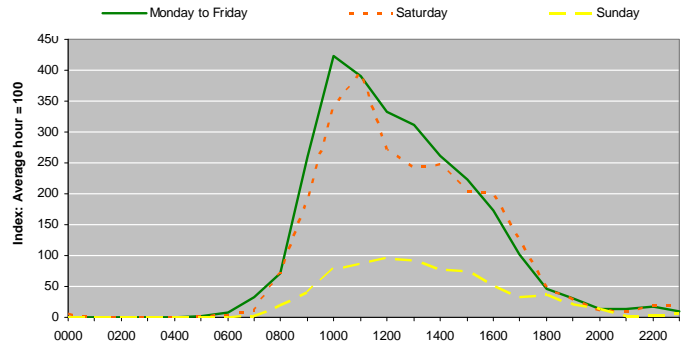
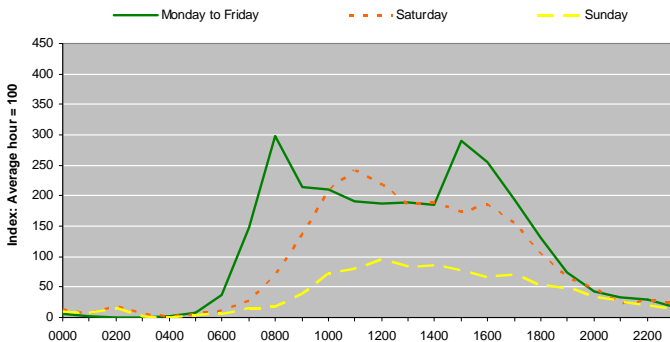
Bus use by time and day

On weekdays local bus trips peak between 8-9am and 3-5pm. The evening peak is slightly flatter because trips home from work and school are more staggered than during the morning peak. Local bus trips for people aged 60 and over increase steeply after 8am, reaching a peak at around 10am. There are a high volume of trips from 10am-12pm, before trips made start to decline from 2pm. This peak is likely to be linked to the availability of free concessionary travel which starts at 9am, as generally buses are less busy during these hours.

Chart 5: Bus trips in progress by time of day – 2008

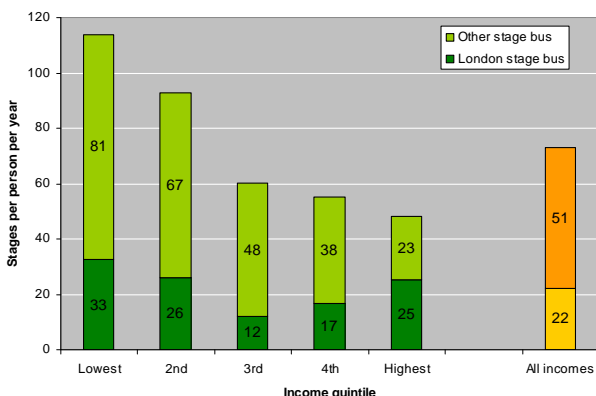
(a) All age groups

(b) Individuals aged 60+



Bus use by income

Chart 6: Bus stages by income quintile¹ - 2008



The number of local bus trips made declines as income increases. Those in the lowest income quintile make the most local bus trips (114 trips per person per year), more than twice as many as those in the highest income quintile (48 trips per person per year).

For London stage buses, the quintiles reflect commuting patterns into Central London which is a high wage area. Those in the highest quintile make more trips on average by London bus, than those in the 3rd and 4th quintile, and also make more trips on average than those in the highest income quintile using a stage bus outside London.

¹ Income quintiles used for London are based on total income quintiles for Great Britain, therefore households may not be evenly distributed across quintiles.

Bus use in Urban and Metropolitan areas

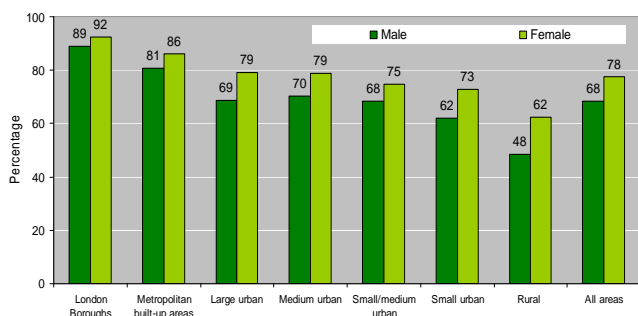
People make more trips and travel much further on buses in London as compared to other areas of Great Britain. In 2008, there were an average of 167 trips and 519 miles travelled on London buses. In rural areas it is 34 and 268 respectively. Stage rates are also increasing in Large urban areas, but decreasing or remaining stable in other areas outside London.

Table 1: Trend in bus stages and distance travelled by area type

	Stages						Miles					
	Stages per person per year						Miles per person per year					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
London Boroughs	150	160	155	151	164	167	506	499	515	475	507	519
Metropolitan built-up areas	111	104	107	108	97	103	402	387	419	431	410	447
Large urban	65	67	66	70	75	74	254	240	247	259	301	292
Medium urban	54	51	51	55	54	51	195	195	187	220	233	218
Small/medium urban	47	40	38	38	30	39	272	230	226	216	212	240
Small urban	43	40	39	43	39	39	255	261	259	309	259	222
Rural	34	31	32	33	31	34	206	206	189	218	230	268
All areas	73	70	70	72	72	73	289	278	280	296	306	312
Unweighted sample size: stages	24,579	23,543	23,970	24,488	24,768	24,052	24,579	23,543	23,970	24,488	24,768	24,052

Concessionary fare schemes

Chart 7: Concessionary fare take-up rate by area type – 2008



The uptake of concessionary pass holding among females aged 60 and over is higher than males in all areas.

In 2008, 68% of men aged 60 and over had a concessionary fare pass compared to 78% of women in Great Britain. Take-up has increased across both genders from 2002 to 2008, coinciding with a rollout of statutory free local travel on buses.

In London, from 2003 to 2008, the stage rate declined from around 180 to 170 stages per person per year.

Otherwise, bus stage trips have increased overall in all other areas, particularly Metropolitan built-up areas which have increased from 119 stages per person per year in 2003, to 139 stages per person per year in 2008.

Table 2: Trends in bus stages per person per year and by area type: 2003 to 2008 (adults aged 60 and over)

	Stages/number						Unweighted sample size (individuals, 2008)
	Stages per person per year						
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	
London Boroughs	179	176	171	162	159	168	454
Metropolitan built-up areas	119	103	120	144	133	139	698
Large urban	84	89	75	86	110	85	764
Medium urban	68	72	70	76	79	86	1,359
Small/medium urban	51	48	46	54	45	56	435
Small urban	37	38	30	56	36	50	451
Rural	22	28	28	30	29	32	953
All areas	77	76	74	84	84	86	5,114

Key dates in concessionary travel provision:

2001 June - Statutory minimum bus concessionary fares introduced in England. Local authorities must offer a concession of at least half the single fare to women aged 60 and over, men aged 65 and over. The concession need not cover peak periods. The permit/photocard is free of charge.

2002 April - Introduction of free off-peak concessionary fare bus travel in Wales for residents aged 60 or over. The scheme gives travel across local authority boundaries, so it is effectively a national scheme.

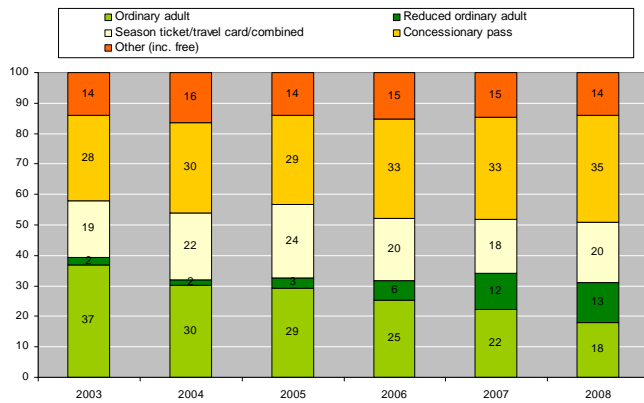
2002 September - Introduction of free off-peak concessionary fare bus travel in Scotland for female residents aged 60 or over & male residents aged 65 or over. It is zoned in groups of adjacent local authorities giving the concession across boundaries.

2003 April - Introduction of equal age for concessionary fares for men and women, at age 60. England retained its statutory minimum half fare scheme at local authority level. Wales has a national scheme of free bus travel for those aged 60 and over. Scotland's free scheme is based on zones which combine groups of adjacent unitary authorities and is extended to men aged 60 or over.

2006 April - Free concessionary bus travel introduced in England for disabled passengers and those aged 60 or over. Local Authorities in England were given £350 million in 2006/07 to reimburse bus operators for journeys made by residents in their own areas. Some authorities continued to fund travel into other areas or on other modes of transport in their area at their discretion.

Bus ticketing

Chart 8: Proportion of local bus stages by ticket type – 2003 to 2008



Ticket policy for buses has been changing in recent years, the trends of which are featured in the chart below. There has been a growth in the use of 'reduced ordinary adult tickets' from 2 per cent in 2003 to 13 per cent in 2008. This category includes 'Oyster' pre-pay in London which has increased in popularity particularly from 2006. There has also been an increase in the use of concessionary passes from 28 per cent in 2003 to 35 per cent in 2008.

Perceptions of bus services

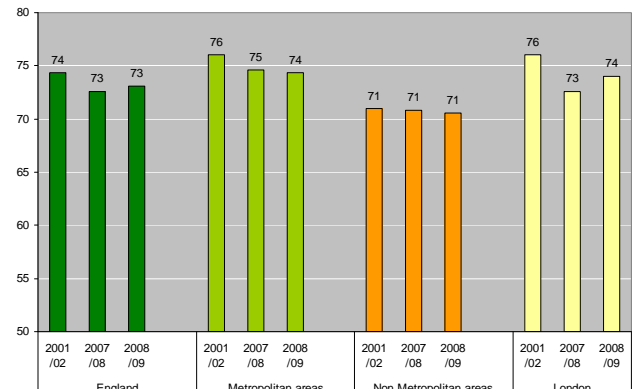
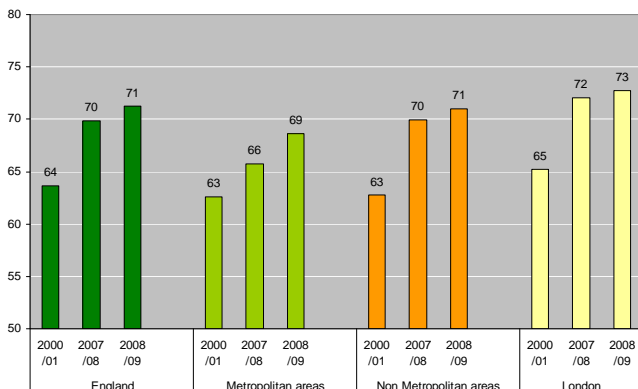
Bus users are asked about their experiences of specific bus journeys through the Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey, a survey of a sample of adults alighting from buses across England. The average overall satisfaction score is 82 out of 100 (2007/08 BPSS).

Bus passengers are generally least satisfied with reliability. However, in all areas of England reliability ratings have been improving, particularly in London which increased from 66 per cent in 2000/01 to 73 per cent in 2008/09. Ratings for value for money are higher overall, and have remained stable in all areas covered by the survey since 2001/02.

Chart 9: Average satisfaction ratings for different aspects of service

(a) Reliability

(b) Value for money



Mobility issues and CCTV

In terms of access, 62 per cent of full-size buses had a low floor for wheelchair accessibility in 2007/08, this is an increase from just 21 per cent of buses in 2000/01.

In England, 55 per cent of buses in 2007/08 had CCTV cameras installed. This figure varies according to region, with 54 per cent of buses in metropolitan areas having CCTV cameras, compared to 35 per cent on non-metropolitan areas. In London, 95 per cent of buses were equipped with cameras in 2007/08.

Further information

The full set of factsheets can be accessed at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgpr/statistics/datatablespublications/personal/factsheets/>.

The main results from the National Travel Survey are published in the annual National Travel Survey Bulletin and Focus on Personal Travel. These can be accessed at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgpr/statistics/datatablespublications/personal/mainresults/>.

Articles based on Omnibus Survey modules are at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/about/who-we-are/our-services/omnibus-survey/index.html>.

Findings from the Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey are available at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgpr/statistics/datatablespublications/public/annualbulletins/publictransportstatsbul09>

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