

Local bus service provision change over the last ten years

Under embargo until Monday 4 April 2022

Headlines:

- According to Department for Transport data, between 2011/12-2020/21, bus service provision across England (as measured in bus vehicle miles) declined by 27%.
- This corresponds with data from the Traffic Commissioners showing that 'live' bus registrations have dropped from 16,913 in March 2012 to 12,067 in March 2021 – a decline of 29% across England.
- This does not include any service cuts that have occurred since March 2021 due to the continued funding uncertainty.
- The biggest drop has happened as a result of the pandemic. Whereas in the 8 years between 2011/12-2018/19, bus vehicle miles in England dropped by 10%, in the two years between March 2019 and March 2021, bus vehicle miles dropped by 18%.
- While pre-pandemic, it had been local authority-supported services that had seen the biggest cuts (50% pre-pandemic vs 16% during), since the pandemic commercial services – which account for the majority (86%) of all services – have been most at risk, declining by 24% in the last 2 years since the pandemic as opposed to 2% pre-pandemic (data for England excluding London).

Department for Transport bus vehicle miles data

Table 1: Vehicle miles on local bus services (millions)*

	2011/ 12	2012/ 13	2013/ 14	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21
North East	90	86	86	85	85	83	79	77	75	67
North West	182	177	172	171	166	152	146	147	136	112
Yorkshire and the Humber	139	138	136	130	125	121	119	118	116	92
East Midlands	95	98	97	96	94	93	86	85	81	62
West Midlands	127	124	121	118	115	115	109	107	108	87
East of England	110	112	113	109	109	109	104	97	97	67
London	302	302	302	301	303	304	302	296	292	286
South East	150	149	151	152	146	156	151	145	142	108
South West	112	111	113	112	109	105	99	99	96	80
England	1,306	1,297	1,291	1,276	1,253	1,238	1,195	1,172	1,142	960

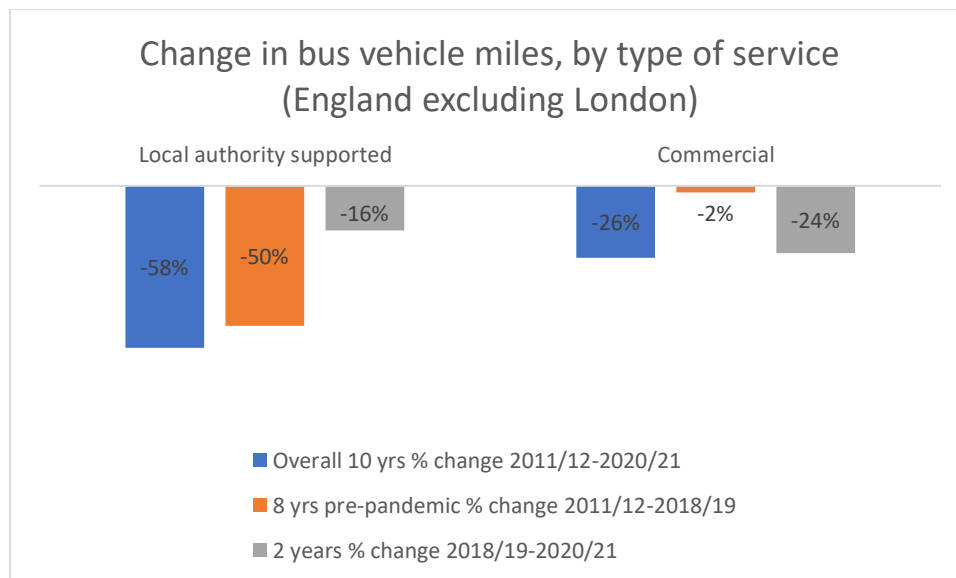
Table 2: Percent change in vehicle miles on local bus services by region*

Region	Last 10 years (2011/12- 2020/21)	8 years pre- pandemic (2011/12-2018/19)	Pandemic last 2 years (2018/19-2020/21)
North East	-26%	-15%	-13%
North West	-38%	-19%	-24%
Yorkshire and the Humber	-34%	-15%	-22%
East Midlands	-35%	-10%	-28%
West Midlands	-32%	-15%	-19%
East of England	-38%	-11%	-31%
London	-5%	-2%	-3%
South East	-28%	-4%	-25%
South West	-29%	-11%	-20%
England	-27%	-10%	-18%

* Source: Department for Transport Bus Statistics, Table BUS0206a: Vehicle miles on local bus services by region: Great Britain, annual from 1970, last updated November 2021, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus02-vehicle-distance-travelled>

Table 3: Change in local bus vehicle miles, by type of service (England excluding London)**

	Local authority supported	Commercial
Overall 10 yrs % change 2011/12-2020/21	-58%	-26%
8 yrs pre-pandemic % change 2011/12-2018/19	-50%	-2%
2 years % change 2018/19-2020/21	-16%	-24%



** Source: Department for Transport Bus Statistics, Table BUS0205a: Vehicle miles on local bus services by metropolitan area status and country, and service type: Great Britain, last updated November 2021, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus02-vehicle-distance-travelled>

Traffic Commissioners live bus services data

Table 4: Live local bus registrations, by Traffic Area (as of 31 March)***

	2011/ 12	2012/ 13	2013/ 14	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21
Eastern	2834	2768	2557	2462	2267	2601	2472	2420	2341	1861
North Eastern	3865	3818	3628	3362	3246	3915	3800	3709	3559	2770
North Western	4144	3926	3404	3490	3274	3544	3353	3338	3177	2847
London & South Eastern	1238	1232	1004	1181	1160	1408	1369	1367	2341	1029
West Midlands	2111	1991	1632	1779	1694	2388	2323	2275	2222	1532
Western Traffic Area	2721	2583	2747	2310	2203	2726	2640	2697	2683	2028
England	16913	16318	14972	14584	13844	16582	15957	15806	16323	12067

Table 5: Percent change in live local bus registrations***

	Last 10 years (2011/12- 2020/21)	8 years pre- pandemic (2012/11- 2018/19)	Pandemic last 2 years (2018/19- 2020/21)
Eastern Traffic Area	-34%	-15%	-23%
North Eastern Traffic Area	-28%	-4%	-25%
North Western Traffic Area	-31%	-19%	-15%
South Eastern and London Traffic Area	-17%	10%	-25%
West Midlands Traffic Area	-27%	8%	-33%
Western Traffic Area	-25%	-1%	-25%
England	-29%	-7%	-24%

*** Source: Table 13: Local bus service registrations – live, new, variations and cancelled local bus services, Traffic Commissioners' annual reports, from 2011/12 to 2020/21. Last updated August 2021. All available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/traffic-commissioners-annual-reports>. Please note the traffic areas do not correspond to the geographical regions above.