

The benefits of buses in London

A summary of evidence



Importance of the bus network

London's buses are the most used form of public transport in the city, with more than five million bus journeys made on a typical day. Buses are vital in keeping the capital moving and communities connected.

As the population of London expands, the bus network will play an increasingly important role in facilitating the additional journeys generated. London needs to grow in a sustainable manner, and supporting bus travel can improve public health, both by reducing congestion and encouraging physical activity, with most journeys to a bus stop involving walking. This benefits people's physical and mental wellbeing, helping relieve pressure on health services. Buses also support a car-free lifestyle, in turn encouraging more walking and cycling.

Buses provide an easy to use, accessible and cheap public transport alternative to cars. One bus can carry up to 87 passengers, making efficient use of road space, and cutting emissions, both by taking polluting private vehicles off the roads and offering a green alternative. London also has more than 275km of bus lanes, which help in offering faster journey times to our bus passengers.



More than five million journeys are made by bus on a typical day



We are aiming for bus journeys to be 10 per cent quicker than in 2015

Improving bus services

Our [Bus action plan](#) highlights the importance of the bus network in London's future development. It sets out our vision and how we can work closely with boroughs and other stakeholders to attain the full potential of buses for 2030.

We are enabling bus travel to play its role at the heart of an active, efficient and sustainable transport network in London. To achieve this, our vision is for bus services to:

- Provide an inclusive customer experience
- Be safe and secure
- Offer attractive journey times
- Provide the connections Londoners need, and
- Provide a zero carbon travel choice

We are aiming for a faster and more efficient bus network, delivering a transformational improvement to bus journey times. Our target is for journeys to be 10 per cent quicker in 2030 than in 2015, with average speeds increasing from 9.3mph to 10.2mph.

The Bus action plan details our aim to make bus travel a zero carbon transport option, providing an attractive alternative to car

use while contributing to London's net zero goal by 2030. Choosing to take the bus is already a highly sustainable option: London has the largest zero-emission bus fleet in western Europe, with more than 1,900 zero-emission buses. We are continuing to invest in our fleet to tackle climate change and improve air quality, helping TfL to become the strong, green heartbeat of London.

We are also committed to delivering the goals set out in our [Bus safety strategy](#), which builds upon our Bus action plan and sets out what we must do to reach Vision Zero for the bus network. We are continuing to champion our [ambitious target](#) to have no-one killed on, or by, a bus by 2030 and no-one seriously injured by a bus by 2041. We are collaborating with partners to achieve safety goals and deliver major safety improvements across our network as part of our Bus Safety Programme – this includes safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe behaviours and safe streets.

As well as being efficient and sustainable, buses also yield wider social, health, economic and environmental benefits, which are summarised within this document. The intention is to help decision makers in developing the case for projects and initiatives that will enhance London's bus services.

Benefits of the bus network

Buses deliver a wide range of social, health, economic and environmental benefits for London and Londoners, evidenced by a large body of research from London and the rest of the UK. These findings, compiled by academics, transport authorities and representative bodies, are summarised below.

Social and health benefits

1 Buses provide exceptional accessibility

More than **96%** of Londoners live within 400 metres of a bus stop, and more than 60% live within the same distance of a Night Bus service



2 Buses help people to have healthier and more active lifestyles

More than **20%** of all walking in London occurs as part of bus travel



3 Buses improve connectivity to town centres and transport hubs

More than **90%** of London households can access a town centre by public transport within 30 minutes, largely due to the presence of the bus network



5 Buses act as a social 'glue', connecting people to help address social isolation

1 in 3 people in the UK have made a bus journey as it provides social contact



Around **94%** of all bus stops across London are accessible, making the bus one of the most accessible public transport modes



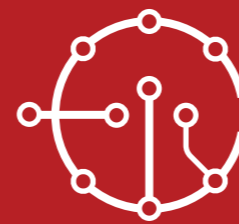
7 minutes of walking to and from the bus stop takes place in an average bus trip



47% of Londoners agree that taking the bus helps with their mental health more than other modes of transport



The Superloop network connects its customers with **310** other bus routes and 23 rail lines across 49 rail stations



4 Buses help address deprivation

10% improvement in local bus service connectivity in England is associated with an estimated 3.6% overall reduction in deprivation



Ownership and use of a concessionary bus pass are associated with a **better quality of life** and fewer depressive symptoms in older adults in England



82% of disabled Londoners have used the bus within the past year, with 58% using the bus at least once a week. Buses are the most used form of public transport by both disabled and non-disabled Londoners



See page 8 for statistical references

Social and health benefits (continued)

6 Buses help young people gain independence, and support their development

24%

of trips by those aged five to 16 travelling to education in London are by bus, making it the most used mode of transport other than walking



75%

of Londoners aged 11 to 15 years use the bus at least once a week compared to 59% of all Londoners

More than

25%

of all bus journeys in London are made by those aged five to 20 (21% of London's population)



7 Bus services help support London's diverse communities

65%

of Black, Asian or minority ethnic Londoners use the bus at least once a week*



73%

of Black Londoners use the bus at least once a week*



63%

of all women, and 80% of women aged 16-25 use the bus at least once a week*



65%

of Londoners aged 65 years and above use the bus at least once a week*



13%

of worship/other religious observance trips are made by bus in London, making it the most used public transport mode for this purpose



8 Buses are one of the safest modes of transportation

An injury risk of

1 per 1.7 million



bus/coach occupant journeys means that bus/coach occupants are at least risk of injury compared to other modes



12

times fewer other road users** killed or seriously injured in collisions involving buses compared to cars in 2023 in Greater London

20

London bus shelters now have CCTV cameras as part of a trial with the Metropolitan Police Service to prevent and detect crime, and improve safety and security



80%

of passengers across England feel secure while travelling on the bus

9 Buses provide a more affordable transport option

60%

cheaper to commute by bus in England than by car



1/3

of all Londoners living in a household with an annual income of less than £20,000 use the bus at least five times a week

10 Buses are equipped with enhanced facilities and features

Our newly designed electric buses offer

improved facilities and comfort

such as USB phone charging ports, high-back seats, upgraded CCTV cameras and larger wheelchair and buggy areas



* in comparison to 59% of all Londoners using the bus at least once a week

** road users in another vehicle/mode of transport

See pages 8-9 for statistical references

Economic and environmental benefits

1 Bus investment generates excellent returns

Up to

£7

of net economic benefit can be delivered for every £1 of investment in local bus priority measures



£45bn

of economic output generated by bus commuters in Britain. Those who use the bus as a back-up transport mode contribute a further £19bn of economic output

2 Buses support a low carbon footprint and help to improve air quality

Our

9,000

buses are all low or zero emission at the tailpipe, meeting Euro VI emissions standards



TfL is on track to save up to

4.8m

tonnes of carbon by 2034, by changing our bus fleet to zero emission

In the UK, only

2%

of transport greenhouse gas emissions come from buses, compared to 53% from cars



3 Buses are a key component of town centre prosperity

In the UK, around

30%

of spending in town centres is by bus passengers



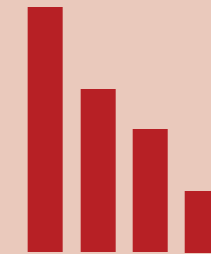
1.2 million

shopping, leisure and personal business trips are made by bus every day in London

In London's town centres, bus users

spend more

per head per month than rail users, car users and cyclists



4 Buses support the nation through green technology innovation and growth



100,000

jobs created by TfL's supply chain – the manufacturing of TfL buses across the UK contributes to this jobs total

3,000

roles created in green bus manufacturing as part of the production of route 63 buses for London



Bus operators spent

£140m

on the production of buses with UK-based manufacturers to meet TfL specifications in 2023/24

See page 9 for statistical references

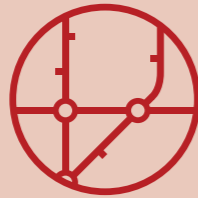
Economic and environmental benefits (continued)

5 Buses enable greater access to jobs and help create more jobs

London's buses enable access to up to

2.5 million

jobs for inner London residents and up to 500,000 jobs for outer London residents within a 45-minute commute by public transport



1 in 10

bus commuters nationally would be forced to look for another job, or give up work altogether, if they could no longer travel by bus



10%

improvement in journey times for all bus commuters in England would lead to an increase in employment, equivalent to 50,000+ jobs



6 Bus priority measures improve journey times and reliability for customers

As part of the Bishopsgate corridor scheme, which included a bus gate, bus journey times have improved by up to

2min/km



Passenger journey time savings of more than

2.5min

were made from bus measures, including a bus lane extension as part of Feltham town centre improvements



7 Buses are vital to London's economic prosperity and 24-hour city status

51%

of all Night Bus passengers in London rely on this service to travel to work



See pages 9-10 for statistical references

References

Social and health benefits

1. Buses provide exceptional accessibility

- More than 96 per cent of Londoners live within 400 metres of a bus stop, and more than 60 per cent live within the same distance of a Night Bus service

Bus action plan, p.13, TfL, 2022

- Around 94 per cent of all bus stops across London are accessible, making the bus one of the most accessible public transport modes

Bus service planning guidelines, p.5, TfL, 2024

- 82 per cent of disabled Londoners have used the bus within the past year, with 58 per cent using the bus at least once a week. Buses are the most used form of public transport by both disabled and non-disabled Londoners

[Bus safety strategy](#), TfL, 2023

[Travel in London: Understanding our diverse communities](#), TfL, 2019

2. Buses help people to have healthier and more active lifestyles

- More than 20 per cent of all walking in London occurs as part of bus travel

Bus action plan, p.24, TfL, 2022

- Seven minutes of walking to and from the bus stop takes place in an average bus trip

[Bus action plan](#), p.13, TfL, 2022

- 47 per cent of Londoners agree that taking the bus helps with their mental health more than other modes of transport

[Press release](#), First group, 22 September 2022

3. Buses improve connectivity to town centres and transport hubs

- More than 90 per cent of London households can access a town centre by public transport within 30 minutes, largely due to the presence of the bus network

[Transport connectivity assessment guide](#), TfL, April 2015

- The Superloop network connects its customers with 310 other bus routes and 23 rail lines across 49 rail stations

[Press release](#), TfL, 18 July 2024

4. Buses help address deprivation

- 10 per cent improvement in local bus service connectivity in England is associated with an estimated 3.6 per cent overall reduction in deprivation

[The value of the bus to society](#), Greener Vision, 2016

5. Buses act as a social 'glue', connecting people to help address social isolation

- One in three people in the UK has made a bus journey as it provides social contact with other people

[Why we need to get the bus and talk more](#), Greener Vision, 2019

- Ownership and use of a concessionary bus pass are associated with a better quality of life and fewer depressive symptoms in older adults in England

Social isolation and physical activity mediate associations between free bus travel and wellbeing among older adults in England, [Journal of Transport and Health](#) 2019, Elsevier

6. Buses help young people gain independence, and support their development

- 24 per cent of trips by those aged five to 16 travelling to education in London are by bus, making it the most used mode of transport other than walking

[London Travel Demand Survey 2023/24](#), TfL

- 75 per cent of Londoners aged 11 to 15 years use the bus at least once a week compared to 59 per cent of all Londoners

[Bus safety strategy](#), TfL, 2023

- More than 25 per cent of all bus journeys in London are made by those aged five to 20 (21 per cent of London's population)

London Travel Demand Survey [2023/24](#), TfL

7. Bus services help support London's diverse communities

- 65 per cent of Black, Asian or minority ethnic Londoners use the bus at least once a week

- 73 per cent of Black Londoners use the bus at least once a week

- 63 per cent of all women, and 80 per cent of women aged 16-25 use the bus at least once a week

- 65 per cent of Londoners aged 65 years and above use the bus at least once a week

[Travel in London: Understanding our diverse communities](#), TfL, 2019

- 13 per cent of worship/other religious observance trips are made by bus in London, making it the most used public transport mode for this purpose

[London Travel Demand Survey 2023/24](#), TfL

8. Buses are one of the safest modes of transportation

- An injury risk of one per 1.7 million bus/coach occupant journeys means that bus/coach occupants are at least risk of injury compared to other modes

[Casualties in Greater London during 2023, road safety factsheet](#), p.15, TfL, 2024

- 12 times fewer other road users killed or seriously injured in collisions involving buses compared to cars in 2023 in Greater London

[Casualties in Greater London during 2023, data annex, Table II](#), TfL, 2024

- 20 London bus shelters now have CCTV cameras as part of a trial with the Metropolitan Police Service to prevent and detect crime, and improve safety and security

[Press release](#), TfL, 25 November 2024

- 80 per cent of passengers across England feel secure while travelling on the bus

[Personal security and anti-social behaviour on bus - a passenger perspective](#), Transport Focus, November 2024

9. Buses provide a more affordable transport option

- 60 per cent cheaper to commute by bus in England than by car

[Stagecoach](#), 2015

- One third of all Londoners living in a household with an annual income of less than £20,000 use the bus at least five times a week

[Bus safety strategy](#), TfL, 2023

10. Buses are equipped with enhanced facilities and features

- Our newly designed electric buses offer improved facilities and comfort such as USB phone charging ports, high-back seats, upgraded CCTV cameras and larger wheelchair and buggy areas

[Improving buses](#), TfL

Economic and environmental benefits

I. Bus investment generates excellent returns

- Up to £7 of net economic benefit can be delivered for every £1 of investment in local bus priority measures

[The value of the bus to society](#), Greener Vision, 2016

- £45bn of economic output generated by bus commuters in Britain. Those who use the bus as a back-up transport mode contribute a further £19bn of economic output

[Buses and economic growth](#), Greener Journeys, 2012

2. Buses support a low carbon footprint and help to improve air quality

- Our 9,000 buses are all low or zero emission at the tailpipe, meeting Euro VI emissions standards

[Improving buses](#), TfL

- TfL is on track to save up to 4.8m tonnes of carbon by 2034, by changing our bus fleet to zero emission

[Press release](#), TfL, 18 August 2023

- In the UK, only two per cent of transport greenhouse gas emissions come from buses, compared to 53 per cent from cars

[Greenhouse gas emissions from transport in 2022](#), Department for Transport, 12 December 2024

3. Buses are a key component of town centre prosperity

- In the UK, around 30 per cent of spending in town centres is by bus passengers

[Buses and the economy II](#), Greener Vision 2014

- 1.2 million shopping, leisure and personal business trips are made by bus every day in London

[London Travel Demand Survey 2019/20](#), TfL

- In London's town centres, bus users spend more per head per month than rail users, car users and cyclists

[Town centres report - summary](#), TfL, 2014-15

4. Buses support the nation through green technology innovation and growth

- 100,000 jobs created by TfL's supply chain – the manufacturing of TfL buses across the UK contributes to this jobs total

[TfL supply chain: Economic impact assessment 2023/24](#), Hatch, 2024

- 3,000 roles created in green bus manufacturing as part of the production of route 63 buses for London

[TfL sets out bold vision for buses in the capital](#), TfL, 2022

- Bus operators spent £140m on the production of buses with UK-based manufacturers to meet TfL specifications in 2023/24

[TfL supply chain: Economic impact assessment 2023/24](#), Hatch, 2024

5. Buses enable greater access to jobs and help create more jobs

- London's buses enable access to up to 2.5 million jobs for inner London residents and up to 500,000 jobs for outer London residents within a 45-minute commute by public transport

[Economic evidence base for London](#), GLA, 2016

- One in 10 bus commuters nationally would be forced to look for another job, or give up work altogether, if they could no longer travel by bus

[Continuing COVID funding support for urban public transport](#), Urban Transport Group, 2022

- 10 per cent improvement in journey times for all bus commuters in England would lead to an increase in employment, equivalent to 50,000+ jobs

[Buses and the Economy II – Main report](#), p.27, Greener Vision, 2014

6. Bus priority measures improve journey times and reliability for customers

- As part of the Bishopsgate corridor scheme, which included a bus gate, bus journey times have improved by up to two min/km

[Bishopsgate monitoring report quarter 4](#), TfL, 2023

- Passenger journey time savings of more than 2.5min were made from bus measures, including a bus lane extension as part of Feltham town centre improvements

[Borough three-year report: 2019/20-2021/22](#), TfL, 2024

7. Buses are vital to London's economic prosperity and 24-hour city status

- 51 per cent of all Night Bus passengers rely on this service to travel to work

[TfL Bus user survey](#), 2014



London's buses are the most used form of public transport in the city

