Proposed changes to DfT bus Statistics for 2011/12



The Department for Transport (DfT) produces a range of statistics on buses to inform monitoring of trends in the bus industry. The majority of the data are available through published tables, with additional ad-hoc analyses sometimes available on request. Most data are available at national level, with some tables available at regional level. Passenger journey levels and punctuality are published at local authority level.

We are keen that the published statistics reflect users' needs as well as possible, with the minimum possible burden imposed on data providers (largely bus operators). As a result we are reviewing the data collected and plan to make some changes which are outlined below.

We are seeking user feedback on our proposals and on our bus statistics more generally via a short online survey available bus.data@dft.gsi.gov.uk. If you have any comments, please let us have them by **31 December 2011**. We will consider any feedback received before finalising changes early in 2012, and informing users of the decisions on this website.

Topic/subject area

Non-local services

The majority of the published DfT bus statistics relate to local bus services only, the exceptions being tables showing staff employed and vehicles operated which cover all PSV operators, including those who do only non-local work (e.g. school contracts, private hire). An estimate of passenger kilometres on local and non-local services is published separately in the annual Transport Statistics Great Britain publication.

Proposal and justification

Stop collecting all information.

Currently the information collected on non-local services contributes little to the published statistics. We propose to stop collecting all information on non-local services, in order to reduce burdens on operators (reducing the sample size for the annual PSV survey from 1,600 to 800).

In future, tables relating to vehicles would then relate to those operated by local operators (though this will include vehicles used for non-local work by these operators). We will produce a time series on an equivalent basis back to 2004/05.

Alternative sources of data allow high level monitoring of trends for non-local services. For example, the National Travel Survey has information on non-local bus journeys, bus and coach mileage can be obtained from DfT traffic statistics and DfT vehicle statistics include numbers of licensed buses and coaches.

Topic/subject area Staff employed by PSV operators Currently information on staff employed by PSV operators is collected from 1,600 operators through the annual PSV survey

and include number of drivers,

Proposal and justification

Stop collecting

We propose to stop collecting information about staff through the PSV survey. Other Government surveys (for example, the Labour Force Survey) provide estimates of the total maintenance and other administrative staff. number of bus and coach drivers which we believe are sufficient for high level monitoring.

Vehicles operated

Currently the annual PSV survey asks operators to supply information about the number of buses, coaches and minibuses that they operate, with more detailed information about buses in particular including those which are accessible, fitted with different types of equipment, and in different age groups.

Reduce information collected

We plan to stop collecting information on buses by age group through the PSV survey, to reduce burdens on operators. DVLA data on licensed buses and coaches by year of registration offers an alternative route to assess the profile of the market, and feed into assessment of future PSVAR compliance.

Bus reliability

Information on scheduled kilometres run on local bus services is collected through an annual survey of the 70 largest operators (including TfL for London).

Stop collecting

We propose to stop this collection, as there is no longer a clear need for this information at the national level following the dropping of the target related to reliability.

We will continue to collate information on bus punctuality from local authorities for the current DfT Business Plan indicator. Passenger Focus collect data on passenger satisfaction with a range of aspects of bus services, including reliability.

Concessionary passenger journeys

Passenger journeys are collected through the annual PSV survey, currently split into elderly/disabled concessions, youth concessions and non-concessionary passengers

Reduce detail collected

We are planning to stop collecting figures for youth concessions, and propose to publish only elderly/disabled concessionary journeys in table BUS0105 in future. This will simplify the survey for operators. DfT has a separate Concessionary Travel survey which collects this information from local authorities.

In addition to the above, we are planning to make further changes to reduce the amount of information which is collected but not currently published. This includes data on operating revenue from contracts and concessionary travel reimbursement (where published figures are derived from local government finance statistics).