

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Title	Cash payment on buses research	
Objective	To investigate why customers pay cash on bus services, and track findings over time	
Date	July 2013	Agency: SPA Future Thinking
Methodology	On bus and at stop interviews with 290 customers that have paid cash for bus tickets in the past year	

Abstract

Most customers that pay by cash for bus tickets do so infrequently, and the most common reasons for paying cash are forgetting to top up an Oyster card, or forgetting or losing an Oyster card. Almost all Londoners and UK non-Londoners who have paid for bus tickets by cash in the last year report that they have an Oyster card (94% and 86% respectively).

Awareness and ownership of contactless payment cards has increased since 2011, but customers paying for bus travel by cash still have lower awareness of the technology than the wider population. Overseas visitors in particular appear to have low awareness of contactless payment, and are also the group least likely to own an Oyster card.

Key findings

Most customers that pay by cash for bus tickets do so infrequently and generally as a result of forgetting to top up, forgetting to carry or losing their Oyster card.

There is a minority of customers who always pay for bus travel by cash (12%, down from 26% in 2011 – though the samples are not identical so comparisons should be treated with caution), and 7% of cash payers say they would not travel rather than pay by an alternative method.

86% of those who have paid for a bus journey by cash in the last 12 months already have an Oyster card (up from 72% in 2011); of these (ie, those who have an Oyster card), 55% said they had bought cash tickets because they forgot to top up their Oyster card, and 51% said they had forgotten or lost their Oyster card. Cumulatively, 83% of Londoners and UK non-Londoners combined said they had ever paid cash for bus tickets either because they had forgotten to top up their Oyster card or they had forgotten or lost their Oyster card (73% in 2011).

Contactless bank card payment is now accepted on almost all buses across London. Awareness of contactless payment technology among those that pay by cash for bus tickets has risen since 2011 (from 31% to 39%), but is lower than among Londoners generally (of Londoners paying cash for bus tickets, 40% were aware of contactless payment, compared with 72% from the Oyster Tracker research, which surveys a representative sample of Londoners each quarter). Ownership of contactless payment cards among those who pay cash on buses has increased from 3% in 2011 to 8% this year.

Overseas visitors to London that pay for bus tickets with cash appear to be less likely to be aware of contactless payment than either Londoners or UK non-Londoners, and also less likely to own an Oyster card (19%).

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