

Local area walking and cycling statistics

Statistical Release

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Local area walking and cycling statistics: England 2011/12

This Statistical Release presents information on cycling amongst adults (aged 16 and over) in England, by local authority, for the year ending mid-October 2012.

The statistics in this release are based on results from the Active People Survey (APS), an annual survey administered by Sport England. The APS is designed to measure participation in sport and active recreation and also includes questions about all types of cycling activity, both recreational or for getting from place to place.

This is the second release in this series and presents results from the sixth Active People Survey (APS6), which **ran from mid-October 2011 to mid-October 2012**. Some results from APS6 have been published by Sport England (see section 7), but this release presents analysis specifically related to cycling. The cycling measures are compared to those from the fifth Active People Survey (APS5) to identify any areas of change.

The previous release in this series (released August 2012) included statistics on walking, as well as cycling. This update only includes statistics on cycling. This is due to changes in the survey questions on walking, for which a full year of new data is not yet available.

The key findings from Local area walking and cycling: England 2011/12 include:

- During the year ending October 2012, 10 per cent of adults in England cycled **at least once per week**. 3 per cent of adults cycled **at least 5 times per week**. The prevalence of cycling in England has not changed significantly, compared to the same period for the previous year.
- Across different local authorities, the proportion of adults cycling at least once per week ranges from 47 per cent (in Cambridge) to lower than 5 per cent in other areas.
- Of the 326 local authorities in England, there are six in which at least a fifth of adults cycle at least once per week.
- According to the 2011 Census, around 2 per cent of adults in England usually travel to work by bicycle, with the highest proportion being in Cambridge (18 per cent).

1. Cycling prevalence in 2011/12

- 15 per cent of adults in England cycled **at least once per month** during the period October 2011 to October 2012, unchanged from the same period last year ([web table cw0111](#)).
- 10 per cent of adults cycle **at least once per week**; 5 per cent cycle **at least 3 times per week** and 3 per cent cycle **at least 5 times per week**. These proportions have not changed significantly¹ since last year.
- There is strong variation in cycling rates across different local authorities. The proportion of adults who cycle at least once per week ranges from 47 per cent (in Cambridge) to less than 5 per cent in a small number of areas.

- The local authorities with the highest proportion of adults cycling at **least once per week** were:

Proportion of adults who cycle at least once per week²

1. Cambridge	(47 per cent)	5. Norwich	(20 per cent)
2. Oxford	(28 per cent)	6(=). Richmond-Upon-Thames	(19 per cent)
3. York	(25 per cent)	6(=). Rutland	(19 per cent)
4. South Cambridgeshire	(22 per cent)	6(=). South Oxfordshire	(19 per cent)

- Rates for more frequent cycling show a similar variation across areas – the proportion of adults cycling **at least five times per week** varies from around 25 per cent in Cambridge and 14 per cent in Oxford to less than one per cent in some areas.
- The local authorities with the highest proportion of adults cycling **at least five times per week** were:

Proportion of adults who cycle at least five times per week²

1. Cambridge	(25 per cent)	4. Hackney	(9 per cent)
2. Oxford	(14 per cent)	5(=). Rutland	(8 per cent)
3. York	(10 per cent)	5(=). South Cambridgeshire	(8 per cent)

- As in 2010/11, the majority of areas with the highest cycling prevalence are cities or boroughs within cities. Other characteristics associated with a number of these areas are a large student population and a flat local landscape.
- Of the 326 local authorities in England, there are six (2 per cent) in which at least a fifth of adults cycle at least once per week. There are 13 authorities (4 per cent) in which less than one in 20 adults cycle at least once per week.

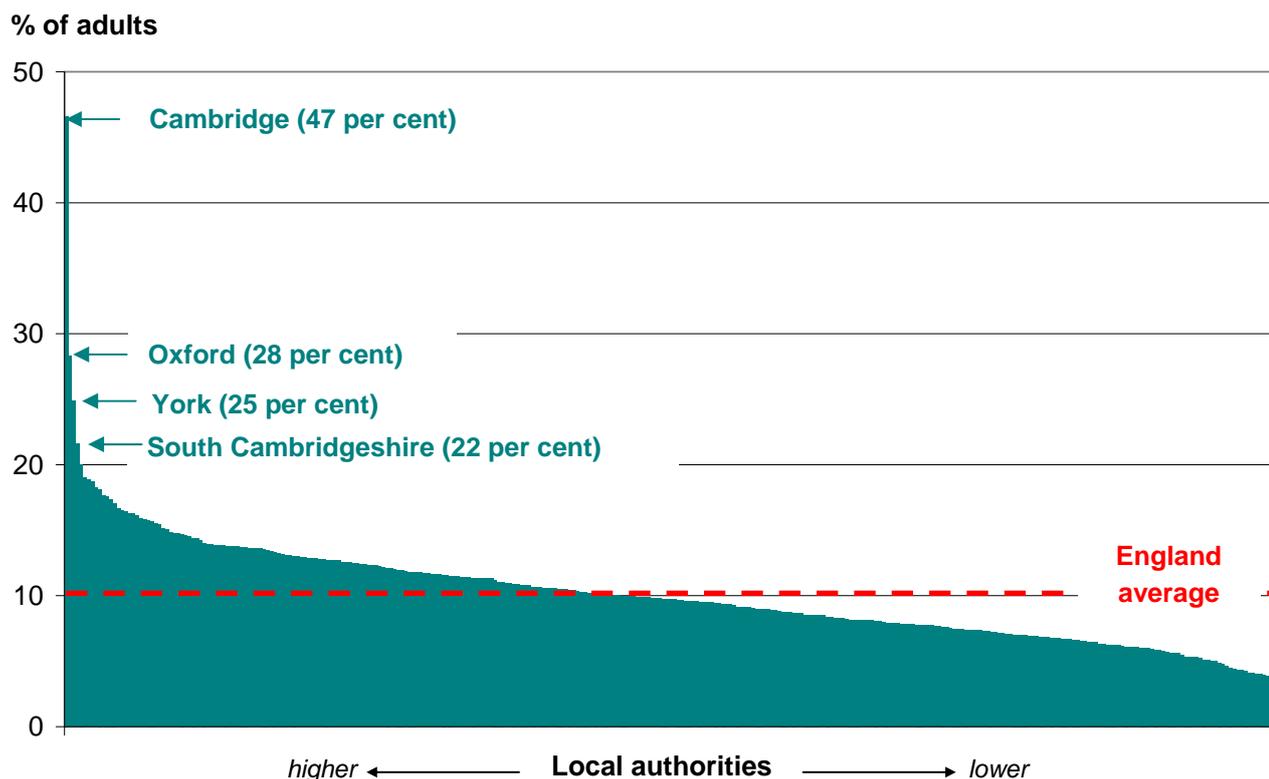
¹ “Significant” in this context refers to statistically significant changes or differences, tested at the 95 per cent confidence level. For details of the statistical tests used, see the accompanying “Notes and Definitions” document.

² Results for the Isles of Scilly and City of London are not directly comparable with other local authorities, due to their very small sample sizes and small populations. For this reason, they are excluded from lists and charts in this bulletin.

- For London, the broad trend is for higher cycling rates amongst residents of the Inner Boroughs, with a lower prevalence amongst the Outer Boroughs. Across London, the proportion of adults who cycle at least once per week ranges from 19 per cent (Richmond-Upon-Thames) and Lambeth (18 per cent) to 4 per cent (Enfield and Redbridge).

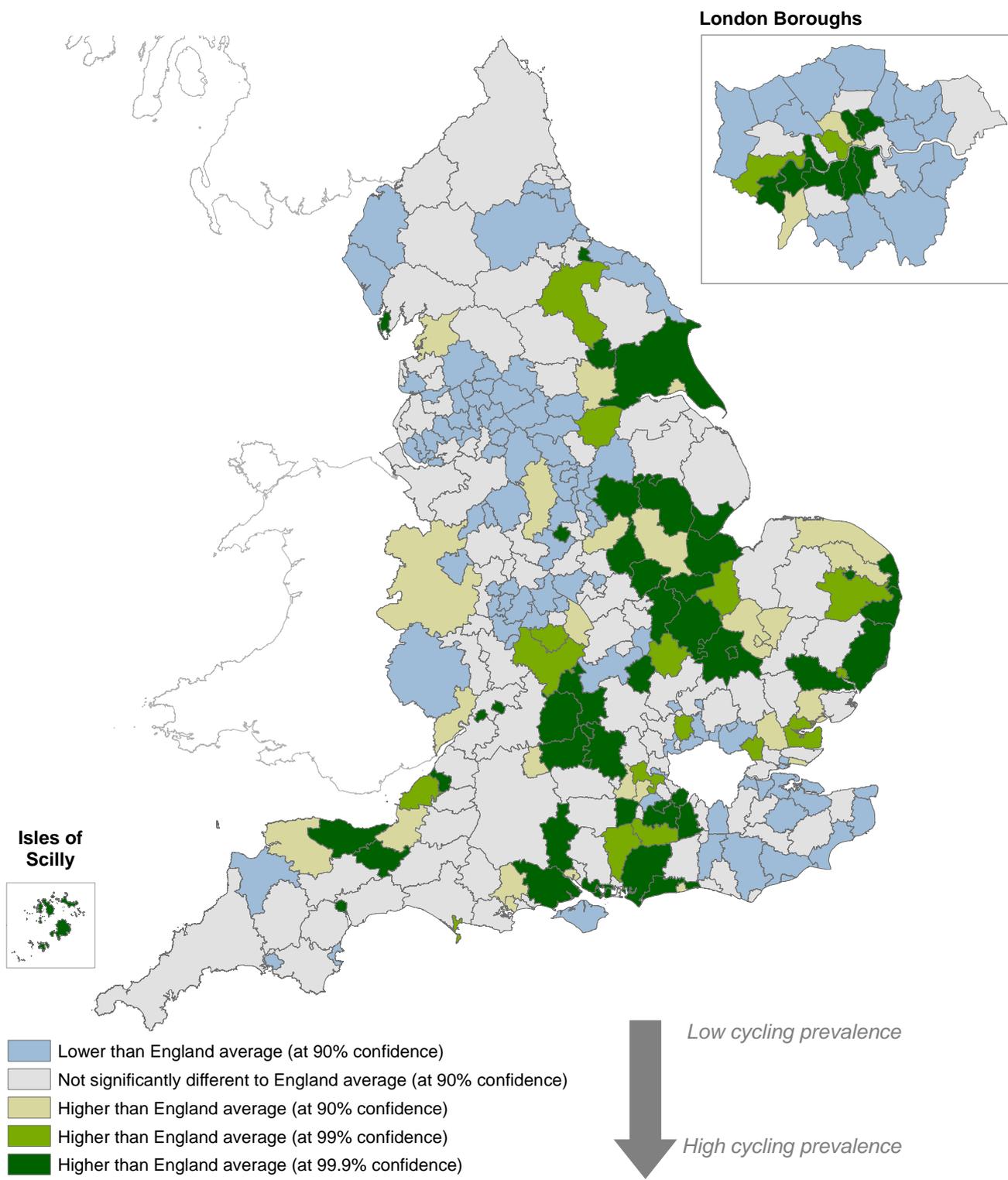
Proportion of adults who cycle at least once per week, by local authority in England, year ending mid-Oct 2012

(Walking and Cycling [web table cw0111](#))



Detailed tables on cycling prevalence by area (for any purpose or length) can be found on the Walking and Cycling Statistics page, table numbers [cw0111](#) to [cw0112](#).

Proportion of adults who cycle at least once per week, year ending mid-Oct 2012:
Local authorities in which the proportion is significantly³ lower (blue) or higher (shades of green) than the England average (*London Boroughs and Isles of Scilly in insets*)
 (Walking and Cycling [web table cw0111](#))



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³ Areas have been compared against the England average figure at varying levels of confidence – 90, 99 and 99.9 per cent. The higher the confidence level, the more likely that the observed difference is a genuine difference in the underlying prevalence of cycling, rather than due to random variation in the sample of people surveyed. For more details of the confidence intervals and their use here, see the accompanying Notes and Definitions document.

2. How have cycling rates changed since 2010/11?

- The prevalence of cycling in England as whole has not changed significantly⁴ between 2010/11 and 2011/12⁵.
- The trend in cycling across different local authorities is also largely unchanged from 2010/11. For example, the lists below show the five areas with the highest cycling rates for 2010/11 and 2011/12. The two lists mostly comprise the same local authorities:

Proportion of adults who cycle at least once per week

2010/11

1. Cambridge	(52 per cent)
2. Oxford	(30 per cent)
3. Gosport	(24 per cent)
4. York	(23 per cent)
5. South Cambridgeshire	(22 per cent)

2011/12 (latest data)

1. Cambridge	(47 per cent)
2. Oxford	(28 per cent)
3. York	(25 per cent)
4. South Cambridgeshire	(22 per cent)
5. Norwich	(20 per cent)

- Statistically significant increases or decreases in cycling prevalence have occurred for a number of individual local authorities. These have been indicated in the data tables accompanying this release. However, some caution is needed in interpreting these changes. As the statistics are based on limited samples of survey respondents, some year-on-year fluctuation in the results will always occur, even outside the limits of a statistical test for significance.
- As only two years of data are currently available, it is not possible to say whether the changes observed are simply a one-off fluctuation or part of a longer term trend. As more data is added to the time series each year, it will be possible to monitor the longer term trends and put individual changes in context.

3. Cycling to work – recent data from the 2011 Census

- In February 2013, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released data from the 2011 Census, relating to people's mode of travel to work, including the proportion that usually get to work by cycling. The Census data are available at local authority level and thus offers a useful comparison with data in this release, particularly the measures related to frequent cycling – for example, cycling at least five times per week.
- According to the 2011 Census, around 2 per cent of adults aged 16 to 74 in England travelled to work by bicycle, broadly consistent with the APS that showed 3 per cent of adults cycled at least five times per week in 2010/11 ([web table cw0901](#)).

⁴ “Significant” in this context refers to statistically significant changes or differences, tested at the 95 per cent confidence level. For more details of the statistical tests used, see the accompanying “Notes and Definitions” document.

⁵ Survey years run from mid-Oct to mid-Oct; thus “2010/11” refers to mid-Oct 2010 to mid-Oct 2011; “2011/12” refers to mid-Oct 2011 to mid-Oct 2012.

- The variation across areas in rates for cycling to work from the Census data is also broadly consistent with the variation in cycling rates observed in this release. For example, comparing the areas with the highest proportions in each case shows similar values:

% cycling to work		% cycling at least five times per week (ranking)	
Census 2011		Active People Survey 5 - 2010/11	

1. Cambridge	18 per cent	37 per cent	(1)
2. Oxford	10 per cent	12 per cent	(2)
3. Hackney	9 per cent	8 per cent	(=5)
4. York	8 per cent	10 per cent	(3)
5. Gosport	7 per cent	8 per cent	(=5)

- The large discrepancy in figures for Cambridge is likely due to its large student population. Students are not counted amongst those in employment for the purposes of the Census, but are sampled in the Active People Survey.

A comparison of the 2011 Census and Active People Survey 5 data can be found in Walking and Cycling table [cw0901](#). Detailed travel to work results from the 2011 Census can be found in the ONS Census table [QS0901EW](#).

4. Related information

Cycling in context

These statistics provide a picture of the variation in cycling across different local areas. According to the Department for Transport National Travel Survey (NTS), **cycling accounts for around 2 per cent of trips** made in Great Britain⁶.

The NTS collects detailed information about personal travel by all modes. Tables from the NTS relating to cycling can be accessed from the Walking and Cycling Statistics page (link below).

Information about cycling also appears in several other statistical releases produced by the Department for Transport, including public attitudes to cycling, road accidents involving cyclists and travel to work and access to services by cycling.

These statistics can be accessed from the web page for this release:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-walking-and-cycling-in-england-2011-12

5. Users and uses of these statistics

Within the Department for Transport, we anticipate these statistics being used in the evaluation of local area interventions to encourage sustainable travel (for example, the Local Sustainable Transport Fund⁷), as background information in the development and targeting of policies, for ministerial briefing and to answer public enquiries.

Other users include local authorities, campaign organisations, Parliamentary Groups, researchers

⁶ A trip is a one-way course of travel with a single main purpose.

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/local-sustainable-transport-fund

and individuals with an interest in cycling.

Request for feedback

In designing this statistical release we gathered views from stakeholders and potential users, including local authorities, on what they would find most useful. We would welcome any feedback on this first release, on the content, format or timing of the statistics, to inform future releases on this topic. A two page survey form is available here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/65XPNSC>

6. Strengths and weaknesses of the data

The figures in this release are based on the Active People Survey (APS), administered by Sport England and used to derive official estimates of participation in sport and active recreation. The APS has a sample size of over 160,000 persons, thus enabling analysis at local authority level. Statistics at this level are not available from the National Travel Survey (NTS), which has an annual sample of around 19,000 persons.

The national level results derived from the APS have been compared with those from the NTS and found to be broadly consistent. Any differences are likely to be due to differences in methodology and definitions between the two surveys.

Results from the APS are grouped by the area where survey respondents live, which may not be the same as the area where they cycle, particularly for urban areas where there are multiple local authorities in a relatively small area.

Although the APS has a standard sample size of at least 500 persons per local authority, because the numbers of those cycling are small (only 15 per cent nationally), some of the measures relating to cycling are based on only a few people per local authority and may not be robust. The tables accompanying this release include 95 per cent confidence intervals for the estimates derived from the survey, to demonstrate the reliability of the estimates and the likely range of values for the true value⁸. Due to a methodological error made previously, the confidence intervals for 2010/11 have been revised as part of this release. The changes as a result of these revisions are minor and generally led to a narrowing of the confidence interval width.

The tables also now highlight whether the change in cycling activity since 2010/11 is statistically significant, rather than simply due to random variation in the survey sample. More details of the statistical test used to assess significant change can be found in the accompanying Notes and Definitions document. Caution should be taken when interpreting these changes because of factors that include small sample sizes and the inherent uncertainty in doing any statistical test.

The APS sample is weighted to ensure that the results are representative of the population. However, it is exclusively a telephone survey and only covers households with a fixed landline. The 15 per cent of households in England that are mobile-only⁹ are excluded from the survey, which may introduce bias into the sample. A comparison of sports participation measures derived

⁸ The confidence intervals used are Wilson Score intervals. For more details, see the accompanying Notes and Definitions document.

⁹ See paper commissioned from the ONS Methodology Advisory Service, available here: http://www.sportengland.org/research/active_people_survey/consultation.aspx

from a telephone survey and a face-to-face survey revealed some small but systematic differences between the reporting of walking and cycling between the two modes. Work is ongoing by Sport England and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to better understand these modal differences, with a view to redesigning the future format of the Active People Survey.

For more methodology details about these statistics, please see the accompanying Notes and Definitions document.

7. Background notes

1. The web tables give further details of the results presented in this statistical release. They are available here: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/walking-and-cycling-statistics
2. Guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics, including the calculation of confidence intervals is available in the “Notes and Definitions” document, which can be found here: www.gov.uk/transport-statistics-notes-and-guidance-walking-and-cycling
3. Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours in advance can also be found at the link above.
4. Further information about the Active People Survey and published sports participation measures for APS6 can be found on Sport England’s website: www.sportengland.org/research/active_people_survey.aspx
5. The next release in this series is due to be published in Spring 2014 and will contain statistics on walking and cycling from APS7, which covers the period October 2012 to October 2013.