

Travel in Urban and Rural areas

Personal Travel Factsheet – March 2010

Introduction

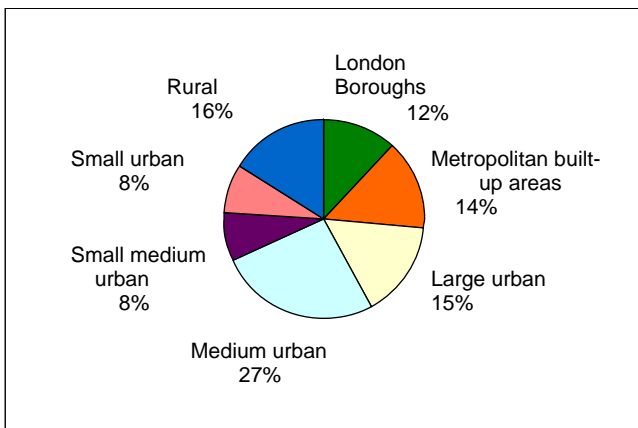
This Factsheet summarises findings on how personal travel patterns vary according to the type of area in which people live. The results cover domestic travel in Great Britain and are based on data from the [National Travel Survey \(NTS\)](#) unless stated otherwise. Data are for 2008 unless otherwise specified.

Type of area: Households are classified according to whether they are within an urban area of at least 3,000 population or in a rural area. Urban areas are subdivided for the purpose of this factsheet as follows:
 London boroughs – the whole of the Greater London Authority
 Built-up areas of former Metropolitan Counties
 Large urban – self-contained urban areas over 250,000 population
 Medium urban – over 25,000 but not over 250,000 population
 Small urban – over 3,000 but not over 25,000 population
 Rural – all other areas including urban areas under 3,000 population

Population by area type

The proportion of individuals in the NTS sample living in each type of area closely matches the proportion in the general GB population (Chart 1).

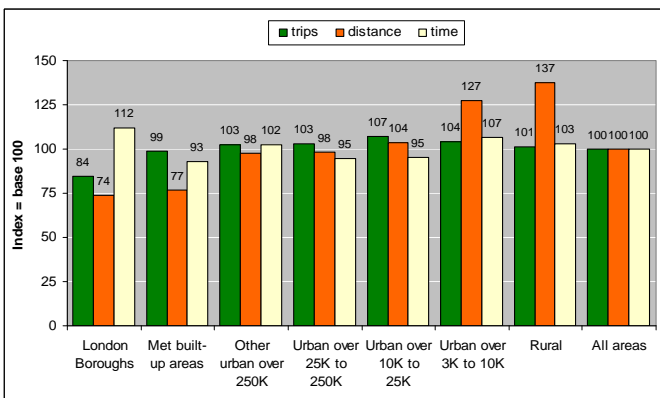
Chart 1: Percentage of NTS sample of individuals in each area type



Overall travel behaviour

The travelling people do and the time they spend travelling varies by area type, with London and Rural areas being particularly distinctive.

Chart 2: Trips, distance travelled and time spent travelling per person per year by area type



- For all areas outside London, average trip rates are similar (between 982 and 1,062 trips per person per

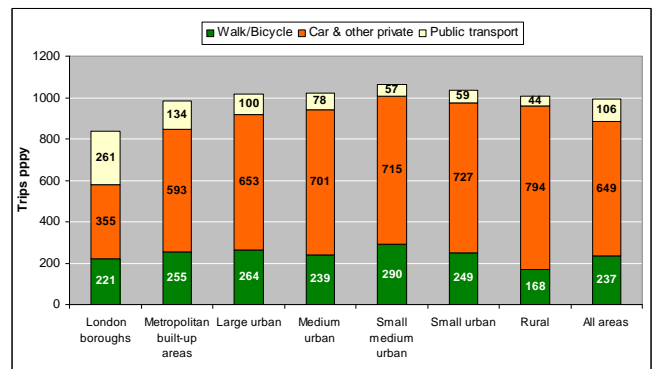
year). London residents make 16% fewer trips (838) than the national average (Chart 3).

- People in rural areas travel on average 86% further each year (9,516 miles) than those in London (5,114 miles) (Chart 4).
- Despite travelling the least distance, London residents spend the longest time travelling each year (420 hours).

Mode of travel

- Car and other private transport are most dominant in rural areas, comprising 79% of all trips respectively. This compares to 42% in London and 65% nationally.
- The average number of trips made per person each year by public transport increases with the size of urban area, and is highest of all in London (Chart 3).

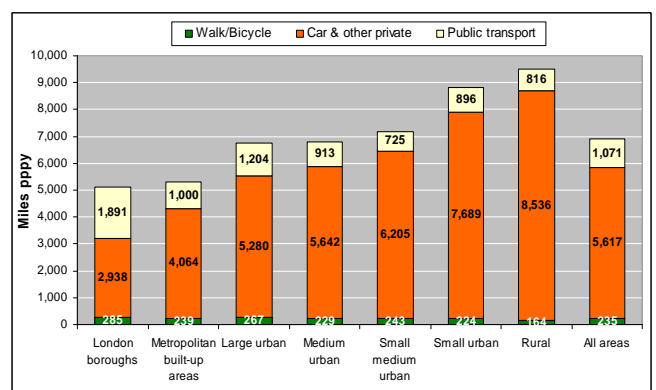
Chart 3: Trips per person per year by main mode and area type



Because trips by car and other private transport are longer on average than those by other modes, they comprise a higher proportion of total distance travelled than of other trips made (Chart 4).

- In rural areas, 90% of total distance covered for personal travel is by car or other private modes (excluding walking and cycling) and 9% is by public transport. In large urban areas these proportions are 78% and 18% respectively and in London they are 57% and 37%.

Chart 4: Distance per person per year by mode and area type

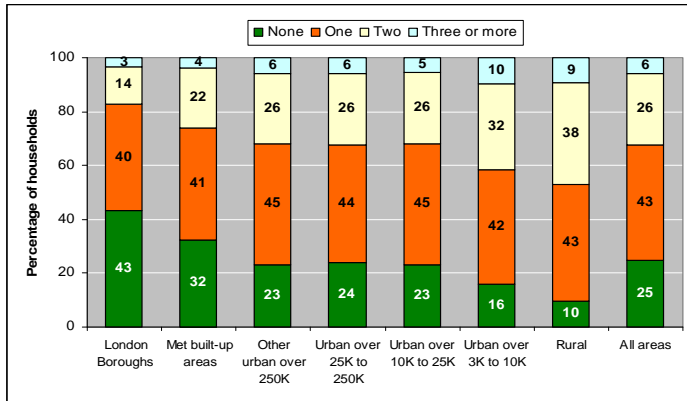


Car ownership and mileage

Car access is one of the most important factors in determining the amount of travelling people do. This is illustrated by the pattern in the proportion of households in each area type who own one or more cars.

- In rural areas, 90% of households have access to a car compared with 57% in London.
- Rural areas also have the highest proportion of households with multiple cars (47%).

Chart 5: Household car ownership by area type



Bus services

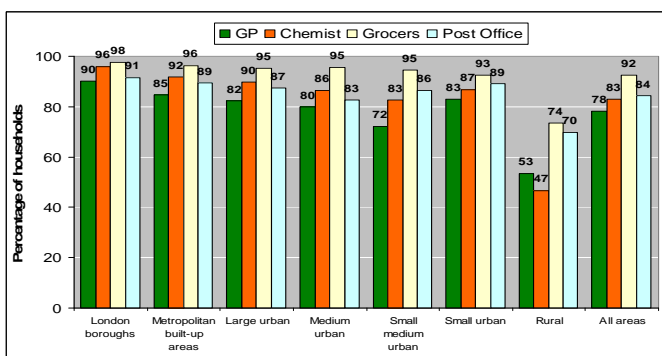
The NTS asks respondents how near they live to a bus service. The minimum criterion for the government's 'bus availability indicator' is that a household should be within 13 minutes' walk of a bus stop with an hourly or better service.

- Between 1998/00 and 2008, the proportion of households in rural areas that met this criterion increased from 45% to 58%.
- In small urban areas the proportion of households with this access increased from 74% to 88% over the same period. Bus travel in small urban and rural areas has however remained relatively unchanged.
- There was little change in medium and large urban areas, where the vast majority (over 90%) of households live within 13 minutes walk of a bus stop with a service at least once an hour.

Access to services

Respondents are asked how long it takes to travel to a range of important local services on foot or by public transport (whichever is quicker) from their home. Results show that key services are less accessible to households in rural areas than those in urban areas.

Chart 6: Proportion of households within 15 minutes (by foot or public transport) of local services by area type



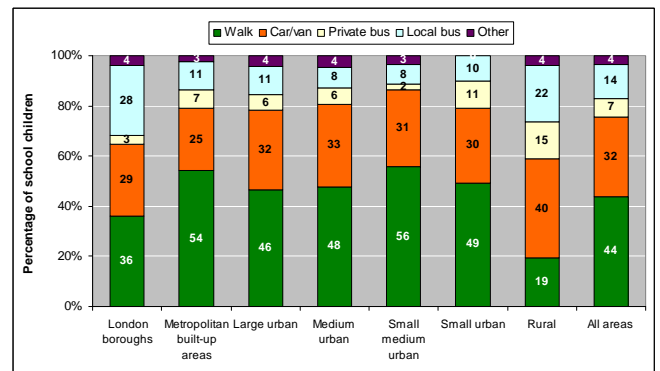
- In areas of population over 10k, over 95% of households are within 15 minutes of a shop selling groceries and over 80% are within 15 minutes of a GP. In rural areas the proportions are 74% and 53% respectively (Chart 6).
- In rural areas, 70% of households are within 30 minutes of the nearest post office, compared to 83% in medium urban areas and 91% in London.

Travelling to school

Children living in different types of area face different journeys to school, and they and their parents make different choices on how to get there.

- In 2008, 44% of trips to school by children aged 5-16 were made on foot, slightly lower than 47% in 1995/1997. The proportion of trips by car during that period increased from 29% to 32%.
- In rural areas, more children travel by car (40%) or private bus (15%) than in urban areas and fewer walk to school (19%) than the national average (44%) (Chart 7).

Chart 7: Proportion of trips to school by main mode and area type



Further information

Since 2002, NTS fieldwork has been conducted by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen).

The main results from the National Travel Survey are published at: www.dft.gov.uk/transtat along with details of the NTS methodology

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