Department for Transport

National Travel Attitudes Study: Wave 3

About this release

This is a companion product of the National Travel Survey (NTS). Whilst the NTS provides a wealth of information on the travel patterns and behaviour of individuals, the National Travel Attitudes Study (NTAS) provides information on public attitudes to travel and transport.

The NTAS is an online and telephone survey which covers responses from individuals aged 16 and over in England, drawn from people who have previously responded to the NTS. This release covers the third NTAS, Wave 3, which was conducted during January and February 2020, and had a sample size of 2,695 individuals.

In this publication

Widespread concerns regarding air and noise pollution

Around 48% of Wave 3 respondents expressed concerns over poor air quality in their immediate neighbourhood.

48% concerned about poor air quality

In addition, 40% also expressed concerns regarding noise pollution (distracting or unwanted noises) in the area they live in.

40% concerned about noise pollution

Knowledge of carbon offsetting

The majority of Wave 3 respondents (61%) have heard of carbon offsetting: the practice of compensating for CO2 emissions by participating in schemes designed to make equivalent reductions of CO2 in the atmosphere.

61% have heard of carbon offsetting

Interest in buying e-bikes

Around 19% of all respondents consider it very likely or fairly likely that they will purchase an e-bike next time they buy a bicycle.

Only considering the respondents who say they are planning on buying a bicycle, this figure increases to 32% of potential bicycle buyers who find it very likely or fairly likely to opt for an e-bike next time they purchase a bicycle.

NTAS Wave 3 in light of COVID-19

The data for this study was collected in January and February 2020. Data collection was therefore completed before the global outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020. All displayed attitudes are reflective of what people thought at the time of data collection.

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Active transport (NTAS0101)

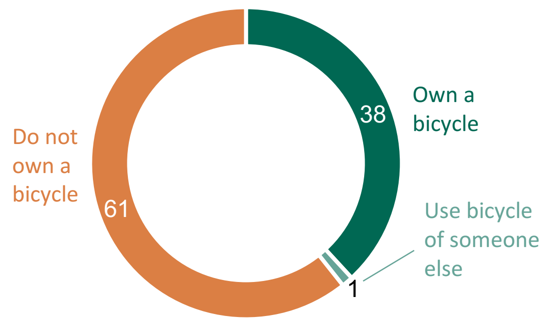
Active transport, or active travel, means journeys made through active means, such as cycling and walking. Wave 3 includes several questions in this area covering the general usage of bicycles, safety concerns around bicycles, the likelihood to buy an electric bicycle and changes in using walking as a means of transport.

Bicycle usage

According to the respondents of NTAS Wave 3 as reported in January and February 2020, the majority of English citizens do not have access to a bicycle. 61% reported to have no access to a bicycle compared to 38% who own a bicycle themselves and 1% who regularly use a bicycle owned by someone else.

However, of those that reported to own a bicycle, 61% of respondents said that they have cycled in the past 12 months which suggests that many bicycles that are owned by English citizens are not regularly being used.

Bicycle Ownership



Bicycle owners...

The data suggests that bicycle usage is more prevalent among citizens from households with higher incomes. While around 20% of respondents from households with an income below £25,000 reported to have cycled in the past 12 months, this number rises to around 40% for respondents from households with incomes higher than £50,000.

Bicycle usage in past 12 months by household income group

Cycling and Walking

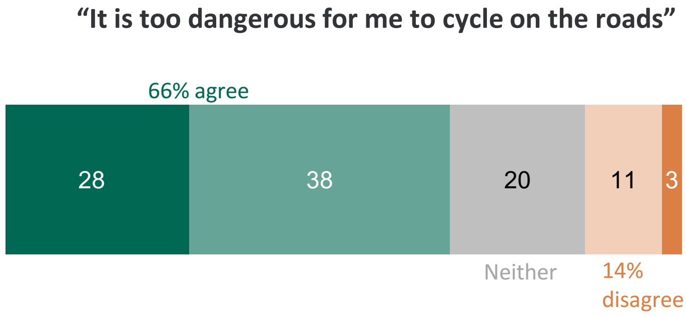
The government's ambition is to make cycling and walking a natural choice for shorter journeys, or part of longer journeys, by 2040.

For more information on cycling policy, infrastructure, funding, and standards, see the Department for Transport collection page on Cycling and Walking.

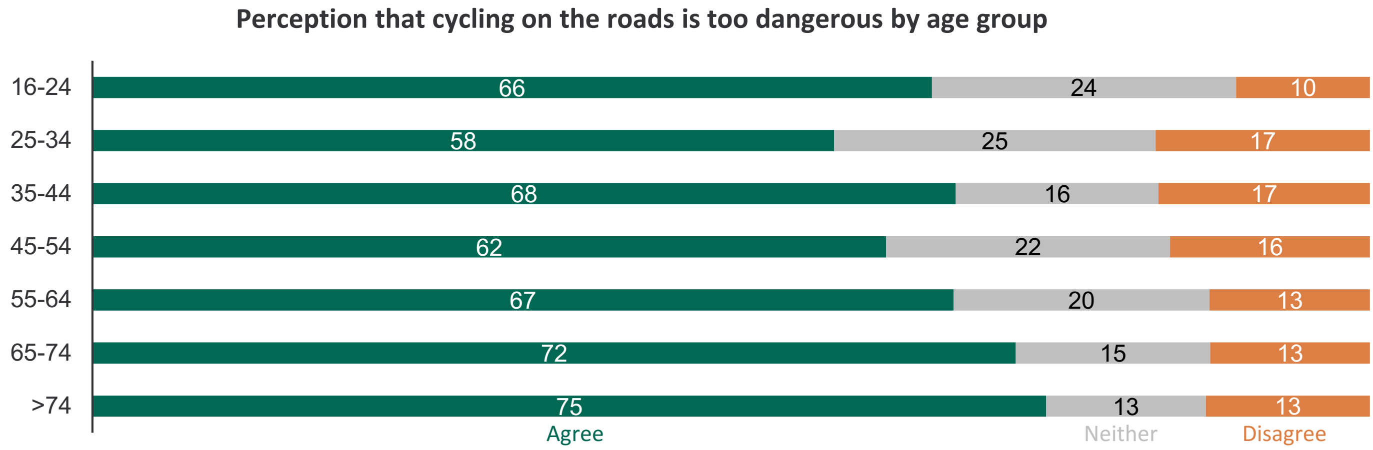
For more statistical outputs around cycling and walking, see the latest Walking and Cycling Statistics, which comprises data from the National Travel Survey (NTS) and the Active Lives Survey (ALS).

Safety of cycling

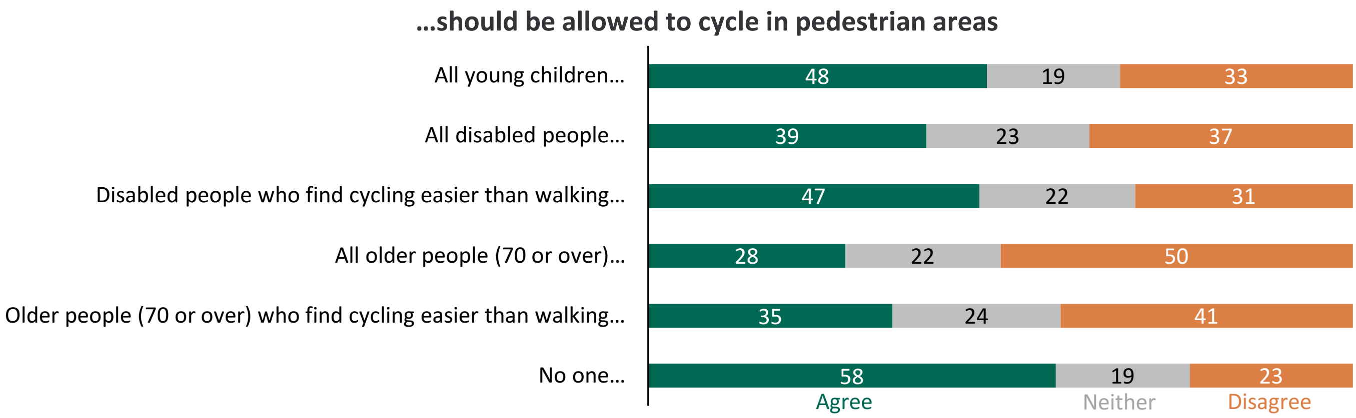
The majority of respondents think that cycling on roads is too dangerous for them. In total, 66% either agree strongly or agree somewhat with the notion that cycling on roads is too dangerous and 14% disagree (the rest is undecided).



The same sentiment towards cycling on roads can be found in all age groups and increases slightly for older survey participants.

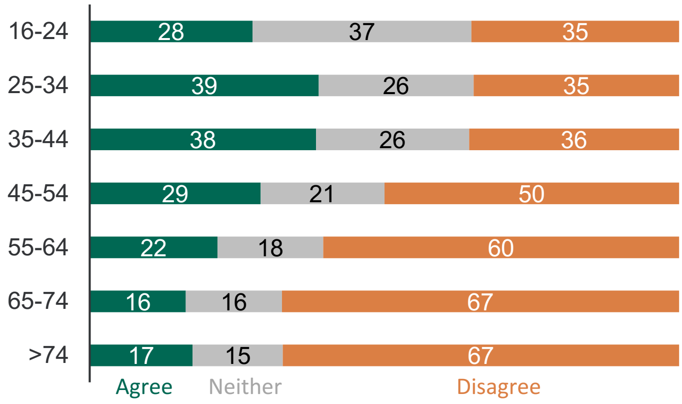


With regard to the question of who should be allowed to cycle in pedestrian areas, the highest level of support is displayed towards younger children being granted that right with 48% agreeing and 33% disagreeing. Opinions are split among respondents on whether all disabled people should be allowed to cycle in pedestrian areas with 39% agreeing and 37% disagreeing. Agreement increases to 47% when respondents are asked if disabled people who find cycling easier than walking should be allowed to cycle in pedestrian areas. Allowing older people (>70) the use of bicycles in pedestrian areas is seen as more negatively by respondents with 28% supporting the right to cycle in pedestrian areas being granted to all older people and 35% supporting the right being granted to older people who find cycling easier than walking. Contradictorily, the notion that no one should be allowed to cycle in pedestrian areas is supported by 58% and rejected by 23%.



Curiously, older citizens display less support for the notion that all older people should be allowed to cycle in pedestrian areas. While respondents between 16 and 34 are rather evenly split between support and rejection, the share of respondents that disagree with the statement is clearly greater in all older age groups.

Agreement with "All older people should be allowed to cycle in pedestrian areas" by age group

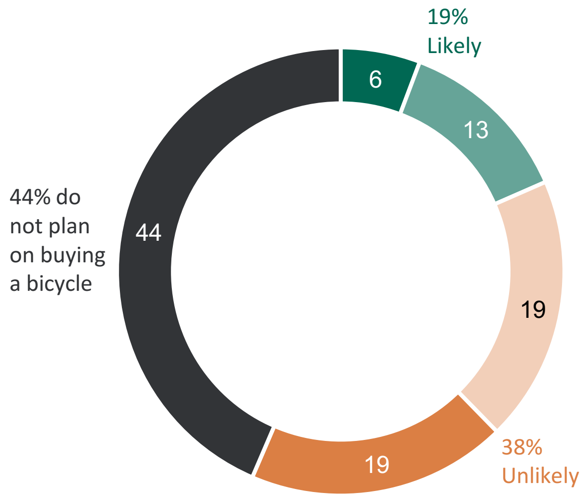


Electric bicycles

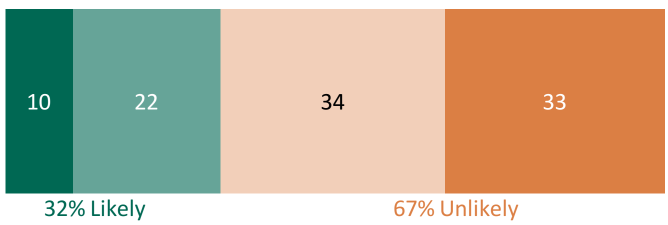
A small share of respondents are considering purchasing an electric bicycle. 6% consider it to be very likely and 13% to be fairly likely to opt for an electric bicycle next time they buy a new bicycle. A further 19% consider this possibility not very likely while 19% also consider it to be not at all likely. The remaining 44% report that they do not plan on buying a bicycle.

This means that among those who might buy a bicycle in the future, nearly a third (32%) consider it to be very likely or fairly likely that they will opt for an electric bicycle. The remaining two-thirds consider it to be not very likely or not at all likely.

"How likely would you be to buy an electric bicycle?"



Likelihood to buy an electric bicycle among respondents who are planning on buying a bicycle



Sales of electric bicycles

Since only a small number of e-bikes are produced in the UK, import figures can be used as proxy for total sold e-bikes in the UK.

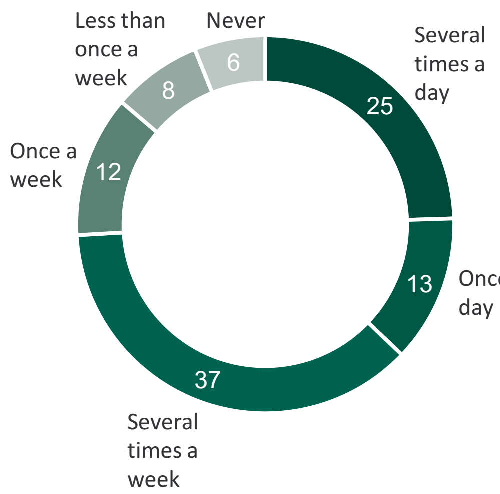
In 2019, 101,362 e-bikes were imported to the UK, which is roughly a 50% increase compared to the 67,300 that were imported the year before.

However, e-bikes still only amount to a small fraction of all bike imports in the UK, since more than 2.6 Million regular bicycles were imported to the UK in 2019.

Walking

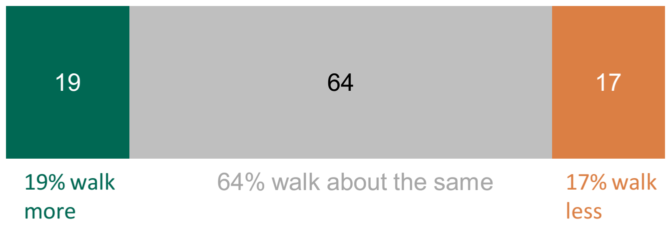
Most survey participants report to use walking as a regular means of transport. Nearly a quarter (25%) say that they travel by walking several times a day for at least 10 minutes. Walking as a means of travel is used by 13% once a day, by 37% several times a week and by 12% once a week. 8% say that they walk less than once a week and 6% report to never use walking as means of transport.

"In an average week, how often do you travel more than 10 minutes by walking?"



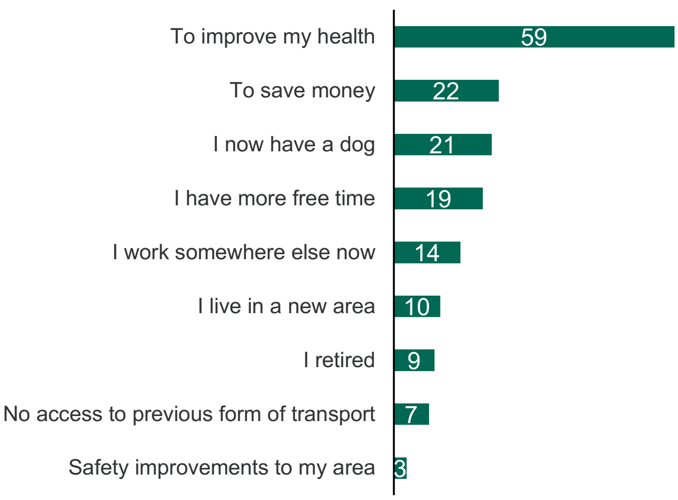
Participants of Wave 3 were asked in January and February 2020 if they currently walk more or less than 12 months ago and about factors that have influenced their walking behaviour. Nearly two-thirds (64%) say that they walk about as much as they did last year, 19% report to walk more than 12 months ago and 17% say they walk less than 12 months ago.

"Are you walking more or less than this time last year?"

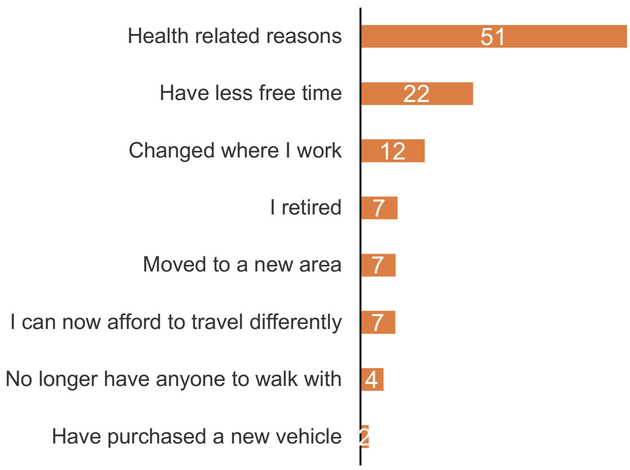


The most often mentioned reasons for walking more than 12 months ago are to improve one's health (mentioned by 59%), to save money (22%), having acquired a dog (21%) and more free time (19%). The most often mentioned reasons for walking less than 12 months ago are health issues (mentioned by 51%), less free time (22%) and a different workplace (12%).

Reasons for walking more in past 12 months



Reasons for walking less in past 12 months



For more information related to walking, cycling, and other forms of active transport, please see the published table NTAS0101.

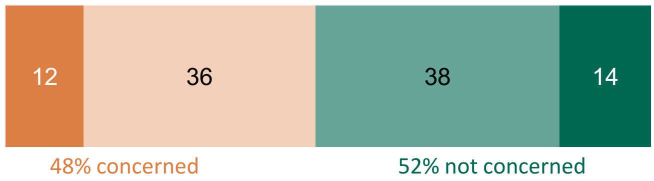
Road journeys and the environment (NTAS0201)

Questions in this category relate to travel by road, and the road infrastructure, with a focus on the environmental impact. Wave 3 included new questions about concerns regarding air quality and noise pollution.

Air pollution

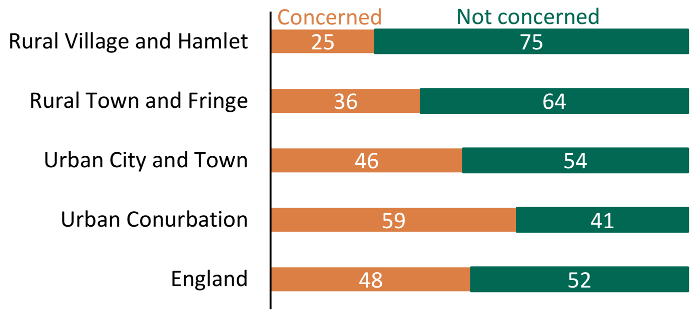
Around half of respondents (48%) are either very concerned (12%) or fairly concerned (36%) about poor air quality in their immediate area. The rest are either not very concerned (38%) or not at all concerned (14%).

"How concerned, if at all, are you about air quality in your immediate area?"



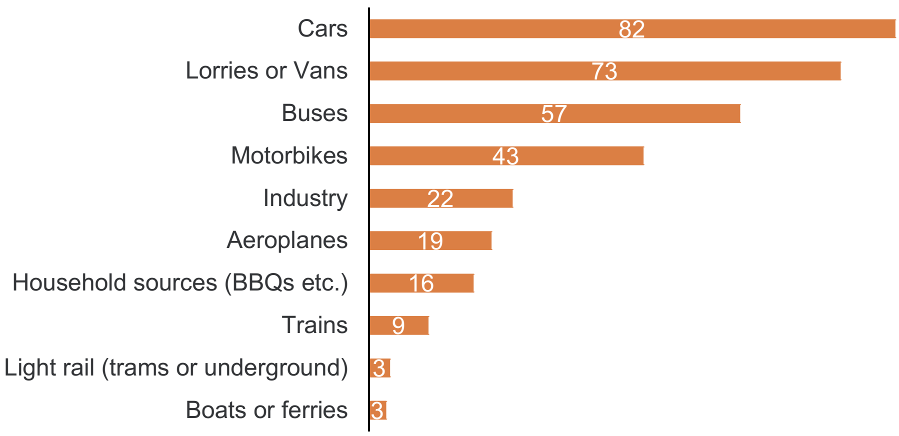
Respondents who live in less populated settlements report concerns regarding air pollution substantially less frequently than respondents from towns and cities. While a quarter of all participating citizens from rural villages and hamlets express concerns over air pollution, this figure increases to 59% for all citizens from urban conurbations.

Concern over air pollution by settlement type



Street vehicles such as cars (82%), lorries or vans (73%), buses (57%) and motorbikes (43%) are most often mentioned when respondents were asked about the causes of their concerns in relation to poor air quality. Other causes, such as industry (22%) and aeroplanes (19%) were mentioned by a smaller fraction of the sample.

"In your immediate area, which of the following, if any, cause you concern in relation to poor air quality?"



Settlement type

Settlement type is classified according to the 2011 ONS Rural-Urban classification - See here for more details.

Urban Conurbation:
An extended urban area, typically consisting of several towns merging with the suburbs of a central city.

Urban City and Town:
A built up area with population exceeding 10,000 individuals within the settlement.

Rural Town and Fringe:
Fewer than 10,000 within a settlement which consists of more than 35 dwellings within 800m radius.

Rural Village and Hamlet
Fewer than 10,000 within a settlement, consisting of fewer than 35 dwellings within 800m radius.

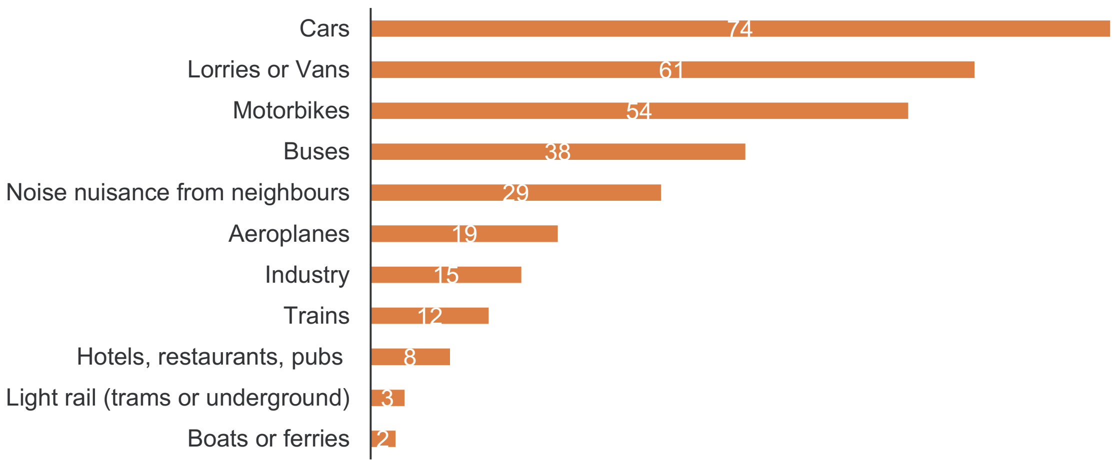
Noise pollution

Concerns regarding noise pollution are less strong than concerns regarding air pollution. Around 40% say they are either very concerned or fairly concerned about noise pollution in their immediate area. The remaining 60% report to be not very concerned or not at all concerned.

"How concerned, if at all, are you about noise pollution, that is any unwanted or distracting noise, in your immediate area?"

As with air pollution, street vehicles, such as cars (74%), lorries or vans (61%), motorbikes (54%) and buses (38%) are most often mentioned as sources of concern in relation to noise pollution. Additionally, noise nuisance from neighbours was mentioned by 29%. Other causes, such as aeroplanes (19%), industry (15%) and trains (12%) were mentioned less often.

"In your immediate area, which of the following, if any, cause you concern in relation to noise pollution?"



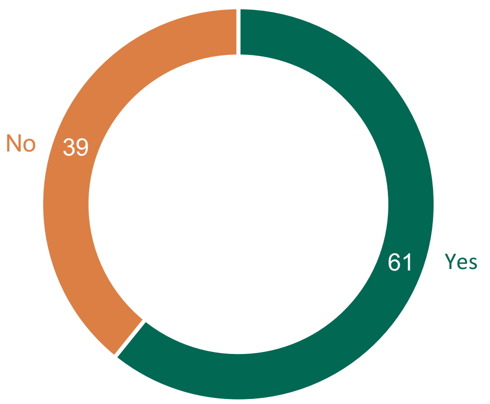
For more information related to road travel and the environment, including questions related to road infrastructure affecting the environment, views on climate change, and vehicle emissions, please see the published table NTAS0201.

Aviation and climate change (NTAS0301)

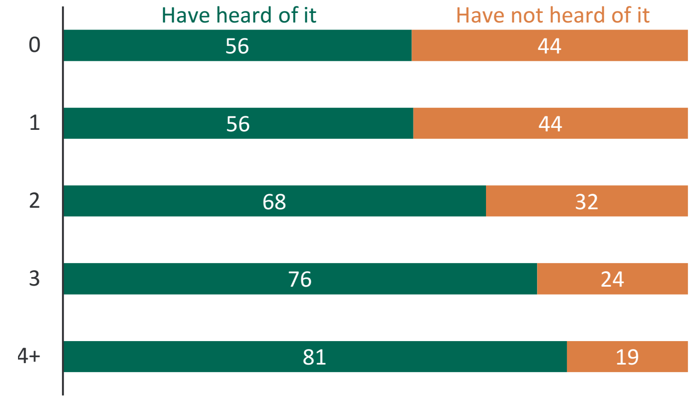
Questions in this category relate to perceptions of aviation, climate change and willingness to change travel behaviour to reduce the impact on the climate. Wave 3 saw only two new questions in this area, both centring around the awareness of carbon offsetting.

The majority of the population seems to be aware of carbon offsetting with 61% of respondents reporting that they have heard of carbon offsetting compared to 39% that have not heard of it. Awareness of carbon offsetting seems to be more prevalent among people who fly regularly with 81% of those that have made four or more international plane trips in the last 12 months reporting to have heard of carbon offsetting compared to 56% of those that have not made any such trips in the same time frame. There seems to be no significant difference between those that did no trips and those that did one international plane trip in the last 12 months.

"Have you heard of carbon offsetting?"

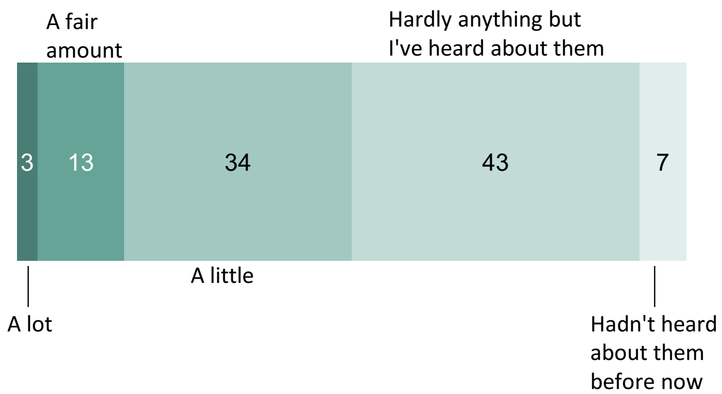


Awareness of carbon offsetting by number of international plane trips in last 12 months



Of those that had heard of carbon offsetting, 7% said they have never heard of voluntary carbon offsetting schemes and 43% said they have heard about them but know hardly anything about them. Around a third (34%) reported to know a little, 13% reported knowing a fair amount and 3% said they know a lot about voluntary carbon offsetting schemes.

"How much do you know about voluntary carbon offsetting schemes for air travel?" (only asked to those that have heard of carbon offsetting)



Carbon offsetting

Carbon offsetting describes the practice of compensating for CO2 emissions by participating in programmes designed to make equivalent reductions of CO2 neutralising the environmental impact of the action. Such programmes reduce CO2 by funding projects that will reduce emissions in other sectors or that will capture CO2 from the atmosphere.

More information can be retrieved from the website of the World Economic Forum.

For more information related to aviation and climate change, including questions related to changing travel behaviour and how much flight tickets should cost in the light of climate change, please see the published table NTAS0301.

Road safety (NTAS0501)

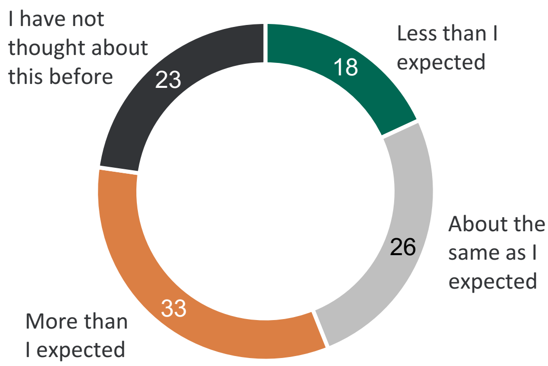
Questions in this category relate to attitudes around safety on the road, including drink driving, speeding, seat belt use and the use of a mobile phone by drivers. Wave 3 saw three new questions added in this area regarding concerns about traffic casualties and policing priorities.

Slightly more than half of respondents (54%) expressed concern about the number of people who are killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions in their immediate area, with 16% reporting to be greatly concerned and 38% being concerned. The rest reported either to be not very concerned (36%) or not at all concerned (9%).

"How concerned, if at all, are you about the number of people who are killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions in your immediate area?"

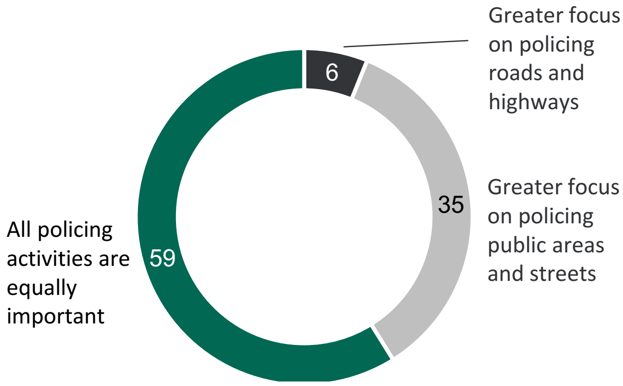
When survey participants were told that almost 1,800 people were killed in accidents on Britain's roads in 2018, 18% considered this to be less than they expected and 33% considered it to be more than expected. Roughly a quarter (26%) said that it was about the same as they expected and 23% said they had not thought about this topic before.

"In 2018, almost 1,800 people were killed in accidents on Britain's roads. Is this number more or less than you expected?"



With regard to policing priorities, a small fraction of the sample (6%) would prefer to see a greater focus on policing roads and highways. A further 35% said they would prefer the focus to be put on public areas and streets. Most respondents (59%), however, consider all policing activities to be equally important.

"Which of the following statements best reflects your opinion on policing priorities…"



Road safety links

Statistics on personal injury road accidents is available on the collection page for [Road Accidents and Safety Statistics](#).

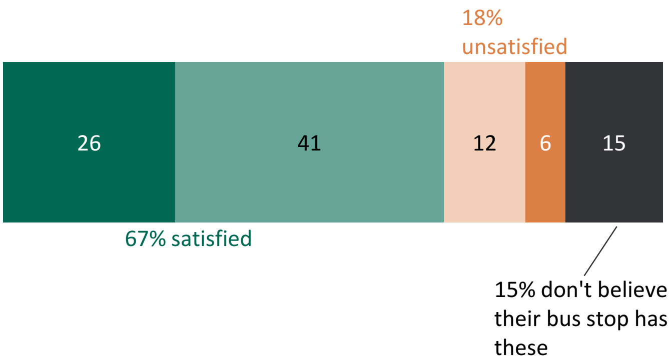
For more information related to road safety, including questions regarding drink driving, driving using mobile phones, speeding and limits/cameras, and in-car safety devices, please see the published table [NTAS0501](#).

Personal, local, and public travel (NTAS0601)

Questions in this category relate to attitudes around public transport, travel in the local area, and local road management and interventions. Wave 3 saw several new questions covering different aspects of bus travel.

Overall, there seems to be high satisfaction with the availability of real time information when travelling by bus. Around two-thirds (67%) reported to be either very or somewhat satisfied and 18% reported to be not very satisfied or not at all satisfied. The remaining 15% said they do not believe that their bus stop provides real time information.

"How satisfied, if at all, are you with the availability of real time information when travelling by bus?"



Bus Open Data Service

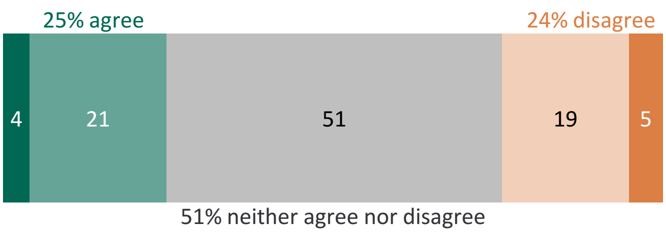
In January 2020, the [Bus Open Data Service] went live which will enable passengers to more easily plan their journeys, find best value tickets and receive real time service updates. Bus operators will be obliged to provide their timetables, vehicle location, fares and ticket data over the course of the next three years.

58% of the sample said that a standardised bus fare between £1 and £2 would encourage them to use the bus in the future, while 42% said they would not be encouraged by a standardised fare.

"Would a standardised fare between £1 to £2 encourage you to use buses in the future?"

Opinions are split amongst respondents on whether time spent on the bus can be used in a productive way. 25% find their time on the bus productive compared to 24% who do not find their time on the bus productive. Slightly more than half (51%) neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

"I find my time on the bus productive"



Further links regarding public and local transport

Guidance, statistics, research, policy papers and consultations regarding local transport issues can be found on the Department for Transport's website.

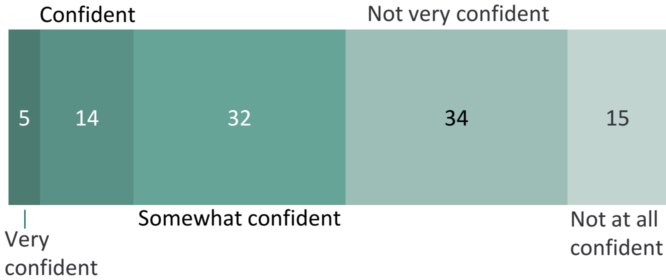
For more questions related to personal and public travel including opinions on residential speed limits and speed bumps, opinions on public transport networks, and opinion on parking, please see the published table NTAS0601.

Disability and transport (NTAS0701)

Questions in this category relate to attitudes around disabled people and access to transport, as well as ease of using transport modes. Wave 3 saw a few new questions regarding giving up seats for others, the enforcement of the law on disabled parking spaces and the confidence to spot disabilities that make the use of public transport more difficult.

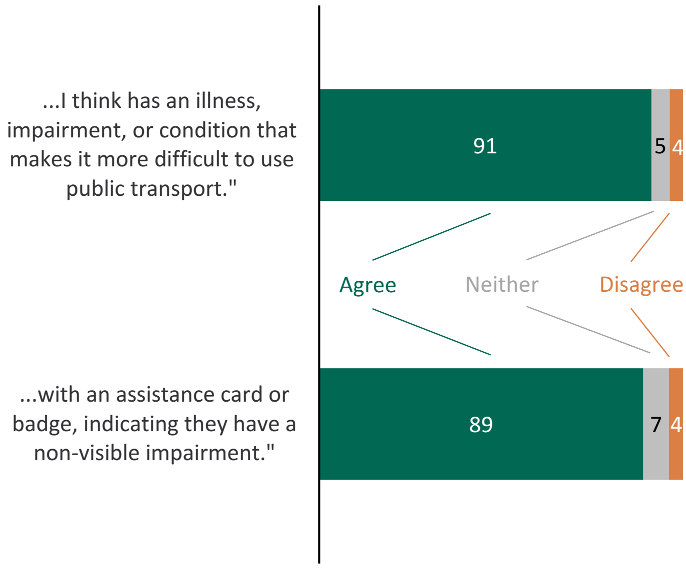
19% report to be very confident or confident that they can tell whether someone has an impairment or condition that makes it more difficult to use public transport. This compares to 32% who feel only somewhat confident and 49% who feel either not very confident or not confident at all to tell if somebody has an impairment that makes the use of public transport more difficult.

“How confident, if at all, are you that you can tell whether someone has an impairment or condition that makes it more difficult to use public transport?”



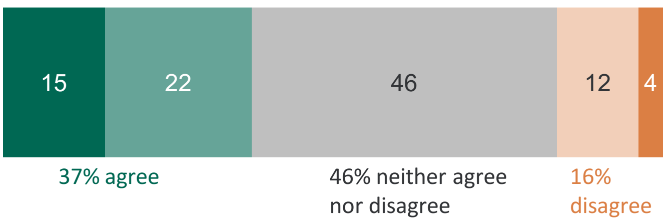
The vast majority of respondents (91%) say that they would give up their seat for someone they think has an illness, impairment, or condition that makes it more difficult to use public transport. This figure drops slightly to 89% when asked if respondents would also give their seat up for somebody that wears an assistance card or badge, indicating they have a non-visible impairment, which shows that most respondents are also willing to support citizens with non-visible disabilities.

“I would give up my seat for someone...



While 37% of respondents think that the law on parking vehicles in on-street disabled spaces is not properly enforced in their immediate area,16% feel like the law is sufficiently enforced in this regard. The remaining 46% are undecided.

“The law on parking vehicles in on-street disabled spaces is not properly enforced in my immediate area”



Further links regarding disability and transport

Please visit the following websites if you want to know more about Blue Badges for people with invisible disabilities, statistics and data about the number of disabled parking badges and the government's inclusive transport strategy.

For more information related to disability and transport such as awareness of illness, impairments and conditions, and the behaviour of other transport users, please see the published table NTAS0701.

Methodology

The National Travel Attitudes Study (NTAS) collects data on the attitudes of individuals aged 16 and over across England. These surveys are designed as small snapshots, and as such there is the possibility of multiple "waves" throughout a year.

Individuals who have completed the National Travel Survey (NTS) and have consented to taking part in the NTAS panel, are contacted with an offer of completing the wave of NTAS questions. The NTAS is a random probability sample with respondents drawn from the NTS, and responses are weighted to take account of the mode of delivery, and to reflect the population.

Users

Users of the data include central government, the devolved administrations and local government, transport consultants and academics, and international organisations.

Initial contact is via letter and email, and by SMS text message (where the information is available). If no response is received within two weeks, this is pursued via a telephone call.

Parent surveys

The National Travel Attitudes Study (NTAS) arose as a product of the National Travel Survey (NTS), and we are using it to ask the transport questions previously on the British Social Attitudes (BSA) Survey.

National Travel Survey

The National Travel Survey (NTS) is a household survey designed to monitor long-term trends in personal travel and to inform the development of policy. It is the primary source of data on personal travel patterns by residents of England within Great Britain. It began in 1965 as the first national travel survey in the world, and has been running continuously since 1988.

The survey collects information on how, why, when and where people travel as well as factors affecting travel (e.g. car availability and driving licence holding). Respondents are drawn by a probability sample based on post codes across England.

The NTAS uses NTS respondents who have consented to completing further surveys. As a result we can expect the sample size to increase as future years of the NTS provide new members to the NTAS cohort. In addition, this allows a link to be drawn between a respondent's travel behaviour and their travel attitudes, as long as the sample size is sufficient for the comparison to be drawn.

More information on the NTS can be found on the statistical series release page.

Transport and Transport Technology: Public Attitudes Tracker

The Department for Transport also runs another survey: the Transport and Transport Technology: Public Attitudes Tracker.

This survey aims to research public awareness of and attitudes to current, emerging and future transport technologies, including:

- car ownership and connectivity
- electric vehicles

- automated vehicles
- drones

Just as in the NTAS, this survey is conducted in waves. As there is a potential for overlap with the NTAS, any prospective question received by either team is reviewed to make sure it is asked in the most appropriate survey, be it NTAS or the tracker.

More information can be found on the DfT webpage for the tracker survey.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Data

- The respondents to the National Travel Attitude Study (NTAS) are drawn from those who completed the National Travel Survey (NTS). This allows us to directly compare attitudes towards travel and transport revealed by the NTAS, to the travel behaviour identified during the NTS. This also reduced the number of demographic questions that need to be asked, resulting in a shorter survey than if it were asked of a random selection of the public.

- The NTAS data relates only to respondents aged 16 and over in England.

Sample size

Wave 1 of the 2019 NTAS survey was offered to individuals who had completed the NTS between January 2018 and June 2018, and as such is considered half of what can be achieved in a full year. This amounted to 1,384 respondents. Wave 2 of NTAS was conducted during August and September 2019, and had a sample size of 2,654 individuals. Wave 3 was conducted during January and February 2020, and had a sample size of 2,695 individuals.

Method of delivery

Individuals who choose to partake in the NTAS survey are directed to an online form. If the survey is not completed online within two weeks, a follow-up call is initiated and the interview can be conducted by telephone. The NTAS offers an incentive in the form of a voucher for individuals who complete the survey.

Users and Uses of the Data

These statistics are used both inside and outside government to aid decision making, including:

- To provide general background to sector trends, and to inform the development and evaluation of policy, and to inform decision making.
- In the development or testing of transport and environmental models and forecasts.
- In market analysis by transport consultants and businesses.
- To respond to requests for information from Parliament, members of the public and international organisations.

We welcome any feedback on these statistics by email to national.travelstats@dft.gov.uk.

Background Notes

- Official Statistics are produced to the high professional standards set by the Code of Practice for Statistics. However, these statistics have not yet been assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation.
- The web tables and charts give further detail of the key results presented in this statistical release. They are available here: [Statistics on public attitudes towards transport.]
- Details of Ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here: [pre-release access list.]

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