Department for Transport

# Walking and Cycling Statistics, England: 2019

## About this release

This statistical release presents information on walking and cycling in England using two main sources: the National Travel Survey (NTS) and the Active Lives Survey (ALS).

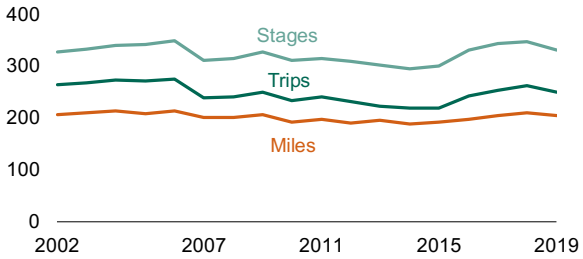
Some key uses of the data include describing patterns in walking and cycling, monitoring trends and contributing to evaluation of policies.

## In this publication



## Reported annual walking activity, in terms of trips made and miles walked, decreased in 2019 after increasing in recent years.

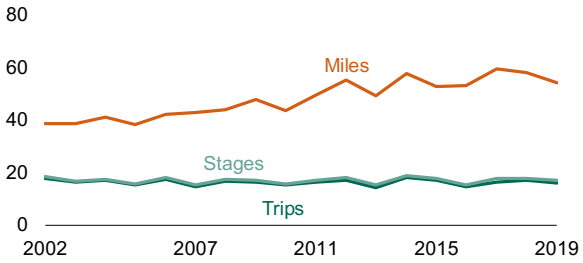
| Stages per person | Miles per person |
|---|---|
| 2019: 332 | 2019: 205 |
| 2015: 300 | 2015: 192 |




- 71% of adults in England walked at least once a week and nearly all (98%) local authorities had at least 60% of their adult population walking at least once a week. This is broadly similar to the previous year.

## The average number of miles cycled has generally increased over time, but the number of cycling stages has remained flat over the same period.

| Stages per person | Miles per person |
|---|---|
| 2019: 17 | 2019: 54 |
| 2015: 16 | 2015: 53 |




- 11% of adults cycled at least once per week but a small number (4%) of local authorities had more than 20% of adults cycling at least once per week, with Cambridge and Oxford having the highest rates.

### Comment on Coronavirus (COVID-19) impact

This release does not cover travel after movement restrictions were announced in March 2020 due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. An indication of changes in cycling activity in England during this period is published alongside other modes. These figures are derived from a different source to this publication. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-use-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic

RESPONSIBLE STATISTICIAN: Matthew Slocombe Email: subnational.stats@dft.gov.uk
FURTHER INFORMATION: Media: 020 7944 3066 Public: 020 7944 3077

Follow @DfTStats

# Interpretation of results

The results from the National Travel Survey (NTS) and the Active Lives Survey (ALS) are not directly comparable due to a number of methodological differences which are summarised below.

### National Travel Survey

- Covers the calendar year, the latest being 2019.
- Interview with household members and a one week travel diary. All trip, stage and distance statistics are based on the travel diary.
- Results from the NTS in this publication are primarily based on the one week travel diary element of the survey.
- Covers all ages.
- Continuous survey which enables analysis of patterns and trends.

### Active Lives Survey

- Covers a 12 month period from mid-November, the latest being mid-November 2018 to mid-November 2019.
- Push-to-web survey, with around 182 thousand adults taking part in 2018-19.
- Results from the ALS are based on respondents remembering how many days they have walked or cycled in the last 28 days.
- Covers those aged 16+.
- Four years worth of data (2015-16 to 2018-19).

# Feedback

We always welcome feedback to help ensure we meet the needs of users: subnational.stats@dft.gov.uk.

## What dataset should I use?

The NTS includes personal travel within Great Britain, by residents of private households in England, along the public highway, by rail or by air. It allows us to look at walking and cycling in isolation, but also compare to other modes of travel and look at long term trends.

The ALS measures the number of people taking part in sport and physical activity by those aged 16+ in England. It has a much larger sample size than the NTS so allows us to look at estimates of walking and cycling at the local authoritiy level.

## National Statistics

The NTS was assessed by the UK Statistics Authority against the Code of Practice and was confirmed as National Statistics in July 2011.

Results from the ALS are not National Statistics.

# Walking Factsheet: 2019

## Summary [NTS]



250 walking trips
332 walking stages
205 miles walked
17 minutes per trip

## Gender [NTS]

267 trips
206 miles

232 trips
203 miles

Women make more walking trips, and walk further than men.

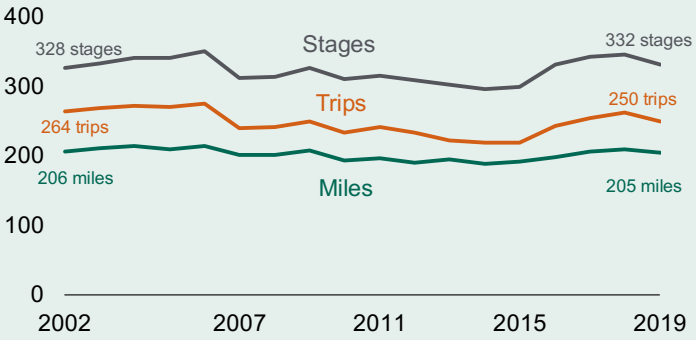
## Trends [NTS]

In 2019:

Trips 5% since 2002

Stages 1% since 2002

Distance 1% since 2002

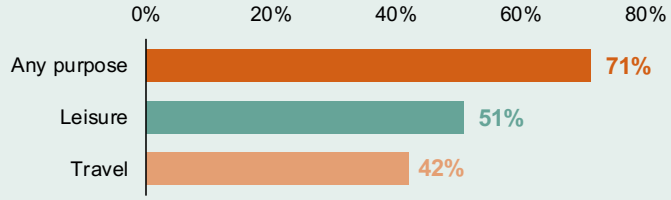



**Trip:** A one-way course of travel with a single main purpose. A "walking trip" is one where the greatest part was walked.

**Stage:** Trips consist of one or more stages. A new stage is defined when there is a change in the mode of transport.

## Purpose [ALS]

Proportion of adults walking at least once a week by purpose, mid-Nov 2018 to mid-Nov 2019



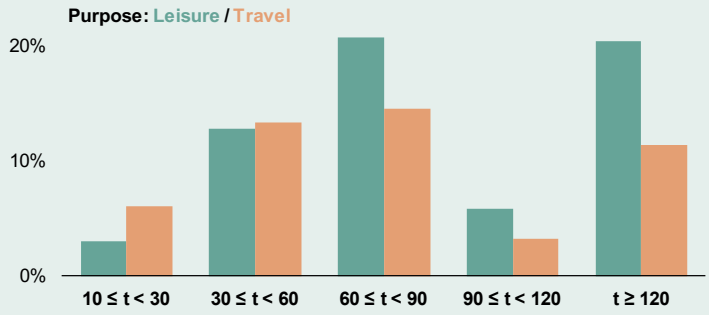

Seven out of ten adults walked at least once a week. More adults walked for leisure than for travel. This is similar to previous years.

**Leisure:** For the pleasure or value of the activity

**Travel:** Getting from A to B **Any**: Leisure or Travel

## Usual time spent per day [ALS]

Proportion of adults walking, by purpose and minutes per day, mid-Nov 2018 to mid-Nov 2019




When adults walked for over 2 hours, they were more likely to be walking for leisure rather than travel.

## Car access [NTS]

358 trips
285 miles

227 trips
187 miles

People without access to a car walk more and further than those that have access to a car.

## Mobility [NTS]

249 trips
219 miles

123 trips
81 miles

Adults with no mobility difficulties make twice as many walking trips and walk nearly three times as far as those with mobility difficulties.

## Travel purpose [NTS]

**24%** of walking trips are for **just walking**

**21%** of walking trips are for **education/ escort education**

**Escort Education**: Escorting or accompanying a child/children to school.

**Sources:** NTS: National Travel Survey 2018 (any walking on the public highway)
ALS: Active Lives Survey 2017-2018 (aged 16+ only, walk: at least 10 minutes)

Follow @DfTStats

# Cycling Factsheet: 2019

## Summary [NTS]



16 cycling trips
17 cycling stages
54 miles cycled
23 minutes per trip

## Gender [NTS]

8 trips
23 miles

24 trips
86 miles

Men cycle 2.5 times as many trips and almost four times further than women.

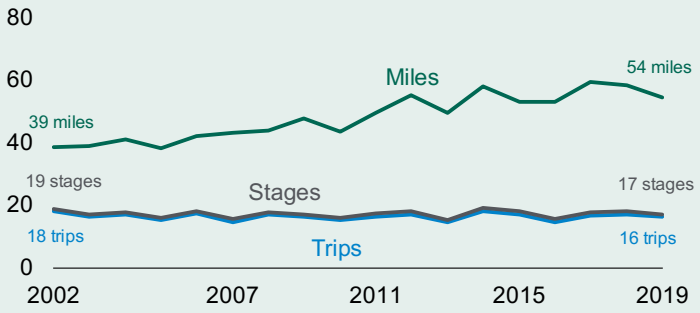
## Trends [NTS]

In 2019:

Trips  10% since 2002

Stages  8% since 2002

Distance  41% since 2002

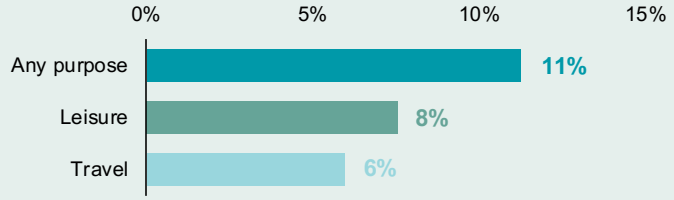



**Trip:** A one-way course of travel with a single main purpose. A "cycling trip" is one where the greatest part was cycled.

**Stage:** Trips consist of one or more stages. A new stage is defined when there is a change in the mode of transport.

## Purpose [ALS]

Proportion of adults cycling, by purpose and minutes per day, mid-Nov 2018 to mid-Nov 2019



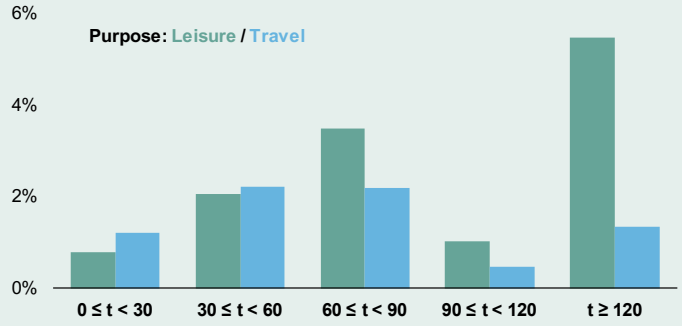

Just over one in ten adults cycled at least once a week. More adults cycled for leisure than for travel. This is similar to previous years.

**Leisure:** For the pleasure or value of the activity

**Travel:** Getting from A to B **Any**: Leisure or Travel

## Usual time spent per day [ALS]

Proportion of adults cycling, by purpose, mid-Nov 2018 to mid-Nov 2018




When adults cycled for over 2 hours, they were far more likely to be cycling for leisure rather than travel.

## Car access [NTS]

26 trips
72 miles

14 trips
50 miles

People without access to a car cycle more and further than those that have access to a car.

## Mobility [NTS]

18 trips
68 miles

3 trips
12 miles

Adults with no mobility difficulties make far more cycle trips and cycle over seven times as far as those with mobility difficulties.

## Travel purpose [NTS]

**36%** of cycling trips are for **commuting/ business**

**34%** of cycling trips are for **leisure purposes**

**Leisure purposes**: Visit friends at home and elsewhere, entertainment, sport, holiday and day trip.

**Sources:** NTS: National Travel Survey 2019 (any cycling on the public highway)
ALS: Active Lives Survey 2018-2019 (aged 16+ only, any cycling)

Follow @DfTStats

# Trends in walking

**The amount of walking, in terms of average stages and miles walked per person, has decreased after increasing in recent years.**

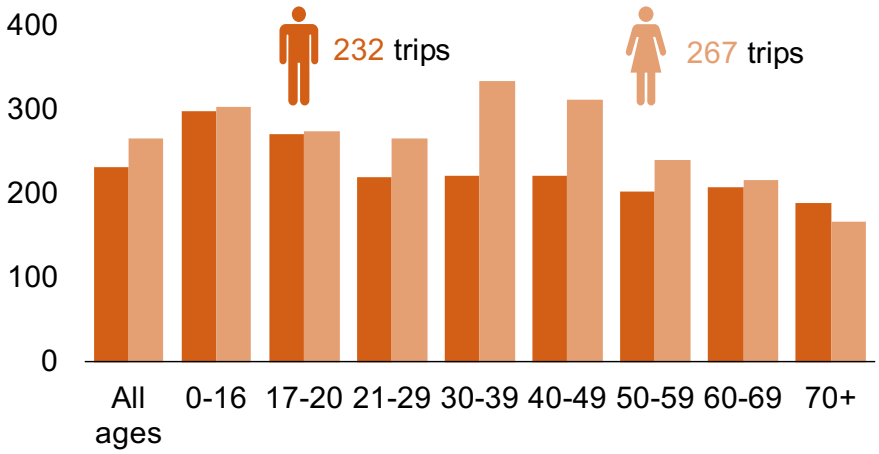
In 2019, people walked an estimated total of 18,705 million stages in England. The average person:

- made 332 walking stages;
- walked 205 miles;
- spent about 80 minutes a week travelling by foot;
- made 26% of all their trips by walking;
- covered 3% of all their distance travelled by walking.

**The number of walking trips and the reasons for walking differ between men and women, and people of different ages.**

In 2019, women on average made 15% more walking trips than men. Women in their thirties (aged 30 to 39) made the highest number of walking trips. One possible reason for this is that women in their thirties make four times as many escort education trips than men of the same age, and walking is the most common mode used to make these trips.

**Chart 1: Walking trips per person per year, by age and gender, England, 2019 [NTS0601]**




## Walks in the NTS

A **walking stage** in the NTS is one where someone walks as part of an overall trip. If the walk stage constitutes the longest stage in the trip by distance, it is also classed as **walking trip.** Walks under 50 yards and off the public highway are excluded. Walks over 50 yards but under 1 mile ("short walks") were recorded on day 1 of the travel diary.

**Distance** figures include walks made as part of any trip.

## CWIS objective

**Walking stages** are the main metric for one of the objectives in the Department's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

For more information, please see the Methodology notes.

# Factors influencing walking rates

## Adults with mobility difficulties walk far less often and much shorter distances.

In 2019, adults with no mobility difficulties walked twice as many trips as those with mobility difficulties (249 trips compared to 123 trips) and walked nearly three times as far.

## People without access to a car are far more reliant on walking as a mode of transport.

People in households without access to a car made 50% of all their trips and 10% of their distance travelled by foot. This compares to 23% of trips and 3% of distance for those in households with access to a car.

## The most common reason that people cite for not walking more is that they walk enough already.

In 2019, the NTS asked respondents to select reasons for not walking more from a list of options. The most common was “Walk enough already” with 38% of respondents. People also identified the weather as another barrier (18%). This feeling is also reflected in responses when people where asked what would encourage them to walk more with 58% of people not identifying an option from the list. The most selected encouragements were safer roads (20%), well maintained pavements (17%) and safe crossing points (10%).

## The number of pedestrians killed or seriously injured has generally been decreasing.

In Great Britain, the number of pedestrians killed or seriously injured has decreased by 21% from 8,569 in 2008 to 6,793 in 2018 (using the series adjusted for changes in severity reporting), although the trend in the last 5 years is broadly flat with a slight rise in the latest year.

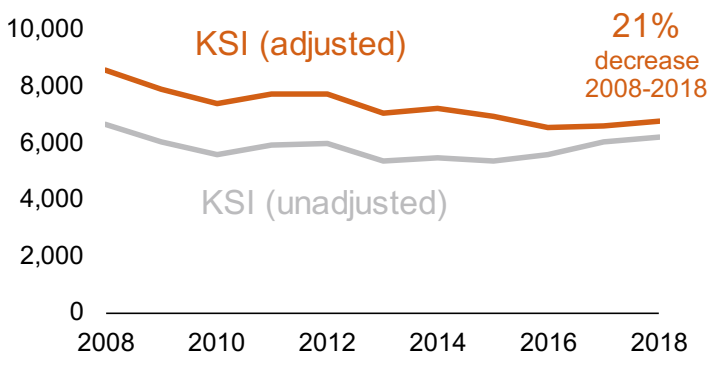



**Chart 2: Pedestrians killed or seriously injured (adjusted and unadjusted), Great Britain, 2008 to 2018 [RAS30001]**

### Mobility difficulties

In this context, an adult (aged 16+) has mobility difficulties, if they say they have difficulties travelling on foot, by bus or both.

In 2019, 9% of adults reported that they had mobility difficulties.

### Adjusted KSI figures

Serious and slight road accident figures have been adjusted to account for a change in severity reporting systems in a large number of forces who record road accidents. We recommend using the adjusted figures for understanding trends over time.

For more information see Reported road causalities Great Britain, main results: 2018.

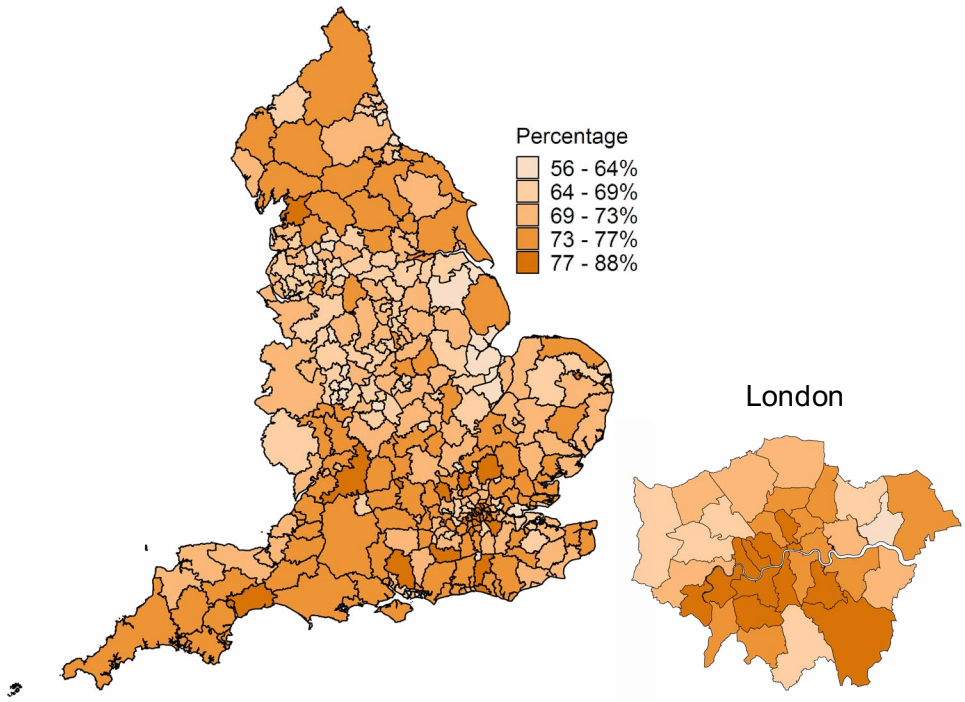
# Local area walking rates

**Nearly all (98%) local authorities had at least 60% of their adult population walking at least once a week.**

The local authority with the highest prevalence of walking at least once a week was the City of London* (88%), followed by Richmond upon Thames (86%) and Wandsworth (86%).

Six local authorities had less than 60% of their adult population walking at least once a week, with Barking and Dagenham having the lowest prevalence at 56%.

### Map 1: Proportion of adults walking at least once a week by Local Authority, England, 2018-2019 [CW0303]




### Table 1: Top and bottom five local authorities for walking at least once a week, England, 2018-2019 [CW0303]

| Local Authority | % | Local Authority | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| City of London* | 87.7 | Stoke-on-Trent | 59.4 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 86.0 | Sandwell | 59.3 |
| Wandsworth | 85.8 | South Holland | 59.2 |
| Isles of Scilly* | 85.1 | Wolverhampton | 57.8 |
| Brighton and Hove | 83.5 | Barking and Dagenham | 56.3 |

## How accurate are these local estimates?

The Active Lives Survey has a standard sample size of at least 500 persons per local authority.

The data tables accompanying this release include 95% confidence interval half widths, which demonstrate the accuracy of the estimates and the likely range of values for the true value. For more information, see the "Notes and Defintions" document.

*Note that due to their small size, the estimates for City of London and Isles of Scilly have a higher degree of error associated with them.

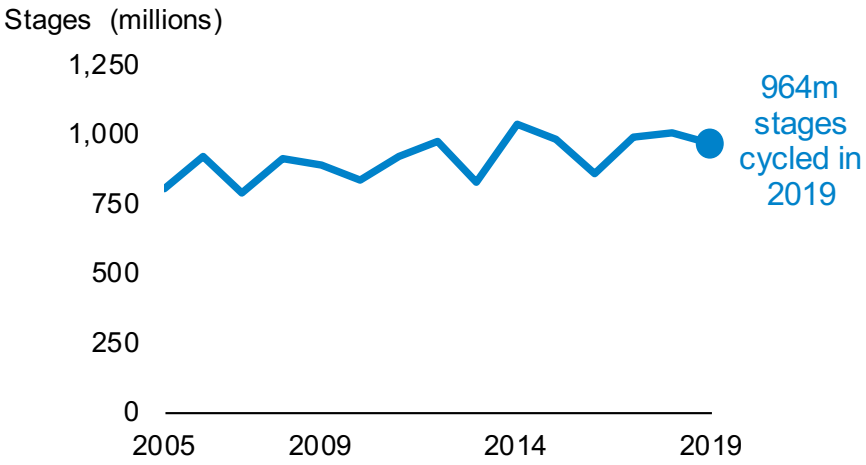
# Trends in cycling

**The average number of miles cycled per person decreased in 2019 but has generally increased since 2002. The number of cycling trips and stages has remained broadly similar over this time.**

In 2019, people cycled a total of 964 million stages. The average person:

- made 16 cycling trips (and 17 cycling stages);
- cycled 54 miles;
- spent about 7 minutes a week travelling by bike;
- made 2% of all their trips by cycling;
- covered 1% of all their distance by cycling.

**Chart 3: Total stages cycled per year in millions, England, 2005 to 2019 [CW0403]**




If we look at "cyclists", that is people who recorded the use of a bicycle in their NTS travel diary at least once, we get a different picture. In 2019, cyclists made on average 326 trips per year (about 6 trips a week) and travelled around 1,064 miles per year, 55% further than in 2002.

## What is a cycling trip in the NTS?

A cycling trip in the NTS is one where cycling is the main mode in terms of distance. Distance figures include cycling stages made as part of any trip. The number of respondents using this mode is small, so results (particularly year-on-year variability) should be interpreted with caution.

Due to these small sample numbers, sometimes we average over more than one year to increase the reliability of the data.

## CWIS objective

**Cycling stages** are the main metric for one of the objectives in the Department's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

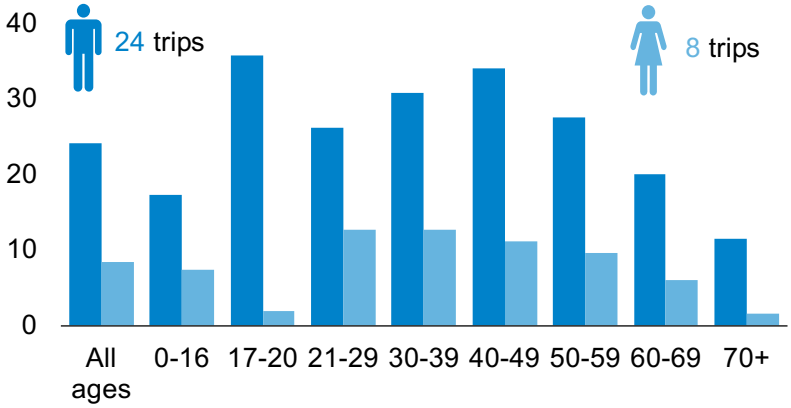
For more information, please see the Methodology notes.

# Trends in cycling

**Men cycle more often and further than women, and adults in their forties cycle the most.**

In 2019, men made 3 times more cycle trips than women (24 trips compared to 8 trips), and cycled almost four times further than women (86 miles compared to 23 miles). With men and women combined, people aged 40-49 cycled more than other age groups.

**Chart 4: Cycling trips per person per year, by age and gender, England, 2019 [NTS0601]**




# Factors influencing cycling rates

**Two fifths of people have access to a bicycle. [NTS0608]**

In England, 42% of people aged 5 and over owned or had access to a bicycle in 2017 to 2019 combined. This proportion has remained the same as previous years. Bicycle ownership is most prevalent amongst people aged under 17 years old. People aged 40-49 also indicated high bicycle ownership, 49%, in line with this being a peak age for cycling activity.

**Having no interest in cycling and road safety concerns are the most common reasons cited for people not cycling more, along with there being too much traffic.**

The NTS asks respondents (those aged 5 and over) about the barriers to people cycling more. Individuals were asked to look at a list of reasons for not cycling more and select which apply to them, regardless of whether they currently cycle or not. Respondents could select more than one barrier from the list. The most common barriers cited for people not cycling more were "No interest in cycling" (28%) and "Road safety concerns" (24%). These was followed by "Too much traffic/ traffic too fast" (16%) and the weather (15%).

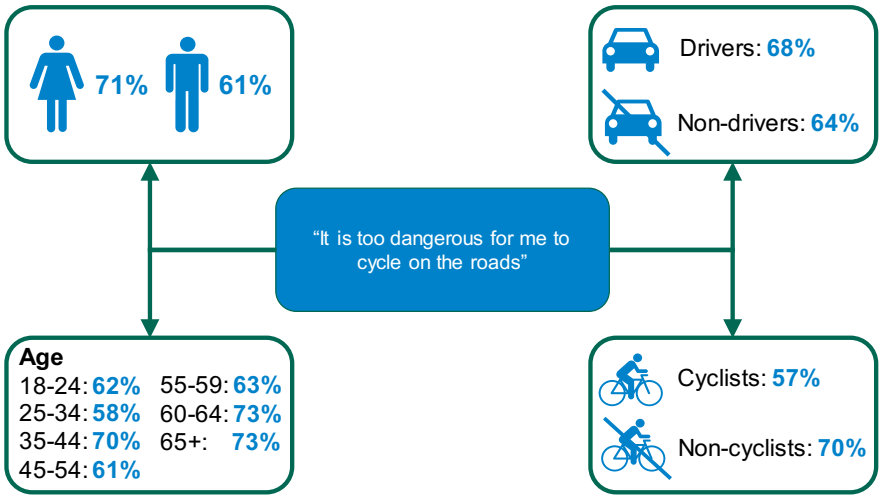
When asked, most people (51%) did not identify an option which would encourage them to cycle more. The most common encouragements identified related to safer roads (28%), safe cycle lanes (21%) and segregated cycle paths (19%) .

# Factors influencing cycling rates

## Two thirds of adults feel that it is too dangerous to cycle on the roads.

In 2020, the third wave of the National Travel Attitudes Study (NTAS) showed that 66% of adults aged 18+ in England agreed that "it is too dangerous for me to cycle on the roads". Women were more likely than men to agree (71% to 61%). Cyclists were less likely to believe that cycling was too dangerous for them than non-cyclists (57% to 70%).

**Chart 5: Proportion of adults aged 18+ who agree with the statement "It is too dangerous for me to cycle on the roads", by gender, age band, cycling and driving status, England, 2020 [CW0409]**

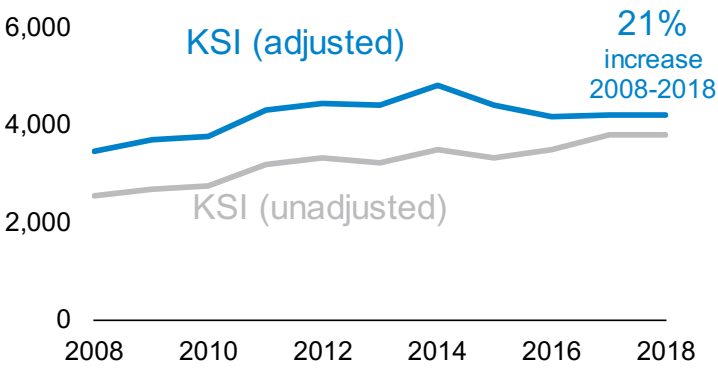



The figures above for drivers/non drivers are based on respondents who also participated in wave 1 of the NTAS, which included the relevant question on driving.

## The number of cyclists killed or seriously injured

In Great Britain, the number of pedal cyclists killed or seriously injured increased by 21% from 3,487 in 2008 to 4,205 in 2018, (using the series adjusted for changes in severity reporting). This may be in part due to increases in miles cycled per person in England over this period.

**Chart 6: Pedal cyclists killed or seriously injured, Great Britain, 2008 to 2018 [RAS30001]**




### National Travel Attitudes Study

This survey is asked of respondents to the NTS who have consented to being contacted for further studies. Multiple survey waves are conducted each year, with people added to the sample as time goes on.

For more information see https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-public-attitudes-to-transport

### Adjusted KSI figures

Serious and slight road accident figures have been adjusted to account for a change in severity reporting systems. We recommend using the adjusted figures for understanding trends over time.

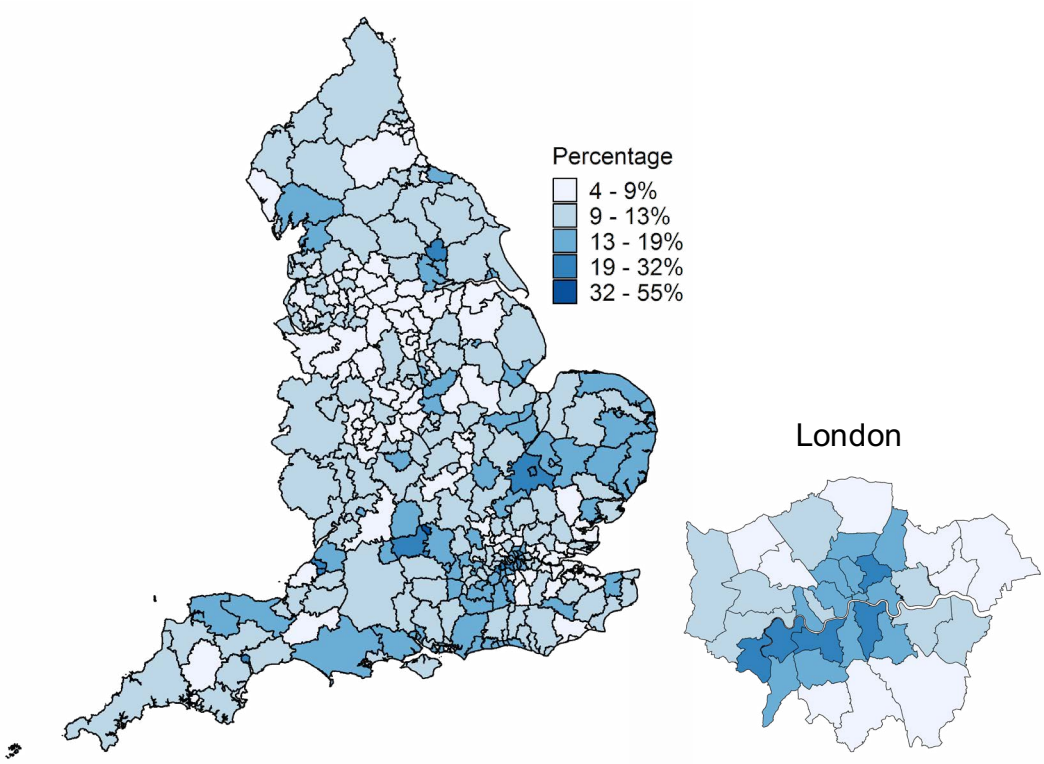
For more information see Reported road causalities Great Britain, main results: 2018.

# Local area cycling rates

**Nearly all (96%) local authorities had less than 20% of their adult population cycling at least once a week.**

The local authority with by far the highest prevalence for cycling at least once a week was Cambridge (55%), followed by Oxford (40%) and Isles of Scilly* (31%). Barking and Dagenham had the lowest prevalence of cycling at least once a week at 3%. Only 12 authorities had more than 20% of their adult population cycling at least once a week.

### Map 2: Proportion of adults cycling at least once a week by Local Authority, England, 2018-2019 [CW0302]




## How accurate are these local estimates?

The Active Lives Survey has a standard sample size of at least 500 persons per local authority.

The data tables accompanying this release include 95% confidence interval half widths, which demonstrate the accuracy of the estimates and the likely range of values for the true value. For more information, see the "Notes and Defintions" document.

*Note that due to their small size, the estimates for City of London and Isles of Scilly have a higher degree of error associated with them.

### Table 2: Top and bottom five local authorities for cycling at least once a week, England, 2018-2019 [CW0302]

| Local Authority | % | | Local Authority | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cambridge | 55.2 | | Croydon | 4.2 |
| Oxford | 39.6 | | Havering | 4.0 |
| Isles of Scilly* | 31.5 | | Oldham | 4.0 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 26.8 | | Dudley | 3.7 |
| Exeter | 25.5 | | Barking and Dagenham | 3.5 |

# Changes in local area walking and cycling rates

## The proportions of adults walking at least once a week have increased slightly at the national and regional level since 2017-18; with more variation at the local authority level.

The proportion of adults walking at least once a week increased overall in England from 70% in 2017-18 to 71% in 2018-19, a small but statistically significant increase. Proportions across all regions increased over this period, with increases in Yorkshire and The Humber, East Midlands, East of England, South East and South West being statistically significant.

Looking at local authority level, 24 local authorities saw a statistically significant increases while only 3 had significant decreases.

These Local Authority changes exclude those affected by boundary changes which mean there is not a comparator the previous year.

## Rates of cycling once a week are similar to 2017-18 at both national and regional level.

The proportion of adults cycling at least once a week in England remained at 11% in 2018-19. At the regional level cycling rates were similar to the previous year with no statistically significant changes although there continue to be differences between regions.

The picture at local authority level was more varied, with 7 local authorities seeing a significant increase on the previous year and 11 a significant decrease.

### How far back can we compare local area data?

Activity in the ALS has been captured on a consistent basis for four years, allowing us to compare local level rates across years. However, some Local Authorities have changed and these new boundaries are reflected in the most recent data.

### Statistically significant

If a change is statistically significant then we can be confident that the difference seen in those sampled are reflective of the population.

*Change for City of London should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

**Table 3: Local authorities with largest increases in proportion of adults walking and cycling at least once a week between 2017-18 and 2018-19 [CW0302 and CW0303]**

| Local Authority | % point increase (walking) | Local Authority | % point increase (cycling) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pendle** | 13.6 | North Devon** | 7.8 |
| East Lindsey** | 11.9 | Hillingdon** | 6.2 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham** | 9.9 | Woking | 6.0 |
| Chelmsford** | 9.8 | Cheltenham | 5.6 |
| Malvern Hills** | 9.5 | Redcar and Cleveland | 5.4 |

** change is statistically significant.

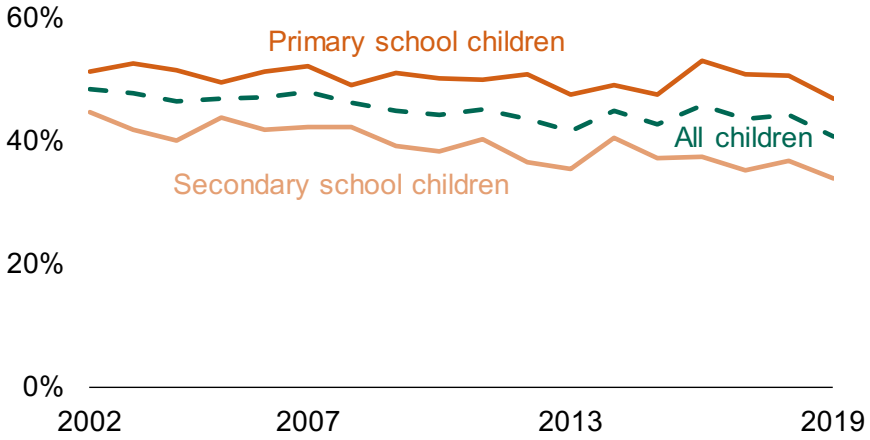
# Walking and cycling to school

## Less than half of children usually walk or cycle to school.

In 2019, 41% of all children (aged 5-16) usually walked to school. 47% of primary school children and 34% of secondary school children usually walked to school, both lower than in recent years.

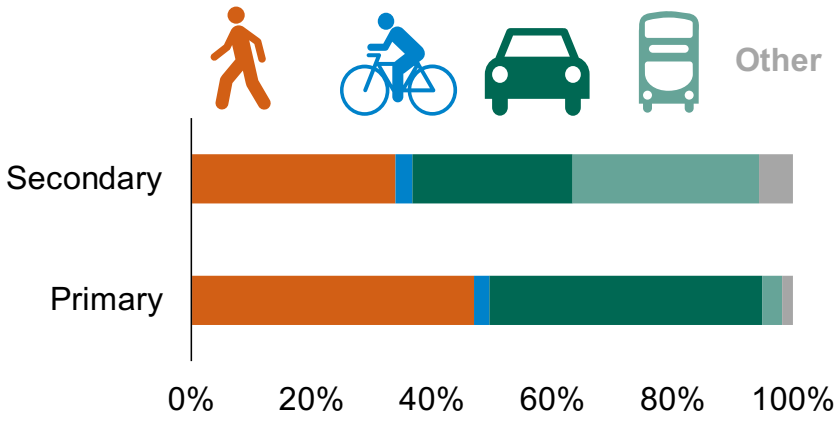
Only 3% of all children usually cycled to school, with similar proportions for both primary and secondary school age children. This proportion has remained between 2% and 4% since 2002.

**Chart 7: Proportion of children who usually walk to school, by age band, England, 2002 to 2019 [NTS0615]**




The most popular alternative to walking or cycling for primary school children was car / van at 45%, which switches to bus (private or local) for secondary school children at 31%.

**Chart 8: Usual mode of travel to school by age group, England, 2019 [NTS0615]**




### Trips to school

In this section, **primary school children** are those aged 5-10 years and **secondary school children** are those aged 11-16 years.

The usual mode used by children to get to school is not collected in the NTS trip diary but they are asked a question in the household interview.

### CWIS Objective

**Percentage of children aged 5-10 years walking to school** is the main metric for one of the objectives in the Department's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

For more information, please see the Methodology notes.

# Methodology notes

## General information

The web tables give further details of the results presented in this statistical release: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/walking-and-cycling-statistics

Guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics, including the calculations of confidence intervals, is available in the "Notes and Definitions" document: www.gov.uk/transport-statistics-notes-and-guidance-walking-and-cycling

## National Travel Survey

The National Travel Survey (NTS) is administered by the Department for Transport (DfT) and is a household survey designed to provide a rich source of data on personal travel. In 2019, the sample size was around 6,000 households and 14,000 individuals.

## Active Lives Survey

The Active Lives Survey (ALS) is a push-to-web survey administered by Sport England and is used to derive official estimates of participation in sport and physical activity. The ALS had a sample size of around 182 thousand adults in England in mid-November 2018 to mid-November 2019, thus enabling analysis at local authority level.

## Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

Under the Infrastructure Act 2015, the government is required to set a Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) for England. In April 2017, the first CWIS was published with the ambition of: *We want to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey. By 2040, our ambition is to deliver better safety, better mobility and better streets.*

The government's strategy is set out in the published document: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy.

## National Statistics

The NTS was assessed by the UK Statistics Authority against the Code of Practice for Statistics and was confirmed as National Statistics in July 2011.

Results from the ALS are not National Statistics.

# Background information

Data sources used in this publication:

- The **National Travel Survey (NTS)**: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics
- The **Active Lives Survey (ALS)**: https://www.sportengland.org/research/active-lives-survey/
- The **National Travel Attitudes Study (NTAS)** - a panel survey of individuals who have completed the NTS: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-attitudes-study-ntas-2019-wave-1
- **Road Accidents and Safety Statistics:** https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-accidents-and-safety-statistics

# Related information

- The **Travel in London Report** provides walking and cycling statistics for London: https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/travel-in-london-reports
- The **Propensity to Cycle Tool** is an interactive tool which maps the cycling rate potential at local levels: http://pct.bike/
- The **Scottish Household Survey** contains walking and cycling statistics for Scotland, and is reported on in Transport and Travel in Scotland: https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/transport-and-travel-in-scotland-2017/7-walking-and-cycling/
- The **National Survey for Wales** contains walking and cycling statistics for Wales: https://gweddill.gov.wales/statistics-and-research/national-survey/?lang=en
- The **Travel Survey for Northern Ireland** contains walking and cycling statistics for Northern Ireland: https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/type/statisticalreports/topic/5165
- **Bike Life** is an assessment of city cycling development including infrastructure, travel behaviour, satisfaction, the impact of cycling, and new initiatives: https://www.sustrans.org.uk/bike-life

To hear more about DfT statistics publications as they are released please follow us on Twitter via our @DfTstats account: https://twitter.com/dftstats. TWITTER, TWEET, RETWEET and the Twitter logo are trademarks of Twitter, Inc. or its affiliates