



Department
for Transport

National Travel Attitudes Study: Wave 4 (Provisional)

About this release

The National Travel Attitudes Study (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 National Travel Survey (NTS).

This release covers the provisional version of the fourth NTAS, Wave 4, and centres around travel attitudes in relation to the coronavirus pandemic and travel restrictions. The survey was conducted between May and July 2020 and had a sample size of 2,688 individuals. A final version of Wave 4 with a twice as large sample size will be released in January 2021.

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Increased importance of walking and cycling

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had a substantial and potentially sustainable impact on active travel. When interviewed between May and July 2020, 39% reported to walk more and 38% reported to cycle more than before the outbreak of the coronavirus.

39%



walk more than before pandemic

38%



cycle more than before pandemic

Of those that reported to walk or cycle more, 94% thought it likely that they would continue to cycle and walk more once travel restrictions were removed.

Public concerns about health when using public transport

Of all respondents in wave 4, 86% expressed concerns for their health when thinking about using public modes of transport (e.g. bus, plane, train), compared to 19% regarding private modes (e.g. walking, cycling, private car). Shared modes (e.g. taxi, shared bicycle schemes) were a concern for 68% of respondents.

Respondents that felt concerned using respective mode

86%

19%

68%

Dynamic development during data collection

Data collection for this study ran from 26.05.20 until 20.07.20. Travel restrictions were in place when data collection started and gradually lifted on 01.06.20 and 04.07.20, which means that not all study participants completed the survey under the same conditions. Therefore, care should be taken when interpreting the results.

Coronavirus statistics

Further [statistics on transport by mode during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#) are published weekly by the Department for Transport.

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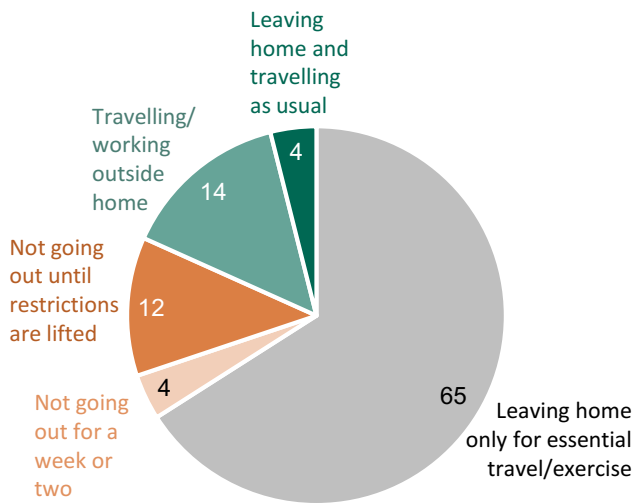
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Travel behaviour during COVID-19 pandemic

Questions in this category relate to the impact the pandemic and imposed travel restrictions have had on the travel behaviour of respondents. The section includes questions regarding the general experience of respondents during the outbreak, number of conducted journeys a week, the frequency with which certain modes of transport were used and the purpose that conducted journeys had.

Chart 1: "Which of the following best reflects your current experience of the outbreak?"



When asked about their experience of the coronavirus outbreak during the survey period (May-July 2020), around two-thirds of respondents said that they only left their home for essential travel and daily exercise. A stricter approach was practised by 16% who reported to either self-isolate and did not plan to leave the house for a week or two (4%) or planned to not go out at all until restrictions are lifted (12%). The remaining 18% practised a less strict approach with 14% saying that they were travelling and working outside their home and 4% saying that they were travelling and leaving their home as normal.

Travel restrictions during coronavirus pandemic

On the announcement of the 23rd March, all non-essential shops and businesses were closed, and residents were instructed that they "must stay at home" except for "very limited purposes" including essential food and medicine shopping, and one outdoor form of exercise per day.

Travel restrictions were limited to overnight stays on 1st June but the advice to refrain from non-essential journeys remained. A complete list of regulations in connection to travel restrictions can be viewed [here](#).

Households with more vehicles were more likely to travel and work outside of the home than households with fewer vehicles. In households with two or more vehicles, 17% of people said that they travelled and worked outside of the home (but isolated otherwise), compared to 8% of households with no vehicles. Similarly, only 9% of respondents from households with two or more vehicles planned to self-isolate until restrictions lifted, compared with 14% of respondents from households with no vehicles.

Chart 2: General lockdown experience by car ownership

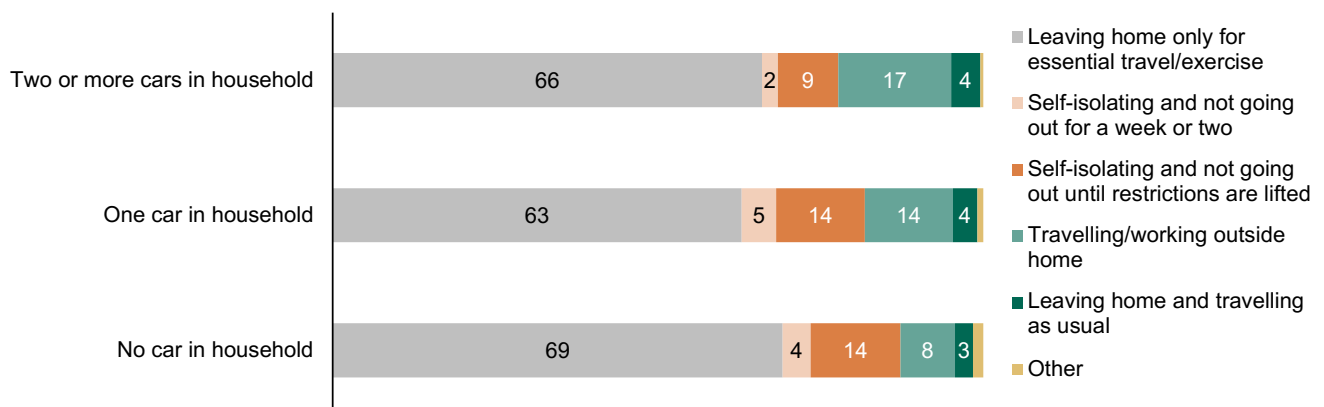


Chart 3: General lockdown experience by income group

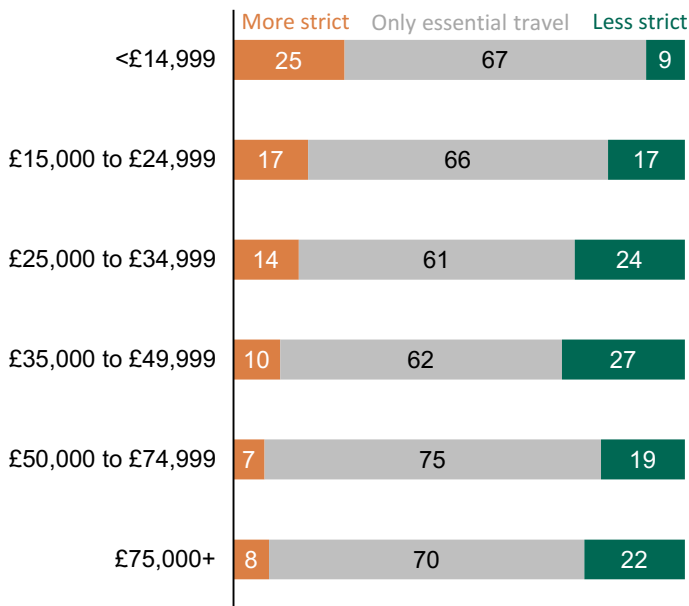
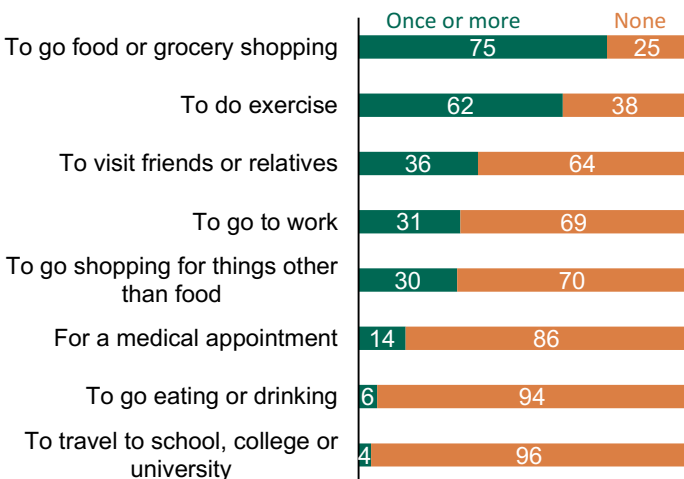


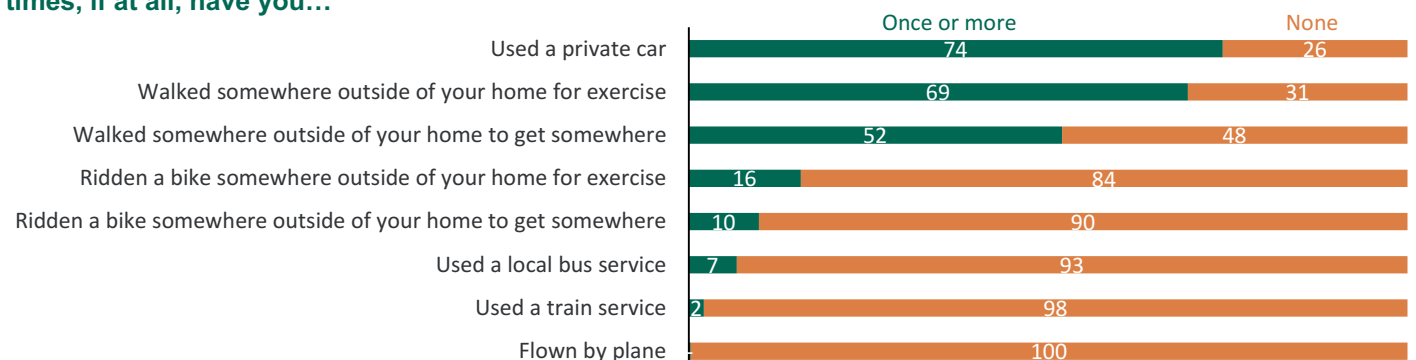
Chart 4: In the last seven days, how many times, if at all, have you travelled from your home for any of the following purposes?



Further analysis shows that respondents from lower income households experienced stricter social distancing measures, while respondents from higher income households took a slightly more relaxed approach. While around a quarter of respondents from households with an income of less than £15,000 either planned to isolate for a couple of weeks or until lockdown was over, this figure decreases to 7-8% for respondents from households with an income higher than £50,000. Likewise, 9% of respondents from households in the lowest income group reported to either travel or work outside the home or travelled as they normally would compared to 27% of respondents from households with an income between £35,000 and £49,999 and 22% of respondents from households with an income higher than £75,000. When the reasons for leaving home were analysed, only grocery shopping (75%) and exercise (62%) were named by more than half of the sample as the reason for leaving their house in the seven days prior to completing the survey. Nearly a third (31%) reported that they had left the house to go to work at least once, 30% said the same about shopping for things other than food and 36% had left to visit friends and relatives. Medical appointments (14%), going out to eat or drink (6%) and travelling to school, college or university (4%) were mentioned less often.

When respondents were asked about the modes of transport they had used in the previous seven days, private cars (74%) and walking (69% for exercise and 52% to get somewhere) were mentioned most often. All other modes, such as cycling (16% for exercise and 10% to get somewhere), local bus services (7%), train services (2%) and planes (0.3%) were mentioned far less often.

Chart 5: Thinking about all the times you have travelled from your home in the last seven days, how many times, if at all, have you...



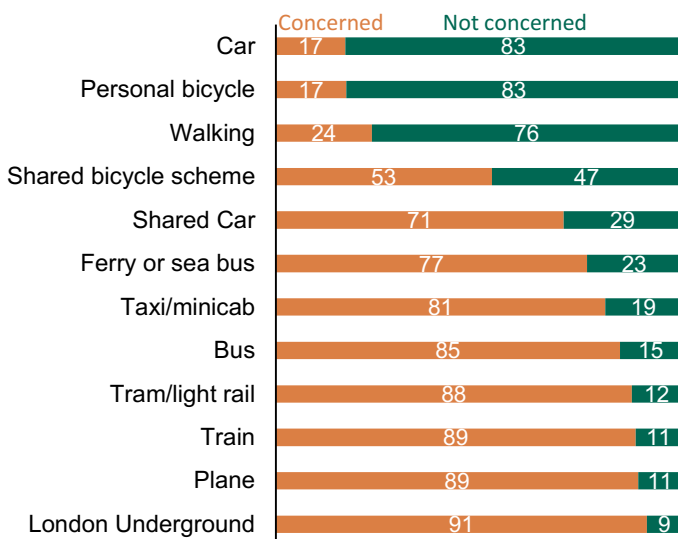


Concerns around transport

Questions in this category relate to the concerns respondents developed during the outbreak regarding the use of certain modes of transport and to what extent respondents anticipate these concerns will remain when social distancing and travel restrictions have been removed.

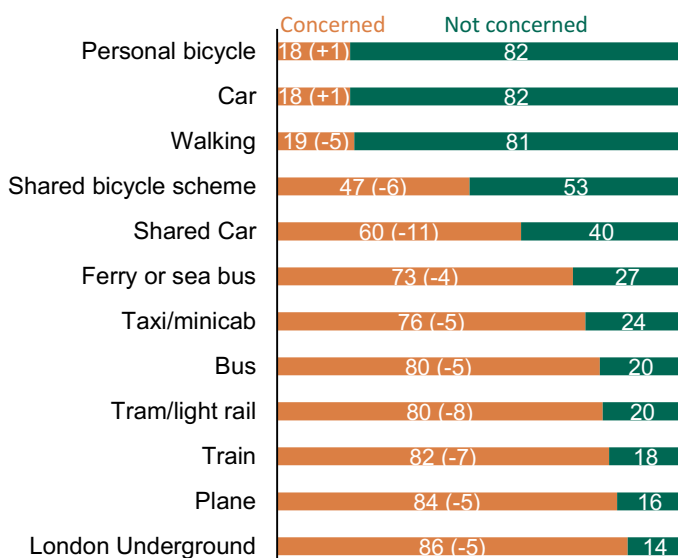
When considering the modes which respondents had used to travel, respondents were most concerned for their health when using modes that involved contact with other passengers. An average of 84% of respondents were concerned about modes which required them to sit or stand with other passengers. A direct comparison can be seen when looking at car use: Only 17% of respondents were concerned about the use of a car alone, compared to 71% of respondents who were concerned about the use of a car when it was shared with other passengers.

Chart 6: "How concerned for your health, if at all, would you be currently if you were to use the following modes of transport:"



Survey respondents felt less often concerned for their health when considering the use of personal cars, personal bicycles (both 17% concerned) and walking (24% concerned). Far more respondents felt concerned when thinking about the use of buses (85%), trams (88%), trains (89%) and planes (89%). With 91%, the highest share of respondents displayed concern about using the London Underground.

Chart 7: "When the current travel restrictions and social distancing are removed, how concerned, if at all, for your health would you be when using the following modes of transport?"



When asked to think about when travel restrictions and social distancing were removed, this slightly reduced the concerns respondents displayed towards different modes of transport. For most transport modes, the share of respondents displaying health concerns decreased by around 5-6 percentage points. The largest decline can be seen with regards to concerns around the use of shared cars which fell by 11 percentage points.



Changes in travel behaviour

Questions in this category cover how the pandemic and the resulting lockdown altered the travel behaviour of respondents and how respondents anticipated travelling once travel restrictions were removed.

Chart 8: "Comparing now to before there was a confirmed case of coronavirus in the UK, how much are you using the following modes:"

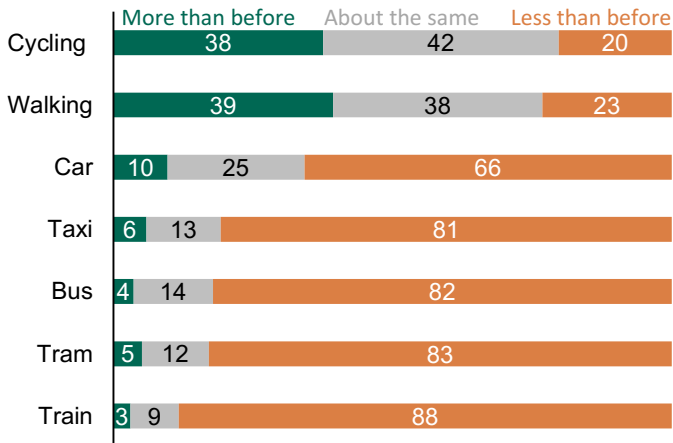


Chart 9: "How likely, if at all, will you continue walking or cycling more after travel restrictions and social distancing are removed?"

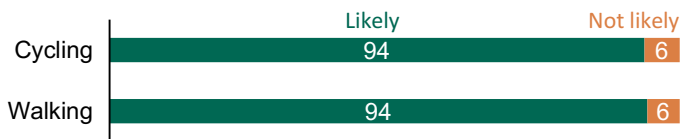
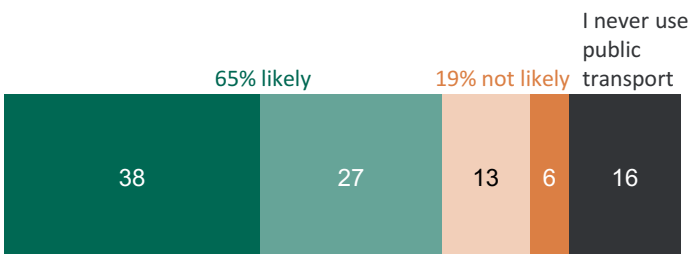


Chart 10: "After travel restrictions and social distancing are removed how likely, if at all, are you to avoid using public transport if it is crowded?"



When asked about how their use of different travel modes had changed from before the first confirmed case of the coronavirus in the UK, to their time in lockdown (which was when the questions were asked), respondents reported travelling less by modes of transport which required sitting or standing with other people. When considering these modes, namely buses, taxi/minicabs, trains and trams, and correcting for respondents who said that they never used these modes anyway, an average of 84% of respondents reported a fall in use. This contrasts strongly with walking and cycling, where an average of 22% of respondents reported walking or cycling less, compared to 38% who walked or cycled more than before lockdown. These respondents were further asked how likely it was that they would continue to walk or cycle once travel restrictions and social distancing were available, with 94% stating it was likely.

The lack of confidence in the use of public transport looks likely to remain after travel restrictions and social distancing measures have been removed. Nearly two-thirds of respondents say it is very likely (38%) or fairly likely (27%) that they will avoid using public transport if it is crowded once travel restrictions have been removed. 19% consider this not very likely (13%) or not at all likely (6%). The remaining 16% stated that they never use public transport.

Further information regarding travel behaviour during pandemic

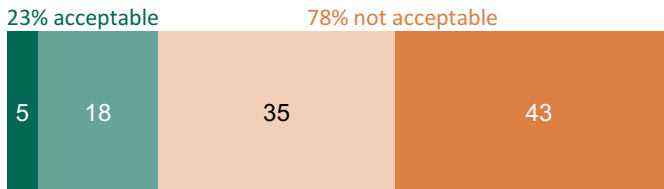
The Department for Transport has also released the publication "[All Change? Travel Tracker - Wave 1](#)" which publishes the results of a baseline survey of more than 4,000 individuals. Further waves will look at how the travel behaviour of this group of people changes over time during different stages of the pandemic.



Compliance with regulations

This section includes questions relating to the social acceptance of making non-essential journeys while travel restrictions were active, and reasons why respondents have not used public transport in the last seven days.

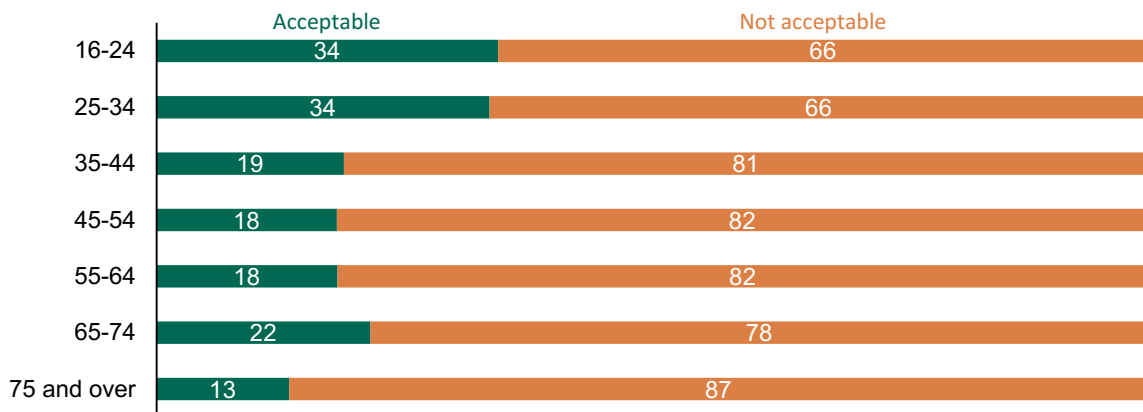
Chart 11: "How acceptable is it for people to make non-essential journeys while travel restrictions and social distancing are active?"



Around three-quarters of respondents did not consider it acceptable to make non-essential journeys while travel restrictions and social distancing were active, with 43% saying it is not at all acceptable and 35% saying it is not very acceptable. The remaining 23% thought it was either somewhat acceptable (18%) or completely acceptable (5%).

Full acceptance or partial acceptance of non-essential journeys was particularly high among younger respondents in the age groups 16-24 (34%) and 25-34 (34%). The share that found non-essential journeys acceptable was smaller among older respondents, with only 13% among those older than 74 finding non-essential journeys fully or partially acceptable.

Chart 12: Acceptance of non-essential journeys by age group





Leisure and holidays

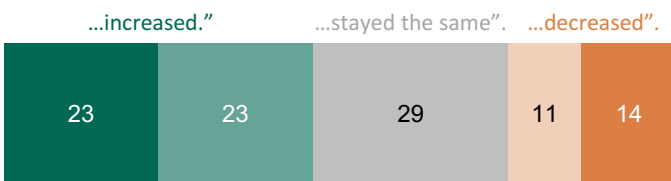
This section includes questions regarding attitudes towards leisure time in the light of the coronavirus and how the pandemic has changed the anticipated holiday-making of respondents.

Chart 13: Which of the following statements best describes your thoughts on leisure activities after travel restrictions and social distancing are removed? I will likely undertake...



When asked if they would undertake more or less leisure activities once travel restrictions were removed, respondents were divided. While 26% reported to plan undertaking more leisure activities, 22% expected to undertake less leisure activities than before. The remaining 52% expected to undertake the same amount of activities.

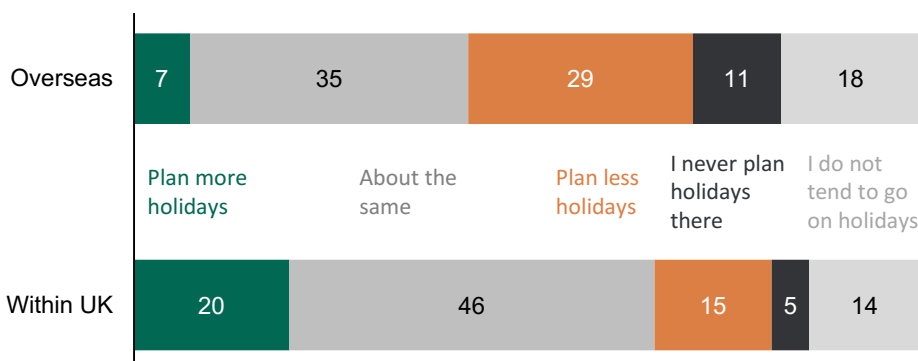
Chart 14: "Would you say the value you place on your leisure time as a result of the current travel restrictions and social distancing has...."



Nearly half of respondents stated that the value they place on their leisure time as a result of the travel restrictions and social distancing had increased, with 23% saying it had greatly increased and 23% saying it had slightly increased. For 29%, the value had stayed the same. A quarter reported that the value they placed on leisure activities had either slightly decreased (11%) or greatly decreased (14%).

A substantial share of respondents indicated that they planned to change the frequency with which they go on holiday in the UK and abroad. While 7% reported to plan more holidays overseas after travel restrictions and social distancing have been removed, 29% said they would plan fewer holidays and 35% about the same. 11% indicated that they never plan holidays overseas and 18% said that they do not tend to go on holidays in general. With regard to domestic holidays, 20% of respondents would plan more holidays in the UK, 15% fewer holidays and 46% about the same. The remaining 19% either indicated that they do not tend to go on holidays at all or that they never plan holidays in the UK.

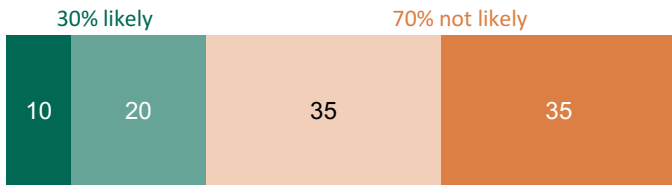
Chart 15: "Thinking about your future holidays, do you think you will plan more or fewer holidays after travel restrictions and social distancing are removed?"



Of those that would go on holiday in the UK, more than two-thirds said that it is not very likely (35%) or not at all likely (35%) that they would consider using public transport to go on holiday in the UK in the future. 20% considered this to be fairly likely and 10% very likely. When those who considered it unlikely were asked if this is a result of the coronavirus, 44% answered with yes and 56% with no.

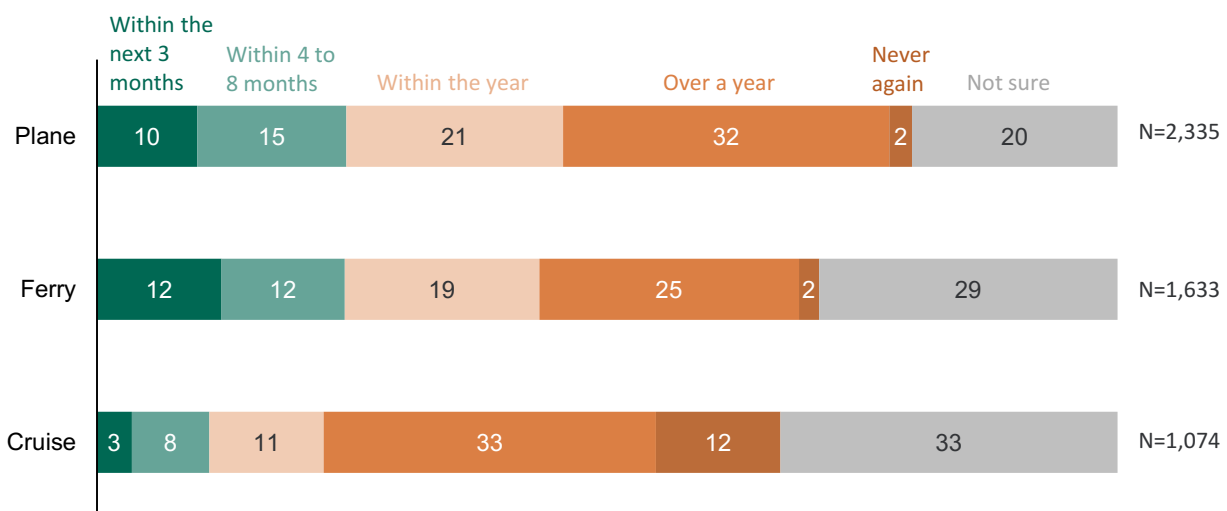
Chart 16: "How likely, if at all, are you to consider using public transport to go on holiday in the UK in the future?"

Chart 17: "Is this as a result of the coronavirus?"



Only taking those into account that generally indicated to travel by the respective mode, most respondents did not think that they and their families should use planes, ferries or cruise ships to travel to another country from the UK anytime soon. At the time of surveying, 25% considered planes a viable mode of transport within the next eight months compared to 24% for ferries and 11% for cruise ships. 34% of respondents indicated that they would consider using a plane either in over a year (32%) or never again (2%). Scepticism was most profound regarding cruises with 33% saying the right time to travel by cruise ship would be in over a year and 12% saying that the right time would come never again. For each mode, between a fifth and a third reported that they are not sure how to answer this question, which illustrates the high degree of uncertainty around long-time travel plans during the pandemic.

Chart 18: "Thinking about your future travel plans, when, if at all, do you think will be the right time (for you and your family) to travel by these modes of transport from the UK to another country?" (only considering the respondents who said that they travelled by this mode")



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.

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.
- Data collection for this study ran from 26.05.20 until 20.07.20. Travel restrictions were in place when data collection started and gradually lifted on 01.06.20 and 04.07.20.. This means that not all study participants completed the survey under the same conditions, which should be kept in mind when interpreting results.



Sample size

Wave 4 of the 2020 NTAS survey was offered to individuals who had completed the NTS in 2018 and agreed to be contacted for further studies. In total, 2,688 individuals completed the Wave 4 questionnaire.

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.travelsurvey@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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