



Department for Transport

National Travel Attitudes Study: Wave 4 (Final)

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 final version of the fourth NTAS, Wave 4, and centres around travel attitudes in relation to the coronavirus pandemic and travel restrictions. A provisional version was published on October the 8th 2020. The survey was conducted in two sampling stages, the first one running from May till July 2020 and the second one running from August till September 2020. In total, 5,299 people completed the survey.

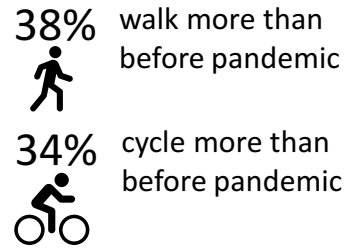
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Increased importance of walking and cycling

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had a substantial impact on active travel. When interviewed between May and September 2020, 34% of cyclists reported to cycle more and 38% of those who walk as a means of transport reported to walk more than before the outbreak of the coronavirus.

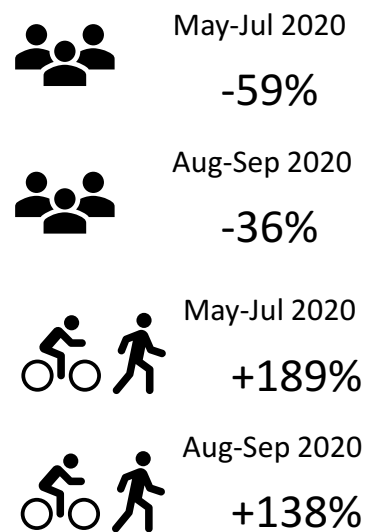
Pre-pandemic walkers and cyclists



Decline in trip rates during coronavirus pandemic

During the first sampling period (May-July 2020), the average number of trips to visit friends and relatives fell by 59% compared with data from the National Travel Survey 2019. During the second sampling period (August-September 2020), the difference was less substantial, down 36% compared with the NTS 2019.

Trip rates compared with NTS 2019



NTAS Wave 4 respondents reported to go out for exercise more than twice as often than respondents from the NTS 2019: a 189% increase in the first sample, and 138% increase in the second sample.

Two independent samples

Data collection was conducted in two sampling stages between May and September 2020. While most charts refer to the full sample, there are some charts which only cover either the first (May-July) or the second (August-September) sample. Those charts are either marked with (Sample 1) or (Sample 2). All other charts are marked with (Sample 1+2).

Coronavirus statistics

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



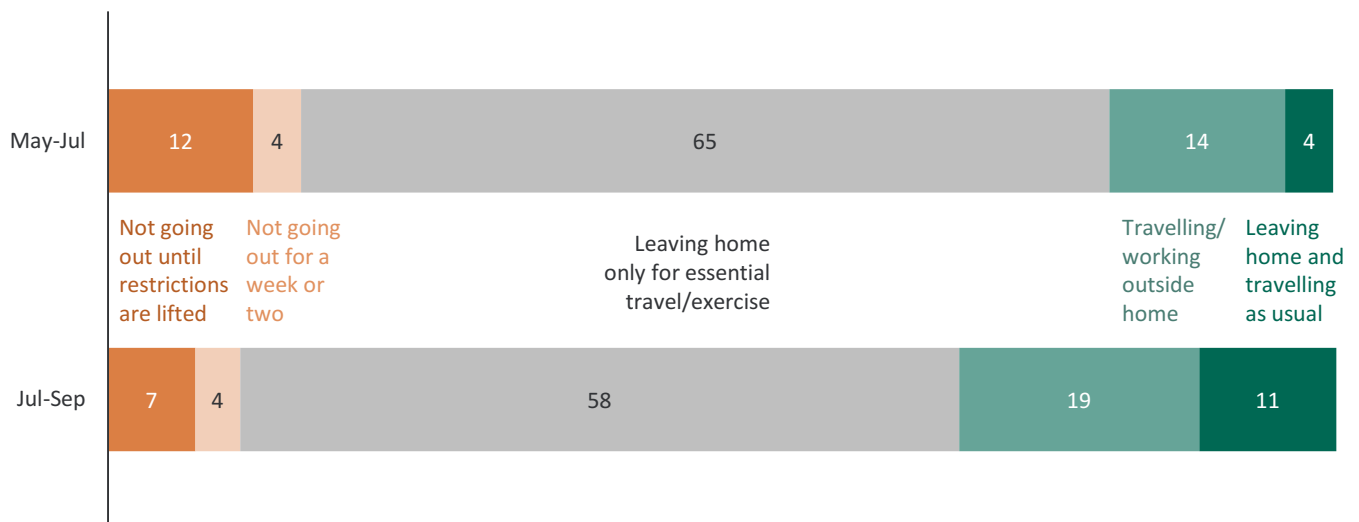


Travel behaviour during COVID-19 pandemic

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 per week, the frequency with which certain modes of transport were used and the purpose that conducted journeys had.

When asked about their experience of the coronavirus outbreak, around two-thirds of respondents from the first sample (surveyed between May and July 2020), 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 were 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. Respondents from the second sample, which were surveyed between August and September 2020, reported overall to travel more often with 30% saying that they either travelled and worked outside of their home or travelled as usual, 58% saying that they left home only for essential travel and 11% saying that they either did not go out for a week or two or planned not going out until restrictions were lifted.

Chart 1: "Which of the following best reflects your current experience of the outbreak?" (Sample 1+2)



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. On 4th July, most travel restrictions were lifted and only advice to refrain from non-essential journeys and limitations with regards to meeting other people 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, 20% of people said that they travelled and worked outside of the home (but isolated otherwise), compared to 10% of households with no vehicles. Similarly, only 6% of respondents from households with two or more vehicles planned to self-isolate until restrictions lifted, compared with 16% of respondents from households with no vehicles.

Chart 2: General lockdown travel experience by car ownership (Sample 1 + 2)

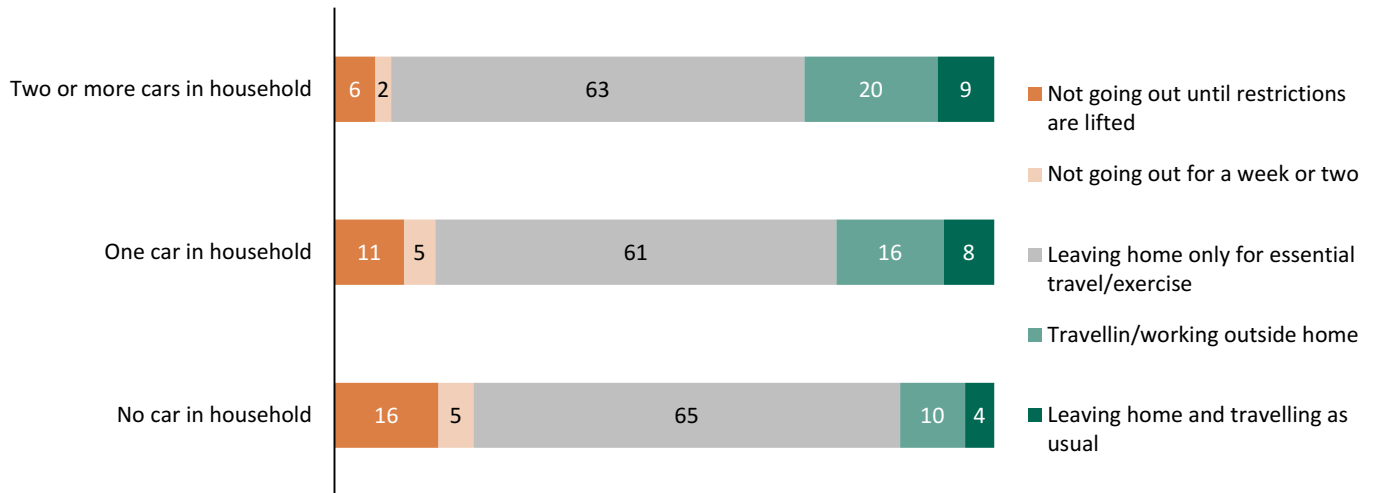
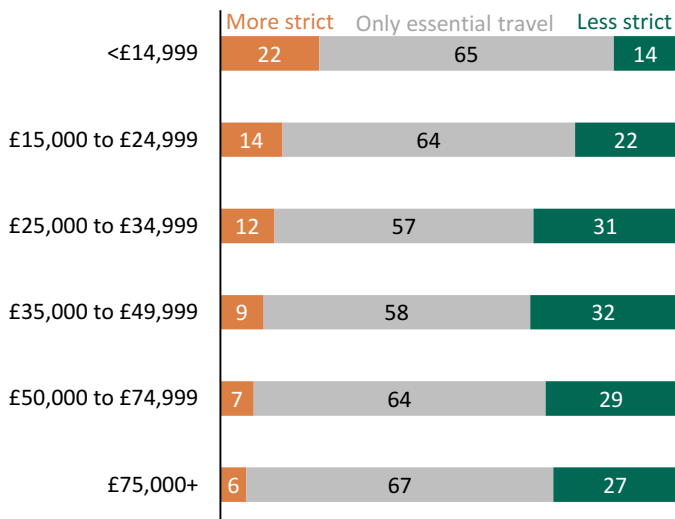


Chart 3: General lockdown travel experience by income group (Sample 1+2)



Further analysis shows that respondents from lower income households travelled less than respondents from other income groups, while respondents from higher income households reported more often to have travelled like before the pandemic. While nearly 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 6-7% for respondents from households with an income higher than £50,000. Likewise, 14% 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 32% of respondents from households with an income between £35,000 and £49,999, and 27% of respondents from households with an income higher than £75,000.

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? (Sample 1)

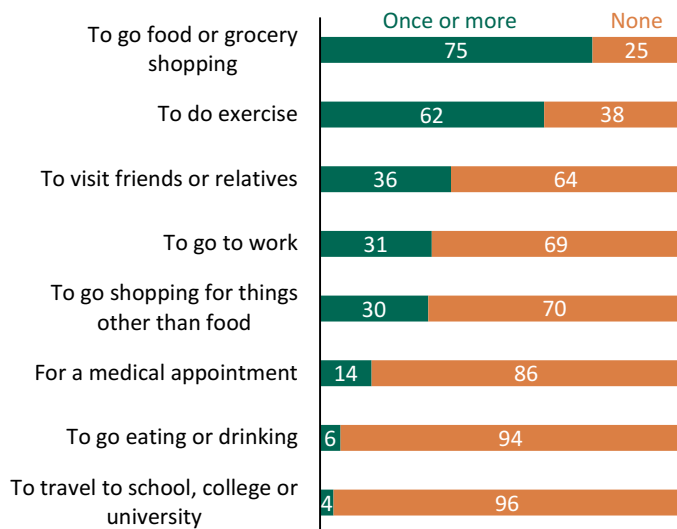


Chart 5: In the last seven days, how many times, if at all, have you travelled from your home for any of the following purposes? (Sample 2)

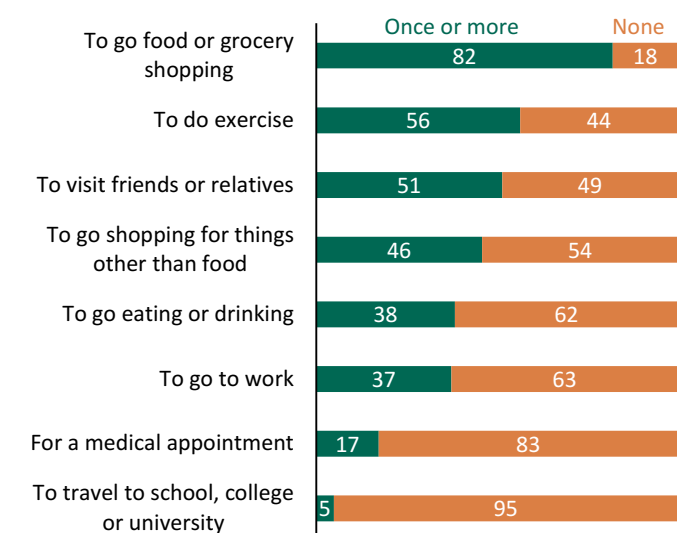


Table 1: Comparison of trips by purpose of both samples with NTS 2019 data (May-September)

Trip purpose	Trips per person per week NTS 2019	1st sample (May-Jul 2020) compared to NTS 2019	2nd sample (Aug-Sep 2020) compared to NTS 2019
To go to work	3.89	-69%	-62%
To travel to school, college or university	0.17	-35%	+/-0%
To go food or grocery shopping	1.82	-18%	-6%
To go shopping for things other than food	1.62	-73%	-56%
For a medical appointment	0.37	-53%	-41%
To visit friends or relatives	1.38	-59%	-36%
To go eating or drinking	0.60	-87%	+9%
To do exercise	0.85	+189%	+138%

When the reasons for leaving home were analysed, only grocery shopping (75%) and exercise (62%) were named by more than half of the first sample (surveyed between May and July 2020) 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.

With the exception of doing exercise, all travel purposes saw increases among respondents from the second sample (surveyed between August and September 2020) compared to the first sample. The highest increase was seen with regards to purposes that were considered non-essential during the first lockdown period, such as going out for eating or drinking which rose from 6% to 38% and shopping for things other than food which rose from 30% to 46%. With regards to eating and drinking, it should be kept in mind that the second survey period fully overlapped with the 'Eat out to help out' scheme.

Table 1 shows how the frequency of conducted trips by purpose measured during the two sampling periods in May-July 2020 and August-September 2020 compared to data from the NTS 2019. In order to improve comparability, only respondents who were 16 and older and who completed the NTS between May and September 2019 were included. The results show that trip rates fell substantially compared to 2019 for all purposes during the first sampling period except exercise. The decline was largest for 'To go eating or drinking' and for 'To go shopping for things other than food' which fell by 87% and

73% compared to the levels of the NTS 2019. During the second survey period in August and September 2020, trip rates for several purposes, such as travelling to school or university, going grocery shopping, or going out for eating and drinking, recovered to levels similar to those of 2019. Others, such as going to work and going shopping for things other than food, remained on comparatively low levels with a decrease of 62% and 56% compared to levels of the NTS 2019. Evidently, trips related to exercise were reported much more frequently by NTAS respondents in 2020 than by NTS respondents in 2019.

Chart 6: "Thinking about all the times you have travelled from your home in the last seven days, how many times, if at all, have you..." (Sample 1)

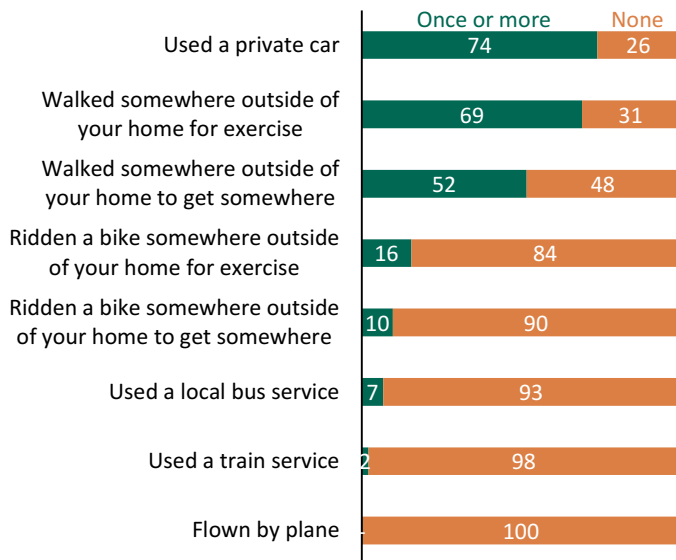
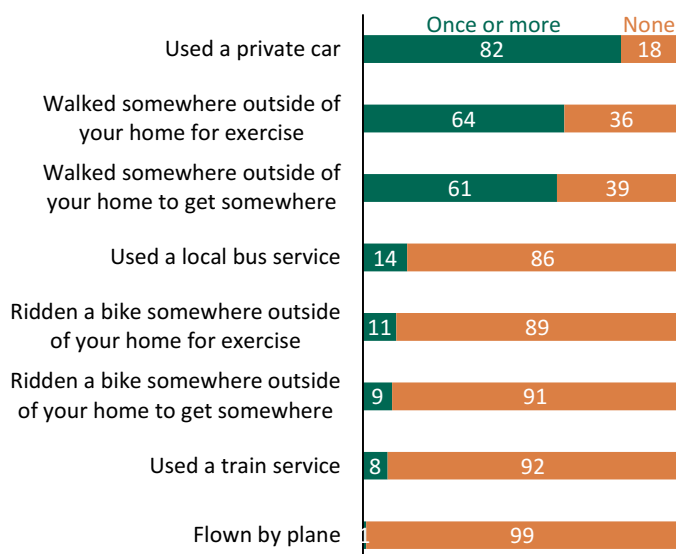


Chart 7: "Thinking about all the times you have travelled from your home in the last seven days, how many times, if at all, have you..." (Sample 2)



When respondents from the first sample (May-July 2020) 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.

Underlying data

A table that contains the underlying data for each question in this report can be found [here](#). The table lists data for each question and each sampling period individually and also includes data that is not part of this report.

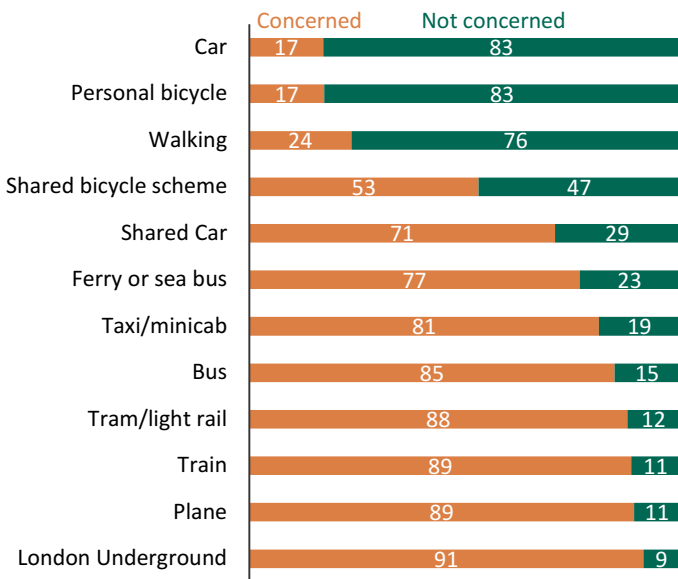
When respondents from the second sample (August-September 2020) were asked about the modes they had used in the last seven days, all public modes showed substantial increases. The proportion of respondents who had used a train service in the last seven days quadrupled from 2% during the first survey period to 8% during the second survey period. Likewise, the usage of local bus services doubled from 7% to 14% and the share of respondents who flew by plane in the last seven days increased from 0.3% to 1%. While private car usage and walking to get somewhere also increased from 74% to 82% and from 52% to 61%, riding a bicycle to get somewhere fell slightly from 10% to 9%. The only modes that decreased substantially between the first and the second survey period were walking for exercise which fell from 69% to 64% and riding a bike for exercise which fell from 16% to 11%.



Concerns around transport

Questions in this category relate to the concerns respondents developed during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic regarding the use of certain modes of transport.

Chart 8: "How concerned for your health, if at all, would you be currently if you were to use the following modes of transport:" (Sample 1)

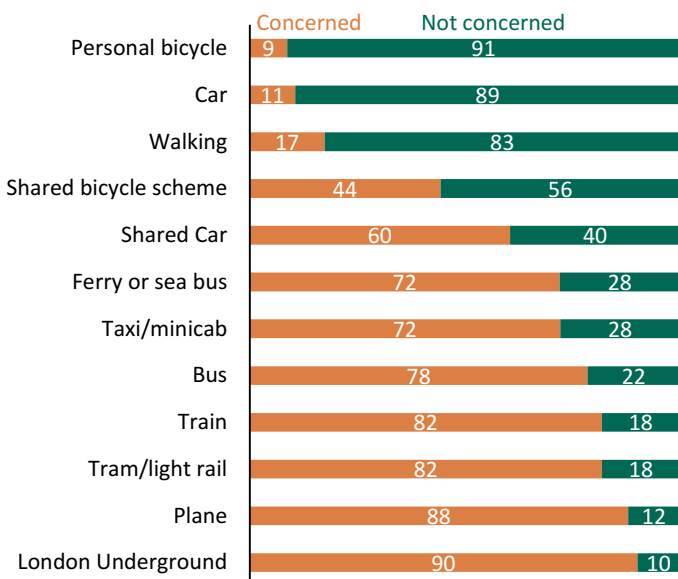


During the first survey period (May-July 2020), respondents felt concerned for their health less often when considering the use of personal cars, personal bicycles (both 17% concerned) and walking (24% concerned). Far more respondents felt concerned when thinking about the use of buses (85%), trams (88%), trains (89%) and planes (89%). With 91%, the highest share of respondents displayed concern about using the London Underground.

Caution when comparing results

Following feedback from interviewees from the first sample, respondents from the second sample were offered the answer option 'I never travel this way'. Due to this difference, the results from both waves cannot be directly compared.

Chart 9: "How concerned for your health, if at all, would you be currently if you were to use the following modes of transport:" (Sample 2)



Respondents who took part in the study during the second survey period (August-September 2020) reported being concerned less often when thinking about the use of the examined transport modes. When compared with the first sample, the decrease in concern was most profound with regards to personal travel modes (walking, cycling and driving a personal car) as well as shared modes (shared bicycles schemes and taxis). With 88% and 90%, the share of respondents who expressed concerns towards the use of planes and the London Underground remained equally large as during the first survey period.



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 10: "Comparing now to before there was a confirmed case of coronavirus in the UK, how much are you using the following modes:" (Sample 1+2; only referring to existing users of respective modes)

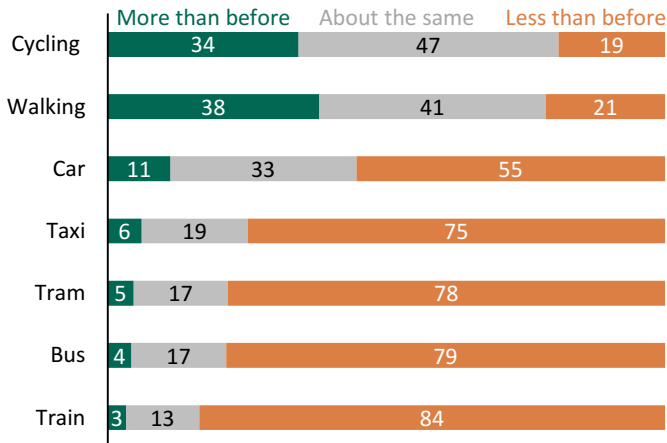


Chart 11: "How likely, if at all, will you continue walking or cycling more after travel restrictions and social distancing are removed?" (Sample 1+2)

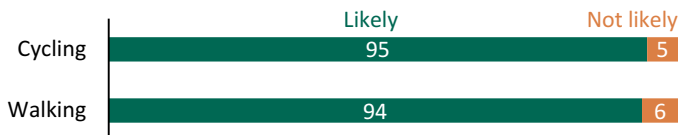
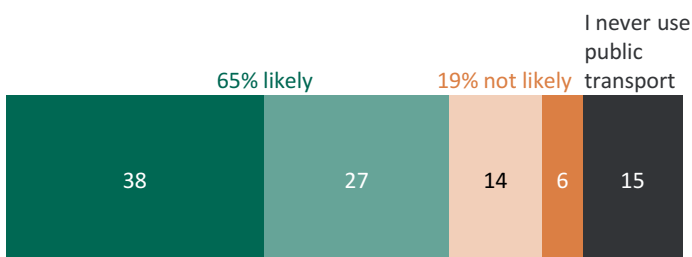


Chart 12: "After travel restrictions and social distancing are removed how likely, if at all, are you to avoid using public transport if it is crowded?" (Sample 1+2)



When existing users of different transport modes were asked about how their use of these modes had changed from before the first confirmed case of the coronavirus in the UK, 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, an average of around 80% of existing users reported a fall in use. This contrasts strongly with walking and cycling, where an average of 20% of pre-pandemic walkers and cyclists reported walking or cycling less, compared to 36% who walked or cycled more than before. These respondents were further asked how likely it was that they would continue to walk or cycle more once travel restrictions and social distancing were available, with 94-95% stating it was likely.

The lack of confidence in the use of public transport may possibly remain after travel restrictions and social distancing measures have been removed. Nearly two-thirds of respondents said it was very likely (38%) or fairly likely (27%) that they will avoid using public transport if it is crowded once travel restrictions have been removed. 20% consider this not very likely (14%) or not at all likely (6%). The remaining 15% stated that they never use public transport.

Further information regarding travel behaviour during coronavirus pandemic

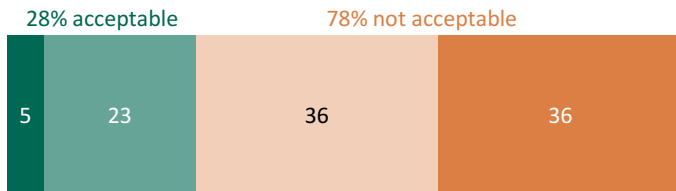
The Department for Transport has also released the publication "[All Change? Travel Tracker - Wave 1](#)" which publishes the results of a baseline survey of more than 4,000 individuals. Further waves will look at how the travel behaviour of this group of people changes over time during different stages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

Chart 13: "How acceptable is it for people to make non-essential journeys while travel restrictions and social distancing are active?" (Sample 1+2)



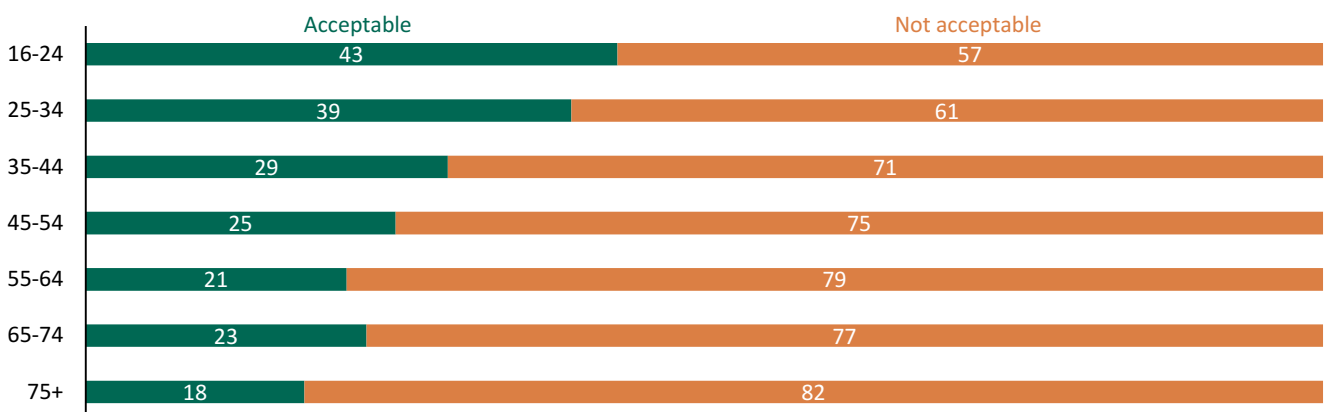
Around three-quarters of respondents did not consider it acceptable to make non-essential journeys while travel restrictions and social distancing were active, with 36% saying it was not at all acceptable and 36% saying it was not very acceptable. The remaining 28% thought it was either somewhat acceptable (23%) or completely acceptable (5%).

Dynamic development during data collection

Data collection was conducted in two sampling stages, the first running from May to July 2020 and the second running from August to September 2020. Not all respondents were therefore subject to the same travel restrictions and social distancing rules when answering these questions.

Full acceptance or partial acceptance of non-essential journeys was particularly high among younger respondents in the age groups 16-24 (43%) and 25-34 (39%). The share that found non-essential journeys acceptable was smaller among older respondents, with only 18% among those older than 74 finding non-essential journeys fully or partially acceptable.

Chart 14: Acceptance of non-essential journeys by age group (Sample 1+2)





Leisure and holidays

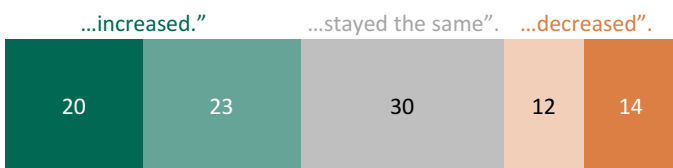
This section includes questions regarding attitudes towards leisure time in the light of the coronavirus and how the pandemic has changed the anticipated holiday-making of respondents.

Chart 15: "Which of the following statements best describes your thoughts on leisure activities after travel restrictions and social distancing are removed? I will likely undertake..." (Sample 1+2)



When asked if they would undertake more or less leisure activities once travel restrictions were removed, respondents were divided. While 25% 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.

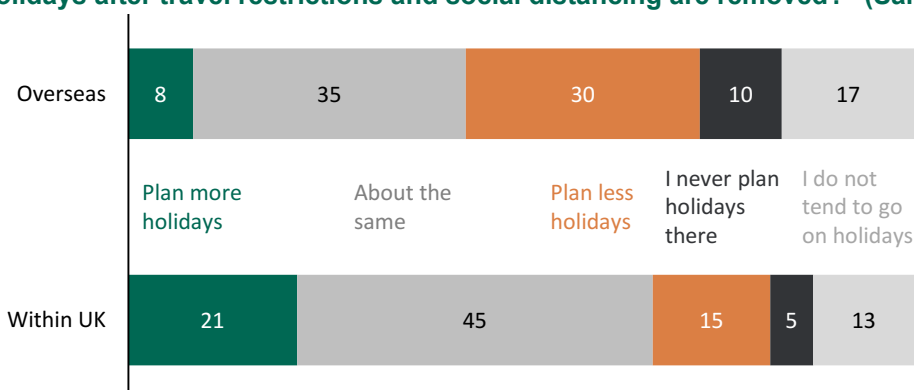
Chart 16: "Would you say the value you place on your leisure time as a result of the current travel restrictions and social distancing has..." (Sample 1+2)



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 20% saying it had greatly increased and 23% saying it had slightly increased. For 30%, the value had stayed the same. About a quarter reported that the value they placed on leisure activities had either slightly decreased (12%) 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 8% reported to plan more holidays overseas after travel restrictions and social distancing have been removed, 30% said they would plan fewer holidays and 35% about the same. 10% indicated that they never plan holidays overseas and 17% said that they do not tend to go on holidays in general. With regard to domestic holidays, 21% of respondents would plan more holidays in the UK, 15% fewer holidays and 45% about the same. The remaining 18% either indicated that they do not tend to go on holidays at all or that they never plan holidays in the UK.

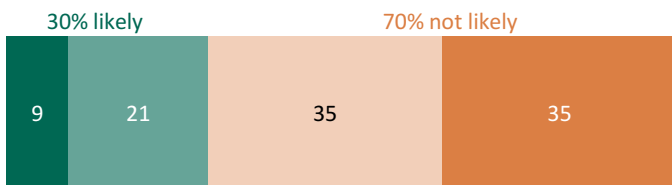
Chart 17: "Thinking about your future holidays, do you think you will plan more or fewer holidays after travel restrictions and social distancing are removed?" (Sample1+2)



Of those that would go on holiday in the UK, more than two-thirds said that it was 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. However, 21% considered it fairly likely and 9% very likely to use public transport to go on holiday in the UK. When those who considered it unlikely were asked if this is a result of the coronavirus, 44% answered with yes and 56% with no.

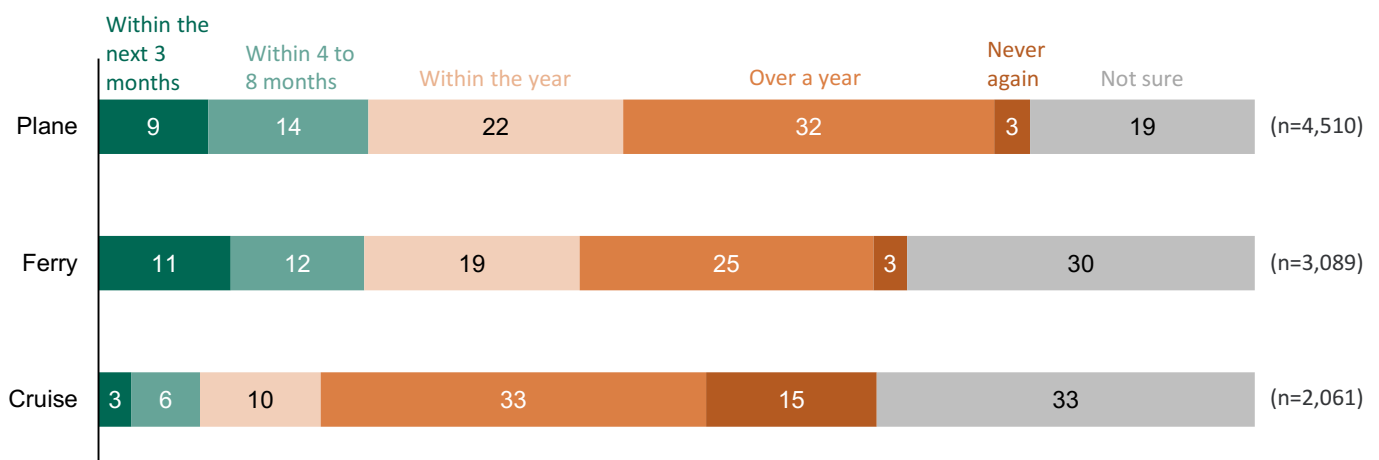
Chart 18: "How likely, if at all, are you to consider using public transport to go on holiday in the UK in the future?" (Sample 1+2)

Chart 19: "Is this as a result of the coronavirus?" (Sample 1+2)



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, both planes and ferries were considered a viable mode of transport within the next eight months by 23% of respondents compared to 9% for cruise ships. 32% of respondents indicated that they would consider using a plane in over a year and 3% reported that they would use one never again. Scepticism was largest regarding cruises with 33% saying the right time to travel by cruise ship would be in over a year and 15% saying that the right time would come never again. For each mode, between a fifth and a third reported that they were not sure, which illustrates the high degree of uncertainty around long-time travel plans during the pandemic.

Chart 20: "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; Sample 1+2)



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.
- This study is comprised of data from two samples. Data collection from the first sample ran from 26.05.20 until 20.07.20. Respondents from the second sample were surveyed from 01.08.20 till 17.09.20. 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 or 2019 and agreed to be contacted for further studies. In total, 5,299 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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