

National Travel Survey: 2010

This Statistical Release presents information on personal travel in Great Britain during 2010.



Key Findings	1
Trends in personal travel	2
How, why and when people travel	3
Travel by age, gender and other factors / Accessibility	5
Vehicles	7
Background notes	8

The 2010 National Travel Survey (NTS) is the latest in an established series of household surveys of personal travel in Great Britain. The NTS has been running continuously since 1988, following previous ad hoc surveys. The survey is primarily designed to track long term development of trends in travel, although short term changes can also be detected.

NTS data is collected via two main sources - interviews with people in their homes, and a diary that they keep for a week to record their travel. The NTS covers travel by all age groups, including children. In 2010, diary data was collected from 8,100 households, covering over 19,000 individuals.

The key findings from the 2010 NTS include:

- There has been a steady falling trend in trip rates since 1995/97. Average distance travelled per person per year remained relatively stable until 2007, but has declined slightly over the last three years.
- In 2010, there was an average of 960 trips per person per year – the lowest level since the mid-1970s. There were 1,061 stages, 6,726 miles travelled, and an average trip length of 7.0 miles.
- Between 1995/97 and 2010, overall trips rates fell by 12%. Trips by private modes of transport fell by 14% while public transport modes increased by 8%. Walking trips saw the largest decrease.
- Most of the decline in overall trips rates between 1995/97 and 2010 can be accounted for by a fall in shopping and visiting friends.
- In 2010, 80% of males and 66% of females held a full car driving licence. While the proportion of males holding a licence remained fairly stable since the early 1990's, the proportion of females with a licence continued to increase.
- Trips by car (as a driver or passenger) accounted for 64% of all trips made and 78% of distance travelled in 2010.
- On average, females make more trips than males, but males travel much further each year.
- Concessionary travel pass take-up in 2010 was 78% of those eligible.
- Average annual car mileage was estimated to be 8,430 miles in 2010.

RESPONSIBLE STATISTICIAN:

Lyndsey Avery
020 7944 6594

FURTHER INFORMATION

Media Enquiries:

020 7944 3066

Public Enquiries:

020 7944 3097

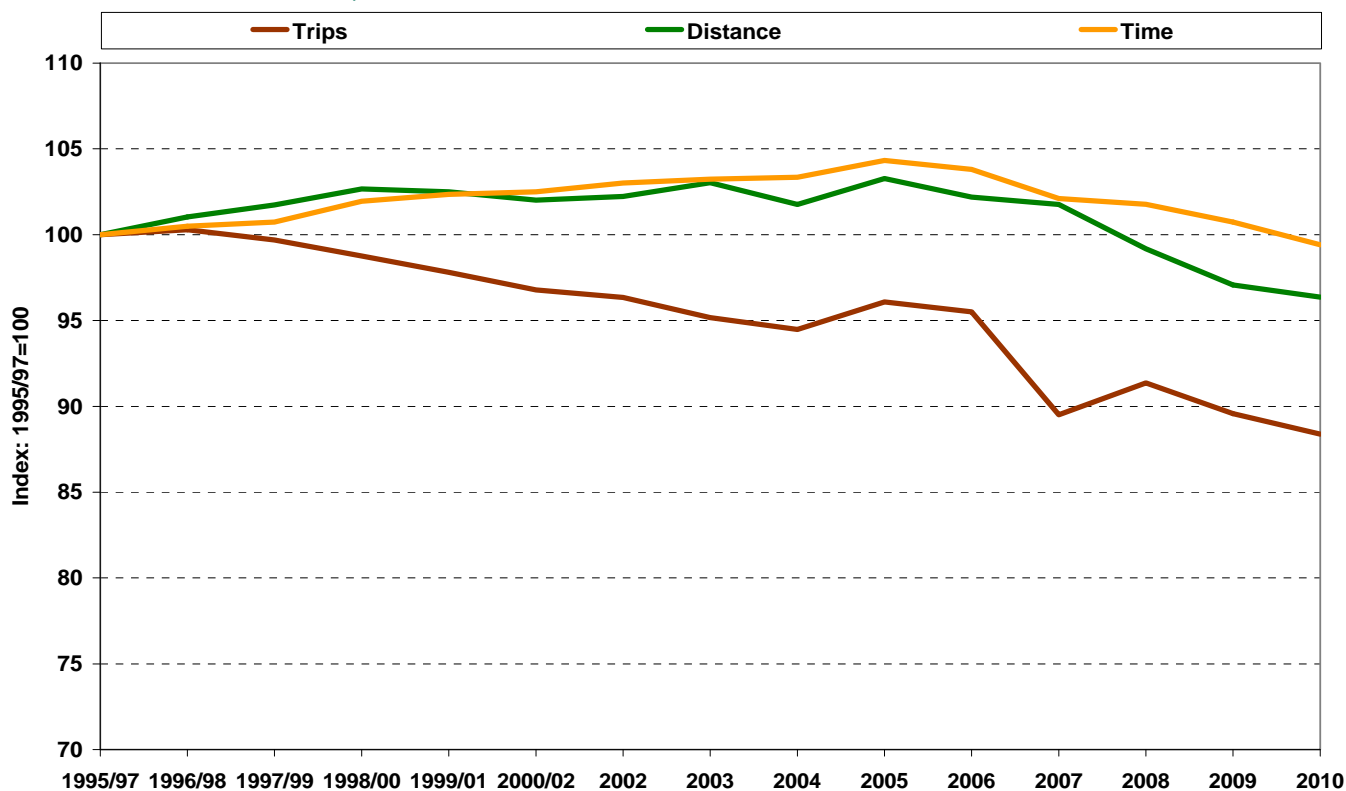
national.travelsurvey@dft.gsi.gov.uk

1. Trends in personal travel

- Over the long term, since the early 1970s, the average **distance** people travel per year has increased by 50%. Most of this growth occurred during the 1970s and 1980s and was largely due to an increase in average **trip lengths**, which have risen by 50% since the early 1970s. **Trip rates** increased until the mid-1990s, but have since fallen back to close to the 1970s level. Since the late 1990s, the average distance travelled and average trip lengths have generally levelled off.
- Between 1995/97 and 2010 there was a steady falling trend in **trip rates**. In 2010 the average person made 960 trips per year compared to 1,086 in 1995/97 – a fall of 12%.
- The average **distance travelled** per person per year fell by 7% since its peak of 7,208 miles in 2005, to 6,726 miles in 2010.
- The average **trip length** in Great Britain increased by 9% from 6.4 miles in 1995/97 to 7.0 miles in 2010.
- **Time spent travelling** remained fairly static over the last 15 years at just over an hour a day. In 2010, residents of Great Britain spent an average of 367 hours per year travelling compared to 369 hours in 1995/97. Average trip time has increased by 12% over the period, from 20.4 minutes to 22.9 minutes.

Trips, distance travelled and time taken - index: Great Britain, 1995/97 to 2010

(NTS web table NTS0102)



- The NTS estimates that 35 million residents in Great Britain held a full car driving licence in 2010. Since 1995/97 the proportion of men with a full **driving licence** has remained relatively stable at around 80%, but it has continued to increase among women, from 57% to 66% in 2010. Licence holding has also continued to increase among older people.
- The proportion of households in Great Britain **without access to a car** fell from 38% in 1985/86, to 30% in 1995/97, and to 25% in 2005. It has remained at this level up to 2010. The proportion of households with two or more cars has increased from 17% in 1985/1986 to 25% in 1995/97 and to 33% in 2010. Since 2000, there have been more households with two or more cars than households with no car.

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on “trends in travel patterns” and “driving licence holding and vehicle availability” can be found on the National Travel Survey 2010 web page at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/national-travel-survey-2010>, table numbers [NTS0101 to NTS0107](#) and [NTS0201 to NTS0207](#).

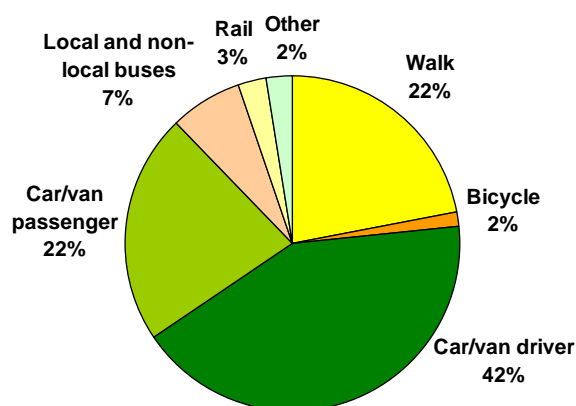
2. How, why and when people travel

- **Trips by car** (as a driver or passenger) accounted for 64% of all trips made and 78% of distance travelled.

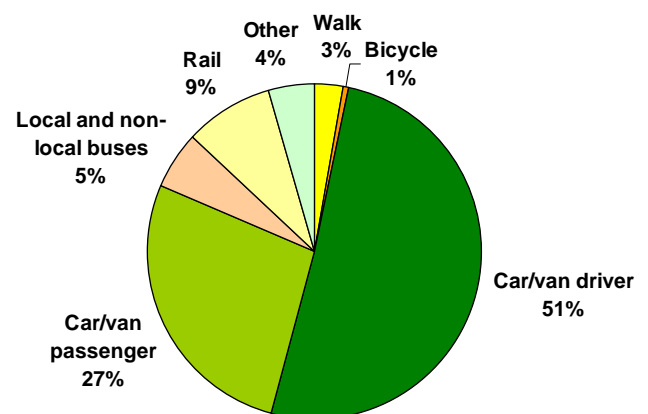
Mode share: Great Britain, 2010

(NTS web tables NTS0301 and NTS0302)

Average number of trips



Average distance travelled



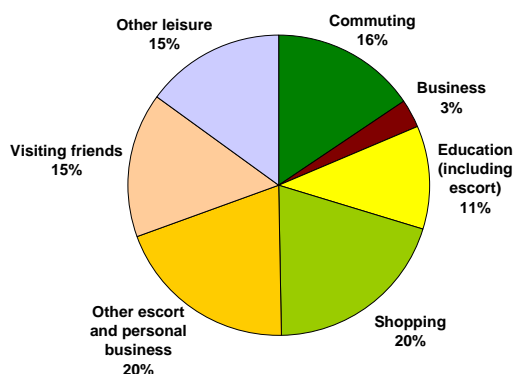
- Between 1995/97 and 2010 trips by **private modes** of transport fell by 14% while **public transport modes** increased by 8%.
- **Walking trips** fell 8% compared to last year, making 2010 the lowest level recorded to date at 210 trips per person per year. In 2010, 77% of all trips less than one mile in length were made on foot, with 20% made by car.

- Between 1995/97 and 2010, the average distance travelled by **bus in London** has nearly doubled (+90%) to 81 miles per person per year, while the average distance travelled by **other local buses** is now similar to its 1995/97 level at 226 miles per person per year.
- Rail travel** (surface rail and London underground) accounted for 9% of all distance travelled in 2010. The average number of trips and distance travelled by **surface rail** has increased overall between 1995/97 and 2010, by 61% and 58% respectively. The latest year shows a rise in surface rail travel, reversing the downward trend of recent years. Trips by **London underground** increased by 12% between 1995/97 and 2010, while the average distance travelled has increased by 23%.
- The average **cyclist** made 6 trips per week by bicycle in 2010, spending just under two hours on their bicycle and covering 16 miles. While the average **motorcyclist** made 8 trips per week by motorcycle, travelled around 88 miles and spent three hours and 20 minutes travelling on their motorcycle. On average cyclists made a quarter of all their trips by bicycle while motorcyclists used their motorcycle as the main mode for nearly two-fifths of all trips

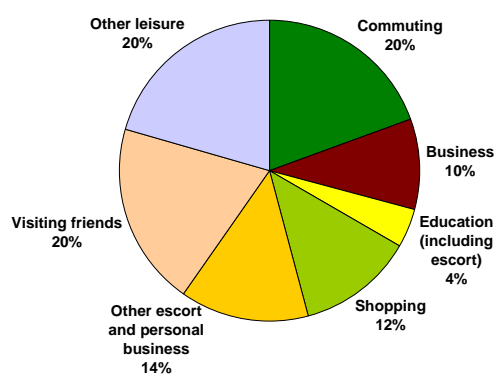
Purpose share: Great Britain, 2010

(NTS web tables NTS0401 and NTS0402)

Average number of trips



Average distance travelled



- In 2010, **commuting and business** trips accounted for 19% of all trips made, and represented 29% of all distance travelled. **Shopping** accounted for 20% of all trips but only 12% of distance travelled.
- Most of the decline in overall **trips rates** between 1995/97 and 2010 can be accounted for by a fall in **shopping** and **visiting friends**. On average people made 18% fewer shopping trips per year in 2010 than they did in 1995/97. Trips to visit friends declined by 22% during this period, with the fall entirely due to visiting at private homes rather than elsewhere.
- People make more trips on weekdays than weekends – an average of 149 trips per year on each **weekday**, compared to 137 trips on a **Saturday** and 108 on a **Sunday**.

- On a weekday, **commuting** trips have a 2-hour start time peak between 07:00 and 8:59, with 31% of these trips starting during this time. 41% of **education** trips starting between 08:00 and 08:59 with a further 32% of education trips between 15:00 and 15:59.

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on “how people travel”, “why people travel” and “when people travel” can be found on the National Travel Survey 2010 web page at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/national-travel-survey-2010>,

table numbers [NTS0301 to NTS0317](#), [NTS0401 to NTS0410](#) and [NTS0501 to NTS0506](#).

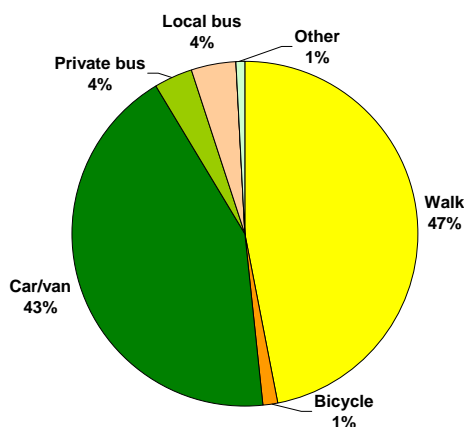
3. Travel by age, gender and other factors / Accessibility

- On average, **females** make more trips than **males**, but males travel much further each year. In 2010, females made 5% more trips than males (984 per year compared to 935). However, males travelled 23% further than females, averaging 7,426 miles a year compared with 6,051 miles respectively.
- The gap in distance travelled is narrowing as **travel patterns for males and females** change. Since 1995/97 the average numbers of car driver trips and average distance travelled by males have fallen by 18% and 17% respectively. This compares to a 12% increase in car driver trips and a 21% increase in distance travelled by females.

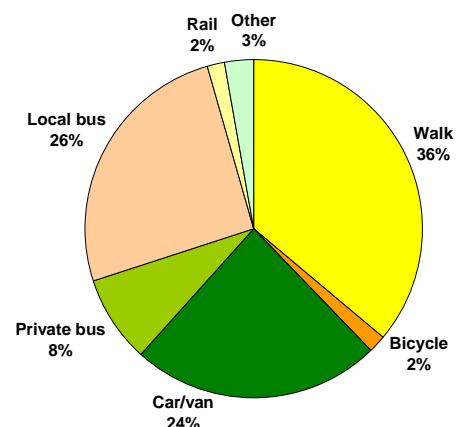
Trips to/from school: Great Britain, 2010

(NTS web table NTS0613)

Primary school children



Secondary school children



- In 2010, 47% of **primary school children** walked to school, a further 43% were driven to school in a car. For **secondary school children**, 36% walked to school, while 24% went by car and a further 34% used local or private bus services. The mode of transport used varies by trip length.

-
- The average length of a trip to school increased from 2.1 miles in 1995/97 to 2.6 miles in 2010. During this period, the average **trip length** for primary school children increased from 1.3 to 1.5 miles, and for secondary school pupils from 2.9 to 3.5 miles. This reflects the shift from walking to car use over the same period.
 - Since 1995/97, cars taking children to school ('escort education' trips) have increased as a proportion of all car driver trips in the **morning peak hour** (8-9am) from 10% to 16%. In 1995/97 the peak proportion of car driver trips that were for the purpose of escort education was at 8.50am compared to the earlier time of 8.40am in 2010 with the 'school run' now accounting for nearly a quarter (24%) of car driver trips by residents of urban areas during term time. This earlier peak time is reflective of the increase in average length of school trips during this period.
 - The take-up rate of **concessionary travel passes** among those eligible in Great Britain has increased from 58% in 2002 to 78% in 2010 (82% of females and 74% of males). This reflects changes to the coverage and eligibility of concessionary fare schemes since 2002.
 - During 2007/10¹, 13% of adults said that they had been involved in at least one **road accident** in the last 3 years including 4% who had been injured in a road accident.
 - On average in 2010, members of **car-owning households** made 39% more trips than people living in **non car-owning households**, and travelled over twice as far per year.
 - In 2010, 49% of households in the lowest **income** quintile had no car compared with 9% in the highest income quintile. However, the gap in car availability between high and low income households is narrowing as car ownership increases among low income households.
 - On average in 2010, more trips were made by people living in households containing 2 adults with children than any other **household type** (1,038 trips). However, households consisting of just 2 adults travelled further (7,566 miles per person) than other household types, of which 79% of the distance travelled was by car.
 - Variation in car availability contributes to differing travel patterns across **ethnic groups**. In 2007/10, on average adults from a White background made the most trips (1,023 trips per person per year), compared to 865 trips by those from an Asian background, and 859 trips by those from a Black background.
 - People in managerial and professional occupations made the most trips (1,103 per person per year) and travelled the farthest in total and per trip of the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (**NS-SEC**) groups.

¹ 2007/10 represents 4 years of combined data.

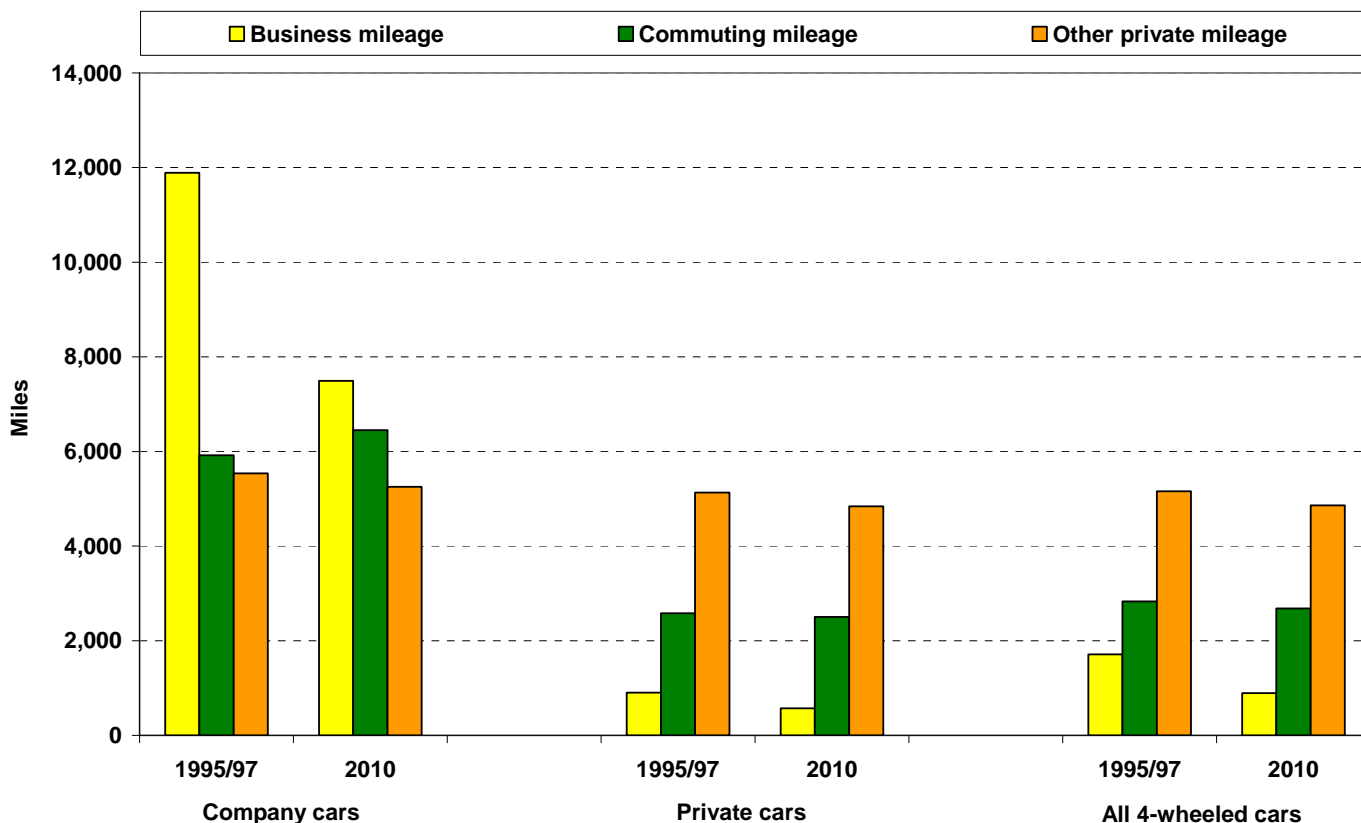
- In 2010, 85% of households in Great Britain lived within a 6 minute **walk of a bus stop** while a further 11% lived within 13 minutes. A large majority of households were able to travel within 15 minutes by foot or by public transport to the following key services: a shop selling groceries (92%), a chemist (85%), a post office (85%) and a doctor's surgery/GP (81%).

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on “travel by age and gender”, “travel by car availability, income, ethnicity and household type” and “accessibility” can be found on the National Travel Survey 2010 web page at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/national-travel-survey-2010>, table numbers [NTS0601 to NTS0625](#), [NTS0701 to NTS0708](#) and [NTS0801 to NTS0806](#).

4. Vehicles

- The estimated average **annual mileage** per car has decreased as the number of cars per household has risen, falling from about 9,700 in 1995/97 to 8,430 in 2010. DfT Vehicle Licensing Statistics show that there has been a continued growth in the number of licensed cars in Great Britain (an increase of 24% between 1997 and 2010).
- Estimated annual **business mileage** has fallen by 48% from 1,710 miles in 1995/97 to 890 miles in 2010. For company-owned cars only, business mileage has fallen from 11,890 in 1995/97 to 7,490 in 2010. Estimated annual **commuting mileage** of all cars has fallen 5% during this period to 2,680 miles in 2010. However, there was a 6% rise in the past year.

Annual mileage of 4-wheeled cars by type and trip purpose: Great Britain, 1995/97 and 2010 (NTS web table NTS0901)



-
- **Occupancy rates** have remained fairly stable since 1995/97 at around 1.6 occupants per car stage. However, occupancy rates vary by purpose of journey, being lowest for commuting and business (1.2 in 2010) and higher for holidays/day trips and education (2.0 persons per vehicle).

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on “vehicles can be found on the National Travel Survey 2010 web page at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/national-travel-survey-2010>, table numbers [NTS0901 to NTS0908](#).

5. Background notes

1. The National Travel Survey web page at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/national-travel-survey> provides further detail of the key findings presented in this statistical release and statistics on other survey topics. Available are short summaries of the key findings on each topic and a set of web tables. The topics covered are:

- Trends in driving licence holding and vehicle availability (Tables [NTS0201 to NTS0207](#))
- How people travel (Tables [NTS0301 to NTS0317](#))
- Why people travel (Tables [NTS0401 to NTS0410](#))
- When people travel (Tables [NTS0501 to NTS0506](#))
- Travel by age and gender (Tables [NTS0601 to NTS0625](#))
- Travel by car availability, income, ethnic group, household type and NS-SEC (Tables [NTS0701 to NTS0708](#))
- Accessibility (Tables [NTS0801 to NTS0806](#))
- Vehicles (Tables [NTS0901 to NTS0908](#))

2. The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

3. Since 2002, the Department for Transport has commissioned the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) as the contractor for the NTS. Full guidance on the methods used to conduct the survey, response rates, weighting methodology and survey materials can be found in the **National Travel Survey 2010 Technical Report** at: <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/national-travel-survey/nts2010-technical.pdf>

4. Sample sizes are included in all the individual web tables. As estimates made from a sample survey depend upon the particular sample chosen, they generally differ from the true values for the population. This is not usually a problem when considering large samples but may give misleading information when considering data from small samples, such as cyclists in a particular age group.

Tables of **standard errors** for selected key statistics derived from the 2009 NTS are published at:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/national-travel-survey/stderror2009.xls>

A note explaining the methodology used to calculate the 2009 NTS standard errors is published at:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/national-travel-survey/stderror2009.pdf>

5. Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found in the **Pre-release access list** at:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/national-travel-survey/nts2010-prerelease.pdf>

6. A **Notes & Definitions** document which includes background to the NTS, response rates, sample size & standard error information and a full list of definitions can be found at:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/national-travel-survey-2010/nts2010-notes.pdf>

7. The next release of National Travel Survey statistics will be a set of regional and area type web tables published in September 2011.

Key Definitions

(A full list of definitions can be found in Appendix A of the Notes & Definitions)

Travel: only includes personal travel by residents of Great Britain along the public highway, by rail or by air within Great Britain.

Trips: The basic unit of travel, a trip, is defined as a one-way course of travel with a single main purpose.

Stages: A trip consists of one or more stages. A new stage is defined when there is a change in the form of transport or when there is a change of vehicle requiring a separate ticket.

Mode/main mode: Trips may include more than one mode of transport, and each mode is recorded as a stage within that trip. When 'main mode' is used in the title of a table or chart this allocates information for the whole trip to the stage used for the greatest length (in distance) of the trip. When 'mode' is used this refers to information for individual stages of trips.

Car and car/van: both include 4-wheeled and 3-wheeled cars, 4x4 vehicles, light vans and lorries.

Rail: includes surface rail (National Rail) and the London Transport Underground service, unless otherwise specified and excludes light rail and other rail systems (e.g. Tyne and Wear Metro), which are included under 'other public transport'.

Walks: Walks of less than 50 yards are excluded.

Adults: Normally persons aged 16+. For some tables (e.g. car driving licence holding and car ownership), analyses are restricted to those aged 17+.