Accessibility

Statistical Release

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Accessibility Statistics 2012

This Statistical Release presents information on accessibility statistics for England for 2012.

Accessibility statistics provide a small area measure of the availability of transport to key services (food stores, education, health care, town centres and employment centres). They are published for England at national, regional, local authority and Lower Super Output Area level.

Please note:

(1) The statistics have only been **partially** updated for 2012. Statistics for the cycle and car transport modes have been updated, while those for the public transport /walking mode have not, for reasons described below. Users requiring statistics for public transport/walking are advised to refer to the 2011 results in the published data sets [1] or, for a summary of these results, to the 2011 statistical release.

(2) The accessibility statistics are currently being **reviewed**, and the Department is very keen to get feedback from users via this **survey** [4] on whether these statistics are still needed, and if so, whether they meet user needs or could be improved. This information will be used to help plan future transport statistics, making the best use of the resources available.

In 2012:

- The average minimum travel time to seven key services (excluding town centres) was 9 minutes by cycling and 6 minutes by car. These times were little changed from 2011. (The equivalent figure for public transport / walking in 2011 was 14 minutes).
- Hospitals had the longest average minimum travel times of the seven key services, with average minimum travel times of 19 minutes by cycling and 9 minutes by driving. Primary schools and food stores were the most accessible services.
- Users in urban areas could access key services by cycling, on average, in 7 minutes compared with 17 minutes in rural areas.
- Overall access to key services within a 'reasonable' time by cycling or by car was greatest in London and, generally, lowest in the South West.

1. National

The Department measures access to eight key services (employment centres, primary schools, secondary schools, further education institutions, GPs, hospitals, food stores and town centres) by public transport/walking, cycle and car. Since 2010 the car measures use Trafficmaster data, which takes into account actual traffic speeds and delays.

The statistics take three forms

- Travel time indicators (which, within a given area, look at the average travel time to the nearest service);
- Destination indicators (which, within a given area, look at the proportion of resident users with access to each service within a given time);
- Origin indicators (which, within a given service, look at the choice of locations available to the resident population within a given time).

Travel times are affected by three main things: the number and location of service destinations, the quality of the service destinations datasets, and road / travel factors (such as public transport timetables, road layout and congestion). In most the cases changes in the first two factors (i.e. relating to the number and location of destinations and data quality) will have a greater affect on average travel times than changes in timetables. The exception to this are travel times to town centres as the locations and data sources have remained the same every year since 2009.

The latest results for 2012 show:

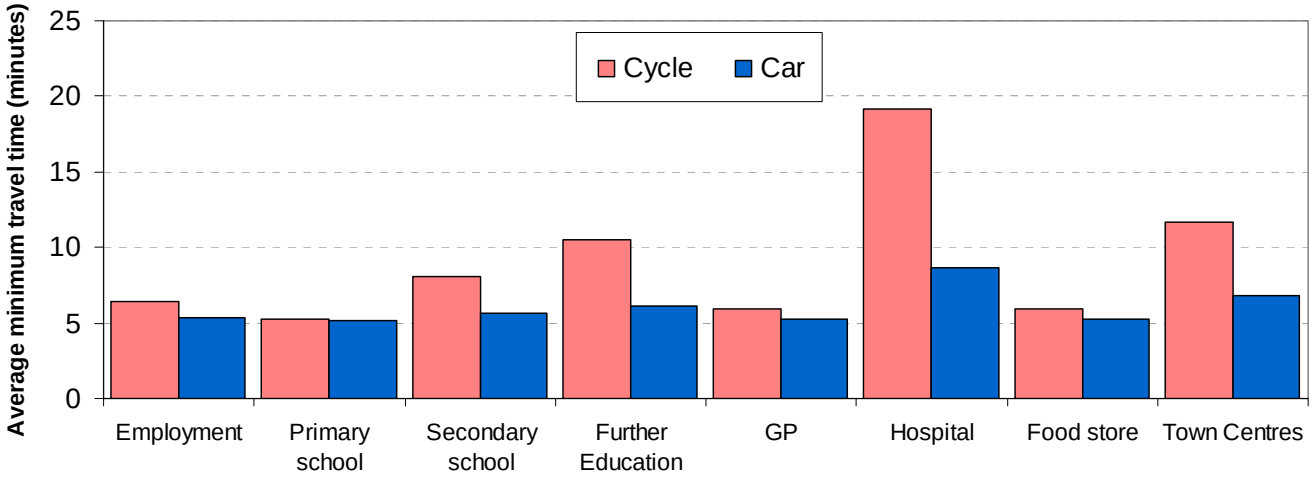
Travel Time Indicators

- The average minimum travel time across seven key services (this measure excludes town centre destinations) was 9 minutes by cycling and 6 minutes by car.

- The average minimum travel time to the nearest service by cycling was lowest for primary schools (5 minutes) and highest for hospitals (19 minutes). The pattern for car travel was similar, but with less variation, from 5 minutes for primary schools, food stores, GPs and employment centres to 9 minutes for hospitals. (A similar relative pattern is apparent for public transport / walking, in previous years). The same general pattern has been seen since 2007. The main causes of the differences in travel times between the service types are how the service locations are distributed throughout England, and how these locations relate to the population.

- The average minimum travel times by cycle or car changed little between 2012 and 2011. Any changes for these modes will be due to a combination of changes in the destination data sets, changes in the road network, or, for cars, changes in the average traffic speeds on the road network. All changes were less than 2 per cent except for hospitals, where the average minimum access times reduced slightly – this will probably reflect changes to the hospital destination dataset, but this should be seen in the context of an increase in access times for hospitals in the previous year.

Average minimum travel time to reach the nearest key services by cycle or car, England, 2012
(See Table ACS0101)



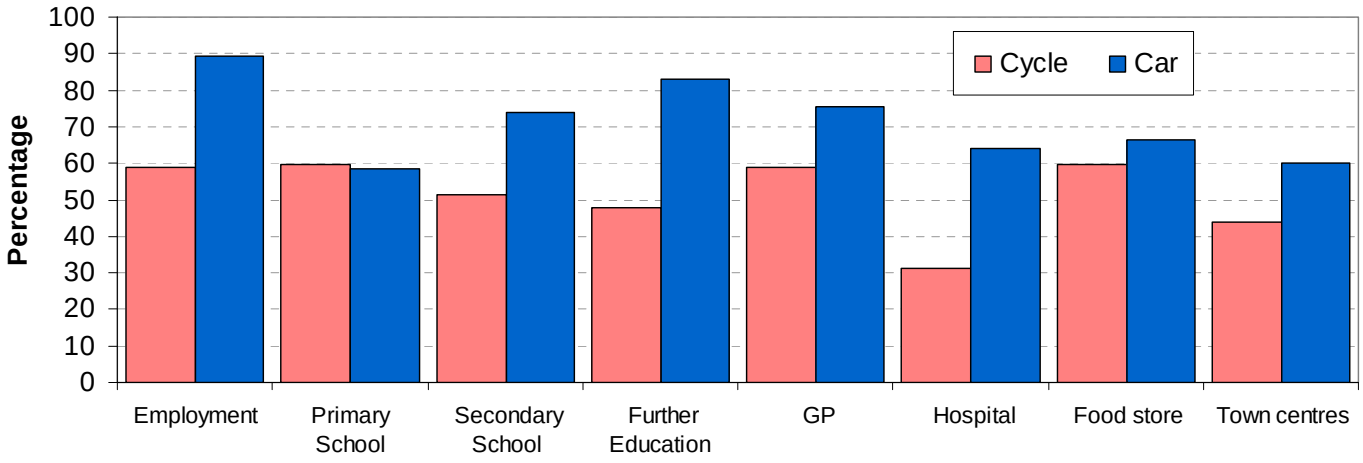
- Users in urban areas could access key services by cycling, on average, in 7 minutes compared to 17 minutes in rural areas. Within rural areas, the average minimum cycle travel time to reach the nearest key service was 14 minutes in 'town and fringes', and 20 minutes in both 'villages' and 'hamlet and isolated dwellings' (based on the Defra rural definition and LA classification).

- There is much less differentiation between urban and rural travel times for car use, with the average minimum access times being 6 minutes in urban areas, 7 minutes in 'town and fringe', 7 minutes in 'villages', and 8 minutes in 'hamlet and isolated dwellings'.

Destination Indicators

- 'Reasonable' access times are a measure of accessibility which takes into account the sensitivity of users to the travel time for each key service. The 'reasonable' time may vary for each type of service. The percentage of the population with 'reasonable' access by cycling was highest for food stores (60 per cent), closely followed by primary schools GPs and centres of employment, and lowest for hospitals (31 per cent).

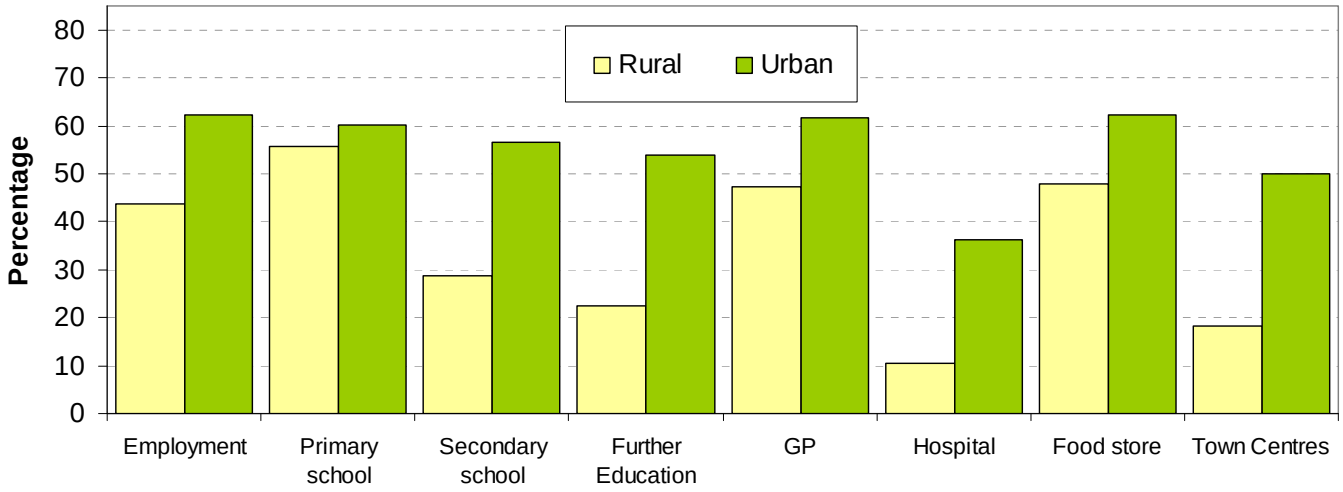
Percentage of users with 'reasonable' access to key services by cycle and car, England, 2012
(see Table ACS0201)



- Access within a ‘reasonable’ time by car was greatest for centres of employment (89 per cent) and lowest for primary schools (58 per cent).

- Access to services within a ‘reasonable’ time varied relatively little between urban and rural areas for the services with a more localised delivery pattern (primary schools, GPs, food stores, and also centres of employment), while the difference was much more marked for those destinations which tend to serve larger catchments (secondary schools, further education colleges and hospitals).

Percentage of users with ‘reasonable’ access to key services by cycle, rural and urban areas, England, 2012 (see Table ACS0204)



Origin Indicators

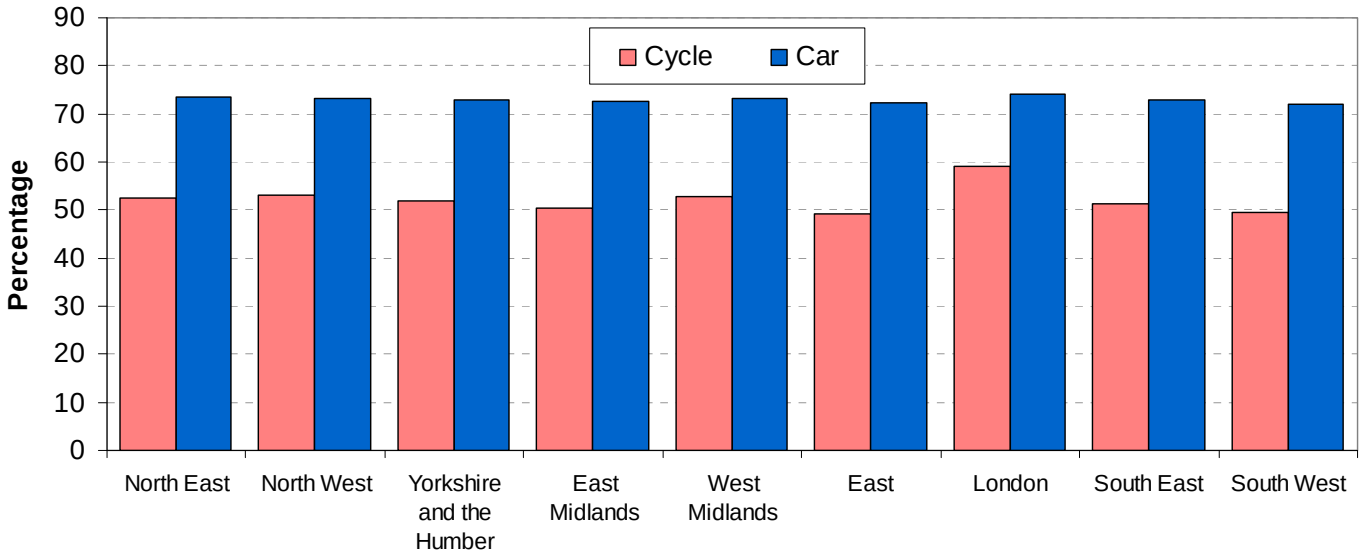
- The average number of service locations that users were able to access by cycling within a ‘reasonable’ time (which takes into account the sensitivity of users to travel time to that particular service) ranged from 0.6 for hospitals to 4.9 for food stores.

- The corresponding figures for cars range between 2.2 (for hospitals) and 7.0 (for further education establishments).

2. Regional

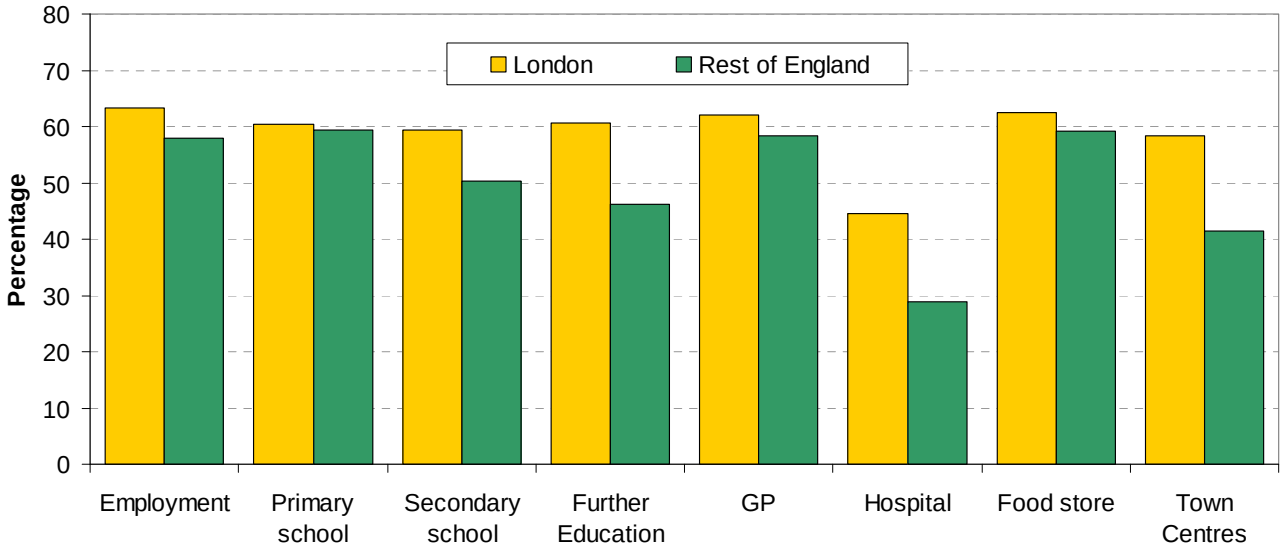
- The average percentage of users with 'reasonable' access by cycle across 7 types of service (excluding town centres) was lowest in the East of England region, and highest in London. However there was very little difference in the figures between the regions, except for London. There was little variation in the equivalent figures for car travel at all.

Percentage of users with 'reasonable' access to key services by cycle and car, by region, 2012 (see Tables ACS0209 & ACS02010)



- The differences between London and other regions for travel by bicycle are largely accounted for by differences for the most widely spread destinations, serving larger catchments, that is hospitals, secondary schools and further education colleges.

Percentage of users with 'reasonable' access to key services by cycle, London and elsewhere, in England, 2012 (see Table ACS0209)



- In general, differences in accessibility are much more pronounced between urban and rural areas within regions, than between regions.

3. Public transport/walking mode – data issues

In this edition of accessibility statistics, updated estimates for the public transport / walking mode have not been published. This means that updated statistics for the composite mode (public transport/walking and cycling), and for the DfT business plan indicator measure *'households with good transport access to key services or work'* are also not available.

The public transport / walking estimates depend on the consistent interpretation of comprehensive nationwide information on public transport networks and timetables. The main source of information of public transport timetables has changed since the 2011 edition of these statistics. Work on the compilation of this year's accessibility statistics showed that a sufficient number of issues remained in the interpretation of the available timetable data for October 2012 and March 2013 that the public transport travel time estimates could not yet be considered representative of changes since 2011, or comparable in all areas. It was therefore decided not to produce the public transport / walking estimates, rather than risk publishing misleading figures.

Considerable progress has already been made in dealing with these data issues in subsequent updates of the public transport data, and the Department is continuing to work closely with Traveline and others to ensure that versions of the timetable data optimised for national accessibility analyses are regularly available for the future.

Decisions about the timing and content of all future accessibility statistics will depend on the outcome of the review referred to on page 1. Therefore no definitive plans for the future release of statistics for the public transport/walking mode can be given at this stage. However, the basis for any future statistics is likely to be the public transport timetables for October 2013 or later, given the practical constraints on retrospectively revising data for the period between October 2011 and October 2013.

4. Strengths and weaknesses of the data

The key strengths and weaknesses of the accessibility statistics are discussed in a separate document. A full explanation of the methodologies used and further information on the items to consider when using these statistics can be found in the separate guidance note and methodology note [1].

5. Background notes

1. The full set of accessibility statistics tables are available to download from the Transport Accessibility Statistics home page, along with technical documentation including frequently asked questions, details of the data sources and methodologies used to compile the accessibility statistics, strengths and weaknesses of the statistics and key terms and definitions used.

2. The locations of services used in the calculation of the statistics will be available to download at https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/accessibility-destination-datasets.

3. The date and content of future accessibility statistics releases is subject to the outcome of the review.

4. The user feedback questionnaire will be available for at least 2 months from 18 September 2013.

5. Details of ministers and officials who received pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found at the Transport Accessibility Statistics web page referred to in note 1 above.

6. Other DfT statistics containing information on the use of public transport include the National Travel Survey (2012 results published June 2013) and Bus Statistics (2012 statistics due 24 September 2013).