



Department  
for Transport

# Walking and Cycling Statistics, England: 2017

## 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).

The NTS is a household survey of personal travel by residents of England travelling within Great Britain, from data collected via interviews and a one week travel diary.

The ALS is a household survey by residents of England, from data collected via a push-to-web survey.

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

**Next Published:  
Summer 2019**

**In 2017, the average number of walking stages per person per year increased, but the distance travelled remained at similar levels to previous years.**



**343** walking stages per person per year in 2017  
**206** miles walked per person per year in 2017

- Nearly all (97%) local authorities had at least 60% of their adult population walking at least once a week.
- A number of local authorities had large annual increases in the proportion of adults walking at least once a week, these include: Breckland, Poole, West Lindsey, West Somerset and St Edmundsbury.

**In 2017, the average number of miles cycled increased, but the number of cycling trips remained at a similar level to previous years.**



**17** cycling trips per person per year in 2017  
**60** miles cycled per person per year in 2017

- Nearly all (96%) of local authorities had less than 20% of their adult population cycling at least once a week.
- A number of local authorities had large annual increases in the proportion of adults cycling at least once a week, these include: Exeter, Worcestershire, South Cambridgeshire, Tauton Deane and Isle of Wight.

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# Interpretation of results

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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 2017.
- 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 2016 to mid-November 2017.
- Push-to-web survey, with around 197,000 adults taking part in 2016/17.
- 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+.
- Two years worth of data (2015/16, 2016/17).

## Feedback

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

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 authority 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: 2017

## Summary [NTS]



## Gender [NTS]



269 trips  
211 miles



240 trips  
201 miles

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

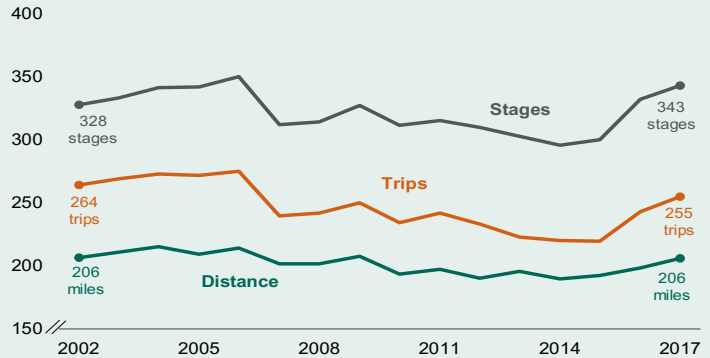
## Trends [NTS]

In 2017:

**Trips** 4% since 2002

**Stages** 5% since 2002

**Distance** no change since 2002

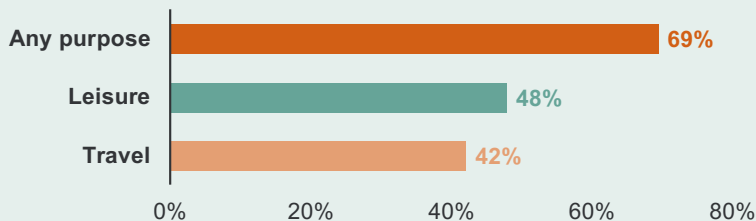


**Trip:** A one-way course of travel with a single main purpose. A "walking trip" is one where the greatest part was walked.

**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, mid-Nov 2016 to mid-Nov 2017



Over two thirds of adults walked at least once a week. More adults walked for leisure than for travel at least once a week.

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

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

## Time spent walking [ALS]

Proportion of adults walking, by purpose, mid-Nov 2016 to mid-Nov 2017



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

## Car access [NTS]



369 trips  
303 miles



229 trips  
184 miles

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

## Mobility [NTS]



257 trips  
220 miles



125 trips  
98 miles

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

## Travel purpose [NTS]



23% of walking trips are for **just walking**



20% of walking trips are for **education/escort education**

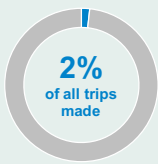
**Escort Education:** Escorting or accompanying a child/children to school.

**Sources:** NTS: National Travel Survey 2017 (any walking on the public highway)

ALS: Active Lives Survey 2016-2017 (aged 16+ only, walk: at least 10 minutes)

# Cycling Factsheet: 2017

## Summary [NTS]



17 cycling trips  
18 cycling stages  
60 miles cycled  
23 minutes per trip

## Gender [NTS]



9 trips  
25 miles



24 trips  
95 miles

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

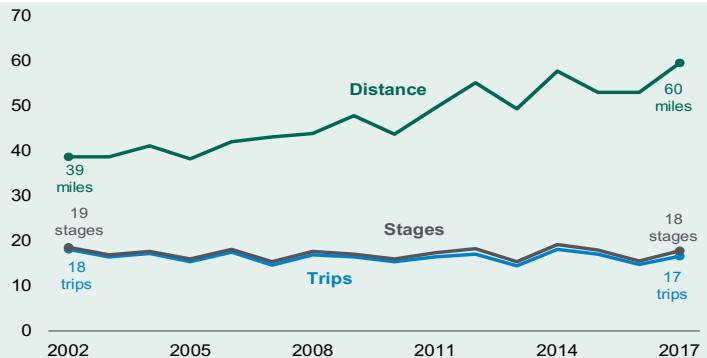
## Trends [NTS]

In 2017:

Trips  8% since 2002

Stages  4% since 2002

Distance  54% since 2002

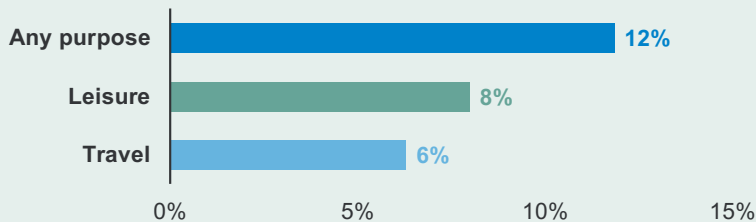


**Trip:** A one-way course of travel with a single main purpose. A "cycling trip" is one where the greatest part was cycled.

**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 at least once a week, mid-Nov 2016 to mid-Nov 2017



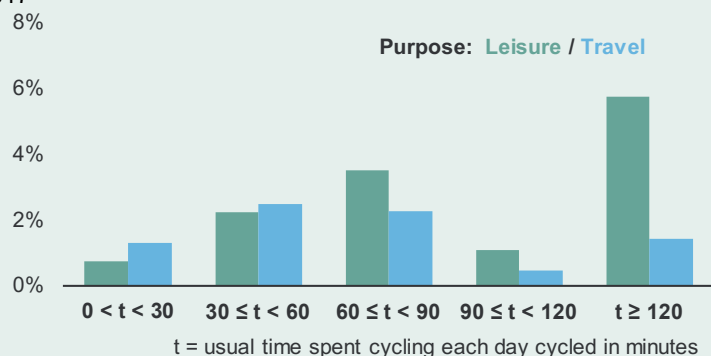
One eighth of adults cycled at least once a week. More adults cycled for leisure than for travel at least once a week.

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

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

## Time spent cycling [ALS]

Proportion of adults cycling, by purpose, mid-Nov 2016 to mid-Nov 2017



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

## Car access [NTS]



24 trips  
73 miles



15 trips  
56 miles

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

## Mobility [NTS]



18 trips  
72 miles



8 trips  
26 miles

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

## Travel purpose [NTS]



37% of cycling trips are for **commuting/business**



36% 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 2017 (any cycling on the public highway)

ALS: Active Lives Survey 2016-2017 (aged 16+ only, any cycling)

# Trends in walking

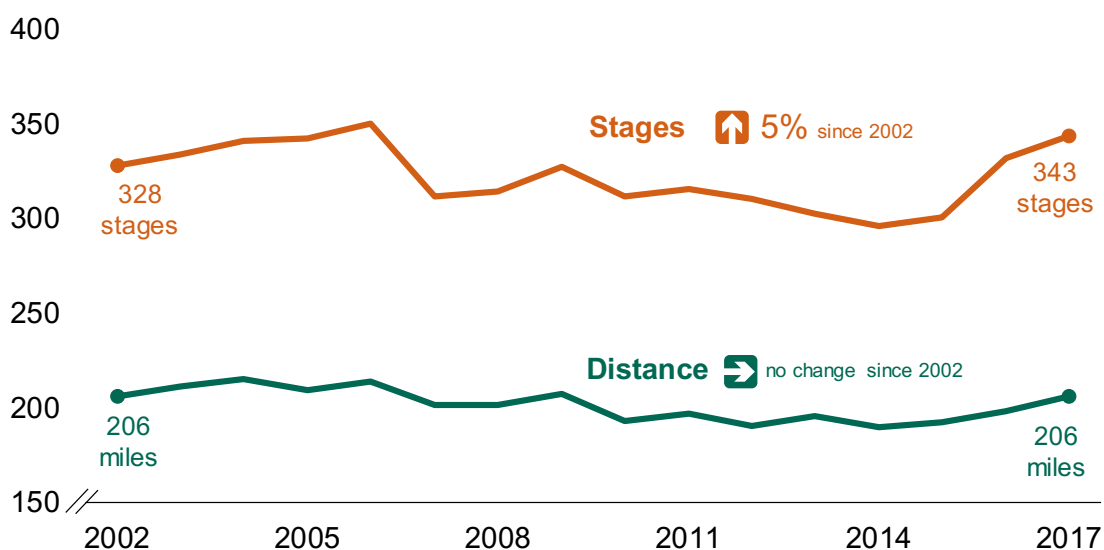
In 2017, the average number of walking stages per person per year increased, but the distance travelled remained at similar levels to previous years.

The average person made 343 walking stages in 2017, compared to 328 walking stages in 2002, which is an increase of 5% (Chart 1). The number of walking stages that people made in 2017 was the highest number since 2006. However, people did fewer 'long walks' (those of more than a mile). The 71 stages that were long walks in 2017 was similar to 2016, and 14% less than 2002.

In 2017 the average person:

- made 343 walking stages;
- walked 206 miles;
- spent about 81 minutes a week travelling by foot;
- made 26% of all their trips by walking;
- covered 3% of all their distance travelled by walking.

**Chart 1: Average number of stages and miles walked per person per year, England, 2002 to 2017** [NTS0303]



## 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 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.

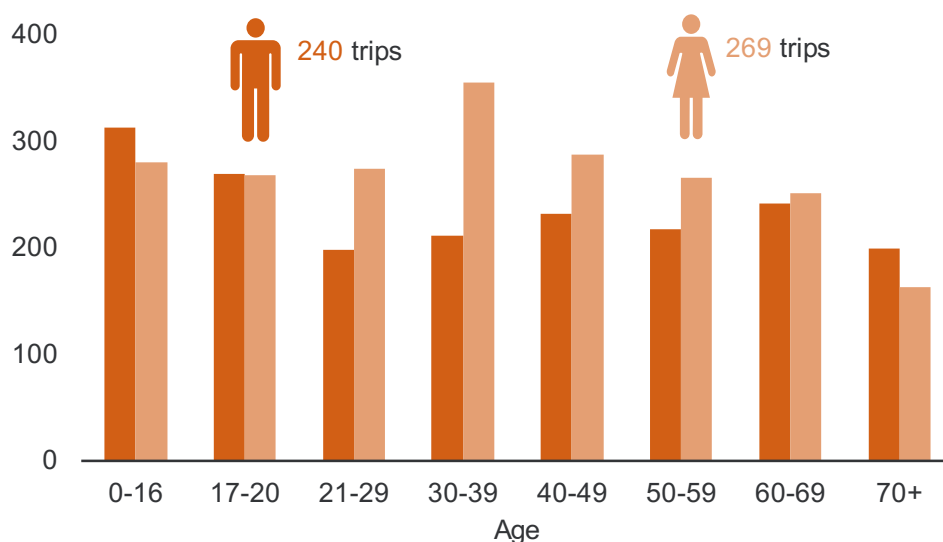
For more information, please see the [Methodology notes](#).

# Walking trips by gender and purpose

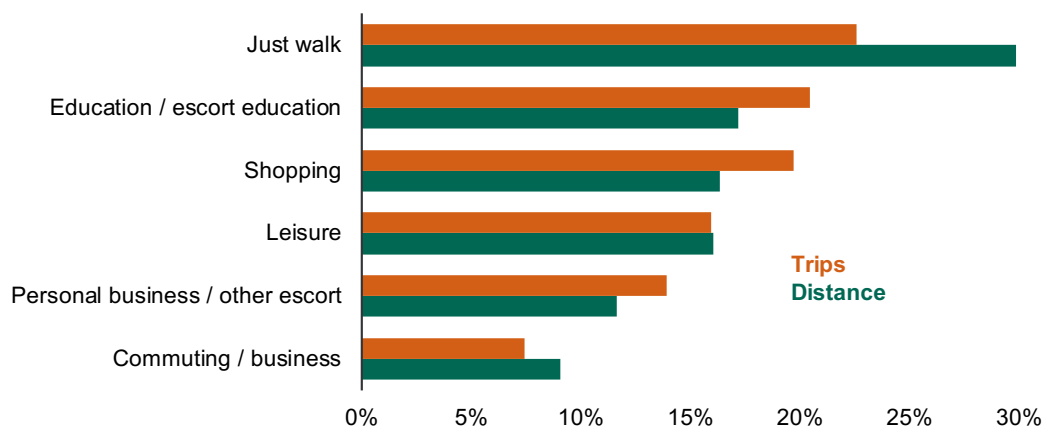
The number of walking trips and the reasons for walking differ between men and women, and people of different ages.

In 2017, women on average made 30 more walking trips than men and walked 9 miles further. 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 2: Walking trips per person per year, by age and gender, England, 2017 [NTS0601]**



In 2017, “Just walk” was the most common walking trip purpose (23% of all walking trips) and made up the furthest distance walked (30% of total distance). “Commuting and business” was the least common walking trip purpose (7% of all walking trips) and the shortest distance walked (9% of total distance).



## Short walks

Due to a change in the way **short walks** were collected in the National Travel Survey from 2016, data from 2002 to 2015 has been reweighted to take into account this change. The impact is a revision upwards of 20 to 25 short walk trips per person per year, for the period of 2002 to 2015. For more information please see the 2017 National Travel Survey publication: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2017>

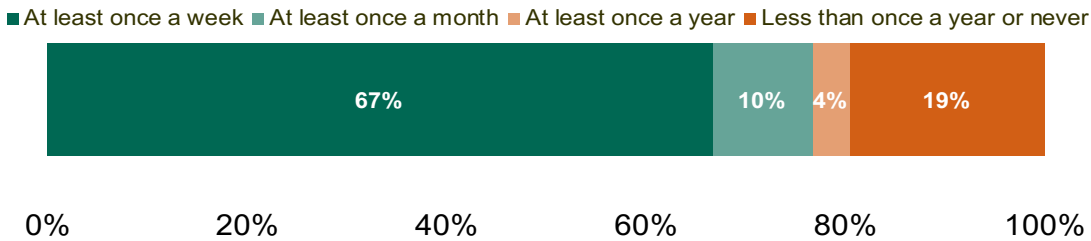
**Chart 3: Purpose share of average number of walking trips and distance travelled, England, 2017 [NTS0409, NTS0410]**

# Frequency of walking

**Two thirds of people walk for at least 20 minutes once a week.**

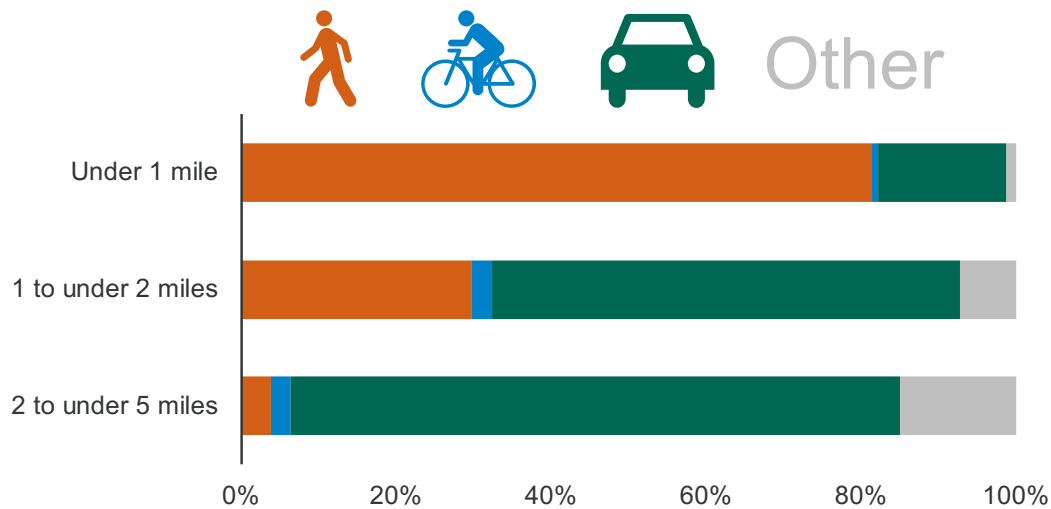
In 2017, 67% of NTS respondents said they walked 20 minutes or more at least once a week. Around 19% said they walk for 20 minutes or more, less than once a year or never, but this varies by age, with nearly half (45%) of those aged 70 and over saying they walk for 20 minutes or more, less than once a year or never.

**Chart 4: Walking frequency (walks of 20 minutes or more), England, 2017** [\[NTS0312\]](#)

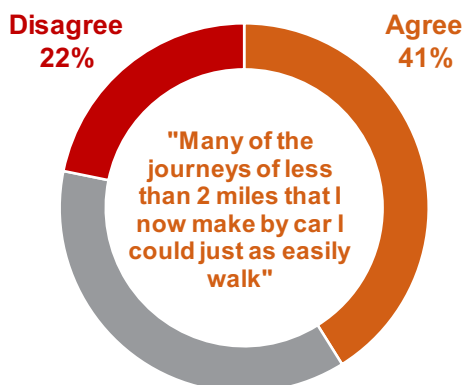


In 2017, out of all trips under a mile, 81% of them were walked. For trips between 1 and 2 miles, this drops to 30%, with car/van trips (driver/passenger) making up the majority share at 60%.

Chart 6 shows that 41% of respondents to the British Social Attitudes (BSA) Survey agree that many of the journeys of less than 2 miles that they made by car could just as easily be walked.



**Chart 5: Mode share of trips, by length and main mode, England, 2017** [\[NTS0308\]](#)



**Chart 6: Proportion of respondents who agreed they could easily walk journeys they currently make by car, England, 2017** [\[ATT0315\]](#)

## British Social Attitudes Survey

The British Social Attitudes (BSA) Survey is conducted annually with a sample of 3,000 British adults aged 18+. The survey includes a number of transport related questions.



# Factors influencing walking rates

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

In 2017, adults with no mobility difficulties walked twice as many trips as those with mobility difficulties (257 trips compared to 125 trips) and walked just over twice as far. By definition, those with mobility difficulties may have “difficulties travelling on foot”, so they would be less likely to choose walking as a mode of travel.

### 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 2017, 10% of adults reported that they had mobility difficulties.

**Chart 7: Travel by mobility status and main mode, England, 2017**

[\[NTS0709\]](#)

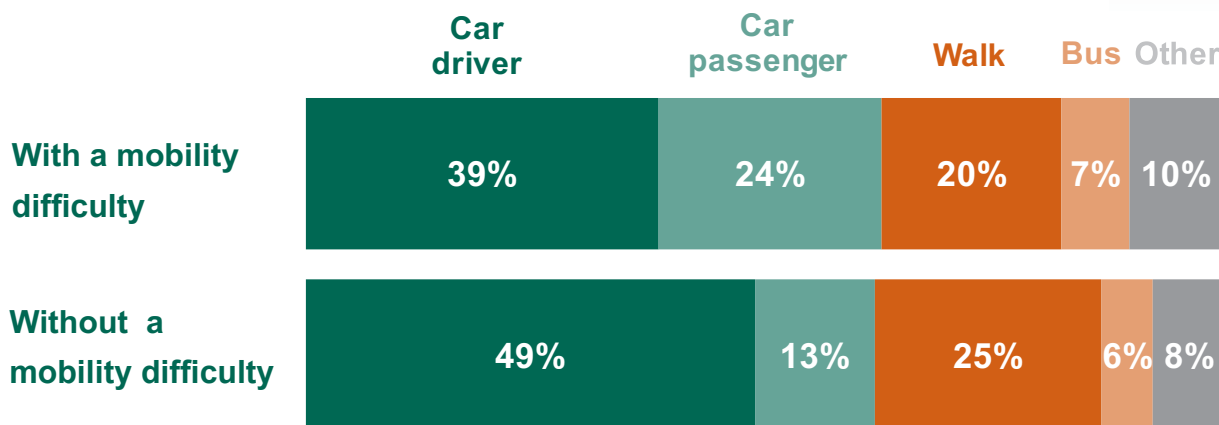


Chart 7 shows that adults with a mobility difficulty made a similar proportion of trips by car as those without a mobility difficulty (63% and 62% respectively), however adults with a mobility difficulty make a higher proportion of these car trips as a passenger (24% compared with 13% respectively).

## 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 were far more reliant on walking as a mode of transport, making 50% of all their trips and 10% of their distance travelled by foot. This compares to 22% of trips and 2% of distance for those in households with access to car. This may be partially due to those who have access to a car making 39% more trips overall.

### Access to a car

A person has “access to a car” if there is a car or van associated with their household. This will include vehicles that the person is unable to use themselves (e.g. if they cannot drive or aren’t insured).

In 2017, 76% of households have at least one car or van available.

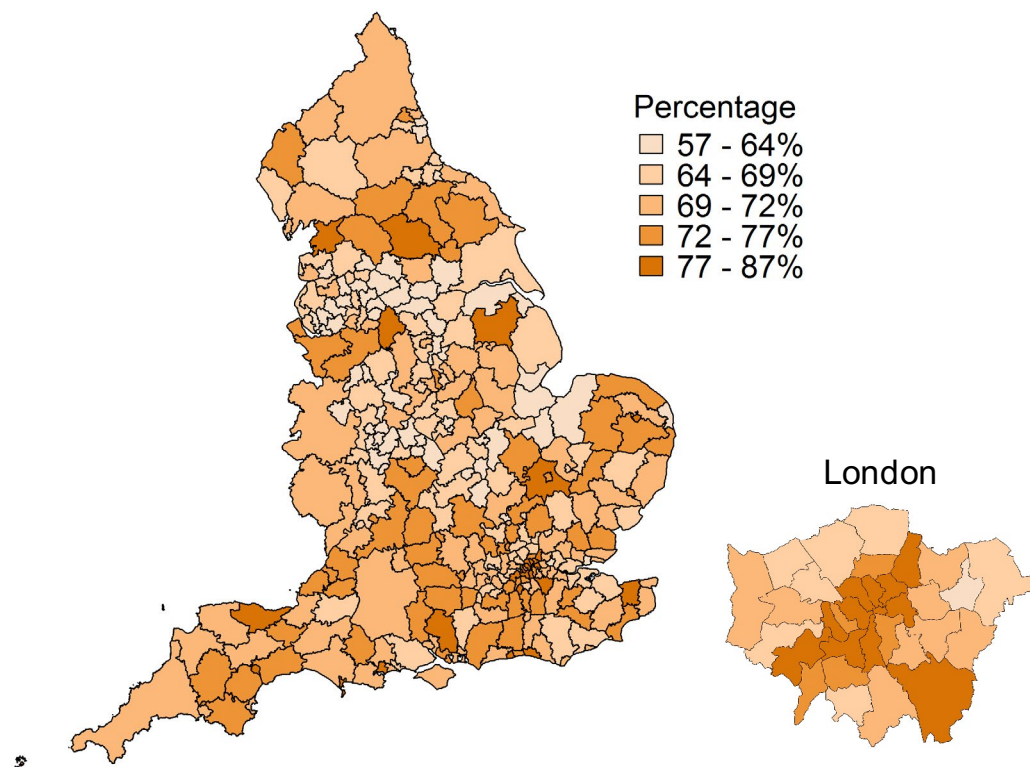
# Local area walking rates

Nearly all (97%) 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\* (87%), followed by Isles of Scilly\* (85%) and Wandsworth (83%). Note that figures for City of London and Isles of Scilly should be interpreted with caution due to their smaller sample sizes.

Nine local authorities had less than 60% of their adult population walking at least once a week, with Fenland having the lowest prevalence at 57%.

**Map 1: Proportion of adults walking at least once a week by Local Authority, England, 2016-2017 [CW0303]**



**Table 1: Top and bottom five local authorities for walking at least once a week, England, 2016-2017 [CW0303]**

Local Authority	%	Local Authority	%
City of London*	87.0	Oadby and Wigston	59.4
Isles of Scilly*	84.5	Rotherham	59.2
Wandsworth	82.9	Wellingborough	58.2
Richmond upon Thames	82.6	Sandwell	57.6
Islington	80.4	Fenland	57.5

## 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.

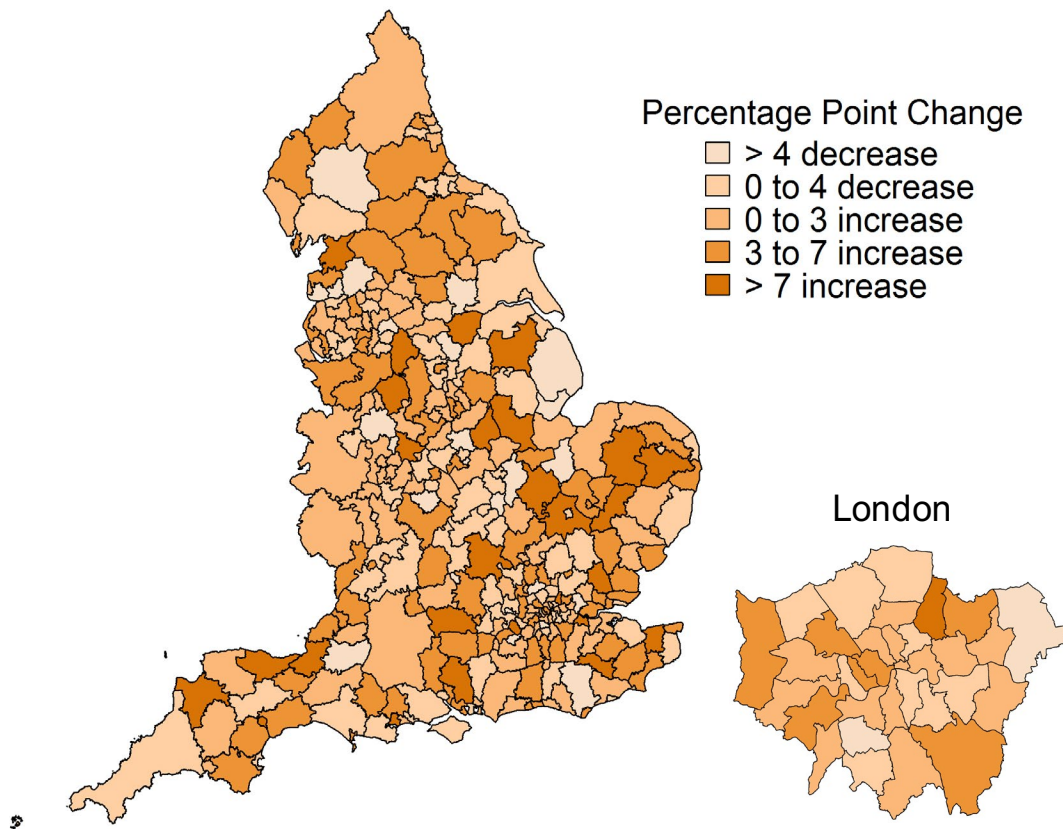
\*Note that due to their small size, the estimate for City of London and Isles of Scilly has a higher degree of error associated with it.

# Changes in local area walking rates

**Walking rates have increased slightly at the national and regional level; with more variation at the local authority level.**

The proportion of adults walking at least once a week increased overall in England from 68% in 2015-16 to 69% in 2016-17. Each region saw an increase in the proportion, with East of England seeing the largest increase from 67% to 70%, followed by the South West, 70% to 72%.

Looking at local authority level, 24 local authorities saw a significant change (increase or decrease) in the proportion of adults walking at least once a week. Breckland had the largest increase from 57% in 2015-16 to 73% in 2016-17. Wellingborough had the largest decrease from 69% to 58%. Both of these changes were statistically significant.



**Map 2: Change between 2015-16 and 2016-17 in proportion of adults walking at least once a week, local authorities in England [CW0303]**

### Statistically significant

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

**Table 2: Local authorities with largest changes in proportion of adults walking at least once a week between 2015-16 and 2016-17 [CW0303]**

Local Authority	% point increase	Local Authority	% point decrease
Breckland**	15.2	Wellingborough**	10.8
Poole**	13.7	Charnwood**	10.0
West Lindsey**	12.0	Rotherham	7.9
West Somerset**	10.6	East Northamptonshire	7.2
St Edmundsbury**	10.1	Oadby and Wigston	7.2

\*\* change is statistically significant.

# Trends in cycling

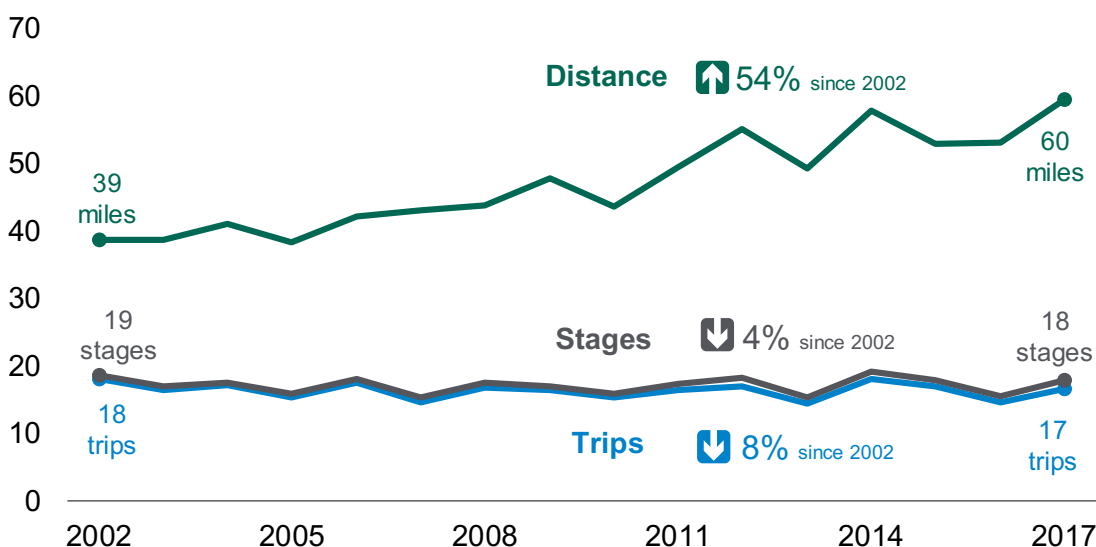
In 2017, the average miles cycled per person per year increased, but the number of cycling trips remained at a similar level to previous years.

The average number of miles cycled in 2017 (60 miles per person) was 54% higher than in 2002. People did an average of 17 trips per person per year in 2017, compared to 18 in 2002. The relatively small number of cycle trips in the sample means that this series can be volatile, but it has remained between 14 and 18 trips per person per year since 2002. This corresponds with the NTS sample identifying the same number of cyclists, but those in the sample have generally been making more cycling trips and travelling further.

In 2017, the average person:

- made 17 cycling trips (and 18 cycling stages);
- cycled 60 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 8: Average number of trips, stages and miles cycled per person per year, England, 2002 to 2017** [[NTS0303](#)]



## 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.

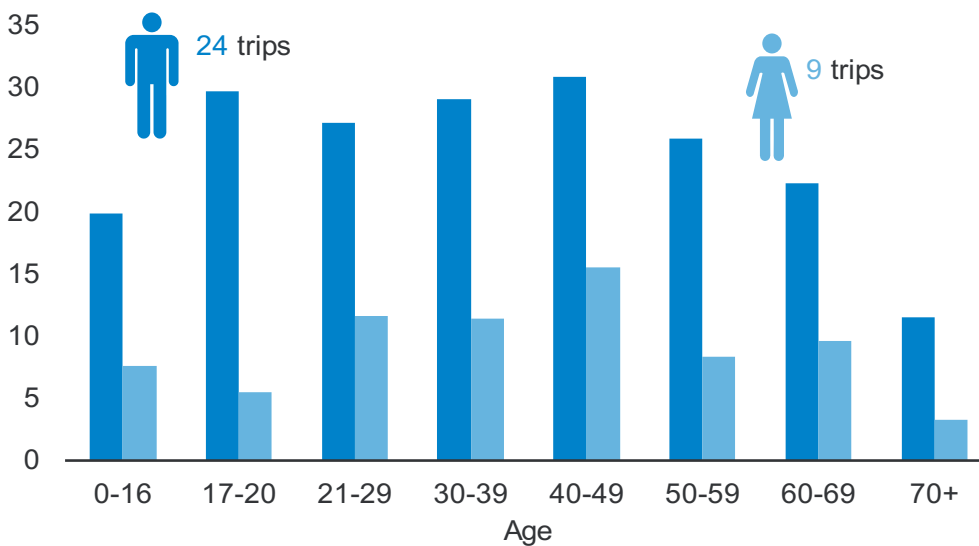
For more information, please see the [Methodology notes](#).

## Cycling trips by gender and purpose

**Men cycle more often and further than women, and adults in their forties cycle the most. People most commonly cycle for commuting and leisure.**

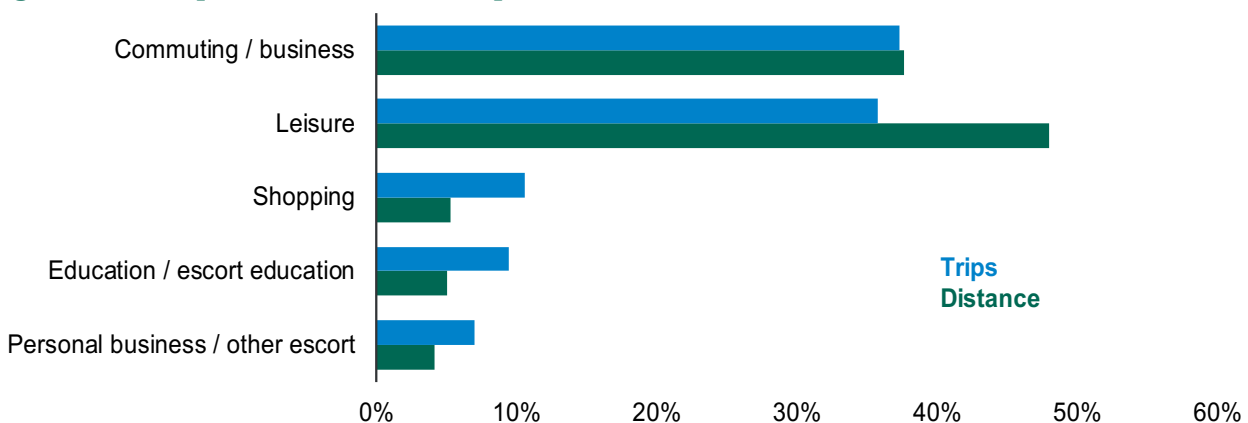
In 2017, men made almost three times as many cycle trips as women (24 trips compared to 9 trips), and cycled almost four times further than women (95 miles compared to 25 miles). Adults aged 40–49 made the most cycling trips for both men and women. The biggest difference in trips for men and women was at age 17-20, where men on average made 24 more cycling trips. One reason why men cycle so much more than women might be that women are more likely to agree that “it is too dangerous for me to cycle on roads” than men (see [Factors that influence cycling](#)).

**Chart 9: Cycling trips per person per year, by age and gender, England, 2017** [[NTS0601](#)]



In 2017, the most common purpose for cycling trips was commuting/business (37%), followed by cycling for leisure (36%). The average distance cycled for commuting purposes in 2017 was 20 miles per person per year, and for leisure was 27 miles per person per year. These make up 38% and 48% of all distance cycled respectively.

**Chart 10: Purpose share of average number of cycling trips and distance travelled, England, 2017** [[NTS0409](#), [NTS0410](#)]



# Trends in cycling by cyclists

## Cyclists make six trips a week on average.

The charts and figures in the previous cycling sections are based on the average number of trips and the average miles travelled per year that include people who cannot or do not ride bicycles. If we look at the same measures but for “cyclists” (see box opposite), that is people who rode a bicycle during the week they filled out their NTS travel diary, we get a different picture.

In 2017, cyclists made on average 332 trips per year (about 6 trips a week) and travelled around 1,144 miles per year, up from 687 miles on average in 2002.

While there have been a similar number of cycling trips made per person per year in the general population since 2002, among cyclists average trips have been increasing since 2005. The NTS sample is not identifying more cyclists, but those in the sample have generally been making more cycling trips and travelling further.

### Definition of a cyclist

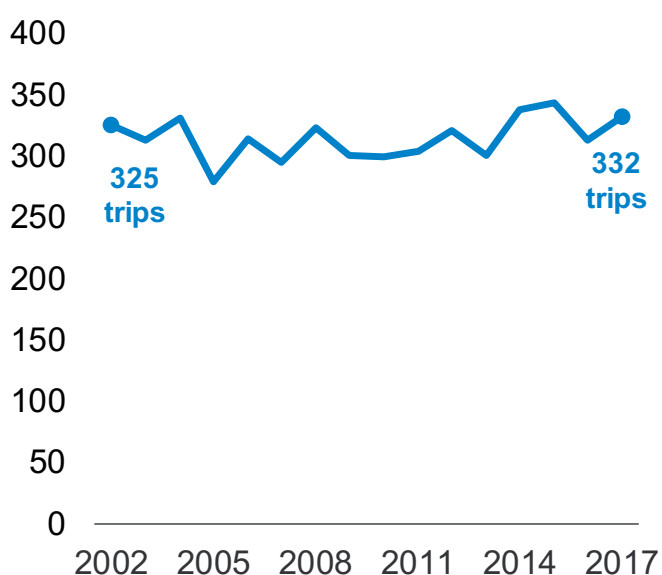
In this section a ‘cyclist’ is an individual who recorded the use of a bicycle in their travel diary at least once.

The travel diary lends us a window into what these mode users are actually using bicycles for and from their interviews we can examine their characteristics.

**Chart 11: Trends in bicycle trips and bicycle miles travelled per cyclist: England 2002-2017** [\[NTS0314\]](#)

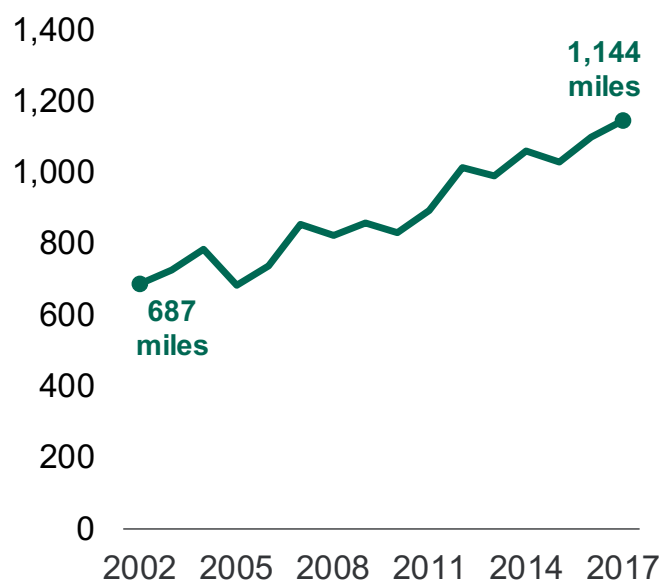
### Trips

Average bicycle trips per cyclist per year



### Distance

Average bicycle miles travelled per cyclist per year



# Frequency of cycling

## 14% of people cycle at least once a week.

The NTS asks people to estimate how often they have cycled in the last 12 months. In 2017, 14% of respondents said they cycled at least once a week, and 66% said less than once a year or never.

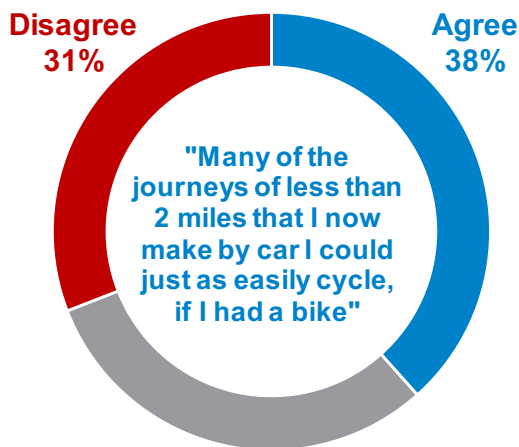
**Chart 12: Cycling frequency, England, 2017** [[NTS0313](#)]

■ At least once a week ■ At least once a month ■ At least once a year ■ Less than once a year or never



0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

The BSA shows that in 2017, 38% of respondents agreed with the statement “Many of the journeys of less than 2 miles that I now make by car I could just as easily cycle, if I had a bike” (Chart 13).



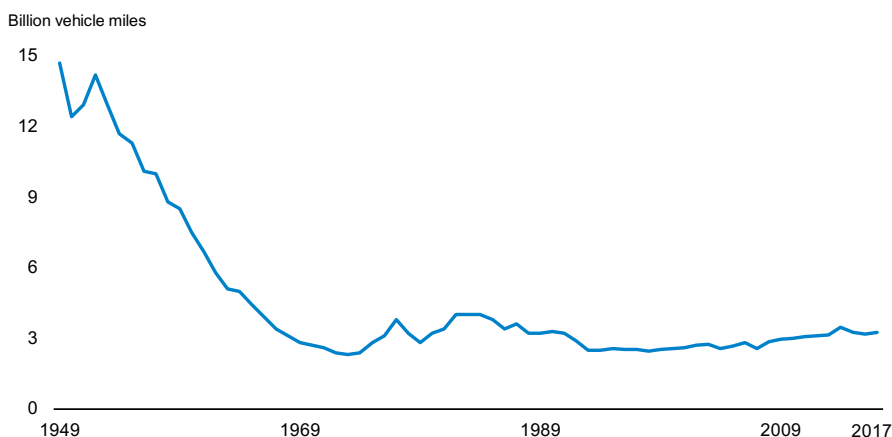
**Chart 13: Proportion of respondents who agreed they could easily cycle journeys they currently make by car, England, 2017** [[ATT0317](#)]

### British Social Attitudes Survey

The British Social Attitudes (BSA) Survey is conducted annually with a sample of 3,000 British adults aged 18+. The survey includes a number of transport related questions.

## British road cycling sharply declined during the 1950's and 1960's, but has been slowly growing since the 1990's.

In 2017, pedal cyclists travelled 3.3 billion miles on British roads, 3% further than in the previous year, and 29% further than 20 years ago (Chart 14).



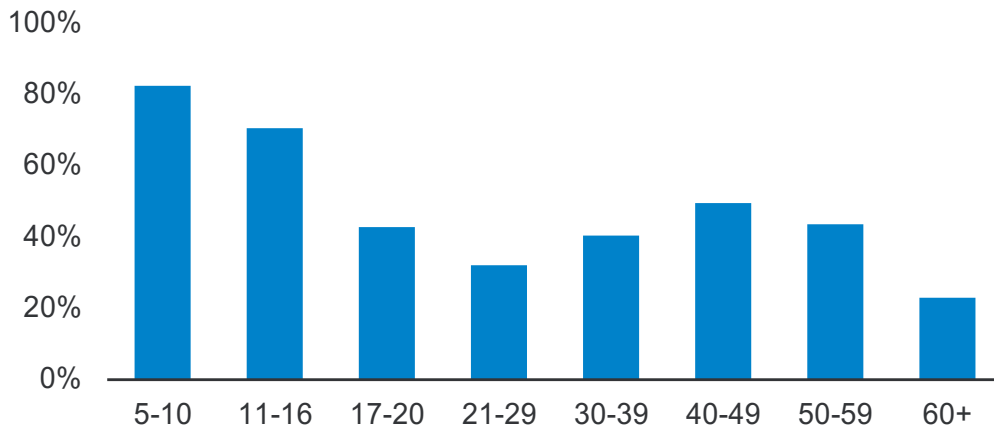
**Chart 14: Long term annual road pedal cycle traffic, Great Britain, 1949 to 2017** [[TRA0401](#)]

# Factors influencing cycling rates

## Two fifths of people have access to a bicycle.

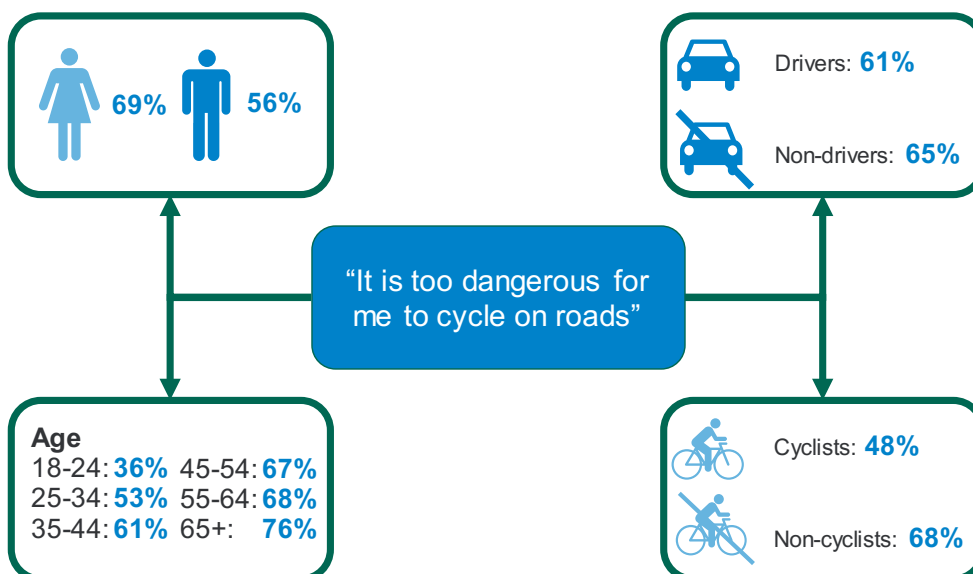
In England, 42% of people aged over 5 owned a bicycle in 2015 to 2017 combined. Bicycle ownership is most prevalent amongst people aged under 17 years old. Amongst adults, bike ownership peaks at ages 40-49 with 49% owning or having use of a bicycle.

**Chart 15: Proportion of people who own or have use of a bicycle, by age band, England, 2015 to 2017 combined** [NTS0608]



## Three fifths of adults aged 18+ feel that it is too dangerous to cycle on the roads.

In 2017, 62% 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 (69% to 56%) and people were more likely to agree if they were older. Cyclists are far less likely to believe that cycling was too dangerous for them than non-cyclists (48% to 68%).



**Chart 16: 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, 2017** [ATT0313]

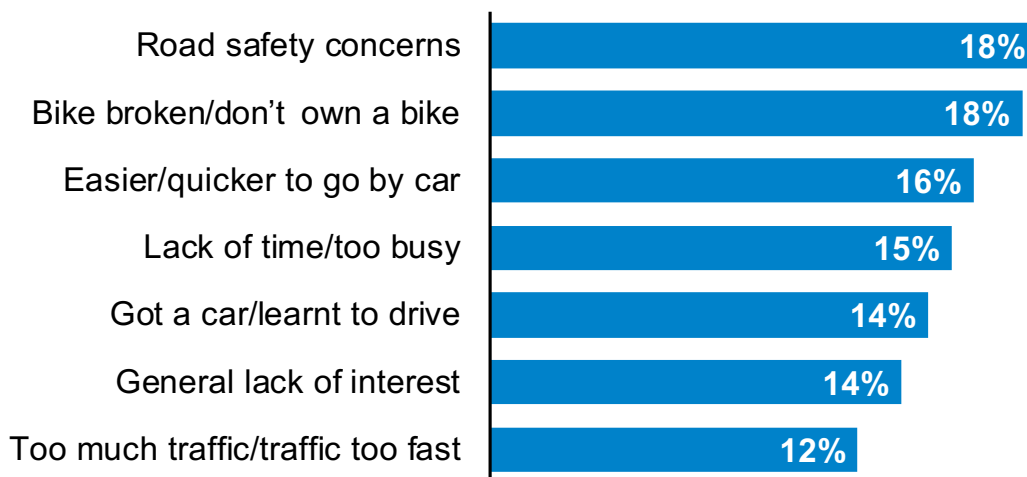


# Factors influencing cycling rates

**Road safety concerns are one of the most common reasons cited for people not cycling more, along with people not owning a bike, or a bike being broken.**

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 “Road safety concerns”, and “Bike broken/don’t own a bike” with 18% of respondents indicating this was a reason for them not cycling more. This was followed by and “Easier/quicker to go by car” (16%). Figures are similar to those seen in 2016.

**Chart 17: Most common<sup>1</sup> barriers to people (aged 5 and over) cycling more, England, 2017 [NTS]**



<sup>1</sup> Percentages sum to more than 100 due to respondents being able to select more than one barrier.

**Adults with mobility difficulties cycle far less often and much shorter distances.**

In 2017, adults with no mobility difficulties cycled over twice as many trips as those with mobility difficulties (18 trips compared to 8 trips) and cycled nearly three times further (72 miles compared to 26 miles).

**People without access to a car cycle more.**

Individuals without access to a car were slightly more reliant on cycling as a mode of travel in 2017, making 3% of all their trips and distance travelled by cycling. This compares to 1% of trips and distance for those individuals with access to a car.

## 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 2017, 10% of adults reported that they had mobility difficulties.

## Access to a car

A person has “access to a car” if there is a car or van associated with their household. This will include vehicles that the person is unable to use themselves (e.g. if they cannot drive or aren’t insured).

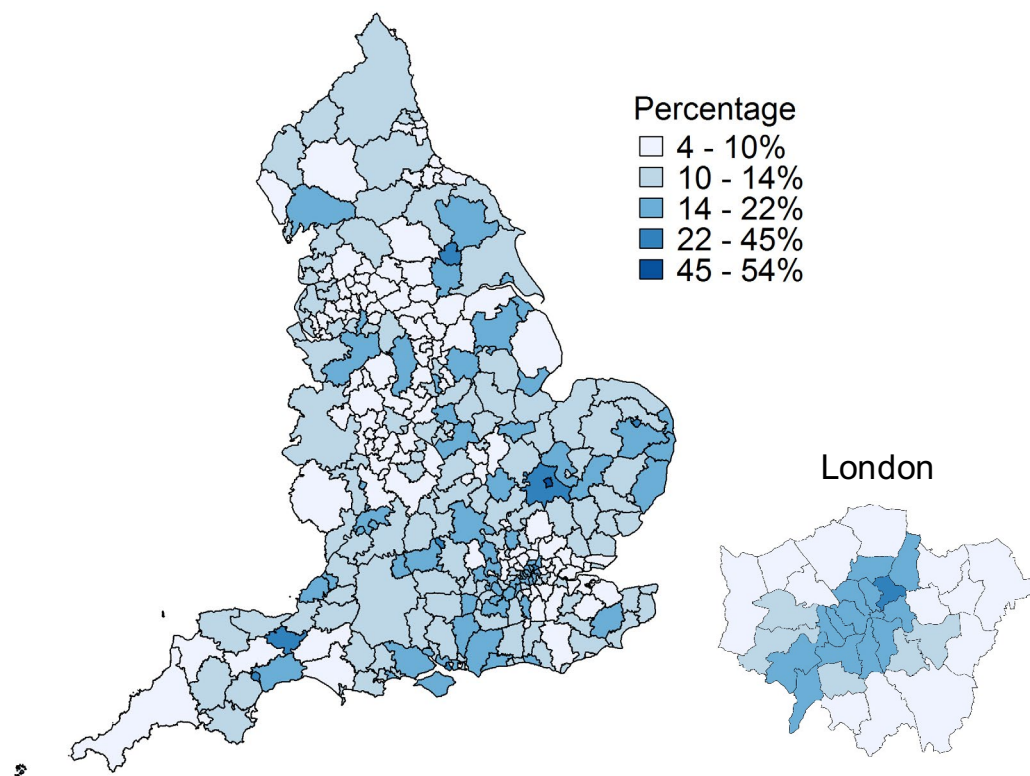
In 2017, 76% of households have at least one car or van available.

# 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 (54%), followed by Oxford (37%) and South Cambridgeshire (33%). Bradford had the lowest prevalence of cycling at least once a week at 5%. Only 13 authorities had more than 20% of their adult population cycling at least once a week.

**Map 3: Proportion of adults cycling at least once a week by Local Authority, England, 2016-2017** [\[CW0302\]](#)



## 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.

\*Note that due to their small size, the estimate for City of London and Isles of Scilly has a higher degree of error associated with it.

**Table 3: Top and bottom five local authorities for cycling at least once a week, England, 2016-2017** [\[CW0302\]](#)

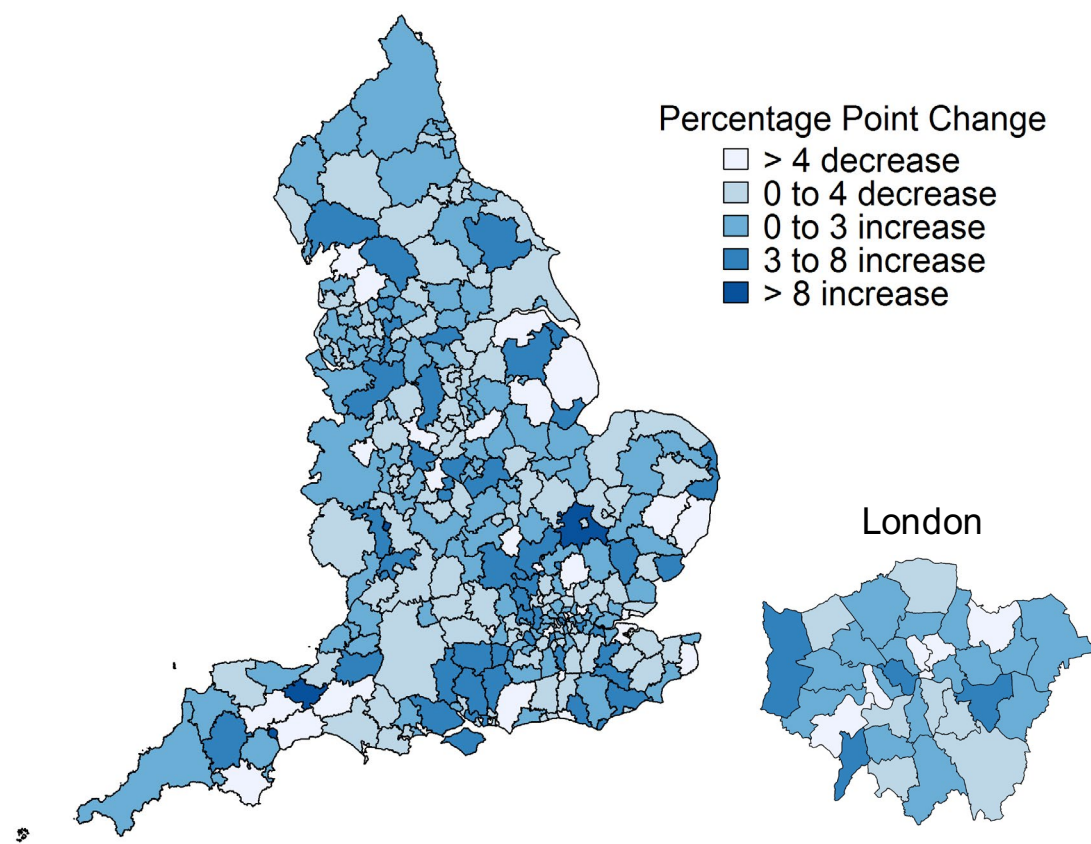
Local Authority	%	Local Authority	%
Cambridge	54.2	Blackburn with Darwen	5.0
Oxford	36.6	Sandwell	4.9
South Cambridgeshire	32.8	Dudley	4.9
Exeter	29.0	Hertsmere	4.8
Isles of Scilly*	27.1	Bradford	4.7

# Changes in local area cycling rates

Rates of cycling once a week have not changed nationally or regionally but have changed at local authority level.

The proportion of adults cycling at least once a week in England has remained the same from 2015-16 to 2016-17 at 12%. Regionally, there were no significant changes from last year.

The picture at local authority level was more varied, with 30 local authorities seeing a significant change (increase or decrease) in the proportion of adults cycling at least once a week from last year. Exeter had the largest increase in proportion from 18% in 2015-16 to 29% in 2016-17. Isles of Scilly had the largest decrease in proportion from 38% down to 27%.



**Map 4: Change between 2015-16 and 2016-17 in proportion of adults cycling at least once a week, local authorities in England [CW0302]**

### Statistically significant

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

**Table 4: Local authorities with largest changes in proportion of adults cycling at least once a week between 2015-16 and 2016-17 [CW0302]**

Local Authority	% point increase	Local Authority	% point decrease
Exeter**	11.1	Isles of Scilly*	11.0
Worcester**	10.3	Telford and Wrekin**	8.9
South Cambridgeshire**	9.7	Lancaster**	8.7
Taunton Deane**	9.1	Mid Devon**	8.4
Isle of Wight**	6.9	Weymouth and Portland**	8.2

\* estimate for Isles of Scilly has a higher degree of error associated with it due to small sample size.

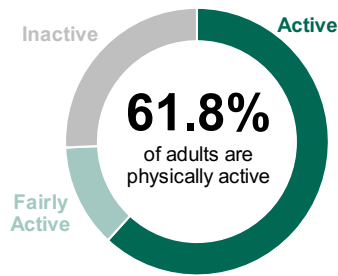
\*\* change is statistically significant.

# Walking and cycling and their impact on health

## Six in ten adults meet the recommended level of physical activity in England.

The Chief Medical Officer in the UK recommends that adults should be physically active for 150 minutes a week. Physical activity must be of at least moderate intensity, in bouts of 10 minutes or more, and can be spread over several days.

In 2016-17, 61.8% of adults were considered “active” by meeting this recommendation through sport and physical activity, down from 62.1% in 2015-16, although this change is not statistically significant.



### Chief Medical Officer

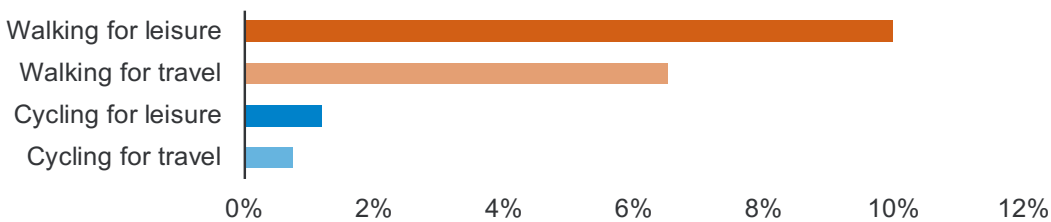
The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) is the most senior government advisor on health matters.

The current CMO for England is Professor Dame Sally Claire Davies, DBE, FMedSci, FRS.

## Dependence on walking or cycling

More adults were dependent on walking rather than cycling to stay active, with 10% dependent on **walking for leisure** and 6.5% on **walking for travel**. With much lower prevalences, 1.2% of adults were dependent on **cycling for leisure** to be active and 0.8% were dependent on **cycling for travel** to be active.

**Chart 18: Proportion of adults that are dependent on an activity to be active, by travel type, England, 2016-2017 [ALS]**



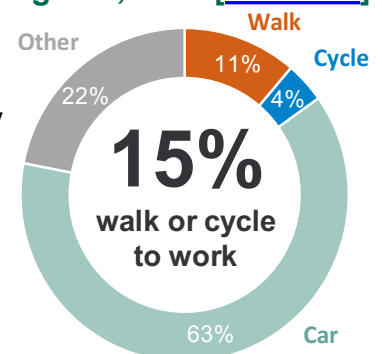
### What is meant by dependent?

This means that if you removed the impact of that activity, an active individual would no longer be considered active because they are not physically active for enough time.

## The proportion of adults that usually walk or cycle to work has remained broadly stable over the past fifteen years

One way people can meet the recommended level of physical activity is by building it into their commute. In 2017, out of all commuting trips, 11% were walked and 4% were cycled. In 2002, these figures were 10% and 4% respectively.

**Chart 19: Modal split for commuting trips, England, 2017 [NTS0409]**



# Walking and cycling to school

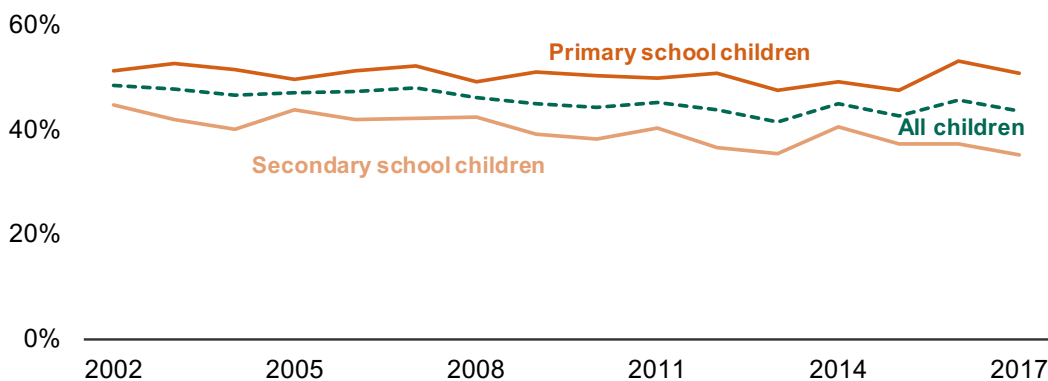
**Half of children usually walk or cycle to school, which has remained broadly the same over the past fifteen years.**

In 2017, 44% of all children (aged 5-16) walked to school. For primary school children this was 51%, the same level as it was in 2002, whereas 35% of secondary school children walked to school, a decrease from 45% in 2002. The lower rate in part reflects the longer distances secondary school children travel to school: 3.5 miles compared to 1.6 for primary school children.

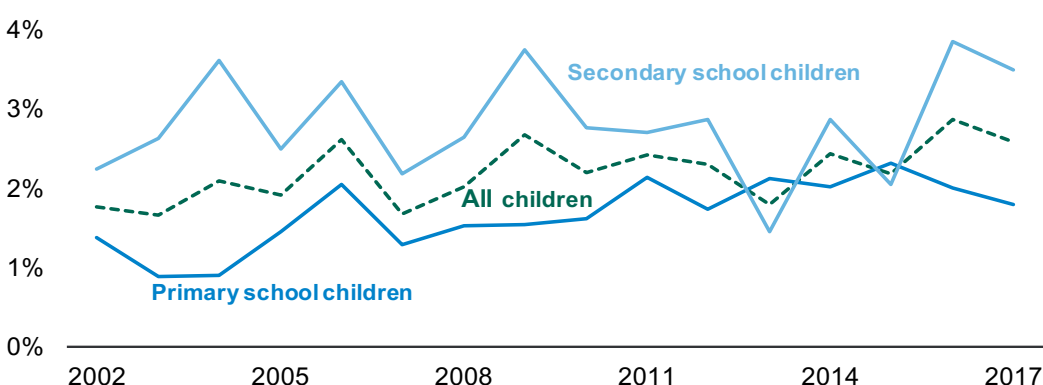
Only 3% of all children usually cycled to school, with secondary school children cycling more: 4% compared to 2% of primary school children.

The most popular alternative to walking or cycling for primary school children was car / van at 41%, which switches to bus (private or local) for secondary school children at 31%.

**Chart 20: Proportion of children who usually walk to school, by age band, England, 2002 to 2017** [[NTS0615](#)]



**Chart 21: Proportion of children who usually cycle to school, by age band, England, 2002 to 2017** [[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

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## 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](http://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](http://www.gov.uk/transport-statistics-notes-and-guidance-walking-and-cycling)

Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours in advance can be found in the pre-release access list at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/walking-and-cycling-statistics-pre-release-access-list>

## 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. It is part of a continuous survey that began in 1988 following adhoc surveys since the mid-1960s. The survey is primarily designed to track long-term development of trends; therefore care should be taken when drawing conclusions from short-term changes. In 2017, the sample size was around 7,000 households and 16,000 individuals. A national response rate of 53% was achieved on sampled households.

## 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 197,000 adults in England in mid-November 2016 to mid-November 2017, thus enabling analysis at local authority level. In 2016-17, 53% took part online and 46% filled in a paper questionnaire.

Results from the ALS are grouped by the area where survey respondents live, which may not be the same area where they walk or cycle, particularly for urban areas where there are multiple local authorities in a relatively small area.

The tables accompanying this release include 95% confidence interval half widths for the estimates derived from the survey, to demonstrate the accuracy of the estimates and the likely range of

values for the true value. This means that some intervals will include errors, but it is not possible to specify which ones. The confidence interval may not contain the true value for the population and a change may show as statistically significant when it is not.

Significance tests have been carried out for the change in frequency of walking and cycling at least once a week. They indicate that if repeated samples were taken, 95% of the time we would get similar findings, i.e. we can be confident that the difference seen in the ALS sampled respondents are reflective of the population. When sample sizes are smaller, confidence intervals are larger, meaning differences between estimates need to be greater to be considered statistically significant.

## **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 results are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics: <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/>

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 and BSA are not National Statistics.

## Background information

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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 **British Social Attitudes (BSA) Survey**: includes numerous questions about perceptions of walking and cycling. DfT analyses can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-public-attitudes-to-transport> and information on the data source can be found here: <http://bsa.natcen.ac.uk/>
- **Road Traffic statistics**: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-traffic-statistics>

## Related information

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- The **Travel in London Report** provide 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/26-september-2017-transport-and-travel-in-scotland-2016/>
- The **National Survey for Wales** contains walking and cycling statistics for Wales: <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/active-travel/?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/bikelife>



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