



Department
for Transport

Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

Report to Parliament



Department
for Transport

Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy - Report to Parliament

Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 21 of the Infrastructure Act 2015

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1. Introduction

Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS)

- 1.1 The Infrastructure Act 2015 introduced a duty on the Secretary of State for Transport to bring forward a Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) in England. In July 2015 Part 2 of the Infrastructure Act (Cycling and Walking Investment Strategies) was enacted through the Infrastructure Act 2015 (Commencement No. 3) Regulations 2015¹.
- 1.2 The Infrastructure Act states that a Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy must specify:
 - Objectives to be achieved during the period to which it relates; and,
 - The financial resources to be made available by the Secretary of State for the purpose of achieving those objectives.
- 1.3 The Act also states that the Secretary of State must, from time to time, lay before Parliament a report on the progress towards meeting its objectives. This report outlines progress made towards achieving the vision and objectives set out in the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2) and covers the period April 2021 to March 2025. Previous reports published in 2022 and 2020 concerned progress towards achieving the aims, targets and objectives set out in the first Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS1).
- 1.4 The third CWIS (CWIS3) was due to be published in early 2025, but because of the timing of the 2024 General Election and the subsequent Spending Review process this was not possible. A written statement to Parliament was published in March 2025² to explain that CWIS3 would be published as soon as possible following the conclusion of the Spending Review. CWIS3 is published alongside this third Report to Parliament.

¹ [The Infrastructure Act 2015 \(Commencement No. 3\) Regulations 2015](#)

² [Third cycling and walking investment strategy - GOV.UK](#)

Vision and Objectives

1.5 The previous Government set out an ambition in CWIS2³ that cycling and walking will be the natural first choice for many journeys with half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030. This was supported by a range of short and medium term objectives, as follows:

Objectives to be achieved by 2025

- increase the percentage of short journeys in towns and cities that are walked or cycled from 41% in 2018 to 2019 to 46% in 2025
- increase walking activity, where walking activity is measured as the total number of walking stages per person per year, to 365 stages per person per year in 2025
- double cycling, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of cycling stages made each year, from 0.8 billion stages in 2013 to 1.6 billion stages in 2025
- increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 who usually walk to school from 49% in 2014 to 55% in 2025

Objectives to be achieved by 2030, 2035 and 2040

- increase the percentage of short journeys in towns and cities that are walked or cycled to 50% in 2030 and to 55% in 2035
- deliver a world-class cycling and walking network in England by 2040

³ [The second cycling and walking investment strategy \(CWIS2\) - GOV.UK](#)

2. Funding

Allocations and Expenditure

- 2.1 The Infrastructure Act 2015, which established the Strategy, requires the setting out of the financial resources available, which are broadly aligned with each Spending Review period. The CWIS2 period covers the period of the 2021 Spending Review period between 2021-2025. The Department worked closely with other government departments to ensure that relevant place-based funds could be used to support walking, wheeling and cycling. This was in addition to providing assistance with the assessment of bids for funding through Active Travel England to ensure proper consideration was given to these elements of the bids and that the funding supported the delivery of safe, high quality infrastructure to support walking, wheeling and cycling.
- 2.2 In 2023 the Department and Active Travel England commissioned Frontier Economics and SYSTRA to carry out an evidence review covering both the CWIS1 (2016-21) and CWIS2 periods (2021-25) to inform the development of CWIS3 and this Report to Parliament. The aim of the evidence review was to understand projected, allocated and delivered investment on walking, wheeling and cycling schemes and programmes, including all dedicated and non-dedicated funds within central government. This was complemented with data on what had been delivered with that funding (outputs), to the extent that data was available.
- 2.3 A comprehensive data collection exercise (completed in July 2024) was undertaken to identify relevant funds and data. The data collected reflects the funding position up to December 2023. The full Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) Evidence Review produced for the Department and Active Travel England is published alongside this Report to Parliament.
- 2.4 The 2022 Report to Parliament estimated that £3.245 billion had been invested into walking, wheeling and cycling over the CWIS1 period. The evidence review has provided a revised estimate for investment over the CWIS1 period of £2.5 billion. The change in the estimate is attributed to a shift in funding allocations from the CWIS1 to CWIS2 period, i.e. active travel schemes originally intended to be delivered during the CWIS1 period were delayed and not delivered until during the period of CWIS2.

- 2.5 Therefore, the evidence review also provides a revised estimate for investment over the CWIS2 period. CWIS2 projected that £3.6 billion would be invested into walking, wheeling and cycling over the CWIS2 period. However, the evidence review has provided a revised estimate for investment of £4.1 billion.
- 2.6 Investment into active travel through Active Travel England over the CWIS2 period totalled £857m. This is part of the overall £4.1 billion investment during CWIS2 as referred to above.
- 2.7 The change in the estimate for CWIS2 and in profile from CWIS1 to CWIS2 can be explained by factors including changes in spending profile; impact of the Covid-19 pandemic; establishment of Active Travel England and the £200m reduction in capital funding for Active Travel England in March 2023.

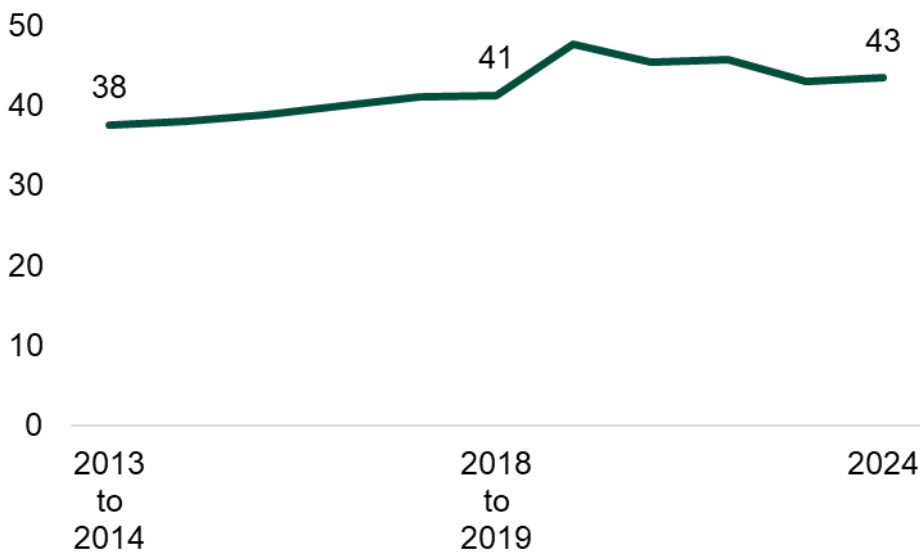
3. Progress towards CWIS2 vision and objectives

- 3.1 Data from the Department for Transport's National Travel Survey (NTS) is used to monitor progress towards the CWIS2 vision and objectives.
- 3.2 These statistics cover the latest walking and cycling figures up to and including 2024 therefore it is not possible at this stage to completely evaluate progress towards the CWIS2 vision and objectives for 2025 until the 2025 National Travel Survey is published in the summer of 2026. The analysis also includes breakdowns by demographic groups such as age, sex and ethnicity.
- 3.3 Due to changes in the methodology of NTS data collection, changes in travel behaviour and a reduction of data collected during 2020, 2021 and 2022, as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, care should be taken when interpreting this data and comparing to other years, due to the small sample sizes.

CWIS2 vision

- 3.4 CWIS2 set out the following ambition:
 - Cycling and walking will be the natural first choice for many journeys with half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030 with a supportive objective to increase the percentage of short journeys in towns and cities that are walked or cycled to 46% in 2025
- 3.5 In 2024, people living in towns and cities walked or cycled 43% of their short journeys (under 5 miles).

Chart 1: People living in towns and cities walked or cycled within short journeys of under 5 miles (%): England, 2013 to 2024⁴



3.6 There has been a gradual increase in the proportion of trips under 5 miles made by people living in towns and cities that are walked or cycled since 2013⁵. Further increases are required in order to meet the 46% target by 2025 and 50% by 2030.

Walking activity

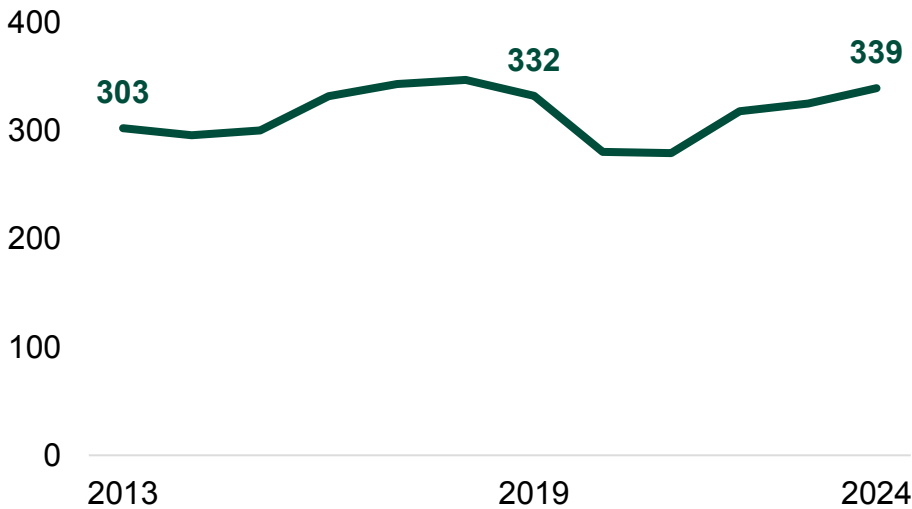
3.7 CWIS2 set out the following objective for walking stages:

- Increase walking activity, where walking activity is measured as the total number of walking stages per person per year, to 365 stages per person per year in 2025
- 3.8 In 2024 there were 339 walking stages per person, comprising 33% of stages. This was an increase of 4% compared to 2023.

⁴ DfT (2024) NTSQ09076: [Average number of trips and stages under 5 miles by rural-urban classification of residence and mode: England, 2002 onwards](#)

⁵ Due to changes in the methodology of NTS data collection, changes in travel behaviour and a reduction of data collected during 2020, 2021 and 2022, as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, care should be taken when interpreting this data and comparing to other years, due to the small sample sizes.

Chart 2: Walking stages per person per year: England, 2013 to 2024⁶



3.9 Average walking stages in 2024 were at similar levels to pre-pandemic (2019) years. Further increases in walking stages are required to meet the target of 365 walking stages per person by 2025.

Cycling activity

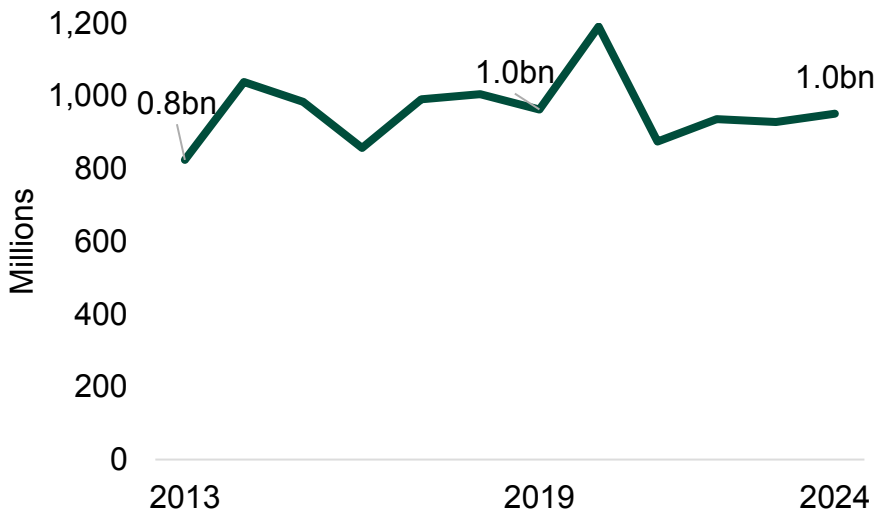
3.10 CWIS2 set out the following objective for cycling:

- Double cycling, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of cycling stages made each year, from 0.8 billion stages in 2013 to 1.6 billion stages in 2025

3.11 In 2024, an estimated 1.0 billion cycle stages were made by residents of England.

⁶ DfT (2024) NTS0303: [Average number of trips, stages, miles and time spent travelling by mode: England, 2002 onwards](#)

Chart 3: Total cycling stages per year: England, 2013 to 2024⁷



3.12 In 2024, total cycling stages had increased by 15% since 2013 (around 0.1 billion cycling stages). Since 2014, total cycling stages have been consistently higher than 2013 levels, but trends have fluctuated each year. Further increases of 0.6 billion cycling stages are required to achieve the aim of 1.6 billion cycling stages by 2025.

Walking to school

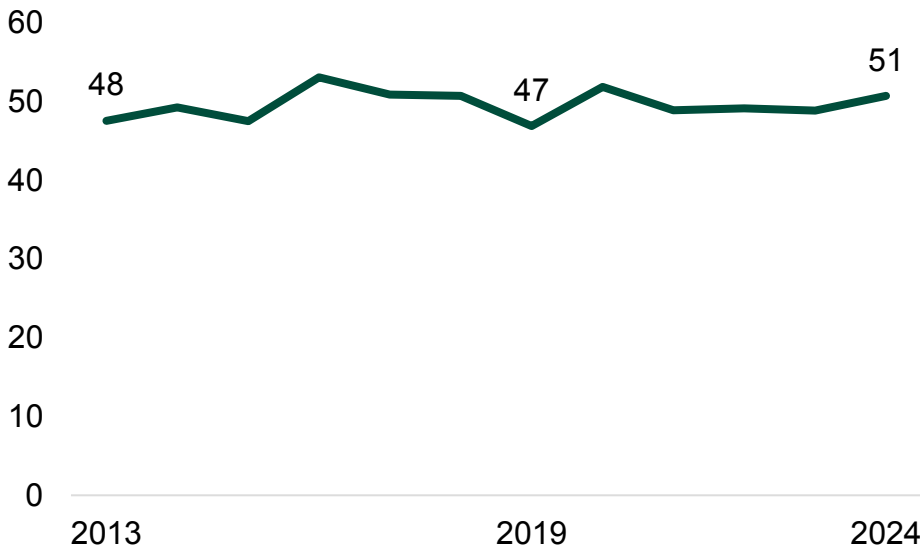
3.13 CWIS2 set out the following objective for walking to school:

- Increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 who usually walk to school from 49% in 2014 to 55% in 2025

3.14 In 2024, over half (51%) of children aged 5 to 10 usually walked to school. This compares to 43% of all children (aged 5-16) and 36% of secondary school children (aged 11-16).

⁷ DfT (2024) NTS0303: [Average number of trips, stages, miles and time spent travelling by mode: England, 2002 onwards](#)

Chart 4: Usually walk to school, children aged 5 to 10 (%): England, 2013 to 2024⁸



3.15 The percentage of children aged 5-10 who usually walk to school has fluctuated, although levels have been slightly higher in recent years, when compared to 2013 levels. Further increases are required to meet the target of 55% by 2025.

Walking and cycling stages by demographics

Table 1: Percentage change in walking and cycling stages per person per year, by demographics: England, 2013 to 2024

Demographics	Change in walking stages 2013 to 2024 (%)	Change in cycling stages 2013 to 2024 (%)
Age		
0 to 16	-13	21
17 to 20	-9	-42
21 to 29	17	-26
30 to 39	6	-4
40 to 49	19	18
50 to 59	38	47
60 to 69	39	61
70 and over	41	3
Sex		
Females	9	8
Males	15	6
Household income quintile		
Lowest level	-13	0
Second level	23	-14
Third level	12	19

⁸ DfT (2024) NTS0615: [Usual mode of travel to school by age: England, 1995 onwards](#)

Fourth level	23	-13
Highest level	23	39
Employment status		
Employed	27	3
Unemployed	9	2
Ethnic group		
White	18	8
Ethnic minorities	-12	57
Overall average stages	12	6

3.16 Overall, average stages increased for both walking (12%) and cycling (6%) between 2013 and 2024. The percentage change in the average number of stages made by walking and cycling vary by different demographic characteristics.

Age

3.17 As age increases, the change in walking stages also increases, with a 41% increase in walking stages made amongst those aged 70 and over. Younger people are walking less, with children aged 0 to 16 making 13% fewer trips in 2024 compared to 2013. Those aged 17 to 20 had the largest decrease in average cycling stages (42%), whereas children under 17 and people aged 40 and over were cycling more. People aged 60 to 69 had the largest percentage increase in average cycling stages (61%) between 2013 and 2024.

Sex

3.18 Average walking stages increased more for males (15%) than females (9%), and average cycling stages increased more for females (8%) than males (6%) between 2013 and 2024.

Income quintile

3.19 Average walking stages increased among those in all income bands except the lowest quintile. The picture for cycling is mixed, however those in the highest income quintile had the largest increase (39%) between 2013 and 2024.

Employment status

3.20 Those in employment had larger increases in walking and cycling stages (27% and 3% respectively) than those that are unemployed, between 2013 and 2024.

Ethnic background

3.21 People from ethnic minority backgrounds saw a decrease in the average number of walking stages (12%) however, the number of average cycling stages increased by 57% from 2013 to 2024. People from white backgrounds saw an increase of 18% in average walking stages and an increase of 8% in average cycling stages between 2013 to 2024.

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