



Department
for Transport

National Travel Survey: England 2015



On average, each person made 914 trips in 2015 - the lowest trip rate recorded. Trip rates have been falling steadily since 1995/97.



Car and walking, which together account for 86% of trips, have decreased while trips by bus in London and by rail have increased.



Trips for shopping, commuting and visiting friends have fallen consistently since 1995/97.



Women make more trips than men on average, but men travel 20% further per year.

About this release The National Travel Survey 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.

RESPONSIBLE STATISTICIANS: Julie Sullivan - Kathryn Kershaw - John Cummings

FURTHER INFORMATION: Media: 020 7944 3231 Public: 020 7944 3097 Email: national.travelsurvey@dft.gsi.gov.uk



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Main results: National Travel Survey 2015



Long Term Trends

- ▶ Compared to the 1970s, the number of trips and time spent travelling per person per year have remained broadly stable. The number of trips has decreased by 4% while the time spent travelling has increased by 4%. 
- ▶ Compared to the 1970s the distance travelled per person has increased by 49%. 
- ▶ Longer term trends reflect increasing access to cars, which is shown by both the increase of driving licence holding and car availability. 



Short Term Trends

- ▶ In recent years, there has been a steadily falling trend in trip rates. The average number of trips in 2015 is the lowest recorded. 
- ▶ In the decade from 1995, the overall fall in trips was largely accounted for by a fall in walking. 
- ▶ Between 2014 and 2015 the average distance travelled per person has increased by 2%. This was driven by an increase in distances travelled by women. However, average distance travelled per person has decreased in the last decade. 




How people travel

- ▶ Car is the most common mode, accounting for 64% of trips and 78% of the distance travelled in 2015. 
- ▶ Walking accounts for 22% of trips, but is mainly predominant for very short distances. The average distance cycled per person per year has increased by 16% since 1995/97, but accounts for only 2% of trips. 

Why people travel

- ▶ Shopping and personal business are the most common trip purposes, each accounting for almost 1 in 5 trips. 
- ▶ Leisure, including visits to friends, accounts for 41% of distance travelled. 

Demographics

- ▶ On average, women make more trips than men, but men travel 20% further, which is mostly due to more commuting mileage. 
- ▶ People in the highest household income group travel more than twice as far as people in the lowest. Most of the difference is due to car use. 
- ▶ Residents of rural areas travel around 44% further than urban residents and almost twice as much as London residents. 



About the National Travel Survey

The 2015 National Travel Survey (NTS) is the latest in a series of household surveys designed to provide a consistent source of data on personal travel behaviour across England.

Key uses of the NTS

The NTS covers the whole of England and is part of a continuous survey that began in 1988, following ad-hoc surveys from the 1960s, which enables analysis of patterns and trends. Some key uses of the data include:

- ▶ **describing patterns** for example how different groups of people travel, or how different transport modes are used, to inform policy formulation.
- ▶ **monitoring trends** in travel, including sustainable modes - for example informing indicators for the DfT business plan and cycling delivery plan.
- ▶ assessing the potential **equality impacts** of transport policies on different groups (e.g. by gender or age).
- ▶ contributing to **evaluation** of the impact of policies, for example relating to free concessionary bus travel.
- ▶ providing inputs for **transport modelling and appraisal** guidance, which in turn form the basis for making decisions about transport investment at a national and local level.

Source of the data

NTS data is collected in two ways: from an interview with household members, and from trip diaries which respondents keep for a 7-day period.

In 2015, around 7,000 households and 16,000 individuals took part.

What travel is included in the NTS?

The NTS only includes personal travel within Great Britain, by residents of private households in England, along the public highway, by rail or by air. Travel off-road, or for commercial purposes (to deliver goods or to convey a vehicle or passengers) is not included.

What is a trip?

The basic unit of travel in the NTS is a trip, which is defined as a one-way course of travel with a single main purpose.

What is a stage?

Trips consist of one or more stages. A new stage is defined when there is a change in the mode of transport.

The image shows a National Travel Survey form. The top part is a purple header with the Department for Transport and NatCen logos. Below this is a 'Travel record of' section with fields for 'Travel week', 'Start date', and 'Your household'. The main part of the form is a grid for recording travel over a 7-day period. The grid has columns for 'Day' (1-7) and rows for 'Time' (0-24). Each cell in the grid contains a small table for recording travel stages, including 'Start time', 'End time', 'Mode', and 'Purpose'. A 'STAGES' section on the right side of the grid provides a legend for recording travel stages, including icons for walking, cycling, bus, train, car, and air.



Important note for users

As these statistics are derived from a sample survey resulting estimates can fluctuate as a result of sample variability. Therefore users should be careful when drawing conclusions, particularly from short-term changes.

Detailed technical information about the survey is available via the link below.

NTS standard errors

A detailed [report on standard errors](#) for selected NTS variables (based on 2009 data) is available.

Accessing NTS data

In addition to the published statistics described in this document together with accompanying statistical tables, the underlying dataset and guidance in analysing it can be accessed from the UK Data Service for users who wish to explore the data for themselves or would like variations on the published figures.

UK Data Service

NTS data can be accessed via the UK Data Service [National Travel Survey datasets](#).

Contact details and request for feedback

Users of NTS data can contact the NTS team at DfT via the details given on the front page of this publication. Email us at:

National.TravelSurvey@dft.gsi.gov.uk

We always welcome feedback to help ensure that the survey meets the needs of users, and any feedback provided will help inform the future design and development of the survey.

Thank you

The 2015 survey was carried out by the National Centre for Social Research. Special thanks are due to the past and present project team, the coders and to all the interviewers. The help of all those members of the public who gave their time and co-operation is gratefully acknowledged.

Further information about the NTS and its methodology

A range of supporting information is available which provides background to understand the source of the statistics presented in this publication, all available from the [NTS collections page](#) on gov.uk:

- ▶ Key notes and definitions
- ▶ A technical report covering all aspects of the survey methodology including a copy of the NTS survey questionnaire and travel diary
- ▶ Over 100 statistical tables



Trends in personal travel

The National Travel Survey has collected data on personal travel in a broadly consistent way since the 1970s, meaning it is a key source for monitoring trends in travel behaviour.

Longer term trends in trips, trip times and distance

The average number of trips per person and total time spent travelling have remained broadly stable since the 1970s. What has changed over this period is the average distance travelled, which has grown as a result of increasing average trip lengths. This is largely the result of changes in how - not why - we travel, in particular increasing car availability and use.

1972/73

4,476 miles

353 hours

956 trips

travelled per person per year
on average (GB residents)

2015

6,649 miles (+49%)

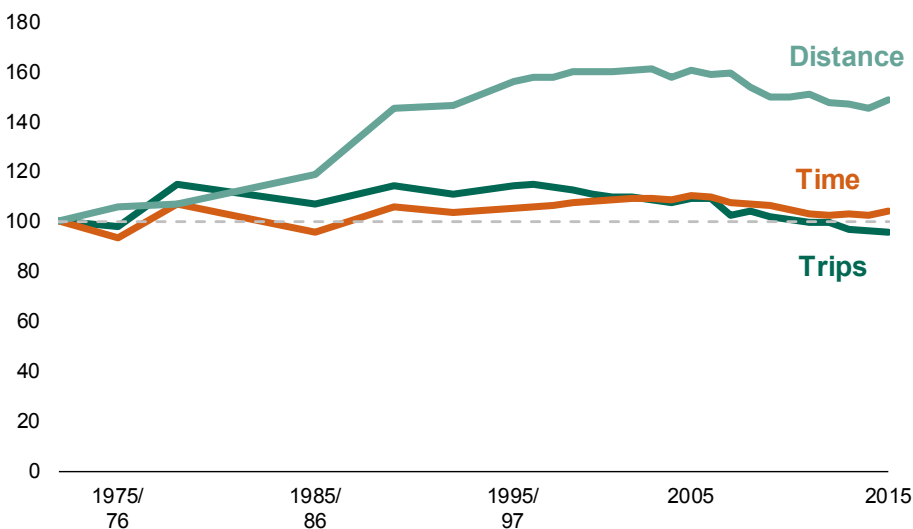
368 hours (+4%)

914 trips (-4%)

travelled per person per year
on average (England residents)

Trends in trips, distance travelled and time spent travelling: England 1972/73 to 2015 [\[NTS0101\]](#)

Index 1972/73 = 100



50 years of the NTS

Although the time series presented here begins in 1972/73, the first NTS was carried out in 1965.

The 1965 survey had some notable differences - in particular, data on short walks were not collected and so results are not presented as part of the standard data tables.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the first NTS data collection, a factsheet including figures estimated from the 1965 survey is available on the [NTS 2014 page](#).

Note on trend data

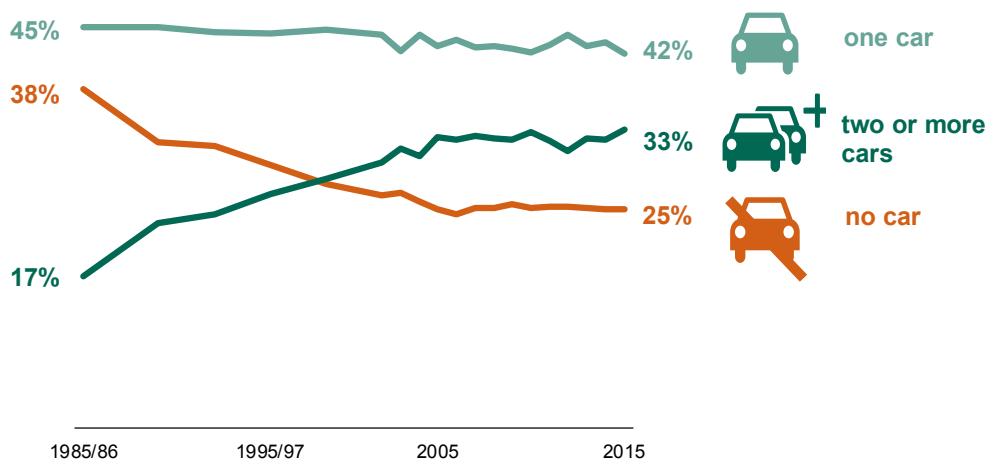
Figures from 1995 onwards are weighted, causing a one-off change in the NTS series. Data prior to 2002 are based on combined survey years (e.g. 1995/97) as the annual sample size was smaller. Figures are for Great Britain residents to 1989, and England residents thereafter. The majority of the comparisons in this publication are not materially affected by this change.



Trends in car availability

Over the long term, the cost of purchasing a motor vehicle has decreased, which has contributed to increases in car ownership. The proportion of households without a car had fallen from 38% in 1985/86 to 25% by 2005 while the proportion of households with more than one car increased over this period, from 17% to 33%. However, over the last decade trends have been broadly flat. This masks some different patterns at the regional level: for example, between 2002/03 and 2014/15, the proportion of households without a car has fallen from 37% to 29% in the North East of England but remains unchanged at 41% in London.

Household car availability: England 1985/86 to 2015 [NTS0205]



Car availability greatly influences personal travel patterns: people in households with cars, on average, make more trips, spend more time travelling and, most notably, travel much further than those without cars. Increasing car availability is thus a key factor influencing the long term trend in distance travelled. Similarly, the more recent levelling off and then decline in distance travelled coincides with a flatter trend in the proportion of households with cars.

Related data sources

Household car availability is also collected by the Census. This provides data at a much more detailed level of geography than is possible from NTS data:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/index.html>

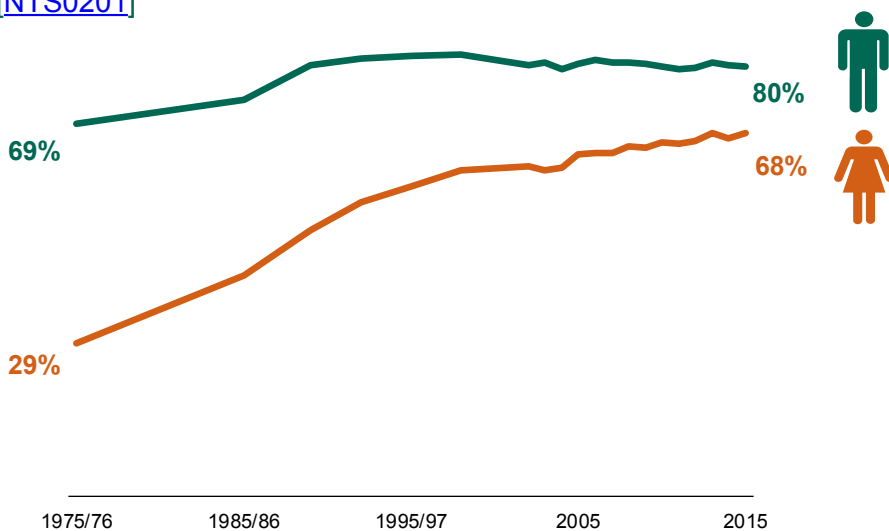


Trends in driving licence holding

The increasing access to cars is also reflected by trends in driving licence holding. 74% of all adults aged 17+ in England held a full car driving licence in 2015 - an increase from 48% in the mid 1970s, and representing 32 million licence holders.

Whilst, over the long term, licence holding among both men and women has increased, the rate of increase has been much greater for women. The proportion of males holding a licence has been flat since the mid-1990s. For women it has continued to increase, reaching 68% in 2015, compared to 80% of men.

Full car driving licence holders by gender: England 1975/76 to 2015 [NTS0201]



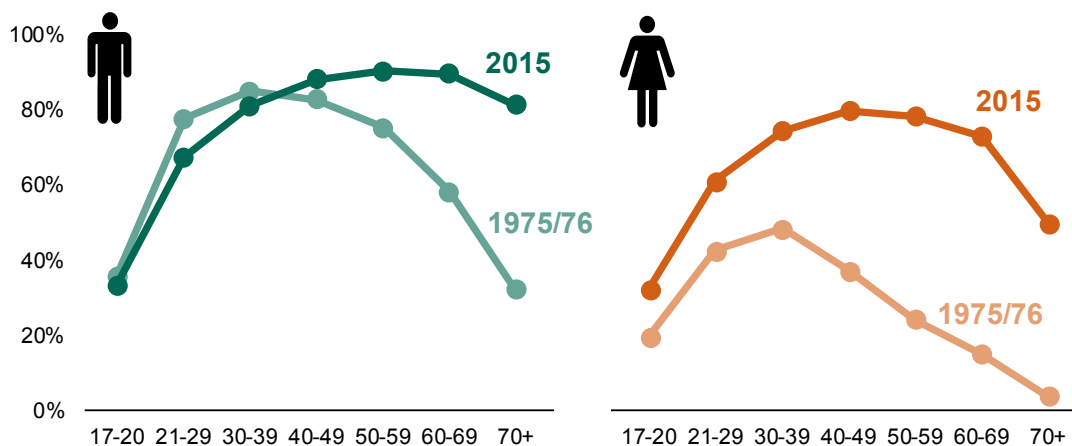
Related data sources

DfT publishes statistics about [driving tests and instructors](#) and numbers of [registered vehicles](#).

DVLA publishes a breakdown of licence holders by age and gender at <http://data.gov.uk/dataset/driving-licence-data>

The increase in driving licence holding has been greatest among older age groups. The proportion of young adults (aged 17-20) with a full driving licence has decreased since the 1990s when it was highest for this age group.

Full car driving licence holders by age and gender: England 1975/76 and 2015 [NTS0201]

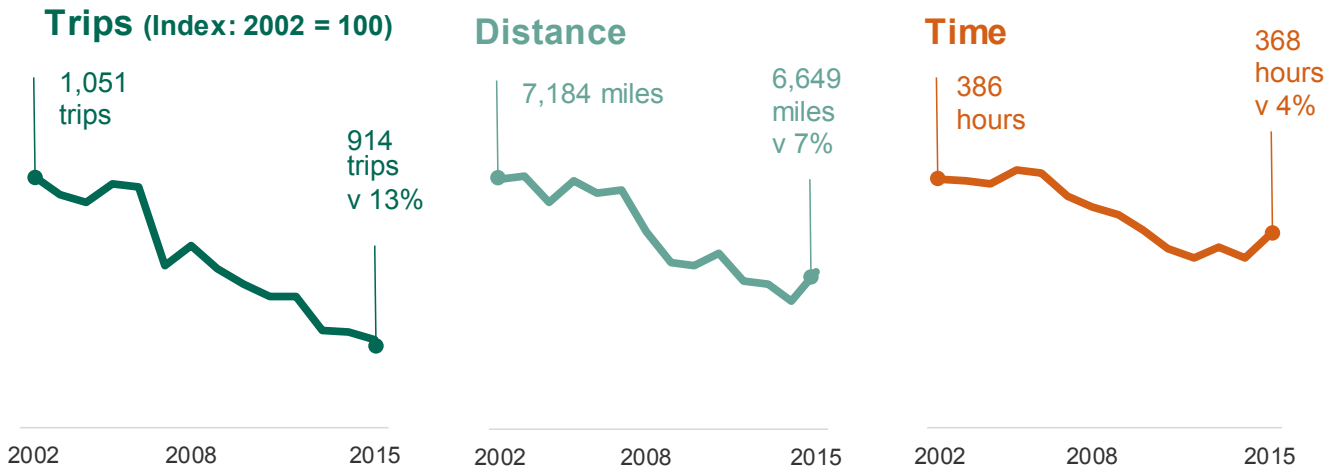




More recent trends in trips, trip times and distance

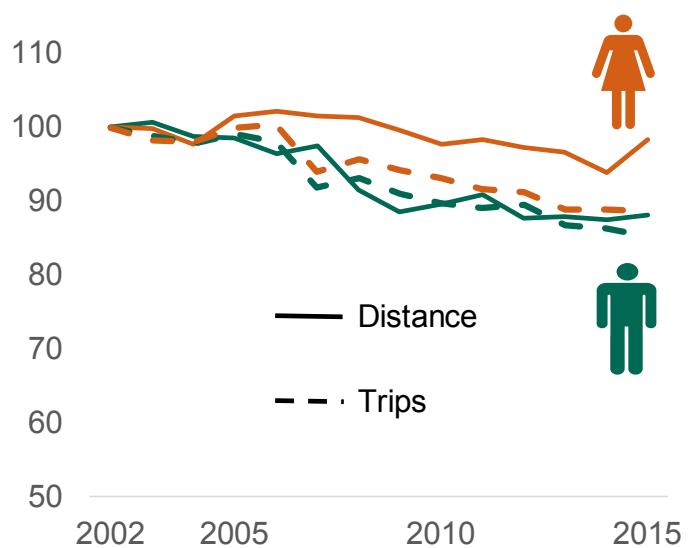
In recent years there has been a steadily falling trend in trip rates. In 2015, the average number of trips was the lowest recorded - 13% lower than in 2002. Average trip distance and time spent travelling are also lower than in 2002, though the fall has been proportionally smaller than for trip rates and with both seeing a small increase in the latest year.

Trends in trips, distance travelled and time spent travelling: England 2002 to 2015 [[NTS0102](#)]



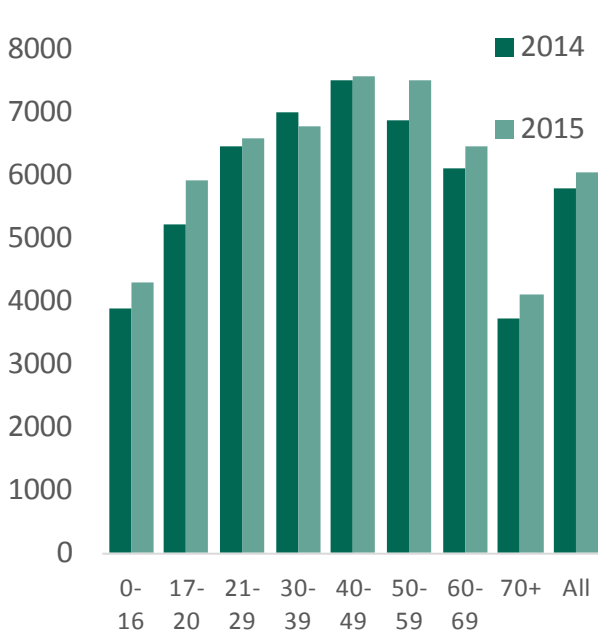
However, the overall trends mask different patterns for different groups. For example, women make more trips than men at 941 per person per year compared to 886, but do not travel as far (travelling 6,057 miles per person per year compared to 7,260). While both men and women have seen a decrease in trips since 2002, the trend in distance is less clear. Between 2002 and 2012 the distance travelled by men decreased by 12% and has remained broadly unchanged since then. The distance travelled by women, on the other hand, largely remained unchanged between 2002 and 2013, albeit with some fluctuation. However, between 2014 and 2015 the distance travelled per person by women increased by 5%.

Trends in trips and distance travelled by gender: England 2002 to 2015 [[NTS0601](#), [0605](#)]





Average distance travelled by women per person, by age: England 2014 and 2015 [NTS0605]



It is unclear what is causing the increase in the distance travelled per person by women. However, clear differences can be seen in both the younger and older age groups: women aged over 50 and women aged under 20 travelled further, on average in 2015 compared to 2014. This increase does not seem to be due to the increase in use of a specific mode of transport, and seems to be driven by an increase in the distance travelled for leisure (sport, entertainment, holidays and day trips). However, we need to wait for the 2016 data to see if this is statistical variation or the start of an increasing trend.

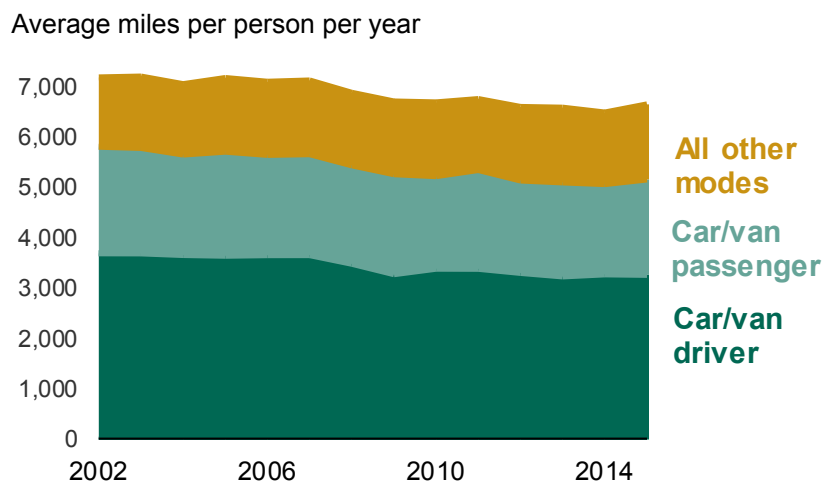
Trends in walking and car use

In the decade from 1995, the overall fall in trips per person was largely accounted for by a fall in walking. In 1995/97 walking accounted for 27% of trips, while in 2005 walking accounted for 24% of trips. This decrease has continued: in 2015 walking accounted for 22% of trips.

Over the same period, the proportion of distance travelled per person on foot remained unchanged at 3% of distance travelled per person per year. However, because walking trips are short the average walking trip has remained largely unchanged, increasing from 17 minutes in 2002 to 18 minutes in 2015.

Around two thirds of trips are made by car, either as a driver or passenger. Since the mid-2000s, most of the fall in trips has been due to fewer car trips, despite the proportion of households with car access remaining broadly unchanged. Over this period, average distance travelled by car per person has also fallen; this is explained largely by the fall in trips, with average trip length by car remaining fairly stable.

Trends in average distance travelled per person, by car and other modes: England 2002 to 2015 [NTS0305]





The NTS figures relate to personal travel at the individual level. Overall volume of traffic is also influenced by population growth and commercial travel. Therefore despite the declining individual car driver mileage, which has led to a debate about whether car use has peaked, DfT traffic statistics show that total traffic levels for all motor vehicles have increased in recent years, and in 2015 reached a new peak level of 316.7 billion vehicle miles travelled

The NTS provides a rich source of data to explore trends in car use (and other modes). For example, it is a key source in the Department's analysis 'Understanding the drivers of road travel', which explores a range of potential factors to explain the trends in car use. The NTS was also used in the recent 'Road Use Statistics' report.

Overall, the Department's work concludes there is little evidence to confirm that car ownership levels or distance travelled per person have reached saturation. As shown by NTS data, car ownership has continued to rise outside London during the last decade (although at a slower rate than preceding decades). In recent years, aggregate car traffic levels have resumed growth, as shown by DfT traffic statistics.

However, there are different patterns for different groups, which are explored in more detail in the following chapters. For example, there are different patterns by age and gender, with a greater decline for younger males, but some groups such as older women continuing to increase car use. As noted, patterns also differ by type of area, most notably within and outside London. The NTS provides a useful source to continue to monitor trends in driving behaviour at the individual level.

'Peak car'

Peak car is a term used by some to describe the hypothesis that car driver mileage per person has reached a peak, and will now begin to fall.

Related data sources

Aggregate trends in road traffic, which show how overall traffic has grown in the latest year, are published in the Department's traffic statistics available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-traffic-statistics>

Further analysis and DfT traffic forecasts

A more detailed analysis of trends in car trips and mileage, which uses NTS data, can be found in the DfT publication '[Understanding drivers of road travel](#)'.

[Road Use Statistics](#) is a new publication which draws together key results from DfT statistics, in particular road traffic statistics, National Travel Survey, vehicle licensing statistics, and road freight statistics to provide an overall picture of roads, vehicles and how people use roads.

DfT also publishes [road traffic forecasts](#).

Further information about trends in personal travel

The statistical datasets published alongside this release provide a series of statistical tables containing further data. [NTS01](#) presents trends in travel over time, and [NTS02](#) covers driving licence holding and vehicle availability.

In addition, the NTS dataset contains a wide range of further details which facilitate more in-depth study.



How people travel

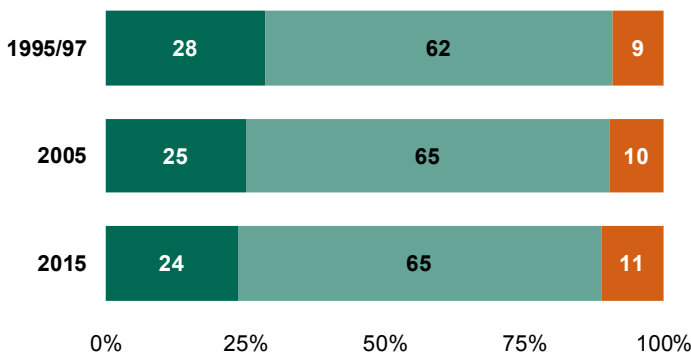
The National Travel Survey collects information on modes of travel for each trip and stage. This chapter will investigate how people travel and how this has changed in recent years.

Share of trips and distance travelled, by mode

The mix between active, private and public modes of travel has marginally changed since the mid 1990s. The share of active modes (walking and cycling) has decreased from 28% to 24%, while the share of public transport has increased from 9% to 11% since 1995/97.

Active, private and public mode share of average number of trips: England, 1995/97, 2005 and 2015 [[NTS0303](#)]

Walking and cycling Other private transport Public transport



What are private modes?

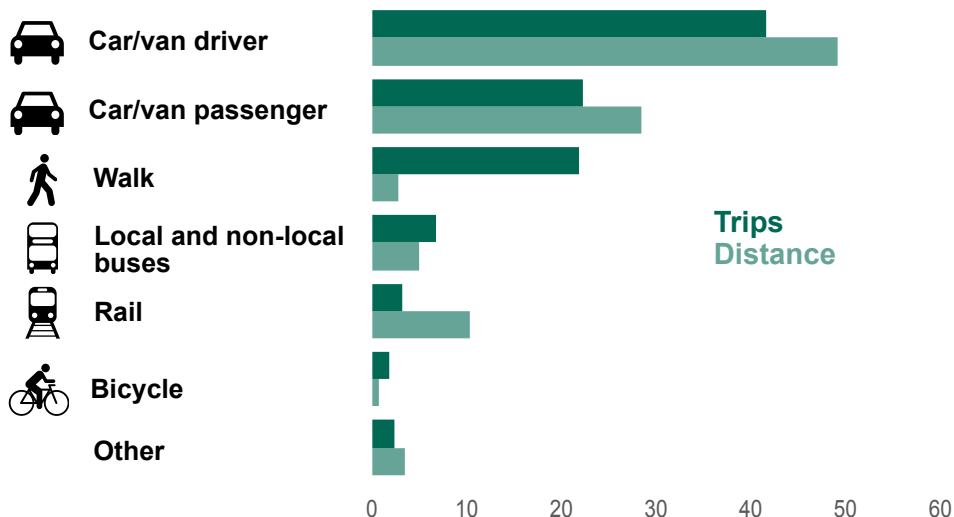
Private modes of transport are walk, bicycle, car, motorcycle, private hire buses, minibus, motorcaravan and dormobile.

What are public modes?

Public modes of transport are local bus in London, other local bus, non-local bus, rail (surface rail and London Underground), light rail, tram, taxi, domestic air and ferry.

The mode share depends whether trips or distance is considered. The modes accounting for most trips were car, either as a driver or a passenger (64%), and walking (22%). Therefore, in 2015, 86% of all trips were accounted for by only two modes: car and walking.

Mode share of average number of trips and distance travelled: England, 2015 [[NTS0301](#), [NTS0302](#)]

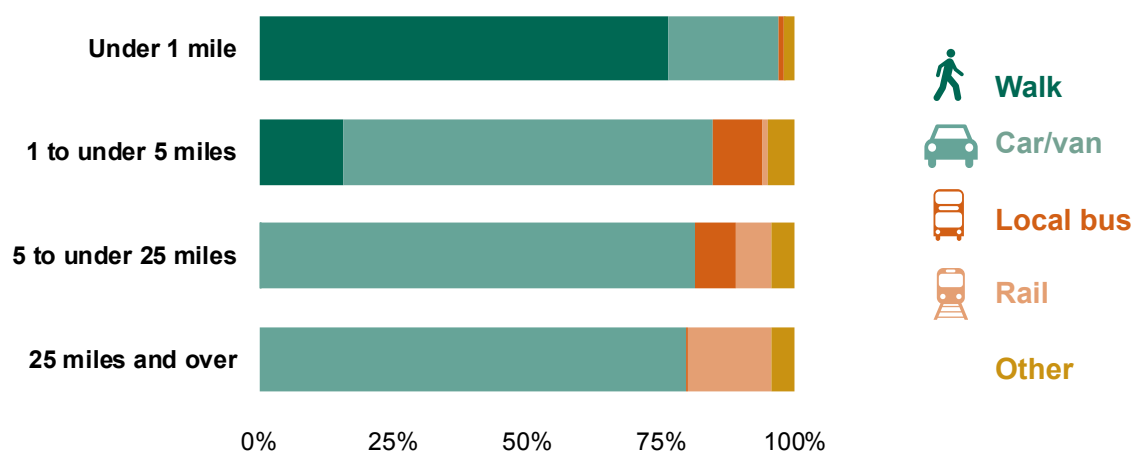




Car, either as a driver or as a passenger, is also the most common mode for distance travelled, accounting for 78% of the total distance travelled in 2015. Walking accounts for a larger share of trips than of distance, because it is a mode which tends to be used for short distances. Conversely, rail travel accounts for a larger share of distance than trips, being predominantly for longer distances.

Walking is the most frequent mode used for very short distance trips: 76% of all trips under one mile are walks. For all other distance bands, the car is the most frequent mode of travel. The bus is mainly used for medium length trips, between 1 and 25 miles. The share of rail trips increases with distance, reaching 16% of trips of 25 miles and over.

Mode share of trips by main mode for different trip lengths: England, 2015 [NTS0308]



The NTS also shows how most trips are relatively short - in 2015, 19% of trips were under 1 mile, and 66% under 5 miles (table [NTS0308](#)). Again, this varies by mode of travel; nearly all walks are under 5 miles, compared with 55% of car driver trips and just 8% of trips by rail.

Recent trends in public and private modes

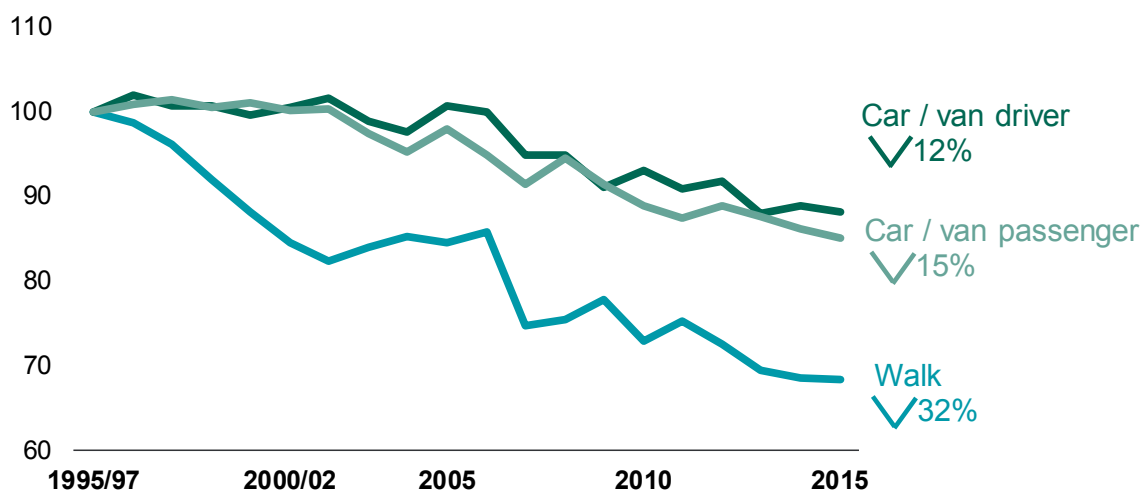
Trips made by public and private modes have evolved differently since the mid-1990s.

- ▶ Walking, car as a passenger, and car as a driver - the main **private modes** - have fallen consistently over time, by 32%, 15% and 12% respectively since 1995/97. The 2015 walking trip rate is the lowest over this period.
- ▶ The trends are different for **public modes**. The increase in the public transport share of all trips shown at the beginning of this chapter is mainly due to surface rail and buses in London. The average number of London bus trips has increased by 37% since 1995/97, while trips made by surface rail have increased by 65% over the same period. However, trips made by local bus outside London have fallen by 19% since 1995/97.



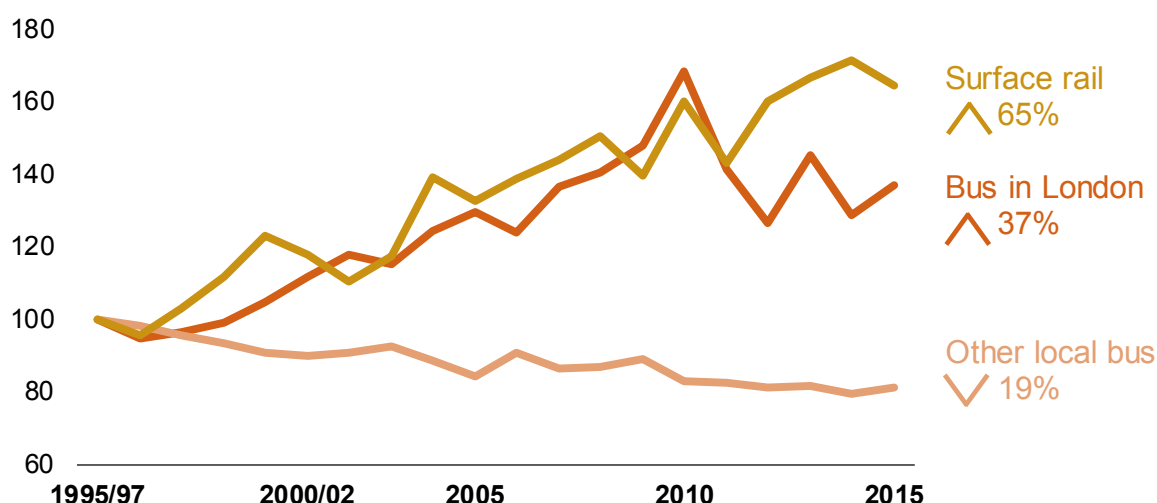
Trends in trips by selected private modes: England, 1995/97 to 2015 [NTS0103]

Index: 1995/97 = 100



Trends in trips by selected public modes: England, 1995/97 to 2015 [NTS0104]

Index: 1995/97 = 100



Comparing 2015 with 2002, the average number of trips per person has fallen by 137 (13%) and distance travelled per person by 535 miles (7%).

Overall (in net terms), these reductions are due to reduced car use, though this will mask different patterns for different groups of people. Although the number of trips by surface rail and by bus in London has grown rapidly, overall these modes still account for a relatively small share of trips and distance.

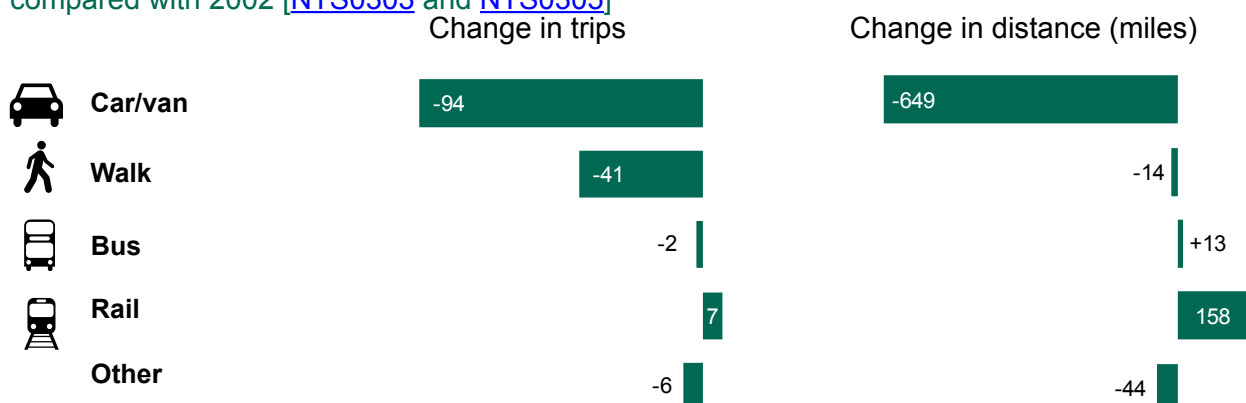
Related data sources

DfT publishes a range of different statistics that look at trends in different modes of transport, including:

- ▶ [Walking and cycling statistics](#)
- ▶ [Bus statistics](#)
- ▶ [Transport Statistics Great Britain](#)
- ▶ [Rail statistics](#)



Change in average trips and distance travelled per person per year, by mode: England, 2015 compared with 2002 [[NTS0303](#) and [NTS0305](#)]

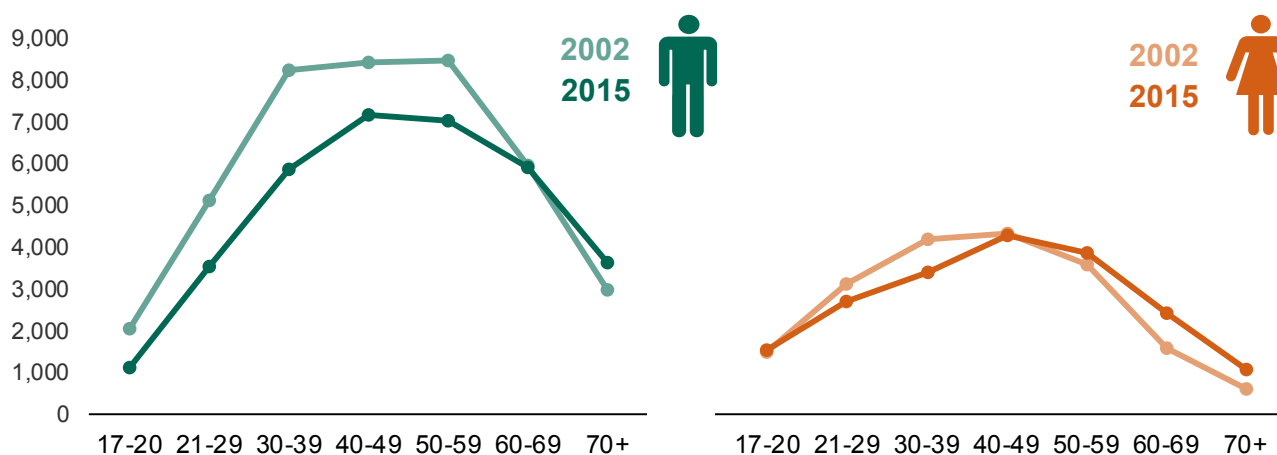


Trends in car driver mileage

As shown above, the decline since 2002 in mileage travelled per person is mostly due to a reduction in distance travelled by car per person (as a driver or passenger). Understanding the reasons for the reduction in car use is not straightforward as there are many potential factors, not all of which are well evidenced. However, data from the NTS provides insight into some of the patterns and factors.

Over the past decade, on average car driver mileage has fallen for men and remained broadly unchanged for women. Among men, miles driven have fallen proportionately more for the younger age groups.

Average annual distance travelled by car, by age and gender: England, 2015 compared to 2002 [[NTS0605](#)]



The following is a brief look at some of the areas where NTS data helps provide insight into trends. This is far from comprehensive; as noted many other factors may affect car travel behaviour (see box right for DfT's more detailed study)

Further analysis

A more detailed analysis can be found in the DfT publication '[Understanding drivers of road travel](#)'.



Driving costs and economic conditions:

Changes in car use tend to be affected by wider economic factors, such as the state of the economy and fuel prices. Increases to the (relative) cost of motoring could also be expected to have a negative impact on car use.

Young people frequently say that the cost of learning to drive and of insurance are main reasons for not learning to drive (see page 22). This is likely to have contributed to declining car use amongst the younger age groups. In addition, employment rates and income growth rates are likely to have an influence on car travel. Employment rates for young people fell more than for other groups during the economic downturn.

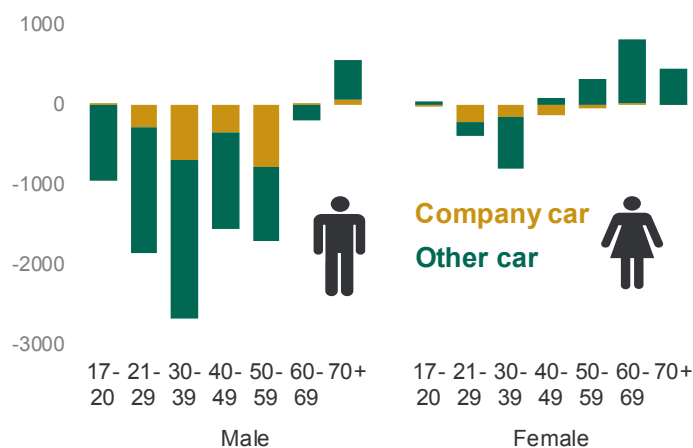
43%

of 17-20 year olds without driving licences cite **cost of learning to drive** or **cost of insurance** as main reason for not learning to drive

Company car use:

Decline in use of company cars, which may have been associated with changes in taxation rules, has been shown to be a factor leading to reduced mileage by men aged 30 to 60 (although the effect was bigger for years prior to 2002).

Change in average annual distance as a car driver by type of car: England, 2015 compared with 2002

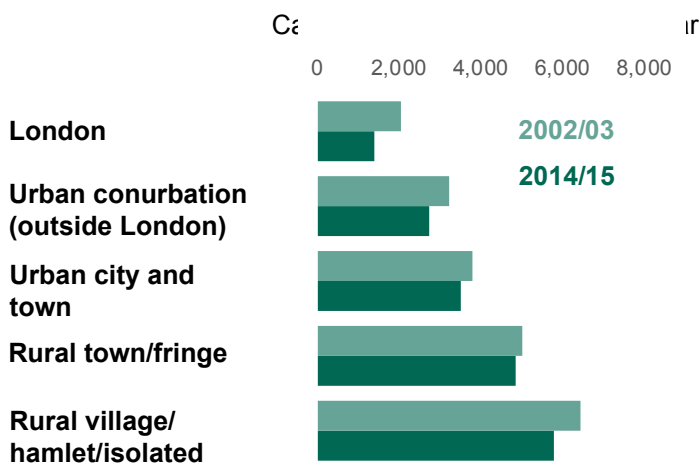


Urbanisation:

Living in urban areas with better public transport may be associated with reduced car demand (as NTS data shows how car use is much lower in urban areas, particularly London).

However, research suggests the effect of urbanisation is fairly modest as the shift in population from rural to urban areas has been fairly small in recent years.

Average annual car driver mileage, by area type: England, 2014/15 compared to 2002/03 [NTS9904]





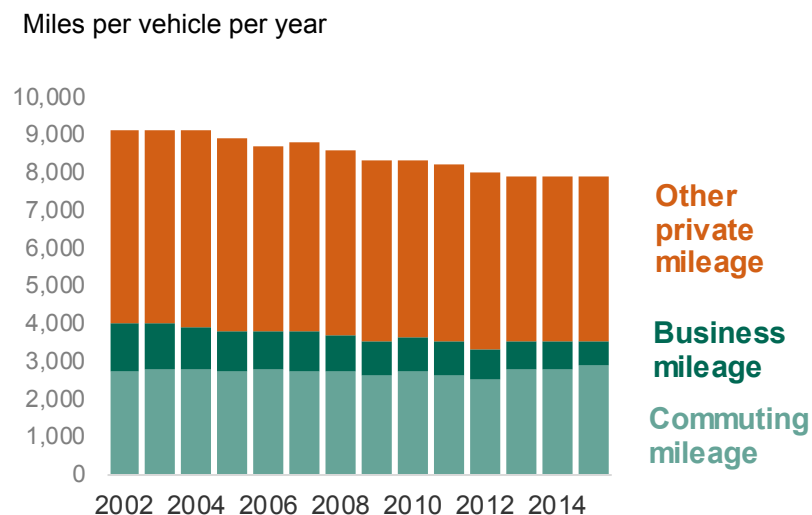
Household car mileage

Recent trends in household car mileage are similar to the trend in miles driven per person per year.

The average annual mileage of a household car was 7,900 miles in 2015, the same as the previous two years and a fall from 9,200 in 2002.

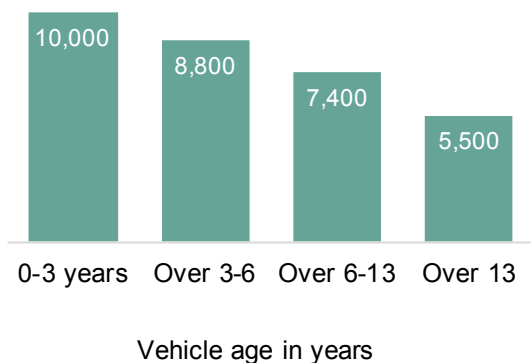
Company cars have an annual mileage more than double that of private cars (18,300 compared to 7,500) but account for only 4% of the total vehicles. The proportion of company cars has fallen from 6% in 2002, which could be linked to changes in how they are taxed.

Annual mileage of household cars by type of mileage: England, 2002 to 2015 [NTS0901]



Although the average annual mileage of household cars has decreased when compared to 2002, the average annual mileage for commuting has remained relatively stable, varying between 2,500 and 2,900 miles per year. Business mileage however has halved over this period.

Annual mileage of household cars by age of vehicle: England, 2015 [NTS0903]



The NTS provides some further information on annual car mileage; for example it is greater for newer cars, and for diesel cars compared to petrol cars.

Related information

[Experimental statistics](#) derived from vehicle odometer readers taken at annual MOT tests are also published by DfT as part of the vehicle statistics series.

Further information about how we travel

The statistical datasets [NTS03](#) contain detailed tables related to how people travel. In addition to the figures presented above, information is available on trip distance, length and time by mode, and frequency of transport modes use.

Section [NTS09](#) provides further data relating to household vehicles mileage.



200

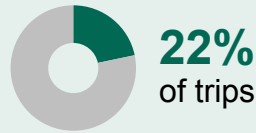
walking trips per person per year on average in 2015

184

miles travelled walking per person per year on average

18

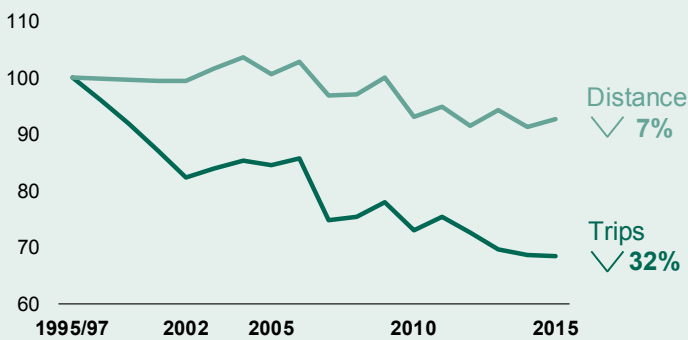
minutes per walking trip on average



Walking is the second most common mode for trips, but accounts for a small share of distance, as walking trips tend to be shorter than average.

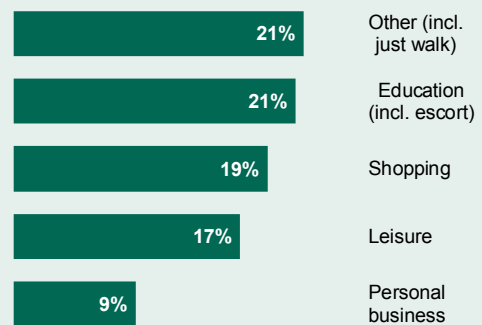
Trends [\[NTS0303\]](#), [\[NTS0305\]](#)

Trends in trips and distance from 1995/97 to 2015 (index: 1995/97=100)

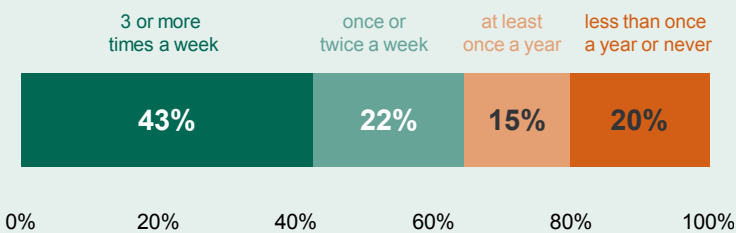


Purpose of walking [\[NTS0409\]](#)

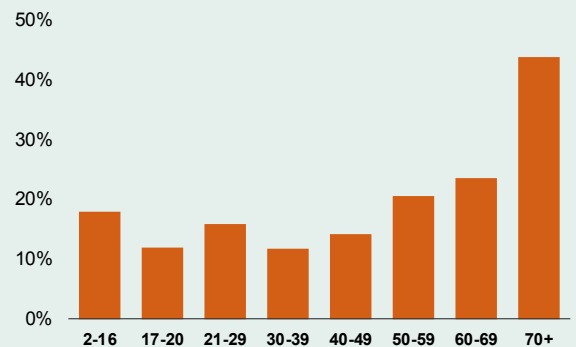
Top 5 purposes, as % of walking trips: 2015



Reported frequency of walking [\[NTS0312\]](#)

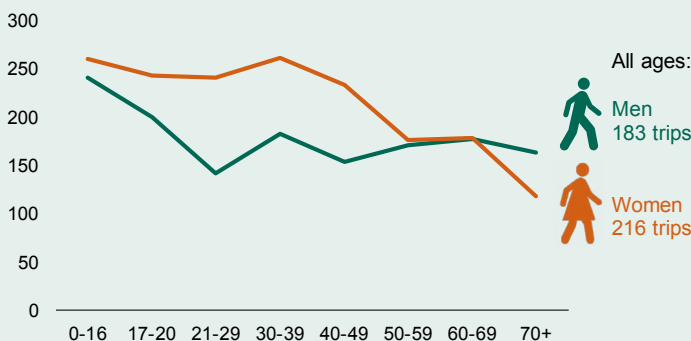


Proportion who walk for 20 minutes, less than once a year or never: 2015



Walking trips, by age and gender [\[NTS0601\]](#)

Trips per person per year, by age and gender: 2015



Rates of walking trips are greater for women than men on average, with the greatest difference for those aged 21-29.

What is a walk in NTS?

A **walk trip** in the NTS is one where walking is the main mode in terms of distance. Walks under 50 yards and off the public highway are excluded. Walks over 50 yards but under 1 mile are recorded only on day 7 of the travel diary and weighted up. **Distance** figures include walks made as part of any trip.

Related data sources

DfT publishes statistics on walking at local area level as part of the annual [Local Area Walking and Cycling statistics](#).



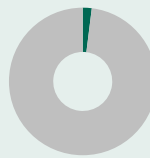
17 cycling trips per person per year on average in 2015



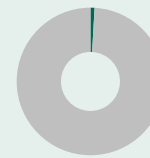
53 miles travelled cycling per person per year on average



22 minutes per cycling trip on average



2%
of trips



1%
of distance

Cycling accounts for a small share of trips and distance travelled.

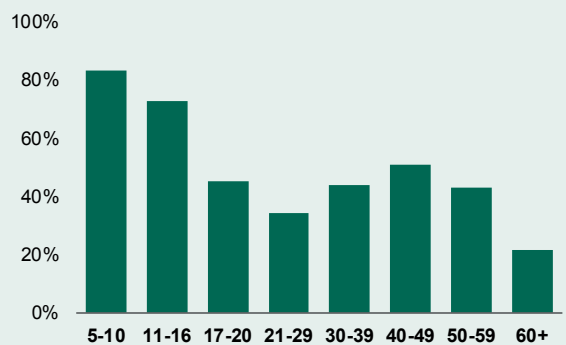
Trends [\[NTS0303\]](#), [\[NTS0305\]](#)

Trends in trips and distance from 1995/97 to 2015 (index: 1995/97=100)



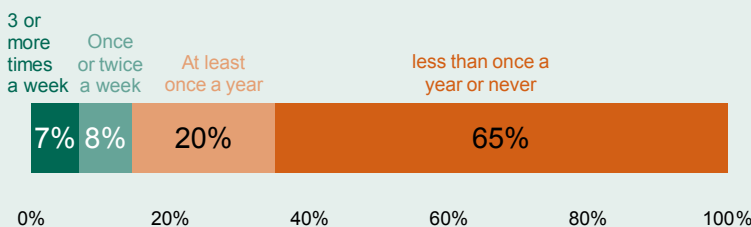
Access to a bicycle [\[NTS0608\]](#)

Proportion who own or have use of a bicycle, by age band: 2013-15 combined



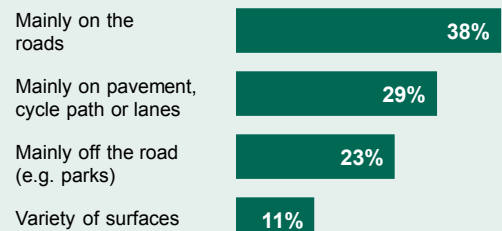
Frequency of cycling [\[NTS0313\]](#)

65% of people aged 5+ use a bicycle less than once a year or never.



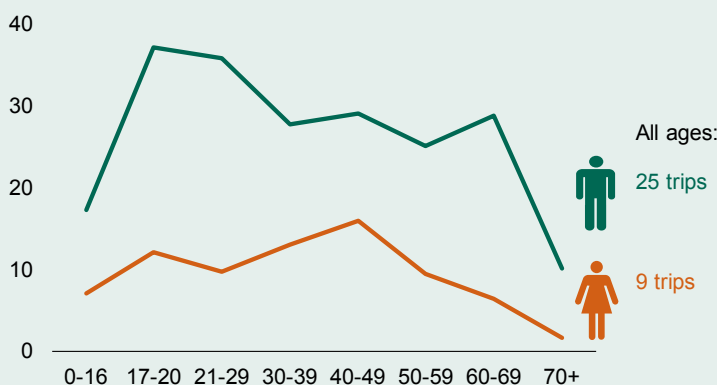
Where people cycle [\[NTS0315\]](#)

Where usually cycled in the last 12 months: 2015



Cycling trips by age and gender [\[NTS0601\]](#)

Trips per person per year, by age and gender: 2015



Men make more cycling trips than women at all ages, with the greatest difference for those aged 21-29.

What is a cycling trip in 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.

Related data sources

DfT publishes statistics on cycling at local area level as part of the annual [Local Area Walking and Cycling statistics](#).



584

trips made by car (driver or passenger) per person per year on average in 2015



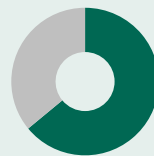
5,159

miles travelled by car per person per year on average



22

minutes per car trip on average



64%
of trips



78%
of distance

Car (as a driver and as a passenger) is the most common mode for both trips and distance travelled, but car use has been falling in the last decade.

Trends [\[NTS0303\]](#)

Trends in trips from 1995/97 to 2015 (index: 1995/97=100)

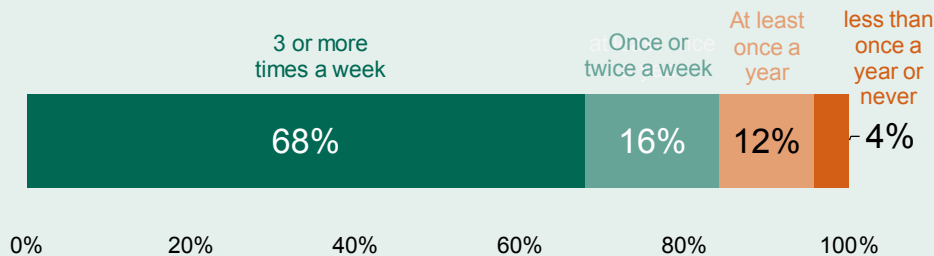


Trends [\[NTS0305\]](#)

Trends in distance from 1995/97 to 2015 (index: 1995/97=100)



Frequency of private car use [\[NTS0313\]](#)



What is a car trip in NTS?

Figures for car trips and distance presented here relate to both **cars** and **vans**.

Further information

In addition to the figures presented here, the National Travel Survey collects statistics on household vehicles in the [NTS09](#) tables, including annual mileage, type of car (company or private), and fuel type.

Related data sources

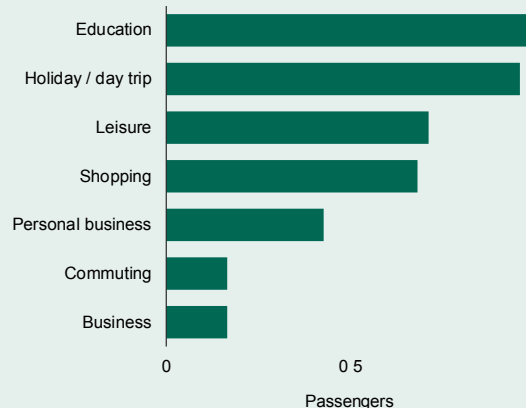
Statistics on the volume of road traffic are available at: <http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-traffic-statistics>.

Car occupancy [\[NTS0906\]](#)

1.6
persons in the car on average for a car driving stage

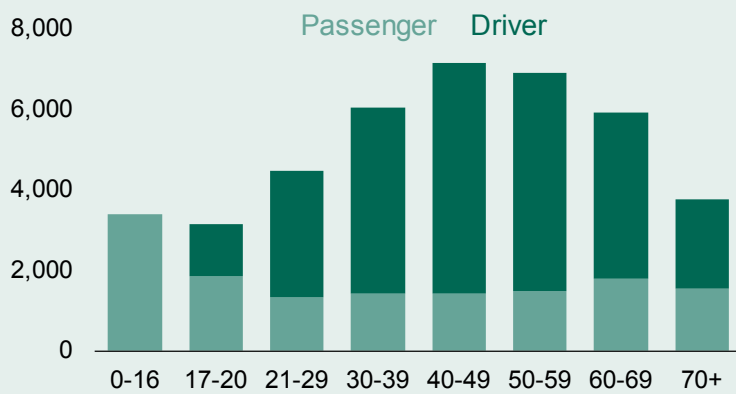
62%
of car driving stages, where the driver is alone in the car

Average number of car passengers by purpose: 2015





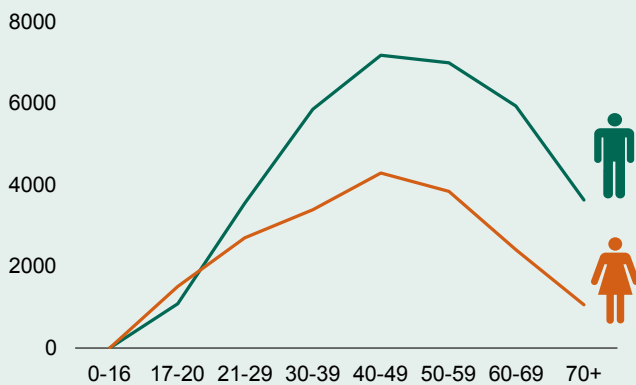
Car mileage, by age and gender [\[NTS0605\]](#)



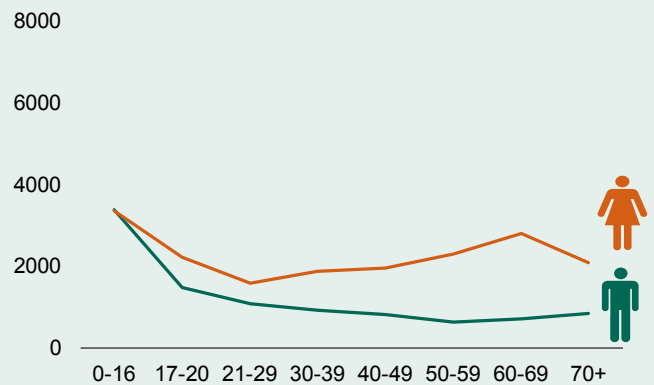
Car mileage increases with age until 40-49 years old, and then decreases. Car driver accounts for a larger share of total car mileage for all age groups except the youngest (0-16 and 17-20).

Distance travelled by car as a driver is lower for women, but women do more mileage as car passengers than men at all ages.

Distance travelled as a car driver in miles, by age and gender: 2015



Distance travelled as a car passenger in miles, by age and gender: 2015



Travel and personal car access [\[NTS0702\]](#)



Persons in households without a car

687 trips
per person per year

2,934 miles
per person per year



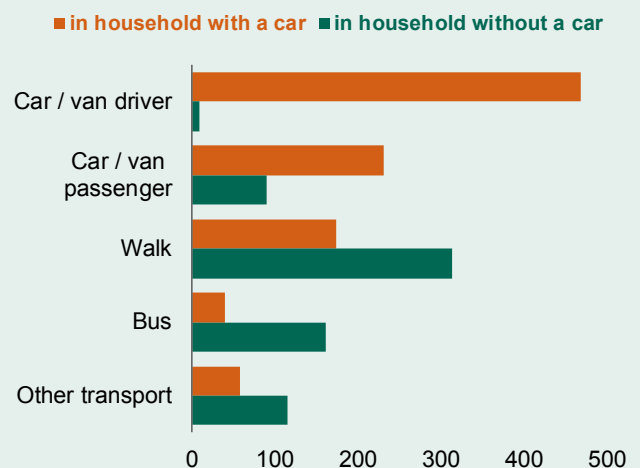
Persons in households with a car

967 trips
per person per year

7,514 miles
per person per year

People living in households with a car make 1.4 times more trips and travel 2.6 times further than people living in households without cars.

Trips per person per year, by personal car access: 2015

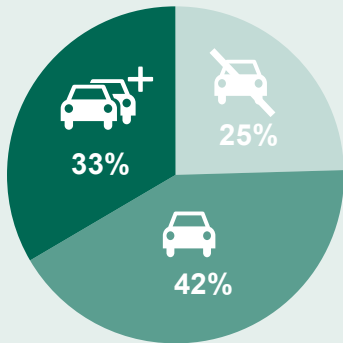


People who do not have access to a car in their household most often walk or travel by bus. Car driving is the most frequent mode for people with a car in their household.

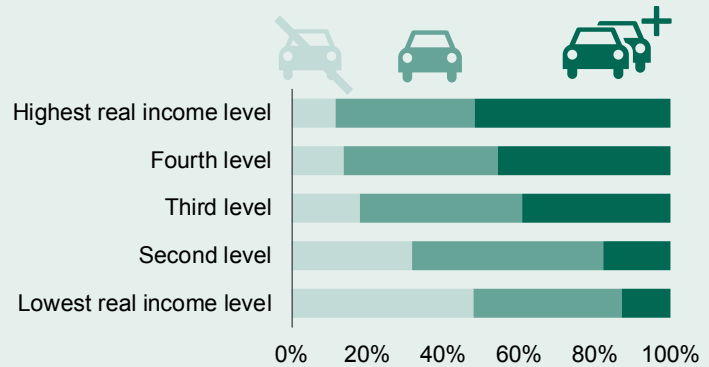


Household car access [\[NTS0205\]](#), [\[NTS0703\]](#)

Household car availability: 2015



Household car availability, by household income quintile: 2015



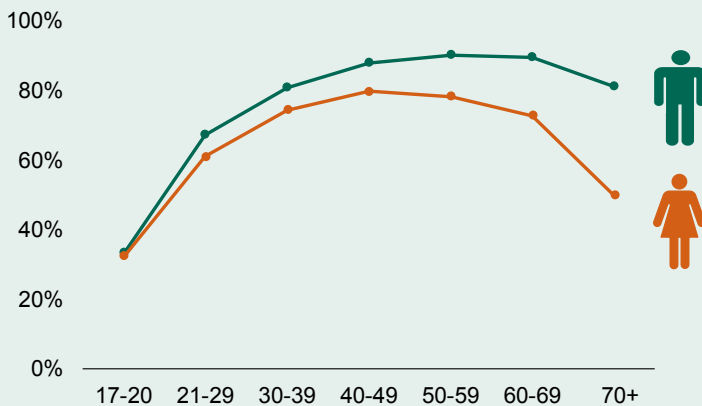
Driving licence holding in 2015 [\[NTS0201\]](#)



32.2 million estimated licence holders

74% of English residents aged 17+

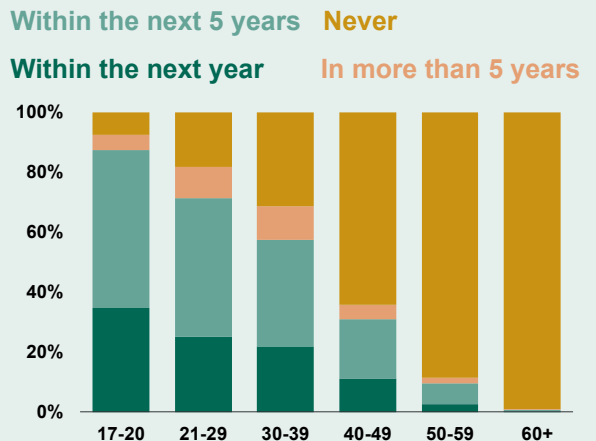
Full car driving licence holders, by age and gender: 2015



Learning to drive [\[NTS0203\]](#), [\[NTS0204\]](#)

Amongst people who do not hold a driving licence, how soon they think they will learn to drive varies by age. Younger age groups are more inclined to say they will learn to drive in the near future.

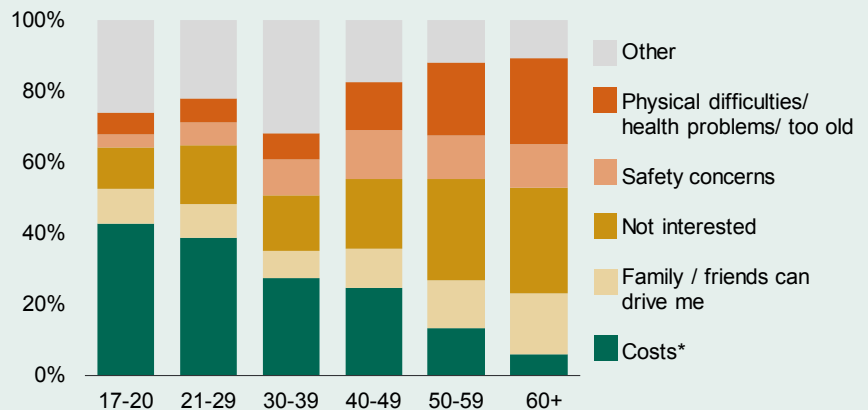
How soon non-licence holders think they will learn to drive, by age: 2015



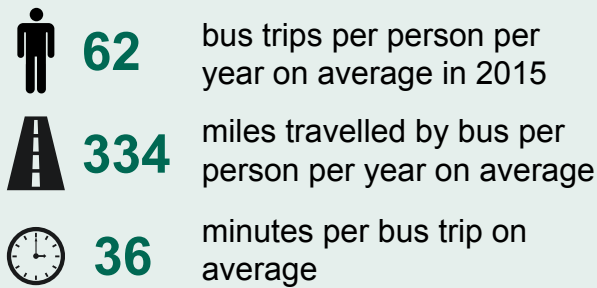
Among people who do not hold a driving licence, the reasons for not learning to drive also vary by age.

For young people, costs are the main barrier for not learning to drive, whereas older age groups are more often not interested in driving, have safety concerns or physical difficulties.

Main reason for not learning to drive, by age: 2015



* includes learning to drive, insurance, buying a car and other general motoring costs



Bus travel accounts for a small share of trips and distance. The bus is mainly used for medium length trips (1 to 25 miles).

Trends (NTS0303)

Trends in trips per person per year from 1995/97 to 2015 (index: 1995/97=100)



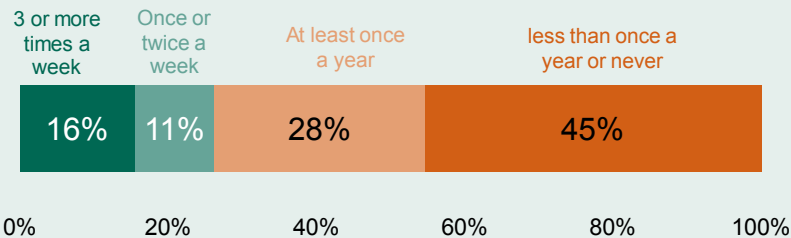
(NTS0305)

Trends in distance from 1995/97 to 2015 (index: 1995/97=100)



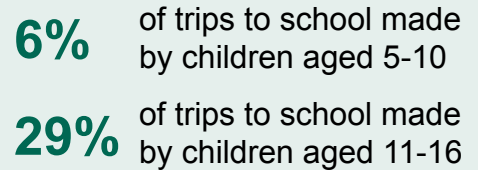
Trips and mileage made by bus in London have increased in the last 20 years, whereas the number of trips made by local bus outside London has decreased by 19% in the same period.

Frequency of local bus use (NTS0305)



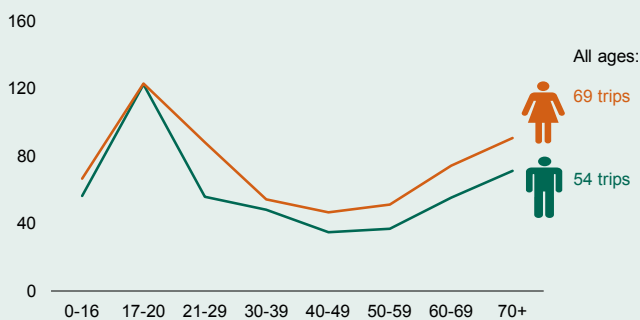
Trips to school (NTS0613)

Private and local buses account for...



Bus use by age and gender (NTS0601)

Trips per person per year by age and gender: 2015



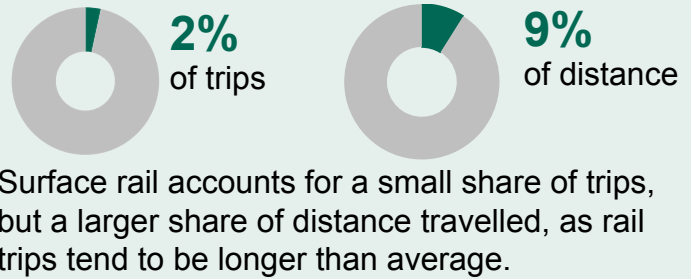
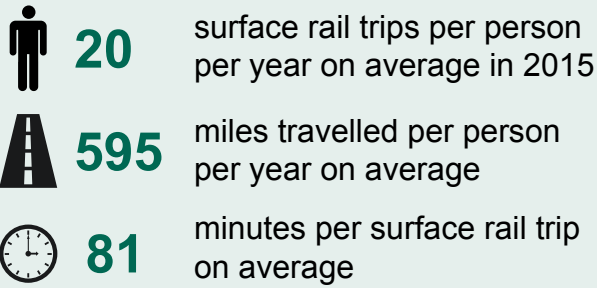
Women make more bus trips than men at all ages.

What is a bus trip in the NTS?

Local bus includes all local services, which can be split between bus in London and other local bus. **Non-local bus** includes express services, excursions and tours. Unless otherwise specified, bus refers to local and non-local bus.

Related data sources

DfT publishes bus statistics, available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/bus-statistics>.

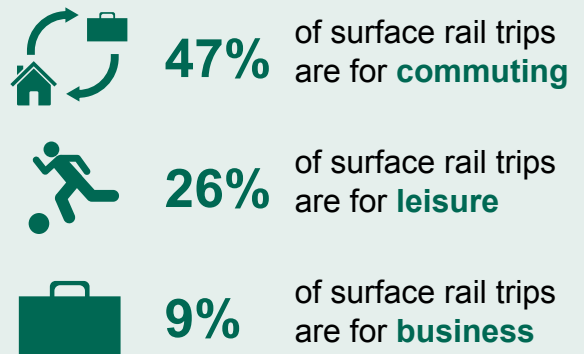


Trends [\(NTS0303, NTS0305\)](#)

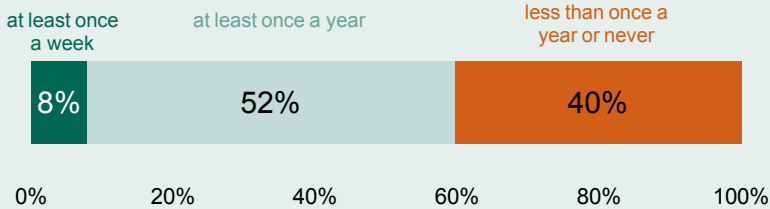
Trends in trips and distance from 1995/97 to 2015 (index: 1995/97=100)



Purpose of surface rail trips [\(NTS0409\)](#)

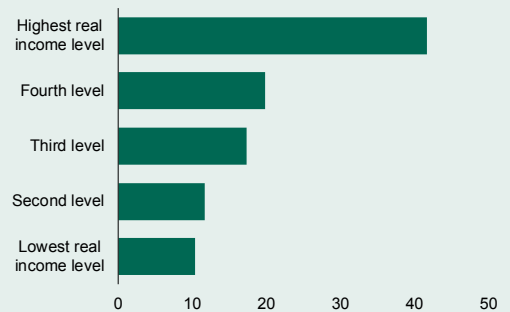


Frequency of surface rail use [\(NTS0313\)](#)



Surface rail trips by income [\(NTS0705\)](#)

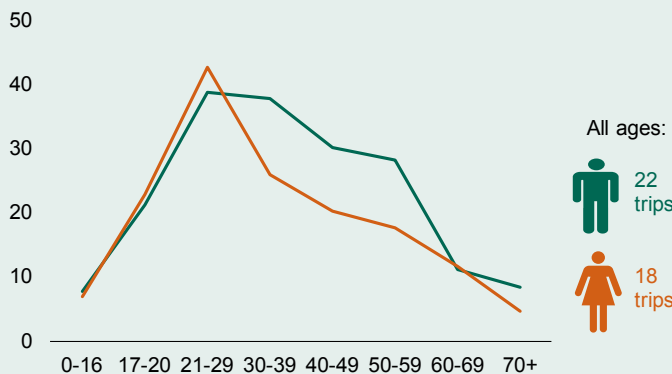
Trips per person per year, by household income quintile: 2015



People in the highest income level make 4 times more surface rail trips than people in the lowest.

Surface rail trips, by age and gender [\(NTS0601\)](#)

Trips per person per year, by age and gender: 2015



Surface rail trip rates are higher for middle age bands (21-39), and men make more surface rail trips than women, on average.

What is a surface rail trip?

Surface rail includes national rail and London Overground, but excludes London Underground, DLR, trams or light rail.

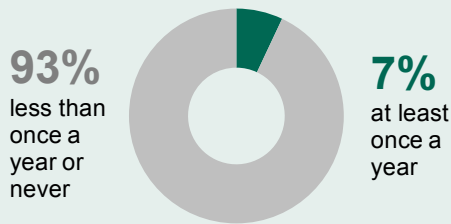
Related data sources

Rail statistics are published by the [Office of Rail and Road](#), and by [DfT Rail Statistics](#).



Frequency of domestic flights (NTS0313)

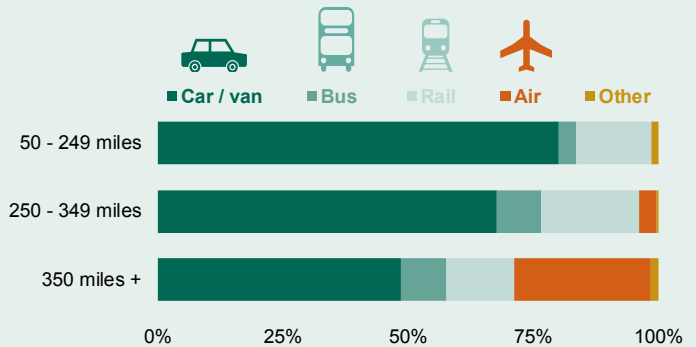
Frequency of use of domestic air: 2015



The proportion of people who travel at least once a year by domestic air has decreased over the last decade from 10% to 7%.

Domestic air as share of long trips (NTS0317)

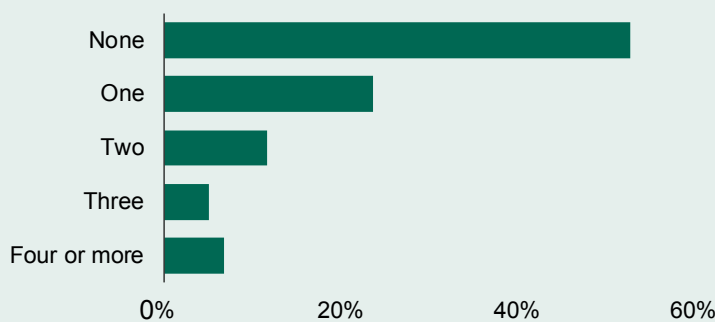
Mode share of long distance trips, by trip length: 2015



Domestic air accounts for 27% of long distance trips of 350 miles and over.

Frequency of international flights (NTS0316)

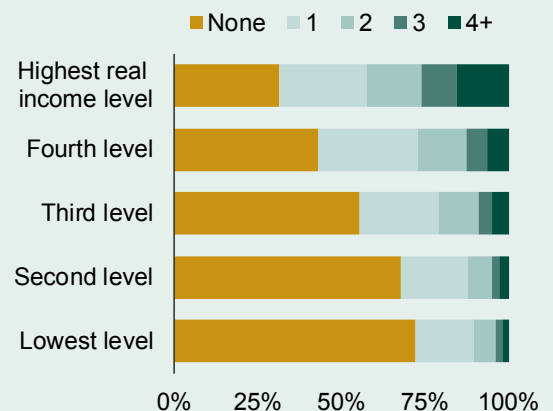
Number of flights abroad in the last 12 months: 2015



53% of people made no international flights in the last 12 months.

International flights by income

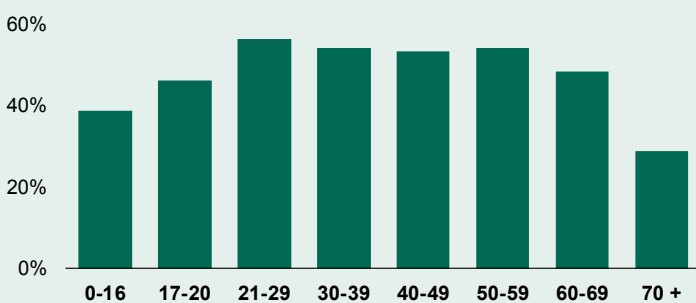
Number of flights abroad in the last 12 months, by household income quintile: 2015



The proportion of people who took at least one international flight in the last 12 months increased with household income level, from 28% in the lowest quintile to 69% in the highest.

International flights by age

Percentage of people who made at least one flight abroad in the last 12 months, by age: 2015



Younger and older age groups travel abroad less than average. This does not vary for gender.

What is a flight in NTS?

Domestic air relates to single way flights within Great Britain. **International air** refers to single way flights overseas.

Related data sources

Aviation statistics are published by DfT, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/aviation-statistics>.



Why people travel

The subject of the National Travel Survey is personal travel - trips people make in order to reach a destination, with each trip having a single main purpose. Therefore the NTS provides a key source of information on why people travel.

Share of trips and distance travelled by purpose

Shopping and personal business are the most common reasons for travelling - each accounting for 19% of trips per person, but accounting for a smaller share of trip distance (11% and 13% respectively).

Other leisure - which includes holidays and day trips, sport and entertainment - accounts for the highest share of distance travelled per person at 22% (16% of trips).

These figures are averages over the whole population; reasons for travelling vary by many factors, such as age. Some of these are explored later in this report.

Purpose of travel in the NTS

The purposes of travel used in this section can be summarised as follows:

- ▶ **Commuting:** trips from home to usual place of work or from usual workplace to home
- ▶ **Business:** personal trips in course of work
- ▶ **Education:** trips to school or college
- ▶ **Shopping:** trips to the shops or from shops to home
- ▶ **Personal business:** visits to services, medical consultations, etc.
- ▶ **Visit friends:** trips to visit friends, either at someone's home or elsewhere
- ▶ **Other leisure:** mostly entertainment, sport, holidays and day trips

Escort trips are those made to accompany someone else e.g. taking a child to school is escort education.

For more details on trip purposes, please see [Notes and definitions](#).

Purpose share of average number of trips and distance travelled: England, 2015 [[NTS0401](#), [NTS0402](#)]

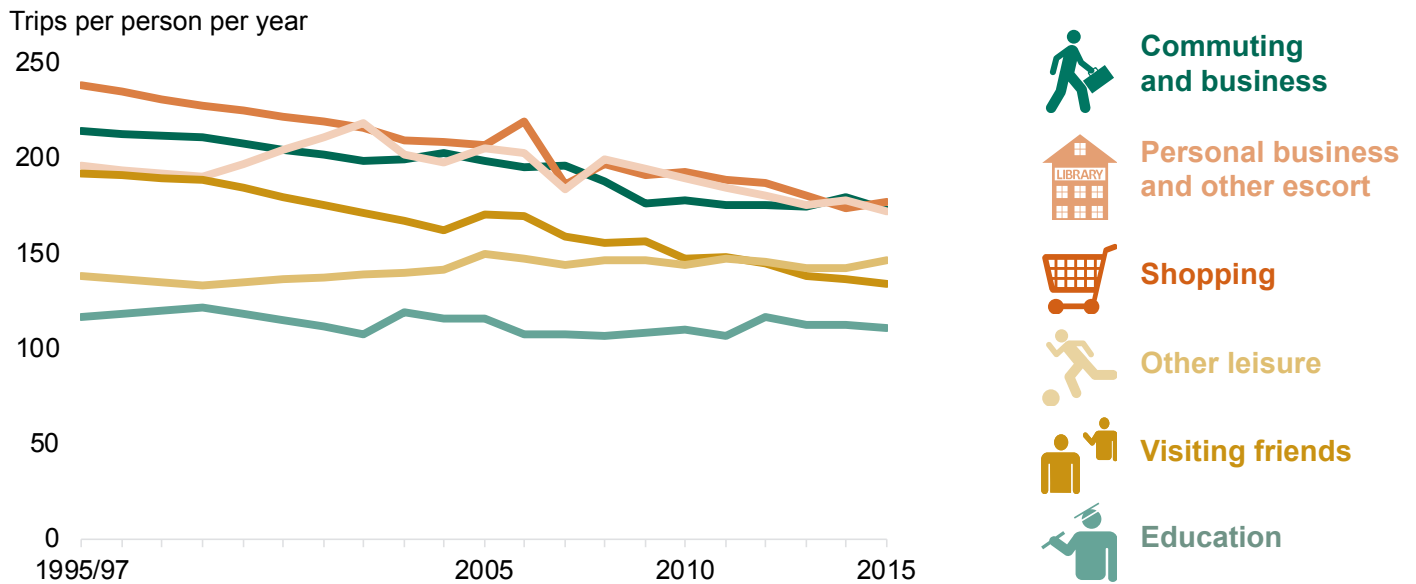
		% of trips	% of distance
	Other leisure	16	22
	Commuting	16	20
	Visiting friends	15	19
	Personal business and other escort	19	13
	Shopping	19	11
	Business	3	9
	Education (incl. escort)	12	5



Trends in trips and distance travelled, by purpose

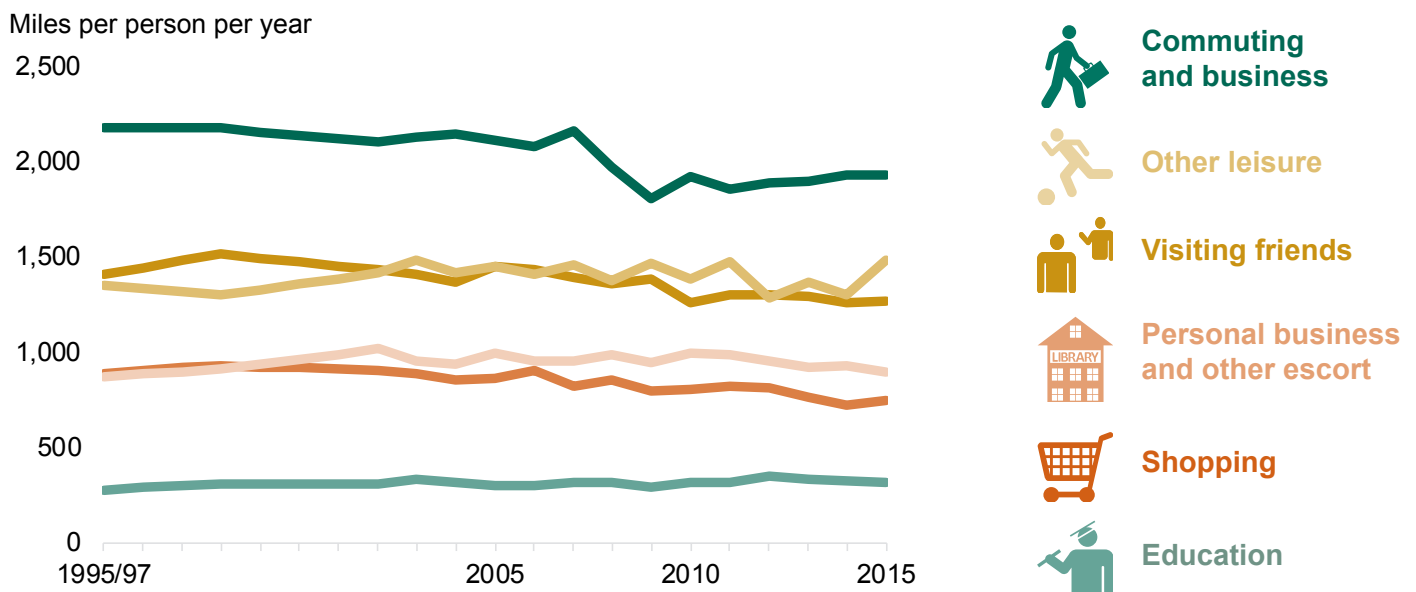
Over the past 20 years, a long-term downward trend in shopping, visiting friends and commuting and business trips has been evident.

Average number of trips, by purpose: England 1995/97 to 2015 [\[NTS0403\]](#)



Trends in distance travelled have been more stable over the same period, though commuting and business travel saw a notable drop during the 2008/09 economic downturn.

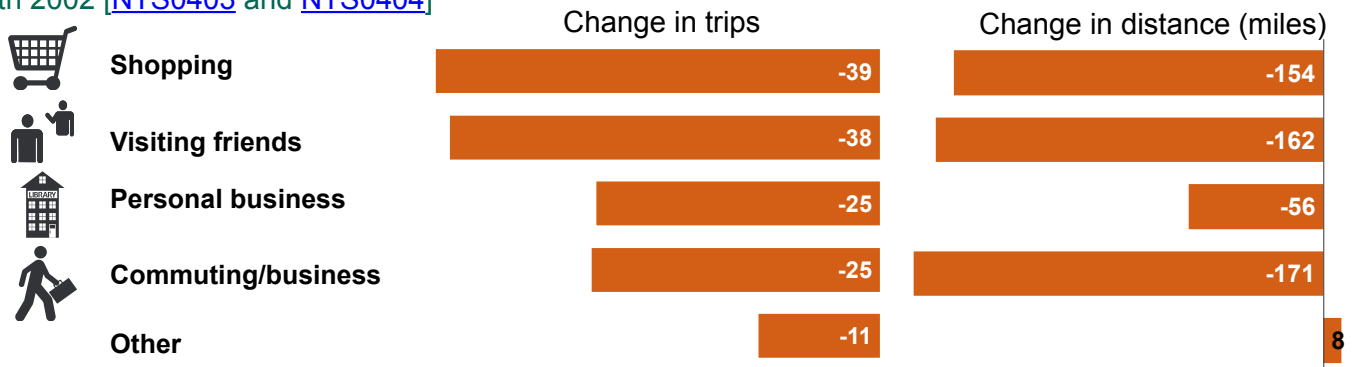
Average distance travelled, by purpose: England 1995/97 to 2015 [\[NTS0404\]](#)





Since 2002 people are travelling less to shop, visit friends or for commuting or business reasons.

Change in average trips and distance travelled per person per year by purpose: England, 2015 compared with 2002 [[NTS0403](#) and [NTS0404](#)]



Understanding the reasons for the trends observed in trips rates by purpose is not easy. The averages presented here mask different trends for different types of people and types of trip, and there are likely to be many factors influencing trends, which could include:

- ▶ changing demographic patterns e.g. an ageing population
- ▶ changing patterns of trips e.g. replacing several shopping trips with one visit to a supermarket
- ▶ new technology influencing the demand for travel e.g. online shopping, social media and capability for home working

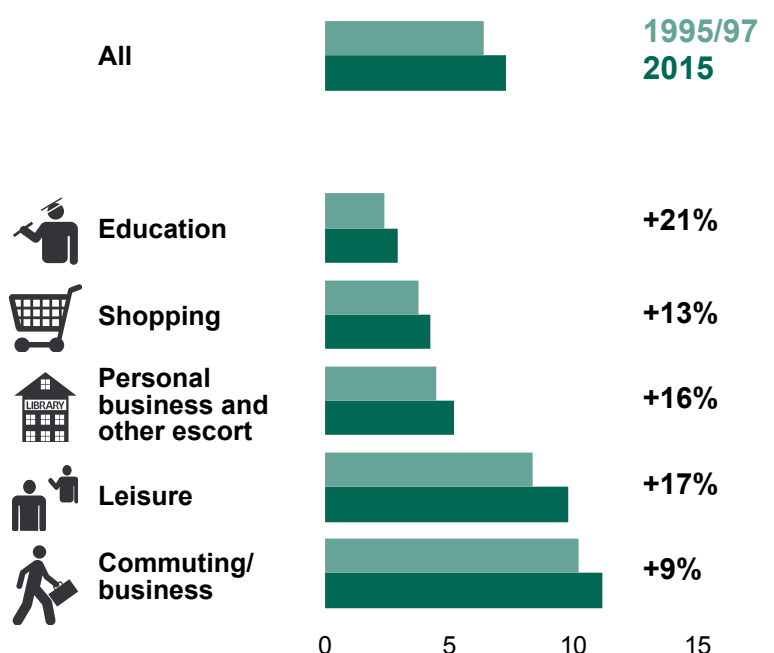
Trip length, by purpose

The fact that trips have fallen more than distance travelled for most purposes means that average trip lengths have increased since 1995/97.

Average trip length by purpose: England, 1995/97 to 2015 [[NTS0405](#)]

Average trip times show a broadly similar pattern by purpose, with commuting trips being longest (31 minutes on average) and shopping and education trips shortest (18 minutes) in 2015. Comparing average trip length and time suggests education trips are slowest, which reflects the fact that a high proportion of these trips are made by walking (see [NTS0406](#) for trip time data).

As trips increase in distance, they are more likely to be for business or holiday purposes ([NTS0407](#)).





Possible explanatory factors: changes in lifestyle and technology

There are a number of possible explanations for the decreasing trends observed in trip purposes. For example, the decrease in commuting may be the result of an increase in homeworking and other flexible working patterns. It could also reflect an increase in trip-chaining, where people combine two or more trips for differing purposes, such as dropping-off children to school on the way to work and doing the grocery shopping on the way home. Other hypotheses to explain the decreasing trends include the increased use of technology, specifically online shopping (shopping) and social media (visiting friends).

Trends in homeworking:

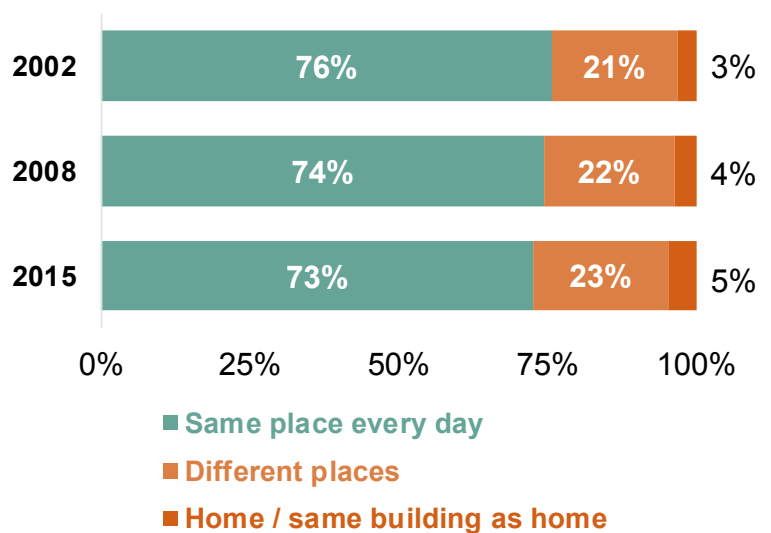
The spread of new working patterns might have an impact on travel behaviours, although its role in the declining trends in commuting and business trips is still unclear.

An increasing part of the population does not work in the same place every day. In 2015, 5% of employed people worked from home, and 23% from different places.

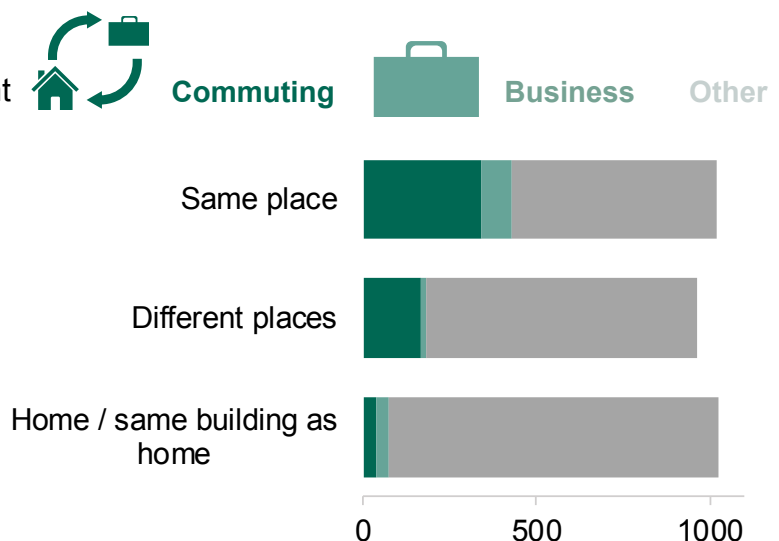
These working patterns vary according to type of employment. For example, 23% of self-employed people work from home and 50% from different places, which is higher than for full-time and part-time employees.

People who work at home or from different places do fewer commuting trips and more business trips on average. Overall, the increase in the proportion of people who work from home could be linked to the decrease in commuting trips overall, although the scale of this effect would be likely to be small, as home-working still accounts for a small proportion of the employed population.

% of employed people, by workplace: England, 2002, 2008 and 2015 [NTS0804]



Average number of trips, by purpose and usual workplace: England, 2015





Trends in delivery of goods at home and online shopping:

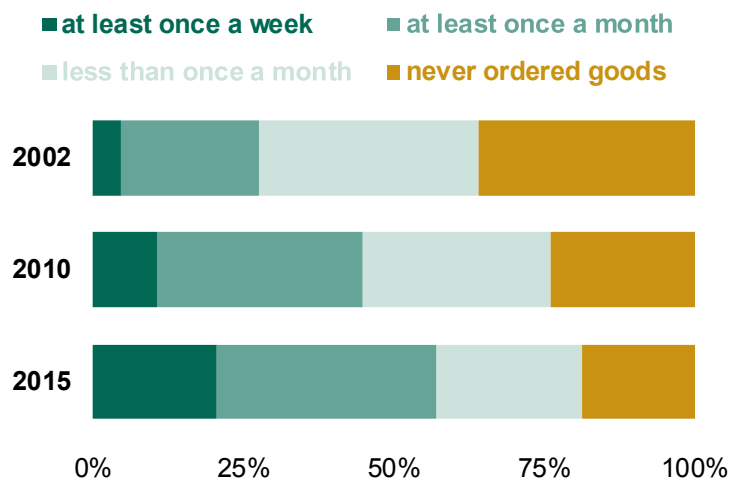
A potential explanatory factor for the fall in shopping trips is the spread of online shopping and the increase in delivery of goods at home.

More households have goods delivered to their home; in 2015, 80% of households ordered goods, either by telephone, post or internet, the items most commonly cited being clothes, books, CDs and travel tickets.

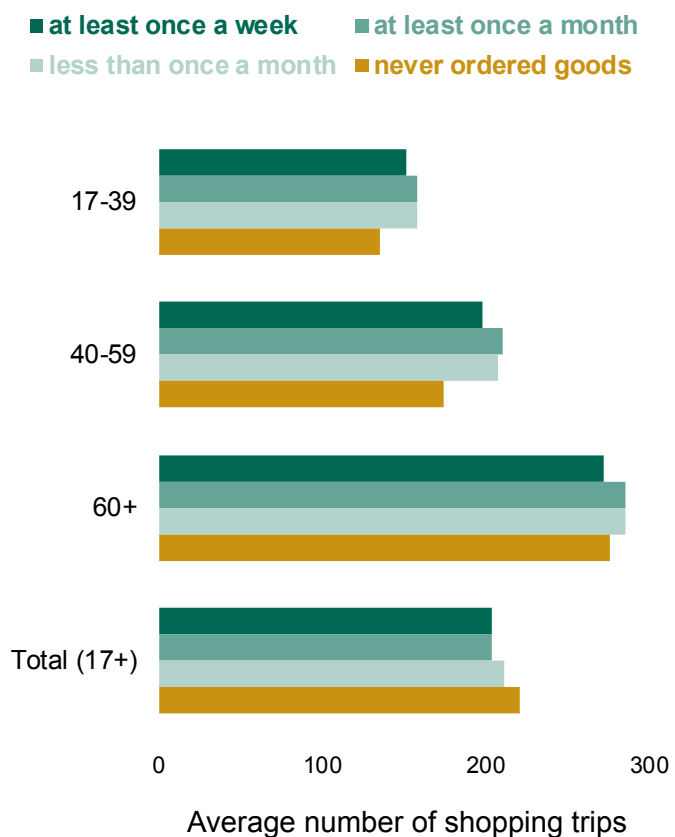
The effect on shopping trips, however, is not straightforward, as there are two competing explanations: while, in some cases, online purchases may replace a shopping trip, in other cases it may result in a new trip, for example to collect the item.

In aggregate terms, people in households who have goods delivered do fewer shopping trips, but this masks important variation by age. This is an important factor to take into account, as internet use is strongly linked to age: for example, older people are less likely to have access to the internet and order online, while they do more shopping trips. For younger age groups (17-39 and 40-59), people in households who have goods delivered frequently do more shopping trips on average than households who never order goods.

Frequency of household delivery of goods and services: England, 2002, 2010 and 2015 [\[NTS0806\]](#)



Average number of shopping trips, by age and frequency of delivery of goods in the household: England, 2015





Trip purpose, by time and day

Overall, there are prominent peaks in the number of journeys underway at around 8am and from 4pm on weekdays - almost twice as many trips are in progress at 8am on a weekday than during the middle of the day.

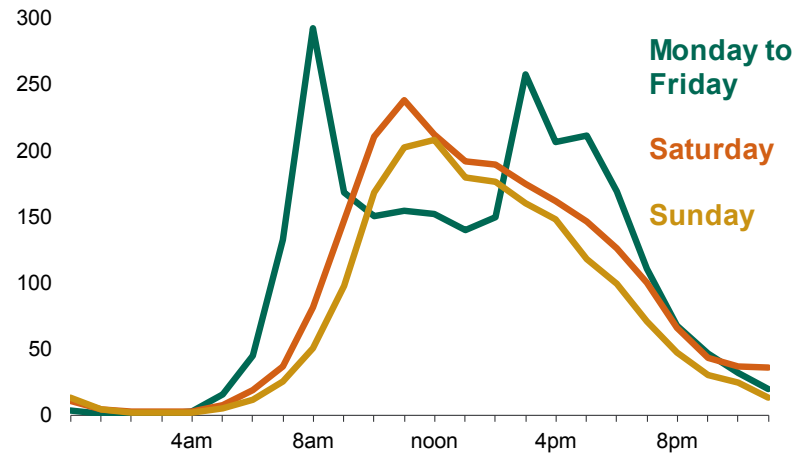
At weekends, there are far fewer people travelling in the early mornings, but more in the middle of the day, compared with an average weekday.

Education and work have a big impact on travel patterns, even though they account for far fewer than half of all trips - the rush hour peaks are largely attributable to travel to work or school. Education trips have a higher peak because escort trips are included, in addition to pupil journeys. But many other types of trip are also underway during the afternoon / evening peak.

Trips in progress, by time of day and day of week: England, 2015 [\[NTS0501\]](#)

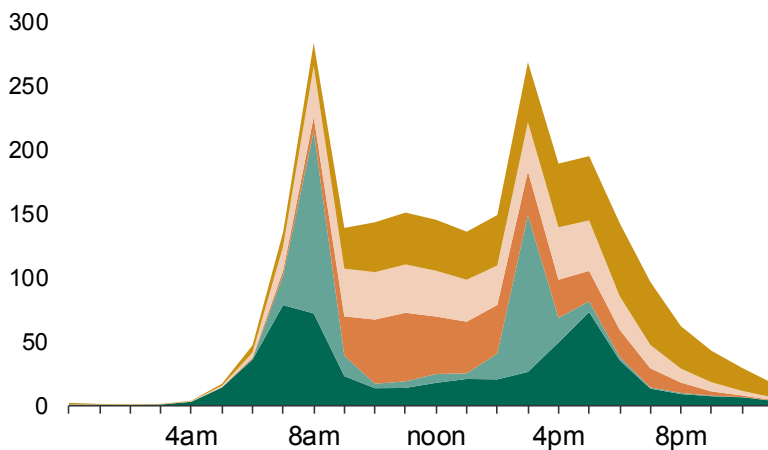


Index: average hour = 100



Trips by start time and purpose, Monday to Friday: England, 2011/15 [\[based on NTS0503\]](#)

Index: average hour = 100



Leisure (visiting friends and other leisure)



Personal business and other escort



Shopping



Education



Commuting and business

Further information about why and when we travel

The statistical datasets [NTS04](#) and [NTS05](#) contain tables related to why people travel and when people travel respectively.

In addition to the figures presented above, information is available on how travel patterns vary by month of year.

Further detail is available in the NTS dataset. This includes a more detailed categorisation of journey purpose (for example, shopping trips can be split into food and other types of shopping).

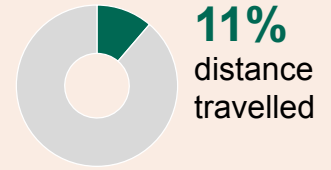
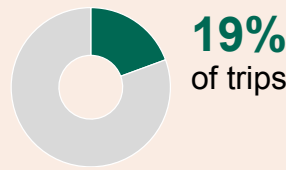


177 shopping trips per person on average in 2015

4.2 miles per shopping trip on average (750 miles per person per year in total)

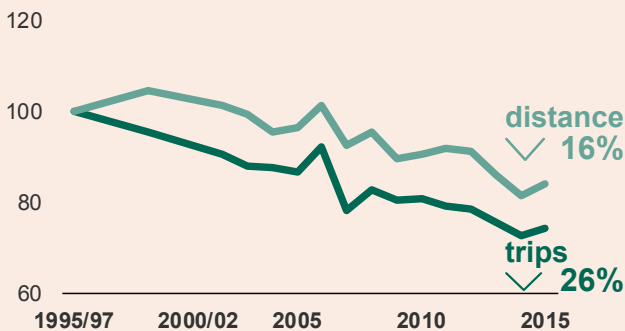
18 minutes per shopping trip on average

Shopping is one of the most common reasons for travelling, but accounts for a smaller share of distance travelled.



Trends [\[NTS0403\]](#), [\[NTS0404\]](#)

Trends in trips and distance per person per year, from 1995/97 to 2015 (index: 1995/97=100)



Main mode [\[NTS0409\]](#)

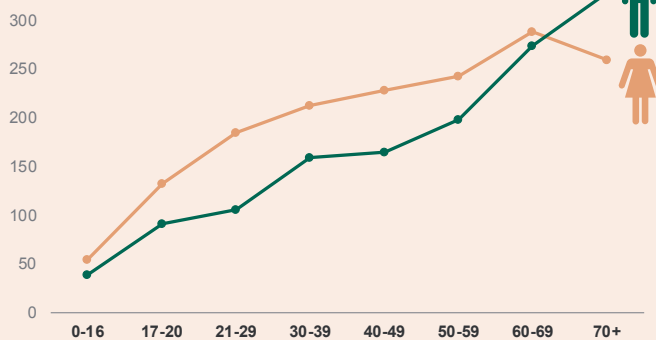
66% of shopping trips are made by **car/van**

21% of shopping trips are made by **walking**

9% of shopping trips are made by **local bus**

Age and gender [\[NTS0611\]](#)

Trips per person per year, by age and gender: 2015



160 shopping trips per year on average (18% of all trips by men)

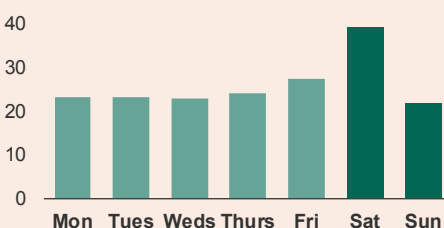
195 shopping trips per year on average (21% of all trips by women)

For both men and women, number of shopping trips made increases with age

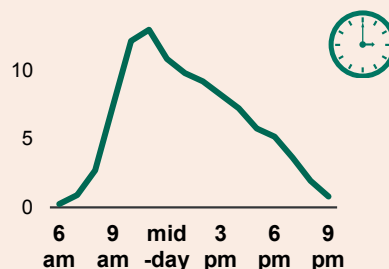
Time and day [\[NTS0503\]](#), [\[NTS0504\]](#)

A fifth of shopping trips are made on a **Saturday**. During the week, most shopping trips begin between **9am and 3pm**.

Trips per person per year, by day of week: 2015



% shopping trips starting by hour of the day, Mon-Fri: 2011/15



What is a shopping trip?

A shopping trip is defined in the NTS as 'any trip to the shops, whether or not anything was bought, and even when there was no intention to buy'.

Related data sources

[ONS Retail sales statistics](#) provide information on the growth in online shopping which may be associated with trends in shopping trips.

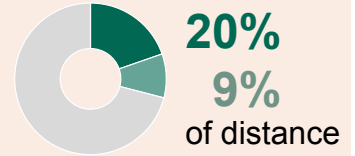
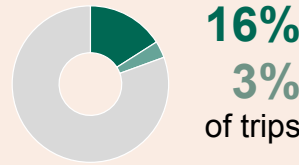
Why people travel - commuting and business



142 commuting trips per person per year on average in 2015
31 business

Commuting and **business** trips tend to be relatively long, so account for a larger share of distance travelled than trips made.

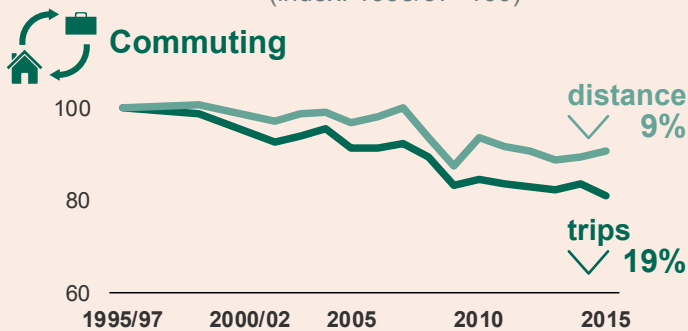
1,308 commuting average miles per person per year
623 business



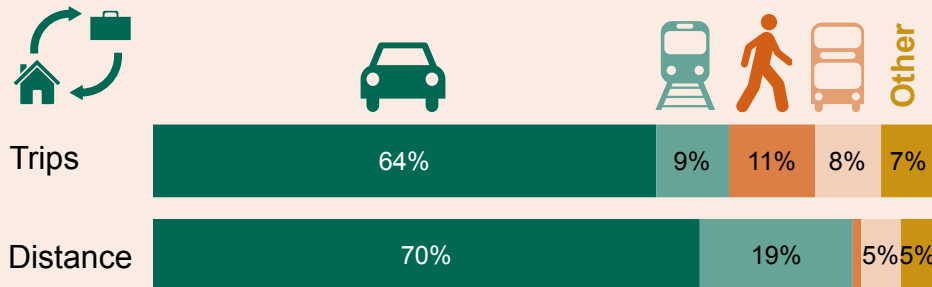
31 minutes per commuting trip on average

Trends [NTS0611] Trends in trips and distance per person per year from 1995/97 to 2015 (index: 1995/97=100)

[NTS0612]



Mode of commuting [NTS0409, NTS0410]



Commuting and business trips

In the NTS a **commuting** trip is defined as a trip from home to work, or from work to home.

Business trips are defined as those made in the course of work, provided that the purpose is to reach a destination - commercial travel (e.g. to deliver goods or convey a vehicle or passenger) is not included.

Related data sources

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Census both have information on commuting:

LFS: <https://www.gov.uk/>

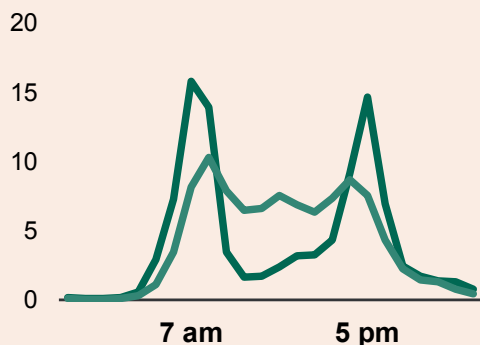
[government/statistical-data-sets/tsgb01-modal-comparisons](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tsgb01-modal-comparisons)

Census: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/index.html>

Time of day [NTS0502]

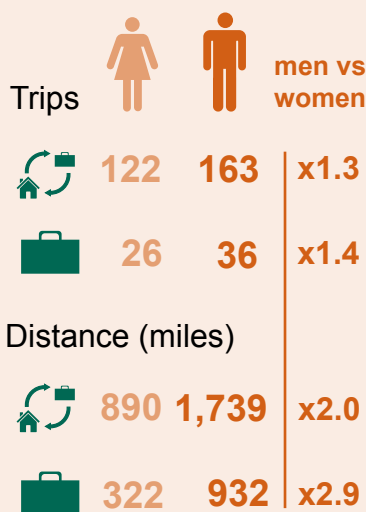
68% of **commuting** trips start between 6am and 9am and 4pm to 7pm. **Business** trips are more evenly spread over the day.

Percentage of commuting and business trips by start hour, Monday-Friday: 2011/15



Gender [NTS0611-12]

On average in 2015





62 education
48 escort education

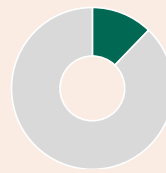
trips per person per year on average in 2015



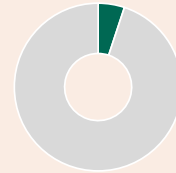
3.2 miles

average length of an education trip - shortest of any main purpose

Including escort trips:



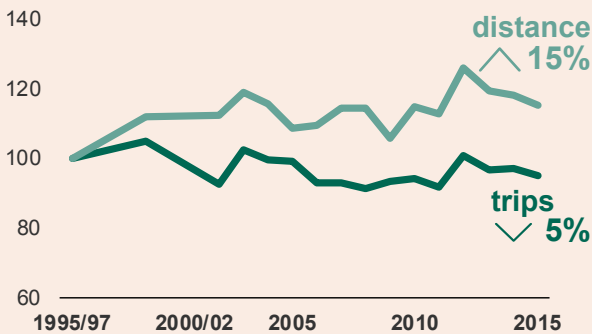
12%
of trips



5%
of distance

Trends [\[NTS0404\]](#), [\[NTS0405\]](#)

Trips and distance per person from 1995/97 to 2015 (index: 1995/97=100), including escort education



Overall, education trip distance has grown, whilst number of trips has remained stable.

On average, the length and duration of education trips (all ages, not including escort) has increased between 1995/97 and 2015.



3.2 miles
^ 15%



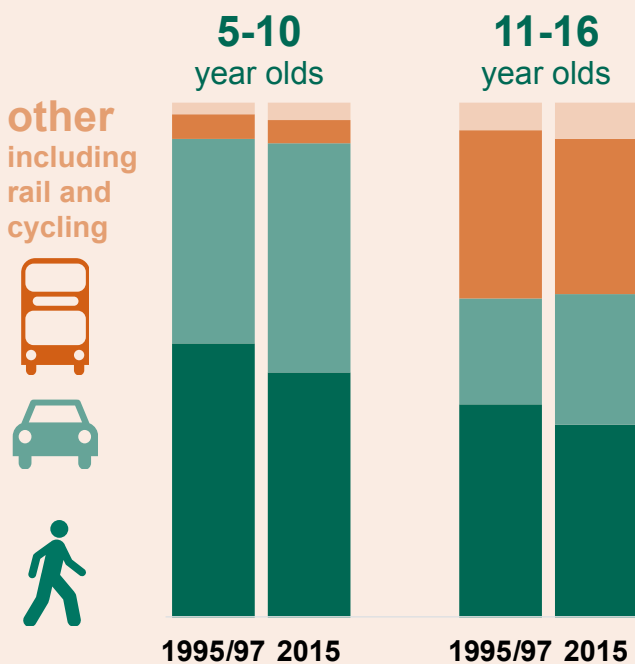
21 minutes
^ 18%

Mode of travel to school [\[NTS0613\]](#)

The proportion of children walking to school has fallen since 1995/97. This could be partly due to journeys getting longer.



Children's mode of travel to school by age group: 1995/97 and 2015



Walking to school [\[NTS0615\]](#), [\[NTS0617\]](#)

The proportion of children that walk to / from school is lower for older children.



48% of 5-10 year olds

37% of 11-16 year olds

This reflects that older children travel further to school on average.

For journeys **under 1 mile**, equivalent figures are:

78% of 5-10 year olds

87% of 11-16 year olds

59% of 7-13 year olds that walk to school are usually accompanied by an adult.



Traffic danger is the most commonly mentioned reason for accompaniment (61%).

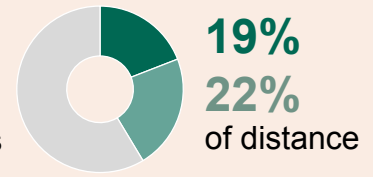
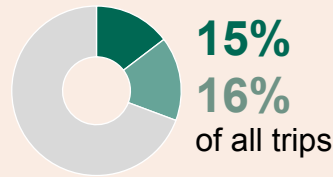


280 leisure trips per person per year on average in 2015

2,751 average miles per person per year travelled for leisure

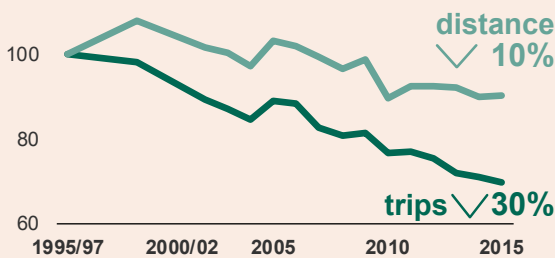
29 minutes per leisure trip on average

Visiting friends accounts for around half of leisure trips and mileage; **other leisure** includes entertainment, sport and holidays.

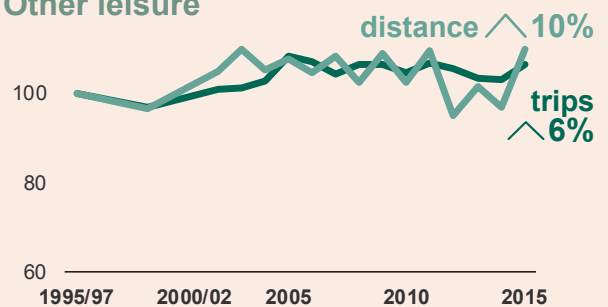


Trends [[NTS0404](#), [NTS0405](#)] Trends in trips and distance from 1995/97 to 2015 (index: 1995/97=100)

Visiting friends



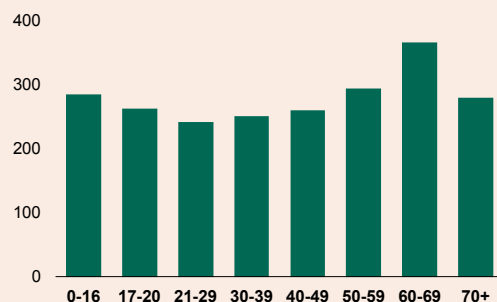
Other leisure



Age [[NTS0611](#)]

The number of leisure trips varies relatively little with age, but peaks for the 60-69 year old group.

Trips per person per year: 2015



Gender [[NTS0611](#)]

Men and women make similar numbers of leisure trips per year, on average



'Other leisure' trips [[NTS0401](#), [NTS0405](#), [NTS0611](#)]

Entertainment and sport	Other (inc. just to walk)	Day trips	Holidays (to holiday base)
64 trips	43 trips	28 trips	12 trips
8 miles long on average	1.1 miles long on average	13 miles long on average	50 miles long on average

Leisure trips in the NTS

Leisure trips include trips to visit friends (at home or elsewhere), for entertainment, sport, and holidays and day trips (travel within Great Britain only). They also include walking trips which are made for no purpose other than to walk.

Related data sources

The Office for National Statistics publish statistics on [tourism](#), which includes international travel by UK residents.

Day of week [[NTS0504](#)]





Factors affecting travel behaviour

The NTS collects data on the characteristics of households and individuals through the interview, which can be linked with patterns of trip-making which respondents record in the travel diary. This makes it a valuable source for exploring and describing factors which influence travel behaviour, at the national level.

The following provides a brief summary of some of the key variables which influence travel patterns:

- ▶ age and gender
- ▶ personal mobility
- ▶ household income
- ▶ type of area (i.e. urban or rural)

This analysis considers the effect of each factor in turn to highlight the key patterns.

However, in practice, travel behaviour of individuals will reflect interaction of a range of factors, so that patterns are inevitably more complex than are presented here.

The figures presented here are based on averages. This hides the variation in behaviour within particular groups i.e. the distribution.

NTS data allows more detailed analysis, and links to selected in-depth studies of specific aspects are provided in the box to the right.

Selected studies using NTS data to explore travel patterns

The following are examples of recent reports which use NTS data. These links are provided to illustrate the use of the dataset, rather than any endorsement of findings:

- ▶ [On the Move](#), RAC Foundation study of trends in car and rail use
- ▶ [Understanding the drivers of road travel](#), DfT
- ▶ [Older people's use of concessionary bus travel](#), NatCen
- ▶ [Poverty and travel in Great Britain](#), Transport Studies Unit, University of Oxford
- ▶ [An exploration of mode choice variability](#), University of West of England

There are many other studies which rely on NTS data. Some [examples using NTS data accessed via the UK Data Service](#) are listed on the UKDS website.

Further information about factors affecting travel behaviour

The statistical datasets published alongside this release provide a series of statistical tables related to the factors described here, providing underlying data and some further tabulations. For example:

- ▶ [NTS06](#) covers age and gender, including travel to school and take up of concessionary bus passes
- ▶ [NTS07](#) covers travel by car availability and income, ethnic group, household type and mobility status
- ▶ [NTS99](#) has tables which show how personal travel varies by region and urban-rural type of residence

In addition, the NTS dataset contains a wide range of further variables which facilitate more in-depth study.



Overall trips and distance, by gender

On average, women make more trips than men, but men travel 20% further. This partly reflects differences in the type of trips made. Women make more trips for shopping and escort education, which tend to be relatively short, whereas men make more commuting trips, which tend to be longer.



886 trips
7,260 miles

per person per year



941 trips
6,057 miles

per person per year

Trip purpose by age and gender

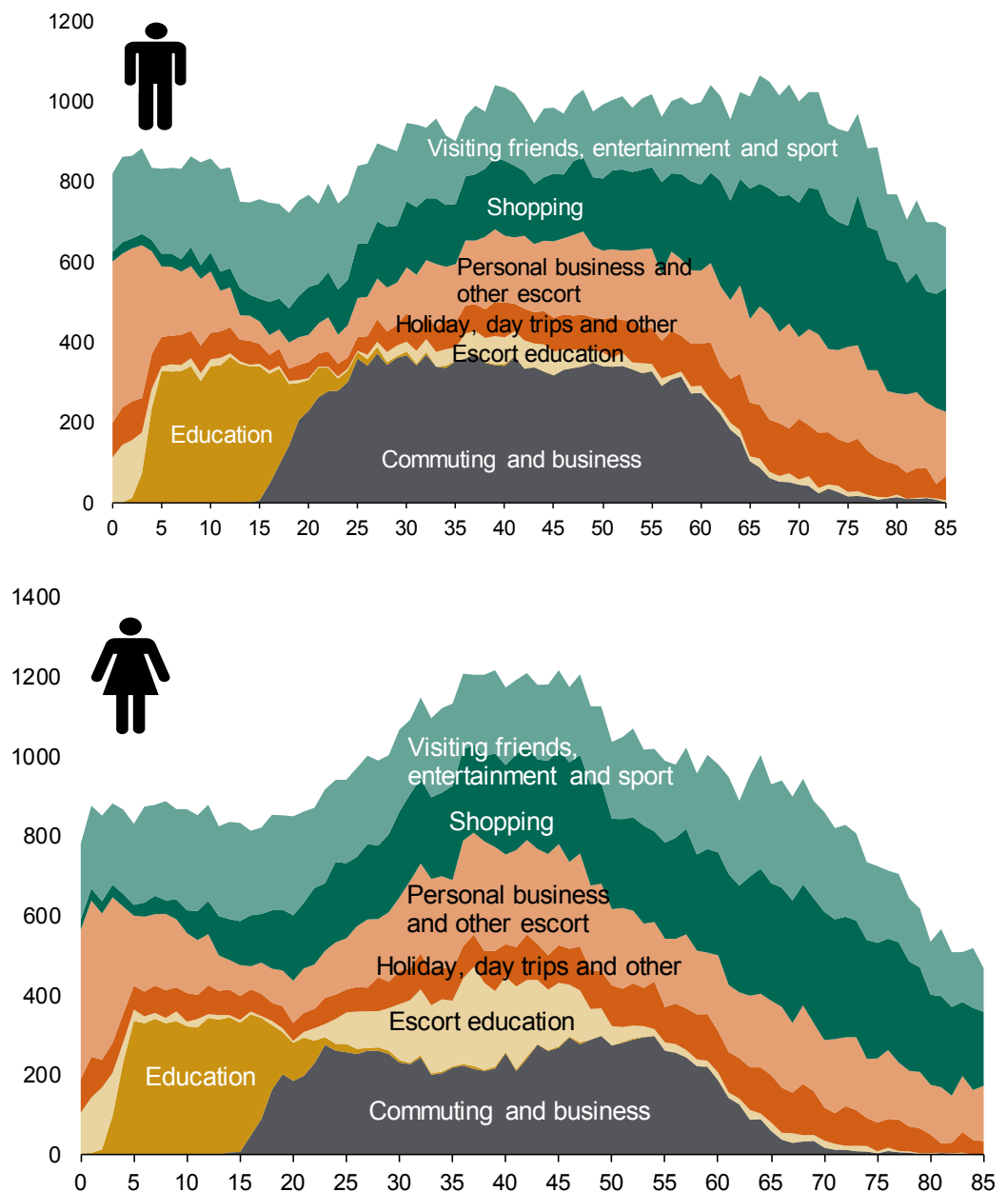
Between **ages 5 and 15**, education accounts for nearly 40% of trips.

Between **ages 15 and 30**, trip rates increase similarly for men and women; from **age 25** commuting becomes the single most common reason for travel, especially for men.

Between **ages 30 and 50**, women make more trips than men, the most notable difference being for escort education (taking children to school).

From **age 60**, shopping trips increase and account for around a third of trips for older age groups; however overall trip rates are lower. Men make more trips than women at these ages, on average.

Average trips per person per year, by age and gender: England 2011/15 average [based on [NTS0611](#)]





Distance travelled, by age, gender and purpose

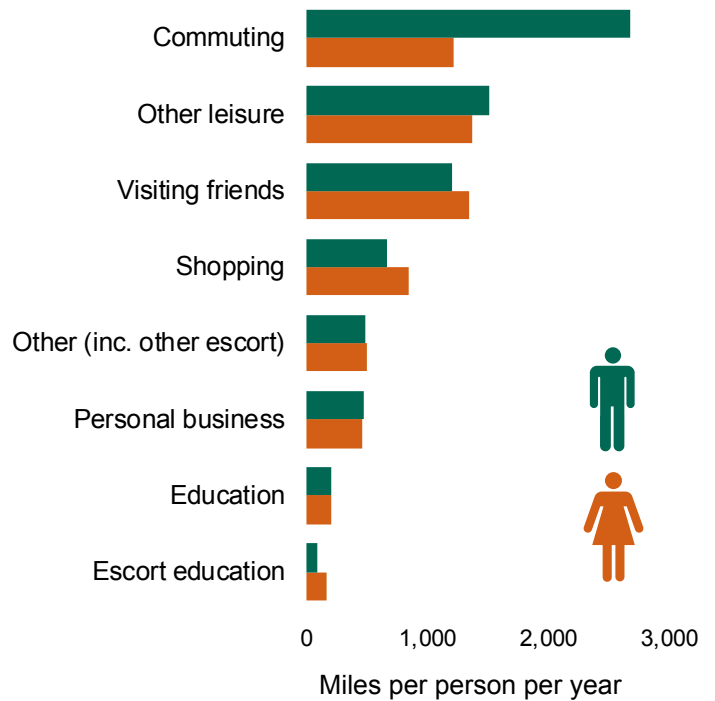
In terms of distance travelled, the biggest differences between men and women are for commuting and business, where men travel over twice as far on average. This partly reflects the fact that men make more of these trips, and partly that men make longer commuting and business trips on average, which in turn probably reflects differences in the type of jobs that men and women do.

The average length of a commuting or business trip is 13 miles for men, compared to 8 miles for women. For other trip purposes, average trip lengths are broadly similar.

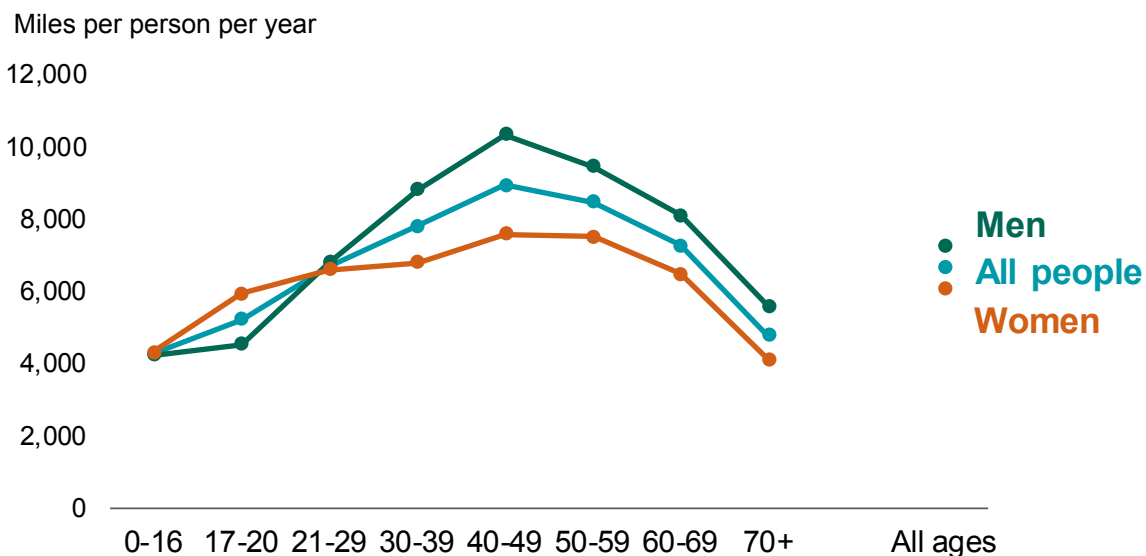
Women travel further for shopping and escort education, as they make more of these types of trip than men. However, trips for these purposes tend to be relatively short.

For both men and women, distance travelled is highest for those aged 30 to 59. Again, this reflects reasons for travelling as, for example, this age group makes the most commuting and business trips at 68%, which tend to be longer on average.

Average distance travelled per person per year, by gender and purpose: England, 2015 [\[NTS0612\]](#)



Average distance travelled per person per year, by age group and gender: England, 2015 [\[NTS0612\]](#)



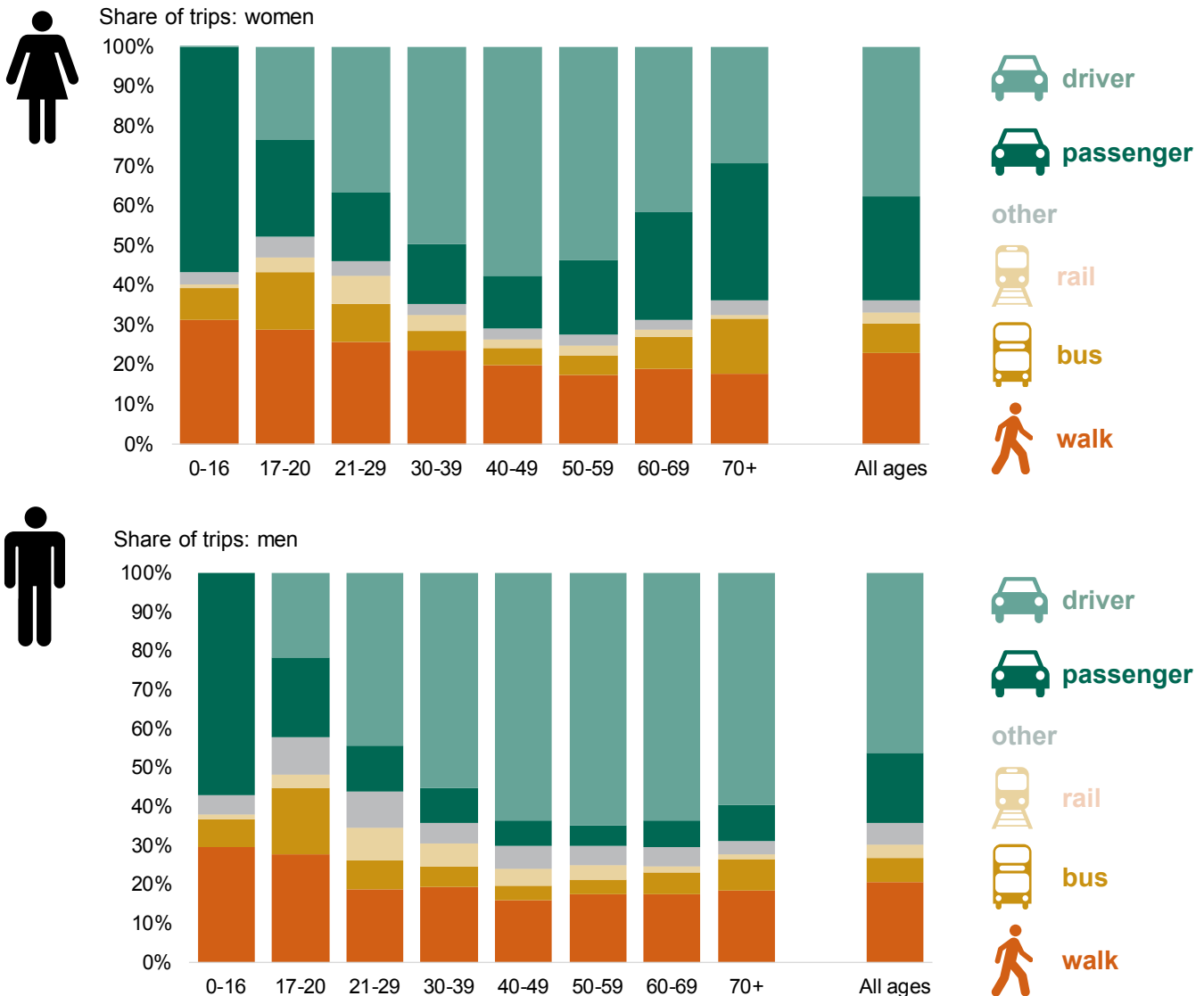


Trip mode, by age and gender

Variations in trip mode by age and gender reflect differences in access to cars, as well as different trip purposes.

- ▶ **Car** (as driver or passenger) accounts for more than half of trips for all age groups except 17-20 year olds. Men make a higher share of trips as a driver than women do, particularly for older age groups.
- ▶ 17-20 year olds make more trips by **bus** than other age groups, and twice as many bus trips as the average person. For 17-20 year old men and women, 1 in 6 trips are by bus. The share of trips by bus is also relatively high for older ages.
- ▶ **Rail** (surface rail and London Underground) has its highest share among men aged 21-29, accounting for 8% of total trips for this group.
- ▶ **Walking** accounts for around a third of trips by children, but a lower share for adults.

Mode share of trips, by gender and age: England, 2015 [\[NTS0601\]](#)

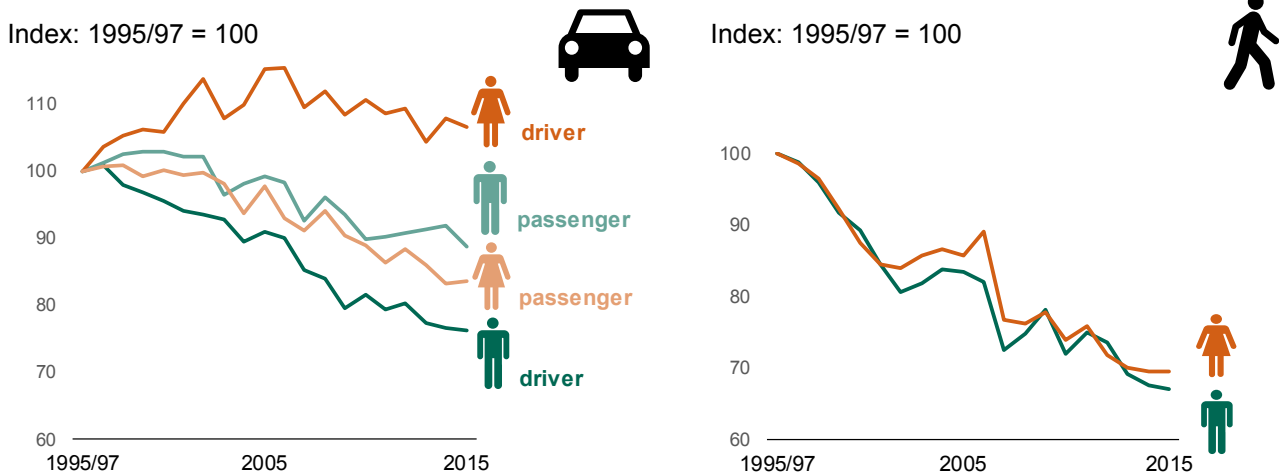




These figures show the latest position, but as noted earlier in this release, age and gender groups are showing different trends over time.

For example, whilst trends in car passenger and walking trips follow similar trends for men and women, trips as a car driver have declined more for males. As shown earlier, there are also different patterns by age, with more car driving by older age groups.

Trends in car and walking trips per year, by gender: England, 1995/97 to 2015 [NTS0602, NTS0603]



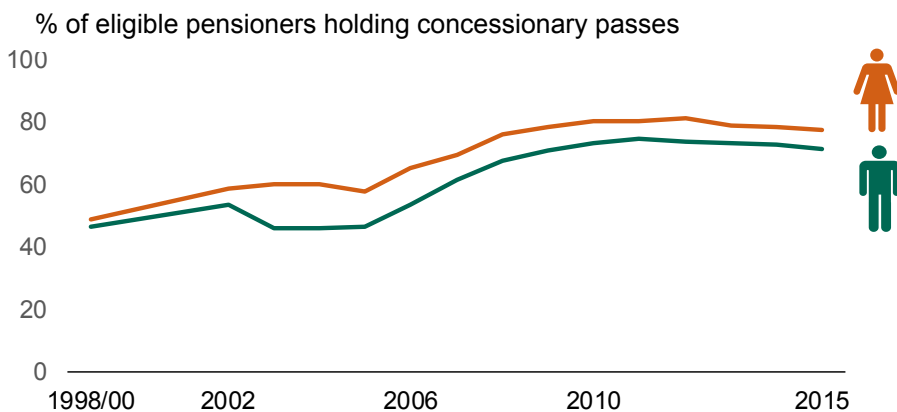
Concessionary travel

As shown earlier, bus use is higher on average for older age groups. The NTS monitors take-up of concessionary bus passes (eligibility by age); since April 2008, travel by local bus has been free anywhere in England for those of eligible age (since 2010 this has been increasing in line with female pension age), although prior to this local schemes existed.

Take-up of passes increased notably with the introduction of the free concession and then levelled off since this time.

30% of those aged 60 or over say that they use the bus at least once or twice a week (compared with 43% saying less than once a year or never).

Take-up of concessionary travel schemes: England 1998/00 to 2015 [NTS0620]



Related data sources

DfT publishes more detailed statistics on concessionary travel, including total passholders, concessionary bus journeys and scheme cost: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/concessionary-travel-statistics-year-ending-march-2015>.



Overall, 9% of adults reported having a mobility difficulty in the 2015 NTS sample. This proportion increases with age, being 30% of individuals aged 70+ compared with 3% of those aged 16-49. The increase with age is more marked among women than men, though this may be influenced by the fact that within the 70+ age group a higher proportion of women than men live to older ages.

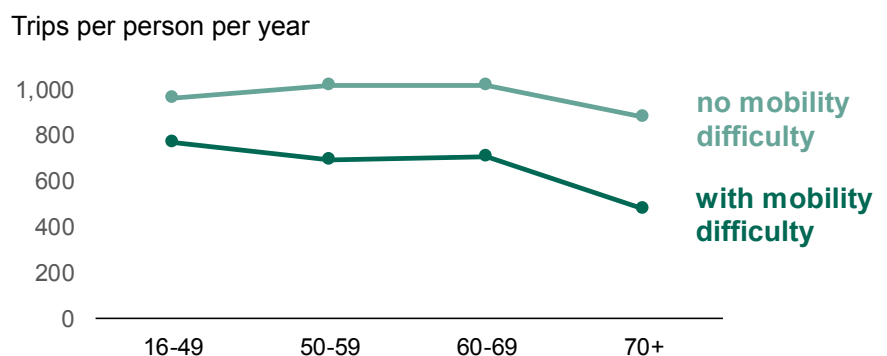
Mobility difficulties

The NTS asks adults (aged 16+) whether they have mobility difficulties. Those who say that they have difficulties travelling on foot, by bus or both are classified as having mobility difficulties.

Number of trips, by mobility status

People reporting mobility difficulties make fewer trips on average: 605, compared to 968 for those without mobility difficulties. The difference is fairly consistent across all age groups, although 16-49 year olds with a mobility difficulty make more trips than those at older ages.

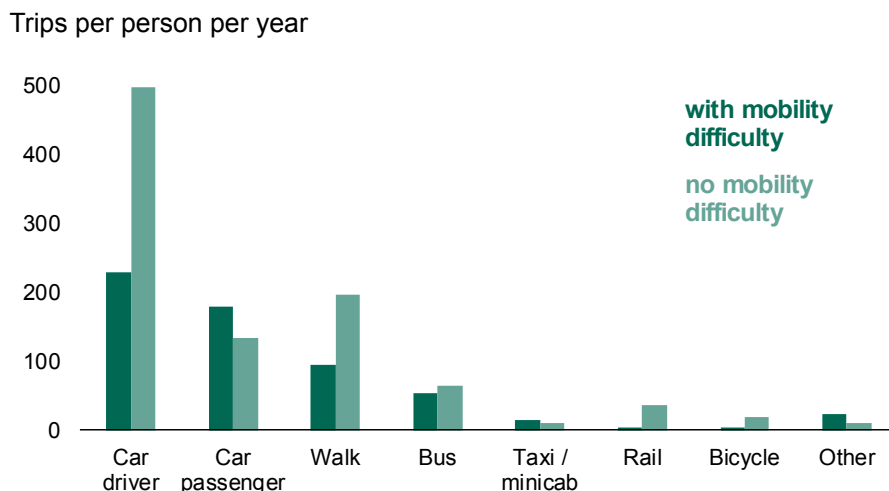
Average number of trips, by mobility status and age group: England, 2015 [[NTS0622](#)]



Variations in trip mode and purpose, by mobility status

People with mobility difficulties make fewer commuting, education or leisure trips than those without mobility difficulties. This in part reflects the older age profile of those with mobility difficulties. By mode, the main differences between those with and without mobility difficulties are walking and car driver trips.

Average number of trips, by mobility status and main mode: England, 2015 [[NTS0709](#)]



Related data sources

A summary of statistics on [transport and disability](#) is published as part of the DfT annual Transport Statistics Great Britain report. This includes figures relating to [disabled parking badges](#) and accessible public transport vehicles, in addition to statistics based on the NTS.

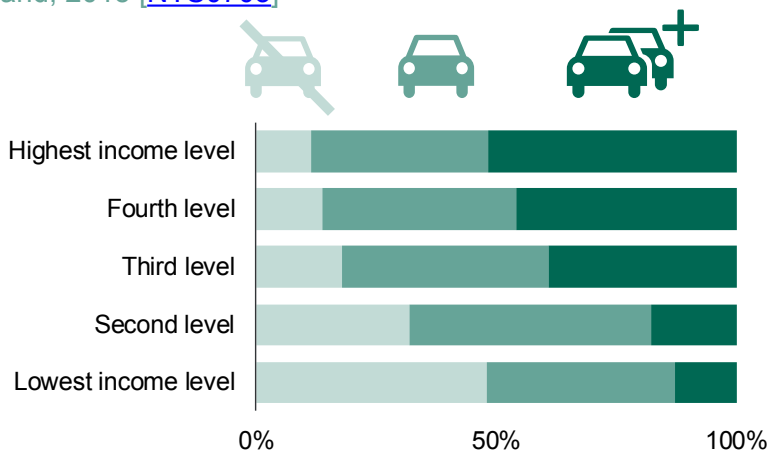
The DfT also published a [Factsheet](#) on Disability and Travel, using NTS data.



Household income

Car availability: The proportion of households which do not have access to a car decreases as household income increases. For example, if we divide all households into five income groups, 48% of households in the lowest income group have no car, compared to only 11% of the highest income group. Conversely, having several cars is more common when income increases. Indeed, about half of households in the highest income group have more than one car, compared with 13% of households in the lowest income group. A quarter of all households have no car access at all.

Household car availability, by household income quintile: England, 2015 [\[NTS0703\]](#)

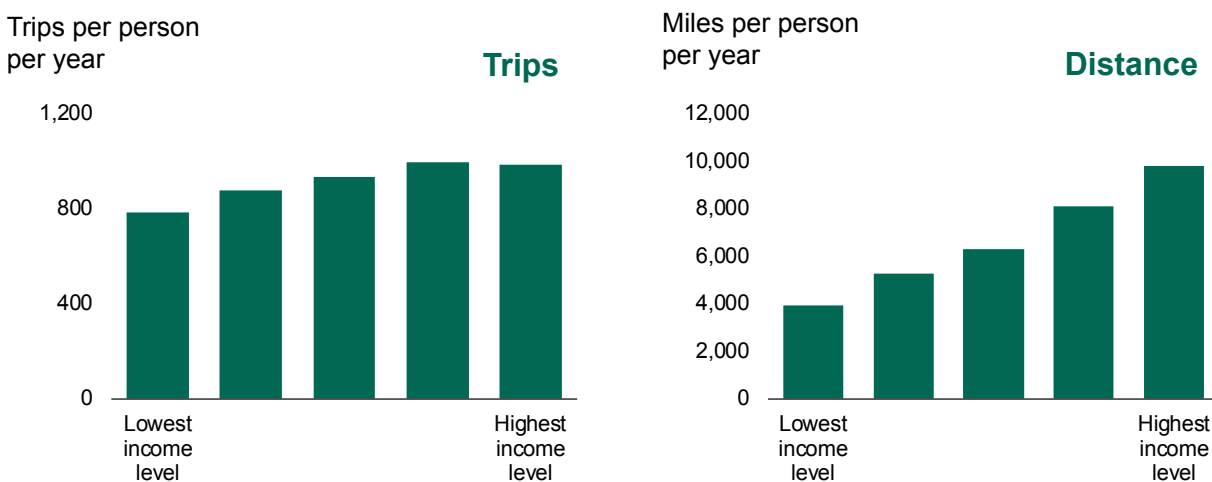


What are income quintiles?

Income quintiles, used in this section, come from dividing all households into five groups of equal size according to their level of real household income equivalent (accounting for inflation and household composition). For more information on the measure of household income, please see [Notes and definitions](#).

Trips and distance: On average, people living in higher income households tend to travel more and further than people living in lower income households. If we divide all households into five income groups, the highest income group make 26% more trips, and travel more than twice the distance, compared with the lowest income group.

Trips and distance travelled per person, by household income quintile: England, 2015 [\[NTS0705\]](#)



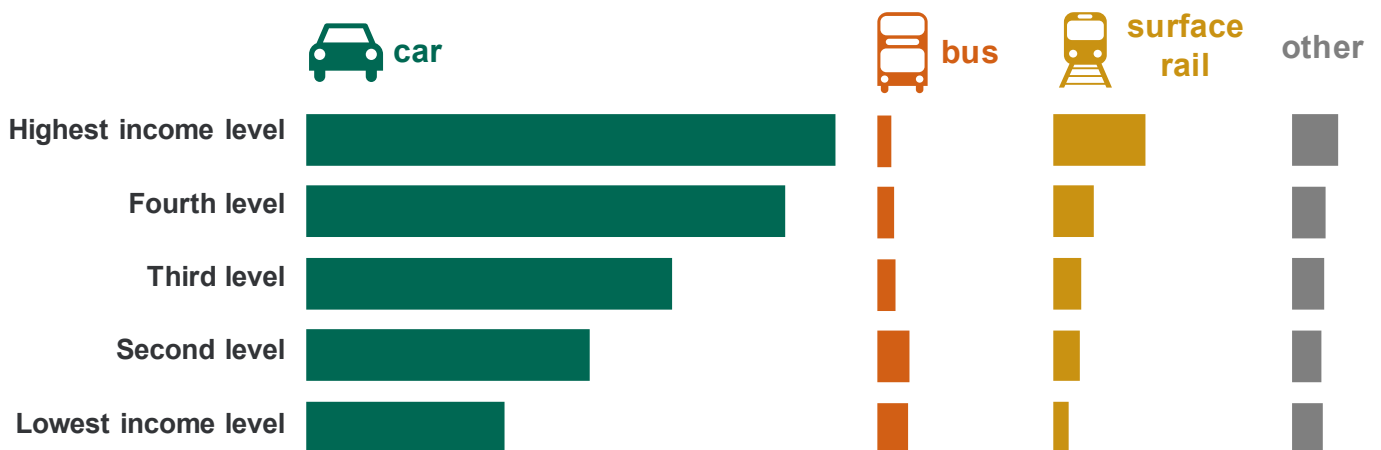


Mode of travel: The modes used to travel vary by income. In terms of trip distance:

- ▶ The distance travelled by **car** increases with income: people in households of the highest income group travel on average 7,356 miles per person per year by car, 2.7 times further by car than people in lowest income households (2,747 miles per person per year).
- ▶ Similarly, **surface rail** use increases with income: with 1,370 miles per person per year, people in the highest income households travel almost 6 times further by rail than people in the lowest income households (232 miles per person per year). **London Underground** use follows a similar pattern.
- ▶ Conversely, the distance travelled by **bus** is higher for people in lower income households. Indeed, with 459 miles per person per year, people from the lowest income households travel on average 2.4 times further by bus than people in households with the highest income level.

Trips follow a similar pattern, with people in higher income households travelling more often by car and by rail, whereas people in lower income households travel more often by bus.

Average miles travelled, by household income quintile and mode: England, 2015 [NTS0705]

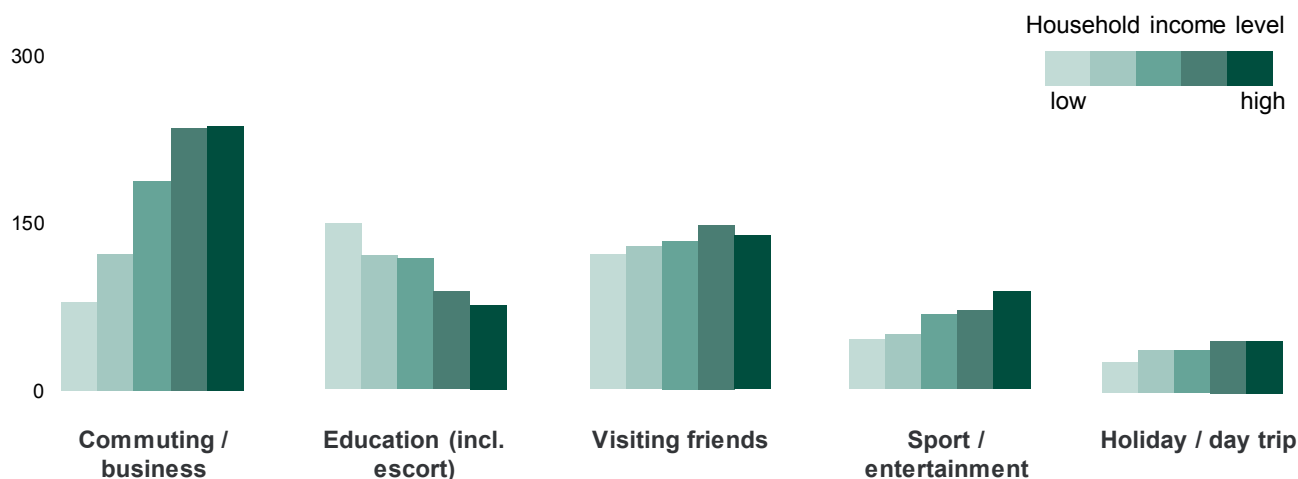


Therefore, the difference in total mileage by income is mostly due to a difference in car use, which partly relates to disparities in car access between lower and higher income households.



Purpose of travel: Trip purposes also vary according to household income levels. While some purposes show a stable pattern across income groups (shopping, personal business), the purposes presented in the following chart seem to be related to income levels.

Trips, by household income quintile and selected purposes: England, 2015



- ▶ **Commuting and business** is the purpose explaining the largest share of variability in trips made according to household income. Indeed, when dividing households into five income groups, people in the highest income group make almost 3 times more commuting and business trips than people in the lowest income group.
- ▶ Conversely, **education** varies negatively with household income: people in the lowest household income group make twice as many trips for this purpose as people in the highest income households.
- ▶ A few purposes relating to **leisure** (visiting friends, sport, entertainment, holiday and day trips) also account for more trips for people living in higher income households.



Occupation

As income levels closely relate to socio-economic position, travel behaviours show a similar pattern when investigated with a socio-economic classification.

Trips and distance: People in managerial and professional occupations make more trips and travel further, on average, than other socio-economic groups. People who have never worked or are long-term unemployed display the lowest level of travel, with only 655 trips and 3,155 miles per person per year.

What is the NS-SEC classification?

The National Statistics Socio-economic classification is a standard measure of socio-economic position across official statistics in the UK since 2001, used to explain variation in social behaviours. Here, it is used for individuals aged 16 and over. For more information, please see the [NS-SEC methodology and guidance of the Office for National Statistics](#)

Trips and distance travelled, by NS-SEC: England, 2015 [\[NTS0708\]](#)



Mode of travel: Patterns in distance travelled by mode according to socio-economic position follow a similar pattern to distance travelled by mode according to income level. People in managerial and professional occupations tend to travel further by car and rail, whereas people from intermediate and routine occupations tend to travel further by bus, on average.

People who never worked or are long-term unemployed show the lowest level of distance travelled, on average, by car (2,106 miles per person per year) and rail (surface rail and London underground - 223 miles per person per year), but the highest level of distance travelled by bus (429 miles per person per year).

Average distance travelled, by NS-SEC: England, 2015 [\[NTS0708\]](#)





Working status

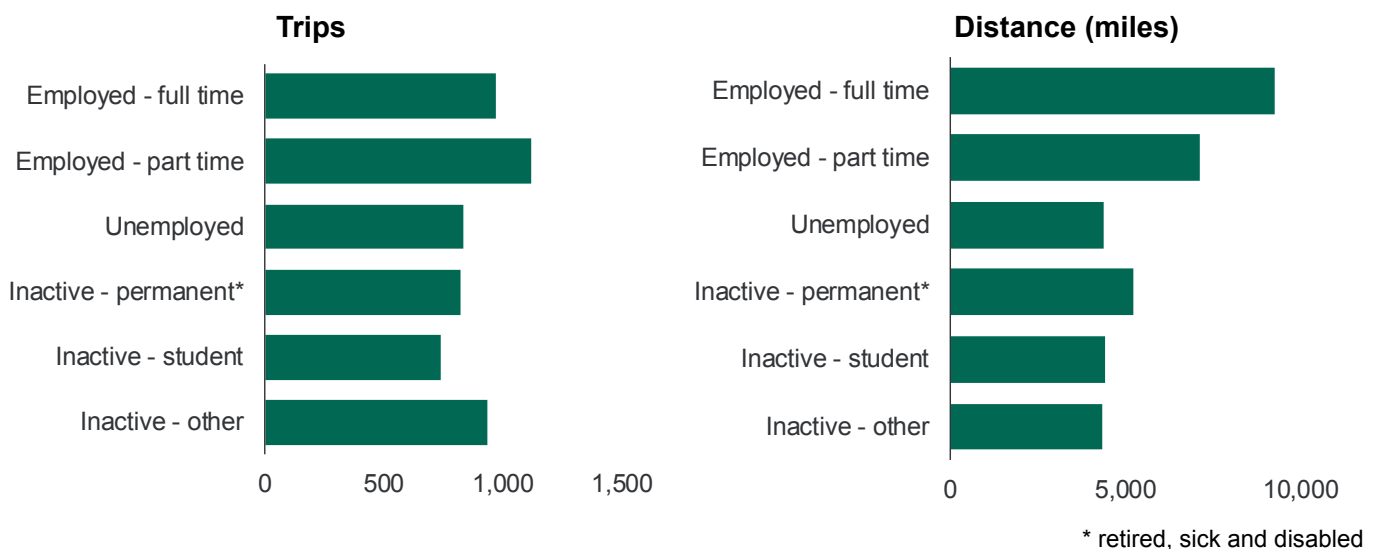
Trips and distance: Travel behaviours vary with working status. Employees make more trips on average than people who are unemployed or inactive. Amongst employees, part-time workers make more trips than full-time workers, on average.

Employees also travel further on average than unemployed and inactive people. Full-time workers, at 9,237 miles per person per year, travel further, on average, than part-time workers.

What is working status?

Working status differentiates between employment, unemployment and economic inactivity for individuals aged 16 and over. Here, inactive people are divided between those who are permanently inactive (retired, sick, disabled), students, and other inactives (for example, looking after family or home). Unemployment is defined according to the [ILO definition](#).

Trips and distance travelled, by working status: England, 2015

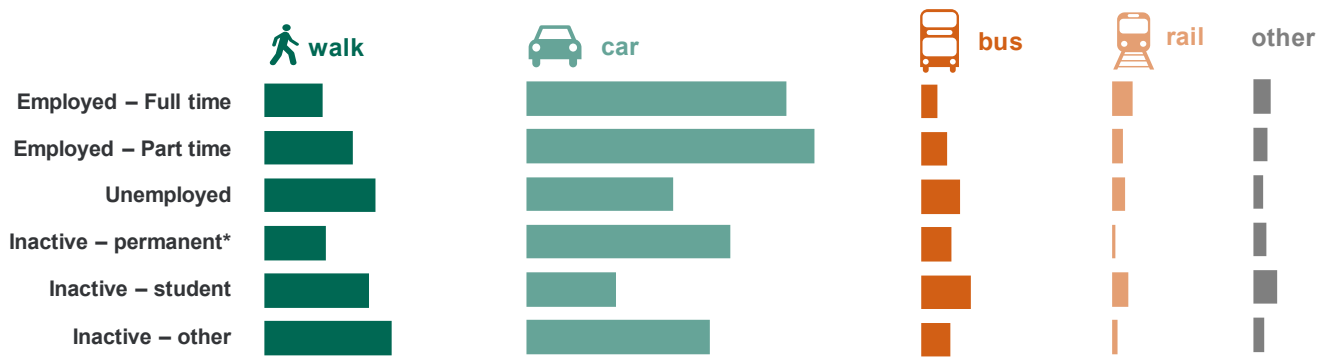


Mode of travel: The frequency of mode use also varies according to working status.

- ▶ Full-time workers make the fewest **walking** trips on average, with the retired, sick and disabled group also making fewer walking trips than average.
- ▶ People in employment make more trips by **car**, and within this group, part-time workers make more car trips than full-time workers. Students and people who are unemployed make fewer car trips than average.
- ▶ On the other hand, students and people who are unemployed make more trips by **bus** than average.
- ▶ **Rail** use (surface rail and London Underground) is more frequent for full time workers and students.



Average number of trips made, by working status: England, 2015

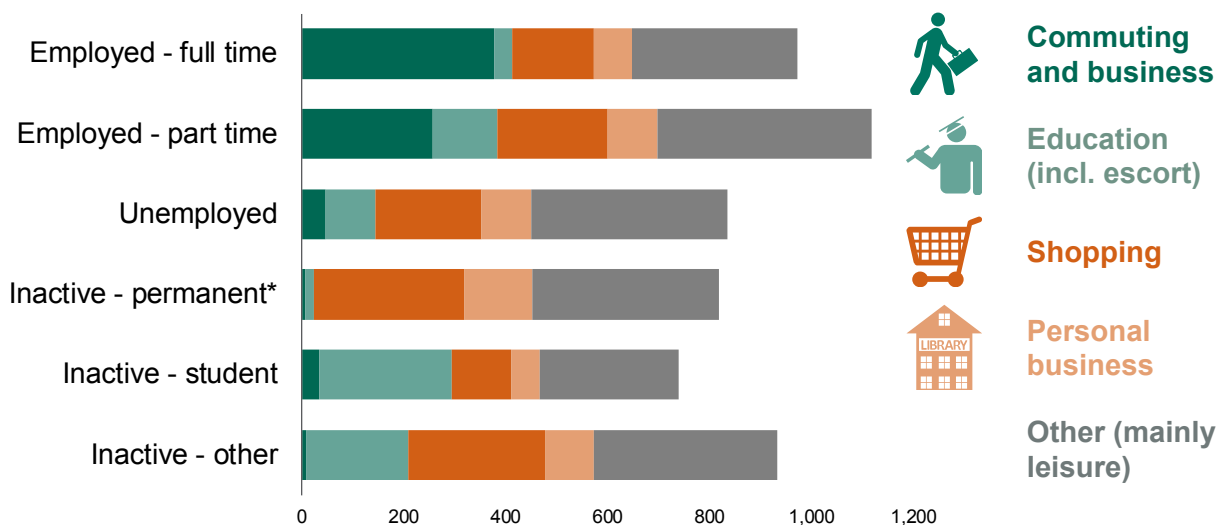


* retired, sick and disabled

Trip purpose:

- ▶ Employees make the most **commuting and business** trips, with full-time workers (378 trips per person per year) making more of those trips than part time workers (256 trips per person per year).
- ▶ **Education** trips are more frequent for students, unemployed, other inactive people and part-time employees. Most trips made for educational purposes by the unemployed, other inactive people and part-time employees are to take someone to school, whereas adult students make education trips for themselves.
- ▶ Most trips made by people permanently inactive (retired, sick, disabled) are for **shopping and personal business**. Students make fewer trips for shopping and personal business than all other categories, on average.

Average number of trips, by purpose and working status: England, 2015



* retired, sick or disabled



Trips and distance travelled, by type of residence

People living in rural areas make more trips and travel further than people living in other area types. Residents of rural areas travel around 44% further than urban residents, and almost twice as far as London residents.



Mode of travel, by type of residence

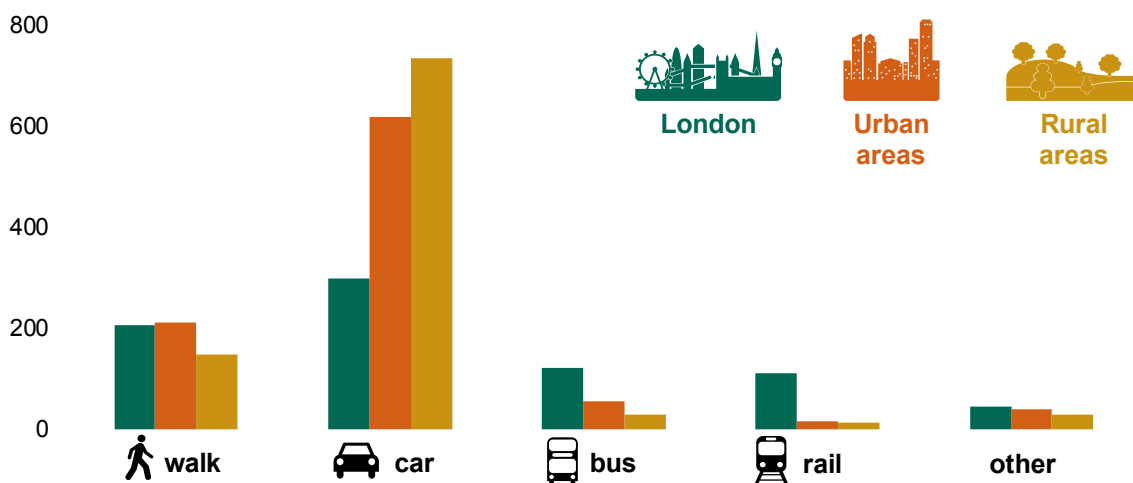
The difference in overall trip rates between types of residence is mainly due to differences in levels of car use.

- ▶ People living in **rural areas** make fewer walking trips and more car trips than average.
- ▶ People living in **London** make use in particular of bus (121 trips per person per year) and rail (110 trips per person per year, including London Underground) more often than those in other types of residence.

What is type of residence?

The types of residence presented here are based on the 2011 Rural-Urban Classification. An area is defined as rural if it falls outside of settlements with a resident population of more than 10,000. For more information on the classification, please see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rural-urban-definition>.

Average number of trips, by main mode and type of residence: England, 2014/15 [NTS9903]





People who live in London rely more on public transport modes, which account for 31% of their trips, whereas 9% of trips by residents of urban areas (excluding London) and 5% of trips by residents of rural areas are made by public transport. People living in rural areas rely more on the car, which accounts for 77% of all their trips. By comparison, 66% of trips by residents of urban areas, and only 38% of trips by London residents, are made by car.

Purpose of travel, by type of residence

London residents make more commuting and business trips, on average, than people living in other area types.

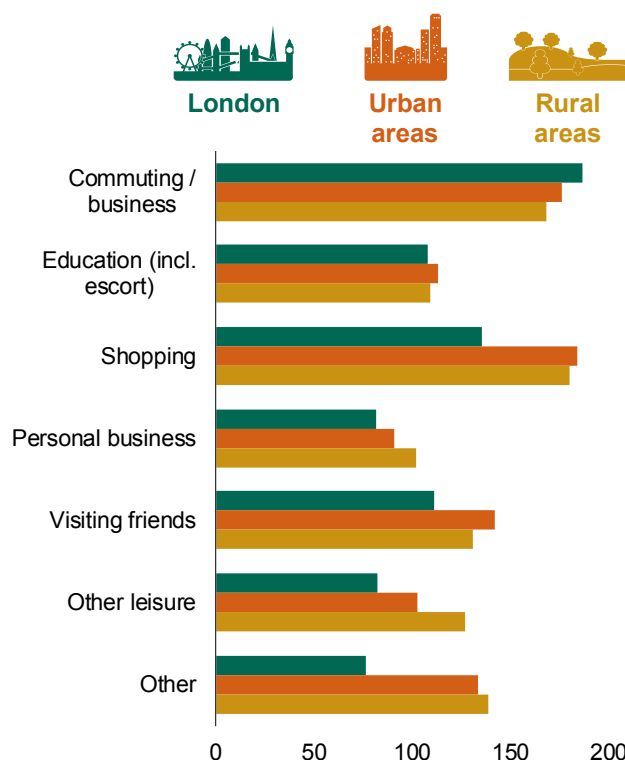
Residents of rural and urban areas make more trips for shopping, personal business and to visit friends, on average.

Residents of rural areas particularly make more trips for other types of leisure, like sport, entertainment, holidays and day trips.

The comparison of travel behaviours by type of residence is very different when we look at distance travelled. Indeed, residents of rural areas travel further for all purposes.

This is likely to be due to all facilities being located further away in rural areas than in urbanised areas. It is also possible that people who choose to live in rural areas do not mind doing more mileage to get to their daily activities.

Average number of trips, by trip purpose and type of residence: England, 2014/15 [NTS9906]



Related data sources

DfT publish [journey time statistics](#) which provide estimates of travel times to key services for each neighbourhood area within England.

Time spent travelling, by type of residence

On average, London residents spend more time travelling, at 392 hours per person per year, than residents of urban areas (361 hours) and rural residents (383 hours). London residents also make longer trips on average (30 minutes per trip), which is likely to be due to their higher use of public transport and walking and cycling modes. The average trip time is similar in rural and urban areas, despite people in rural areas travelling further on average.



A commuting trip lasts on average 42 minutes for London residents, and less than 30 minutes for those in urban and rural areas.

Therefore, London residents make the lowest number of trips and travel the shortest distance, but they spent the longest time travelling, and their trips are longer on average.

Average trip time, by type of residence: England, 2014/15 [NTS9914]



30 minutes
in London



23 minutes
in urban areas



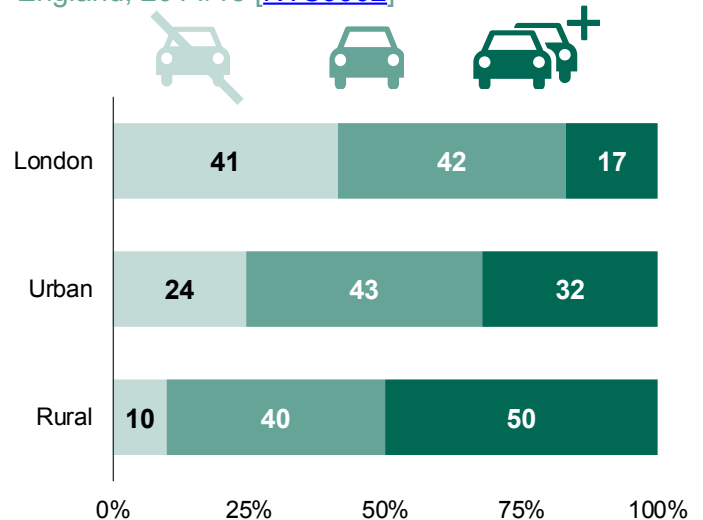
24 minutes
in rural areas

Car availability, by type of residence

The major difference in travel patterns between urban and rural areas lies in car use. Households living in rural areas are more likely to have access to a car than urban residents.

Indeed, 41% of households in London do not have a car, compared to 24% of households in urban areas and only 10% of households in rural areas. Conversely, half of households living in rural areas have several cars.

Household car ownership, by type of residence: England, 2014/15 [NTS9902]

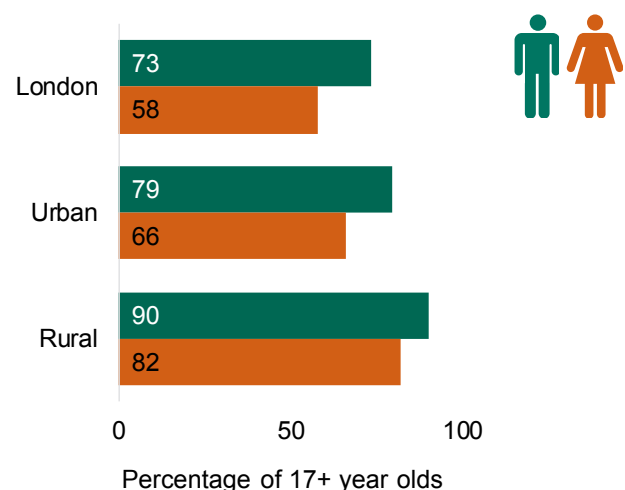


Driving licence holding, by type of residence

The same difference by type of residence is observable in the holding of a driving licence.

- ▶ 65% of **London** residents hold a driving licence, compared with 72% of people living in urban areas, and 86% of people living in rural areas.
- ▶ The gap in driving licence holding between men and women is narrower in **rural areas**. Until around 60 years old, a similar proportion of both men and women hold a driving licence in rural areas.

Driving licence holding, by gender and type of residence: England, 2014/15 [NTS9901]





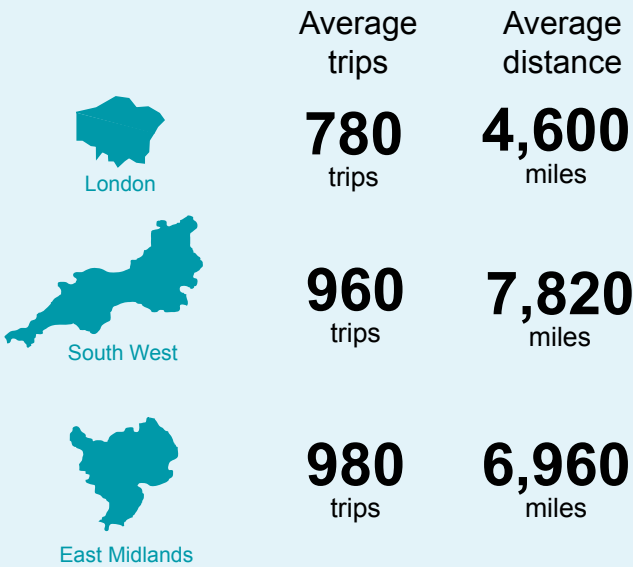
Trips and distance travelled, by region

[NTS9903](#) and [NTS9904](#)

Residents of London make the fewest trips on average, and travel the shortest distance.

Residents of East Midlands make the most trips, but it is the residents of South West England that travel the furthest distance.

These regional differences in trips and distance travelled are driven mainly by differences in car use. This is likely to be due to more of the South West being a rural type of residence.



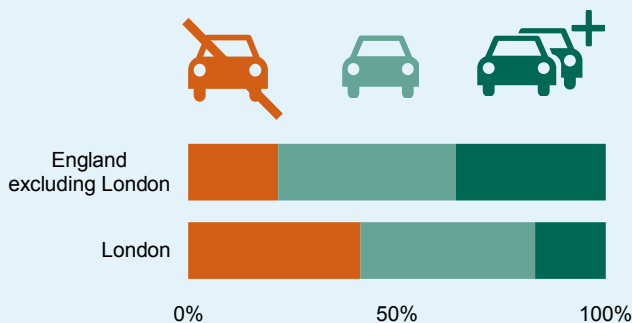
Trip time and length

Residents of London make the shortest trips but their trips take the longest, on average, compared to all other regions. Residents of the East of England can travel the furthest in a short time.



Car ownership [NTS9902](#)

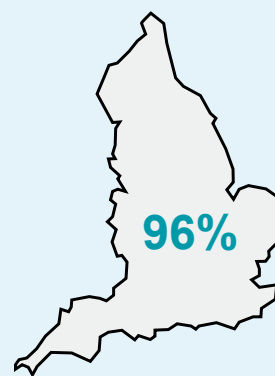
Household car availability, by region: 2014/15



London stands out from all other regions in England with lower levels of car ownership. Therefore, the proportion of trips made by car is lower in London (40%) than in other regions (all above 60%).

Trips within the same region [NTS9905](#)

Proportion of trips with same region of origin and destination by region, 2014/15



The vast majority of trips are made within one region, at 96% across England. This is even true in London, where 92% of journeys are made within the region.

Further information

In addition to the figures presented here, the National Travel Survey collects statistics on travel patterns by region of residence in the [NTS99](#) tables.



Notes and background information

This publication presents an overview of the National Travel Survey data. This section provides brief background notes and links to sources of further information.

Other topics covered by the NTS

In addition to the material covered in this publication, the National Travel Survey covers a range of topics, including the following, which are covered by the published NTS data tables:

- ▶ Daily and monthly trip patterns (tables NTS0504 - NTS0506)
- ▶ Motorcyclists and household motorcycle ownership (tables NTS0610 and NTS0207)
- ▶ Concessionary bus travel (NTS0619 - NTS0621)
- ▶ Road safety - proportion of people involved in road accidents (NTS0623 - NTS0625)
- ▶ Accessibility of local services (NTS0801 - NTS0803)
- ▶ Working from home and deliveries of good and services (NTS0804 - NTS0806)
- ▶ Annual vehicle mileage, by type and age of vehicle (NTS0901 - NTS0904)
- ▶ Satellite navigation technology and vehicle parking (NTS0907 and NTS0908)

Detailed statistical tables

The National Travel Survey web page at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics> provides a set of results tables covering the topics presented in this release and the additional topics above. The full list of table sections is:

- ▶ Trends in personal travel (Tables [NTS0101 to NTS0108](#))
- ▶ Driving licence holding and vehicle availability (Tables [NTS0201 to NTS0208](#))
- ▶ How people travel (Tables [NTS0301 to NTS0317](#))
- ▶ Why people travel (Tables [NTS0401 to NTS0412](#))
- ▶ 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 NTS0710](#))
- ▶ Accessibility (Tables [NTS0801 to NTS0806](#))
- ▶ Vehicles (Tables [NTS9901 to NTS9915](#))
- ▶ Travel by region and Rural-Urban Classification of residence (Tables NTS9901 to NTS9915)

Raw data

Raw data from the NTS is available from the UK Data Service for users to produce their own analysis. A dataset covering survey years 2002-2015 will be available as soon as possible.



Related information

Other travel surveys in Great Britain. From January 2013, the coverage of the NTS changed to sample residents of England only. This change was agreed following a public consultation in 2011.

Details of the consultation outcome can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/230560/NTSconsultationSummaryofresponses.pdf

Related surveys carried out in other areas of Great Britain which cover similar topics (though do not use the same collection methods as NTS) include:

- ▶ Transport Scotland collect personal travel data for residents of **Scotland** using a one day travel diary in their Scottish Household Survey.

<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/statistics/scottish-household-survey-travel-diary-results-all-editions>

- ▶ In **Northern Ireland** data are collected via the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland, based on a similar methodology to the NTS (interview and 7-day travel diary):

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/travel-survey-northern-ireland>

- ▶ The Welsh Government collect information on active travel as part of the National Survey for **Wales**, although this does not include a travel diary

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/national-survey/>

- ▶ Within England, Transport for London conduct the London Travel Demand Survey for **London** residents which is much bigger than the London sample of the NTS (and uses a different data collection method)

tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/london-travel-demand-survey

Other transport statistics. In addition to National Travel Survey statistics presented here, DfT and others publish a range of statistics related to modes of transport - as signposted throughout this document. Detailed comparisons between the NTS and other sources are not always possible because of differences in collection, coverage and measurement. However, where the NTS and other statistics refer to the same phenomenon, a degree of coherence between different sources can be observed over time, although year-on-year changes can vary.

The full range of statistics published by DfT can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/about/statistics>



Methodology notes

Strengths and limitations of the NTS: The NTS is a long-running survey which uses a high-quality methodology to collect a broad range of information on travel behaviours at the England level. The methodology has been broadly unchanged over several decades meaning that trends can be monitored. Figures are weighted to be representative of the population. However, like any statistical source, the NTS has its limitations. For example, as a sample survey resulting figures are estimates with associated sampling error. In addition, figures below national level require several years data to be combined, and figures for geographies below regional level cannot be published.

Survey methodology: 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 Technical Report at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-travel-survey-2015>

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-travel-survey-2015>

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.

A note explaining the methodology used to calculate the 2009 NTS standard errors and tables of standard errors for selected key statistics are published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nts-standard-error-guide>

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The National Travel Survey was assessed by the UK Statistics Authority against the Code of Practice and was confirmed as National Statistics in July 2011. 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:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-travel-survey-2015>

Improving short walks in the NTS

The Department ran a [consultation](#) on the collection of short walk data in the NTS in 2014, following an experiment conducted during 2013 which concluded that there is under-reporting of short walks in NTS. This was repeated in 2015 and produced similar [results](#). In 2016, the NTS sample will be split and this data will be used to develop weights to uplift the day 7 sample so that NTS results for 2016 will be published as if short walks were collected on day 1.