



UK report

Walking and Cycling Index 2021

Published May 2022



Foreword

Our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling



The Walking and Cycling Index is the new name for Bike Life, with walking and wheeling being included our UK-wide survey for the first time. We have found that walking and wheeling are the top mode of travel in

urban areas: people walk or wheel frequently more than any other form of transport. In fact, there's huge potential for many more local journeys to be walked or cycled; in the 17 urban areas taking part in the Index, there are nearly 2 billion journeys under three miles that are currently driven each year.

Many of these journeys could be walked, wheeled or cycled if more of the money we spend on roads were channelled specifically into making active travel safer, more accessible and more desirable.

In our survey, 56% of city dwellers said they want more investment in walking, compared with 32% in driving. 54% said that their streets are dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles.

Looking at what would help people shift from driving to walking, 70% of people told us that fewer cars on the pavement would help, as would wider pavements for 72% of respondents. In terms of switching to cycling,

69% of people said that more traffic-free cycle routes would help, and 65% want cycle tracks that are physically protected from traffic.

The case for taking action to make walking, wheeling and cycling more feasible and appealing has never been stronger, with evidence showing that active modes of travel are the top performers for health, for tackling climate change and for the economy. Everyone involved in shaping and managing the public realm has a role to play and those roles start with taking heed of what people are saying. People across the UK want to walk or cycle for their local journeys. They are saying they want pavements to be generous, well-maintained and clear of parked cars; they want safe, accessible cycle tracks and pedestrian crossings; and they want more investment in sustainable, healthy transport.

At Sustrans we're working tirelessly to act on what people are saying by working with governments, local authorities, civic institutions and major employers in the UK's four nations, to move transport investment into active travel, to improve streets and to support people to switch their local journeys from driving to walking, wheeling or cycling. Please do join the movement.

Rachel Toms
Director of Urbanism
Sustrans



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The Walking and Cycling Index

The Walking and Cycling Index (formerly Bike Life) is the biggest assessment of walking, wheeling and cycling in urban areas in the UK and Ireland. This is the first year walking and wheeling has been included.

It is delivered by Sustrans in collaboration with 18 cities and urban areas. Each city reports every two years on the progress made towards making walking, wheeling and cycling more attractive, everyday ways to travel.

The Walking and Cycling Index UK report

The UK report aggregates data from the 17 UK Walking and Cycling Index cities. The data in this report comes from 2021 and includes local walking and cycling data, modelling and an independent survey representative of adult residents. The survey was conducted from June to August 2021 following most Covid-19 restrictions being lifted. Social research organisation NatCen conducted the survey which is representative of all residents, not just those who walk, wheel or cycle.

Our thanks to the people of the Index cities who took part in the survey and shared their stories with us.

More details on all Walking and Cycling Index reports can be found at www.sustrans.org.uk/walkingcyclingindex



Defining wheeling

We recognise some people, for example wheelchair or mobility scooter users, identify with the term wheeling instead of walking. Therefore we use the terms walking and wheeling together and consider walking and wheeling to include the use of mobility aids and pushchairs.

All walking survey responses within this report include responses from people who wheel. However, please note for graph labels we use walking as a shorthand for walking and wheeling.

i. City is used as a shorthand for Walking and Cycling Index cities, city regions and boroughs.
ii. Data from Dublin Metropolitan Area is not covered in this UK report as it is not in the UK.

Report summary

UK aggregated

Populationⁱ
11,947,997

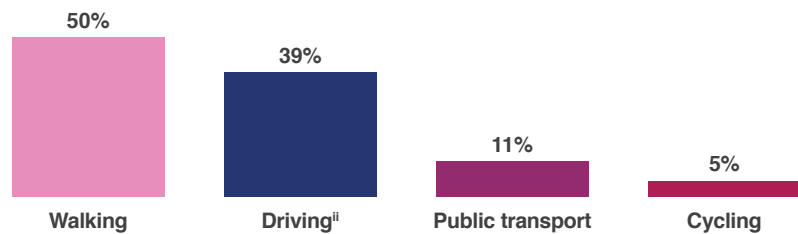
Total number of residents surveyed
23,232

The impact of the pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on how, when and the amount we travel, especially in relation to public transport and driving.

For example: Transport use during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, Department for Transport, June 2020.

Residents who travel by the following modes five or more days a week in Index cities



Half of all residents walk or wheel five or more days each week.

50%
of residents walk at least five days a week

17%
of residents cycle at least once a week

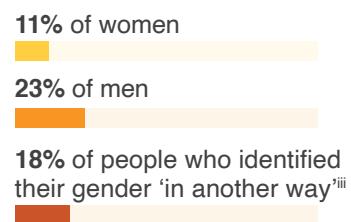
Walking, wheeling and cycling participation is not equal

Walking, wheeling, and cycling participation is not always equal. Barriers can stop some groups from walking, wheeling, or cycling more.

Proportion of residents who walk at least five days a week



Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

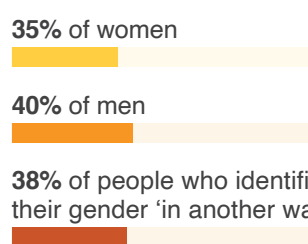


Not all residents feel safe and welcome in their neighbourhood

Proportion of residents who think walking safety is good



Proportion of residents who think cycling safety is good



Proportion of residents who feel welcome and comfortable walking or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood



iii. The sample size for respondents who identified their gender 'in another way' is 0.6% of the total sample.

i. 2019 mid-year population estimates (Source: NOMIS) for all cities except Belfast which uses 2020 mid-year population estimates (Source: NISRA).
ii. Travelling as driver or passenger of car, van or motorcycle.

Everyone benefits when more people walk, wheel and cycle

Last year, people in Walking and Cycling Index cities walked, wheeled or cycled almost 6.1 billion miles, or 667 times around the world every day. Every year, walking and cycling:

+ Prevents

24,576

serious long-term health conditions



Creates

£6.5 billion

in economic benefit for individuals and the region



Saves

440,000 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions

Walking, wheeling and cycling help to tackle the climate emergency

Every day, walking and cycling in Index cities takes up to

2.6 million cars off the road^{iv}

However,

1.99 billion

journeys up to three miles are driven in Index cities each year

If **80%** of these journeys were walked or cycled it could save approximately

660,000 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions^v

Residents want more funding for walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport

Percentage of residents who would like to see more government spending on:

56% on walking



53% on cycling



67% on public transport



32% on driving



This would help increase the liveability of neighbourhoods

Among Index city residents:

60% support



20% oppose



more cycle tracks along roads, physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

79% support



4% oppose



the creation of more 20-minute neighbourhoods^{vi}

66% support



12% oppose



the creation of more low-traffic neighbourhoods

63% agree



17% disagree



increasing space for people socialising, walking and cycling on their local high street would improve their local area

82% agree



5% disagree

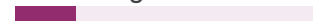


more measures to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour on the street or in public spaces would improve their local area

51% agree



20% disagree



closing streets outside local schools to cars during school drop-off and pick-up times would improve their local area

iv. Based on walking and cycling by residents that live in a household with a car. Does not include leisure cycling or leisure walking trips. v. Based upon each journey being 1.5 miles in length. vi. See definition on page 14.



Walking

Walking and wheeling participation, safety and satisfaction

Walking and wheeling participation

Almost all people walk or wheel, however we often take walking for granted. Walking and wheeling are often overlooked in transport policy and investment.

The pandemic has helped to raise the profile of walking and wheeling. During the pandemic getting out for a walk helped many people improve their mental health, maintain physical activity, meet friends, and enjoy their local neighbourhood.

95%
of all residents walk

50%
of residents walk at least five days a week

Proportion of residents who walk or wheel at least five days a week

Gender

49% of women

51% of men

46% of people who identified their gender 'in another way'ⁱ

Ethnicity

44% of people from ethnic minority groups

51% of white people

Sexuality

59% of LGBTQ+ people

49% of heterosexual people

Age

55% of people aged 16–25

51% of people aged 26–35

51% of people aged 36–45

50% of people aged 46–55

49% of people aged 56–65

44% of people aged 66+

Disability

45% of disabled people

52% of non-disabled people

Socio-economic groupⁱⁱ

52% of AB

53% of C1

42% of C2

46% of DE

i. The sample size for respondents who identified their gender 'in another way' is 0.6% of the total sample. This includes people who are trans, non-binary and intersex.

ii. Socio-economic group is a classification based on occupation maintained by the Market Research Society. Groups A and B are professional and managerial. Group C1 is supervisory/clerical and students. Group C2 is skilled manual. Groups D and E are semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, homemakers and people not in employment.

Walking and wheeling safety and satisfaction

Important differences exist in how safe people feel when walking or wheeling. Safety includes both road and personal safety.

68%
of residents think the level of safety for walking is good

52%
of residents think the level of safety for children walking is good

Proportion of residents who think walking or wheeling safety in their local area is good

Gender

68% of women



70% of men



60% of people who identified their gender 'in another way'



Ethnicity

68% of people from ethnic minority groups



69% of white people



Sexuality

65% of LGBTQ+ people



69% of heterosexual people



Age

68% of people aged 16–25



67% of people aged 26–35



67% of people aged 36–45



71% of people aged 46–55



71% of people aged 56–65



70% of people aged 66+



Disability

60% of disabled people



72% of non-disabled people



Socio-economic group

74% of AB



69% of C1



61% of C2



61% of DE



74%

of residents think their local area overall is a good place to walk



Gordon, Bristol



I'd love to see a big improvement in the environment for pedestrians in Westbury-on-Trym, which would mean wider, better pavements, getting rid of obstructions and so on.

We know that if something is improved for disabled accessibility, it generally improves things for everyone.

Improving maintenance of footways and replacing cracked paving slabs removes trip hazards, and shifting sign posts to reduce the number of obstructions on the footway – there have to be better solutions.

I'd love to see Westbury village flourish, with a broader range of shops and services, but in order for that to happen we need to see less traffic cutting through. Creating more of a liveable village where people feel welcome.



Cycling

Cycling participation, safety and satisfaction

Cycling participation

Encouragingly **37%** of all residents cycle. Many people started cycling during the pandemicⁱ although far fewer cycle on a regular basisⁱⁱ.

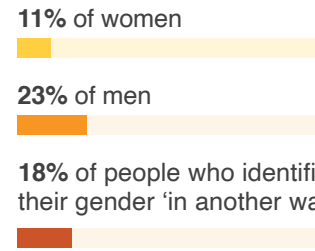
There is huge potential for more people to cycle for everyday transport and recreation in cities and towns across the UK. Current cycling participation is not equal and barriers to cyclingⁱⁱⁱ can be far more pronounced for some people.

37%
of all residents cycle

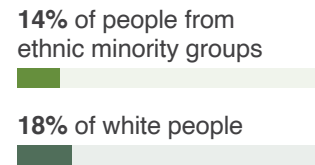
17%
of all residents cycle at least once a week

Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

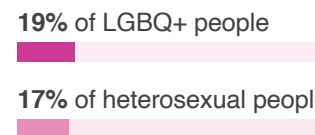
Gender



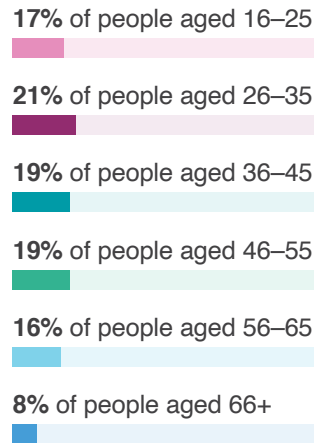
Ethnicity



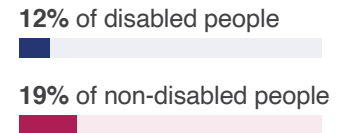
Sexuality



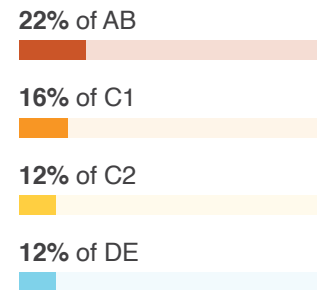
Age



Disability



Socio-economic group



i. For example: The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on walking and cycling statistics, England: 2020.
 ii. Based on people who cycle at least once a week.
 iii. See Bike Life 2019 reports.

Cycling safety and satisfaction

37%

of all residents think the level of safety for cycling in their local area is good

29%

of all residents think the level of safety for children cycling is good

42%

of all residents think their local area overall is a good place to cycle

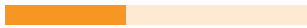
Proportion of residents who think cycling safety in their local area is good

Gender

35% of women



40% of men



38% of people who identified their gender 'in another way'



Ethnicity

45% of people from ethnic minority groups



36% of white people



Sexuality

34% of LGBTQ+ people



38% of heterosexual people



Age

45% of people aged 16–25



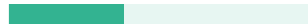
37% of people aged 26–35



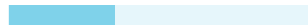
38% of people aged 36–45



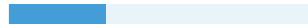
38% of people aged 46–55



35% of people aged 56–65

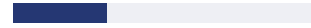


32% of people aged 66+



Disability

31% of disabled people



40% of non-disabled people



Socio-economic group

37% of AB



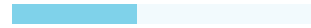
35% of C1



37% of C2



41% of DE



Naaema, Tower Hamlets



For me, cycling is a recent thing, but I've done a lot in a short space of time. I've become a ride leader for Cycle Sisters, a cycling group set up to encourage Muslim women to cycle. I have my own special method of teaching and usually I get people cycling within 20 minutes. I had a 54-year-old lady learn how to ride in her first lesson.

Breaking down barriers is important. I hear, "I'm too old, I'm not fit, I suffer depression, I can't ride in my abaya [a loose-fitting full length robe worn by some Muslim women]." And I tell them none of these things should stop you. I say that I believe they can do it. I show them and with a little time and lots of encouragement, they start to ride and get so much out of it.

Cycling has helped me recover from illness and bereavement.

It's not just about learning how to cycle. It's about self-belief, resilience, achievement.

And these women become role models themselves, pass on the skills and these other great qualities that come with riding a bike. People see me and say, "if she can do it, I can too".



Benefits of walking

Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

The large numbers of walking and wheeling trips in Index cities produce important health, economic and environmental benefits for everyone.

Index city residents walk or wheel 526 times around the world every day

4.5 billion

walking and wheeling trips were made in Index cities in the past year, which adds up to

4.8 billion miles

= 13.1 million miles a day.

This equates to each resident spending

5 days

walking or wheeling continuously in the past year

Annual walking and wheeling trips by purpose in Index citiesⁱ

Enjoyment or fitness – adults and children (including running):
1,886,300,000

42%

Destination – adults only (eg work, school, shopping):
2,301,200,000

51%

School – children only:
323,800,000

7%



Walking and wheeling benefit residents and the local economy in the region

Across the Index cities, the net annual economic benefit for individuals and society from all walking and wheeling trips is

£5.4 billion

Of this total,

£251.4 million

is from people with a car choosing to walk or wheel for transport in the past year.

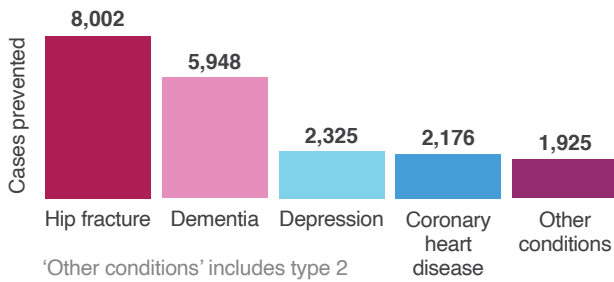


These figures are based upon monetising the costs and benefits of driving and walking. This includes travel time, vehicle operating costs, medical costs, work absenteeism, congestion, infrastructure, local air quality, noise, greenhouse gases and taxation.



Walking and wheeling unlock health benefits for everyone

Walking in Index cities prevents 20,377 serious long-term health conditions each year



Saving the NHS in Index cities
£134.5 million per year

equivalent to the cost of
4.5 million GP appointments

Based on Sport England MOVES tool which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity.

In Index cities the physical activity benefits of walking
prevent 4,843 early deaths annually

which is valued at
£15.9 billionⁱⁱ

Please note wheelchair and mobility scooter trips are modelled as walking trips for the purposes of the MOVES and HEAT models.

People walking and wheeling more instead of driving improves air quality, saving annually:

860,000 kg of NO_x
and
120,000 kg of particulates
(PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

43% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



Walking and wheeling in Index cities help mitigate our climate crisis

310,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by walking or wheeling instead of driving, equivalent to the carbon footprint of

370,000 people taking flights from London Heathrow to New York



Transport now accounts for **27%** of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Between 1990 and 2019, transport emissions went down by only **5%**, while overall emissions went down by **44%**.

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2019 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures

Walking and wheeling keep Index cities moving

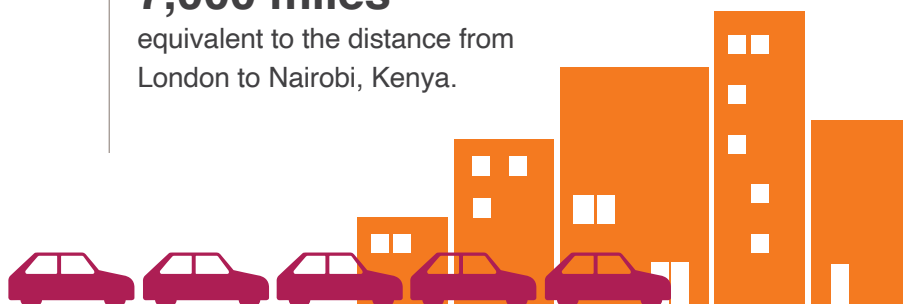
Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.ⁱⁱⁱ This helps keep Index cities moving for all road users.

2.3 million return walking trips are made daily in Index cities by people that could have used a car.

iii. Litman, 2021. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept.

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back

7,000 miles equivalent to the distance from London to Nairobi, Kenya.



ii. Based on WHO/Europe Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), which enables an economic assessment of the health benefits of walking by estimating the value of reduced mortality resulting from specified amounts of walking.



Benefits of cycling

Why everyone gains when more people cycle

Cycling creates significant health, economic and environmental benefits for everyone, including for those that do not cycle.

Index city residents cycle 141 times around the world every day

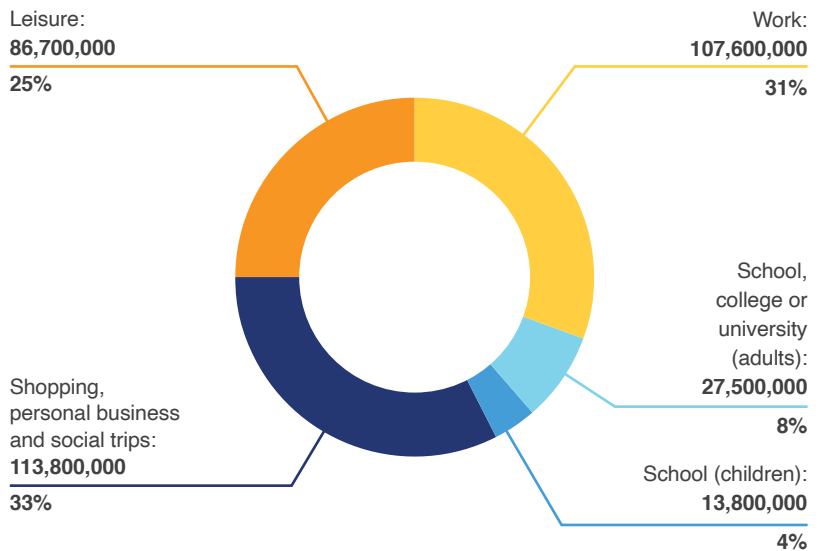
349.4 million cycling trips

were made in Index cities in the past year

This adds up to

1.3 billion miles
= 3.5 million miles a day

Annual cycling trips by purpose in Index citiesⁱ



Cycling benefits residents and the local economy in the region

Across the Index cities, the net annual economic benefit for individuals and society from all cycling trips is

£1 billion

Of this total,

£537.3 million

is from people with a car choosing to cycle for transport in the past year.

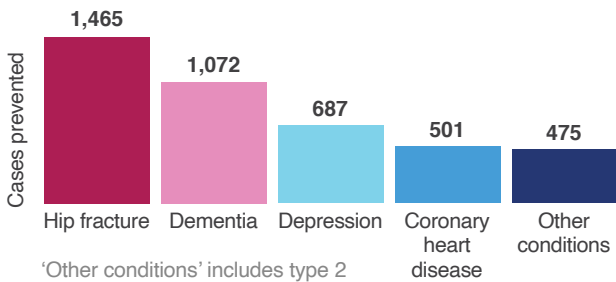


These figures are based upon monetising the costs and benefits of driving and cycling. This includes travel time, vehicle operating costs, medical costs, work absenteeism, congestion, infrastructure, local air quality, noise, greenhouse gases and taxation.



Cycling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Cycling in Index cities prevents 4,199 serious long-term health conditions each year



'Other conditions' includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer, colorectal cancer.

Saving the NHS in Index cities **£27.5 million per year**

equivalent to the cost of **920,000 GP appointments**

Based on Sport England MOVES tool which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity.

In Index cities the physical activity benefits of cycling

prevent 403 early deaths annually

which is valued at **£1.3 billionⁱⁱ**

People cycling more instead of driving improves air quality, saving annually:

260,000 kg of NO_x
and
38,000 kg of particulates
(PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

43% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



Cycling in Index cities helps mitigate our climate crisis

130,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by cycling instead of driving, equivalent to the carbon footprint of



160,000 people taking flights from London Heathrow to New York

Transport now accounts for **27%** of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Between 1990 and 2019, transport emissions went down by only **5%**, while overall emissions went down by **44%**.

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2019 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures

Cycling keeps Index cities moving

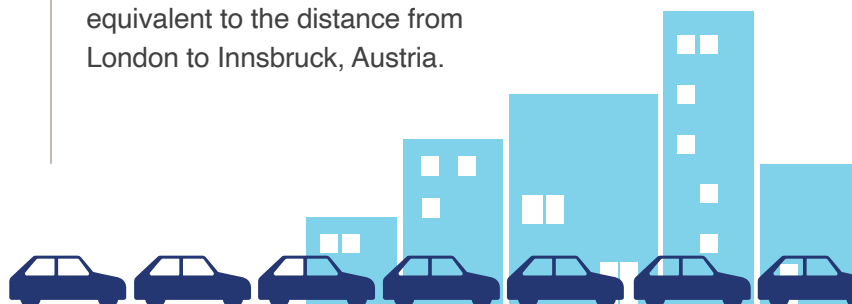
Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.ⁱⁱⁱ This helps to keep Index cities moving for all road users.

260,000 return cycling trips are made daily in Index cities by people that could have used a car.

iii. Litman, 2021. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept.

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back

763 miles equivalent to the distance from London to Innsbruck, Austria.



ii. Based on WHO/Europe Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), which enables an economic assessment of the health benefits of cycling by estimating the value of reduced mortality resulting from specified amounts of cycling.



Walking solutions

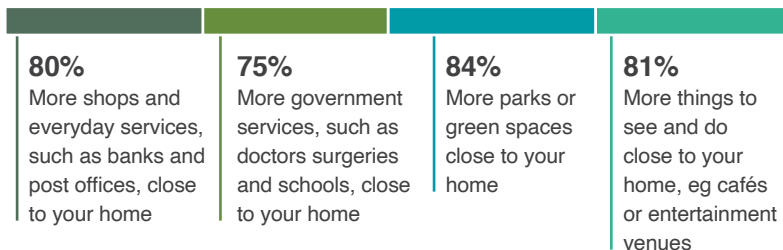
What would help make walking and wheeling better?

Residents want more services and amenities within walking and wheeling distance

Ideally, walking should be the most attractive transport option for the vast majority of short journeys. A city can support this by ensuring many of the things people need are found near to where people live. The walking environment should be safe, comfortable, welcoming and attractive.

Neighbourhoods where many facilities can be reached on foot are known as 20-minute neighbourhoods. You can walk from your home to many of the things you need on a regular basis and back again within 20 minutes. This equates to around 800m each way.

What percentage of residents would find more local amenities and services useful to help them walk or wheel more?



63%

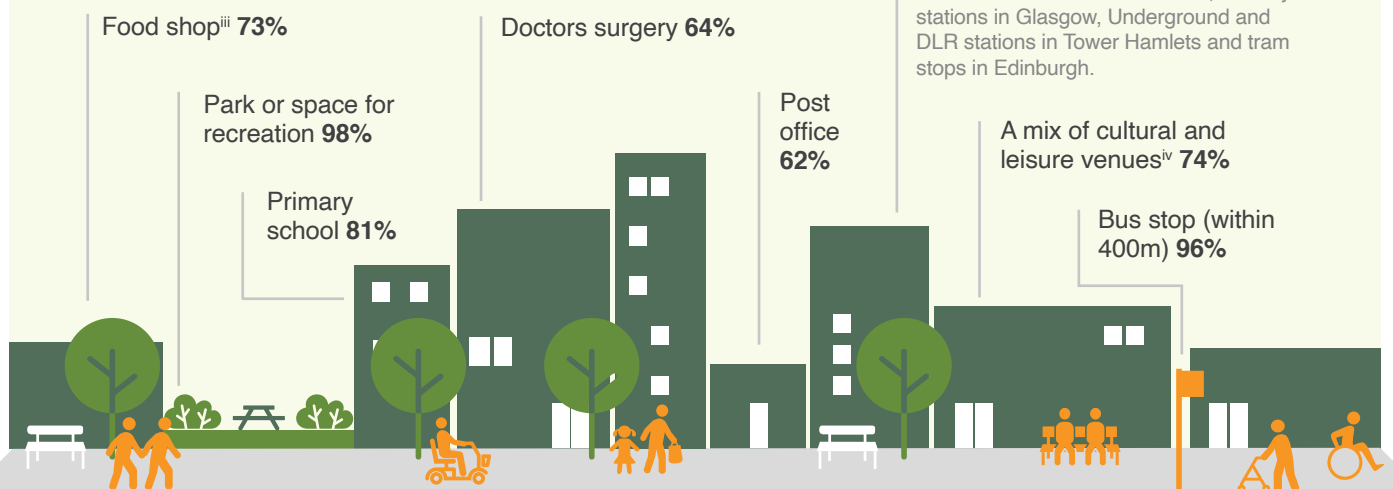
of Index city households are in neighbourhoods of at least 40 dwellings per hectare. These are or can become 20-minute neighbourhoods.ⁱ

Lower density neighbourhoods have too few people to make much local business or public transport viable.ⁱⁱ

55%

agree they can easily get to many places they need to visit without having to drive

Proportion of households within an 800m walk or wheel of the following amenities and services



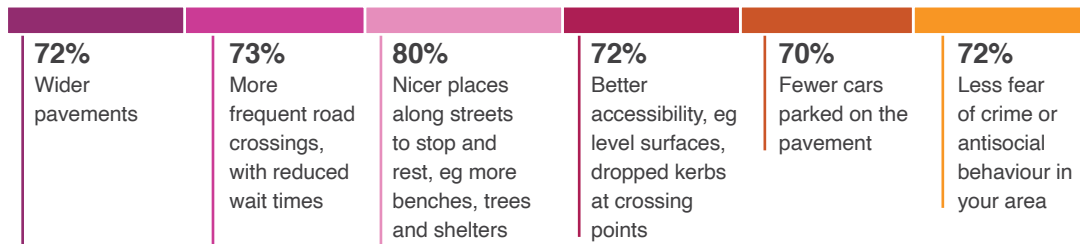
Railway or other station 25%
Includes Metro stops in Tyneside, Greater Manchester and West Midlands, subway stations in Glasgow, Underground and DLR stations in Tower Hamlets and tram stops in Edinburgh.

i. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021, National Model Design Code. ii. Sustrans, 2017. Linking Active Travel and Public Transport to Housing Growth and Planning. iii. Excludes Dundee and Liverpool City Region. iv. A minimum of three distinct types of cultural and leisure venues, eg cafés, pubs, bingo halls, cinemas, museums.

Residents want better streets

There are many ways to make our streets and neighbourhoods safe, welcoming and comfortable for everyone to walk in.

What percentage of residents think that these changes would help them walk or wheel more?



In Index cities:

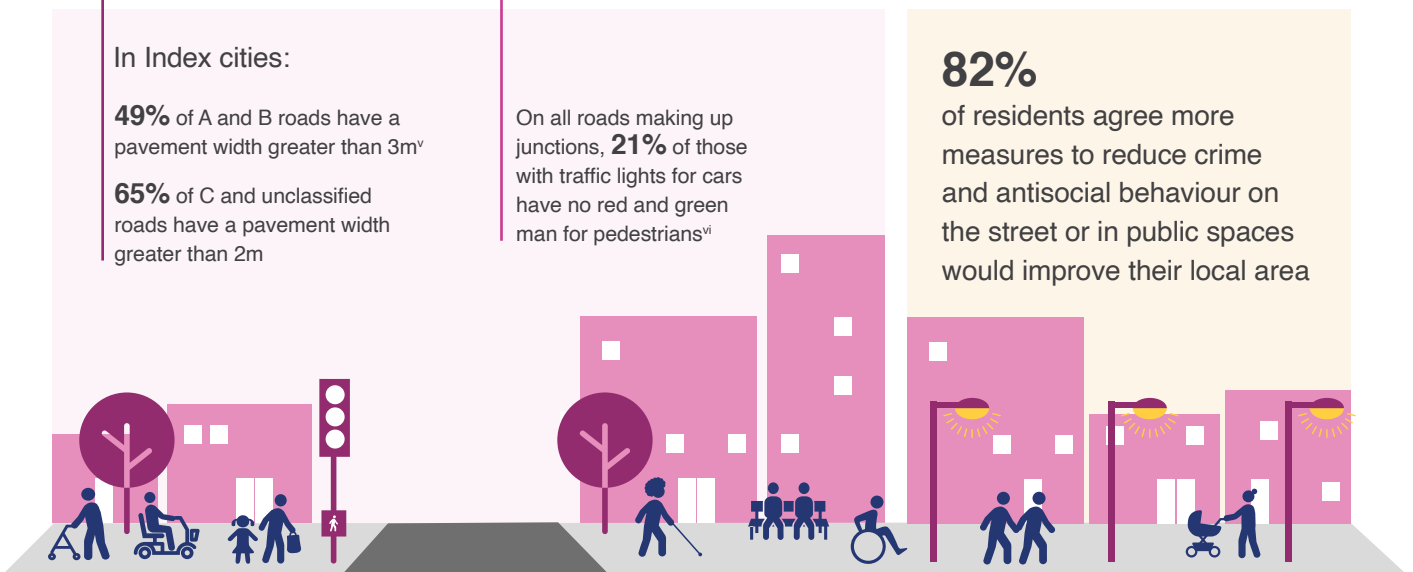
49% of A and B roads have a pavement width greater than 3m^v

65% of C and unclassified roads have a pavement width greater than 2m

On all roads making up junctions, **21%** of those with traffic lights for cars have no red and green man for pedestrians^{vi}

82%

of residents agree more measures to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour on the street or in public spaces would improve their local area



v. A and B roads are main roads. C roads and unclassified roads are more minor roads and often residential streets. Pavement width does not account for obstructions, such as bus stops or litter bins. Excludes Belfast as data is not available.

vi. Excludes Bristol, Cardiff, Greater Manchester, Tyneside and West Midlands as data was not provided.

Vivienne, Liverpool



During lockdown my husband and I started to go for longer walks. I lost a stone. Walking helped reduce my blood pressure and improved my wellbeing.

It's good to walk for a purpose but also for the sheer enjoyment of it. In the past we'd take the car to see my mum. Now we walk the three and a half miles there and back. We feel so much better.

I also started walking regularly with my daughter, who was pregnant at the time. It was good for her and good for me. Since the baby was born we've continued to walk.

One thing we notice is cars parked on the pavement. We can't get the pram past them. I have to go out on the road to check for cars so she can come around. It would be good to have more trees and bushes to enhance the surroundings and improve air quality. Anything to counteract the pollution of cars.

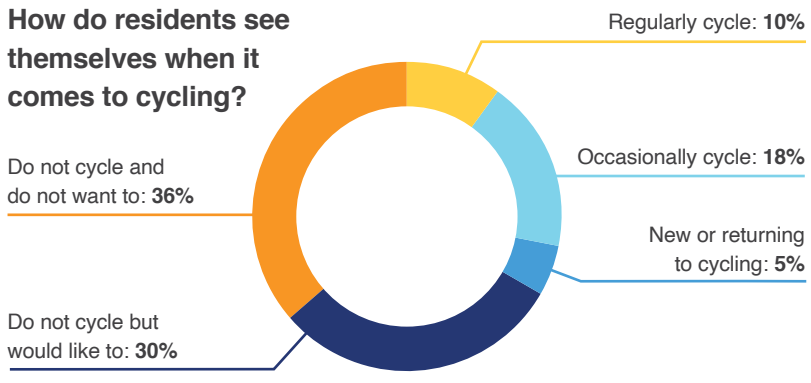


Cycling solutions

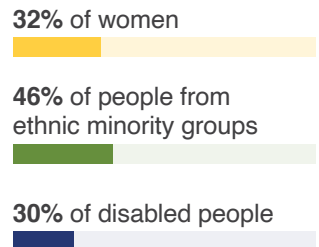
What would make cycling better?

Many Index city residents want to cycle

How do residents see themselves when it comes to cycling?

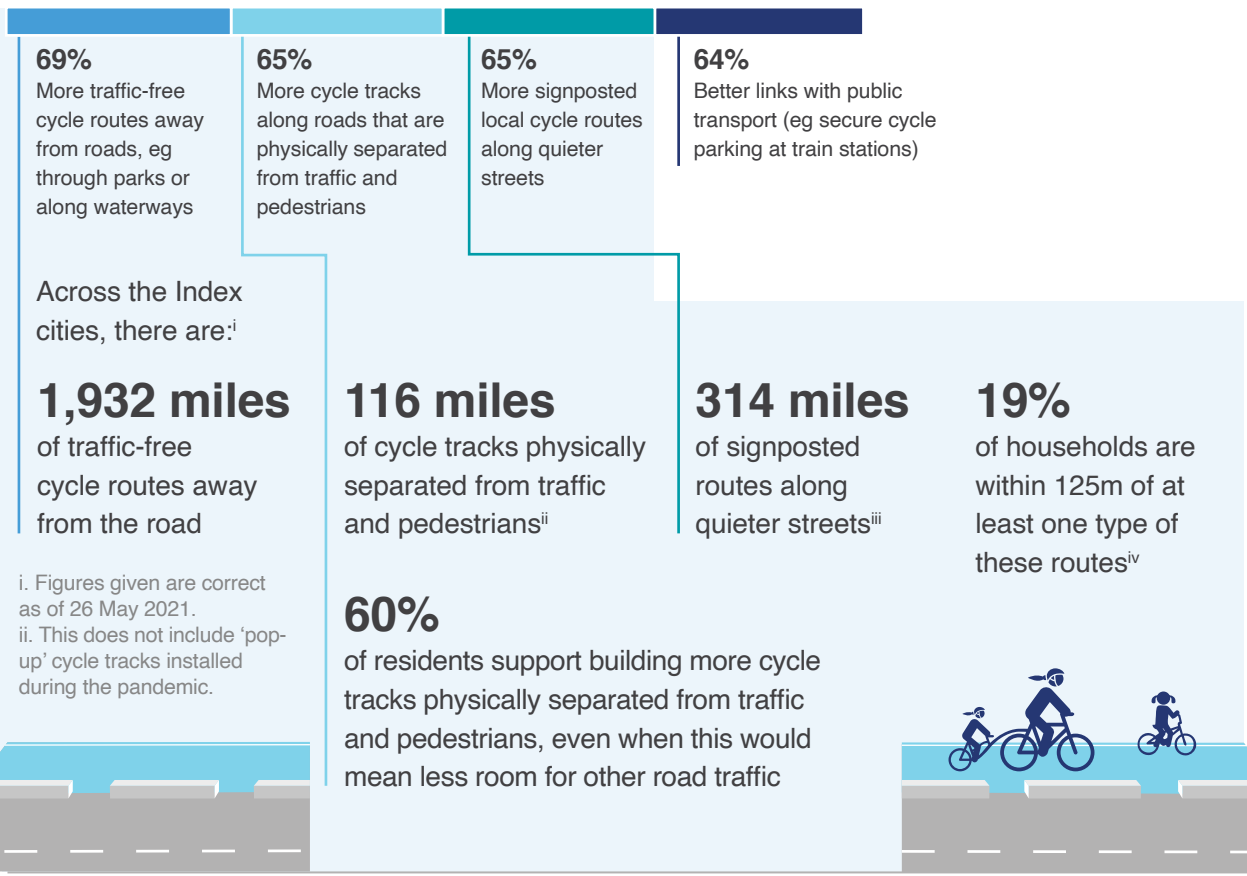


What proportion of residents said they 'do not cycle but would like to'?



Residents want improved cycling infrastructure

What percentage of residents would be helped to cycle more by better facilities?

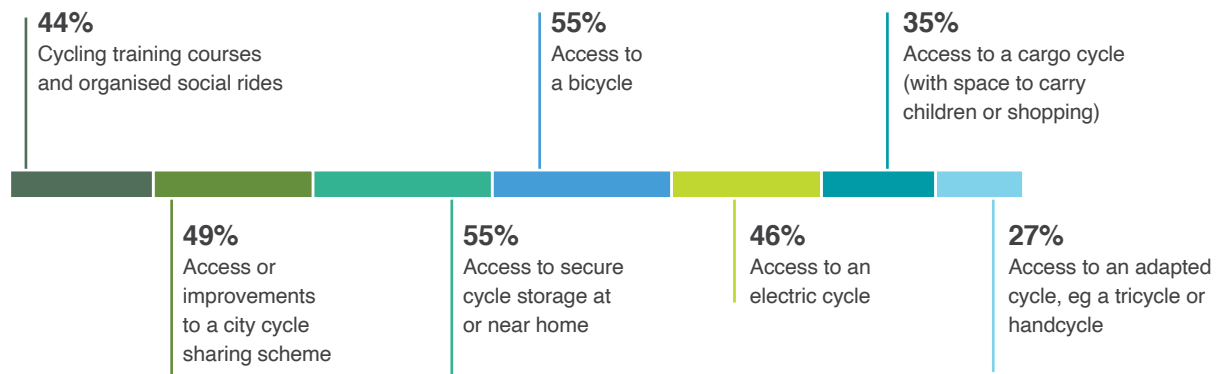


i. Figures given are correct as of 26 May 2021.
 ii. This does not include 'pop-up' cycle tracks installed during the pandemic.

iii. Excludes Aberdeen, Belfast, Bristol, Dundee, Greater Cambridge and West Midlands as data was not provided. Perth and Stirling currently have no signposted cycle routes on low-trafficked and low speed roads. iv. Excludes optional signed route data for Aberdeen, Belfast, Bristol, Dundee, Greater Cambridge and West Midlands as data was not provided.

Residents want more support to cycle

What percentage of residents think that these kinds of support would help them cycle more?



Cycle share schemes across Index cities^v

9 cycle share schemes exist across the 17 Index cities.

Public cycle parking

There is a public cycle parking space for every **62** people who cycle in Index cities.



Reported cycle thefts

There were **20,286** reported cycle thefts in Index cities in 2020/21.

For every **234** people who own an adult cycle in Index cities, there was **1** reported cycle theft in the past year.

Cycle access

49% of residents have access to an adult pedal cycle

24% of households are within 800m of a cycle shop^{vi}



v. Excludes Aberdeen, Bristol, Greater Cambridge, Greater Manchester, Inverness, Perth, Southampton and Tyneside as there are currently no cycle share schemes in operation.



Molly, Aberdeen



I joined a cycling club when I was 10 and I've been competing in road and velodrome cycling ever since. I love cycling with my club, the Deeside Thistle Cycling Club, which has one of the largest numbers of female cyclists in the UK. It feels great to train alongside women and girls my own age. We even have a female coach, ex-professional cyclist Sarah Rowe.

There are about 1,200 students at my school. A good number of boys cycle to school, but there are only one or two girls who cycle. I've seen people looking at me and thinking "why is she doing that", but I don't care. I think that the uniform, the lack of safe infrastructure and being intimidated by the boys, can stop girls from cycling.

I dream of a future where girls would feel safe to cycle to school. I think if there was better cycling infrastructure in Aberdeen it would make it easier for girls to start cycling, and if more girls cycled then it would become normal.

vi. Credit to the Association of Cycle Traders (ACT) and Cycling UK for their assistance with cycle shop locations and services offered.



Neighbourhood solutions

What would help make neighbourhoods better?

All residents should feel welcome in their neighbourhood

Proportion of residents that feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood

65% of residents



65% of women



67% of men



51% of people who identified their gender 'in another way'



56% of disabled people



69% of non-disabled people



59% of LGBTQ+ people



67% of heterosexual people



65% of people from ethnic minority groups



66% of white people



55% of socio-economic group DE



74% of socio-economic group AB



The dominance of motor vehicles can discourage walking, wheeling and cycling

Only 26% of residents think that their streets are not dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles.

Residents would find fewer motor vehicles on their streets useful to:

66% Walk more



62% Cycle more



Unclassified roads are not designed to carry through-traffic, but in Index cities 25% of their total length has nothing to prevent it. This can result in rat-running.ⁱ

55% agree that restricting through-traffic on local residential streets would make their area a better place.

25% of Index cities' streets have 20mph speed limits.ⁱⁱ

Residents would find more streets with 20mph speed limits useful to:

56% Walk more



54% Cycle more



Residents want local streets to be better spaces for people to spend time in

63%

agree increasing space for people socialising, walking and cycling on their local high street would improve their local area

53%

agree they regularly chat to their neighbours, more than just to say hello

66%

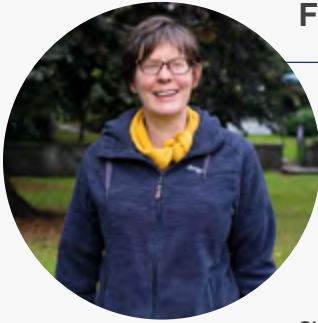
support low-traffic neighbourhoods

i. Based on analysis by CycleStreets www.lowtrafficeighbourhoods.org.

Unclassified roads are all public roads that are neither motorways, A, B nor C roads.

ii.Excludes motorways.

Felicity, Perth



I've lived in Perth City for 14 years. I walk a lot, but feel pushed out of where I live because of the gradual but relentless build-up of traffic.

A pleasant urban environment should entice people in to spend time and money. However, Perth encourages cars into the city with cheap and free parking and has a grid street system, encouraging traffic to travel through the city.

You want your child to have independence to roam, to go out and see their friends.

Through Living Streets, I am focused on trying to make my children's daily journeys safer. A new toucan crossing on Marshall Place, funded through Spaces for People, has made my son Henry's journeys to school and the park so much safer. I'm no longer worried about him darting across the busy road several times a day.

Neighbourhoods need to work for everyone, including children

Neighbourhoods should be places for children to thrive: to grow up in, live their lives in and grow old in. Increasing independence, providing space to play and socialise, and improving the journey to school are all important.

If we design neighbourhoods with children in mind they will then work better for everyone else too.

12 years old

average age when people living with children would let them walk or cycle independently in their neighbourhood.

Over 80% of seven-year-olds in Germany are allowed to go alone to places within walking distance, other than school (parents' responses).ⁱⁱⁱ

49% of residents agree there is space for children to socialise and play



73% of households are within 800m of a children's playground



Among Index city residents:

51% agree



20% disagree



closing streets outside local schools to cars during drop-off and pick-up times would improve their local area

These kind of closures are known as 'School Streets'.

56

permanent School Streets schemes exist across Index cities^{iv}

iv. There are currently no permanent School Streets schemes in Aberdeen, Bristol, Greater Cambridge, Inverness, Liverpool, Stirling, Tower Hamlets and Tyneside. Excludes Belfast as data was not provided. To ensure comparability, figure given is correct as of 26 May 2021 for all city reports. Excludes trial schemes in Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Liverpool, City Region, Perth, Tower Hamlets and Tyneside as these were not permanent by 26 May 2021.



iii. Children's Independent Mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action, 2015.



Changes during the pandemic

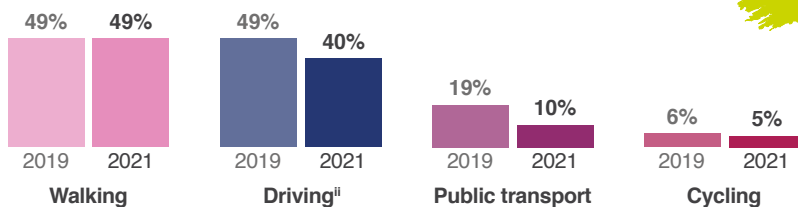
Shifts in behaviour and attitudes across 12 cities

The Covid-19 pandemic has influenced the way we live in many ways, including how we get around and the transport choices we make.

This section compares Bike Life data from 2019ⁱ with Walking and Cycling Index data from 2021. Please note only 12 of our cities have directly comparable data and are included in this aggregate data.

Shifting travel behaviours

Residents who travel by the following modes five or more days a week in Index cities



Participation in walking, wheeling and cycling has remained broadly consistent since 2019.

Encouragingly, the number of people cycling overall has increased since 2019.



36%
of all residents cycle
32% in 2019

17%
of all residents cycle at
least once a week
15% in 2019

Perceptions of cycling safety

Perceptions of safety for cycling for both adults and children have improved since 2019. This may relate to reduced traffic on our streets during the pandemic and many places trialling new cycling schemes.

37%
of all residents think the
level of safety for cycling
in their local area is good
28% in 2019

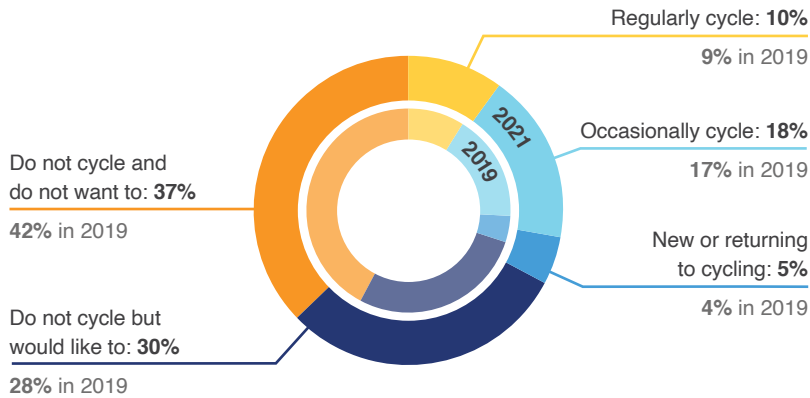
29%
of all residents think the
level of safety for children
cycling is good
17% in 2019

42%
of all residents think their
local area overall is a
good place to cycle
38% in 2019

i. The attitudinal survey was conducted from April to July 2019 by independent social research organisation NatCen.
ii. Travelling as driver or passenger of car, van or motorcycle. In 2019, questions did not include traveling by motorcycle.

Many Index city residents want to cycle

How do residents see themselves when it comes to cycling?



Despite the overall number of people cycling increasing since 2019, almost a third (30%) of residents perceive themselves as someone who does not currently cycle but would like to.

Cycle infrastructure is growing

Across the Index cities, there are:ⁱⁱⁱ

1,530 miles
of traffic-free cycle routes
away from the road
1,504 miles in 2019

iii. Figures given are correct as of 26 May 2021. All route length data excludes Liverpool City Region.

iv. This does not include 'pop-up' cycle tracks installed during the pandemic.

v. Data for Cardiff, Edinburgh, Greater Manchester, Inverness and Tyneside only.

vi. Excludes optional signposted route data for Belfast, Bristol, Dundee, Greater Cambridge, Southampton and West Midlands as data was not provided.

72 miles
of cycle tracks physically
separated from traffic
and pedestrians^{iv}
50 miles in 2019

18%
of households are within
125m of these routes^{vi}
17% in 2019

187 miles
of signposted routes
along quieter streets^v
191 miles in 2019



The length of cycle tracks physically separated from traffic and pedestrians has increased by **22 miles** since 2019. This reflects a rapid increase from cities and towns to improve cycling provision since the start of the pandemic and an increase in funding for cycling across the UK.



Carol Hutchinson, Greater Manchester



During Lockdown I went to the park more with my son. One day we met two mechanics from a local project called Bike Hive.

They invited me to a social ride that Friday. I said: I don't know how to ride a bike. I never thought I could learn to cycle. But within five minutes I was riding by myself. I had learnt to ride a bike at 54!

You'd definitely get more people cycling if there was a physical barrier between the traffic and the person on a bike. It comes down to whether or not people feel safe.



Looking forward

Better streets and places for everyone

At Sustrans we want to help create liveable cities and towns for everyone. Places which are designed around people's needs, equitably.

Walking, wheeling and cycling should be accessible and desirable for most urban journeys. And everyone should feel safe, comfortable and welcome when spending time in their streets and neighbourhoods.

Cities and towns across the UK are increasingly signing up to this vision. They know that places designed for people, as opposed to cars, are places that people want to live, spend time, do business and play in. Cars still have a place, but walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport are attractive, accessible and inclusive for everyone. Only 55% of people we surveyed agree they can get to many places they need to without having to drive.

It's been a tough two years since we published *Bike Life 2019*, but the pandemic has brought some opportunities. Shifting travel and working patterns have helped to ensure walking is still the most frequently used mode of transport in all Walking and Cycling Index cities.

Encouragingly, more people are cycling now than in 2019 and more people think that their local neighbourhood is a better place to cycle. Much of this is down to the hard work of local authorities to put in place walking and cycling schemes during the pandemic.

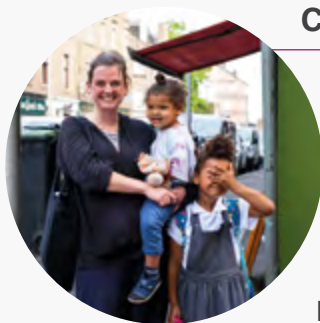
This was the first year we have been able to include data on walking and wheeling. We hope this will help address some of the barriers that have perhaps led to governments overlooking walking. We need to put walking back at the heart of street, town and city design and we need government action to make walking inclusive and give pavements back to people.

We need to invest more in walking and address policy challenges. For example, banning pavement parking would help 70% of the residents we surveyed walk or wheel more. We also need to integrate walking into spatial planning. We found 27% of households are outside of walking distance to a food shop.

The response to the pandemic has perhaps shown what is possible in redesigning our streets and neighbourhoods to genuinely put people first. We need to build on this and the opportunities ahead to transform our cities and towns to help make walking, wheeling and cycling more inclusive for everyone.



Claire, Dundee



My husband drives our car to work every day so I mainly walk with my two children to get around. Walking around Perth Road can be difficult with two young children. My two-year-old has managed to run onto the road before so I don't think it's very safe to walk along.

The footpath is very narrow so there isn't enough space between us and the road, especially when I walk along with a buggy. It feels too close to the traffic. Because of that, to head to the city centre, I prefer making a detour and walk along the river. The paths are broader and I feel safer being away from cars.

I think one of the solutions to improve walking on Perth Road would be to widen the pavement and reduce car speed and traffic. Ideally, the road could even be pedestrianised.



Anne Shackleton, Tyneside



Since lockdown I got out my bike and started to walk and cycle more. I walk to shops and I cycle longer distances to see friends, or visit my mum.

It's good if people see me – an older lady – on a bike. It might help them think they can do this too.

During the pandemic we had the temporary Sunrise cycleway on the seafront where I could just really relax and enjoy riding to Tynemouth. I got anxiety relief from Covid and from the stress of looking after my mum. It was exercise, and I would bump into people as I went along. It really was a life-saver.

Now I have to ride on the pavement or the road. We need everyday cycling infrastructure. Whitley Bay is a ribbon town but it has a heart. I'd like to see much more allocation of road space to pedestrians and a low-traffic neighbourhood. At the moment it's not welcoming or accessible on foot. We picked Whitley Bay so we could walk and cycle to the local shops within 15 minutes. It's such a beautiful place but it could be so much better.

Notes on methodology:

The attitudinal survey was conducted from June to August 2021 by independent social research organisation NatGen.

The survey is representative of all Index city residents, not just those who walk or cycle.

All other data is sourced from our city partners, national data sets or modelled and calculated by Sustrans.

Trip estimates use a model developed by Sustrans. When comparing to other travel surveys, some variation may exist in the proportion of journeys cycled by journey purpose.

Rounding has been used throughout the report. In many cases we have rounded to the nearest whole number. Rounding is avoided where this may cause confusion, for example with modelled estimates shown in the summary and benefits sections.

More information and a detailed methodology are available at www.sustrans.org.uk/walkingcyclingindex

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.

We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute. Join us on our journey. www.sustrans.org.uk

Sustrans is a registered charity in the UK No. 326550 (England and Wales) SC039263 (Scotland)

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