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Transport and Travel in Scotland

Results from the Scottish
Household Survey 2024

An Official Statistics
publication for Scotland

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Key Findings

In 2024, people were back to travelling as much as they did in 2019.

In 2024, 73% of people had travelled the day before their survey interview. This is higher than in 2023 (64%) and a return to the level seen before the COVID-19 pandemic. The average number of trips per adult was 1.96, up from 1.59 in 2023 and similar to 2019 (1.94).

Working from home fell, though it remained above the 2019 rate.

25% of employed people worked from home in 2024, compared to 29% in 2023 and 16% in 2019. There was a rise in the percentage of people travelling to work for 2 days per week to 10% of people who travelled to work from 7% in 2023.

People were less likely to cycle for journeys under 5 miles than in the previous year.

1.4% of journeys under 5 miles were by bicycle in 2024, a decrease from 2.1% in 2023.

Ownership of electric vehicles is steadily growing, but more than half of drivers say they wouldn't consider buying one.

5.8% of driving licence holders owned an electric car or van in 2024, up from 4.7% in 2023. 56% said they wouldn't consider buying an electric car.

Satisfaction with public transport has increased since 2022, but remains lower than in 2019 and prior years.

64% of respondents said they were very or fairly satisfied with public transport. This was about the same as in 2023, but lower than in 2019 (68%).

Introduction

This report presents transport and travel findings from the 2024 Scottish Household Survey.

The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) is an annual survey of the general population in Scotland, carried out since 1999. It aims to collect reliable and up-to-date information on a range of topics through a random sample of people in private residences. It is a voluntary and interviewer-led survey.

The survey covers a number of topics relating to transport and travel, including a 'travel diary', which involves respondents recounting the details of all of the journeys they made the day before their survey interview.

Changes have been made to the frequency of some SHS transport questions from 2024 onwards.

The way we collect details on individual stages of journeys is also changing from 2025.

More details can be found in the Supporting Information section.

Further information on the Scottish Household Survey is provided in the supporting information section.

Interpretation of results

Excel tables have been published in the supporting files to this publication. These include figures for previous years and the relevant table numbers are referred to throughout this publication. The Excel tables include specific results for various sub-groups in the population (e.g. men and women, different age groups).

The Travel Diary is a section of the survey which involves respondents recounting details of all the journeys they made the previous day. A journey may include one or more stages. A new stage is defined when there is a change in the mode of transport or a change requires a separate ticket.

There is a range of further questions in the SHS about transport and travel and the results of these can be found in the Social Survey tables.

Because of sampling variation, some differences may occur by chance. We use standard statistical tests to examine whether differences are likely to be due to chance. Only differences that are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level are described as differences in the text of this report, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

A lookup table for confidence intervals is included in the accompanying excel files (Confidence_intervals). This can be used in conjunction with the estimates and sample size to give an indication of what inferences can reliably be made from the data. In some cases, where the sample size is below 50 respondents, years have been combined or estimates are not given because they might be unreliable.

In this publication, no comparisons are made between figures for 2020 and 2021 and figures for other years. Due to COVID-19 related changes to how the survey was conducted, the 2020 and 2021 editions of the survey are not considered to be comparable with other years. Further information is provided in the supporting information section.

An Official Statistics Publication for Scotland

These statistics are official statistics. Official statistics are statistics that are produced by crown bodies, those acting on behalf of crown bodies, or those specified in statutory orders, as defined in the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#).

Transport Scotland statistics are regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

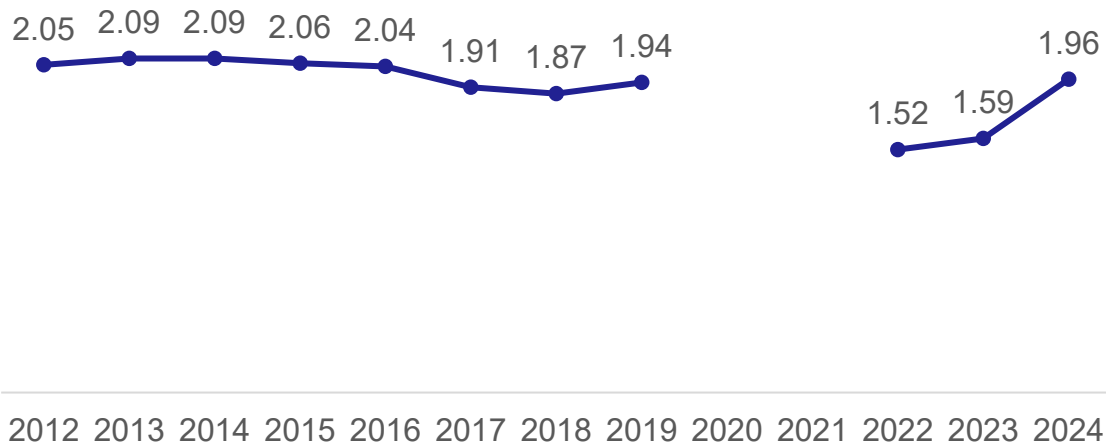
Personal Travel

How much are people travelling?

In 2024, 73% of people had travelled the day before their survey interview. This is higher than in 2023 (64%) and a return to the level seen before the COVID-19 pandemic. [Table TD1].

There was also an increase in the average number of trips per adult the day before the survey interview to 1.96 in 2024 from 1.59 in 2023. This average was similar to the 2019 figure of 1.94. [Table TD2e, TD3a, Figure 1].

Figure 1: Average number of journeys per day per adult, 2012 to 2024

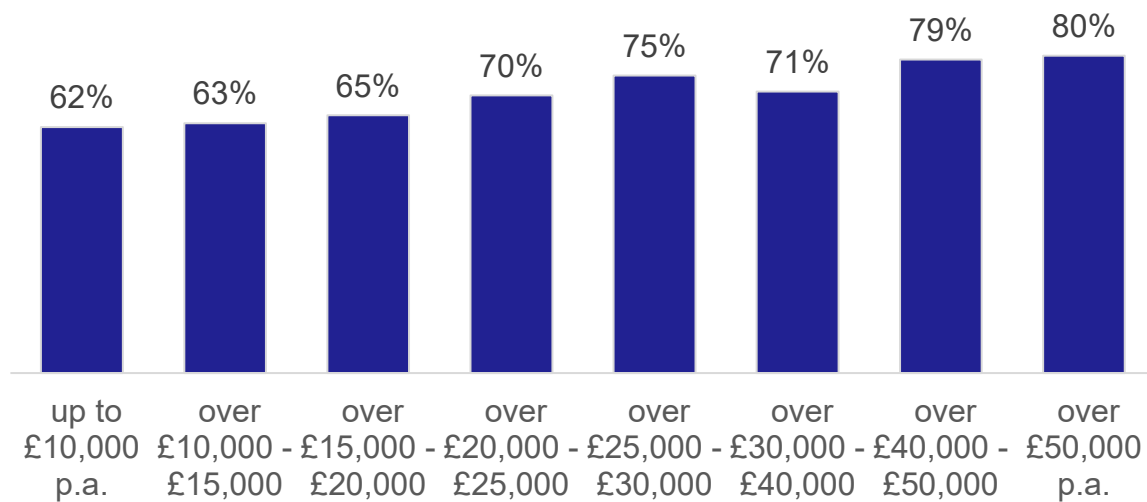


Who travels?

The increase in travel between 2023 and 2024 has been seen across the population, with increases seen for males and females and all age groups. [Table TD1]

The percentage travelling increased with income, with 62% of those with a household income below £10,000 travelling compared to 80% of those with an income above £50,000. [Table TD1 and Figure 2]

Figure 2: Percentage of adults travelling the previous day by household income, 2024



How do people travel?

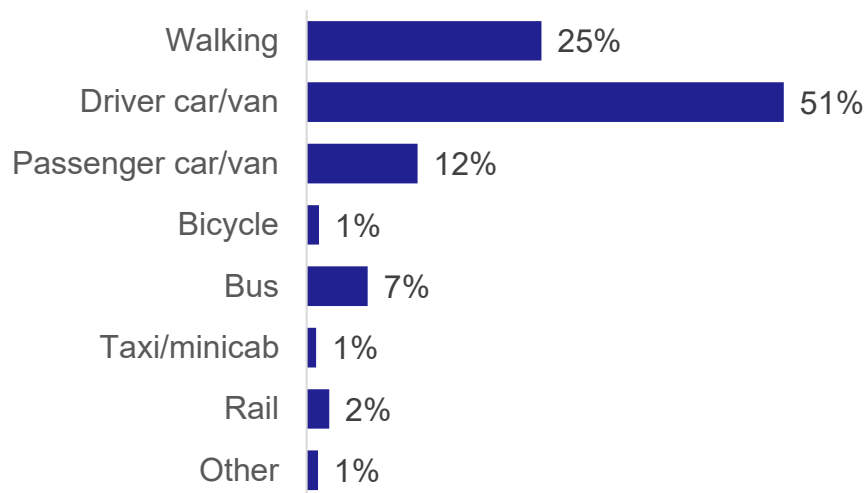
People were using the different modes of transport in a similar proportions in 2024 to 2023. Since people were making more journeys in 2024 than in 2023, the increase in journeys can be seen across most modes of transport. [Table TD2, Table TD2e].

Driving a car or van was the most common mode of transport, accounting for over half of journeys (51%) in 2024. Walking was the next most common mode of transport at 25% of journeys in 2024. 12% of journeys were as car or van passenger, 7% by bus and 2% by rail. [Table TD2, Table SUM1, and Figure 3]

Two-thirds of people (66%) had walked as a means of transport at least one day in the week leading up to the survey interview. This percentage has been steady in recent years, but the percentage of people doing so in 6 or 7 days that week (16%) has fallen since 2019 (22%). At the same time, walking for pleasure or to keep fit has risen with 69% of people doing so at least one day in the week in 2024, compared to 62% in 2019. [Table 25]

In 2024, 5% of people had cycled as a means of transport at least one day in the week leading up to the survey interview and 5% had cycled for pleasure or to keep fit. These figures were slightly lower than in 2023. [Table 25a]

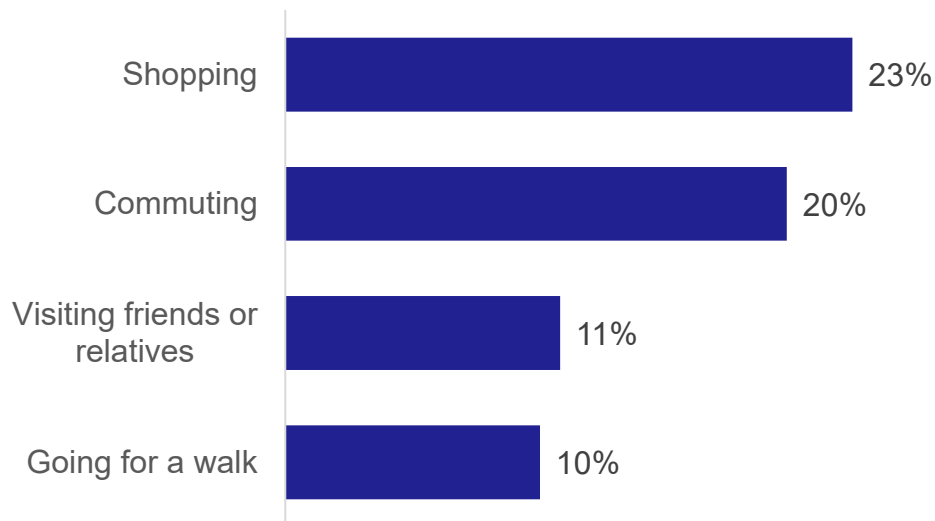
Figure 3: Breakdown of transport modes used for all journeys, 2024



Why do people travel?

As has been the case in recent years, the two most common reasons for travel were shopping (23% of journeys) and commuting (20% of journeys). The proportion of journeys made for commuting remains lower in 2024 than it was in 2019 and prior years. 'Going for a walk' was the reason for 10% of journeys, about the same as 2023. This represents an increase compared to 2012 to 2019. [Table TD3 and Figure 4].

Figure 4: Purpose of travel (most frequent categories), 2024



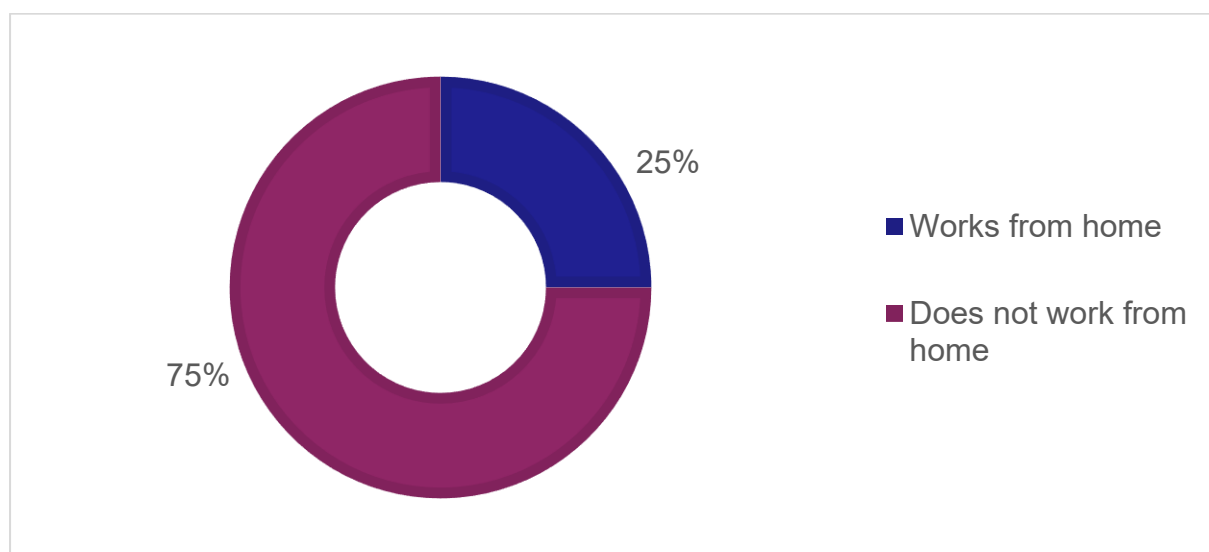
There were increases in the number of journeys for most purposes in 2024 compared to 2023. [Table TD3a]

Travel to Work

Working from home

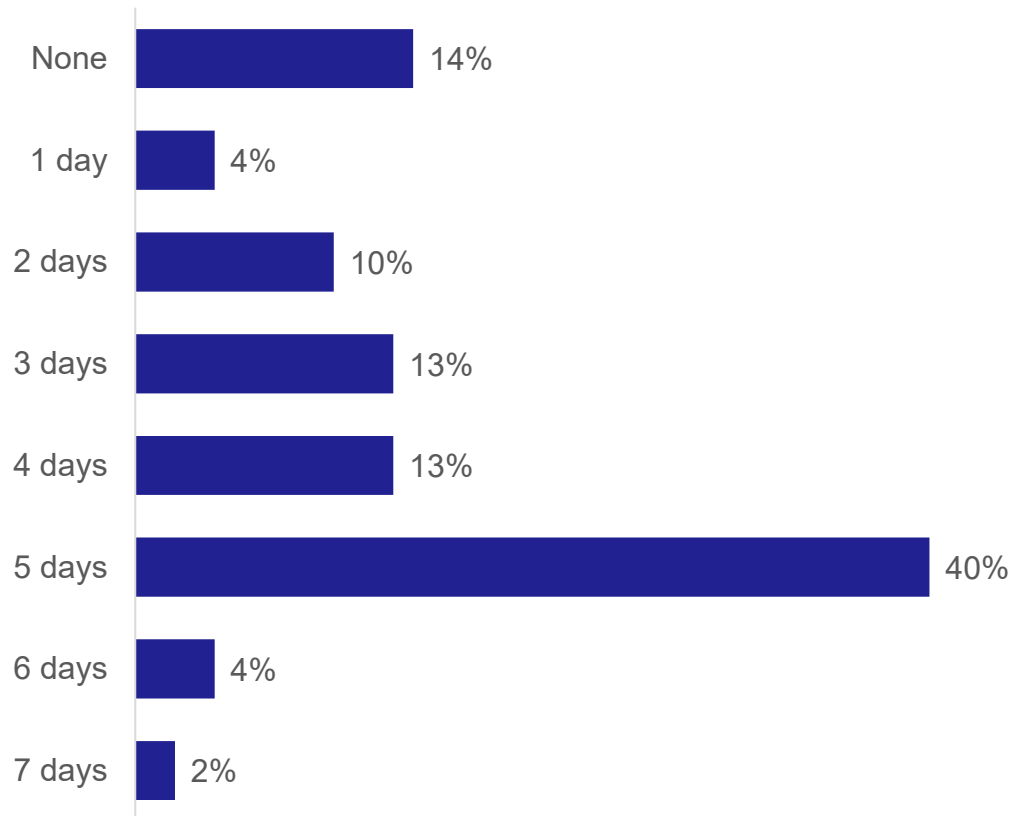
In 2024, the proportion of employed people who described themselves as working at or from home was 25%, a drop from 2023 (29%). This continues to be above the percentage in 2019 (16%). [Table 7a and Figure 5]

Figure 5: Percentage of employed people working from home, 2024



There was a slight increase in 2024 in the proportion of working people reporting travelling to work 2 days per week at 10% compared to 7% in 2023. The percentage who reported travelling to work 0 days per week (14%) fell compared to 2023 (17%), but remained well above the 2019 figure of 5%. [Table 56 and Figure 6]

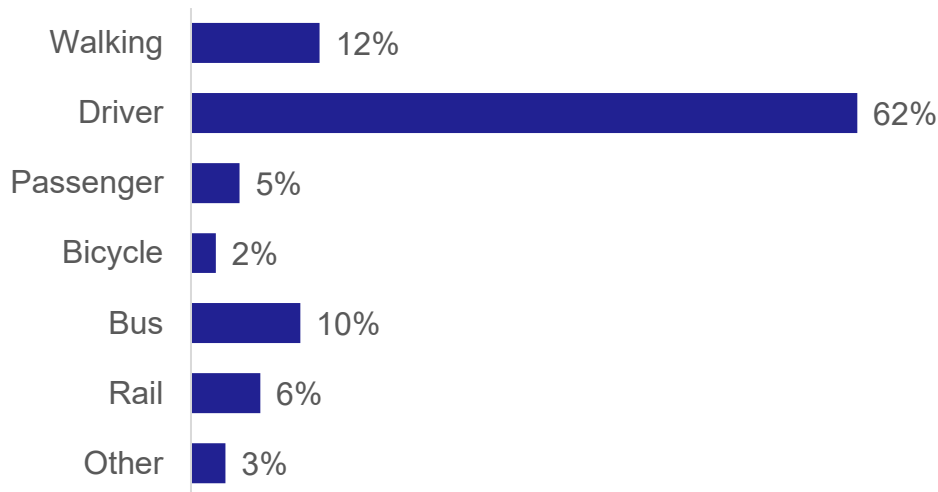
Figure 6: Number of days working people travelled to work per week, 2024



How do people travel to work?

In 2024, two thirds of people who travelled to work (66%) usually travelled by car or van, usually as a driver (62%). 12% of people usually walked to work, while 10% usually took the bus. [Table Sum 1, Table 7 and Figure 7Figure 7]

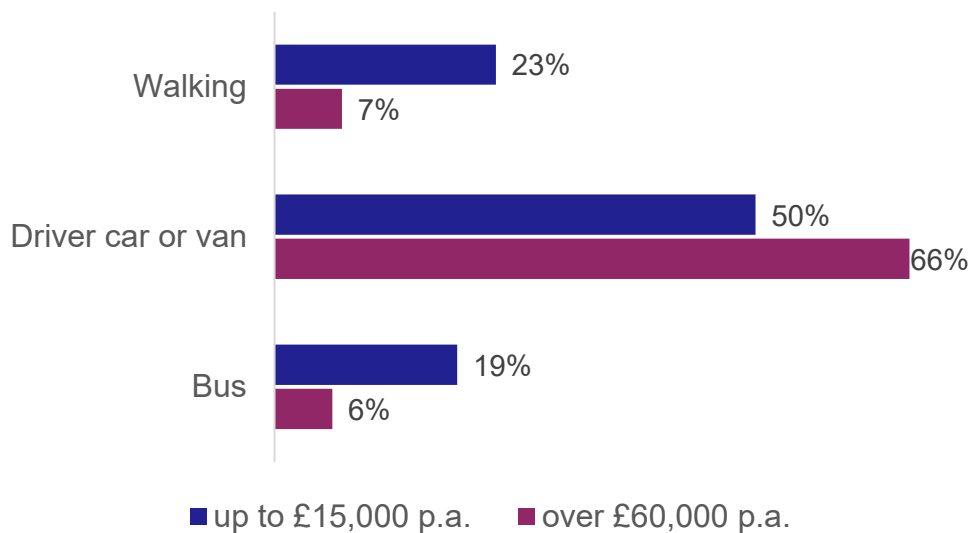
Figure 7: Method of travel to work, 2024



Who travels to work by which mode?

Those on a household income below £15,000 were less likely to travel by car (50%), and more likely to walk (23%) or get the bus (19%) than those with household income over £60,000 (66%, 7% and 6% respectively). [Table 7 and Figure 8]

Figure 8: Percentage of people walking, driving or taking bus to work for highest and lowest income bands, 2024

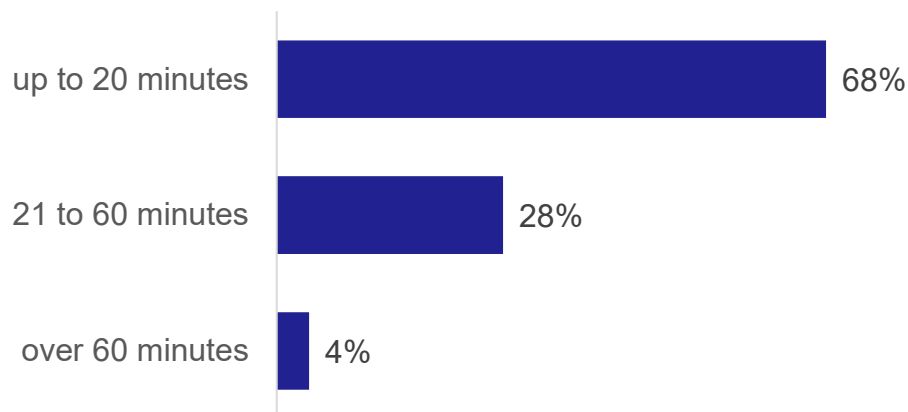


How long do people travel for?

Duration of travel

The majority of journeys reported were of short duration. 68% of journeys lasted up to 20 minutes. Only 4% lasted more than an hour. [Table TD6 and Figure 9]

Figure 9: Percentage of journeys made by duration of journey, 2024



Distance travelled

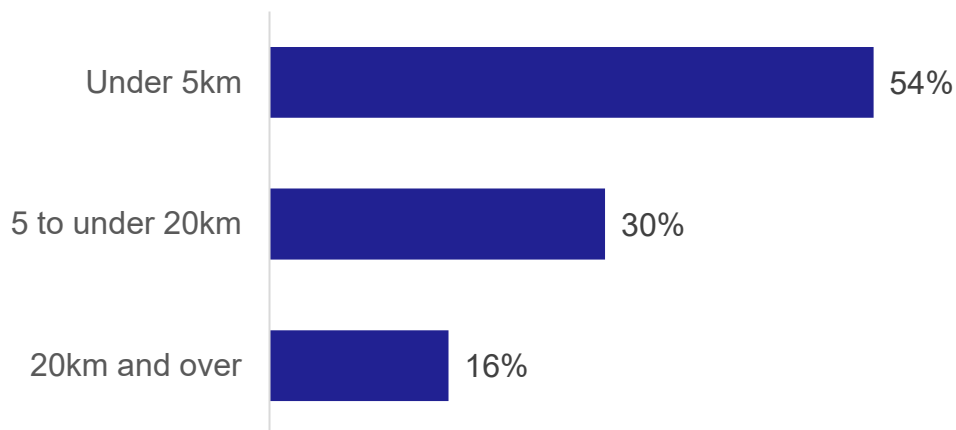
An improvement has been made to the methodology for estimating the distance of journeys. This has had a small impact on statistics involving distance and the time series has been revised.

More information is included in the Supporting Information section.

Over half (54%) of journeys were under 5 km. [Table TD4 and Figure 10]

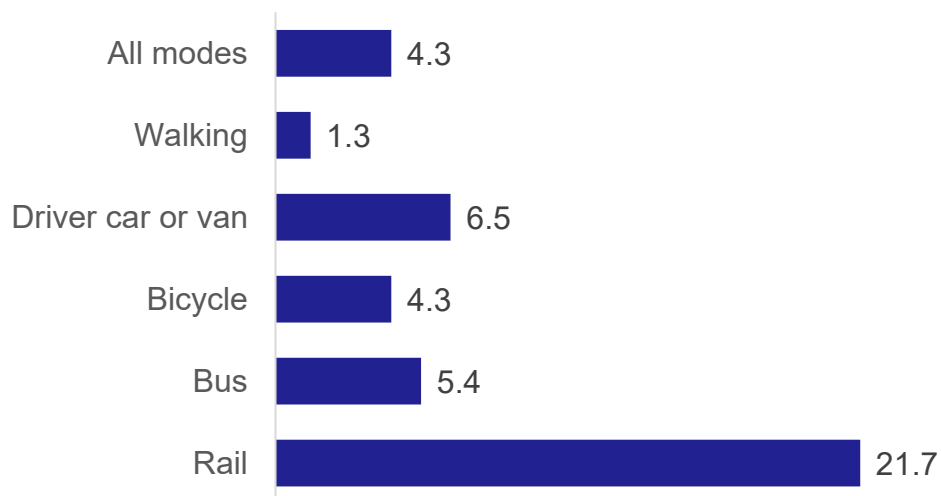
The median journey length was 4.3 km, and the mean journey length was 13.1 km. [Table TD5]

Figure 10: Percentage of journeys by road network distance, 2024



Walking journeys were an average (median) length of 1.3 km, with car driver journeys at 6.5 km and rail the longest at 21.7 km. [Table TD5a and Figure 11]

Figure 11: Average (median) distance (km) by different modes of transport, 2024



71% of journeys under 1 km were made on foot; car journeys (whether as a driver or passenger) accounted for most of the remainder (22%). Car was the most common mode of travel for all distance groupings greater than 2 km. [Table TD2a]

Motor vehicles, traffic and driving

Driving licences

In 2024, 71% of people aged 17 and over held a full driving licence. Men were more likely to hold a driving licence than women, with 75% of men aged 17+ having one, compared to 67% of women. The percentage of men holding a licence has been fairly stable since 1999, but for women this has been steadily increasing from 51% in 1999. [Table 1]

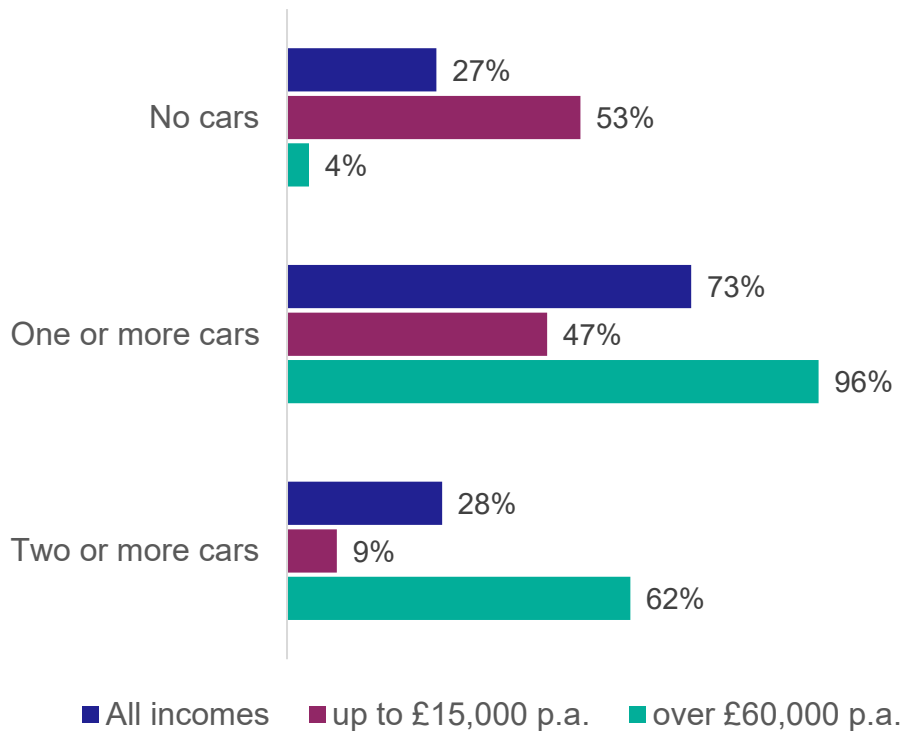
People were more likely to have driving licences in rural areas (60% of adults in large urban areas had a driving licence, compared to 86% of those in rural areas). [Table 1]

Car and van access

73% of households had access to one or more cars or vans for private use. 28% of households had access to two or more cars or vans for private use. This is a slight fall from 2019 (31%). [Table 18b, Table SUM1]

Car access increased with household income, as did the number of cars available per household: 47% of households with an annual income up to £15,000 had access to one or more cars, compared to 96% of households with an annual income of more than £60,000. [Table 18b and Figure 12]

Figure 12: Household access to cars or vans by selected household income bands, 2024



Households in rural areas were more likely to have access to a car than those in urban areas. Car access in accessible rural households was 89%, compared to 61% in large urban areas, where more public transport is available. [Table 18b]

Frequency of driving

64% of people drove at least once a week in 2024 with 35% driving every day. The percentage driving every day remains lower than in 2019 (43%). [Tables 20 & SUM1]

Frequency of driving was higher in rural areas than in urban areas, and increased with income. [Table 20]

Fuel spend and cost of parking

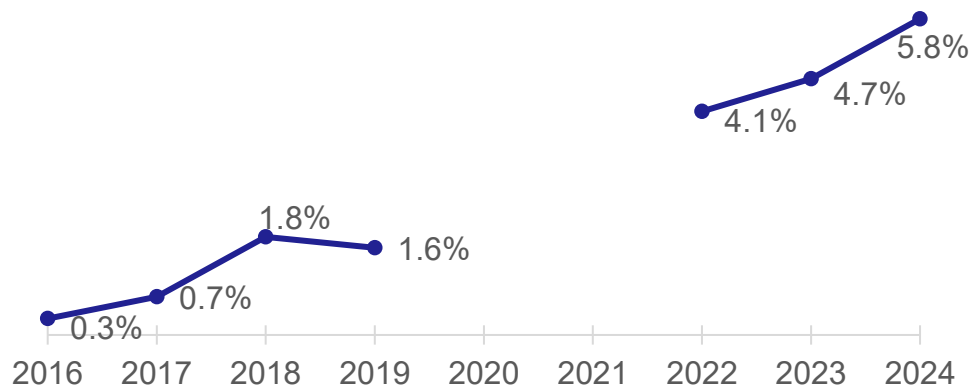
The average (mean) amount which an adult driver spent on vehicle fuel 'in the last month' was £122. [Table 2a]

The average (mean) spent by an adult on parking (including non-drivers) was £0.90 per week. For those who drove, the figure was £1.30. [Table 52]

Electric vehicles

The percentage of driving licence holders owning an electric car or van has steadily increased in recent years to 5.8% in 2024. [Table 49 and Figure 13]

Figure 13: Percentage of driving licence holders owning an electric vehicle, 2016-2024.



Electric cars being environmentally friendly was the most common reason respondents gave for having bought, or why they would consider buying, a plug-in electric car or van (72% of respondents) [Table 50].

The percentage of drivers saying they wouldn't consider buying an electric car was 56% in 2024. This is the highest percentage since the question was first asked in 2016. [Table 49]

When asked their reasons for not considering buying a plug-in electric car or van the most common answer given was the availability or convenience of charging points (52%), followed by cost of vehicle purchase (50%), and the battery (i.e. the distance that can be travelled on a charge) (49%) [Table 51].

Public transport

Public transport satisfaction

Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) said they were very or fairly satisfied with public transport. This was about the same as in 2023, but lower than in 2019 and prior years. [Table 4]

Satisfaction was a little higher amongst actual users of public transport (those that had used bus or train in the past month) with 70% of users reporting that they were satisfied in 2024. [Table 4b]

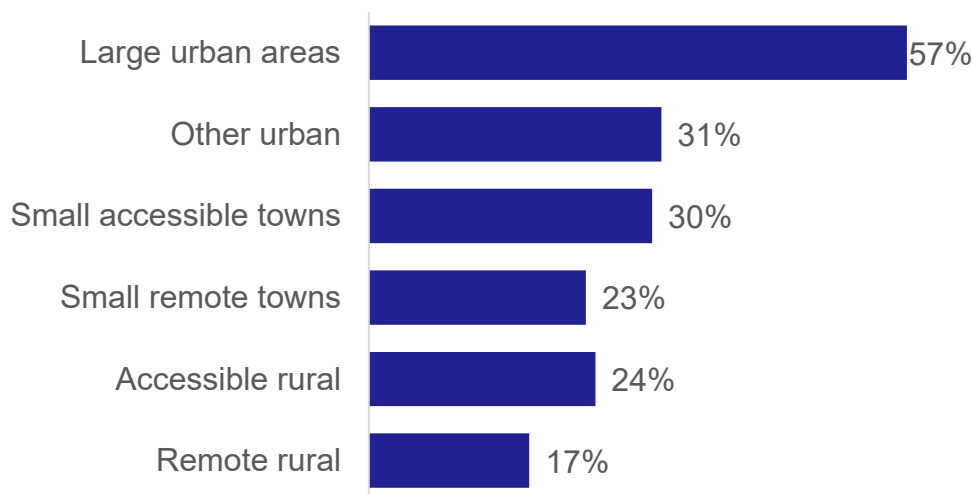
Satisfaction with public transport was lowest in rural areas. Satisfaction rates for those living in remote rural and accessible rural areas (43% and 41% respectively) contrasted with a satisfaction rate of 75% for those living in large urban areas.

Local bus services

39% of survey respondents had used the bus in the past month, with 7% using the bus everyday or almost every day. These percentages were about the same as in 2023, but lower than in 2018 and prior years. [Table SUM1, Table 28a]

Frequency of bus use was higher in urban areas: 57% of people in large urban areas used the bus at least once a month compared to 17% in remote rural areas. [Table 28a and Figure 14]

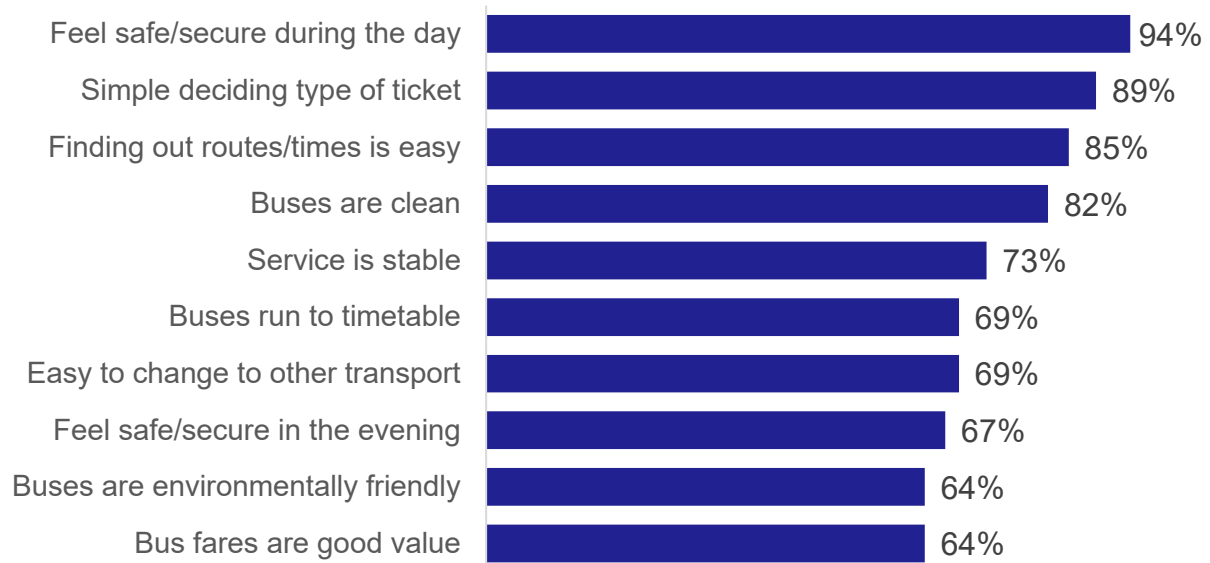
Figure 14: Percentage of adults using the bus at least once a month, by urban rural category, 2024



Views on bus services

Bus users were asked whether they agreed with a number of statements about their bus service. They were most likely to agree that they felt safe or secure on the bus during the day (94% of users agreed), but were less likely to agree that they felt safe or secure using the bus during the evening (67%). Almost two thirds (64%) of users agreed that fares were good value. More than a fifth of users (22%) disagreed that buses run to timetable. [Table 29 and Figure 15]

Figure 15: Percentage of bus users agreeing with statements on their bus service 2024

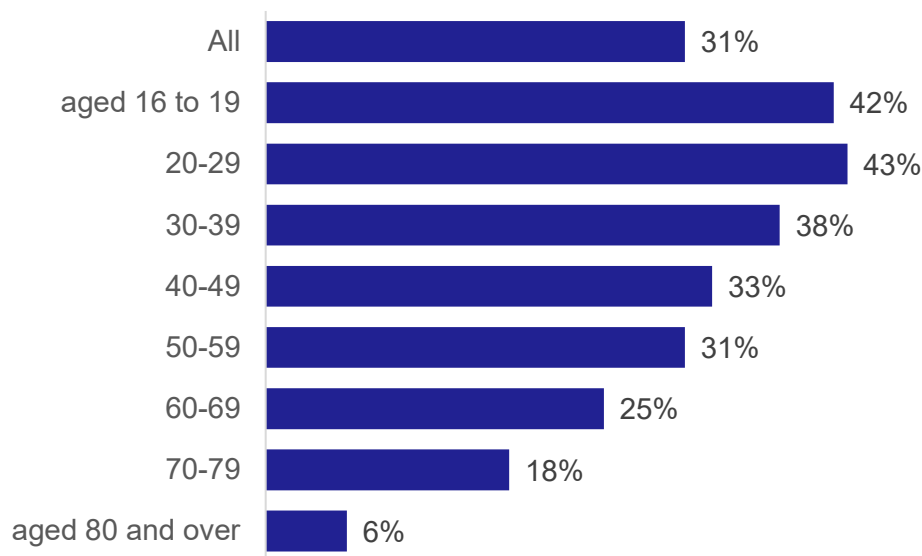


Rail travel

31% of survey respondents had used the train in the last month. This is an increase from 28% in 2023. Most of the increase has been in usage once or twice a month. [Table 28b, Table SUM1]

The proportion of people who reported that they had used the train in the last month decreased with age: 42% of those aged 16-19 and 43% aged 20-29 had used the train in the last month, compared to 18% aged 70 to 79 and 6% of those aged 80 and over. [Table 28b and Figure 16Figure 16]

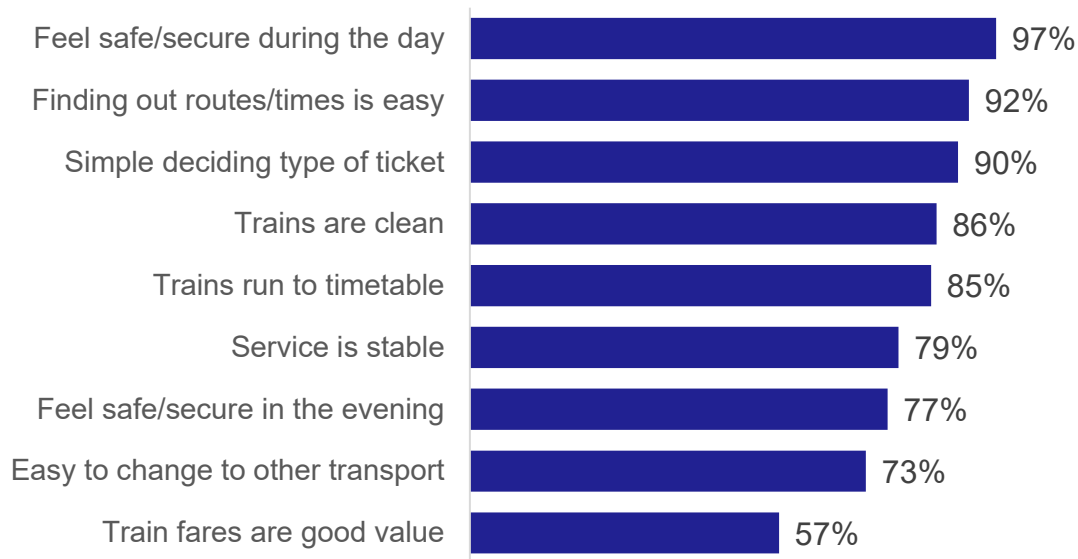
Figure 16: Percentage of adults using the train at least once in the past month by age, 2024



Views on rail services

Rail users were asked whether they agreed with a number of statements about their rail services. A high percentage of rail users agreed that they felt safe or secure using the train during the day (97%). Almost a third of rail users (31%) disagreed that train fares were good value. [Table 30 and Figure 17]

Figure 17: Percentage of rail users agreeing with statements on their train service, 2024



Public transport cost

The average amount spent by an adult on public transport in 2024 was £4.60 per week. Most people (79%) spent nothing. This includes those who do not use public transport and holders of a pass for free travel. [Table 53]

For those who said they used public transport at least once a week, the average spent was £9.60 per week and 54% spent nothing (this will include free pass holders). [Table 53]

Affordability of transport

69% of people said their transport costs were either fairly easy or very easy to afford, about the same as in 2023.

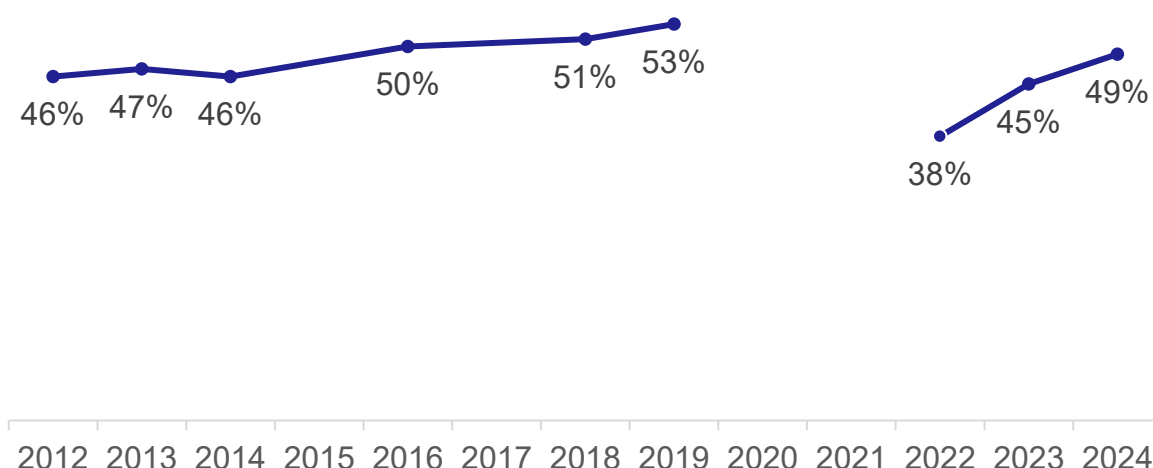
Those in households on incomes up to £15,000 were less likely to consider their costs affordable (57%). [Table 54]

50% of respondents said that transport costs affected the method of travel they used. [Table 55]

Aviation

In 2024, almost half of adults (49%) said they had taken at least one flight for leisure in the last 12 months. This percentage has been increasing since 2022 (38%), but it continues to be lower than 2019 (53%). [Table 37a and Figure 18]

Figure 18: Percentage of adults taking flights for leisure, 2012 to 2024



Flights taken for business remained lower than in the period 2009 to 2019. In 2024, 6% of adults had taken a flight for business compared to 8% in 2019. [Table 38a]

Flights to Europe were most common amongst those flying for leisure (82% of those that flew for leisure flew to Europe at least once). For business flyers, flights to the rest of the UK were most common (62% flew at least once to the rest of the UK).[Tables 37b, 38b]

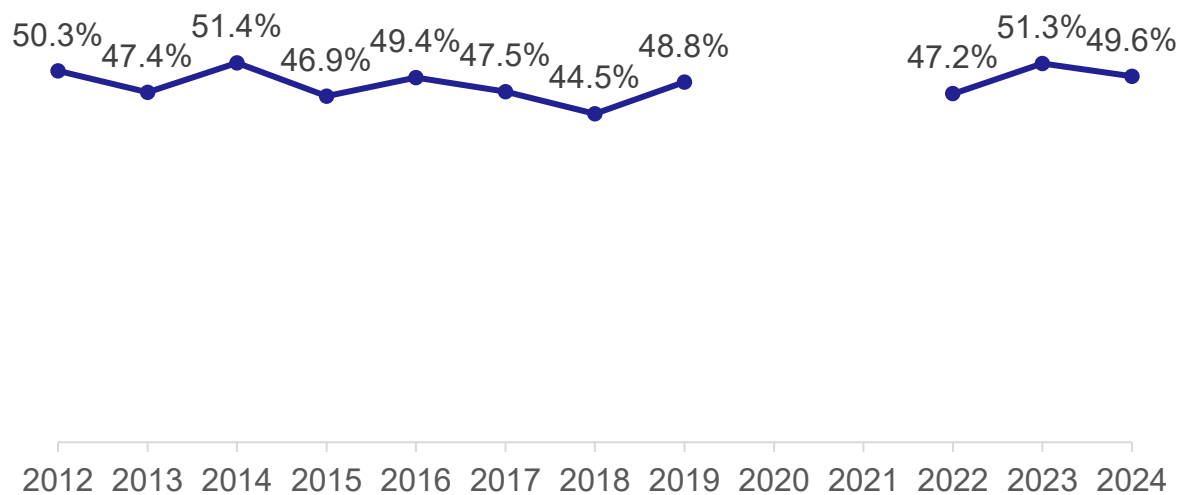
By far the two most common reasons people gave for flying within the UK over other forms of transport was that it was quicker (78%) and cheaper (37%). [Table 39]

Journeys by active travel

Scotland's National Performance Framework (NPF) had included a 'journeys by active travel' indicator. Following the latest statutory review of the National Outcomes, and the subsequent Scottish Parliament inquiry, the Scottish Government has committed to a period of reform of the NPF. The current 11 National Outcomes are still in operation as is the duty on public bodies 'to have regard' to them. The NPF website has been archived and a reformed framework is expected to be launched in 2026.

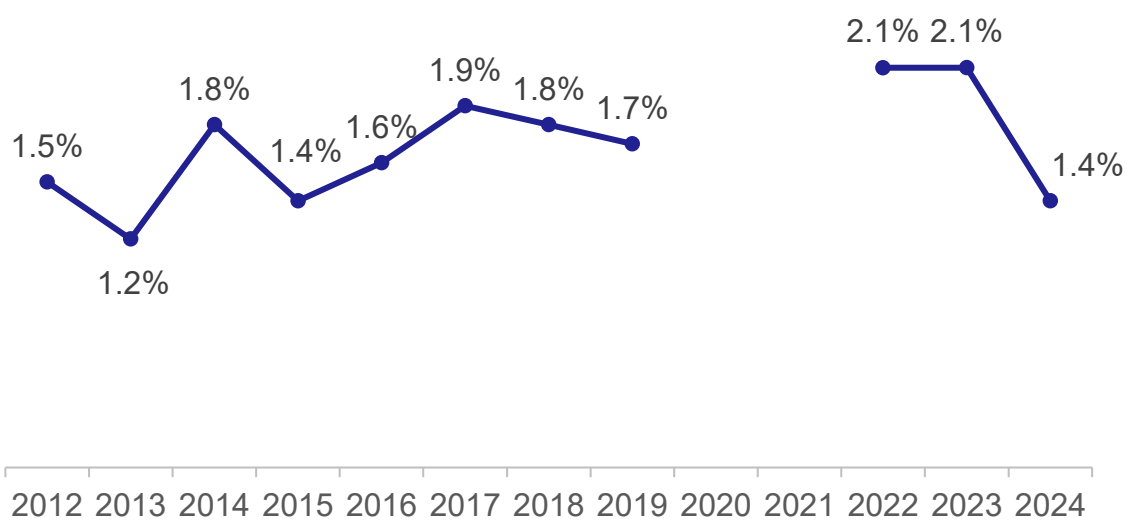
49.6% of journeys under two miles were on foot in 2024. This compares to 51.3% in 2023. This decrease is not statistically significant at the 95% level. [Table TD4c and Figure 19]

Figure 19: Percentage of journeys under 2 miles by main mode, walking, 2012 to 2024



1.4% of journeys under five miles were by bicycle, compared to 2.1% in 2023. This decrease is statistically significant at the 95% level. [Table TD4d and Figure 20]

Figure 20: Percentage of journeys under 5 miles by main mode, cycling, 2012 to 2024



Supporting Information

Additional background information on the SHS

The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) started in February 1999. Its principal purpose is to collect information to inform policy on Transport, Communities and Local Government, but other topics are covered, such as household composition, amenities, employment or unemployment, income, assets and savings, credit and debt, health, disabilities and care, and other topics. The SHS provides the first representative Scottish data on many subjects, such as access to the Internet, daily travel patterns, etc.

Where appropriate, the SHS uses the harmonised concepts and questions for government social surveys which have been developed by the Government Statistical Service, to facilitate comparison with the results of other government surveys. However, differences in sampling and survey methods mean that SHS results will differ from those of other surveys.

The SHS is intended to be a survey of private households. For the purposes of the survey, a household is defined as one person or a group of people living in accommodation as their only or main residence and *either* sharing at least one meal a day *or* sharing the living accommodation. A student's term-time address is taken as his/her main residence, in order that they are counted where they live for most of the year.

The sample was drawn from the Small User file of the Postcode Address File (PAF), which is a listing of all active address points maintained by the Post Office. The Small User file excludes addresses where an average of more than 25 items of post is delivered per day. Blocks of flats etc, which have several dwellings at the same address, are *not* excluded from the Small User file: in such cases, the file's Multiple Occupancy Indicator is used to count each dwelling separately for the selection of the sample.

People in certain types of accommodation (such as nurses' homes, student halls of residence etc.) will be excluded from the SHS unless the accommodation is listed on the Small User file of the PAF and it represents the sole or main residence of the people concerned. People living in bed and breakfast accommodation may be included, *if* it is listed in the Small User file of the PAF and if it is their sole or main residence. Prisons, hospitals and military bases are excluded. This exclusion of some forms of accommodation may have particular effects upon the inclusion of certain groups in survey, such as disabled people.

Further information on the Scottish Household Survey can be found on the [Scottish Government website](#).

The data collected for the SHS is made available via the UK Data Service and may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact shs@gov.scot for further information.

Comparability with previous years

The results of the 2020 and 2021 SHS telephone surveys are not directly comparable to SHS face-to-face survey results for other years. We would expect some genuine changes in people's views, experiences, and habits relating to transport during the pandemic. However, response rates for the telephone survey were lower than for previous face-to-face surveys, and there was a change in the profile of respondents (e.g. home owners and people with degree level qualifications were over-represented).

The results of the 2022 survey onwards are comparable with results for 2019 and earlier years.

The annual [SHS Methodology Reports](#) provide more detail on the changes in approach, and how this may have impacted the results.

Improvement to the estimation of journey distance

Since the publication of 2017 data, statistics involving journey distance have been based on the road network distance, calculated as the shortest distance by road between the start and end points of the journey. This was adopted to replace the previous straight line distance measure, as the straight line measure was found to be underestimating the actual distance travelled by around a third.

However, using this approach the road network distance of some journeys was calculated as zero. This occurred where the journey was circular, i.e. had the same start and end point. These journeys were mostly single stage and often started and ended at the respondent's home. The calculation has now been updated to impute an estimate of distance for these journeys by multiplying the time spent on the journey by an average speed for the mode of transport.

The time series has been revised back to 2012. The impact has been to reduce the percentage of very short (under 1km) journeys and increase slightly the percentages for the other distance categories. The modes most affected are walking and car journeys. The summary statistics in tables TD5 and TD5a have increased (by less than 1km).

Changes to the frequency of questions and collection of journey stage data

In advance of the 2024 SHS, a questionnaire review was carried out, with the aim of shortening the survey interview from 1 hour to 45 minutes. This was to reduce the burden on respondents, increase the likelihood of respondents giving valid and reliable answers, and improve response rates. Social surveys are increasingly costly to run as it has become more difficult to persuade people to take part.

As a result of the questionnaire review, many transport-related questions in the social survey section were changed to be asked every two years rather than every year (some questions were already asked every two years). Most of the biennial transport-related questions are now asked in even years, so the next version of this publication (presenting data from 2025), will present a reduced set of findings compared to this report.

In addition, a small number of questions were removed from the survey, including from the travel diary section. The changes are detailed in the annex document available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

From 2025 onwards, further changes have been made to the collection of journey data. Again, this has been made to reduce the burden on survey respondents and to improve the experience for respondents and interviewers. The changes mean that a reduced set of information will be collected on the component stages of journeys. Whilst the different modes used over the course of the journey will be recorded, start and end locations and duration will only be collected for the journey as a whole. Where a journey involves switching from a car to public transport or vice versa, the location of that switch will be collected.

Other Transport findings from the Scottish Household Survey

Disability and Transport

A publication providing further analysis of the Scottish Household Survey for disabled people, as well as measurements from other sources, [Disability and Transport](#), was updated on 19th March 2025 to include 2022 and 2023 data. An update to include 2024 data will be published early next year.

Transport Scotland Statistics

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