



**TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND**
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

Scottish Transport Statistics 2021

Summary Transport Statistics

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. The content of this chapter.....	3
3. Overview of travel in Scotland	3
4. Motor vehicles, traffic and road casualties	5
4.1 Motor vehicles	5
4.2 The road network.....	6
4.3 Road traffic	6
4.4 Road casualties	7
5. Public transport: bus, rail, air and ferry.....	8
5.1 Local bus and rail services	8
Bus	8
Rail	8
5.2 Air and ferry passengers	9
Air	9
Ferry	10
6. Personal travel (e.g. driving, walking and cycling; travel to work and school)	10
7. Cross-border transport	11
8. Environment and emissions.....	11

1. Introduction

This chapter highlights some of the main findings from Scottish Transport Statistics, the accompanying summary tables provide longer term trends than those included in the individual chapters and include comparisons between Scotland and Great Britain. This publication covers data up until 2020-21.

2. The content of this chapter

This chapter covers the following topics:

3. Overview of travel in Scotland
4. Motor vehicles, traffic and road casualties
5. Public transport: bus, rail, air and ferry
6. Personal travel (e.g. driving, walking and cycling; travel to work and school)
7. Cross-border transport
8. Environment and emissions

3. Overview of travel in Scotland

In 2020-21, travel in Scotland was significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Public transport journeys fell by 70%, with 153 million public transport journeys made by either bus, rail, air, or ferry in 2020-21. This was down from the 502 million public transport journeys recorded in 2019-20.

Bus remained by far the most commonly used form of public transport in 2020-21, with 83% of public transport journeys made by bus, 9% by rail, 5% by air and 3% by ferry.

The number of bus journeys dropped by 65% in 2020-21. This followed on from a generally declining trend which had seen bus passenger numbers drop by 21% in the ten years leading up to 2019-20.

Rail journeys, which had been steadily increasing in the years immediately prior to the pandemic, showed a larger drop of 85% over the year.

Air passengers, which had increased by 28% in the ten years prior to the pandemic, then fell by 76%. Ferry passengers showed a drop of 53% over the year.

Road traffic also fell in 2020-21, although not as markedly as the use of public transport. Overall road traffic dropped by 22%, with car traffic dropping by 26%. This followed a steadily increasing trend with road traffic increasing by 10% in the 10 years up to 2019.

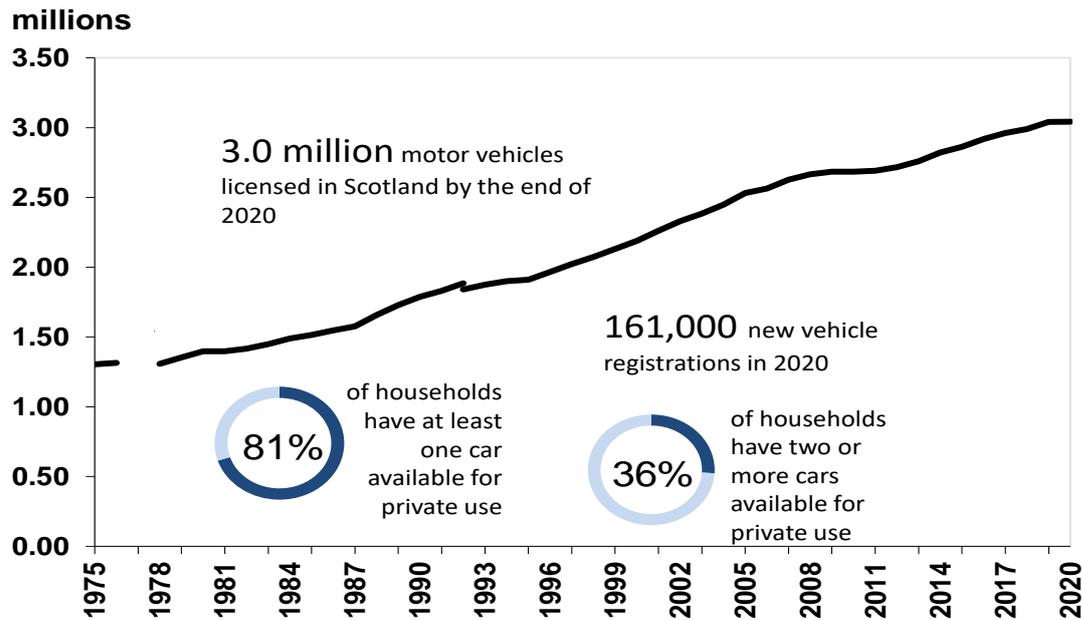
Cycling was one of the few transport types to demonstrate an increase in traffic, with estimates suggesting that on-road cycling increased by over half.

	2015-16	2020-21	Change over 1 year	Change over 5 years
Car Traffic (m/veh km)	34,786	27,083	-26.3%	-22.1%
Pedal Cycle Traffic (on-road) (m/veh km)	342	600	63.5%	-
ScotRail Passengers (millions)	93.8	14.4	-85.1%	-84.7%
Bus Passengers (millions)	410	127	-65.0%	-69.0%
Air Passengers (millions)	25.5	7.0	-75.6%	-72.4%
Ferry Passengers (millions)	9.6	4.9	-52.8%	-48.4%
<i>Source: STS 2021, Table S1 except Traffic estimates from table 5.3.</i>				

4. Motor vehicles, traffic and road casualties

4.1 Motor vehicles

Figure 1: Motor vehicles licensed in Scotland



There were 3.0 million motor vehicles licensed in Scotland in 2020. This is the highest level recorded, having increased slightly from 2019.

The total number of vehicles registered in Scotland has been increasingly steadily over the longer term. The current total is 13% higher than in 2010 and has more than tripled since 1964.

The number of *new* vehicle registrations decreased by 27% in 2020. During the UK lockdown (which applied from 23 March 2020), vehicle dealerships and showrooms were required to close, removing the main method by which new vehicles are sold in Scotland. This was lifted in Scotland on the 29th June. However local restrictions may have applied at later points in the year.

Whilst the significant decrease in 2020 will be linked to the pandemic, the number of new registrations had also decreased in the previous three years. This suggests that in recent years people have been buying fewer new vehicles, but retaining existing vehicles for longer.

There were fewer vehicles per person in Scotland than in Great Britain as a whole (56 compared to 59 per hundred population), as has consistently been the case in recent years.

4.2 The road network

There were 56,959 kilometres of public road in Scotland in 2020. Seven per cent of this was trunk road, which is managed centrally by Transport Scotland; the remaining roads are the responsibility of Local Authorities.

In Scotland, there was 10.4 kilometres of road per 1,000 people, compared to 6.1 km per 1,000 people in GB as a whole.

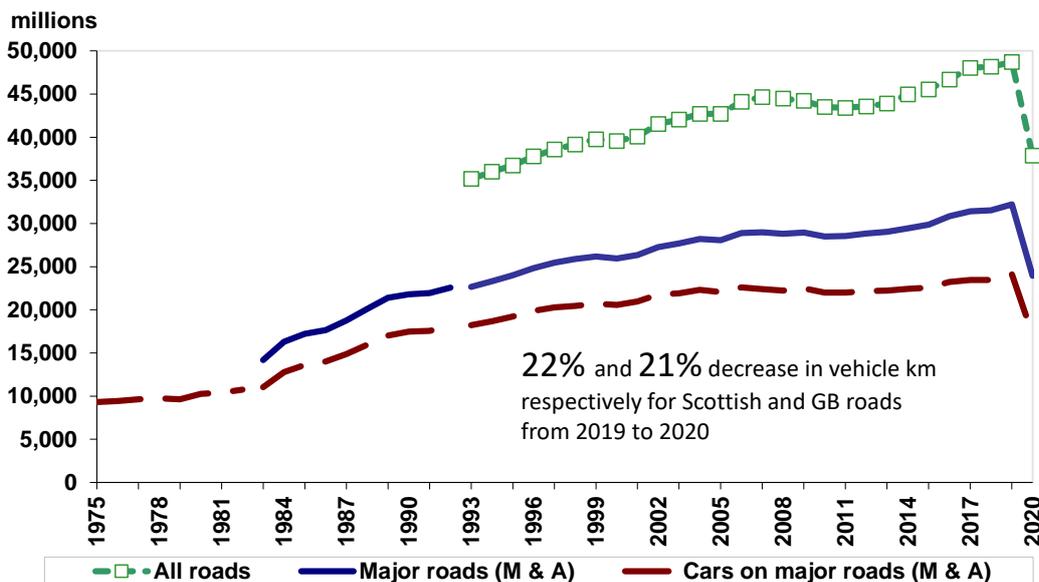
4.3 Road traffic

The distance travelled on Scotland’s roads was the lowest recorded since 1996. In 2020, 37.9 billion vehicle kilometres were travelled, a decrease of 22% compared to the previous year, and 13% less than in 2010.

Prior to the pandemic, the volume of traffic on major roads (Motorways and A roads) had more than doubled since 1983, from an estimated 14,185 million vehicle kilometres to around 32,000 million vehicle kilometres in 2019.

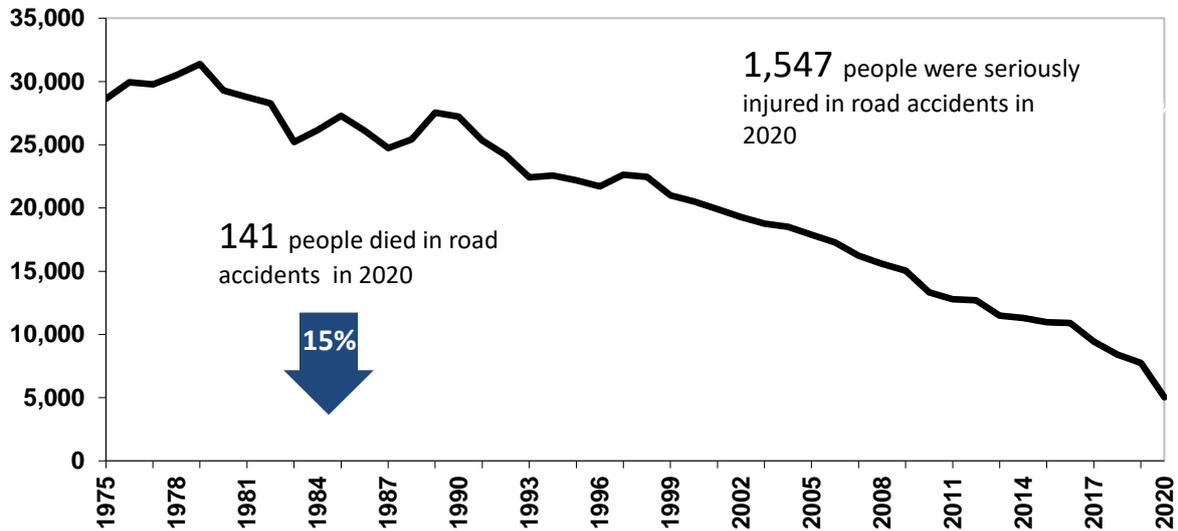
Car and van users reported that 5% of journeys were delayed due to traffic congestion in 2020.

Figure 2: Traffic in Scotland (vehicle km)



4.4 Road casualties

Figure 3: Reported road casualties of all severities – including fatal, seriously injured and slightly injured



In 2020, 141 people were killed and 1,547 seriously injured in road accidents.

The total number of casualties on Scottish roads fell 35% between 2019 and 2020 and is at the lowest level since records began over 50 years ago.

These latest figures will have been influenced by the reduction in traffic seen over the course of the pandemic. However, prior to the pandemic recorded casualties were declining. The total number of road casualties decreased by 62% over the last decade. Casualties of all severities have fallen over this period.

In Scotland in 2020, for every thousand people in the population, 0.31 were killed or seriously injured in road accidents, compared to 0.36 for Great Britain.

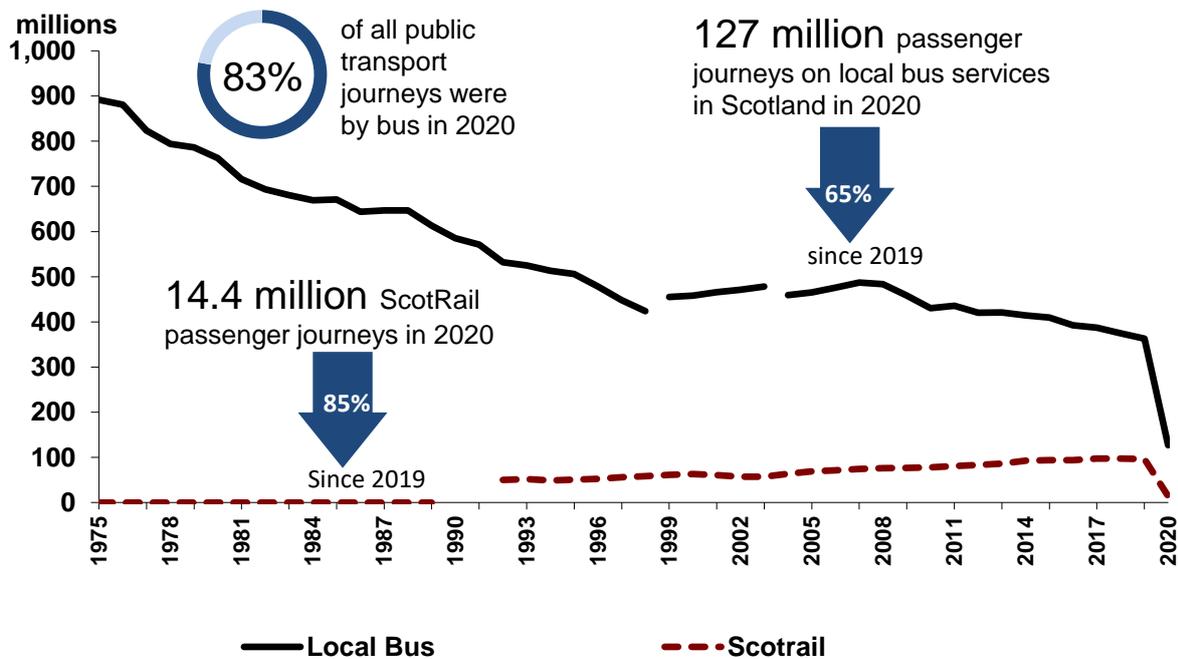
Road accident **casualties by mode of transport**
 Figure 4: Road accident casualties by mode of transport

	Share of all road casualties	Yearly change in number of casualties
	55%	-40%
	16%	-36%
	8%	-20%
	12%	+2%

5. Public transport: bus, rail, air and ferry

5.1 Local bus and rail services

Figure 5: Bus and rail passenger numbers in Scotland



Bus

In 2020, there were 127 million bus passenger journeys, a decrease of 65% on the previous year. Two fifths of all bus journeys in 2020 were made under the National Concessionary Travel scheme, a very similar proportion to 2019.

Prior to the pandemic, bus passenger journeys had been falling over the longer term. The figures almost halved between 1960 and 1975 and roughly halved again by 2019.

The distance covered by local bus services (expressed in terms of ‘vehicle kilometres’) can be seen as a measure of bus service provision. Although this dropped in 2020 by 24%, this was a much smaller drop than the decrease in passenger numbers (65%).

Rail

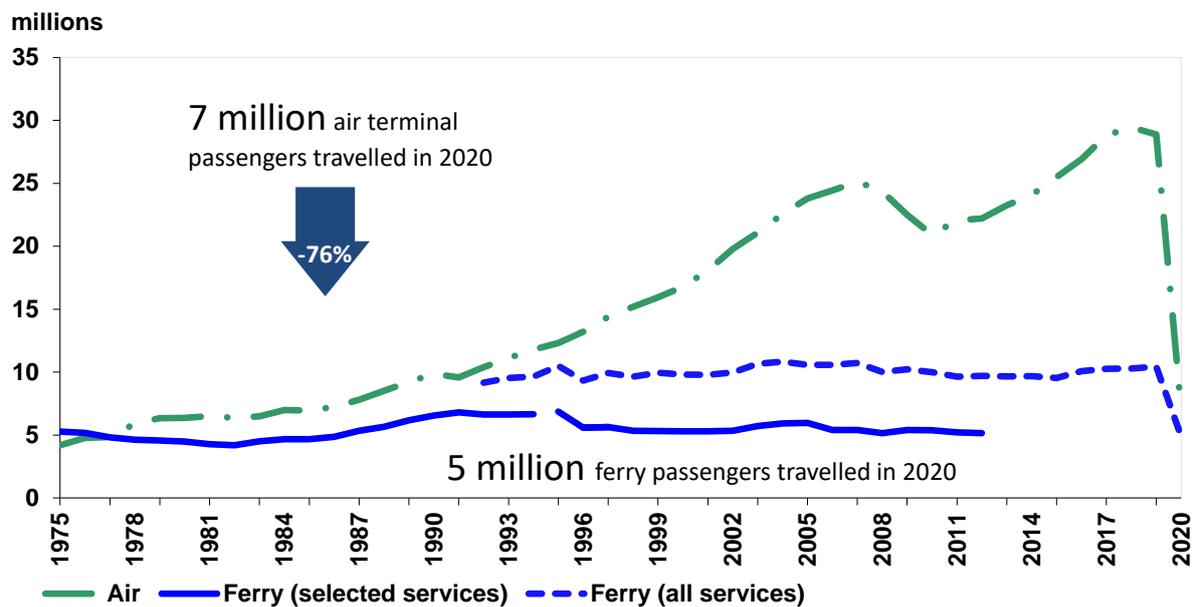
There were 14.4 million ScotRail passenger journeys in 2020-21, a decrease of 85% from 2019-20.

Prior to the pandemic, rail patronage had been rising steadily and was 25% higher in 2019-20 compared to 2009-10.

Similar to bus services, the distance covered by scheduled trains in Scotland did drop by 27% in 2020-21 (reflecting a reduction in services across the year). However this was not to the same scale as the drop in passenger numbers (85%).

5.2 Air and ferry passengers

Figure 6: Air and ferry passenger numbers in Scotland



Note: in the above figure, 'selected services' refers to those services for which data is available back to 1975 – Caledonian MacBrayne, P&O Scottish Ferries, Northlink Orkney and Shetland Ferries and Orkney Ferries.

Air

There were 7 million air terminal passenger numbers in 2020, down 76% compared to the previous year, and 66% lower than 2010. Prior to the pandemic, air passenger numbers had been increasing over time, with a 28% increase in the ten years up to 2019.

In 2020, 6% of all terminal passenger traffic was from within Scotland, 40% was to or from other parts of the UK, 45% was between Scotland and mainland Europe.

Ferry

In 2020, 4.9 million passengers travelled by ferry (including traffic within Scotland and to and from Northern Ireland), a 53% decrease on the previous year.

Across all ferry routes, 2 million vehicles were carried in 2020 (including traffic between Scotland and Northern Ireland and within Scotland), a 44% decrease on the previous year.

6. Personal travel (e.g. driving, walking and cycling; travel to work and school)

The figures presented in this section come from the 2020 Scottish Household Survey. Due to pandemic-related survey changes, they are not considered comparable with previous years. More information is presented in [the Transport and Travel in Scotland](#) publication.

In 2020, 76% of people aged 17 or over had a full driving licence. The proportion of men aged 17+ holding a licence was higher than women (80% compared to 72%).

21% of people drove every day in 2020, with around 81% of households having access to at least one car.

Figure 7: Main modes of travel to work and school

Main mode of travel to work:			Main mode of travel to school:		
Car (driver)		68.8%	Walk		47.7%
Walk		13.0%	Car/Van		26.1%
Bus		8.0%	Bus		20.7%
Car (passenger)		4.7%	Other		2.0%
Rail		1.3%	Cycle		2.1%
Cycle		2.0%	Rail		1.3%
Other		2.1%			

Fifty three per cent of employed people reported that they currently worked from home. Of those that travelled to work in 2020, 25% of journeys to work were by public or active travel.

Over two thirds of people (70%) were either very or fairly satisfied with public transport in 2020.

7. Cross-border transport

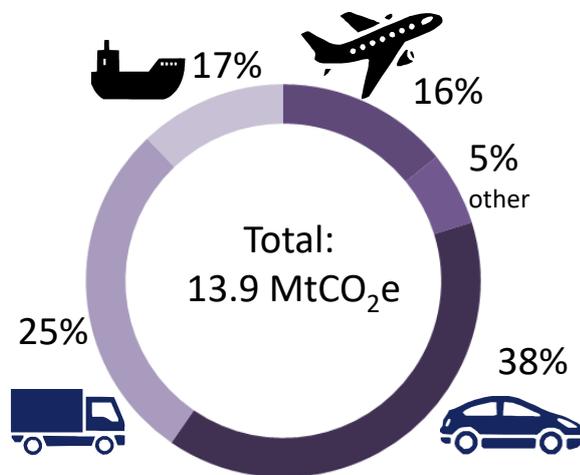
As with transport more generally, cross-border transport was significantly affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. In 2020, there were 3.7 million air and ferry passenger journeys to other parts of the UK, a decrease of 71% since 2019. The majority of these journeys were made by air (2.8 million).

The most recently available figures for cross-border rail journeys are for 2019 and do not cover the pandemic period. These show 9.8 million passenger journeys were made to other parts of the UK in 2019.

In 2020, 3.4 million passenger journeys were made to and from other countries by air, a decrease of 63% since 2010.

8. Environment and emissions

Figure 8: Share of greenhouse gas emissions by mode in 2019



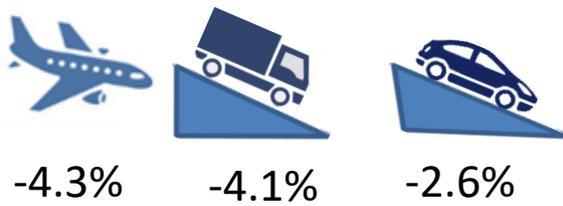
The most recently available figures for transport emissions relate to 2019.

Transport accounted for 29.2% of Scotland's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2019.

Scotland's transport emissions in 2019 were 2.2% lower than in 2018, and 6.3% lower than in 1990.

Over the longer term, newly registered cars have become more efficient in terms of carbon dioxide emissions, with average CO₂ emissions in Scotland for new car registrations falling by 10% over the last ten years. However, average CO₂ emissions for newly registered cars have increased by 2% in each of the last 2 years.

Figure 9: Change in emissions by key transport mode between 2018 and 2019



At the end of 2020, ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) accounted for 0.9% of vehicles licensed in Scotland. There has been a significant increase in the numbers of ULEVs registered in Scotland between 2014 Q1 and 2020 Q3, with the number rising from 1,122 to 38,634. The biggest increase has been in Plug-in-Grant Eligible cars which accounted for 54 per cent of newly registered ULEVs and 65 per cent of all ULEVs in 2020.

There has been a significant increase in the numbers of ULEVs registered in Scotland between 2014 Q1 and 2020 Q3, with the number rising from 1,122 to 38,634.



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