



**TRANSPORT  
SCOTLAND**  
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

# **Transport and Travel in Scotland**

**Results from the Scottish  
Household Survey 2021  
Telephone Survey**

**Experimental Statistics**

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## Key findings

Over the period that telephone surveys were being conducted (April 2021 to March 2022) people in Scotland were subject to some restrictions on travel and daily activity due to coronavirus measures.

- 69% of adults travelled the day before their survey interview. [Table TD1]  
Fewer people travelled in the oldest age groups, with 63% of those over 70 and 49% of the over 80s travelling the previous day. Disabled people were less likely to have travelled than those who were not disabled (58% compared to 73%). [Table TD1 and Figure 1]
- Half of all journeys (50%) were made by driving a car or van. Walking was the next most popular mode of transport (30% of journeys), followed by 11% as car passenger, 4% by bus, 2% by cycling, and 1.5% by rail. [Table TD2, Table SUM1, and Figure 2]
- Shopping was the most common reason for travel (24% of journeys), followed by commuting (16%) and going for a walk (13%). [Table TD3 and Figure 3]
- 40% of employed people reported that they currently worked from home. [Table 7a and Figure 4]. Working from home was more common for higher earners. 46% of those earning over £50,000 a year worked from home, compared to 30% of those earning up to £20,000. [Table 7a]
- Amongst those that travelled to work, 71% per cent of people usually went by car or van, either as a driver (68%) or passenger (3%). [Table 7]
- Scotland's National Performance Framework includes a 'Journeys by Active Travel' National Indicator, which monitors the proportion of short journeys that are made by the two main active travel modes: walking and cycling.  
This found that 56.2% of journeys under two miles were on foot. [Table 4c and Figure 20] and 2.8% of journeys under five miles were by bicycle. [Table 4d and Figure 21]
- Over half of children (54%) walked to school, while 22% travelled by car and 19% travelled by bus. [Table SUM1, Table 15 and Figure 8]
- Car access increased with household income, as did the number of cars available per household. Fifty per cent of households with an annual income up to £10,000 had access to one or more cars, compared to 97% of households with an annual income of more than £50,000. [Table 18b and Figure 14]
- 3% of adults owned an electric vehicle.

## Introduction

This report presents transport and travel findings from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) 2021 telephone survey.

The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) is an annual survey carried out since 1999. It collects data on a wide range of topics not available from any other sources, and is at the heart of the Scottish Government's evidence-based approach to policy.

## Changes to survey approach in response to Covid-19 pandemic

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the SHS used face-to-face in-home interviewing. However, in March 2020, fieldwork was suspended in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Only a small proportion of the 2020 survey had been completed. The approach was adapted, and the remainder of the 2020 survey fieldwork was carried out using telephone interviewing. In 2021, telephone interviewing was again used.

This publication summarises findings from telephone interviews. Reflecting the experimental nature of the change in approach, this publication is classed as Experimental Statistics rather than its usual classification of National Statistics.

## Comparability with previous years

**The results of the SHS 2020 and 2021 telephone surveys are not directly comparable to SHS results for the years up to 2019.**

**Some of the differences between 2020 and 2021 figures may be due to seasonal effects.**

Everything else being equal, we would expect some genuine changes in people's views, experiences, and habits relating to transport during the pandemic. However, it is not possible to determine the extent to which differences between the 2020 and 2021 results and previous years represent genuine changes in views and experiences, or are due to changes in how the survey was carried out.

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). There are also potential mode effects (respondents answering differently over the telephone than they would face-to-face).

The [SHS 2020 methodology report](#) provides more detail on the change in approach, and how this may have impacted the results.

2020 data only covered October 2020 and January to early April 2021, so there may have been a seasonal effect upon some data. In contrast, 2021 data covered all

months from April 2021 to March 2022. Differences between the two years could be due, in part, to seasonal differences.

## ***Disability and Transport***

In July 2021, Transport Scotland released an initial publication summarising findings up to 2019 relating to disability and transport from the SHS.

An updated disability and transport report will be produced later this year to include 2021 data.

## ***New tables and details for 2021***

In 2021 we are publishing several new tables. These include:

- Table 52 Weekly cost of parking
- Table 53 Weekly cost of public transport
- Table 54 How easy or difficult people find it to afford transport costs
- Table 55 Do transport costs affect which method of travel is used
- Table 56 Number of days people travelled to work (timeseries)
- Table 56a Number of days people travelled to work (detail)
- Table 57 How often people use a car for certain activities
- Table 58 Table 58: How easily people can do certain activities without a car (those who always use a car)
- Table 59 Usual method of travel to further of higher education.

There are also more tables sub-divided by the Equality Act's protected characteristics, income, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and urban-rural classification.

As well as household income, equivalised income before housing costs has also been calculated for some tables. This adjusts income according to the number of people who are in a household and whether they are adults or children. If a single person and a large family have the same net income, the single person will have a higher equivalised income. Households with the same equivalised income can be said to have the same standard of living.

## ***Additional sources of transport statistics for 2021***

In October 2021, Transport Scotland published a [report highlighting the key trends in transport and travel in Scotland](#) for the first year of the coronavirus pandemic (March 2020 to March 2021). It reports on changes in travel across all main modes of transport (walking, cycling, concessionary bus, rail, road, ferry and aviation).

In addition to this, throughout the coronavirus pandemic Transport Scotland published a [range of transport analysis](#). This includes:

- Transport trends data summarising changes in key transport modes over the pandemic
- Public Attitudes Survey results, monitoring public attitudes to transport and travel during the COVID-19 outbreak
- Monthly Sub-National Reports, which presents transport trends at local authority level.

Our annual compendium statistics publication Scottish Transport Statistics, released annually in March, gathers together figures for a wide range of transport sources.

## ***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 etc).

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** can consist of one or more **stages**. A new stage is defined when there is a change in the form of transport or when there is a change of vehicle requiring a separate ticket.

The more conventional survey content is referred to as the Social Survey.

Because of sampling variation, some differences may occur by chance. We therefore 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 (Table A), which 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 suppressed.

## ***Transport Scotland Statistics***

For a full list of transport statistics publications see:

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/statistics/#>

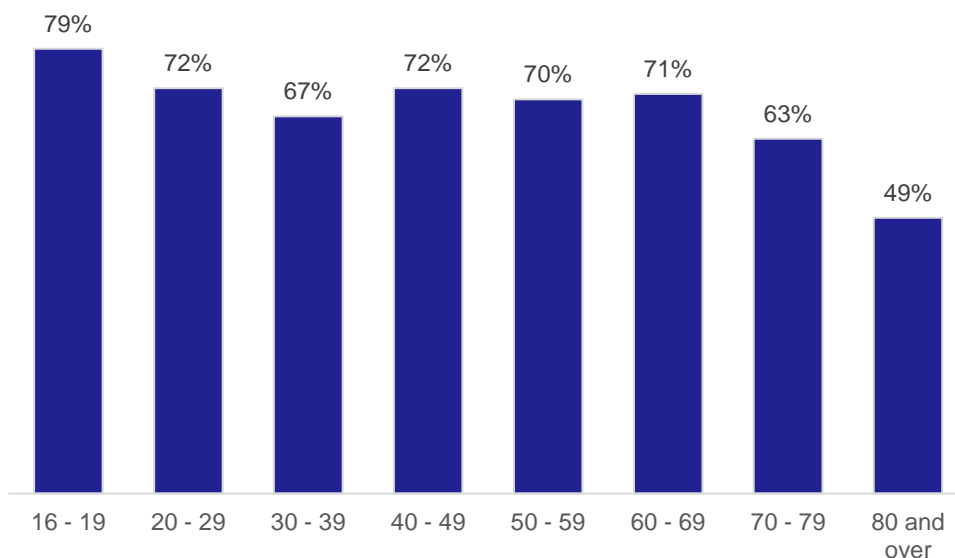
## Personal Travel

Over the period that telephone surveys were being conducted (April 2021 to March 2022) people in Scotland were subject to some restrictions on travel and daily activity due to coronavirus measures.

### Who travels?

69% of people had travelled the day before their survey interview. Fewer people travelled in the oldest age groups, with 49% of those over 80 travelling the previous day. [Table TD1 and Figure 1]

Figure 1: Percentage of adults travelling the previous day by age, 2021

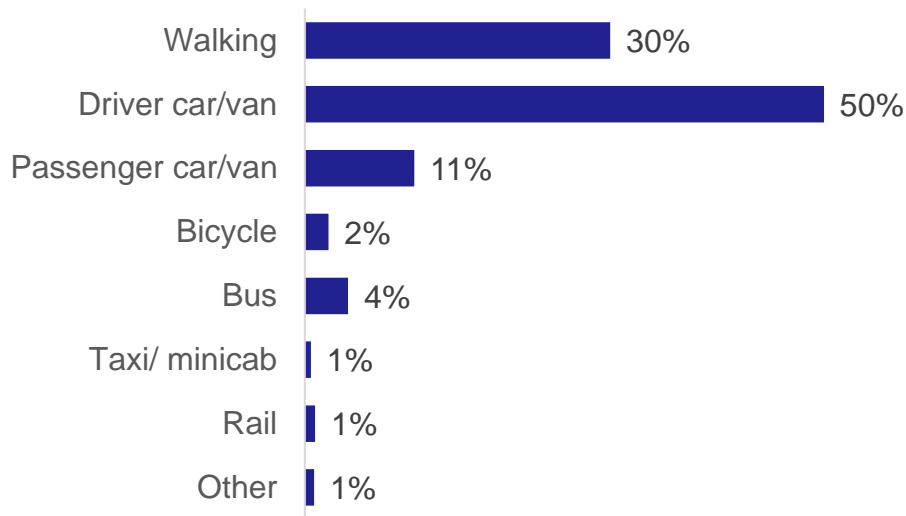


Disabled people (58%) were less likely to travel than those who were not disabled (73%). [Table TD1]

### How do people travel?

50% of journeys were made by driving a car or van. Walking was the next most popular mode of transport (30% of journeys). 11% of journeys were as car or van passenger, 4% by bus and 1% by rail. [Table TD2, Table SUM1, and Figure 2]

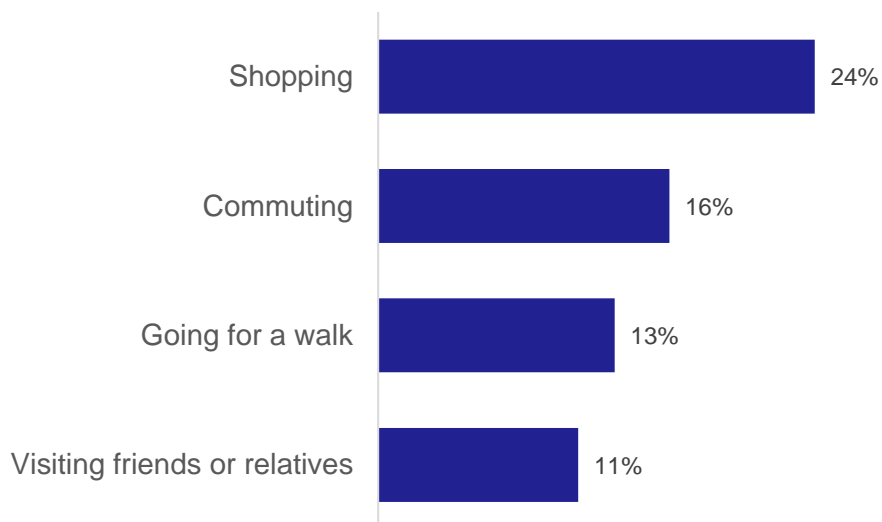
Figure 2: Modal share of all journeys, 2021



### ***Why do people travel?***

Shopping was the most frequent reason for travel (24% of journeys). Commuting was the next most common at 16%. 13% of journeys were to go for a walk. [Table TD3 and Figure 3].

Figure 3: Purpose of travel (most frequent categories), 2021





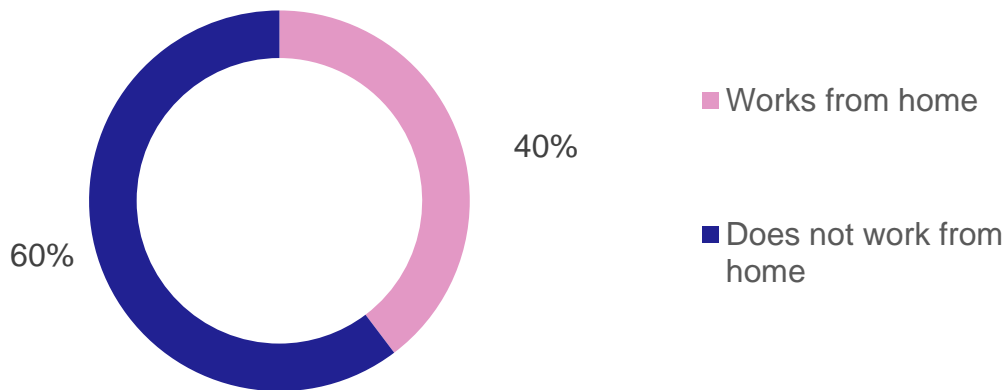
## Travel to Work

Over much of the period that telephone surveys were being conducted (April 2021 – March 2022) workers across Scotland were encouraged to work from home where practicable.

### Working from home

40% of employed people reported that they currently worked from home. [Table 7a and Figure 4]

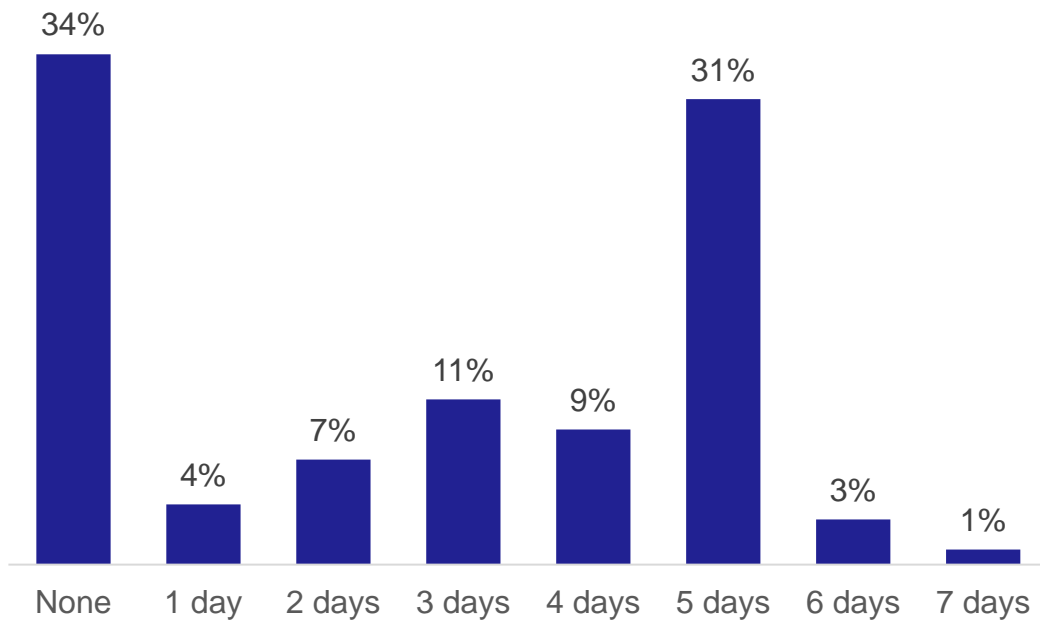
Figure 4: Percentage of employed people working from home, 2021



30% of those who earned up to £20,000 worked from home, compared to 46% of those with incomes above £50,000. [Table 7a]

When asked specifically how many days a week they travelled to work, 34% said none, while 35% travelled 5 or more days. [Table 56 and Figure 5]

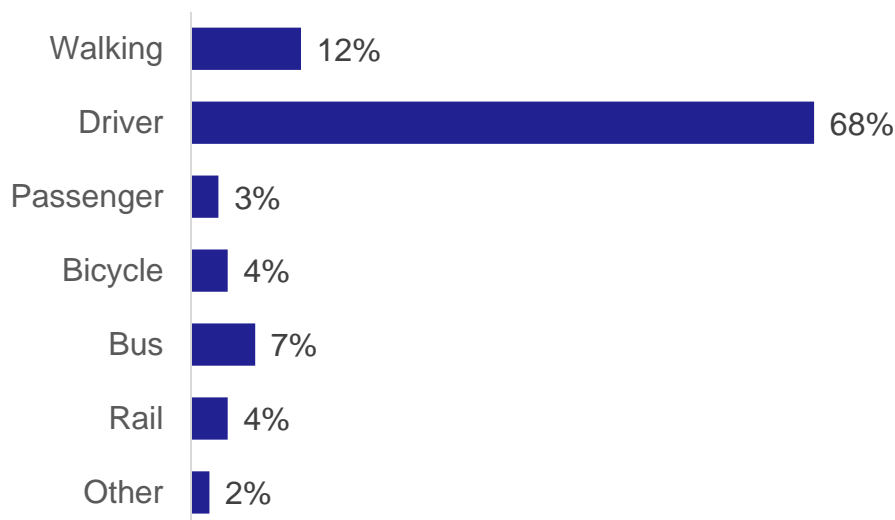
Figure 5: Number of days working people travelled to work per week, 2021.



### How do people travel to work?

Amongst those who made a journey to work, 71% of people usually travelled by car or van, usually as a driver (68%). 12% of people usually walked to work, while 7% usually took the bus. [Table 7 and Figure 6]

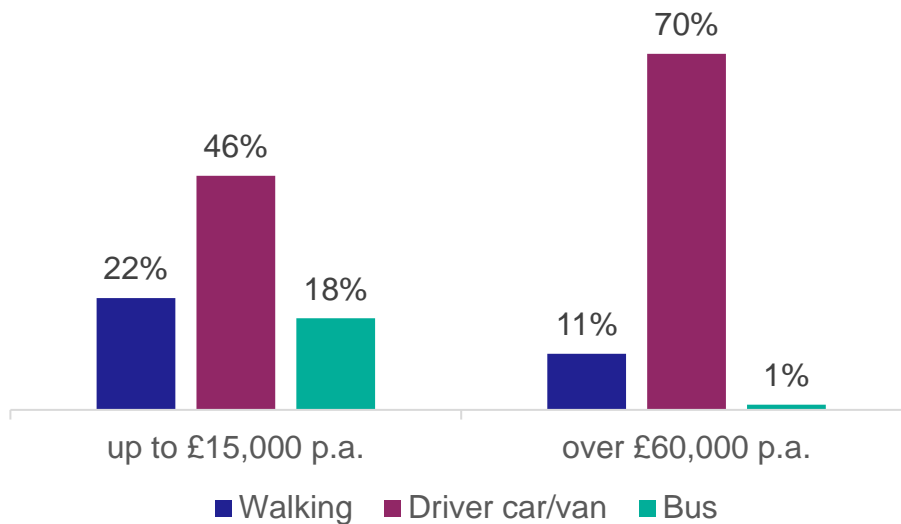
Figure 6: Method of travel to work, 2021



## Who travels to work by which mode?

Those on an income below £15,000 were less likely to travel by car (46%), and more likely to walk (22%) or get the bus (18%) than those on higher incomes. [Table 7 and Figure 7]

Figure 7: Percentage of people walking, driving or taking bus to work for highest and lowest income bands, 2021



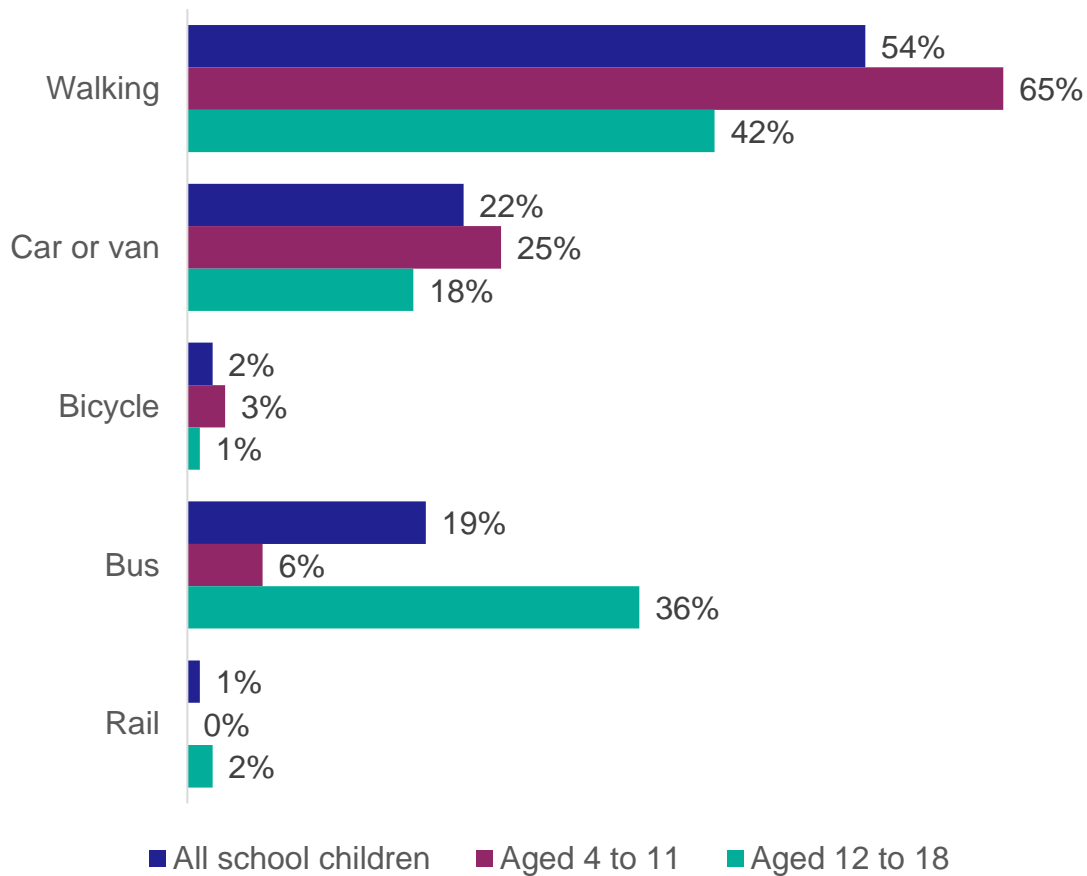
## Travel to School

### How do children travel?

Over half of children (54%) walked to school, over a fifth (22%) travelled by car and around a fifth (19%) used a bus. [SUM1 and Table 15]

There was variation in mode of travel by age. In the 4 to 11 age group, 65% reported walking to school, compared to 42% in the 12 to 18 age group. The older age group were more likely to catch a bus than younger children (36% compared to 6%). [Table 15 and Figure 8]

Figure 8: Method of travel to school, 2021

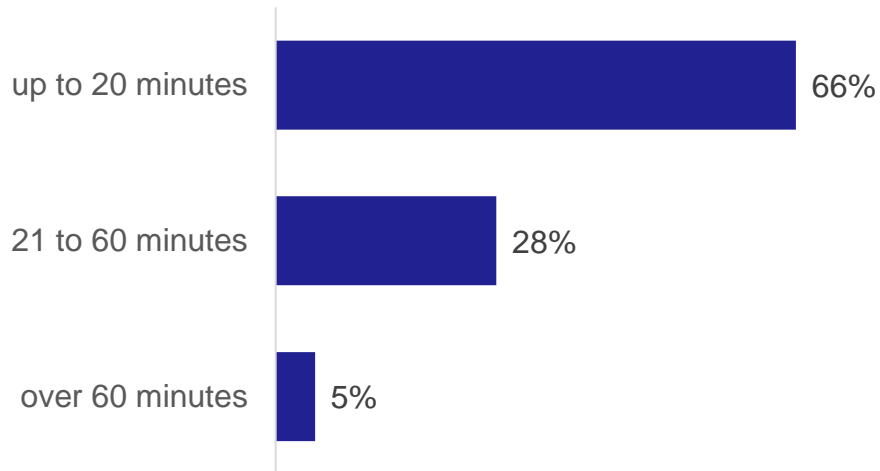


## How long do people travel for?

### Duration of travel

The majority of journeys reported were of short duration. 66% of journeys lasted up to 20 minutes. Only 5% lasted more than an hour. [Table TD6 and Figure 9]

Figure 9: Percentage of journeys made by duration of journey, 2021

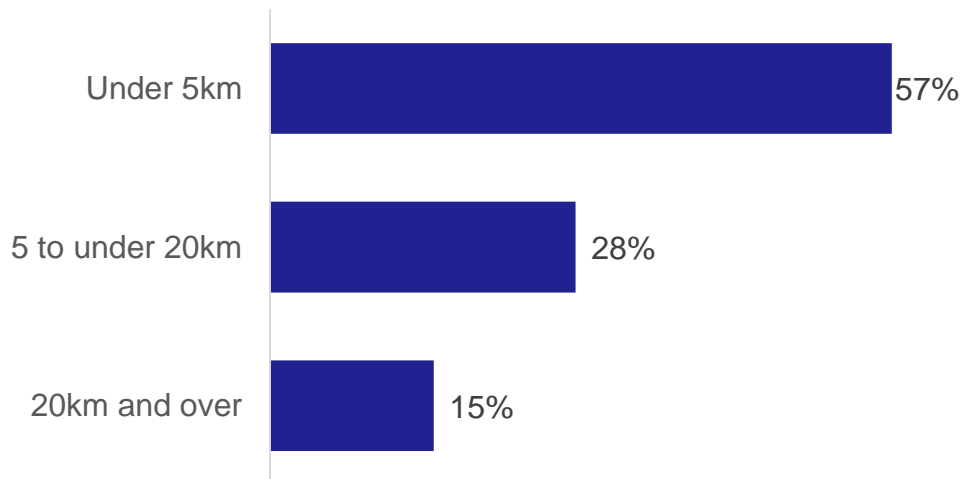


### Distance travelled

57% were under 5 km. [Table TD4a and Figure 10]

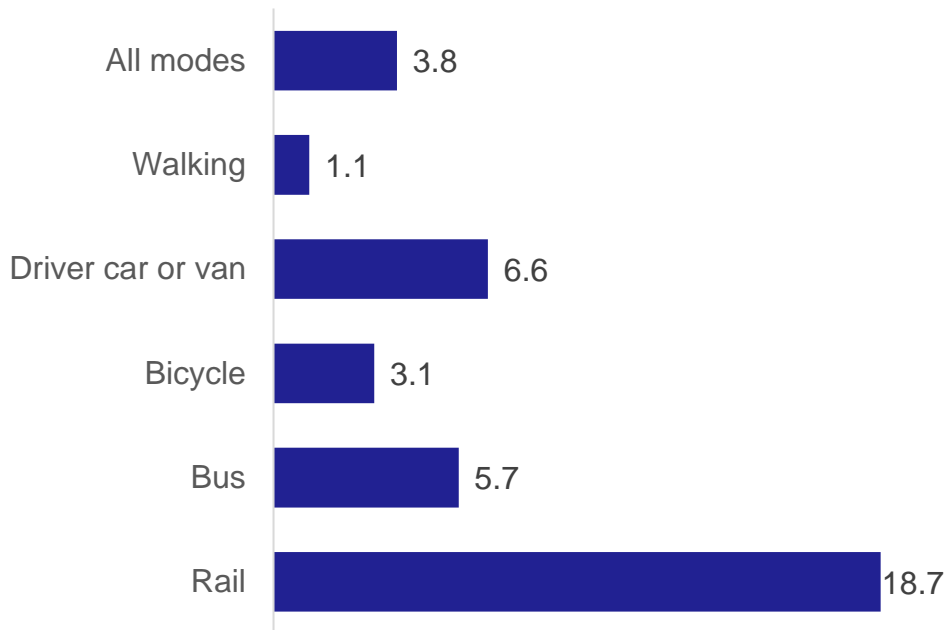
The median journey length was 3.8 km, and the mean journey length was 11.4km. [Table TD5]

Figure 10: Percentage of journeys by road network distance, 2021



Walking journeys were an average (median) length of 1.1 km, with car driver journeys at 6.6 km. [Table TD 5a and Figure 11]

Figure 11: Average (median) distance (km) by different modes of transport, 2021



73% of journeys under 1 km were made on foot; car journeys (whether as a driver or passenger) accounted for most of the remainder (20%). Car was the most common mode of travel for all distance groupings greater than 2 km. [Table TD2a]

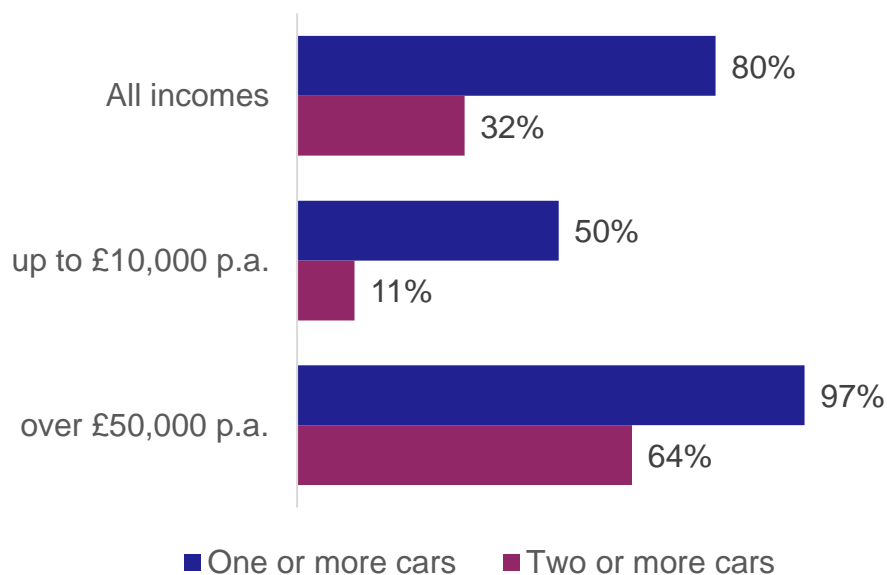
## Motor vehicles, traffic and driving

### *Car and van access*

80% of households had access to one or more cars or vans for private use. 32% of households had access to two or more. [Table 18b, Table SUM1]

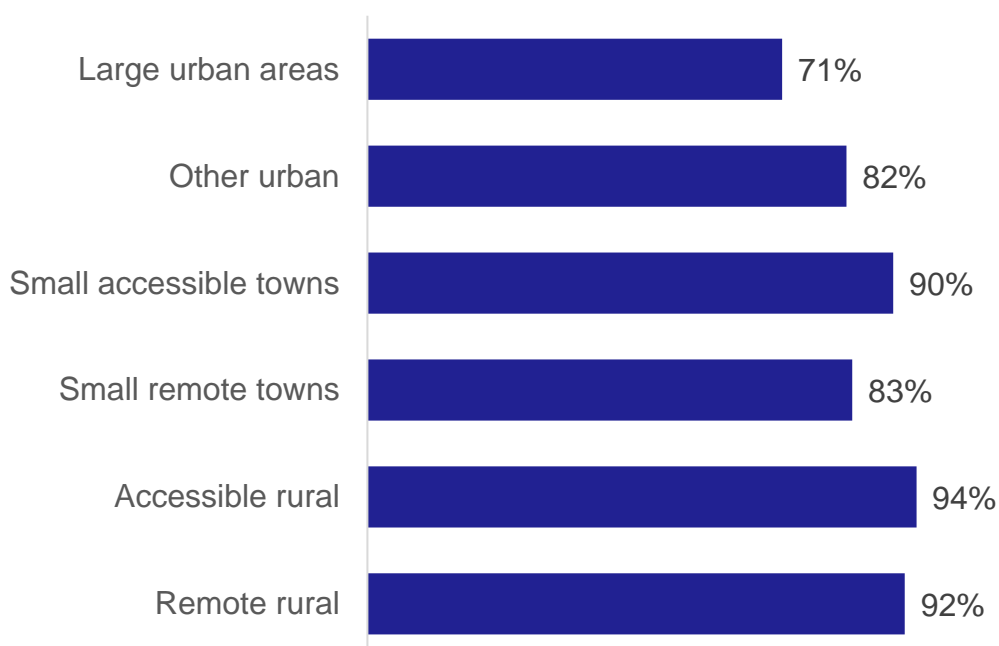
Car access increases with household income, as does the number of cars available per household: 50% of households with an annual income up to £10,000 had access to one or more cars, compared to 97% of households with an annual income of more than £50,000. [Table 18b and Figure 12]

Figure 12: Household access to cars or vans by selected income bands, 2021



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 94%, compared to 71% in large urban areas. [Table 18b and Figure 13]

Figure 13: Household access to cars by urban-rural classification, 2021



## Frequency of driving

70% of people drove at least once a week, while 34% drove every day. [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

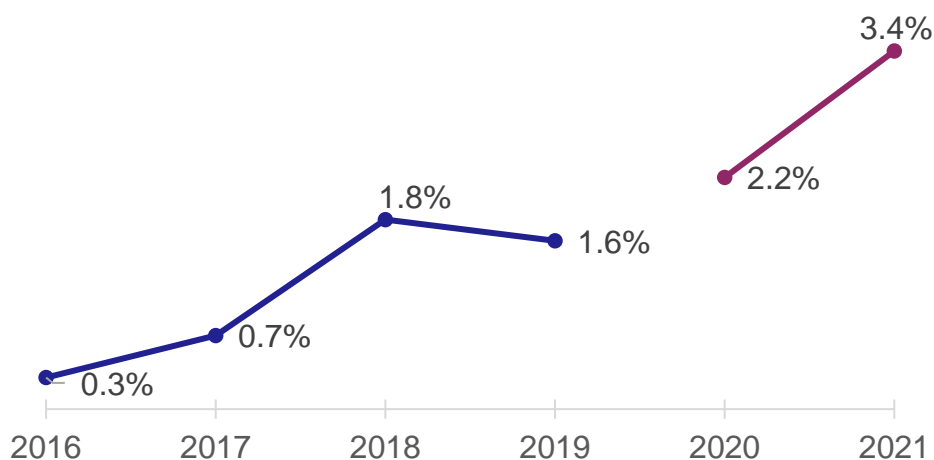
The average (mean) amount which an adult driver spent on vehicle fuel in the last month was £94. [Table 2a]

The average (mean) spent by an adult on parking (including non-drivers) was £0.80 per week. For those who drove, the figure was £1.10. [Table 52]

## Electric vehicles

3.4% of people owned an electric car or van in 2021. [Table 49 and Figure 14]

Figure 14: Percentage of adults owning an electric vehicle, 2016-2021. (There is a break in the series between 2019 and 2020 due to a change in methodology.)





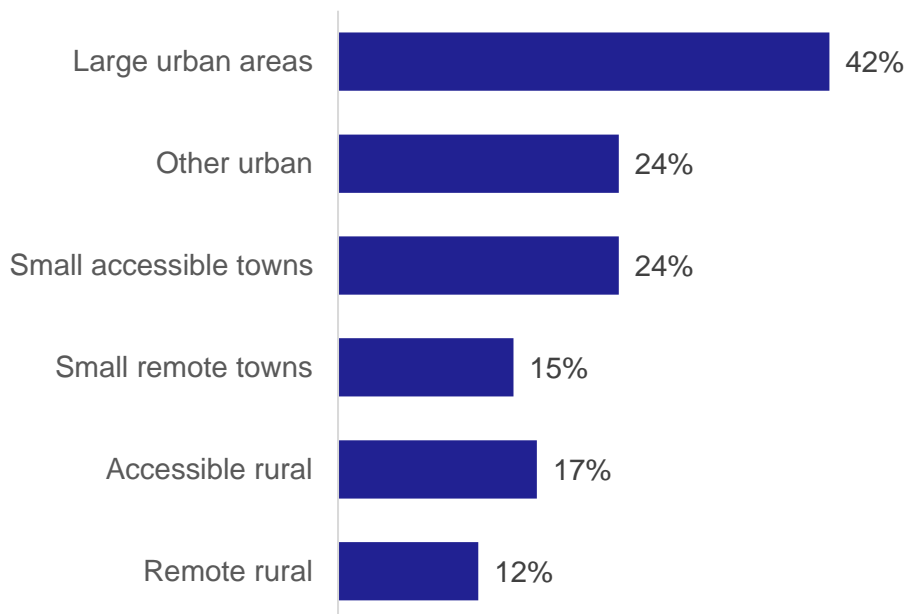
## Public transport

### Local bus services

29% of survey respondents had used the bus in the past month. 3% used the bus every day or almost every day. [Table SUM1, Table 28a]

Frequency of bus use was also higher in urban areas: 42% of people in large urban areas used the bus at least once a month compared to 12% in remote rural areas. [Table 28a and Figure 15]

Figure 15: Percentage of adults using the bus at least once a month, by urban rural category, 2021

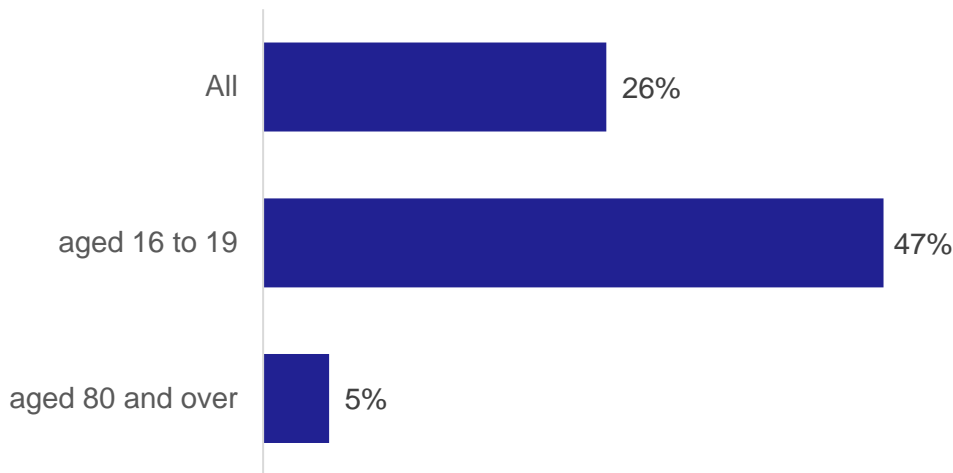


### Rail travel

26% of the population had used the train in the last month. [Table 28b, Table SUM1]

The proportion of people who reported that they had used the train in the last month decreased with age: 47% of those aged 16-19 had used the train in the last month, compared to 11% aged 70 to 79 and 5% of those aged 80 and over. [Table 28b and Figure 16]

Figure 16: Percentage of adults using the train at least once in the past month by age, 2021



Of those who had used the train in the last month, the most frequent journey purpose was visiting friends or relatives (32%), followed by shopping (28%). [Table 44]

### **Public transport cost**

The average amount spent by an adult on public transport was £2.20 per week. Most people (84%) 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 £7.50 per week and 52% spent nothing (this will include free pass holders). [Table 53]

Excluding free travel pass holders who are over 60 or have a long-term health problem or illness, the average cost for those travelling about once a week or more was £10.70. 34% of these spent nothing, 36% up to £10, 11% between £10 and £20, and 19% over £20. [Table 53]

Free bus travel for people under 22 was introduced towards the end of the survey period, although uptake was initially low.

### **Affordability of transport**

78% of people said their transport costs were either fairly easy or very easy to afford. Those in households on incomes up to £10,000 were less likely to consider their costs affordable (61%). The survey was conducted over a time period before fuel prices and general inflation reached a peak in 2022. [Table 54 and Figure 17]

Figure 17: Percentage who thought transport costs were very or fairly easy to afford, selected household income groups, 2021



41% said transport costs affected the method of travel they used. This rose to 53% for those earning £10,000 or less. [Table 55]

## Walking and cycling

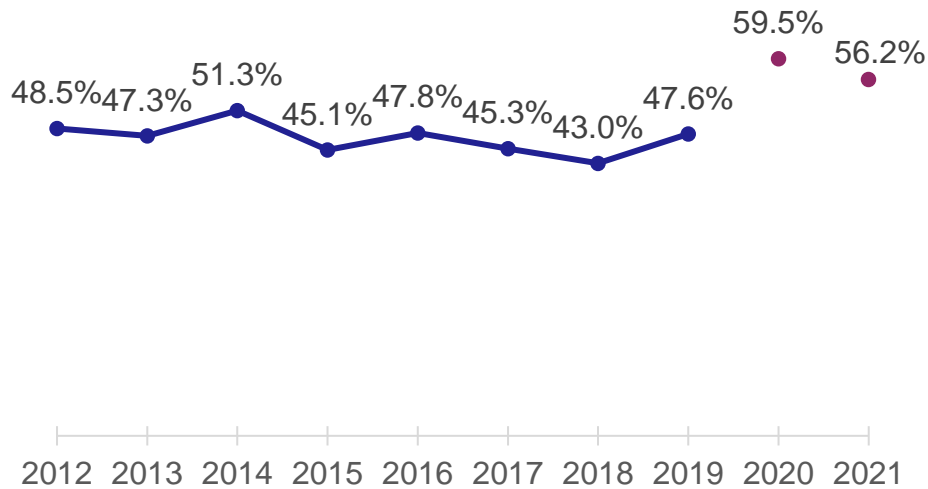
### ***National indicator***

As part of Scotland’s National performance framework there is a ‘journeys by active travel’ National Indicator, which monitors the proportion of short journeys that are made by the two main active travel modes: walking and cycling.

Typically, the performance on National Indicators are assessed as to whether they are improving, maintaining or worsening. However, in 2020 interviews were mainly in winter months whereas in 2021 they covered a full year. There are likely to be seasonal effects on the 2020 figures, but not the 2021 figures. There was also a much smaller sample size in 2020, which makes the usual criteria for change inappropriate. For these reason the national indicator is not receiving a performance assessment.

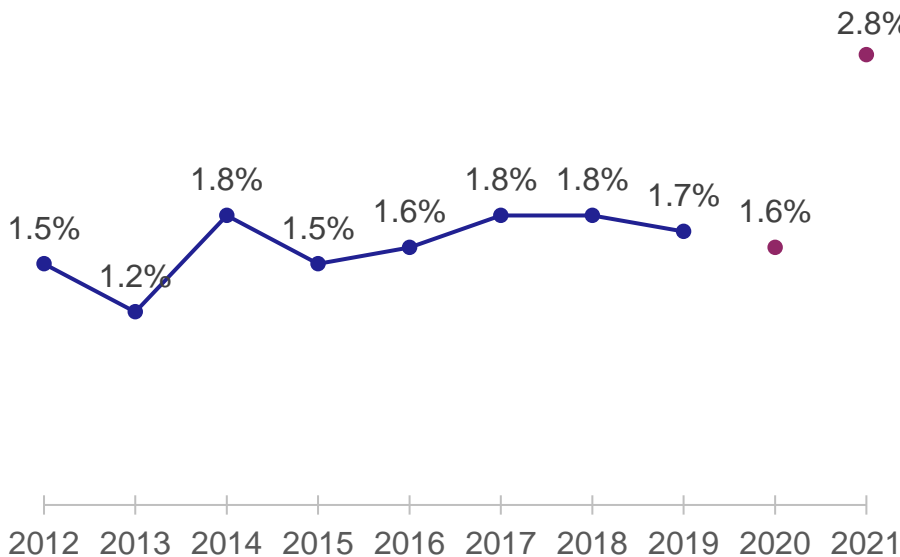
56.2% of journeys under two miles were on foot in 2021. [Table 4c and Figure 18]

Figure 18: Percentage of journeys under 2 miles by main mode, walking National Indicator, 2012-2021. (There is a break in the series between 2019 and 2020 due to a change in methodology. Seasonal factors affect the 2020 figure.)



2.8% of journeys under five miles were by bicycle. [Table 4d and Figure 18]

Figure 19: Percentage of journeys under 5 miles by main mode, cycling National Indicator, 2012-2021. (There is a break in the series between 2019 and 2020 due to a change in methodology. Seasonal factors affect the 2020 figure.)



More information on the indicator, including further details on how performance is normally assessed can be found on the [National Performance Framework](#) website.

## 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 *not* designed to produce statistics on unemployment or income: it collects such information *only* for selecting the data for particular groups of people (such as the unemployed or the low-paid) for further analysis, or for use as background variables when analysing other topics.

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.

## Experimental Statistics

Official and National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Both undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs and are produced free from any political interference.

Experimental statistics are a subset of newly developed or innovative official statistics that are undergoing evaluation. Experimental statistics are developed under the guidance of the Head of Profession for Statistics and are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in the assessment of their suitability and quality at an early stage.

## ***Correspondence and enquiries***

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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](mailto:shs@gov.scot) for further information.

## ***Complaints and suggestions***

If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to the Chief Statistician, 3WR, St Andrews House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, e-mail [statistics.enquiries@gov.scot](mailto:statistics.enquiries@gov.scot).

If you would like to be consulted about statistical collections or receive notification of publications, please register your interest at [www.gov.scot/scotstat](http://www.gov.scot/scotstat).

Details of forthcoming publications can be found at [www.gov.scot/statistics](http://www.gov.scot/statistics).



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