



**TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND**
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

Scottish Transport Statistics 2023

Summary Transport Statistics

Contents

Introduction	3
The content of this chapter	3
Overview of travel in Scotland	3
Motor vehicles, traffic and road casualties.....	5
Motor vehicles.....	5
The road network.....	6
Road traffic	6
Road casualties	7
Public transport: bus, rail, air and ferry	9
Local bus and rail services	9
Bus	9
Rail	9
Air and ferry passengers	10
Air	10
Ferry	10
Personal travel (e.g. driving, walking and cycling; travel to work and school)	12
Cross-border transport.....	12
Environment and emissions	13
Official Statistics	14
Data and Methodology.....	14
Tell us what you think.....	14
Feedback survey	14
Enquiries.....	14
Join our mailing list	15
Future publications	15

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 2022-23.

The content of this chapter

This chapter covers the following topics:

- Overview of travel in Scotland

- Motor vehicles, traffic and road casualties

- Public transport: bus, rail, air and ferry

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

- Cross-border transport

- Environment and emissions

Overview of travel in Scotland

Transport and travel habits in Scotland were profoundly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, with restrictions on travel and daily activity in place for large parts of 2020 and some of 2021.

In 2022-23, public transport journeys rose by 34%, with 396 million public transport journeys made by either bus, rail, air, or ferry. This compares with the 294 million public transport journeys recorded in 2021-22.

Bus remained by far the most commonly used form of public transport in 2022-23, with 76% of public transport journeys made by bus, 16% by rail, 5% by air and 2% by ferry.

The number of bus journeys increased by 29% in 2022-23, although this was still down 17% from 2019-20. Prior to this, bus passenger numbers had been following a generally declining trend, dropping by 10% in the ten years leading up to 2019-20.

Rail journeys showed an increase of 36% over the year 2022-23. However, rail journeys were still down by around a third compared with 2019-20. In the years immediately prior to the pandemic rail use had been steadily increasing.

Air passengers increased by 207% between 2021 and 2022, but are still down by around a quarter compared with 2019. Air passenger numbers had increased by 28% in the ten years prior to the pandemic. Ferry passenger numbers showed an increase of 21% in 2022, but were still down 10% compared to 2019.

Road traffic also rose in 2022-23. Overall road traffic increased by 9%, with car traffic increasing by 11%. However, this is still below pre-pandemic levels. Prior to the pandemic, road traffic had been following a steadily increasing trend with total road traffic increasing by 10% in the 10 years up to 2019.

During the pandemic cycling was one of the few transport types to demonstrate an increase in traffic volume. Despite a decrease of 3% in 2022-23, cycling on the road network was estimated to be 16% higher than in 2019-20.

The table below shows changes in the numbers and percentage changes for various forms of transport.

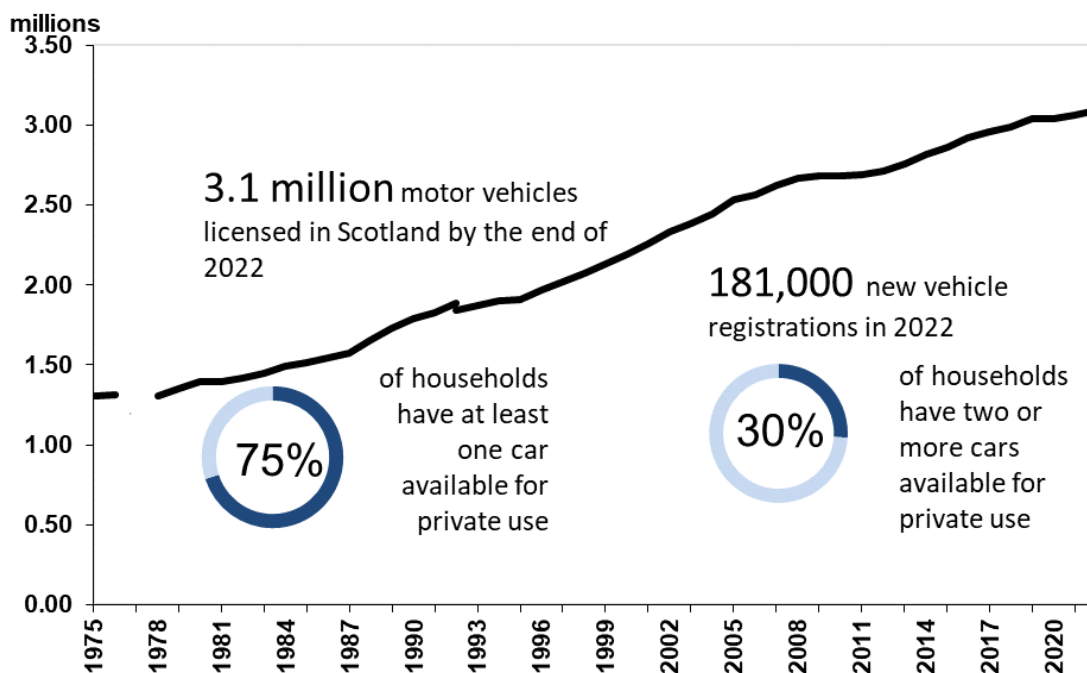
	2019-20	2021-22	2022-23	Change over 1 year	Change since 2019-20
Car Traffic (m/veh km)	36,678	31,063	34,375	+11%	-6%
Pedal Cycle Traffic (on-road) (m/veh km)	365	435	422	-3%	+16%
ScotRail Passengers	96.4	46.7	63.7	+36%	-34%
Bus Passengers (millions)	361	233	301	+29%	-17%
Air Passengers (millions)	28.9	7.0	21.5	+207%	-26%
Ferry Passengers	10.4	7.7	9.3	+21%	-11%
<i>Source: STS 2023, Table S1 except Traffic estimates from table</i>					

Motor vehicles, traffic and road casualties

Motor vehicles

There were 3.1 million motor vehicles licensed in Scotland in 2022. Having increased slightly from 2021, this is the highest level recorded [Figure 1].

Figure 1: Motor vehicles licensed in Scotland



The total number of vehicles registered in Scotland has been increasing steadily over the longer term. The current total is 14% higher than in 2012 and has more than tripled since 1964.

The number of *new* vehicle registrations in 2022 (181,000) remained the same as in 2021. This was above the pandemic-affected figure for 2020 (161,000). However, it was still below the figure for 2019 (221,000), which itself was the third successive annual decrease. Taken together, the trends in total vehicles registrations and new vehicle registrations 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 60 per hundred population), as has consistently been the case in recent years.

The road network

There were 57,187 kilometres of public road in Scotland in 2022. 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 6.0 km per 1,000 people in GB as a whole.

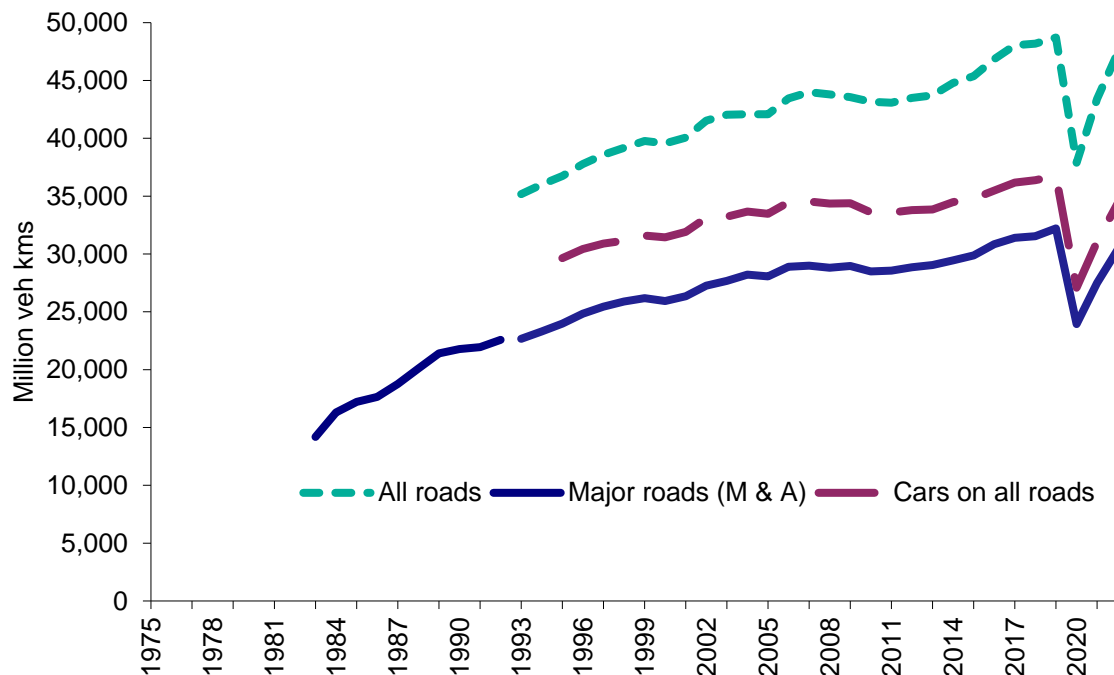
Road traffic

In 2022, 47.4 billion vehicle kilometres were travelled, an increase of 9% compared to the previous year, but 3% less than in 2019.

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 [Figure 2].

Car and van users reported that 10% of journeys were delayed due to traffic congestion in 2022.

Figure 2: Traffic in Scotland (vehicle km)

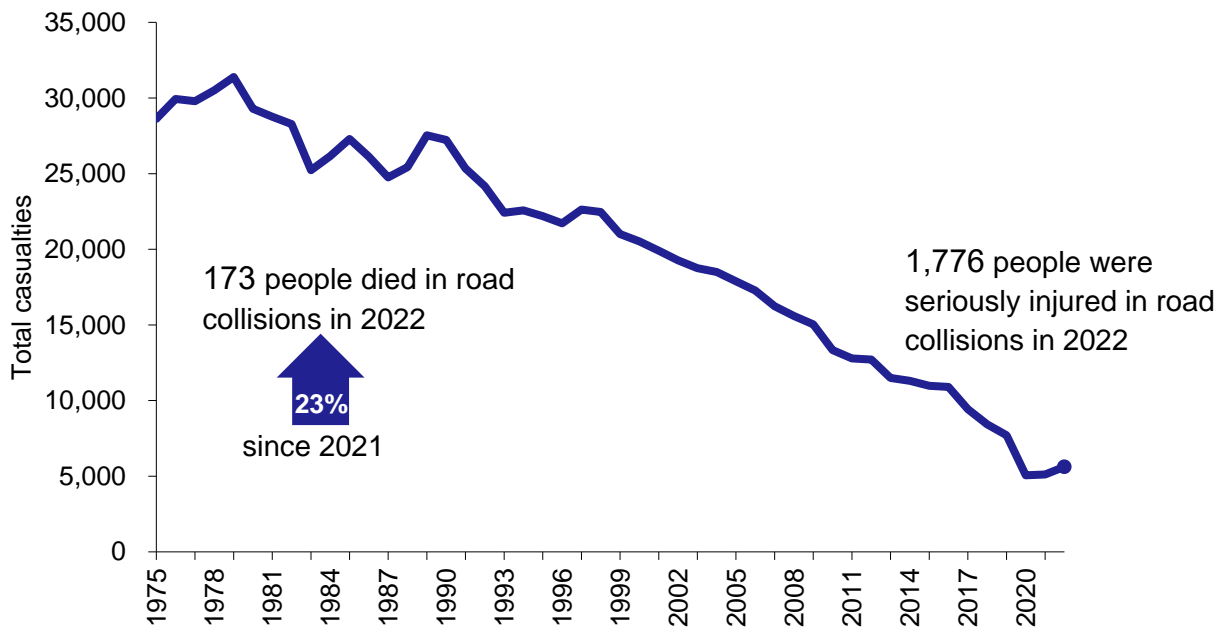


Road casualties

In 2022, 173 people were killed and 1,776 seriously injured in road collisions.

The total number of casualties on Scottish roads rose 10% between 2021 and 2022. These latest figures will have been influenced by the latest increase in traffic. However, prior to the pandemic recorded casualties were declining [Figure 3]. The total number of road casualties decreased by 56% over the last decade. Casualties of all severities have fallen over this period.





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



In Scotland in 2022, for every thousand people in the population, 0.36 were killed or seriously injured in road collisions, compared to 0.45 for Great Britain.

In 2022, car users accounted for over half of all casualties (57%), with car casualties increasing by 10% and pedestrian casualties increasing by 18% in 2022 [Figure 4].

Figure 4: Road collision casualties by mode of transport

	Share of all road casualties	Yearly change in number of casualties
	57%	+10%
	16%	+18%
	8%	+2%
	9%	-6%

Public transport: bus, rail, air and ferry

Local bus and rail services

Bus

Bus travel in Scotland was profoundly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, with restrictions on travel and daily activity in place for large parts of 2020 and some of 2021.

In 2022, there were 301 million bus passenger journeys, an increase of 29% on the previous year [Figure 5]. One half of all bus journeys in 2022 were made under the National Concessionary Travel scheme, 12 per cent more than 2021. In early 2022, the scheme was expanded to include those aged under 22.

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 fell in 2022 by 5%, the number of passengers carried still rose by 29%.

Rail

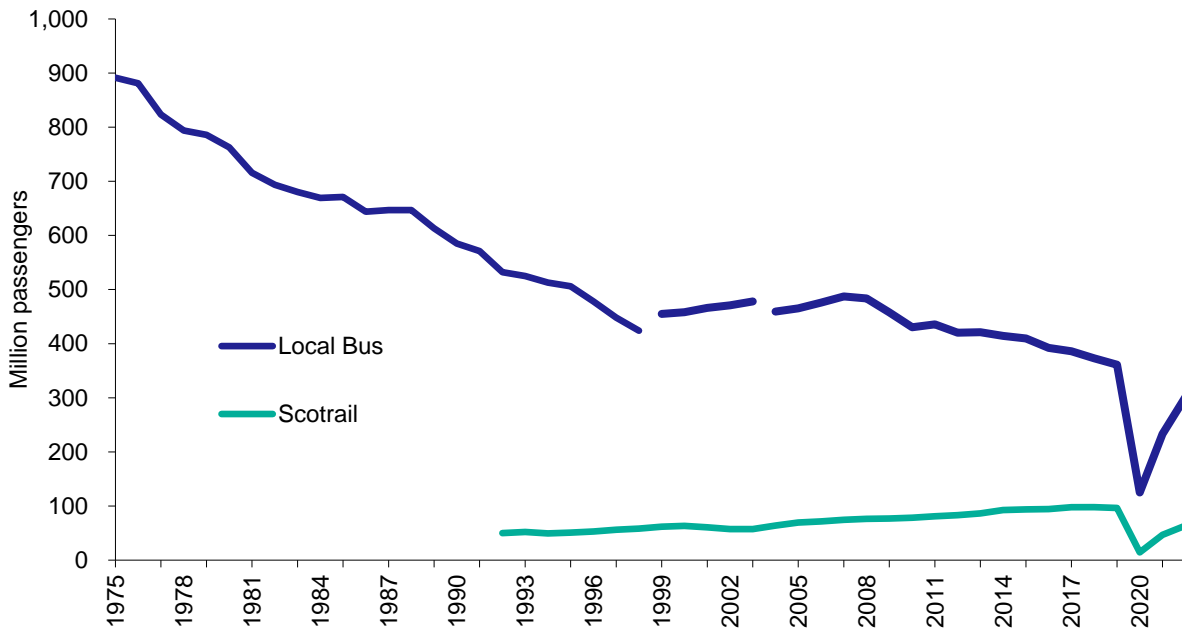
Rail travel in Scotland was profoundly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, with restrictions on travel and daily activity in place for large parts of 2020 and some of 2021.

There were 63.7 million ScotRail passenger journeys in 2022-23, an increase of 36% from 2021-22 [Figure 5].

Prior to the pandemic, rail patronage had been rising steadily and but it was 23% lower in 2022-23 compared to 2012-13.

The distance covered by scheduled trains in Scotland rose by 1% in 2022-23. However, this was not to the same scale as the increase in passenger numbers (36%).

Figure 5: Bus and rail passenger numbers in Scotland



Air and ferry passengers

Air

There were 21.5 million air terminal passengers in 2022, up 207% compared to the previous year, but 26% lower than in 2019. Prior to the pandemic, air passenger numbers had been increasing over time, with a 28% increase in the ten years up to 2019 [Figure 6].

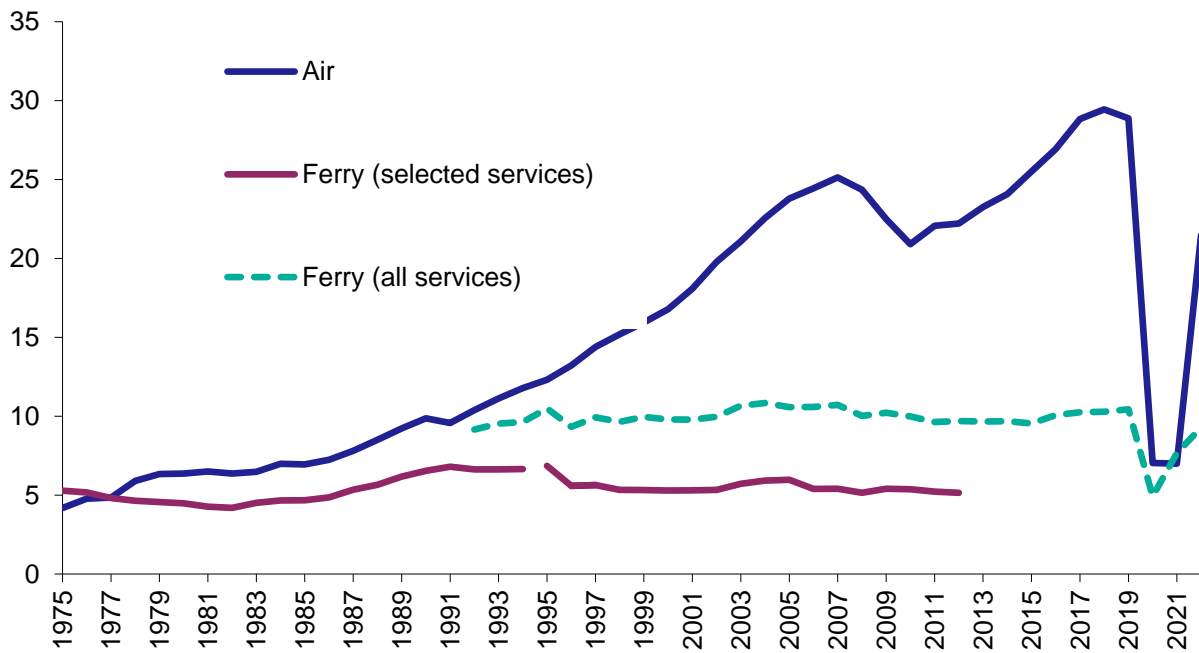
In 2022, 4.4% of all terminal passenger traffic was from within Scotland, 34% was to or from other parts of the UK, 55% was between Scotland and mainland Europe.

Ferry

In 2022, 9.3 million passengers travelled by ferry (including traffic within Scotland and to and from Northern Ireland), a 21% increase on the previous year [Figure 6].

Across all ferry routes, 3 million vehicles were carried in 2021 (including traffic between Scotland and Northern Ireland and within Scotland), a 46% increase on the previous year.

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












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

In 2022, 73% 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 68%).

34% of people drove every day in 2022, with around 75% of households having access to at least one car.

Thirty one per cent of employed people reported that they currently worked from home. Of those that travelled to work in 2022, 30% of journeys to work were by public or active travel [Figure 7].

Figure 7: Main modes of travel to work and school 2021

Main mode of travel to work:			Main mode of travel to school:		
Car (driver)		68.0%	Walk		54.4%
Walk		12.1%	Car/Van		22.0%
Bus		6.8%	Bus		19.4%
Car (passenger)		2.9%	Other		1.3%
Rail		4.1%	Cycle		1.9%
Cycle		4.3%	Rail		1.0%
Other		1.9%			

Fifty eight per cent of people were either very or fairly satisfied with public transport in 2022, a drop from 68% in 2019.

Cross-border transport

As with transport more generally, cross-border transport was significantly affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. In 2022, there were 9 million air and ferry passenger journeys to other parts of the UK, an increase of 79% since 2021. The majority of these journeys were made by air (7.3 million).

The most recently available figures for cross-border rail journeys are for 2021 and cover the pandemic period. These show 7.4 million passenger journeys were made to other parts of the UK in 2021.

In 2022, 12.9 million passenger journeys were made to and from other countries by air, an increase of 26% since 2012.

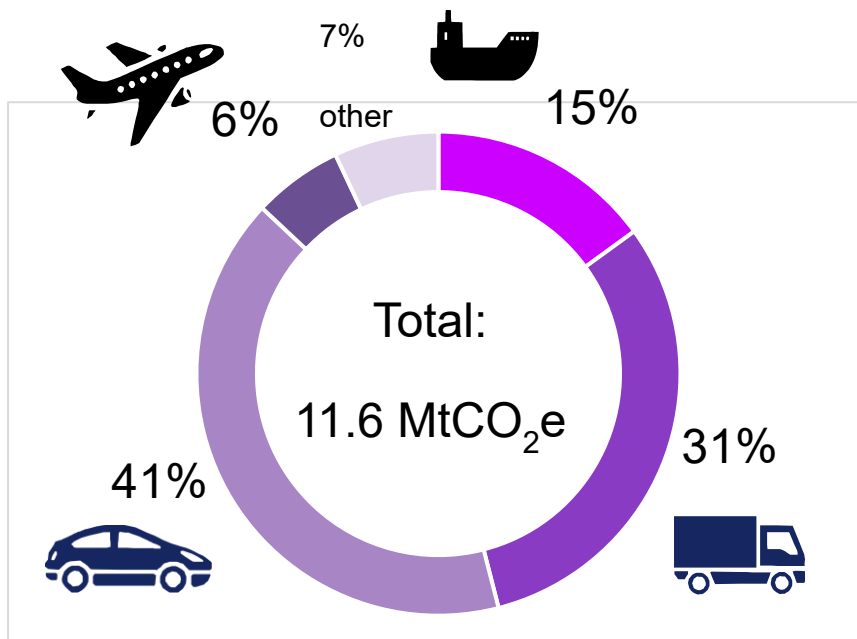
Environment and emissions

The most recently available figures for transport emissions relate to 2021.

Transport accounted for 27.9% of Scotland’s total greenhouse gas emissions in 2021. Scotland’s transport emissions in 2021 were 12.4% higher than in 2020, and 22.0% lower than in 1990.

In 2021, passenger cars accounted for 41% of transport greenhouse gas emissions [Figure 8].

Figure 8: Share of greenhouse gas emissions by mode in 2021



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 11% over the last ten years..

At the end of 2022, ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) accounted for 2.1% of vehicles licensed in Scotland, an increase from 1.4% at the end of 2021.

Official Statistics

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](#).

Scottish Government 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.

Data and Methodology

Information on the notes, definitions and sources for each of the chapters in the publication can be found in the individual chapter user guides.

Tell us what you think

We are always interested to hear from our users about how our statistics are used, and how they can be improved.

Feedback survey

We'd appreciate it if you would complete our short [feedback survey](#) on this publication.

Enquiries

For enquiries about this publication please contact:

Andrew Knight
Transport Scotland Analytical Services

E-mail: transtat@transport.gov.scot

For general enquiries about Scottish Government statistics please contact:

Office of the Chief Statistician

e-mail: statistics.enquiries@gov.scot

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