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Transport and Travel in Scotland 2025

Results from the Scottish Household Survey

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Key Findings

Driving a car or van was the most common mode of transport in 2025, accounting for 50% of journeys.

Walking was the second most common mode of transport at 28% of journeys.

The top two reasons for travel were shopping and commuting.

Shopping was the reason for 22% of journeys and commuting for 17% of journeys.

Use of buses and trains rose in 2025.

43% of adults had used the bus in the month before their survey interview compared to 39% in 2024. 33% of adults had used the train, a rise from 31% in 2024.

Public transport satisfaction remains below 2019 levels.

64% of respondents said they were very or fairly satisfied with public transport, the same as in 2024, but lower than in 2019 (68%).

Walking to school fell, while travel to school by car and service bus rose.

47% of children walked to school in 2025 compared to 53% in 2023. At the same time, there has been a rise in travelling by car (29% vs 24%) and use of a service bus (8% vs 4%).

Transport costs were easy to afford for 70% of adults in 2025.

People in the 20-29 age group were least likely to find their transport costs easy to afford (59%).

71% of people aged 17+ held a full driving licence in 2025, with licence-holding now stable after years of growth driven by women.

Introduction

This report presents transport and travel findings from the 2025 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.

> **The way we collect details of journeys has changed from 2025 onwards. This has increased the amount of journeys for exercise and dog walking captured in the travel diary.**
>
> **Changes were made to the frequency of some SHS transport questions from 2024.**
>
> **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 modes of transport.

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.

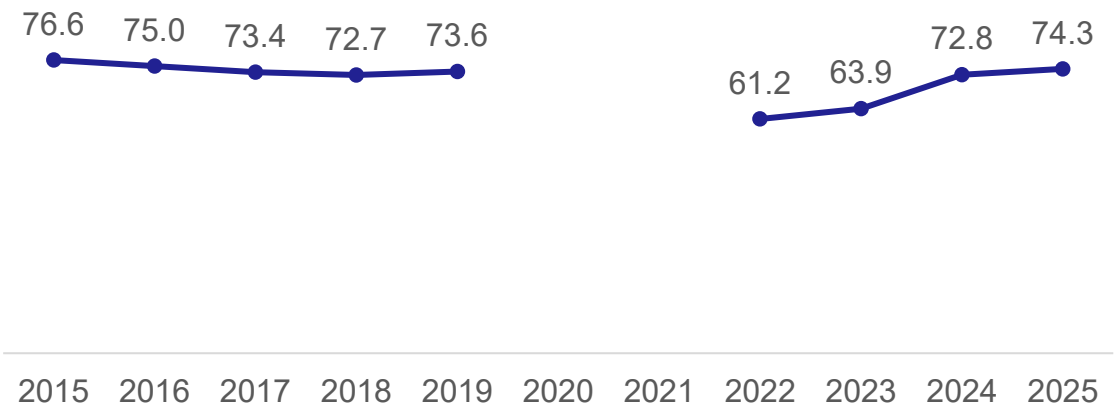
Personal Travel

How much are people travelling?

In 2025, 74% of people had travelled the day before their survey interview. Travel activity has been increasing since 2022 and returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2024. [Table TD1, Figure 1].

The average number of trips per adult the day before the survey interview was 2.12. [Table TD2e, TD3a].

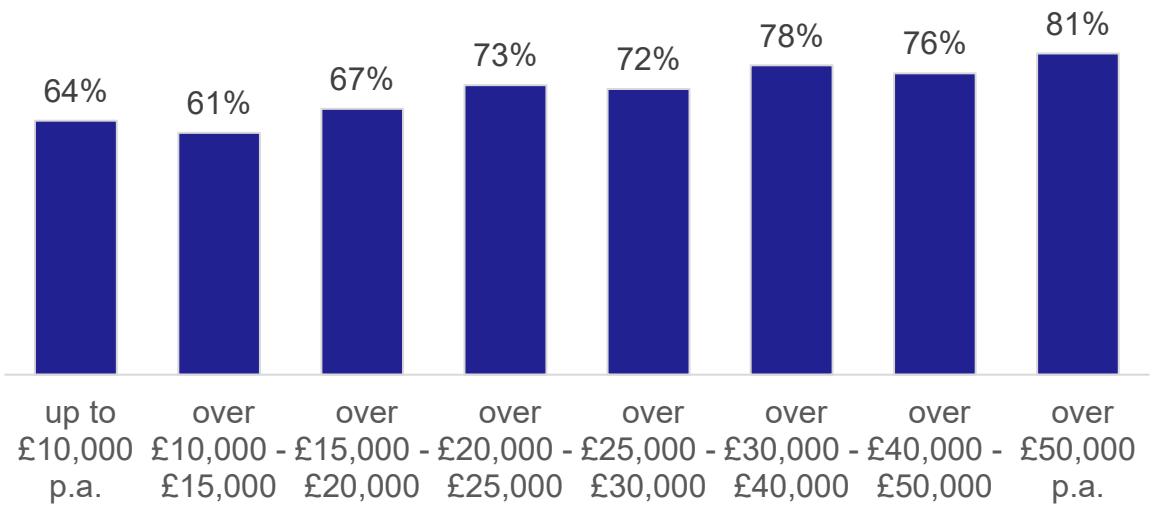
Figure 1: Percentage of adults travelling the previous day, 2015 to 2025



Who travels?

The percentage travelling increased with income, with 61% of those in the £10,000 to £15,000 group travelling compared to 81% of those with an income above £50,000. [Table TD1 and Figure 2]

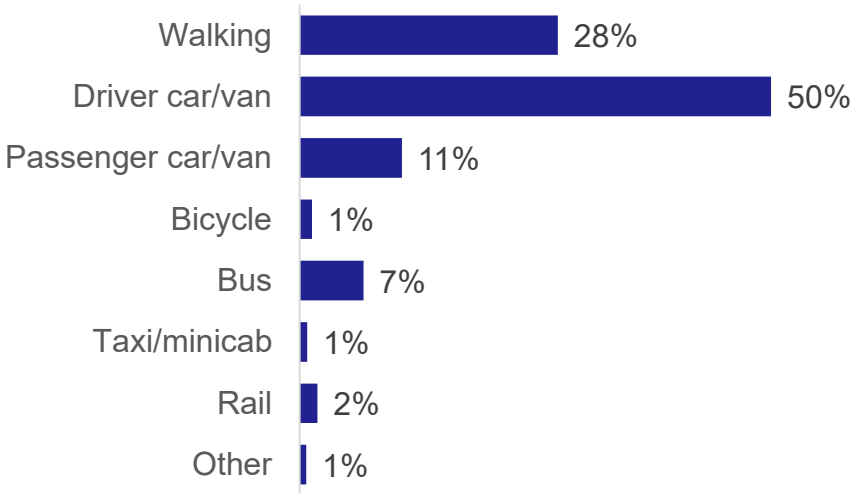
Figure 2: Percentage of adults travelling the previous day by household income, 2025



How do people travel?

Driving a car or van was the most common mode of transport, accounting for half of journeys (50%) in 2025. Walking was the next most common mode of transport at 28% of journeys in 2025. 11% of journeys were as car or van passenger, 7% by bus and 2% by rail. [Table TD2, Table SUM1, and Figure 3]

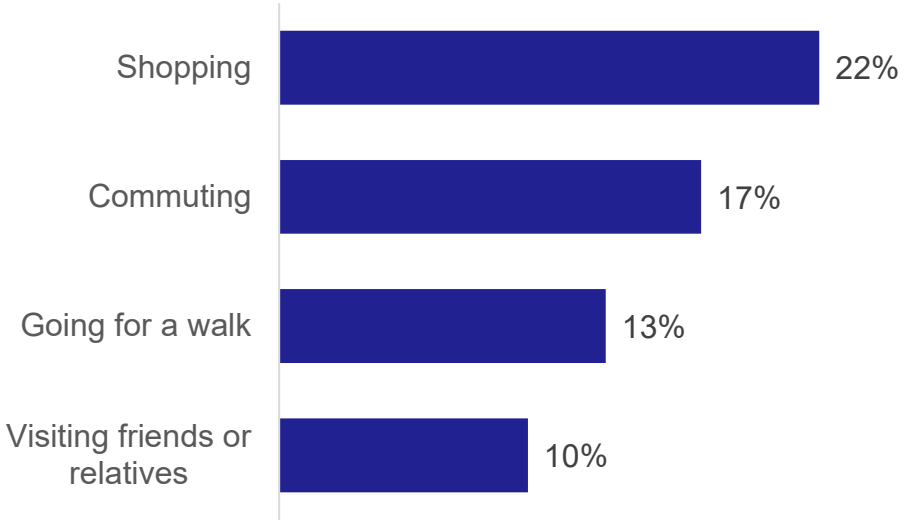
Figure 3: Breakdown of transport modes used for all journeys, 2025



Why do people travel?

The two most common reasons for travel were shopping (22% of journeys) and commuting (17% of journeys). 'Going for a walk' was the reason for 13% of journeys. [Table TD3 and Figure 4].

Figure 4: Purpose of travel (most frequent categories), 2025



Working from home

In 2025, the proportion of employed people who described themselves as working at or from home was 27%. This continues to be above the percentage in 2019 (16%). [Table 7a]

Travel to School

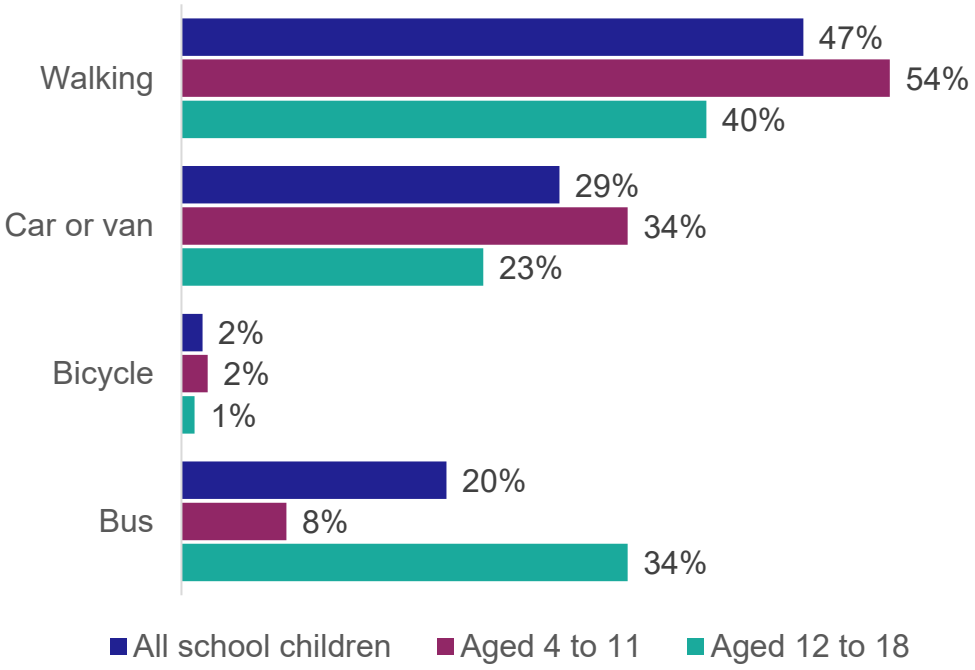
How do children travel to school?

Almost half of children (47%) walked to school, over a quarter (29%) travelled by car and a fifth (20%) used a bus. Walking to school has fallen compared to 2023 (47% vs 53%) while there has been a rise in travelling by car (29% vs 24%) and use of a service bus (8% vs 4%).

There was variation in mode of travel by age. In the 4 to 11 age group, 54% reported walking to school, compared to 40% in the 12 to 18 age group. The older age group

were more likely to catch a bus than younger children (34% compared to 8%). [Table 15 and Figure 5]

Figure 5: Method of travel to school, 2025 (main modes)

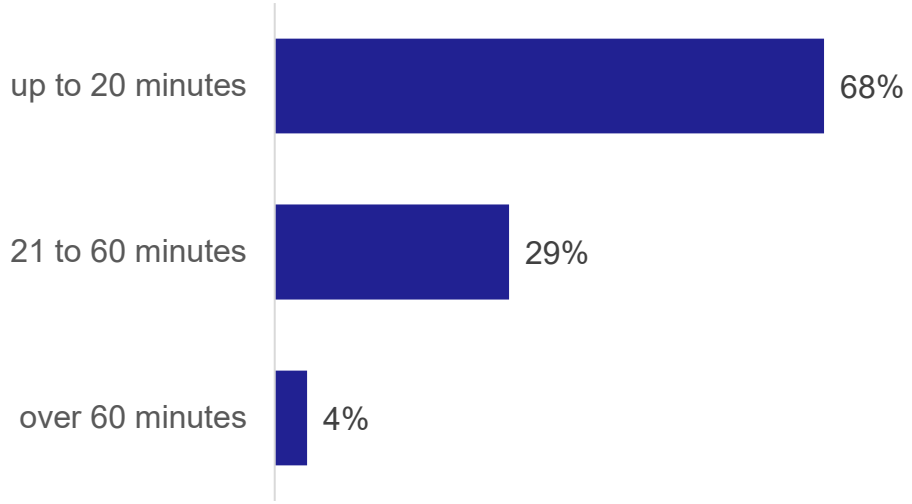


How long do people travel for?

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 6]

Figure 6: Percentage of journeys made by duration of journey, 2025

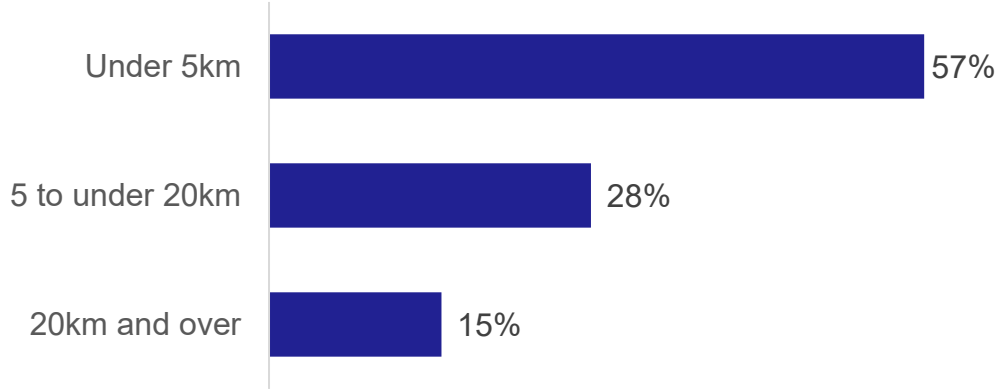


Distance travelled

In 2025, over half (57%) of journeys were under 5 km. [Table TD4 and Figure 7]

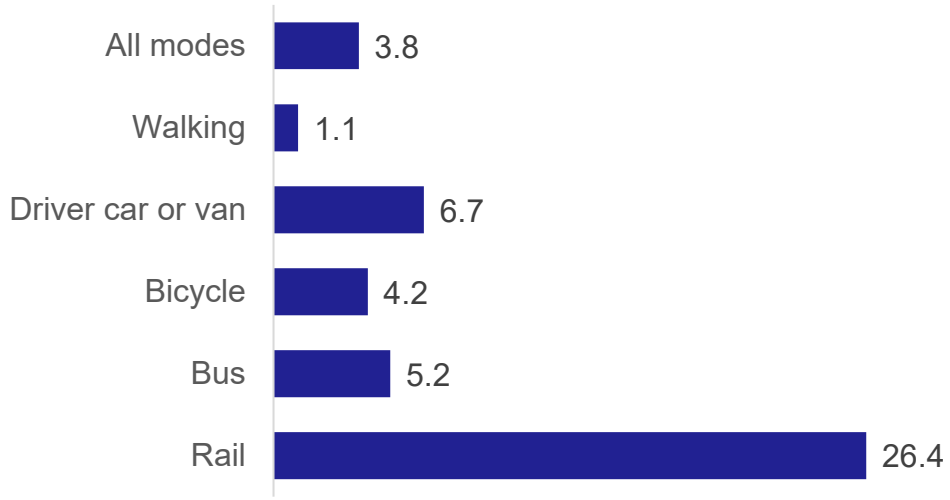
The median journey length was 3.8 km, and the mean journey length was 12.7 km. [Table TD5]

Figure 7: Percentage of journeys by distance, 2025



Walking journeys were an average (median) length of 1.1 km, with car driver journeys at 6.7 km and rail the longest at 26.4 km. [Table TD5a and Figure 8]

Figure 8: Average (median) distance (km) by different modes of transport, 2025



77% of journeys under 1 km were made on foot; car journeys (whether as a driver or passenger) accounted for most of the remainder (17%). 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 2025, 71% of people aged 17 and over held a full driving licence. This percentage has been stable in recent years. Prior to 2019, it had been steadily increasing due to an increasing trend in women holding a licence. Men were still more likely to hold a driving licence than women, with 75% of men aged 17+ having one, compared to 67% of women. [Table 1]

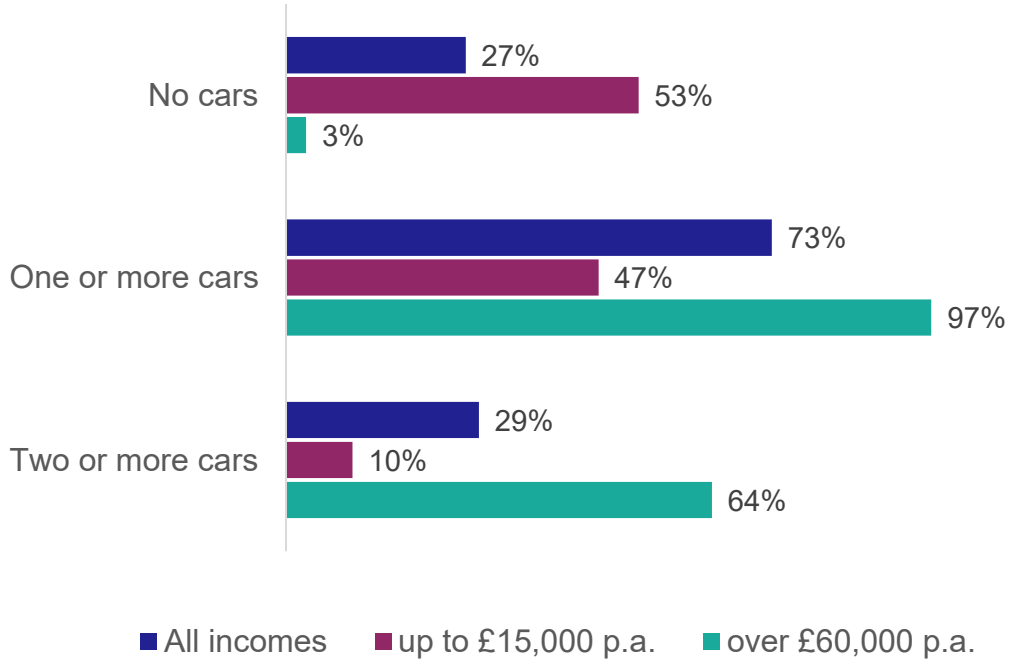
People were more likely to have driving licences in rural areas (62% of adults in large urban areas had a driving licence, compared to 86% of those in rural areas). [Table 1]

Car and van access

73% of households had access to one or more cars or vans for private use. 29% of households had access to two or more cars or vans for private use. [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 97% of households with an annual income of more than £60,000. [Table 18b and Figure 9]

Figure 9: Household access to cars or vans by selected household income bands, 2025



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 88%, compared to 64% in large urban areas, where more public transport is available. [Table 18b]

Frequency of driving

65% of people drove at least once a week in 2025, with 39% driving every day. The percentage driving every day has risen since 2024 (35%), but 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

In 2025, the average (mean) amount which an adult driver spent on vehicle fuel 'in the last month' was £114. [Table 2a]

The average (mean) spent by an adult on parking (including non-drivers) was £1.60 per week, this is higher than in 2024 (£0.80). For those who drove, the figure was £2.30. [Table 52]

Public transport

Public transport satisfaction

Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) said they were very or fairly satisfied with public transport. This was the same as in 2024, 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 2025. [Table 4b]

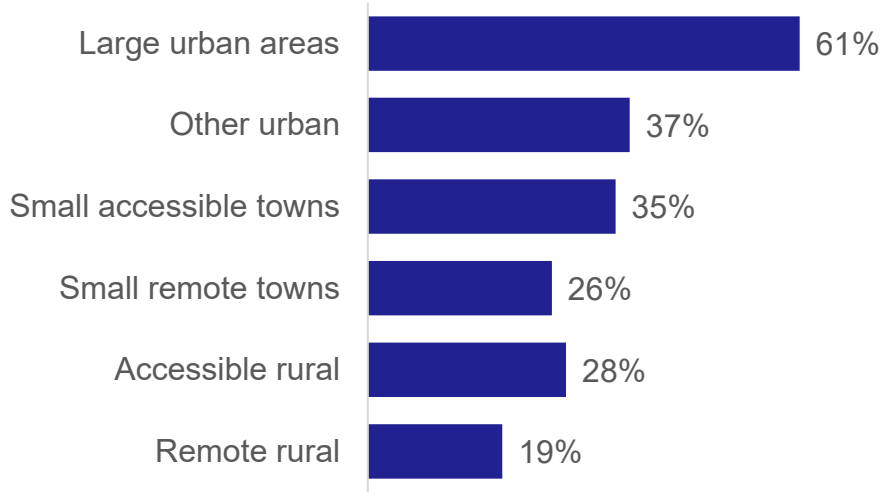
Satisfaction with public transport was lowest in rural areas. Satisfaction rates for those living in remote rural and accessible rural areas (42% and 45% respectively) contrasted with a satisfaction rate of 74% for those living in large urban areas.

Local bus services

43% of survey respondents had used the bus in the past month, a rise on 2024 (39%). Those using the bus everyday or almost every day made up 9%. This is a return to the levels of use seen before the pandemic. [Table SUM1, Table 28a]

Frequency of bus use was higher in urban areas: 61% of people in large urban areas used the bus at least once a month compared to 19% in remote rural areas. [Table 28a and Figure 10]

Figure 10: Percentage of adults using the bus at least once a month, by urban rural category, 2025

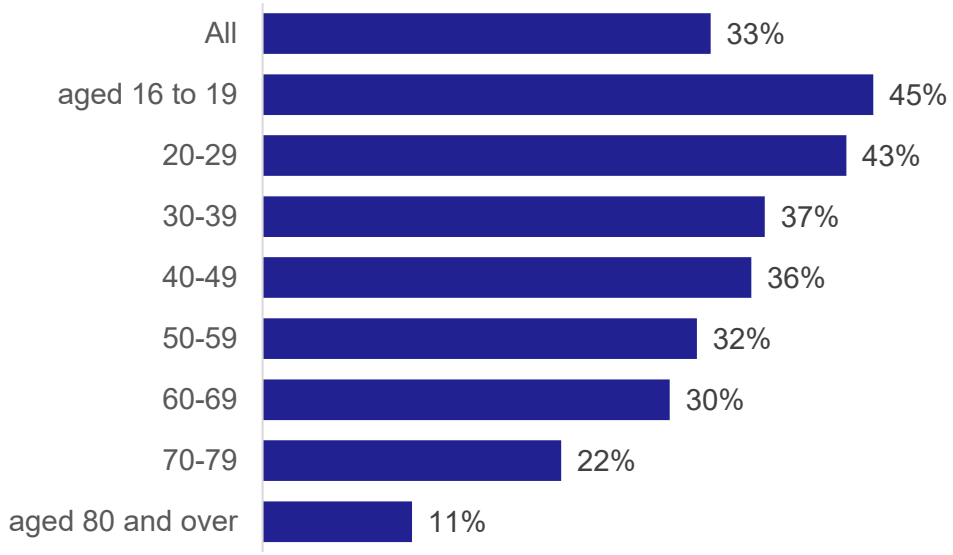


Rail travel

33% of survey respondents had used the train in the last month. Use of the train every day or almost every day has been lower than it was before the pandemic and use 2 or 3 times a week has been higher. [Table 28b, Table SUM1]

The proportion of people who reported that they had used the train in the last month decreased with age: 45% of those aged 16-19 and 43% aged 20-29 had used the train in the last month, compared to 22% aged 70 to 79 and 11% of those aged 80 and over. [Table 28b and Figure 11]

Figure 11: Percentage of adults using the train at least once in the past month by age, 2025



Public transport cost

The average amount spent by an adult on public transport in 2025 was £4.70 per week. Most people (76%) 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 £10.20 per week and 50% spent nothing (this will include free pass holders). [Table 53]

Affordability of transport

70% of people said their transport costs were either fairly easy or very easy to afford, about the same as in 2024. People in the 20-29 age group were least likely to find their transport costs easy to afford (59%). [Table 54]

Journeys by active travel

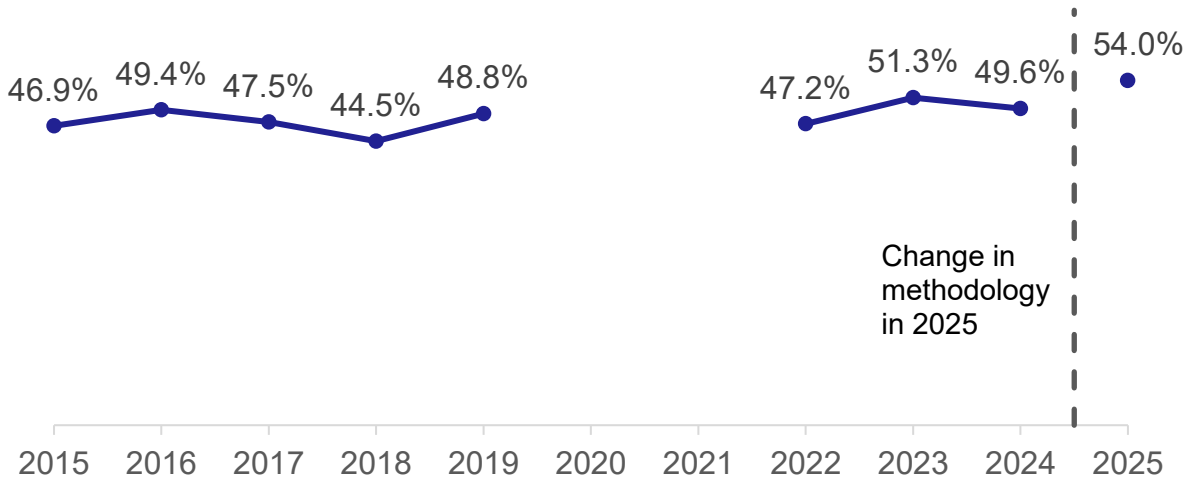
Scotland's National Performance Framework (NPF) had included a 'journeys by active travel' indicator. Following the latest statutory review of the National Outcomes, and the subsequent Scottish Parliament inquiry, the Scottish Government has committed to a period of reform of the NPF. The current 11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

Outcomes and Indicators are not being updated on the NPF website until the reform project has concluded.

This indicator is also included in the monitoring and evaluation framework of the National Transport Strategy.

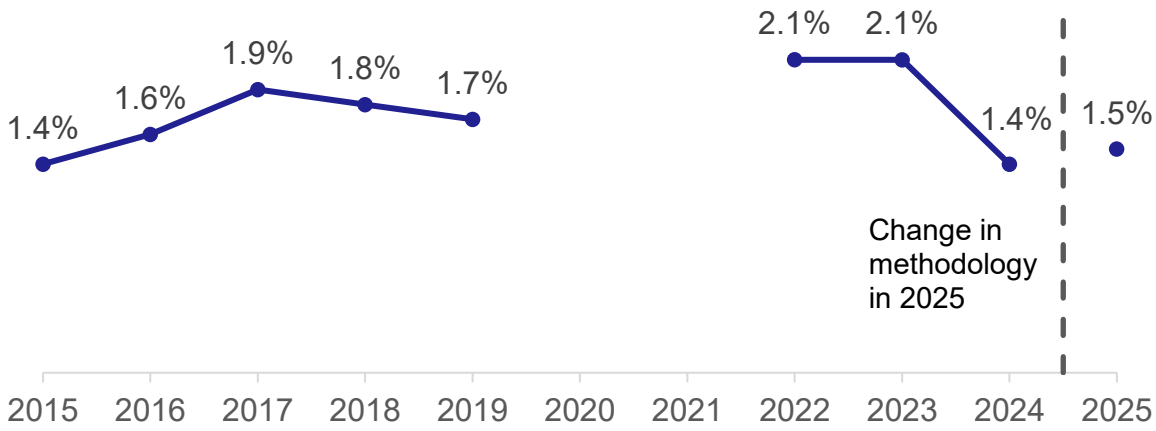
In 2025, 54% of journeys under two miles were on foot. [Table TD4c and Figure 12]

Figure 12: Percentage of journeys under 2 miles by main mode, walking, 2012 to 2025



In 2025, 1.5% of journeys under five miles were by bicycle. [Table TD4d and Figure 13]

Figure 13: Percentage of journeys under 5 miles by main mode, cycling, 2012 to 2025



Supporting Information

Additional background information on the SHS

The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) started in February 1999. It provides robust evidence on the characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of private households and individuals. The topics covered include transport, housing, neighbourhoods, finances, internet, physical activity, local services, environment, volunteering, culture, childcare. Other information is covered, such as household composition, employment or unemployment, income, health and disabilities.

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 Royal Mail's small user Postcode Address File (PAF). The small user file excludes the majority of businesses. 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.

The social questionnaire is in two parts:

- Household – Information is collected about the composition and characteristics of the household from the Highest Income Householder or their spouse/partner. This allows the SHS to produce information representative of Scottish households. A 'random school child' is also selected, and the household respondent answers questions about the school that child attends and how the child travels there.
- Random adult – Information is collected focusing on the attitudes and experiences of a randomly selected adult member of the household. This element also covers the 'Travel Diary' component which asks about travel behaviours on the day previous to that of the interview day. This produces data representative of the Scottish adult population resident in private households.

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.

Changes to the collection of journey data in 2025

The travel diary section of the SHS was redesigned in 2025 to reduce respondent burden and improve the interview experience for both respondents and interviewers. The changes simplified the travel diary section and reduced the amount of information that needed to be collected.

Before 2025, detailed information was collected about the journey as a whole and then on all stages of the journey. (A new stage was defined when there was a change in the mode of transport or a change required a separate ticket.) This caused the travel diary section to be very lengthy and may have contributed to under-reporting of journey stages.

In 2025, the stage-level mode questions were replaced with two journey-level questions:

- What was the main method of travel for this trip?
- What other methods of travel did you use?

The question on the location of stage starts was also removed. Other than the start and end points of the journey, location information is now collected only where travel switches between car or van and public transport, or vice versa.

Circular journeys

Prior to 2025, circular journeys, particularly those made for dog walks, walking, running or cycling, could be difficult to record. Interviewers were required to split these journeys into two parts and record the furthest point reached.

To address this, new questions were introduced for dog walks and walking, running and cycling journeys. Respondents were asked whether the journey was circular and whether the end location was the same as the starting location and if so, this was recorded as one journey. These journeys were split into two at the analysis stage for consistency with other years.

Impact on the data

The questionnaire redesign has affected the number of circular journeys recorded for dog walking and walking or running activities. Around 50% more of these journeys were recorded in the 2025 dataset than in 2024, increasing the sample of journeys by over 900.

This increase is likely to reflect improved capture of these journeys rather than a real change in travel behaviour. The increase may be due to the introduction of dedicated questions for circular journeys and the reduction in time to collect information on other journeys.

As a result, there is a break in the time series for travel diary statistics between 2024 and 2025. Users should therefore exercise caution when comparing statistics over time.

Changes to question frequency from 2024

Following a review of the 2024 SHS questionnaire, the interview length was reduced to lower respondent burden and help improve response rates.

As part of this change, many transport questions (other than the travel diary) are now asked every two years rather than annually, with most being asked in even-numbered years. As a result, publications for odd-numbered years will include fewer updates to the social survey tables.

A small number of questions were removed. Full details are provided in the annex on the Scottish Government website.

Comparability of 2020 and 2021 results with other 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 annual SHS Methodology Reports provide more detail on the changes in approach, and how this may have impacted the results.

Improved estimation of journey distance in 2024

Between 2017 and 2023, journey distance statistics had been based on the shortest road network distance between journey start and end points, replacing straight-line distance, which underestimated travel by around one-third.

For some circular journeys with the same start and end point, this method produced a distance of zero. From the 2024 publication onwards, distances for these journeys are estimated using journey duration and average speed for the mode of transport. This change was applied to the distance time series back to 2012.

The update reduced the proportion of journeys recorded as under 1 km and slightly increased estimates in other distance bands. Walking and car journeys were most affected.

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 11th March 2026 to include data up to 2024. An update to include 2025 data will be published by early next year.

Transport Scotland Statistics

The full range of transport statistics publications are available on the Transport Scotland website.

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.

Enquiries

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