



Department for Transport

Local Area Walking and Cycling Statistics: England, 2013/14

About this release

This Statistical Release presents information on cycling and walking amongst adults (aged 16 and over) in England, by local authority and by region, for the year ending mid-October 2014.

The statistics in this release are based on results from the Active People Survey (APS8), an annual telephone survey of adults, administered by Sport England.

New charts are available on travel by age and purpose, urban and rural areas, ethnicity and disability / impairment.

The release on 30 August 2012 included a number of tables on walking and cycling which have not been updated. This is due to changes in some survey questions, for which new data are no longer available.

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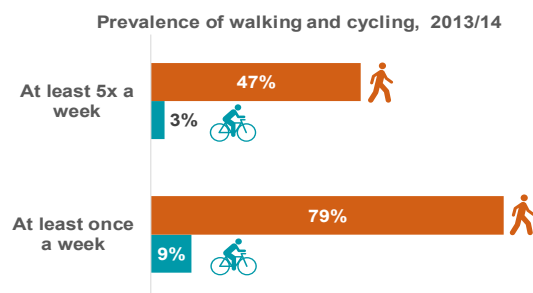
There have been significant increases in many areas in the proportion of people walking more frequently during the week.

% Walking at least 5 x per week: 10 largest local authority percentage point increases

	2012/13	2013/14	Increase
Leeds	40	55	↑ 15
Corby	37	52	↑ 15
Guildford	34	48	↑ 15
Blackpool	39	52	↑ 13
Newcastle-under-Lyme	35	48	↑ 13
Birmingham	37	50	↑ 13
Leicester	40	52	↑ 12
East Hertfordshire	43	55	↑ 12
Cambridge	45	57	↑ 12
Blaby	37	49	↑ 12

Main results

- Between 2012/13 and 2014/14 there were increases of 15 percentage points in the proportion of people walking at least 5 times a week in the local authorities of Leeds, Corby and Guildford.
- There were significant increases in people cycling once a month in 35 local authorities in England between 2012/13 and 2013/14 and also increases in the South West and East Midlands regions, and in Tyne and Wear Metropolitan County.
- In England as a whole, 47% of people walked at least 5 times a week and around 3% cycled at least 5 times a week.



Prevalence of walking and cycling

The charts below summarise the prevalence of walking and cycling for all purposes by adults in England at varying frequencies.

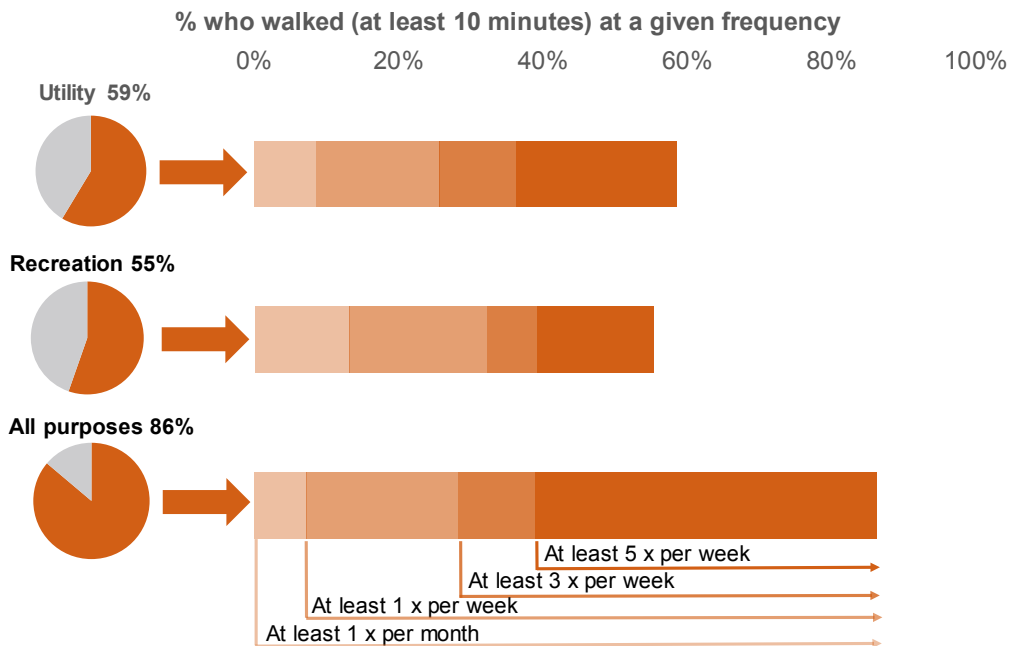
Summary charts: Prevalence of walking and cycling by frequencies in 2013/14

Walking

86% of adults walk at least once per month for any purpose.

The proportion who walk for recreation (55%) is similar to the proportion who walk for utility purposes (59%).

If we add together the proportions who walk for recreation and for utility (114%), the total is more than 86% because many people walk for both purposes.



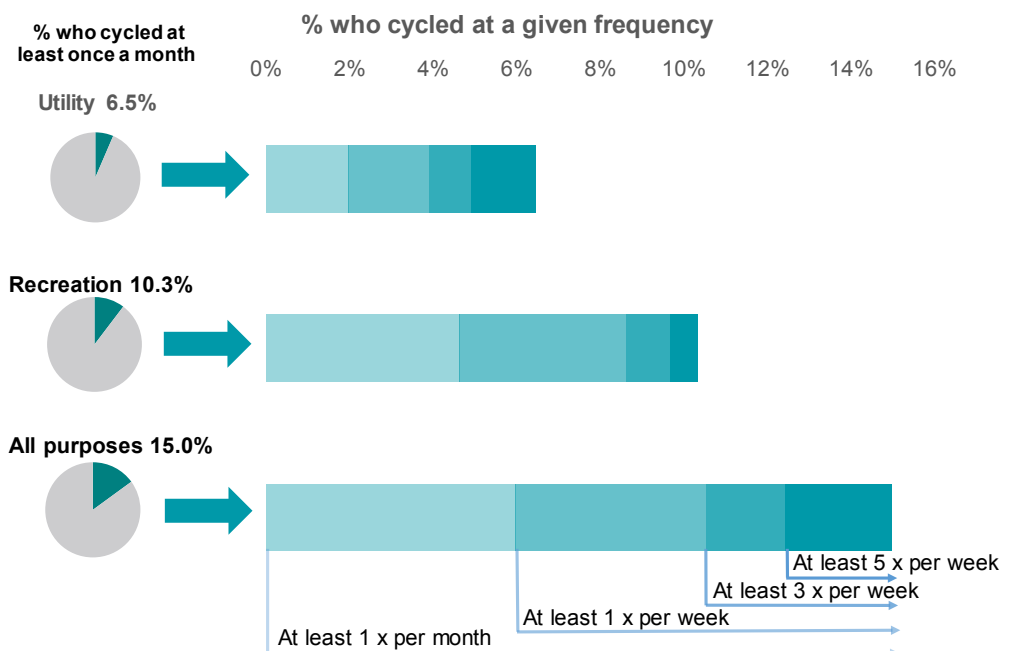
Source: DfT / Active People Survey, 2015

Cycling

15% of adults cycled at least once per month for any purpose, and about 9% cycled at least once a week.

These proportions are considerably lower than the 86% and 79% who walk once a month and once a week respectively (see chart above).

The proportion who cycle for recreation (10.3%) is noticeably higher than the proportion who cycle for utility purposes (6.5%).



Source: DfT / Active People Survey, 2015

Although some people cycle for both utility and recreation, cyclists tend to fall into 2 distinct groups, according to the purposes for which they cycle; if we add together the proportions who cycle for recreation and for utility (16.8%), the total is only slightly more than 15%.

Walking

At the national level in England, the proportion of people walking at least once per month has stayed the same since 2012/13, at 86%.

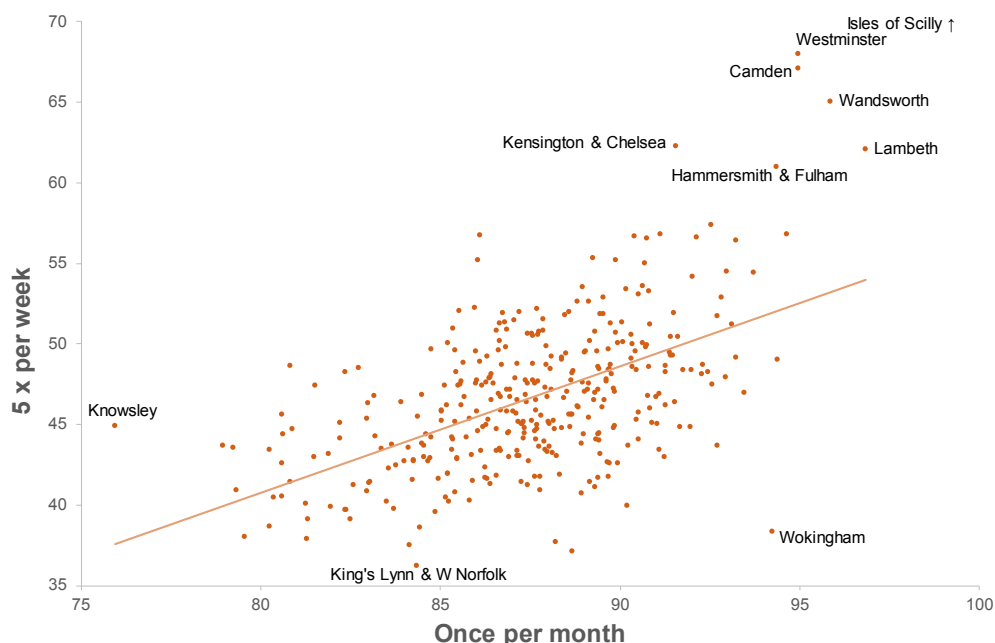
At local authority level, the prevalence of walking at least once per month ranges from 75% in Knowsley, to 96% in the Isles of Scilly (a range of 20%).

% Walking at least 5 x per week: 10 largest local authority percentage point increases

However, at greater frequencies (once, 3 times or 5 times per week), there have been significant increases in walking in England, and in most regions. This has been mainly driven by similarly significant increases in walking for utility purposes.

	2012/13	2013/14	Increase
Leeds	40	55	↑15
Corby	37	52	↑15
Guildford	34	48	↑15
Blackpool	39	52	↑13
Newcastle-under-Lyme	35	48	↑13
Birmingham	37	50	↑13
Leicester	40	52	↑12
East Hertfordshire	43	55	↑12
Cambridge	45	57	↑12
Blaby	37	49	↑12

Local Authorities: % adults walking at least once per month, and at least 5 times per week (England, 2013/14)



Source: DfT / Active People Survey, 2015

Generally, authorities with higher proportions walking at least once per month also have higher proportions walking at least 5 times per week. Those authorities scoring highly on both measures tend to be London boroughs. This result may well be related to the higher proportion of walking for utility purposes in urban areas.

Links to Tables

[CW0121](#) Proportion of residents who walk (for at least 10 minutes) a given number of times per week or month

Definitions

Significant

The size of the value is sufficient that we can be highly confident that the measure reflects the whole population, and is not just a random outcome (see Strengths and Weaknesses of the Data).

95% confidence

If we ran the same-sized sample 100 times, in 95 cases we would correctly ascribe the change as large enough to count as statistically significant in the population.

Scatter chart

Each dot is a local authority. The axes compare % of population walking frequently (at least 5 times per week), with % general walking (at least once per month). The trend line shows the average relationship between the two frequencies. Authorities *above* the trend line (eg Knowsley, Westminster) have a higher proportion walking frequently than we would expect from those walking at least once per month. Those *below* the trend line (eg King's Lynn, Wokingham) have a higher proportion walking at least once per month than we would expect from those walking frequently.

Changes in cycling prevalence over time

Cycling

In England the proportion of the population who cycled at least once per month was unchanged between 2012/13 and 2013/14 at 15%.

However, there were variations between local authorities. For example there were significant increases in cycling rates in 35 local authorities between 2012/13 and 2013/14. There were also significant increases in the South West and East Midlands regions, and in Tyne and Wear Metropolitan County. In 14 authorities, there was a decrease in cycling rates.

Rates for more frequent cycling also showed variation across areas. The proportion of adults cycling at least five times per week varies from around 28% in Cambridge and 11% in Oxford to less than 1% in some areas. The England average is 3%.

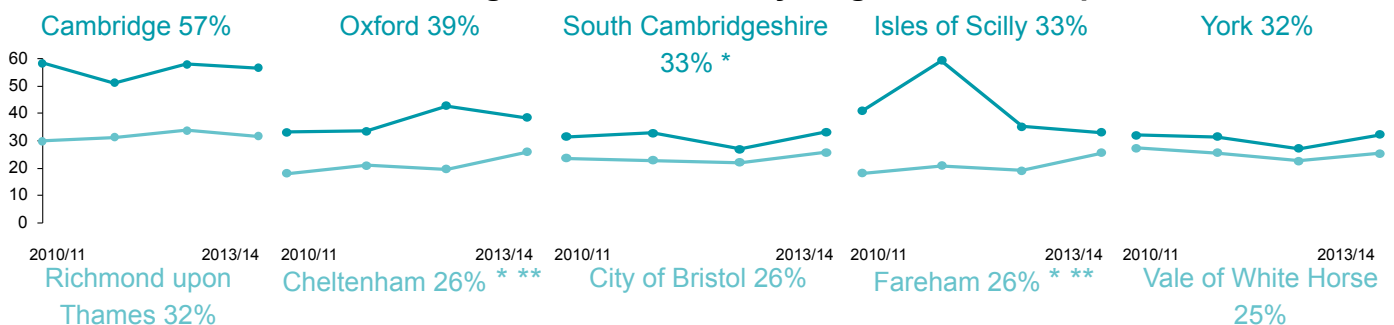
Link: [CW0111](#)

Cycling trends

Since we now have 4 years of comparable data, we can begin to look for signs of developing trends.

Since cycling prevalence is relatively low, it is best to use figures for those who cycle at least once per month, to increase the reliability of the results. In England as a whole, the level has remained at 15% for each of the years from 2010/11 to 2013/14.

10 local authorities with the highest % of adults cycling at least once per month, 2013/14



* Change from 2012/13 to 2013/14 is significant in the population, with 95% confidence

** Change from 2010/11 to 2013/14 is significant in the population, with 95% confidence

Over the last four years, all of the top 10 authorities for cycling have shown both annual increases and decreases since 2010/11; only in South Cambridgeshire, Cheltenham and Fareham have the increases since 2010/11, or since 2012/13, been large enough to be confident that the change in the sample reflects change in the whole population.

Changes in cycling prevalence in London

For the proportion of adult residents who cycle at least once per month, **London** has shown a significant decrease in cycling, over the 4 years from 2010/11 to 2013/14, from 15.7% to 14.2%.

On the more frequent measure of at least 5 times per week, which would capture many of those who commute to work by bicycle, there has been no significant change over the 4 years.

The surveys do consistently show levels of cycling much higher in Inner London boroughs than Outer London ones: 10 of the 13 Inner London boroughs show cycling levels above the national average (from 15%-24%), whilst 15 of the 20 Outer London boroughs are below the national average (down to 5% in Harrow). But detecting changes over time is harder to measure with any confidence. It is also important to remember the limitations of survey methodology. Even in an authority with a fairly high level of cycling, (say, 20% of the population), this amounts to only about 100 cyclists interviewed in the APS sample.

By contrast, Transport for London (TfL) has automatic counters working around the clock all year, and roadside counts at key cordon points, which measure over 160,000 bicycles per day; from 2012 to 2013, TfL reports an increase of just 0.5% in cycling stages.² It would require a survey with a very large sample size to detect this level of change with any confidence.

² ["Travel in London Report 7"](#), Transport for London (2014), p101.

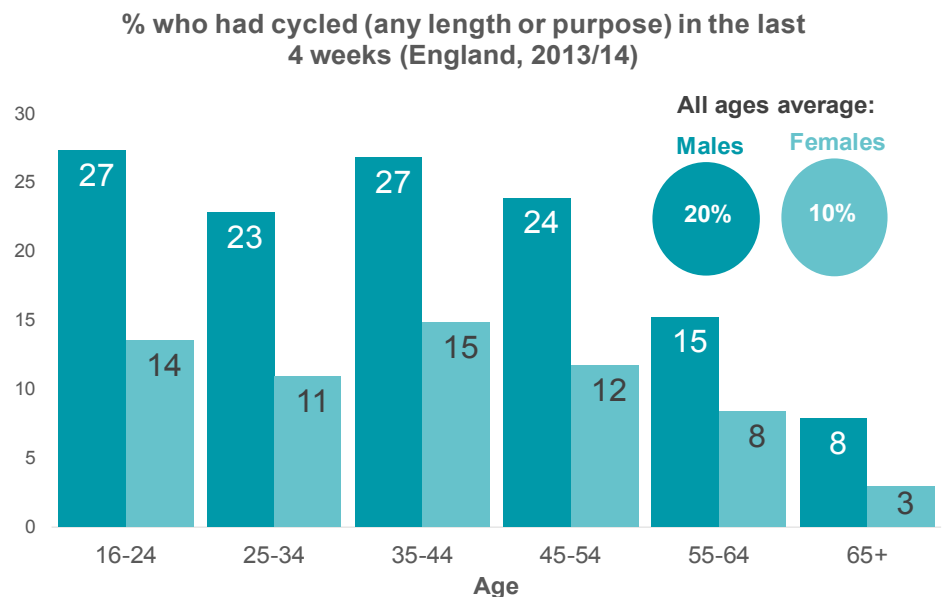
Age and Gender

The charts below show how levels of cycling and walking vary for men and women of different age groups.

Cycling

For cycling, there are distinct differences by gender: at all ages, lower proportions of women tended to cycle than men - on average, 20% of men cycle, whilst only half that proportion of women did so (10%).

However, for both genders, there is a decline in cycling levels between 25-34, before a further rise; levels then decline with age.



Source: DfT / Active People Survey, 2015

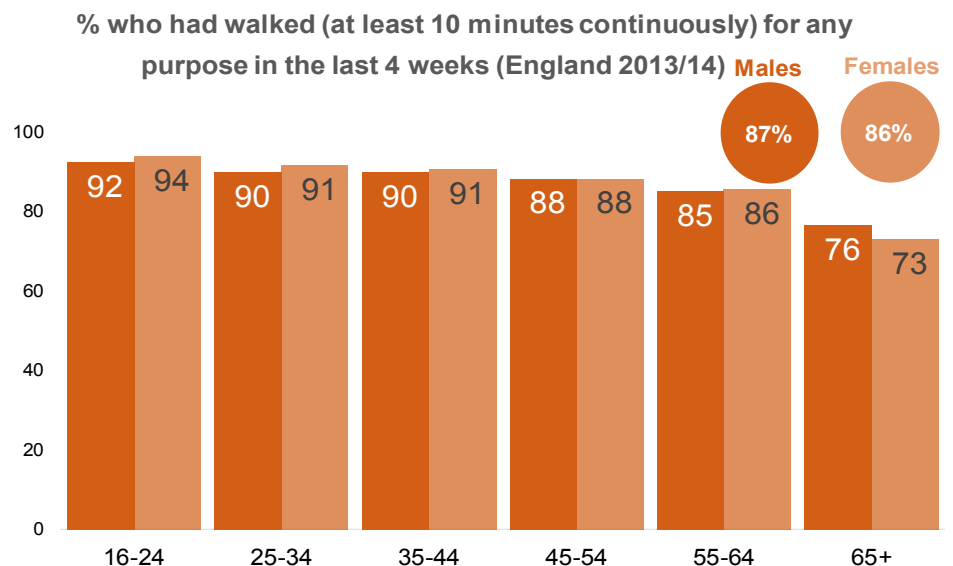
Walking

For walking, however, proportions of men and women tend to be quite similar at all ages.

On average, 87% of men walk at least once per month, and 86% of women

At all ages below 45, a slightly higher proportion of women walk than men.

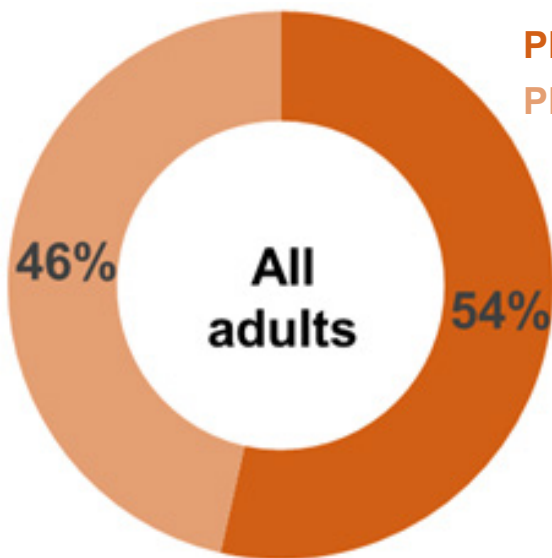
Also, there are also far smaller differences between age groups for walkers than for cyclists.



Source: DfT / Active People Survey, 2015

On the whole, people who did not walk did not compensate by being more physically active in other ways.

Walking & Physical activity



Physically Active

Physically Inactive

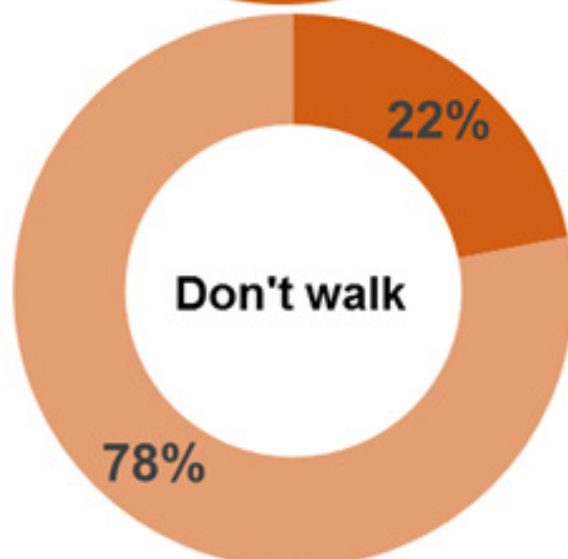
The APS asks about all of the recreational physical activity people did over the last 4 weeks (see box opposite). In 2013/14, nearly half of people (46%) did not engage in *any* moderate physical activity in the last month, whilst 54% *did*.

If there were no relationship between walking and physical activity, we would *expect* walkers and non-walkers to show the same prevalence for engaging in physical activity (54%).

However, the chart here shows that, for those who *do* walk at least once per month, this proportion is *more* than expected (59%).

For those who do not walk at all, only 22% are physically active in other ways - considerably *less* than expected.

(A similar pattern is found for the relationship between the prevalence of cycling and physical activity).



Source: DfT / Active People Survey, 2015

Definitions:

Physical activity of moderate intensity

As well as asking about walking or cycling for all purposes, the APS asks about *all* forms of recreational physical activity, including sport, dance and gardening. We can therefore calculate whether or not, and for how many sessions per month, respondents engaged in physical activity of "moderate intensity" (enough to raise their breathing rate) for at least 30 minutes. Using this measure, we can compare how often people are generally physically active to a moderate extent, with the number of days on which they walk or cycle.

Expected:

The proportions we would expect if there were no association between walking or cycling, and physical activity.

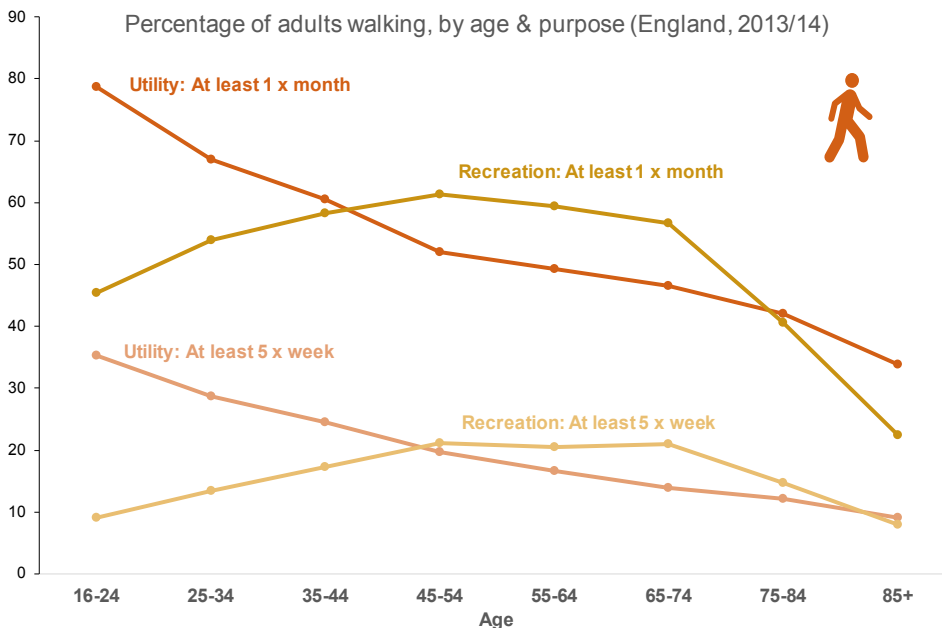
Observed

The proportions we see in the data.

Utility and Recreational purposes: Age

Walking

There are clear age differences depending on whether people walk for recreation or utility. For utility purposes, walking prevalence is highest among the youngest adults (16-24), and declines steadily with age. Prevalence of walking for recreational purposes, however, tends to increase with age to at least 54, and only shows a marked decline beyond the age of 74. These patterns hold for both general and frequent walking (at least once per month, and at least 5 times per week).



Source: DfT / Active People Survey, 2015

Definitions:

Health and recreation purposes

For the pleasure or value of the activity, or enjoyment of the surroundings.

Links:

[CW0401 Recreational cycling](#)
[CW0411 Recreational walking](#)

Utility purposes:

Getting from A to B, which might be commuting, but would also include purposes such as shopping, going to the library, college or hospital, or visiting friends.

Links:

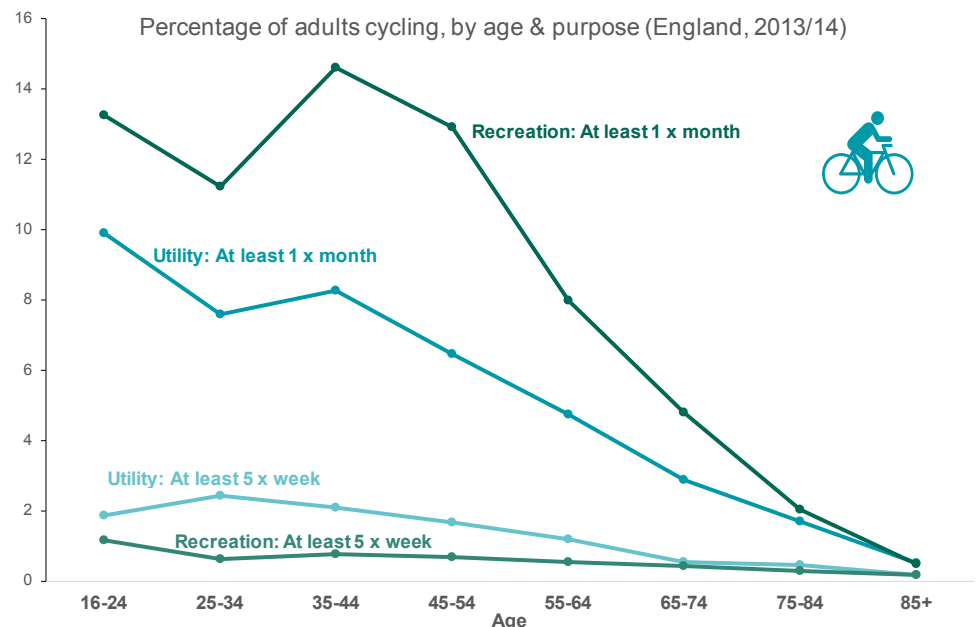
[CW0321 Utility Cycling](#)
[CW0331 Utility Walking](#)

These two distinct purposes interact differently with a number of demographic factors: age, urban or rural authorities, ethnicity and disability/impairment.

Cycling

Cycling shows a different pattern by age and purpose from walking. Firstly, among cyclists generally (at least once per month), recreational cycling is slightly more prevalent than utility cycling. For both purposes, though, there is a decline in prevalence between 25-34, followed by a rise.

Also, frequent cycling does not show the marked rise in prevalence during middle age which general cycling shows.



Source: DfT / Active People Survey, 2015

Urban and rural definitions

For the 2011 Census, the [Office for National Statistics](#) provided a definition of “urban” or “rural” areas, and classified each local authority as predominantly urban or predominantly rural⁴, as well as listing the adult population in each authority.

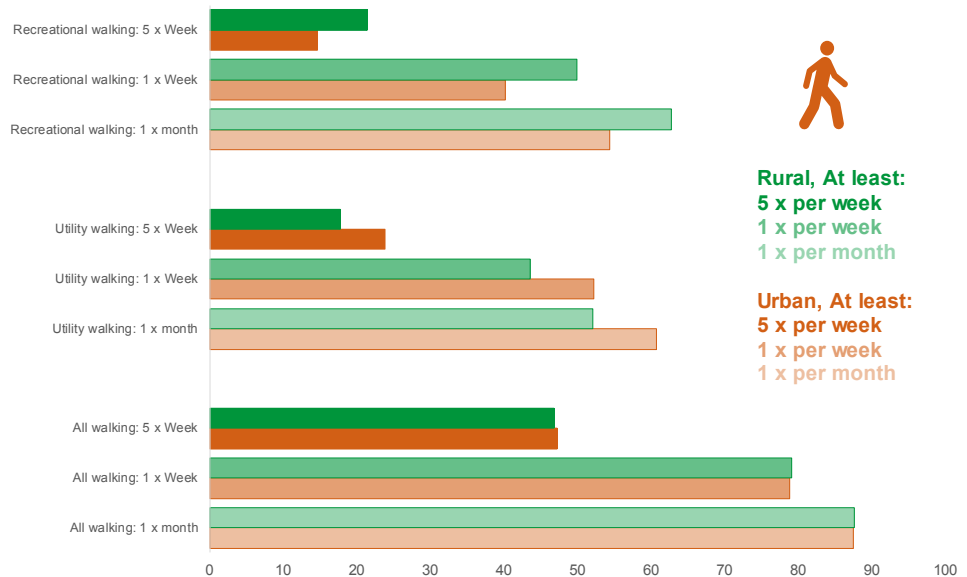
We combined this information with our estimates of the proportions of adults in each authority walking or cycling at different frequencies, to estimate the proportions of the whole English population walking or cycling in urban and rural locations.

For both walking and cycling, the prevalence in each area type depends on the purpose for which people are travelling.

Walking

At all frequencies, walking for recreational purposes is more prevalent in rural areas than in urban ones. By contrast, walking for utility purposes is more prevalent in urban areas. These two tendencies cancel each other out, so that for walking for all purposes, there does not appear to be any noticeable difference in prevalence between urban and rural areas.

Percentages of adults walking, by purpose and area type (England, 2013/14)



Source: DfT / Active People Survey, 2015

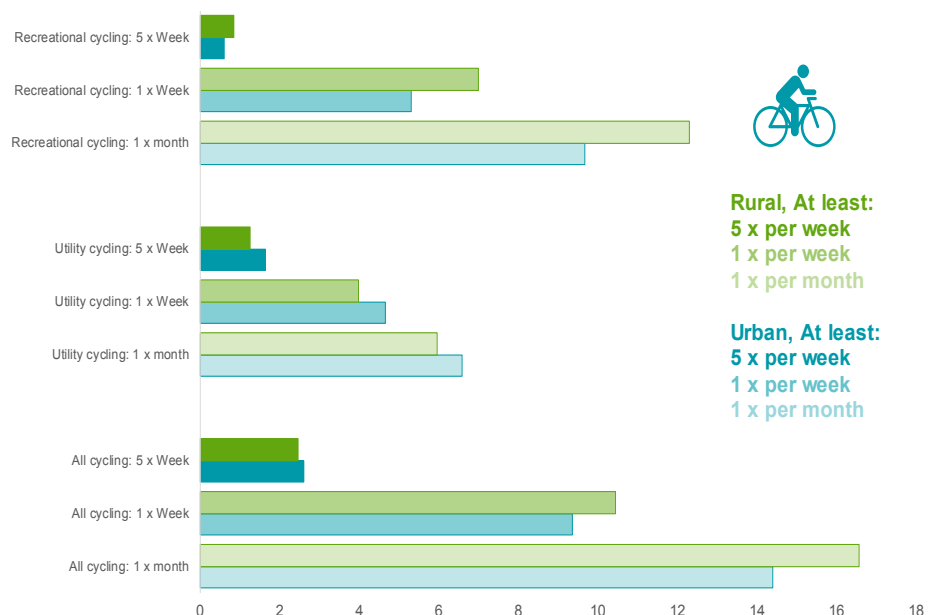
Cycling

The pattern for cycling is similar to that for walking: cycling for recreational purposes is more prevalent in rural areas and cycling for utility purposes is more prevalent in urban areas.

The contrasts between the two area types is especially marked for occasional recreational cycling, whereas the differences are less marked for utility purposes.

This suggests that recreational cycling is more commonly an occasional activity, whereas utility cycling is more

Percentages of adults cycling, by purpose and area type (England, 2013/14)



Source: DfT / Active People Survey, 2015

⁴ See [Notes & Definitions](#). We counted “urban with significantly rural” authorities as “urban” https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/427117/RUCLAD_leaflet_May2015.pdf

Utility and Recreational purposes: Ethnicity

Walking

White British adults as a group walk less for utility purposes than all ethnic minorities, but more for recreational purposes than most ethnic minorities.

Other White groups behave differently: for utility purposes, they resemble other ethnic minorities, but for recreational purposes they resemble White British people, and walk more than any other group.

Compared with white groups, remaining minority ethnic groups are broadly similar to each other; however, there are differences between them – for instance, walking for recreation is least prevalent among black ethnic groups (39% at least once per month), yet walking for utility purposes is most common among **Black people** (70% at least once per month).

Definition: Ethnic group

Respondents were asked to identify themselves into one of 7 ethnic groups: White British (by far the largest group, at 83%), Other White, Asian, Black, Chinese, Mixed, or Other. "Other White" included those from various European countries outside the UK as well as from other continents.

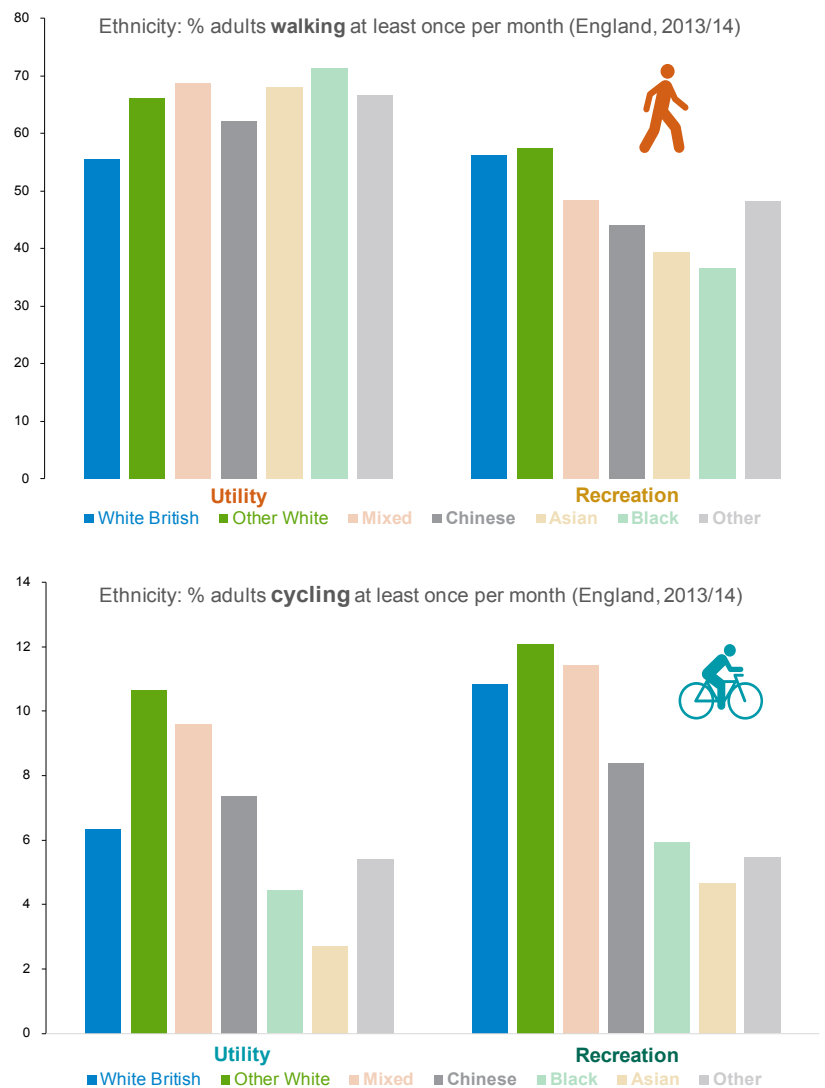
Cycling

Similarly to walking, the **Other White** group stands out as showing a greater proportion cycling, for both utility and recreational purposes, than any other ethnic group.

Again, **White British** adults resemble Other White adults more for recreation than for utility purposes (for the latter, Other White adults show nearly double the prevalence of cycling, compared with White British adults).

Furthermore, for both purposes, there are far greater differences between minority ethnic groups than there are for walking: adults of **Mixed or Chinese** ethnicity show a much higher proportion cycling than **Black or Asian groups**.

It is important to remember that these differences in walking or cycling are not necessarily all directly due to cultural differences.



For instance, if white groups are more inclined to live in rural areas, whilst ethnic minorities tend to live in urban areas, and if urban residents tend to walk or cycle less for recreation than for utility purposes, this would incline towards the result we see here. Other factors, such as differences among ethnic groups in employment, income, or car ownership, might also have an effect.

Definition: Disability/impairment

The questionnaire asks respondents if they have a **long-standing illness, disability or infirmity**, and whether this illness or disability **limits their activities** in any way. Those who answer yes to both questions have been counted here as having a limiting impairment; the remainder are counted as having no limiting impairment.

The questionnaire went on to ask those with a limiting impairment if they were affected in any of 11 specific areas. Whilst these included areas which would obviously be expected to affect walking or cycling, such as vision or mobility, the list included other areas which might not be expected to have similarly large effects on walking or cycling:

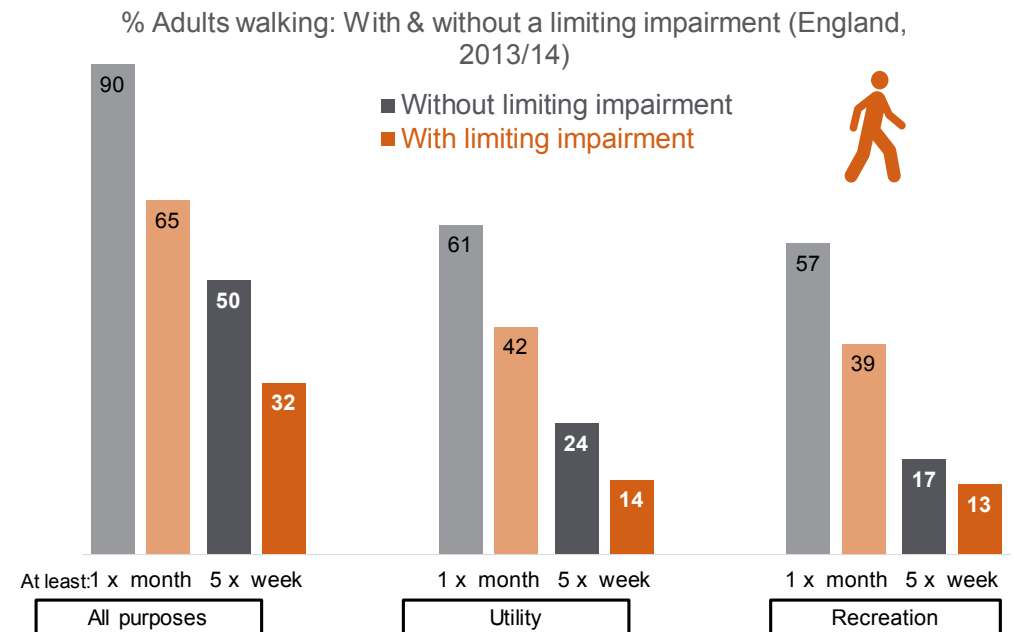
- hearing
- learning
- mental health
- stamina / breathing
- neuro-diverse conditions such as autism
- difficulty speaking
- dexterity
- long term pain
- Other

Detailed analysis found that all of these conditions are associated with markedly lower levels of walking or cycling. Although the results of this detailed analysis are not shown here, this justified treating all the separate areas as a single group experiencing "limiting impairment".

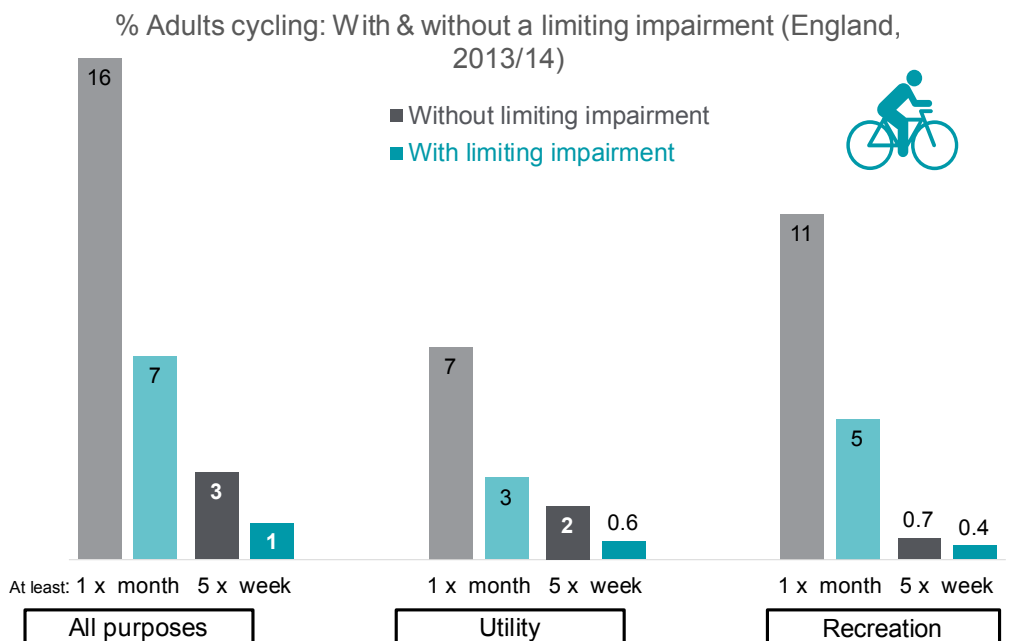
(It is worth noting that a high proportion of those with a limiting impairment experience more than one).

A far lower proportion of people with a limiting impairment walk or cycle than those without a limiting impairment. For example, about 16% adults without an impairment cycled once a month compared to 7% of adults with an impairment.

Comparing these two groups, the pattern is similar for both walking and cycling, regardless of purpose (all purposes, recreation or utility), and across all frequencies (from at least once per month to at least 5 times per week).



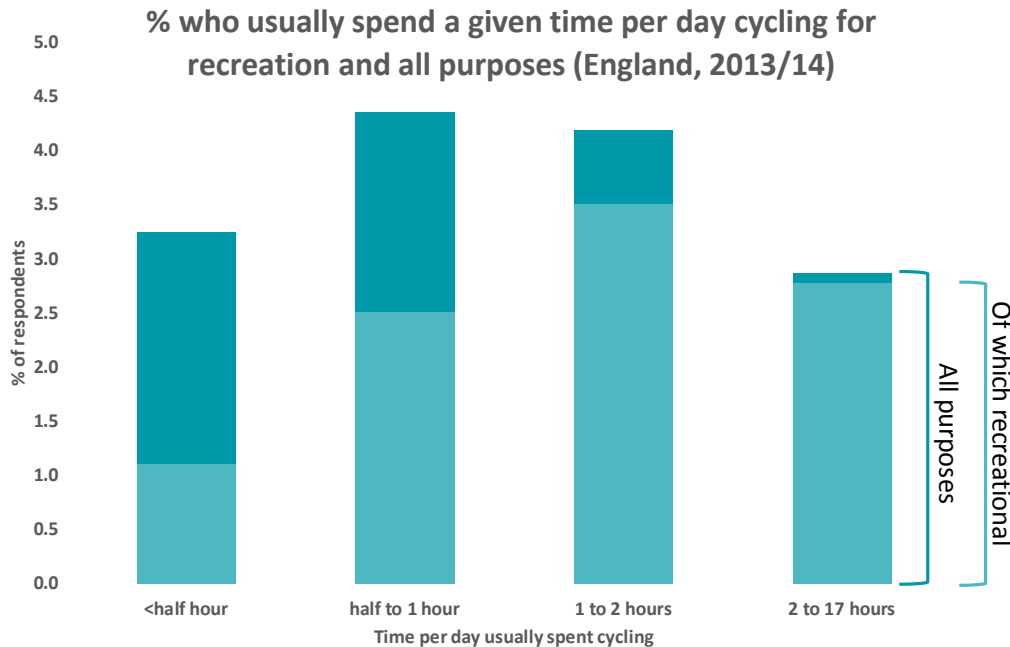
Source: DfT / Active People Survey, 2015



Source: DfT / Active People Survey, 2015

Time usually spent walking and cycling

The charts below show the proportion of the whole population who usually walk or cycle for different time periods. About 15% of the population cycled at least once a month. On the days when those people cycled, 3% of the population usually did so for less than half an hour, 4% usually cycled for between 30 minutes and 1 hour, and a further 7% usually cycled for one hour or more.



Definition: usual length of time

Time *usually* spent is not the same as *average* time. The APS does not have a measure for the length of time people usually spend walking or cycling for *utility* purposes.

Links:

Walking

[CW0241](#) Any purpose

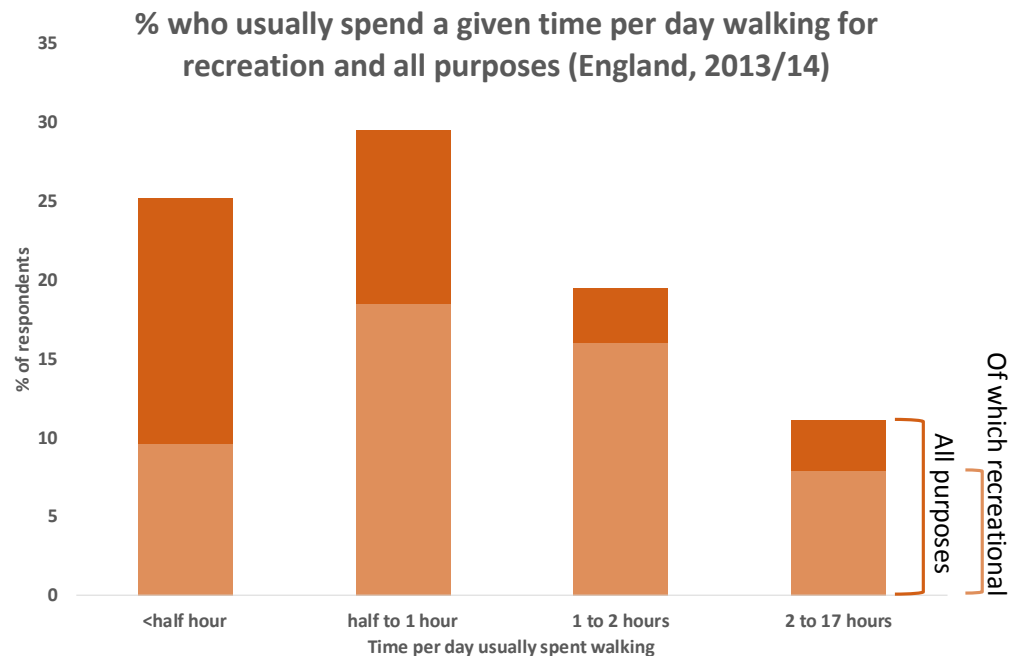
[CW0261](#) Recreation

Cycling

[CW0231](#) Any purpose

[CW0251](#) Recreation

Source: DfT / Active People Survey, 2015



The proportions of the population walking recreationally are fairly even divided between those who usually do so for less than an hour, and those who do so for longer.

Among cyclists, however, somewhat higher proportions of the population usually do so recreationally for more than one hour at a time than do so for less than an hour.

Source: DfT / Active People Survey, 2015

Of those people walking and cycling for more than half an hour, a considerable majority do so for recreational purposes; nearly all cycling for more than two hours is for recreation, rather than utility, purposes.

Background information

Users and uses of these statistics

Within the Department for Transport, we anticipate these statistics being used in the evaluation of local area interventions to encourage sustainable travel (for example, the [Local Sustainable Transport Fund](#)), as background information in the development and targeting of policies, for ministerial briefing and to answer public enquiries.

Other users include local authorities, campaign organisations, Parliamentary Groups, researchers and individuals with an interest in walking or cycling.

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

The figures in this release are based on the Active People Survey (APS), administered by Sport England and used to derive official estimates of participation in sport and active recreation. The APS has a sample size of over 160,000 persons, thus enabling analysis at local authority level. Statistics at this level are not available from the [National Travel Survey](#) (NTS), which has an annual sample of around 19,000 persons.

The national level results derived from the APS have been compared with those from the NTS and found to be broadly consistent. Any differences are likely to be due to differences in methodology and definitions between the two surveys.

Results from the APS are grouped by the area where survey respondents live, which may not be the same as the area where they walk or cycle, particularly for urban areas where there are multiple local authorities in a relatively small area.

Although the APS has a standard sample size of at least 500 persons per local authority, because the numbers of those cycling are small (only 15% nationally), some of the measures relating to cycling are based on only a few people per local authority and may not be robust. The tables accompanying this release include 95% confidence intervals for the estimates derived from the survey, to demonstrate the reliability of the estimates and the likely range of values for the true value⁵. Of nearly 370 authorities and regions, this means that some intervals will include errors, but it is not possible to specify which ones: the confidence interval may not contain the true value for the population, or a change may show as statistically significant when it is not.

The tables also highlight whether the change in walking or cycling activity since 2012/13 is statistically significant, rather than simply due to random variation in the survey sample. More details of the statistical test used to assess significant change can be found in the accompanying [Notes and Definitions](#) document. Caution should be taken when interpreting these changes because of factors that include small sample sizes and the inherent uncertainty in doing any statistical test.

The APS sample is weighted to ensure that the results are representative of the population. However, it is exclusively a telephone survey and only covers households with a fixed landline. The 15% of households in England that are mobile-only⁶ are excluded from the survey, which may introduce bias into the sample. A comparison of sports participation measures derived from a telephone survey and a face-to-face survey revealed some small but systematic differences between the reporting of walking and cycling between the two modes. Work is ongoing by Sport England and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to better understand these modal differences, with a view to redesigning the future format of the Active People Survey.

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/local-sustainable-transport-fund

⁵The confidence intervals used are Wilson Score intervals. For more details, see the accompanying [Notes and Definitions](#) document.

⁶ See paper commissioned from the ONS Methodology Advisory Service, available [here](http://www.sportengland.org/research/active_people_survey/consultation.aspx): http://www.sportengland.org/research/active_people_survey/consultation.aspx

Background information

Further information

The web tables give further details of the results presented in this statistical release. They are available here: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/walking-and-cycling-statistics

Guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics, including the calculation of confidence intervals, is available in the “Notes and Definitions” document, which can be found here: www.gov.uk/transport-statistics-notes-and-guidance-walking-and-cycling

Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours in advance can also be found at the link above.

Further information about the Active People Survey and published sports participation measures for APS8 can be found on Sport England’s website: www.sportengland.org/research/active_people_survey.aspx

Request for feedback

We welcome any feedback on these statistics, to ensure future releases best meet user needs. Feedback can be provided by email to subnational.statistics@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

Next update

This year’s release was postponed beyond April 2015 by a delay acquiring the dataset. The next release in this series is due to be published in Spring 2016 and will contain statistics on walking and cycling from APS9, which covers the period October 2014 to October 2015.

Other sources of information on walking or cycling

- The **National Travel Survey**: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics>
- **Road Accidents & Safety** statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-accidents-and-safety-statistics>
- **Road Traffic** statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-traffic-statistics>
- The **2011 UK Census** contains detailed information on mode of travel to work (which includes walking or cycling), available via NOMIS: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011>