

# Local Area Walking and Cycling Statistics: England 2012/13



Department  
for Transport

**RESPONSIBLE STATISTICIAN:**

John Cummings 020 7944 6104

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

Media: 020 7944 3066

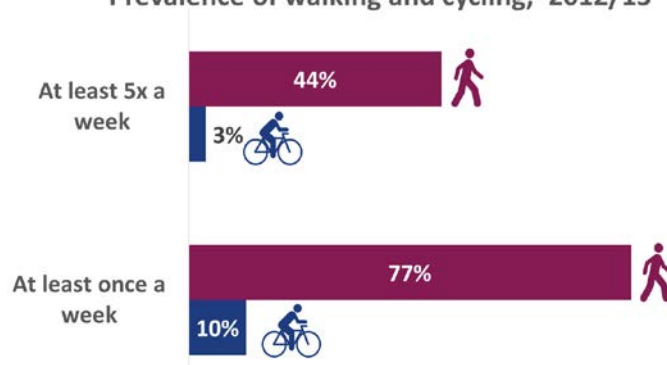
Public: 020 7944 6104 [subnational.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:subnational.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

## Main findings

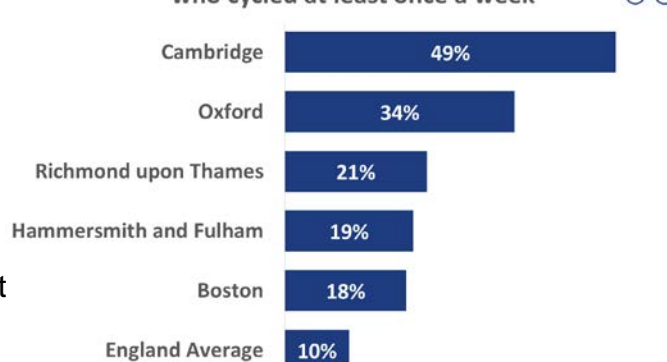
**87% of adults walked or cycled at least once a month in 2012/13. 15% cycle, and 86% walk at least once per month, statistics from the Department for Transport suggest.**

- The prevalence of cycling in England (at least once a month) reduced from 15.3% to 14.7% in the year to October 2013 compared to the previous year. Although the change is small, the size of the sample means that we can be confident that this decrease exists in the whole of the English population.
- 10% of people cycle recreationally (cycling for the pleasure of it) at least once per month, and 7% cycle for utility purposes at least once per month (for example commuting, shopping or visiting friends).
- 43% walk for at least 10 minutes at least once per week recreationally, and 47% do so for utility purposes at least once per week.

Prevalence of walking and cycling, 2012/13



Top 5 local authorities: percentage of residents who cycled at least once a week



## About these statistics

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 2013.

The statistics in this release are based on results from the Active People Survey (APS7), an annual telephone survey of adults, administered by Sport England.

New tables are available on frequency of walking or cycling for all purposes, as well as for recreational or utility purposes, and time usually spent walking or cycling for all or recreational purposes.

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.

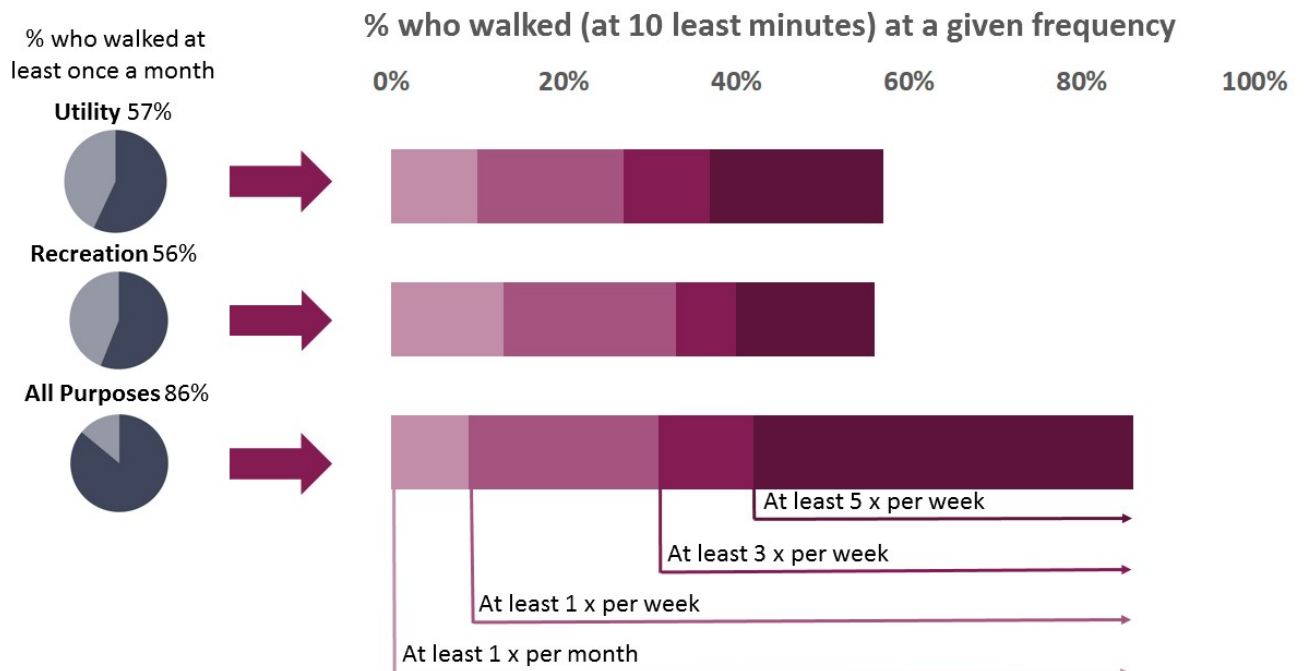
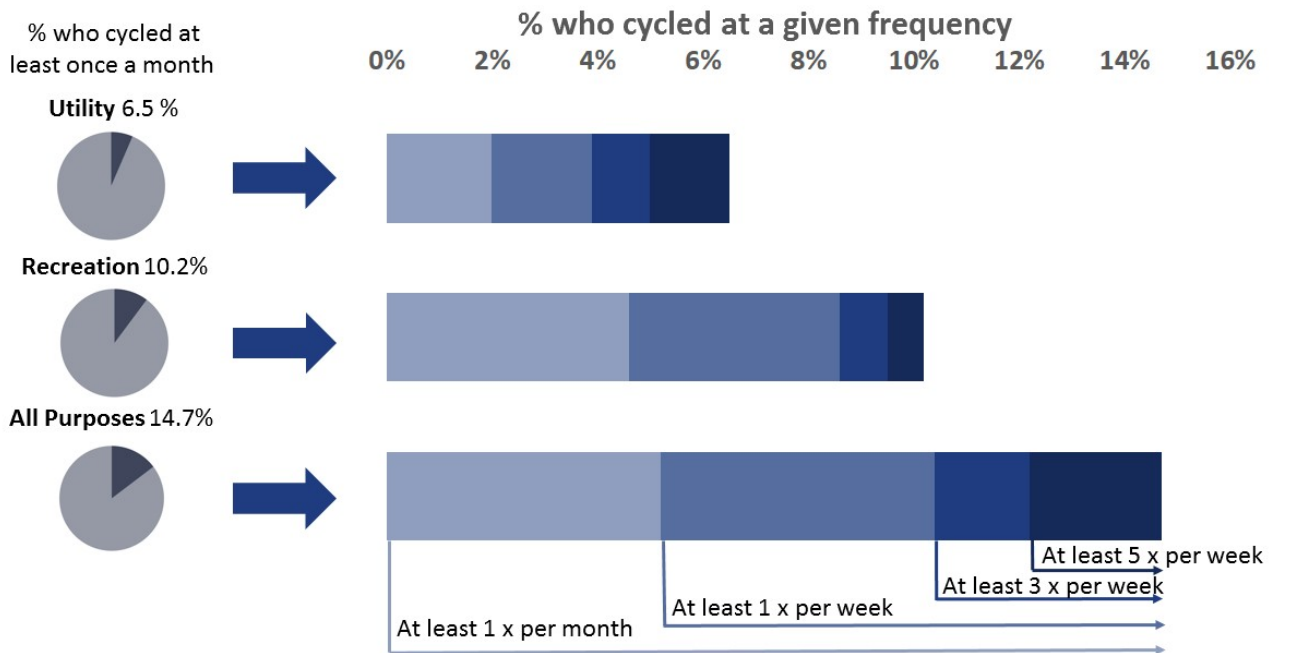
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## Prevalence of walking and cycling

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 2012/13



Levels of walking are considerably higher than those for cycling. A higher proportion of people cycle recreationally than do so for utility purposes, whereas approximately the same proportions of people walk for recreational and utility purposes. If we add together the proportions who cycle recreationally and the proportion who cycle for utility purposes, the total is more than those who

cycle for all purposes, because some people do both. However, a considerably greater proportion walk for both purposes than cycle for both purposes.

Among walkers, it is much more common to walk frequently (at least 5 times per week) than frequent cycling is among cyclists. Conversely, among cyclists, it is more common to cycle less than once per week than it is for walkers to walk less than once per week. Some of these broad patterns are explored in more detail below.

## Cycling prevalence in 2012/13

The local authorities with the highest proportion of adults cycling **at least once per month** were:

1. Cambridge	(58%)	5(=). York	(27%)
2. Oxford	(43%)	5(=). South Cambridgeshire	(27%)
3. Isles of Scilly	(35%)	7. New Forest	(26%)
4. Richmond upon Thames	(34%)	8. Norwich	(24%)

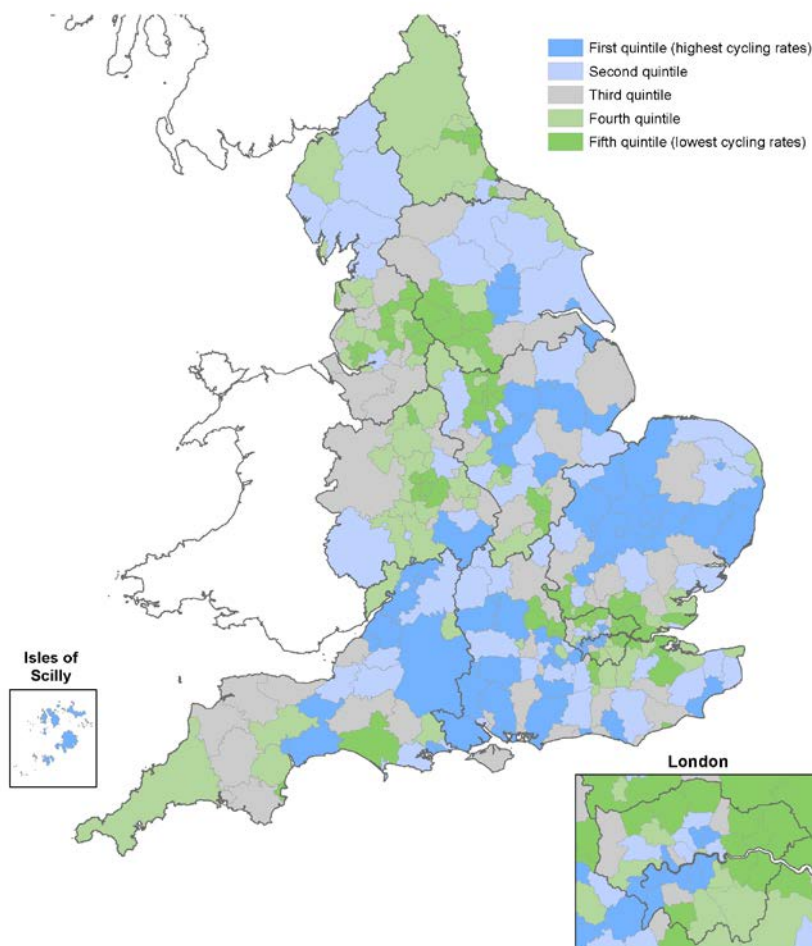
Rates for more frequent cycling show a similar variation across areas.

The proportion of adults cycling at least five times per week varies from around 26% in Cambridge and 17% in Oxford to less than one per cent in some areas.

The map opposite shows which authorities have relatively higher levels of cycling once per month (for all purposes), and which have lower levels.

There are generally relatively higher levels of cycling in the East, East Midlands, and parts of the South East; and relatively lower levels in the North East.

**Map 1: Relative levels of cycling once per month (for all purposes), by Local Authority, 2012/13**



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## Changes in cycling prevalence over time

In England as a whole, the prevalence of cycling at least once per month in the year ending mid-Oct 2013 has reduced slightly, compared to the same period for the previous year, from 15.3% to

14.7%. Although the change is small, the size of our national sample means that we can be confident that this decrease exists in the whole of the English population. Although our sample showed a decline in all regions, the only two regions where we can be confident that this decline is reflected in the whole of the region's population were the East of England, and the South East.

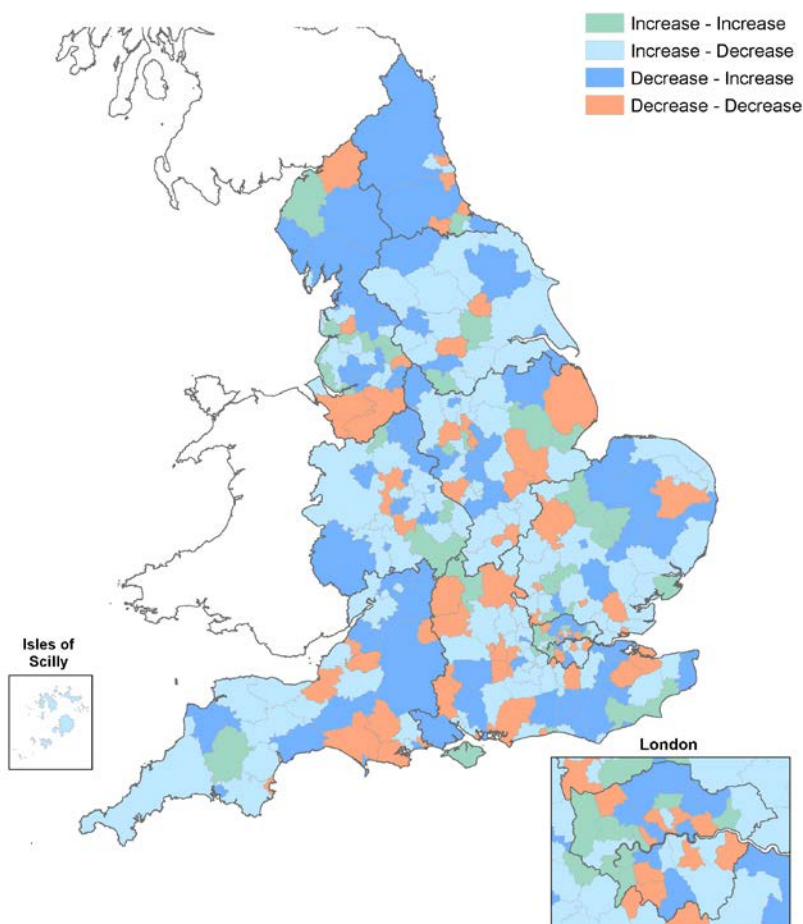
Levels of cycling remain high in London, and higher in inner London than in outer London. However, there has been no statistically significant<sup>1</sup> change across the whole of London during the last year. It is important to note that the Active People Survey records cycling in the authority where people reside, not where they cycle. Many cyclists commute into central London from all around, so considerably more cyclists are visible in central London than in outer areas, whilst those who can afford to live in central London may not choose to cycle.

For the majority of local authorities, there has been no significant change over the last year. There have been significant increases in levels of cycling in East Sussex, 2 London Boroughs, and 10 other authorities. There have been significant declines in 6 counties, 4 London Boroughs, and 29 other authorities. It is also important to note that, in many authorities, the levels of cycling are low, so that it is difficult, even in a survey of this size, to tell whether changes reflect the whole population or just differences in samples.

There appear to have been extremely large declines in cycling in the Isles of Scilly and the City of London, but these two authorities both have small samples, so the scale of the results is uncertain.

Since now we have consistent cycling data for three consecutive years, we can begin to examine whether there is any indication of a trend in cycling. For about two thirds of authorities, the pattern over 3 years has been mixed – increasing in one interval, and declining in the other (see map above). Over the three years, 13% of authorities increased cycling levels consistently, whilst a fifth of authorities (20%) declined consistently. There is some indication that those authorities with higher levels of cycling also saw higher increases in cycling in the last year.

**Map 2: Changes in levels of cycling once per month (for all purposes), by Local Authority, 2010/11 to 2011/12; and 2011/12 to 2012/13**



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<sup>1</sup> "Significant", in this release, means that 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 from a sample (see Strengths and Weaknesses of the Data).

## Comparison of age, gender and ethnicity

For cycling, there were distinct differences by gender: on average, at all ages, lower proportions of women tend to cycle than of men. For walking, however, proportions of men and women tend to be quite similar, and a slightly higher proportion of women walk, at all ages below 55. For walkers, there are also far smaller differences between age groups than for cycling.

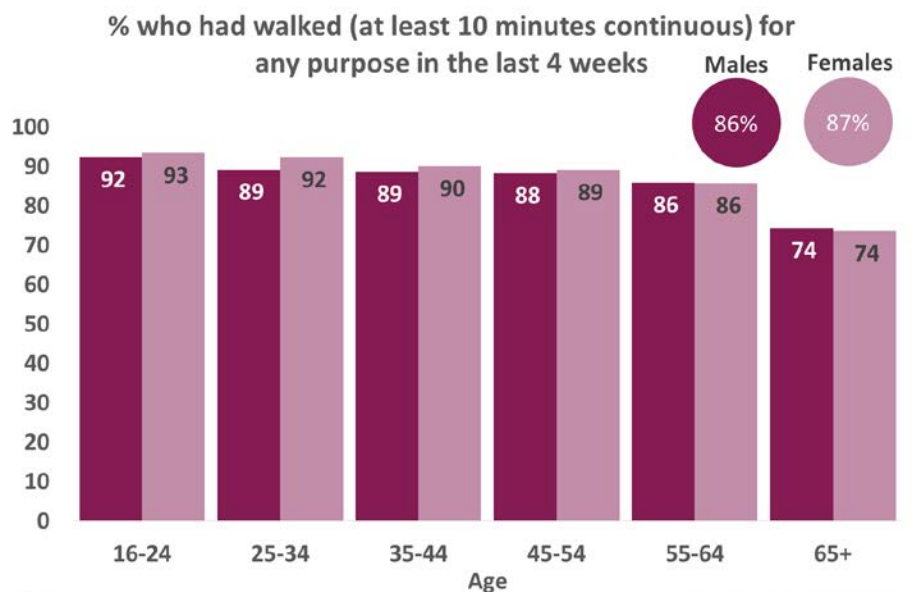
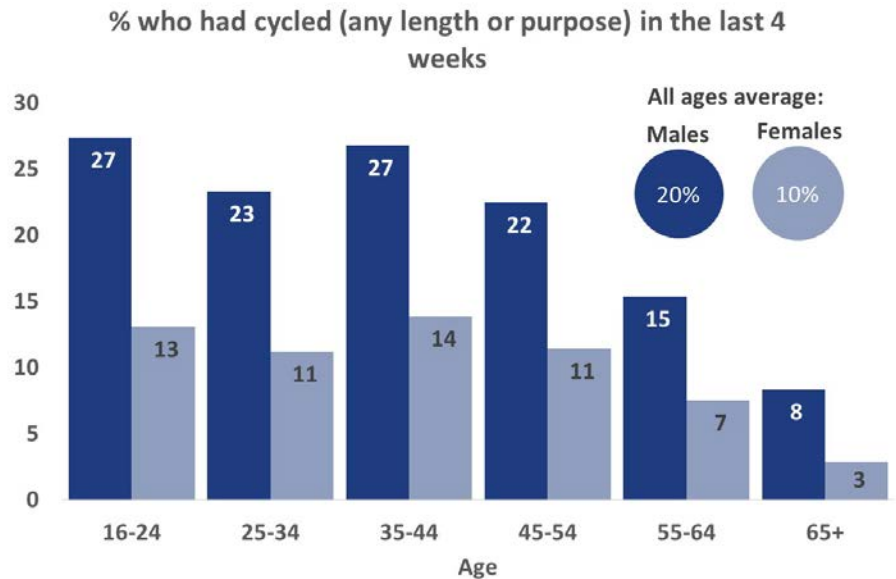
The charts below show how levels of cycling and walking vary for men and women of different age groups.

For both genders, there is a high point for adult cyclists when they are aged 16-24, then a decline in levels between 25-34, before a further rise; levels then decline with age. (For men, the high point

for cycling among 16-24 year olds is a maximum; for women, the maximum is for 35-44 year olds)

Among occasional cyclists (those who cycle only one day per month) women make up about half, but, as frequencies of cycling increase, the proportion of women rapidly becomes a distinct minority.

Among ethnic minorities, Asian men and women in particular make up a smaller proportion of cyclists than they do of the wider population of England.



## Recreational and utility cycling

The regions with the highest proportions of recreational cycling are the South East and South West. The regions with the lowest proportions of recreational cycling are the West Midlands, London and the North East.

At the more detailed level of local authorities, those with the highest proportions of people who cycle for utility purposes closely match those with the highest levels of cycling for all purposes, and include dense urban areas such as Hackney (see below). By contrast, with the exception of Richmond upon Thames (which, along with Isles of Scilly is in both groups), those local authorities with highest proportions of recreational cycling tend to be smaller or rural.

Top 8 authorities: Cycling for utility at least once per month		Top 8 authorities: Cycling recreationally at least once per month	
LA	%	LA	%
Cambridge	53	Winchester	20
Oxford	37	Richmond upon Thames	19
Isles of Scilly <sup>2</sup>	25	Rushcliffe	18
Richmond upon Thames	22	New Forest	17
York	19	Lewes	17
Norwich	19	Isles of Scilly	17
Hackney	17	Eden	16
Boston	16	South Cambridgeshire	16

## Recent Census commuting reports

According to the 2011 Census, around 2% of adults aged 16 to 74 in England travelled to work by bicycle, broadly consistent with the APS which shows that just under 2% of adults cycled at least five times per week for utility purposes. (see table CW0901). For the purposes of this table, adults who said they only ever cycle for recreational purposes are excluded.

In March 2014, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) issued two reports, analysing changes in commuting between the 2001 and 2011 censuses: one on [Cycling to Work](#), the other on [Distance Travelled to Work](#). Although the year of the census (2011) is earlier than the year when data for this release was collected (October 2012 to October 2013), and covers only travel to work (not all travel purposes), the report gives a valuable picture of changing trends over a longer period of time, and in more detail, than the Active People Survey can. Users of the data should also note that the census reports also cover both England and Wales, whereas the APS covers only England.

The average in England & Wales in 2011 was 2.8% who cycled to work, and 9.8% who walked to work. There are, however, clearly local features which will affect the level of walking or cycling in a given place, and which vary hugely across the country – notably how hilly an area is.

Gender is one of the strongest influencing factors on active travel. On the whole, a higher proportion of men cycled, and a higher proportion of women walked. So, in 2011, 3.9% of men commuted by bicycle, compared with 1.6% of women. The higher figure for male cyclists holds in most LAs, but the proportion varies considerably: in East Cambridgeshire, a higher proportion of women cycled to work than men; in Barrow-in-Furness the male cycle to work rate was 10 times that of women.

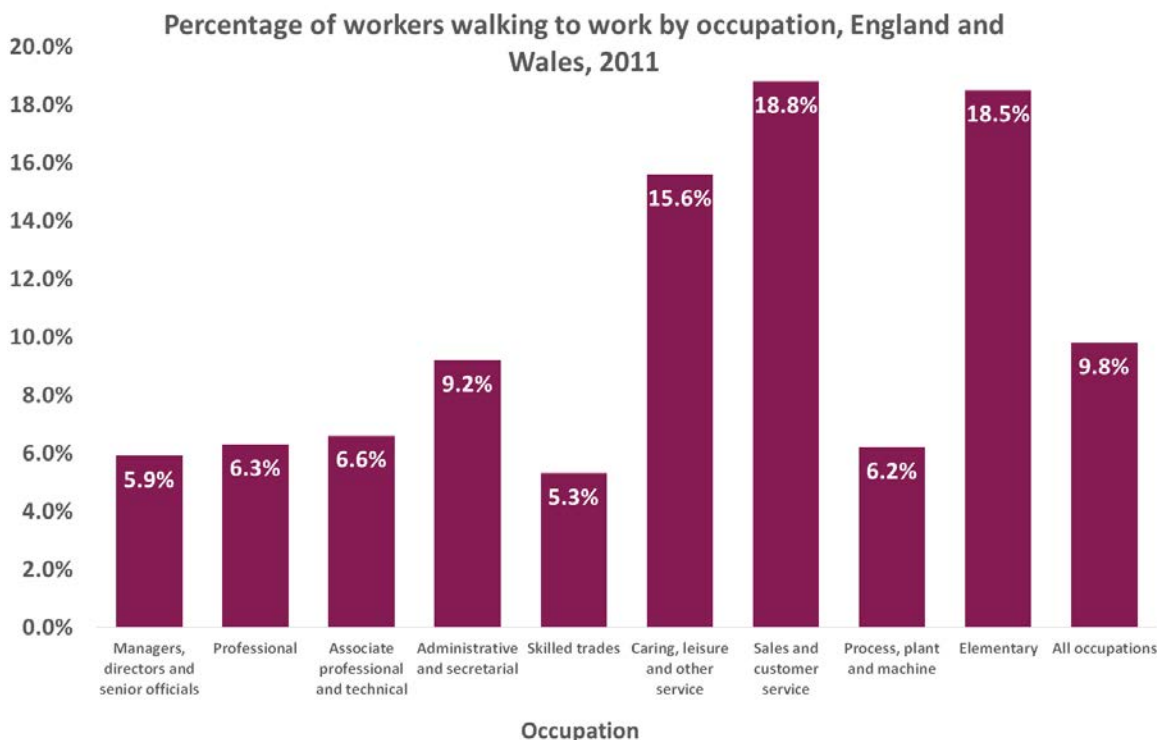
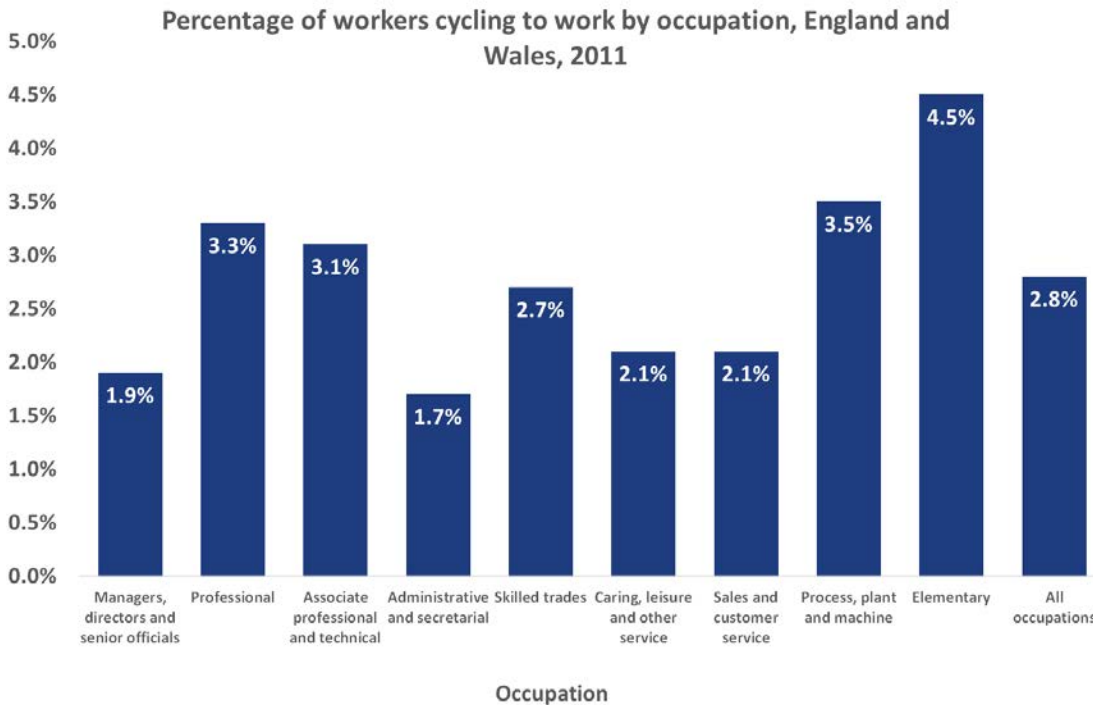
The ratio of men to women also varies depending on the overall level of cycling: *ie* it would appear that getting more men to cycle to work encourages gender equality on this measure. When we include walking with cycling, in nearly all LAs it is women who commute actively more than men.

The ONS reports show that there are differences by industry and occupation in walking or cycling, and it may be that gender influences these too. Manufacturing had the highest level for cycling and a high percentage for walking to work, whilst construction had the lowest for both.

There is greater variation by industry for walking to work than for cycling: The hospitality industry (food services and accommodation) had the highest rate, at 19.9%.

<sup>2</sup> The sample size for Isles of Scilly is small, so precise measures are not robust for the whole population, but cycling levels remain high, despite steep declines within the sample over the last two years.

When comparing two occupations, one might be lower for cycling, but higher for walking. For example, administrative and secretarial occupations had the minimum for cycling (1.7%) but a fairly high walking percentage (9.2%). Within this occupation, however, males were 3.5 times more likely to cycle to work than their female counterparts in 2011. Skilled trades, by contrast, had the lowest rate for walking to work but a near average rate for cycling, and in this occupation, the male / female ratio for cycling to work was the nearest to equal. The occupation most likely to walk to work was in sales and customer services (18.8%).



The ONS report highlights regional differences in mode share. Between the two censuses, in London, both driving and being a car passenger to work fell considerably, whilst rail, bus and cycling to work all showed notable increases. The North East for example changed in very different ways from London: the North East showed an increase in those driving to work, and reductions in car passengers or buses to work; whilst walking and cycling rates remained very similar from 2001 to 2011.

Given that people are more likely to walk or cycle to work over short distances, the distance people commute will affect their mode choices.

Industries with shorter commutes included teaching which are evenly distributed around the country (allowing workers to choose where they live); where jobs are located in specific locations, such as mining, commuting distances tend to be longer, as it may not be possible or desirable to live nearby.

In London, for all occupational groups, a much smaller proportion of workers had a long commute (20 km or more), than the rest of England and Wales. This would help account for the lower levels of cycling outside London.

In particular, managers, directors and senior officials outside London (28.1%) were most likely to have long commutes in 2011, whilst those employed in caring, leisure and other service occupations were least likely to have a long commute (9.5%).

### Walking prevalence in 2012/13

Previous APS surveys asked about periods of walking for at least 5 minutes, or for at least 30 minutes. These questions are no longer asked. Following changes in guidance from Chief Medical Officers, the survey now asks about periods of walking for at least 10 minutes. It is important to note *that the current tables on walking are not directly comparable with previously published tables.*

Given that 15% of people over 16 years old have a mobility difficulty that limits their walking, most people who *can* walk make at least one 10 minute walk per month.

On all four measures of walking (once per month, once per week, three and five times per week), London is the region with the highest levels of walking.

On the whole, authorities' performance on one measure broadly mirrors their relative performance on the other measures. Using walking once per month as the measure, of the top ten authorities, six are in inner London and one in outer London. If we use walking 5 times per week as the measure, five of the inner London authorities are in both lists.

But there are notable exceptions: if we try to compare regions or authorities, different measures of walking can provide different relative rankings. If we rank 359 authorities and counties on their performance on walking once per month, there are ten LAs whose ranking improves by more than 200 if we use walking 5 times per week, and ten whose ranking declines by more than 200 on the more frequent measure. In the most extreme cases, the ranking changes by almost 300.

### Recreational and utility walking

At a national level, if we include infrequent walking (between once and three times per month), there is little difference between proportions of people who walk for recreation and proportions walking for utility purposes. However, at more frequent levels, higher proportions walk for utility (which would include walking to and from work) than for recreation.

Across authorities as a whole, those with a greater proportion of utility walking at least once per month, tend to have a lower proportion of recreational walking, and vice versa.



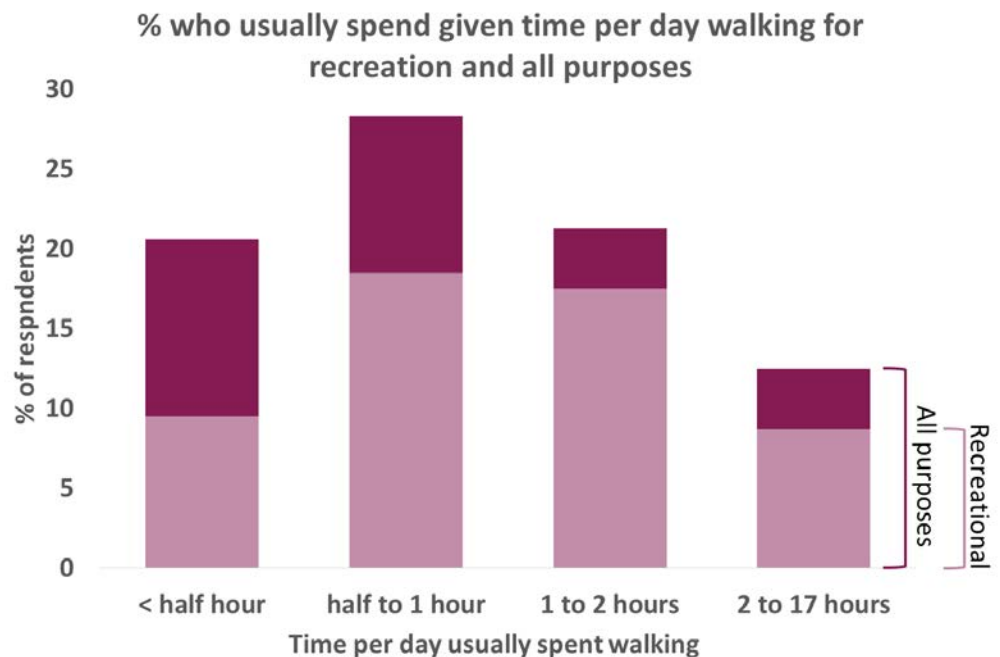
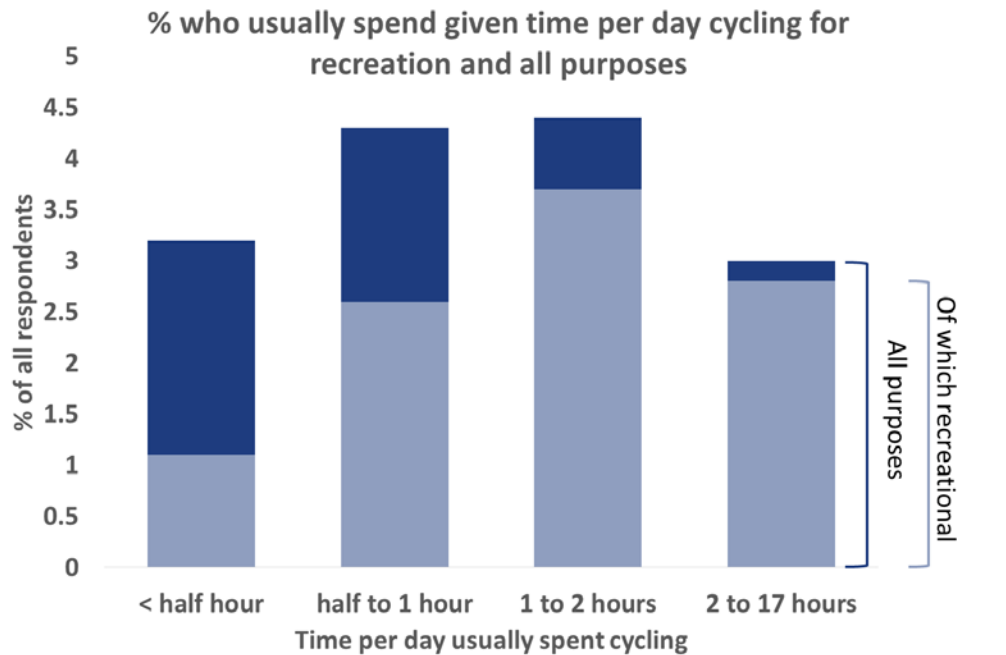
## Time usually spent walking and cycling

We do not have a measure for the *length of time* people usually spend walking or cycling for utility purposes. The graphs below show *proportions of the whole population* who usually<sup>3</sup> walk or cycle for different time periods, for all purposes or for recreational purposes.

A considerably higher proportion of the population walk for recreational purposes than cycle recreationally.

Of those walking or cycling for periods longer than an hour, a considerable majority do so for recreational purposes. Among cyclists, 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, whereas 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.

Although the connection is fairly loose, broadly speaking those authorities which have a higher level of walking tend to have a higher level of cycling, and vice versa. The connection is more marked using the occasional measure (once per month), rather than a frequent measure (five times per week).



## 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

<sup>3</sup> Time *usually* spent is not the same as average time.

Transport Fund<sup>4</sup>), 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 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 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 value<sup>5</sup>.

The tables also highlight whether the change in cycling activity since 2011/12 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-only<sup>6</sup> 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.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/local-sustainable-transport-fund](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/local-sustainable-transport-fund)

<sup>5</sup> The confidence intervals used are Wilson Score intervals. For more details, see the accompanying Notes and Definitions document.

<sup>6</sup> 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)

## 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](http://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](http://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 APS7 can be found on Sport England’s website: [www.sportengland.org/research/active\\_people\\_survey.aspx](http://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](mailto:subnational.statistics@dft.gsi.gov.uk).

## Next update

The next release in this series is due to be published in Spring 2015 and will contain statistics on walking and cycling from APS8, which covers the period October 2013 to October 2014.