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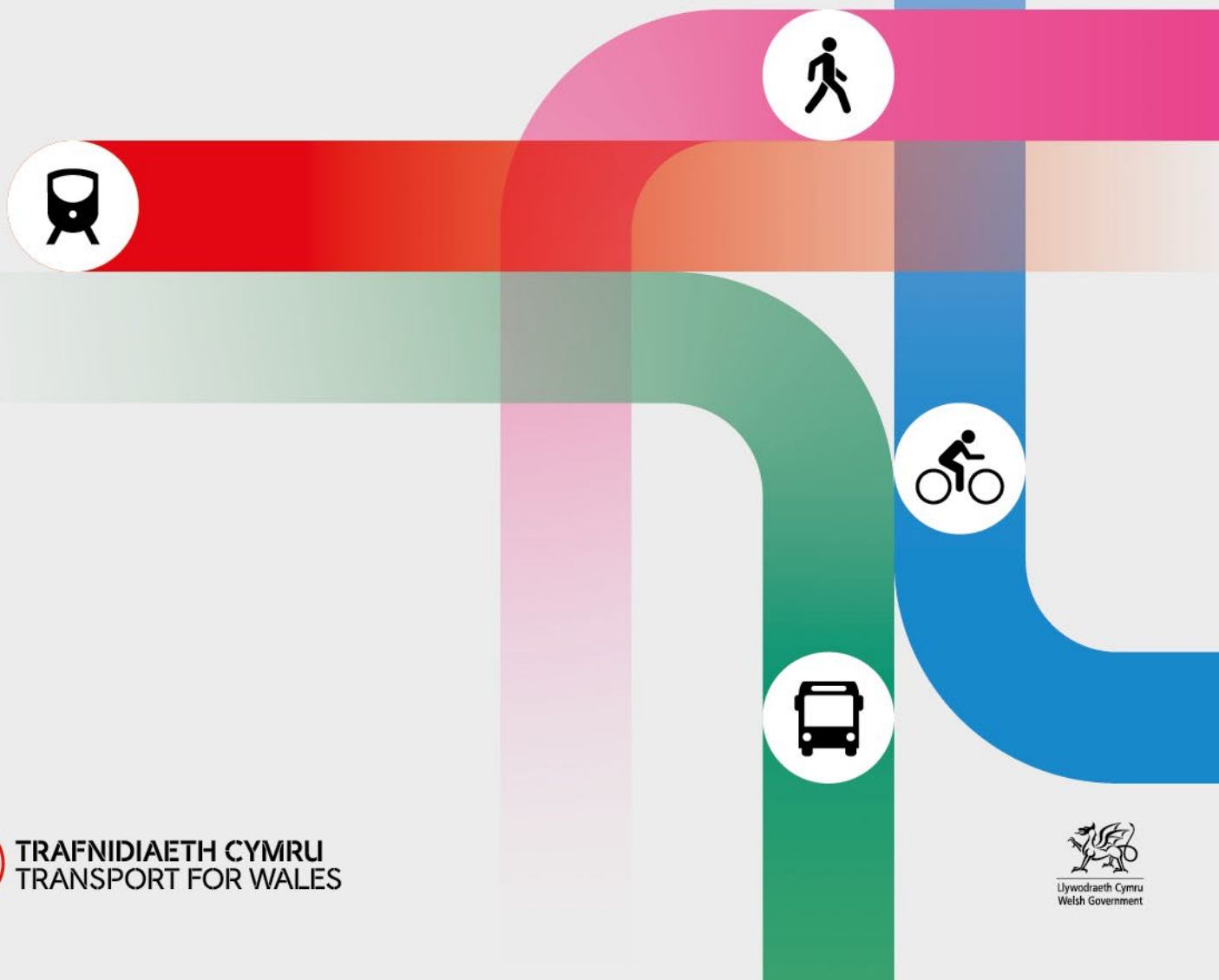
Wales National Travel Survey definitions



TRAFNIDIAETH CYMRU
TRANSPORT FOR WALES

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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List of definitions

Survey information

Wales National Travel Survey (WNTS)

The Wales National Travel Survey (WNTS) is a national survey that collects data on travel attitudes and behaviours from a large random sample of people living in Wales.

Travel

By travel we mean the journeys made for your own purposes, such as going shopping, going to work or returning home. Where a person's work involves transport or delivery goods or people (such as working as a bus driver or delivery driver) these journeys are not considered travel. Journeys for pleasure, exercise or walking the dog are not considered travel.

Transport modes

Walking and wheeling

Walking includes all travel on foot, including running and walking with use of a mobility aid.

Wheeling includes using mobility scooters, non-motorised and motorised wheelchairs, roller-skates, skateboards or non-motorised scooters.

We do not include walking or wheeling for pleasure, exercise, or walking the dog.

Cycling

Cycling as a means of transport is when you cycle to get to a particular destination, such as work, the shops, or to visit friends. Cycle journeys for pleasure or exercise are not considered travel.

Cycle

A cycle is any pedal cycle permitted on the public road. Cycles include electric or e-bikes and trikes (where pedalling is assisted by an electric motor) and non-standard cycles such as adapted cycles (cycles or tricycles specially adapted for use by disabled people), cargo cycles and recumbents.

Bus

Bus travel includes all bus services into, out of and within Wales run by any operator, including TrawsCymru.

Bus services typically operate on fixed routes or schedules and charge a fixed fare. Some services respond to passenger demand, rather than run on a fixed timetable. For example, Transport for Wales's fflecsi services.

Long distance coaches or tours are not included under the definition of bus travel.

Taxi

Taxis can be pre-booked, including over the telephone or via an app. Taxis can also pick up passengers from taxi ranks and be hailed from the street.

Car

Car travel as a means of transport is when you drive or are driven to a particular destination such as work, the shops, or to visit friends. The questions in this section do not cover driving just for pleasure.

For the purposes of this survey, the term car covers all private motor vehicles, including cars, 4x4 vehicles, light vans, minibuses, campervans, motorcycles and mopeds.

It does not include passenger travel by taxi, bus or community transport, or journeys made by professional drivers or crew in the course of their work, such as buses, taxis, ambulances, cranes, refuse vehicles, driving instructors and delivery drivers.

Train

Train travel includes all passenger rail services into, out of and within Wales, including services operated by Transport for Wales, Avanti West Coast, CrossCountry Trains and Great Western Railway.

Community transport

Community transport services are local services (generally run by charities or community groups) which provide transport for people who would otherwise be disadvantaged due to their age, health or where they live. Examples include community bus routes or community vehicle hire schemes. It does not include public transport that is available to anyone to use.

Plane

Air travel as a means of transport is when you fly to a particular destination, such as a holiday, visiting friends and family or for work. It does not include flying just for pleasure. It does not include any private or military flights.

For plane journeys, we are only interested in the respondent's experience at the airport.

The airports included in the survey are:

- Cardiff
- Bristol
- Liverpool John Lennon
- Manchester
- Birmingham
- London (such as Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted or Luton)
- Other (please describe)

Ferry or boat

This is when you travel by boat to a particular destination, such as a holiday, visiting friends and family or for work. It does not include sailing just for pleasure.

For ferry or boat journeys, we are only interested in the respondent's experience at the port.

The ports included in the survey are:

- Holyhead
- Fishguard
- Pembroke
- Dover
- Liverpool
- Other (please describe)

Active travel

Active travel refers to utility or purposeful journeys made by walking, wheeling and cycling, as opposed to recreational walking, wheeling and cycling.

Public transport

Public transport refers to transport services available for public use, typically on fixed routes or schedules that charge a fixed fare. In Wales, public transport includes bus and rail services.

Sustainable transport

Types of transport that contribute to decarbonisation including walking, cycling and public transport.

Multimodal journeys

Multimodal journeys are journeys that involve two or more modes of transport, as reported by the respondent. There is no minimum distance requirement.

Travel attitudes and behaviours

Travel diary

A travel diary is a log of all journeys undertaken in a set time period. For the WNTS, the travel diary collects information for the previous two days. This includes journey destinations, journey purposes, transport modes used and the departure time. Where relevant, the travel diary will also record:

- the number of people a respondent travelled with
- whether they were the driver or a passenger in a car
- the vehicle fuel type, rail station or bus stops used
- the cost of their public transport journey.

Travel day

A travel day begins and ends at 05:00, covering 24 hours.

Journey

A journey, or trip, is a one-way course of travel to a destination for a particular purpose. Outward and return journeys are treated as two separate journeys. Activity for pleasure, or for no specific purpose or location (for example, "walking the dog" or "running for exercise") are not included.

We are only interested in journeys that started and/or finished in Wales. Journeys recorded entirely outside of Wales are removed.

Distance travelled

This is the distance in kilometres between the origin and destination for a journey. Distance is calculated by combining the origin and destination geo-locations, main mode of transport and the start time of the journey and using the TravelTime Routes API.

For walking, wheeling and cycling journeys, routes using roads and paths where walking or cycling are permitted are included. For all other non-rail modes, only roads are used.

The distance most direct, possible route to and from a rail station is used alongside the shortest route between the two stations the respondent visited.

As we do not record the precise routes used by bus or rail journeys, the estimated distance travelled for these modes may differ from the actual distance.

Mean journey distance

The mean journey distance is a measure of the distance travelled per journey. It is the total distance travelled divided equally across all journeys.

Median journey distance

The median journey distance is the middle-value of journey lengths. Half of all journeys are shorter than the median, and half are longer.

Cost per kilometre travelled

For bus and for rail journeys, an estimated cost per kilometre travelled has been produced. This represents the average spend for each kilometre travelled by bus or rail. This excludes respondents who did not pay for travel by bus or by rail (e.g., if they had a discounted or concessionary travel card that allowed them to travel for free).

Where respondents had purchased a season ticket (e.g., a week rail ticket) that allowed free travel, the cost per day for the season ticket has been included.

Journey purpose

The purpose of the trip is the reason for the journey. This is usually the activity at the destination. The journey purposes are:

- Exercise or play sports
- Holiday or day trip
- Medical consultation or treatment
- Personal appointment (e.g., bank, hairdresser or launderette)
- Personal journey during work (including between work locations)
- Shopping, even if there was no intention to buy anything
- Education (e.g., go to school, college)
- Social or entertainment (e.g., meet friends or family, voluntary work)
- Informal caring responsibilities (e.g., care for an elderly relative)
- Accompany someone (e.g., drop someone off or pick someone up)
- Return home
- Commute
- Other

Commuting journeys are a derived variable. This variable combines the journey purposes "go to work" and a subsample of "return home" journeys, where the respondent has previously made a journey to their place of work.

Other "return home" journeys have been recoded as "holiday or day trip" journeys where the respondent is returning from a holiday or day trip, or where their first journey is from a non-home location to home.

Where the respondent has returned home, the purpose has been recoded to the purpose of the previous journey. The respondent travelled as a result of that purpose. For instance, the journeys to and from the shops are both considered to have the purpose "shopping, even if there was no intention to buy" as that was the purpose for travel.

Journeys purely for leisure, where the act of travelling is the leisure or pleasure activity (for instance, going for a run or playing sport) are excluded. This is aligned with the Active Travel Act Guidance (2026) definition of utility journeys. However, journeys to a destination where leisure or pleasure activity is undertaken (e.g., travelling to a park to play sport) are included as "Exercise or play sports". Similarly, journeys for pleasure that involve meeting a friend or family member would be included as a journey for "Social or entertainment (e.g., meet friends or family, voluntary work)".

Main transport mode

The mode of transport that was used to travel the longest distance of any individual journey. The transport modes included are:

- Bus
- Cycle
- Car or other motor vehicles (such as, light van, campervan, motorcycle, moped)
- Taxi
- Train
- Walking or wheeling
- Other

Mode share

The share of journeys per person per year by different main modes.

Additional transport modes

Transport modes used in addition to the main mode. Journeys using additional modes are multimodal journeys.

Transport users

Respondents are considered users of a given mode of transport if they indicate they have used the mode "most days", "several times a week", "once a week", "once or twice a month" and "once every couple of months".

We define frequent users as those who reported that they travelled by the mode at least once per week ("most days", "several times a week" or "once a week").

Infrequent users were those who indicated that they used the mode "once or twice a month", "once every couple of months" or "once or twice during the year".

Non-users were those who indicated that they travelled "not at all" by the given mode.

Feeling of welcomeness

Feeling safe from harassment or personal harm, and a sense of comfort and belonging in your surroundings.

Concessionary travel cards or passes

Concessionary travel cards or passes allow users to travel for free or at a discounted rate. Examples include a 60 and Over Travel Card, or a Disabled Person's Concessionary Travel Card.

Discounted travel cards or passes

Discounted travel cards or passes provide discounts for travel. Examples include a 26-30 Railcard.

Independent travel

Independent travel means travelling without the assistance of any staff or passengers with whom a respondent did not start their journey. This may be assistance with luggage or finding space for a wheelchair or pushchair.

This does not include situations where a respondent may need to ask for directions, check departure times or rail platform or bus stop numbers.

Users and non-users of different transport modes

Respondents are asked how frequently they use various modes of transport. This affects the questions that respondents are asked. Respondents are considered either users or non-users depending on their frequency of use.

Users

Respondents are considered users if they have used the transport mode at least once or twice during the year. This applies for:

- Walking and wheeling
- Cycling
- Bus
- Train
- Taxi

A respondent is considered a car user if they travel by car, either as a driver or a passenger, at least once every couple of months.

Non-users

Respondents are considered non-users of the various transport modes if they indicated they did not travel by the mode at all in the last 12 months.

For journeys by car, either as a driver or passenger, a respondent is a non-user if they travel by car once or twice during the year, or not at all.

Question routing

As part of the WNTS, we asked respondents about their attitudes and opinions on various transport modes depending on how frequently they used these modes.

Overall journey satisfaction

Questions on satisfaction with overall journey by a particular mode were only asked of respondents who reported travelling at least once every couple of months for walking and wheeling, cycling, bus, train, taxi and car. All respondents who had used community transport in Wales, and all respondents who had used a ferry or boat and plane into or out of Wales in the last year were asked these questions.

Satisfaction with safety

Questions on satisfaction with safety were only asked of respondents who reported travelling at least once every couple of months for walking and wheeling, cycling, bus, train, taxi and car, all respondents who had used community transport in the last year and respondents who had used ferry or boat and plane into or out of Wales in the last year.

Feeling of welcomeness

How welcome or unwelcome respondents felt was only asked of those who reported travelling at least once every couple of months for walking and wheeling, cycling, bus, train, and taxi, all respondents who had used community transport in the last year and respondents who had used ferry or boat and plane into or out of Wales in the last year. Respondents who used car as a means of travel were not asked this question.

Demography and geography

Remote workers

Respondents are considered remote workers if they are either "in any paid employment or self-employment (or away temporarily, on leave or off sick)" or "on maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave" and have indicated that they usually "Work remotely, for example, from home or close to home from a local coffee shop or library".

Employment status

Three, high-level groups for employment status have been created: employed, unemployed and "not in labour force".

Employed

This covers respondents who indicate that in the previous seven days they have been either "In any paid employment or self-employment (or away temporarily, on leave or off sick)" or "On maternity, paternity or shared parental leave".

Unemployed

This covers respondents who indicate in the previous seven days they have been "Unemployed and looking for work".

Not in labour force

This covers respondents who indicate in the previous seven days they have been "Retired (whether receiving a pension or not)", "Full-time student, including on holiday or half-term", "Unable to work because of long-term sickness or impairment", "Looking after home or family", or "Other".

Disabled status

A respondent is classed as disabled (Equality Act (2010)) if they answer "yes" to the question "Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?" and either "yes, a little" or "yes, a lot" to the question "Does your condition or illness reduce your ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?".

Welsh language ability

A respondent is considered to have the ability to use the Welsh language if they can do any of the following:

- Understand spoken Welsh
- Speak Welsh
- Read Welsh
- Write Welsh.

These data are not directly comparable to the National Survey for Wales, which asked respondents yes or no questions about their ability to understand, read and Write Welsh. Respondents were also asked about their ability to speak Welsh, with an additional answer "no, but have some Welsh speaking ability".

Additionally, these data are not directly comparable to the UK Census, which only allowed for a binary "yes" or "no" answer.

Rural and urban classification

The Rural Urban Classification is an official statistical classification for England and Wales, used to distinguish rural and urban areas. It is based on settlements and is available for some statistics and administrative geographies (including Census geographies and local authorities). The classification is used in combination with other datasets to produce analysis that distinguishes the characteristics of rural and urban areas.

All output areas are also distinguished by whether they are nearer to or further from a major town or city. Thus, the classification consists of:

Rural

- Smaller Rural: Further from a major town or city
- Smaller Rural: Nearer to a major town or city
- Larger Rural: Further from a major town or city
- Large Rural: Nearer to a major town or city

Urban

- Urban: Further from a major town or city
- Urban: Nearer to a major town or city

Urban areas

Urban areas are determined as settlements, towns or cities with populations of 10,000 or more, based on the 2021 Census.

Rural areas

Rural areas are everywhere else and will include rural towns, villages, hamlets, isolated dwellings and open countryside.

Analysis based on the rural-urban classification comes from where the respondent lives, rather than where the journeys took place. A respondent from a rural area may make journeys in an urban area but these would be considered rural journeys.

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)

WIMD is the Welsh Government's official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales. WIMD is an index of eight separate types of deprivation. These are referred to as deprivation domains.

WIMD Quintiles

Areas in Wales have been grouped into five quintiles based on their relative ranking. Quintiles split the dataset into five equal sizes. The first quintile is the lowest 20% of values, the second is the next 20% and so on.

Access to services domain

The access to services domain captures a household's inability to access services necessary for day-to-day living, and includes material deprivation (e.g., being unable to get food) and social aspects of deprivation (e.g., not being able to attend after school activities). Areas of Wales have been grouped into five quintiles based on their relative access to services deprivation.

Income domain

The income domain captures the proportion of people experiencing deprivation related to low income.

Areas of Wales have been grouped into five quintiles based on their relative income deprivation.

Welsh Regions

Four Welsh regions have been used in the WNTS for sampling and analysis. These are align with the four Corporate Joint Committees.

- Mid Wales: Ceredigion, Powys
- North Wales: Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey, Wrexham
- South East Wales: Bridgend, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen, Vale of Glamorgan
- South West Wales: Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Pembrokeshire

Regional-level analysis comes from where the respondent lives, rather than where the journeys took place. A respondent from North Wales may complete journeys in Mid Wales but these would be considered North Wales journeys.

Technical information

Computer-assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI)

This is where an individual completes the survey online.

Computer-assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI)

This is where an individual completes the survey with the assistance of a person, either in a face-to-face or telephone environment. The fieldwork interviewer records the answers on behalf of the respondent.

Computer-assisted self-interviewing (CASI)

This is where an individual completes the survey themselves in a face-to-face environment.

Kish Grid

A method for randomly selection households, dwelling units (self-contained living accommodation) and individuals to take part in the survey.

Fieldwork period

A respondent may complete the survey anytime in the eight weeks following the dispatch of the initial invite letter to their household. This eight-week period is defined as the fieldwork period.

After the first week of fieldwork, the first reminder letter is sent to households that have not yet completed the WNTS. This letter offers the opportunity of an opt-in telephone completion method.

After another week of fieldwork, a second reminder letter is sent to households that have not yet completed the WNTS or booked a telephone interview. In this letter, households are notified that fieldwork interviewers will be knocking on doors and encouraging participation, starting the following week.

Face-to-face fieldwork period

The face-to-face fieldwork period begins approximately three weeks after the dispatch of the initial invite letters. This lasts for five weeks and is where fieldwork interviewers may knock on people's door to try to obtain a survey interview.

Push-to-web completes

A push-to-web complete is one where a respondent completes the survey online during the face-to-face fieldwork period. This may be where the presence of the fieldwork interviewer has pushed the respondent to complete the WNTS online.

Postcode Address File

The Royal Mail's Postcode Address File (PAF) is a list of all UK addresses, excluding institutional accommodation and communal establishments, such as residential care homes.

The PAF has been used as the sample frame, filtered for Welsh addresses only.