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WALES NATIONAL TRAVEL SURVEY

Travel behaviours: headline results, 2025/26

This report outlines a selection of results from the first twelve months of data collection for the Wales National Travel Survey 2025/26 (WNTS). These results are based on over 6,100 responses and 18,000 journeys recorded from people across Wales. These data are official statistics in development.

This report focuses on travel behaviours. By this, we mean the actual travel patterns and choices that respondents made. This information was recorded in a two-day retrospective travel diary, where we asked respondents how, why, when and where they travelled.

The WNTS is a new survey, and the first national travel survey for Wales since 2012. Care should be taken when considering the results alongside other data sources. Differences could be due to different definitions used, differing survey methodologies or genuine differences in travel behaviour.

This publication is based on the first survey year, with data collected from sample batches from March 2025 to February 2026. Quality information can be found in our Quality Report.

Several transport-specific terms have been used in this report. We have produced a definitions document to aid understanding.

Main findings

- 74.3% of journeys were made by car, either as the driver (59.6%) or a passenger (14.7%).
- 17.5% of journeys were by walking and wheeling and 1.4% were by cycling (18.9% by active travel modes).
- 3.7% of journeys were by bus and 1.9% by rail (5.6% by public transport).
- 10.5% of all journeys were multimodal, where two or more modes of travel were used.
- Journeys combining bus or rail (in any order) were used in 1.7% of multimodal journeys.
- Shopping (23.1%), commutes to or from work (19.3%), and social or entertainment (17.7%) were the most common reasons for travelling.
- On average, individuals travelled 9,670.6 per year, or 15.5km per journey.

A note on the data

The results presented in this report and in the supporting tables are estimates based on the behaviour and opinions of respondents. The data have been weighted to be representative of the Welsh adult population.

These estimates are subject to a degree of uncertainty. This level of uncertainty is greater for smaller groups and less common travel modes. For instance, estimates for South East Wales are based on 2,825 respondents, compared to 665 from Mid Wales, meaning estimates for Mid Wales are subject to greater uncertainty. However, the survey still provides reasonable estimates for these smaller population groups.

More information on the accuracy and precision of these estimates can be found in the Accuracy section of the Quality Report.

Outputs in this report have been produced excluding respondents who selected "Don't know" or "Prefer not to say" to their main mode of travel and journey purpose.

Main mode share

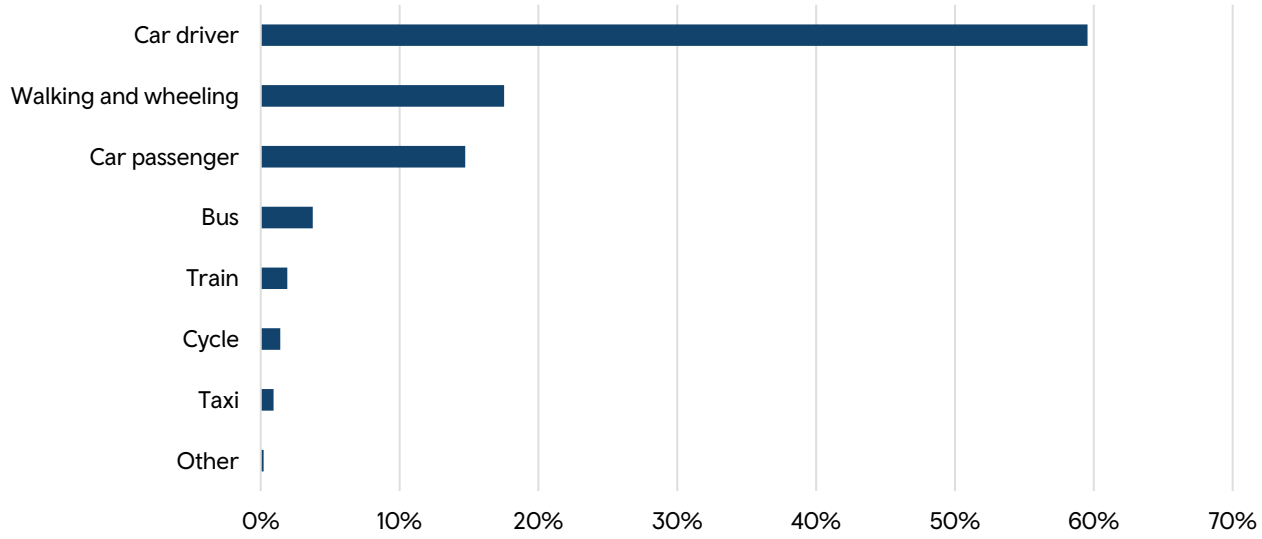
The main mode of travel refers to the mode that was used for the longest distance in a journey. Mode share is the percentage of journeys per person per year completed by a given main mode.

In 2025/26, we estimate that respondents made 624.2 journeys per person per year.

- Car was the most common main mode of travel, used in 74.3% of all journeys. 59.6% of all journeys were as the car driver, with a further 14.7% as a passenger.
- In 17.5% of journeys the main mode of travel was walking and wheeling, the second-most used mode of travel.
- 1.4% of journeys were made by cycling, meaning 18.9% of journeys were made by an active travel mode (walking, wheeling or cycling).
- 5.6% of journeys used public transport as the main mode of travel. Bus journeys (3.7%) were more common than journeys by rail (1.9%).
- Sustainable modes of travel, defined as journeys using either public transport or active travel modes, were the main mode of travel in 24.6% of all journeys.
- Taxis (0.9%) and other modes (less than 0.5%) were used less frequently.

Main mode share, nationally

Figure 1: Share of journeys per person per year by main mode of travel, Wales, 2025/26



Description of Figure 1: A horizontal bar chart showing the share of journeys per person per year by different travel modes. 59.6% of journeys per person per year were made as the car driver. 17.5% of journeys were made by walking and wheeling, with other modes used less often.

Source: Wales National Travel Survey, main mode share

Main mode share by Welsh regions

Regional data are based on the region where the individual lives, rather than where the journey took place.

- Residents of Mid Wales had the lowest share of journeys by public transport (2.8%) across the four regions.
- People living in North Wales made the fewest journeys by walking and wheeling (14.3%) and recorded the highest share of journeys by car (79.1%).
- South East Wales residents had the highest share of journeys by both active travel (20.6%) and public transport (6.7%). Their share of journeys made by sustainable modes of travel was 27.3%, higher than the national average of 24.6%.
- Residents in South West Wales had the lowest rail mode share among the four regions, with only 1.0% of journeys completed by rail.

Journey distances

For non-rail travel modes, the journey distance is the length of the most direct, possible route between the origin and destination. It is not measured as a straight line from the origin to destination.

For journeys by rail, the shortest distance between two railway stations is used. The total distance also includes the most direct possible route from the origin to the origin railway station, and from the destination railway station to the final journey destination. More information on how we have calculated distances can be found in our definitions.

- On average, people in Wales travelled 9,670.6km per person per year. This corresponds to a mean journey length of 15.5km.
- The median distance travelled was 5.8km per journey. Half of all journeys were shorter than this distance and the other half were longer.

Total distance travelled by mode of travel

- Most of the distance travelled was by car, totalling 8,293.2km per person per year. Individuals drove 6,474.1km per year and travelled a further 1,818.4km as a passenger.
- Rail journeys totalled 737.1km per person per year. People travelled 247.4km per person per year by bus, meaning the total distance travelled per person per year by public transport was 984.5km.
- In contrast, journeys by active travel covered on average 238.7km per person per year (175.5km by walking and wheeling, and 63.2km by cycling). Despite having a higher share of journeys, active travel modes were used to cover a total shorter distance than public transport due to their use in typically shorter journeys.

Mean journey distance by mode of travel

- Journeys made by walking and wheeling typically covered the shortest distance, with a mean journey length of 1.6km.
- Cycling journeys had a mean length of 7.2km.
- The mean journey length by car was 17.9km. Journeys as a car passenger were typically longer (19.8km) than as the driver (17.4km).
- The mean length of a bus journey was 10.6km. Rail journeys had the longest average distance covered, with a mean length of 61.9km.

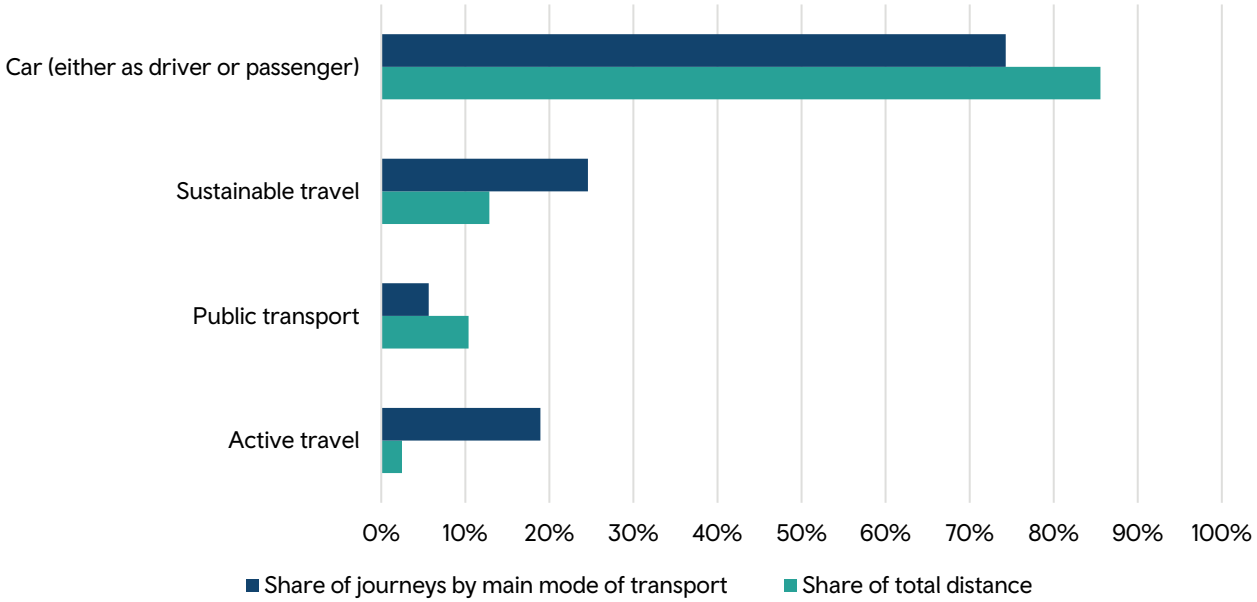
Median journey distance by mode of travel

- The median length of walking and wheeling journeys was 1.0km. For cycling journeys, the median length was 3.7km.
- Journeys by car had a median length of 8.0km, similar to journeys by bus (8.8km).

- As with the mean journey length, journeys by rail were typically much longer. The median length of a rail journey was 33.1km.

Share of journeys and total distance travelled by mode of travel

Figure 2: Comparing the share of journeys per person per year and total distance travelled by main mode, Wales, 2025/26



Description of Figure 2: A horizontal bar chart comparing the share of journeys and share of total distance travelled. A car was used as the main mode of travel in 74.3% of journeys and accounted for 85.8% of the total distance travelled. In contrast, active travel modes were used for 18.9% of journeys and 2.5% of the distance travelled.

Source: Wales National Travel Survey, journey distances

Mode share by distance travelled

- Almost half of all journeys made (46.6%) were under 5km. 12.1% of journeys recorded were less than 1km long, with 34.5% of journeys between 1km and 5km.
- 75.1% of journeys under 1km used walking and wheeling as the main mode of travel, the most common mode used for very short journeys.
- For all distance groups above 1km, car (either as the driver or a passenger) was the most used mode of travel.

Multimodal journeys

A multimodal journey is where two or more modes of travel are used for a single journey. The main mode is the mode of travel used for the longest distance of the journey. Other modes used as part of the journey are defined as additional modes. More details on multimodal journeys can be found in our definitions.

- 10.5% of all journeys were multimodal (65.4 journeys per person per year). These journeys were more common by residents of urban areas (11.5%, or 72.0 journeys per person per year) compared to rural areas (7.9%, or 49.3 journeys per person per year).
- The most common main mode used in multimodal journeys was a car, either as the driver or passenger. This was used as the main mode of travel in 37.6% of multimodal journeys. Bus was used as the main mode in 34.6% of multimodal journeys. Rail was used as the main mode in 17.8% of multimodal journeys.
- The most used additional mode of travel was walking and wheeling, used in 77.1% of all multimodal journeys. Bus was the additional mode of travel in 10.9% of multimodal journeys. Car was used in 9.6% of multimodal journeys as an additional mode of travel.
- Journeys that combined public transport modes were uncommon. 1.7% of multimodal journeys used both bus and rail, accounting for 1.1 journeys per person per year.

Journeys to and from bus stops

On average, 23.3 journeys per person per year were made by bus as the main mode of travel (3.7% of all journeys).

- Walking and wheeling was the most common mode of travel to and from bus stops. 93.1% of journeys to bus stops were made by walking and wheeling, with 91.3% of journeys from bus stops to the destination being made by this mode.
- 1.2% of journeys to bus stops were by car. 1.4% of journeys from bus stops were by car and 1.0% were by taxi.
- Journeys to and from bus stops were typically short. 58.2% of journeys to bus stops were under 1km, with another 38.5% of journeys to bus stops being between 1km and 5km long.
- Journeys from bus stops were a similar length, with 61.2% being less than 1km and 35.8% being between 1km and 5km long.

Journeys to and from railway stations

On average, 11.9 journeys per person per year were made by rail as the main mode of travel (1.9% of all journeys).

- Walking and wheeling was the most commonly used mode of travel to and from railway stations. 70.7% of journeys to and 68.5% of journeys from stations were made using this mode.
- Car journeys were relatively common, with 18.8% of journeys to the railway station and 10.9% of journeys from the railway station being made by car.
- 4.8% of journeys to and 3.3% of journeys from a railways station were made by bus.
- As with bus stops, a large majority of journeys to and from a railway station were under 5km long. 48.2% of journeys to the railway station were under 1km, with another 40.3% being between 1km and 5km. 42.0% of journeys from the railway station to the final destination were under 1km long, and 48.4% were between 1km and 5km.

Journey purposes

The purpose of the journey is the main reason why a respondent was travelling. Often, this is based on the activity undertaken at the origin or destination of the journey. Where a respondent selected 'return home' from their location as the reason for their journey, we've used the purpose at their previous location for the journey purpose.

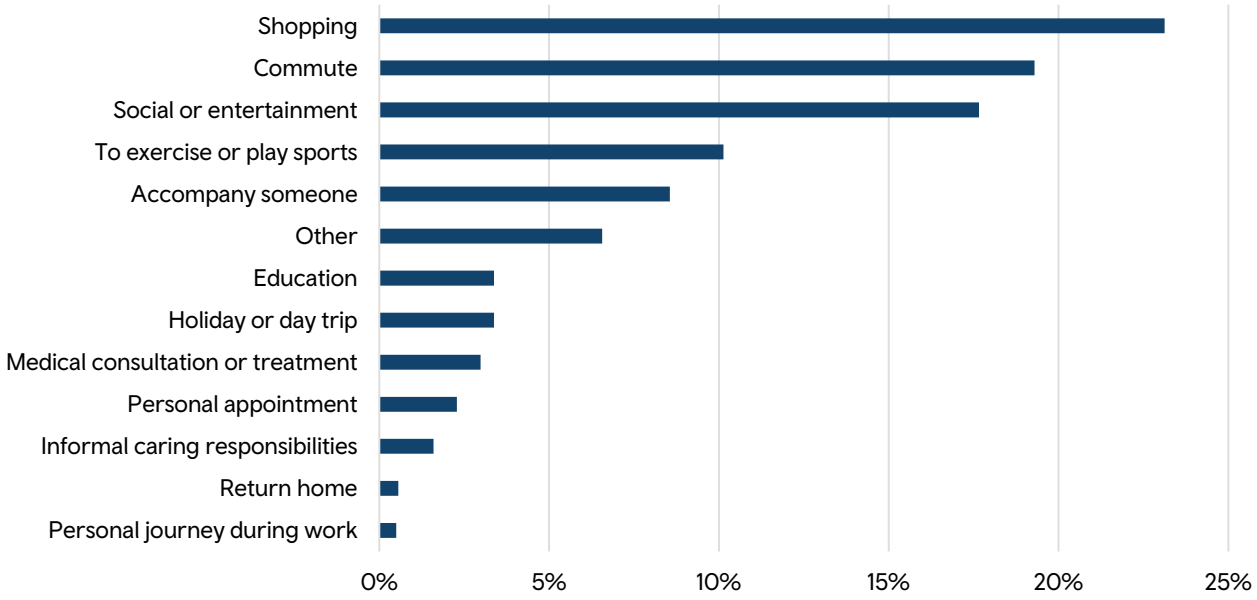
Journeys purely for leisure, where the act of travelling is the leisure activity (for instance, going for a run or playing sport) are excluded. This is aligned with the Active Travel Act Guidance definition of utility journeys.

The travel to a destination where a leisure activity is undertaken (for example, travelling to the gym or to a park to play sport) are included. More information about what journeys were included can be found in our definitions.

- The most common journey purpose was shopping, even if there was no intention to buy anything (23.1%). This was followed by commutes either to or from work (19.3%) and social or entertainment (17.7%).
- A holiday or day trip was the purpose with the longest mean distance (69.9km). These journeys were less common, accounting for only 3.4% of all journeys.

Share of journeys by purpose

Figure 3: Share of journeys per person per year by main journey purpose, Wales, 2025/26



Description of Figure 3: A horizontal bar chart showing the share of journeys per person per year by journey purpose. Over 60% of journeys were for one of three purposes: Shopping, commuting, and social or entertainment. Other purposes were less common.

Source: Wales National Travel Survey, journey purposes