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WALES NATIONAL TRAVEL SURVEY

Wales National Travel Survey: Walking and wheeling 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 across Wales. These data are official statistics in development.

This report focuses on travel by walking and wheeling. It brings together information on how people travel, and their attitudes and opinions on walking and wheeling.

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

- We estimate that 17.5% of journeys per person per year were made by walking and wheeling.
- 69.2% of respondents reported that they walked or wheeled at least once a week
- 17.9% of respondents reported not walking or wheeling at all in the last twelve months.
- 93.3% of walking and wheeling journeys were made by the 69.2% of respondents who walk or wheel at least once per week.
- 85.7% of walkers and wheelers were either very or fairly satisfied with their overall journey.
- "Better maintained routes" was the most popular factor that would encourage people who already walked and wheeled to do it more often (37.7%).

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 commonly used 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.

For some questions, respondents could select up to three response options so totals may not add up to 100%.

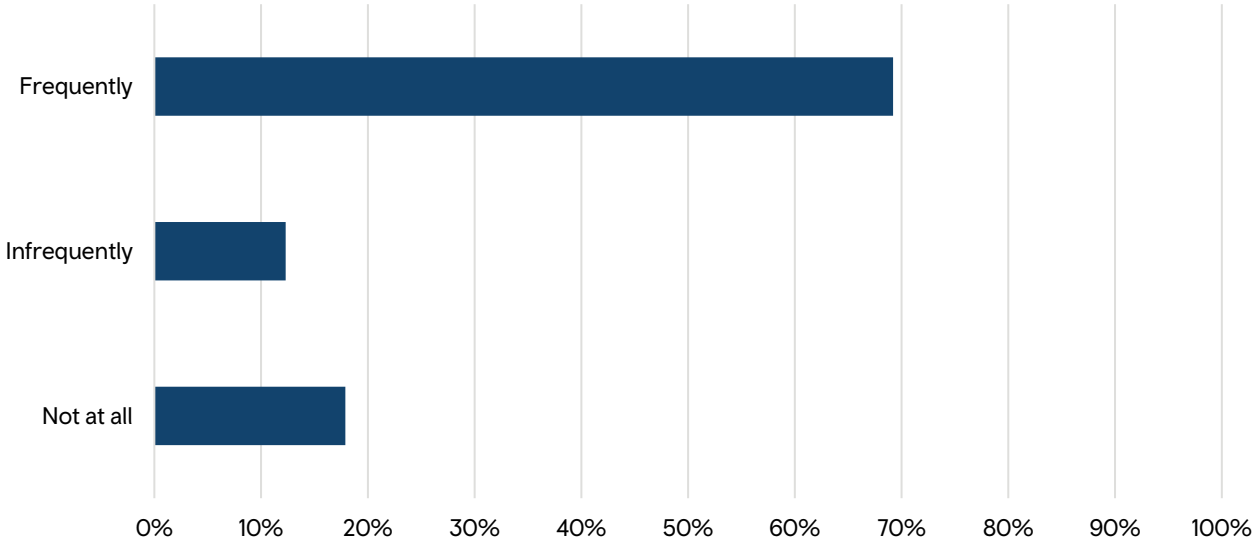
Frequency of travel by walking and wheeling

The travel frequency questions measured how often a person walked or wheeled within the last twelve months. This differs from mode share, which is the share of journeys per person per year made by walking and wheeling.

- 69.2% of respondents reported walking and wheeling at least once a week (40.0% most days, 19.3% several times a week and 9.9% once a week).
- 12.2% of respondents walked or wheeled infrequently, with 6.6% reported walking and wheeling once or twice a month, 3.1% once every couple of months, and 2.6% once or twice during the year.
- 17.9% of respondents reported not walking and wheeling at all.

Walking and wheeling: travel frequency

Figure 1: How frequently respondents walked or wheeled in the last twelve months, Wales, 2025/26



Description of Figure 1: A horizontal bar chart showing the percentage of respondents who reported walking and wheeling frequently, infrequently and not at all. 69.2% of respondents walk or wheel frequently and 12.2% of respondents infrequently. 17.9% of respondents don't walk or wheel at all.

Source: Wales National Travel Survey, travel frequency

Disabled status

- 62.3% of disabled respondents reported walking and wheeling at least once a week, compared to 71.0% of non-disabled respondents. There was a 10.6 percentage point difference in walking and wheeling most days (31.5% disabled, 42.1% non-disabled). There were only minor differences at other frequencies.

Regions

- Fewer respondents in Mid Wales reported walking and wheeling at least once per week than in other regions – 63.3% in Mid Wales compared to 68.0% in North Wales, 68.2% in South West Wales and 71.0% in South East Wales.

Age group

- The proportion of respondents who reported walking and wheeling at least once per week decreased as age groups increased. 83.3% of those aged 16-24 walked and wheeled compared to 46.3% of those aged 85 or above.

Main mode share

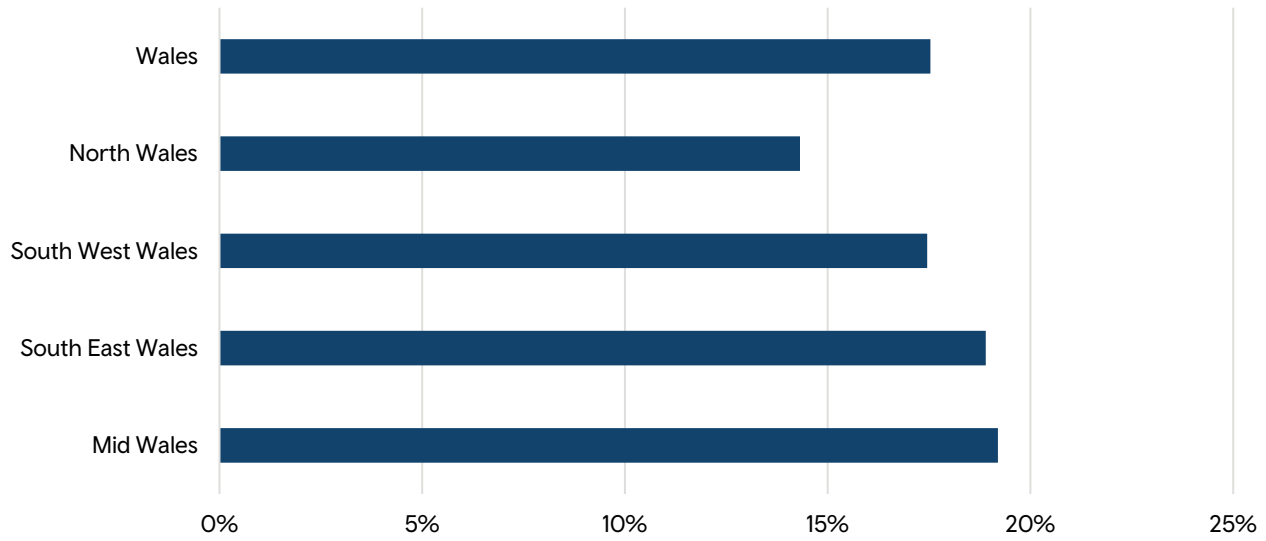
The main mode of travel refers to the mode that was used for the longest distance in a journey. Mode share is the percentage of journeys per person per year completed by a given main mode.

In 2025/26, we estimate that respondents made 109.4 journeys per person per year by walking and wheeling.

- Overall, we estimate that 17.5% of journeys were made by walking and wheeling. This is the second most commonly used mode of travel, after car (74.3%). Walking and wheeling journeys accounted for a sizeable majority of active travel journeys (92.6%).
- Mid Wales residents made the greatest share of journeys by walking and wheeling (19.2%), followed by South East Wales (18.9%) and South West Wales (17.5%). Among those living in North Wales, only 14.3% of journeys were made by walking and wheeling.
- Residents of rural areas made 12.9% of their journeys by walking and wheeling, much below the 19.4% of journeys made by walking and wheeling among urban residents.

Walking and wheeling: Main mode share by region

Figure 2: Share of journeys per person per year by walking and wheeling, Wales, 2025/26



Description of Figure 2: A horizontal bar chart showing the share of journeys per person per year by walking and wheeling. 19.2% of journeys in Mid Wales and 18.9% of journeys in South East Wales were made by walking and wheeling, above the national average (17.5%).

Source: Wales National Travel Survey, main mode share

Mode share by travel frequency

- Frequent walkers and wheelers (those who walked or wheeled at least once per week) accounted for 69.2% of respondents but made 93.3% of the walking and wheeling journeys. Frequent walkers and wheelers made 23.4% of their journeys by walking and wheeling (147.6 journeys per person per year).
- 12.2% of respondents were identified as infrequent walkers or wheelers. These respondents made 5.6% of their journeys by walking and wheeling (37.0 journeys per person per year) and accounted for 4.1% of all walking and wheeling journeys.
- A sizeable group (17.9% of respondents) indicated that they did not walk or wheel at all. This group made an estimated 2.4% of the total walking and wheeling journeys.
- We observe a close, inverse relationship between walking and wheeling and car journeys. Respondents who frequently walked and wheeled made 23.4% of their journeys by walking and wheeling, and 66.6% of journeys by car (either as the driver or as a passenger). In comparison, respondents who infrequently walked and wheeled made 90.1% of their journeys by car, and those who did not walk or wheel made 94.4% of their journeys by car.

Main mode share by Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2025 ranks the relative deprivation of small areas in Wales. For this analysis, the WIMD ranks have been grouped into quintiles (five groups of equal size). Quintile 1 (Q1) has the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. Quintile 5 (Q5) has the 20% least deprived areas of Wales. Information of how WIMD defined deprivation can be found on the Welsh Government website.

- The share of journeys per person per year made by walking and wheeling was highest among respondents living in relatively deprived areas. Those living in Q1, the most deprived 20% of Wales, made 19.3% of their journeys by walking and wheeling. In comparison, 16.6% of journeys were made by walking and wheeling for people living in Q5, the least deprived 20% of Wales.

WIMD is an index of eight separate types of deprivation. These are referred to as deprivation domains. Alongside the overall WIMD quintiles, we have also undertaken analysis of travel behaviours by the income domain and the access to services domain.

The income domain (hereafter "income deprivation") measures the proportion of people experiencing deprivation related to low income.

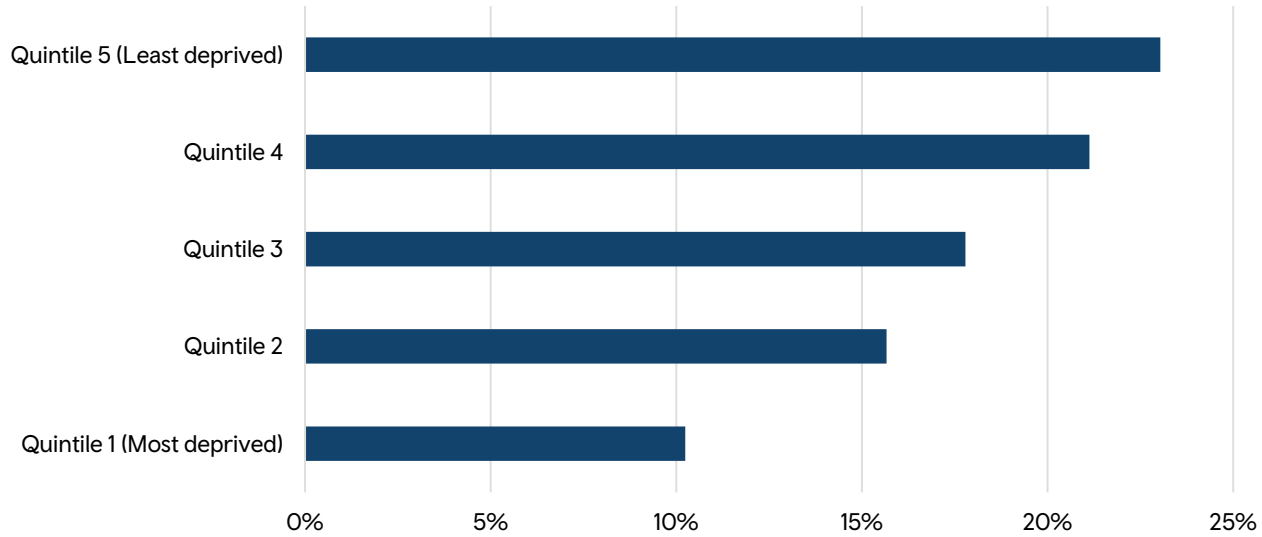
The access to services domain (hereafter "access to service deprivation") captures a household's inability to access services necessary for day-to-day living. It includes material deprivation (such as, being unable to get food) and social aspects of deprivation (such as, not being able to attend after school activities).

More information on these domains can be found in the WIMD 2025 technical report.

- There was no clear trend by income deprivation quintiles. Residents living in Q4 of the relative income deprivation quintiles made the fewest journeys by walking and wheeling (14.0%). Those in Q1 (most income deprived) made the greatest share by this mode (20.3%).
- There was a strong trend when considering access to services deprivation. Residents with the poorest access to services (Q1) made only 10.2% of their journeys by walking and wheeling. This increased as access to services improved, as residents of the least deprived access to service quintile (Q5) made 23.0% of their journeys by walking and wheeling.

Walking and wheeling: Main mode share by access to service deprivation

Figure 3: Share of journeys per person per year by walking and wheeling by WIMD access to service deprivation quintiles, Wales, 2025/26



Description of Figure 3: A horizontal bar chart showing the share of journeys per person per year by walking and wheeling by WIMD access to service deprivation quintiles. As relative access to service deprivation falls, the share of journeys by walking and wheeling increases.

Source: Wales National Travel Survey, main mode share

Main mode share by the sex of the respondent

- There was very little difference in walking and wheeling use by the sex of the respondent. Male respondents made 17.7% of their journeys by walking and wheeling, compared to 17.4% made by female respondents.

Main mode share by disabled status

- Disabled respondents made fewer journeys per person per year by walking and wheeling than non-disabled respondents (109.0 and 113.2 respectively). However, they made a

greater share of their journeys by this mode. 19.8% of journeys made by disabled respondents and 16.7% of journeys by non-disabled respondents were made by walking and wheeling.

Main mode share by age group

- Respondents aged 16-24 made 27.2% of journeys by walking and wheeling, the highest of any age group. The 45-64 age group had the lowest walking and wheeling share, with only 13.9% of journeys made by this mode.

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.

In 2025/26, we estimate that 10.5% of all journeys were multimodal (65.4 journeys per person per year).

- Walking and wheeling regularly featured as part of multimodal journeys. It was used as an additional (non-main) mode of travel in 77.1% of all multimodal journeys, and as the main mode in 6.6% of multimodal journeys.
- 93.1% of journeys to bus stops were made by walking and wheeling, with 91.3% of journeys from bus stops made by this mode.
- A majority of journeys to (70.7%) and from (68.5%) railway stations were also made by walking and wheeling.
- Combining journeys as the main mode (17.5%) and as an additional mode (8.2%) of travel, walking and wheeling was used in 25.6% of journeys.

Journey distance

The walking and wheeling 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.

More information on how we have calculated distances can be found in our definitions.

In 2025/26, we estimate that across all modes the mean journey length was 15.5km, with a median journey length of 5.8km.

- Walking and wheeling journeys were typically short. The mean journey distance was 1.6km long, with a median distance of 1.0km.
- Overall, we estimate that the total distance travelled per person per year by walking and wheeling was 175.5km.
- As these journeys were relatively short, walking and wheeling only accounted for 1.8% of the total distance travelled per person per year (9,670.6km), despite having a mode share of 17.5%.
- Walking and wheeling journeys accounted for 73.5% of the total distance travelled by active travel modes.
- The majority of walking and wheeling journeys were under 1km long (52.0%). A further 44.4% were between 1km and 5km. Longer journeys by walking and wheeling were far less common.
- Two important measures of active travel use is their share of journeys under one mile (1.61km) and under five miles (8.05km). These distances are identified in the Active Travel Act Guidance as reasonable distances that could be travelled by active travel modes. Walking and wheeling journeys accounted for 62.8% of journeys under one mile long, and 29.5% of journeys under five miles long.

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.

- Shopping (27.5%) was the most common journey purpose for walking and wheeling journeys, similar to the overall share (23.1%).
- Journeys to exercise or play sports were the purpose for 18.9% of walking and wheeling journeys, followed by 18.8% of journeys to social or entertainment.
- Commutes were less common, accounting for only 9.1% of walking and wheeling journeys compared to 19.3% of overall journeys.

Experience when walking and wheeling

We asked walkers and wheelers additional questions about their experience on their most recent walking and wheeling journey. We have defined walkers and wheelers as any respondent who reported having travelled by walking and wheeling at least once every couple of months. This corresponded to 78.8% of all respondents.

Overall journey satisfaction

- 85.7% of respondents feeling very or fairly satisfied with their overall journey (38.6% very satisfied and 47.1% fairly satisfied). 6.4% reported feeling fairly dissatisfied and 2.3% reported feeling very dissatisfied.
- 81.2% of disabled respondents reported feeling very of fairly satisfied compared to 88.4% of nondisabled respondents reported feeling very or fairly satisfied
- Respondents in Mid Wales, North Wales and South West Wales were more satisfied with their overall journey at 89.9%, 88.9% and 86.8% respectively compared to respondents in South East Wales at 83.3%.
- In general, respondents in younger age groups were more satisfied with their overall journey compared to those in older age groups. Respondents aged 25-34 were the most satisfied of all age groups at 89.6% whilst those aged 85 or above were the least satisfied at 74.4%.
- There was a 9.4 percentage point difference between the WIMD quintiles, with Q1 being the lowest for reported levels of satisfaction at 79.8% compared to Q3 as the highest at 89.2%.

Satisfaction with safety

- 83.7% of respondents reported feeling very or fairly satisfied with their safety (33.9% very satisfied and 49.8% fairly satisfied). 9.2% reported feeling fairly dissatisfied and 3.3% reported very dissatisfied.
- 79.3% of disabled respondents reported feeling very or fairly satisfied with their safety compared to 86.0% of non-disabled respondents reporting feeling very or fairly satisfied.
- There was a small difference between satisfaction with safety and sex with 85.0% of male respondents satisfied compared to 82.9% of female respondents.

Satisfaction with features of walking and wheeling journeys

Walkers and wheelers were randomly assigned to answer questions on either satisfaction on their most recent journey with lighting and the pavement or footpath condition, or on crossing points and the space to move and pass people.

Satisfaction with lighting

- 64.9% of respondents reported feeling satisfied with lighting. 23.3% of respondents reported feeling dissatisfied.
- A higher proportion of non-disabled respondents reported feeling satisfied with lighting (67.7%) while 58.4% of disabled respondents reported feeling satisfied.
- There was little difference between satisfaction with lighting and sex with 65.7% of male respondents satisfied compared to 64.6% of female respondents.

Satisfaction with the pavement or footpath condition

- 61.1% of respondents reported feeling satisfied with the pavement or footpath condition. 34.6% reported feeling dissatisfied.
- A higher proportion of male respondents (64.0%) reported feeling satisfied with the pavement or footpath condition compared to female respondents (58.4%).
- 64.8% of non-disabled respondents reported feeling satisfied with the pavement or footpath condition compared to 51.0% of disabled respondents.

Satisfaction with crossing points

- 79.7% of respondents reported feeling very or fairly satisfied with crossing points. 14.6% of respondents reported feeling dissatisfied.
- A higher proportion of non-disabled respondents reported feeling satisfied with crossing points (81.9%). 74.0% of disabled respondents reported feeling satisfied.

Satisfaction with space to move and pass others

- 80.2% of respondents reported feeling very or fairly satisfied with space to move and pass others. 14.7% reported feeling dissatisfied.
- 82.9% of non-disabled respondents reported feeling satisfied with space to move and pass others compared to 74.0% of disabled respondents.

Feeling of welcomeness

- 90.8% of respondents reported feeling welcome on their most recent journey (43.5% very and 47.3% fairly welcome). 5.9% of respondents reported feeling unwelcome (1.1% very and 4.8% fairly unwelcome).
- 87.7% of disabled respondents reported feeling welcome, compared to 92.6% of non-disabled respondents.
- Female respondents reported feeling slightly more welcome at 91.3% compared to male respondents at 90.9%.

Why respondents felt unwelcome

5.9% of respondents reported feeling unwelcome on their most recent walking and wheeling journey. We asked these users about why they felt unwelcome.

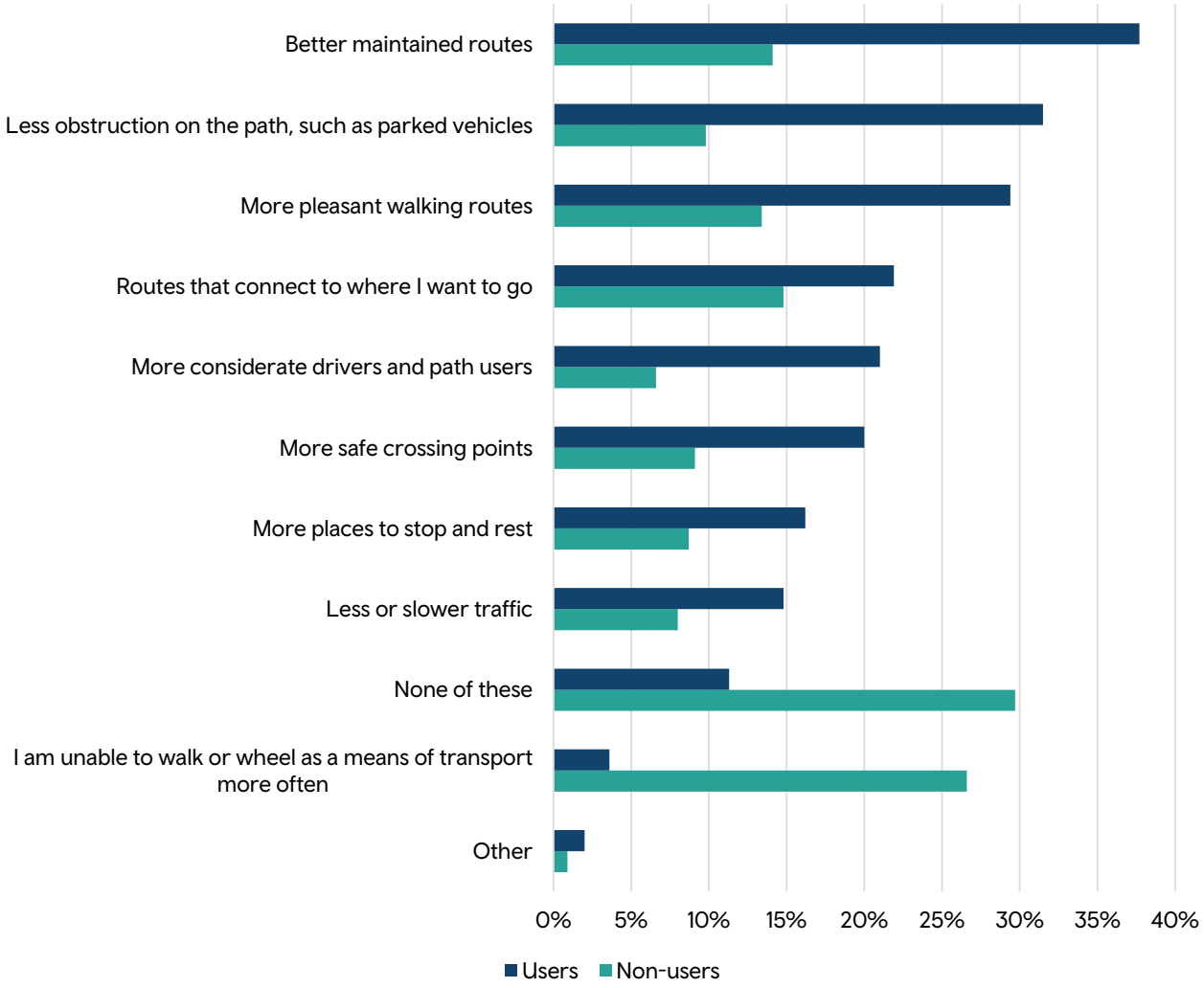
- Almost half of respondents reported they felt unwelcome because of "cyclists or other people walking and wheeling" (46.7%) and "your surroundings" (44.7%).
- 35.5% of respondents selected that "motor vehicles" made them feel unwelcome.
- A higher proportion of male respondents selected "motor vehicles" (40.0% of male respondents compared to 32.5% of female respondents).
- A higher proportion of female respondents selected "your surroundings" (48.4% of female respondents compared to 42.1% of male respondents).
- About half (50.0% and 52.2%) of disabled respondents selected "cyclists or other people walking and wheeling" and "your surroundings". These options were selected by 45.8% and 39.2% of non-disabled respondents.

Factors that would encourage walkers and wheelers to walk or wheel more often

- 81.4% of respondents were considered walkers and wheelers.
- The most popular factors that would encourage more walking and wheeling were "better maintained routes" (37.7%), "less obstructions on the path, such as parked vehicles" (31.5%) and "more pleasant walking routes" (29.4%).

What would encourage people to travel by walking and wheeling

Figure 4: Factors that would encourage walking and wheeling, Wales, 2025/26



Description of Figure 4: A horizontal bar chart showing the factors that would encourage people to walk or wheel more often. The most common response for walkers and wheelers was "better maintained routes" (37.7%). The most common responses for people who did not walk or wheel were "none of these" (29.7%) and that they were unable to walk or wheel more often (26.6%).

Source: Wales National Travel Survey, factors to encourage modal shift to sustainable modes of travel

Note 1: Based on the travel frequency described by respondents, 4,860 (81.4%) individuals were identified as walkers and wheelers. 1,225 (17.9%) were identified as non-walkers or wheelers.

Sex of the respondents

- Compared to the overall shares, the biggest difference between female and male respondents was that "better maintained routes" was selected by more male respondents (41.2%) than female respondents (34.0%).

Disabled status

- For non-disabled and disabled respondents, the most popular two factors were "better maintained routes" and "less obstructions on the path, such as parked vehicles". For disabled respondents, 23.0% selected "more safe crossing points". 31.6% of non-disabled respondents selected "more pleasant walking routes".
- Disabled and non-disabled responded in a similar way to the overall shares, with factors "better maintained routes" and "less obstructions on the path, such as parked vehicles" selected as the most common factors that would encourage further walking and wheeling.
- The two groups differed on their choice of the third-most popular option. "More safe crossing points" was popular for disabled respondents (23.0%). For non-disabled respondents, 31.6% selected "more pleasant walking routes".

Regions

- "Better maintained routes" and "less obstruction on the path" remained popular across the regions as the top selected factors. A lower proportion of respondents selected "more pleasant walking routes" in North Wales (23.6%). The third most common factor in Mid Wales was "routes that connect to where I want to go" at 23.8%.

Age group

- "Better maintained routes" was selected as one of the most popular factors by respondents in all age groups. The share decreased as age increased. 44.9% of users aged 25-34 selected this option, compared to 19.9% for those aged 85 or above.
- "More pleasant walking routes was also selected as one of the top three factors by all users age groups between those aged 16-24 (38.8%) and 55-64 (26.9%).
- The majority of age groups also selected "less obstruction on the path" in their top three factors to encourage further walking and wheeling, ranging from 37.4% for those aged 65-74 to 27.9% for those aged 85 or above.
- "More considerate drivers and path users" and "more places to stop and rest" were also selected in the top three factors by respondents in age groups 65-74 to 85 or above.

Factors that would encourage non-walkers or wheelers to walk or wheel more often

- 17.9% of respondents were considered non-walkers or wheelers.

- 29.7% of non-walkers or wheelers reported that none of the factors listed would encourage them to walk or wheel more often. A further 26.6% said that they were unable to walk or wheel as a means of transport more often.
- 14.8% of those who do not currently walk or wheel reported "routes that connect to where I want to go" would encourage them to walk or wheel more often. "Better maintained routes" was selected by 14.1% of respondents.

Sex of the respondent

- The proportion of male respondents who selected "none of these" was higher (36.8% compared to 23.6% for female respondents).
- The proportion of female respondents who selected "I am unable to walk or wheel more often" was higher (29.7% of female respondents compared to 24.1% of male respondents).

Disabled status

- Over half (52.5%) of disabled respondents reported "I am unable to walk or wheel more often", compared to 14.3% of non-disabled respondents.
- "None of these" was the most commonly selected factor for non-disabled respondents at 35.1%, followed by "routes that connect to where I want to go" (19.3%) and "more pleasant walking routes" (16.6%).
- Following this, 18.7% of disabled respondents reported "none of these" and 10.7% reported "better maintained routes". "Routes that connect to where I want to go" and "more pleasant walking routes" were only selected by 7.3% and 5.9% of disabled respondents respectively.

Regions

- "None of these" remained one of the most commonly selected factors across the regions ranging from 25.3% in South East Wales to 38.0% in North Wales. This is similar for "I am unable to walk or wheel more often", ranging from 24.0% in South East Wales to 32.0% in South West Wales.
- The third most commonly selected response varied across the regions with "more pleasant walking routes" (17.8%) in South East Wales, "routes that connect to where I want to go (17.6%) in South West Wales and "better maintained routes" (15.2% and 12.5%) in Mid and North Wales respectively.

By age group

- Respondents in all age groups other than 16-24 selected "none of these" as one of the top three factors that would encourage them to walk or wheel, ranging from 21.8% for those aged 85 or above to 36.2% for those aged 35-44.
- In general, "I am unable to walk or wheel more often" increased as age groups increased from 9.1% for those aged 25-34 to 61.5% for those aged 85 or above.

- For those aged 16-24, the top three factors selected differed with 32.5% selecting “more pleasant walking routes”, 25.8% selecting “routes that connect to where I want to go” and 23.2% selecting "more safe crossing points”.

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation

- In general, the share of respondents selecting “none of these” increased as overall deprivation decreased. It was 28.2% in WIMD Q1 to 32.4% in WIMD Q4, however 25.6% of respondents in WIMD Q5 selected “none of these”.
- The share selecting “Routes that connect to where I want to go” also increased as overall deprivation decreases from 13.6% in WIMD Q2 to 19.5% in WIMD Q5.
- On the other hand, the percentage of respondents who selected “I am unable to walk or wheel more often” decreased as overall deprivation decreases from 29.0% in WIMD Q1 to 24.1% in WIMD Q5.