

Edinburgh

Walking and Cycling Index 2025



Our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling



Councillor Stephen Jenkinson
Transport and Environment Convener
City of Edinburgh Council

I'm delighted to introduce the 2025 Walking and Cycling Index for Edinburgh.

Since 2023, we've delivered projects including Roseburn to Union Canal, Foot of the Walk to Dock Street and City Centre West to East Link to make walking, wheeling and cycling safer and easier for Edinburgh's residents. 2025 saw the return of a cycle hire scheme to Edinburgh's streets and I'm pleased that we've learned lessons from the previous scheme through a phased expansion.

The Index has shown that perceptions of cycling safety in Edinburgh have improved. While there's been a slight decrease in regular cyclists, previous monitoring has shown growth in cycling journeys at specific locations where we've delivered separated cycling infrastructure. By continuing to develop the cycle network, we can support the quarter of residents who don't cycle but would like to.

It's encouraging to see an increase in Edinburgh residents regularly choosing to walk or wheel for their journeys. I'm proud that Edinburgh was the first city in Scotland to enforce a pavement parking ban in 2024 to give pavements back to people. We know that walking and bus use is the most common form of multi-modal journey and there's been a significant increase from 15% in 2023 to 23% of residents who now use public transport five or more days a week. We recognise that continued investment in Edinburgh's infrastructure and public transport integration is required to sustain sustainable travel as the best choice not just the right choice.

The data speaks for itself; Edinburgh residents want to walk, wheel and cycle more and drive less. I'm determined that we continue to satisfy that demand and make our city a safer, more sustainable and accessible place for all.

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The Walking and Cycling Index

The Walking and Cycling Index is the biggest assessment of walking, wheeling and cycling in the UK and Ireland. It is delivered by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans) in collaboration with 22 regional and local partners. Each area reports on the progress made towards making walking, wheeling and cycling a more attractive, everyday way to travel.

The Walking and Cycling Index reports every two years. This is the sixth report from Edinburgh, produced in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council. The data in this report comes from 2025 and includes local walking, wheeling and cycling data, modelling and an independent, demographically representative survey of 1,233 residents aged 16 or above. The survey was conducted from March to June 2025. Social research organisation NatCen conducted the survey, which is representative of all residents, not just those who walk, wheel or cycle.

Across this report we have included comparisons to 2023 data where available.

Our thanks to the people of Edinburgh who took part in the survey and shared their stories with us.

More details on all reports and an interactive data tool to explore the data in more depth can be found at www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/walking-cycling-index



Defining wheeling

Some people who use a wheelchair or a mobility scooter may not identify with the term walking and may prefer to use the term wheeling. We use the terms walking and wheeling together to ensure we are as inclusive as possible.

Headlines

Edinburgh

Population^[i]

530,680

454,400 adults
76,280 children

Survey area

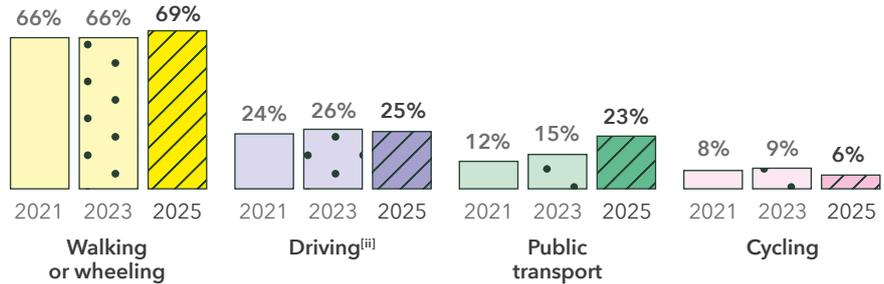


Frequency of different modes of travel

Walking and wheeling is the most common mode of travel amongst Edinburgh residents. Since 2023 walking and wheeling appears to be increasing.

i. NRS mid-year 2024 population estimates. This is the most recent available for Edinburgh.

Residents who travel by the following modes five or more days a week in the city



ii. Travelling as driver or passenger of car, van or motorcycle.

Walking, wheeling and cycling participation is not equal

Residents' travel choices and their perceptions of walking, wheeling and cycling sometimes vary widely between different groups.

69%

of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week

Proportion of residents who walk or wheel at least five days a week

58% of people from ethnic minority groups



71% of white people



18%

of residents cycle at least once a week

Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week^[iii]

13% of women



23% of men



Not all residents feel safe and welcome in their neighbourhood

Proportion of residents who think it's safe to walk or wheel in their local area

73% of disabled people



84% of non-disabled people



Proportion of residents who think it's safe to cycle in their local area

45% of women



56% of men

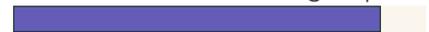


Proportion of residents who feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood^[iv]

72% of socio-economic group DE



89% of socio-economic group AB



iii. See footnote on page 6.

iv. Socio-economic groups AB are managerial while groups DE are manual occupations, homemakers and people not in employment. See page 6 for full definitions.

Everyone benefits when more people walk, wheel and cycle

Based on modelling of survey data, every year, walking, wheeling and cycling:

prevents
1,389
serious long-term
health conditions

creates
£336.7 million
in economic benefit for
individuals and the city

saves
37,000 tonnes
of greenhouse gas emissions

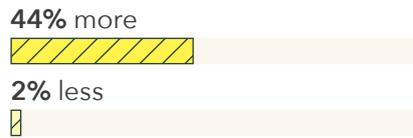
Walking, wheeling and cycling reduces congestion by taking up to 180,000 cars off the roads every day.

Residents want to walk, wheel and cycle more and drive less

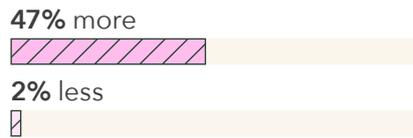
Percentage of residents who would like to use different types of transport more or less in the future:

20% of residents want to drive less. 30% of residents agree that they often use a car because no other transport options are available.

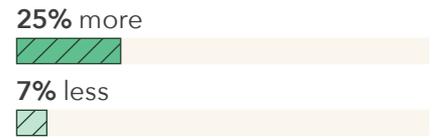
Walk or wheel



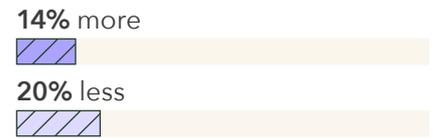
Cycle



Take public transport

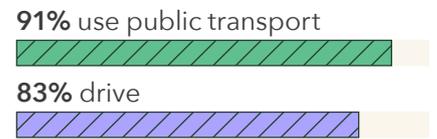
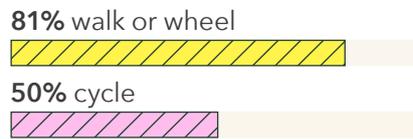


Drive



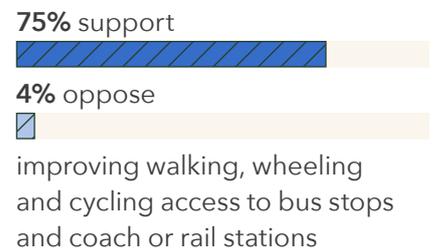
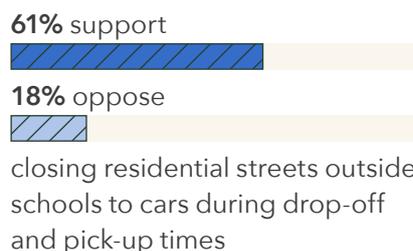
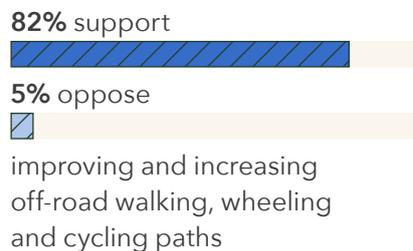
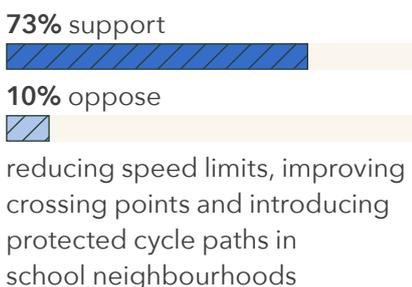
Cycling is seen as less safe than other forms of transport

Percentage of residents who think it's safe in their local area to:



Residents support more connected neighbourhoods

57% of residents support shifting investment from road-building schemes to fund walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. 22% oppose such a shift.



v. Local places with services and amenities nearby your home are often known as 20-minute neighbourhoods.

Walking and wheeling

Participation, safety and satisfaction



Walking and wheeling participation

Overall in Edinburgh the number of residents walking and wheeling at least five days a week has increased since 2023.

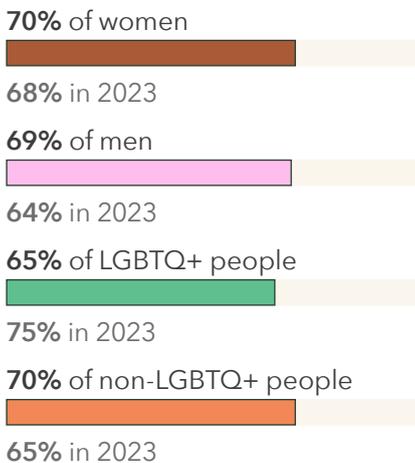
Encouragingly, the majority of residents feel it's safe to walk or wheel in their local area and think it is a good place to walk or wheel.

97%
of all residents
walk or wheel
97% in 2023

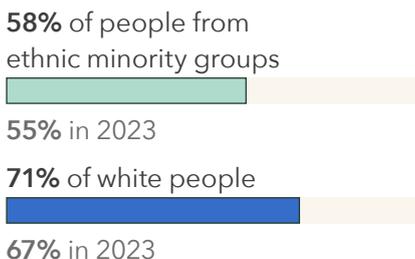
69%
of all residents
walk or wheel
at least five
days a week
66% in 2023

Proportion of residents who walk or wheel at least five days a week

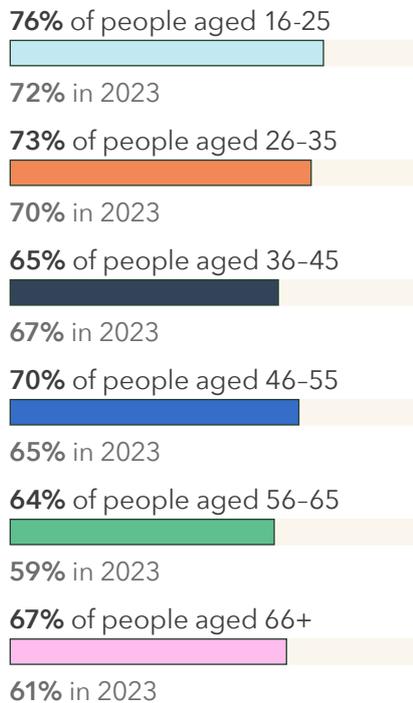
Gender and sexuality⁽ⁱ⁾



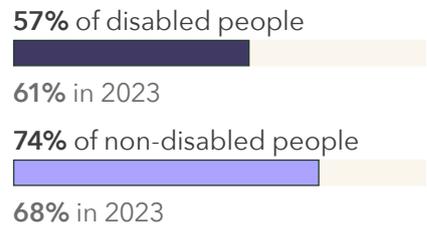
Ethnicity



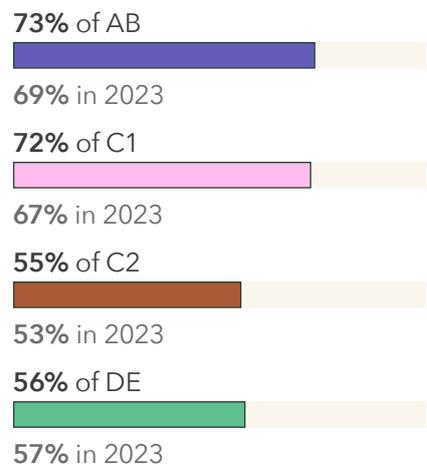
Age



Disability



Socio-economic group⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾



i. The sample size for respondents who identified their gender 'in another way' was too low to be statistically significant and is not shown.
ii. Socio-economic group is a classification based on occupation maintained by the Market Research Society. Groups A and B are professional and managerial. Group C1 is supervisory/clerical and students. Group C2 is skilled manual. Groups D and E are semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, homemakers and people not in employment.

Walking and wheeling safety and satisfaction

81%

of all residents think it's safe to walk or wheel in their local area

70% in 2023

57%

of all residents think it's safe for children to walk or wheel in their local area

51% in 2023

84%

of all residents think their local area overall is a good place to walk or wheel

77% in 2023

Proportion of residents who think it's safe to walk or wheel in their local area

Gender and sexuality

82% of women



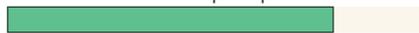
67% in 2023

79% of men



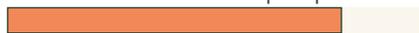
74% in 2023

79% of LGBTQ+ people



71% in 2023

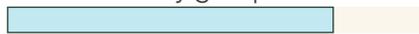
81% of non-LGBTQ+ people



71% in 2023

Ethnicity

79% of people from ethnic minority groups



76% in 2023

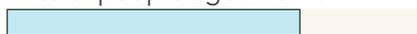
81% of white people



70% in 2023

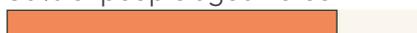
Age

71% of people aged 16-25



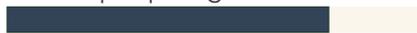
81% in 2023

80% of people aged 26-35



65% in 2023

78% of people aged 36-45



73% in 2023

88% of people aged 46-55



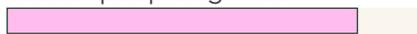
71% in 2023

83% of people aged 56-65



70% in 2023

85% of people aged 66+



67% in 2023

Disability

73% of disabled people



62% in 2023

84% of non-disabled people



73% in 2023

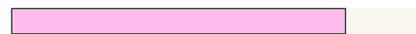
Socio-economic group

85% of AB



70% in 2023

81% of C1



72% in 2023

71% of C2



75% in 2023

68% of DE



62% in 2023



Rachel, cycles for fun

I really like the cycle paths in Edinburgh because I like to be off road as much as possible.

I think a lack of information about cycle paths is a barrier for people getting on their bike.

I enjoy cycling generally because it's fun and the sense of freedom it gives me. Cycling is a great way to see the city. Edinburgh is a very walkable city too.

Cycling

Participation, safety and satisfaction



Cycling participation

Currently, 18% of Edinburgh residents cycle at least once a week. This has decreased since 2023.

Safety, including road safety and personal safety, is the single largest barrier to cycling.^[i]

The potential for cycling is huge, and unlocking it depends on providing safe, dedicated space for cycling.

39%
of all residents cycle
45% in 2023

18%
of all residents
cycle at least
once a week
22% in 2023

Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

Gender and sexuality

13% of women



16% in 2023

23% of men



28% in 2023

13% of LGBTQ+ people



25% in 2023

19% of non-LGBTQ+ people



21% in 2023

Ethnicity

12% of people from ethnic minority groups



11% in 2023

19% of white people



23% in 2023

Age

12% of people aged 16-25



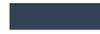
19% in 2023

18% of people aged 26-35



26% in 2023

22% of people aged 36-45



29% in 2023

23% of people aged 46-55



28% in 2023

24% of people aged 56-65



17% in 2023

11% of people aged 66+



6% in 2023

Disability

10% of disabled people



15% in 2023

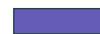
21% of non-disabled people



24% in 2023

Socio-economic group

22% of AB



27% in 2023

15% of C1



19% in 2023

17% of C2



17% in 2023

12% of DE



10% in 2023

i. See Bike Life 2019 Edinburgh report.

Cycling safety and satisfaction

50%

of all residents think it's safe to cycle in their local area

40% in 2023

37%

of all residents think it's safe for children to cycle in their local area

31% in 2023

55%

of all residents think their local area overall is a good place to cycle

49% in 2023

Proportion of residents who think it's safe to cycle in their local area

Gender and sexuality

45% of women



36% in 2023

56% of men



45% in 2023

48% of LGBTQ+ people



33% in 2023

51% of non-LGBTQ+ people



42% in 2023

Ethnicity

59% of people from ethnic minority groups



56% in 2023

49% of white people



38% in 2023

Age

38% of people aged 16-25



49% in 2023

54% of people aged 26-35



36% in 2023

48% of people aged 36-45



41% in 2023

59% of people aged 46-55



43% in 2023

56% of people aged 56-65



37% in 2023

46% of people aged 66+



40% in 2023

Disability

48% of disabled people



33% in 2023

51% of non-disabled people



43% in 2023

Socio-economic group

51% of AB



38% in 2023

50% of C1



42% in 2023

46% of C2



43% in 2023

53% of DE



42% in 2023



Tracy, personal trainer

As a personal trainer I have found that cycling has quite a lot of fitness benefits as well as business and practical benefits. I built my business on the back of my bike.

The cyclability of Edinburgh is what has kept me cycling and I think it's becoming less practical to drive to work within Edinburgh.

I don't understand why more people don't cycle. I think people think it's harder than it actually is. We've got this idea that we have to go somewhere fast and travelling is just time in between stuff but you can make your commute to work enjoyable on a bike.

Benefits of walking and wheeling

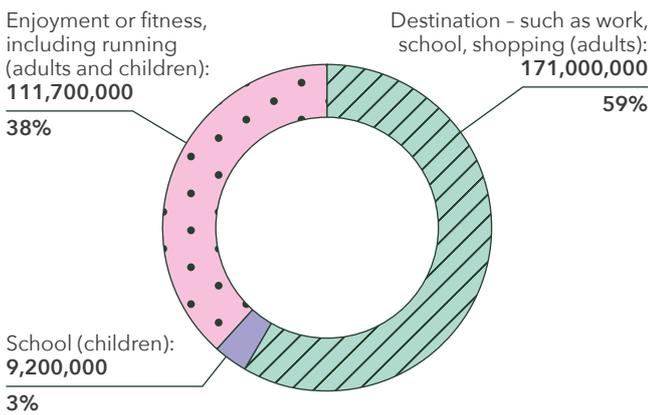
Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

Together, Edinburgh residents walk or wheel 28 times around the world every day

Walking and wheeling improves health and air quality, saves the NHS money, and reduces congestion.

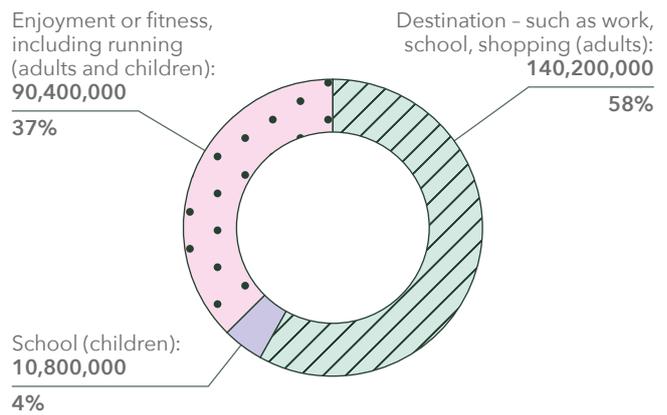
Annual walking and wheeling trips by purpose

291.9 million trips in 2025 which add up to **254 million miles**



Average walking or wheeling trip distance: 0.9 miles

241.3 million trips in 2023 which add up to **210 million miles**



Average walking or wheeling trip distance: 0.9 miles

Walking and wheeling benefits residents and society

We model the costs and benefits of walking and wheeling journeys, including those that replace trips which could have been driven, using our Societal Gain model. This includes travel time, vehicle operating costs, health benefits, air quality and taxation.

The total annual economic benefit from all trips walked and wheeled in Edinburgh is **£269.5 million**

£147.1 million in 2023

Many of these trips were made by people with access to a car. For these (excluding trips for enjoyment or fitness) our model compares the costs and benefits of walking and wheeling to those of driving.

For these journeys **86p** is saved for each mile walked or wheeled instead of driven. Over a year this adds up to **£86.7 million** in economic benefit for residents and society from **100.9 million miles** walked or wheeled by those that could have used a car.



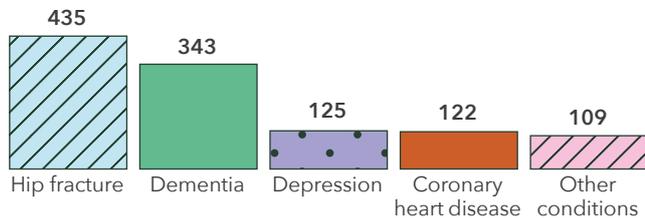
2023 model estimates in this report differ slightly to those published in 2023, due to being recalculated using Census 2022 population data instead of 2021 mid-year estimates, as a more reliable source. Edinburgh provided median walking trip distances as input for modelling. See methodology report for details.

Walking and wheeling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Walking in the city prevents 1,134 serious long-term health conditions each year.

838 in 2023

Cases prevented



This saves the NHS

£14 million per year

£10.6 million in 2023

Equivalent to the cost of

310,000

GP appointments

260,000 in 2023

Above figures are based on applying city data to Sport England MOVES tool, which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity. 'Other conditions' includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer and colorectal cancer.

The physical activity benefits from walking

prevent 329 early deaths annually

281 in 2023

which is valued at

£1.35 billion

£1.02 billion in 2023

Based on WHO/Europe Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), which enables an economic assessment of the health benefits of walking by estimating the value of reduced mortality resulting from specified amounts of walking.

Wheelchair and mobility scooter trips are modelled as walking trips for the purposes of the MOVES and HEAT models.

People walking and wheeling instead of driving improves air quality, saving:

60,000 kg of NO_x

(Nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide)

53,000 kg in 2023

and

5,400 kg of particulates

(PM₁₀, which includes PM_{2.5}) annually.

4,500 kg in 2023

60% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



58% in 2023

Walking and wheeling helps mitigate the climate crisis

By walking or wheeling instead of driving, residents save

27,000 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) annually.

23,000 tonnes in 2023

This is equivalent to the carbon footprint of

26,000 people taking flights

from Edinburgh to New York.

In 2023, transport within Scotland (excluding international aviation and shipping) accounted for **28.8%** of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions.

Scottish Government, Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2023.

Walking and wheeling keeps the city moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.^[i] This helps to keep the city moving for all road users.

160,000 return trips

are walked and wheeled daily by residents who could have used a car.

130,000 in 2023

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back

474 miles

equivalent to the distance from Edinburgh to Portree, Skye and back.

391 miles in 2023

i. Litman, 2023. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept.

Benefits of cycling

Why everyone gains when more people cycle

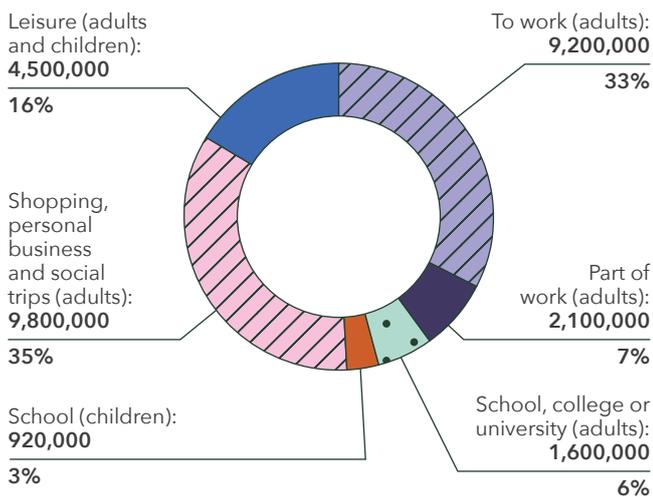


Together, Edinburgh residents cycle 7 times around the world every day

Cycling can be convenient for many local trips, especially in cities and towns. It gives people transport choice and access to education, jobs and community.

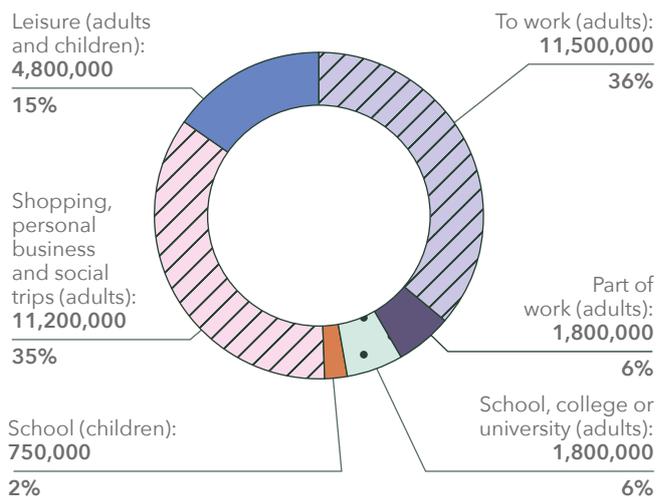
Annual cycling trips by purpose

28.2 million trips in 2025 which add up to **59.6 million miles**



Average cycling trip distance: 2.1 miles

31.9 million trips in 2023 which add up to **67.4 million miles**



Average cycling trip distance: 2.1 miles

Cycling benefits residents and society

We model the costs and benefits of cycling journeys, including those that replace trips which could have been driven, using our Societal Gain model. This includes travel time, vehicle operating costs, health benefits, air quality and taxation.

The total annual economic benefit from all trips cycled in Edinburgh is

£67.2 million

£66.8 million in 2023

Many of these trips were made by people with access to a car. For these (excluding trips for leisure) our model compares the costs and benefits of cycling to those of driving.

For these journeys **£1.57** is saved for each mile cycled instead of driven. Over a year this adds up to **£57.3 million** in economic benefit for residents and society from **36.6 million miles** cycled by those that could have used a car.



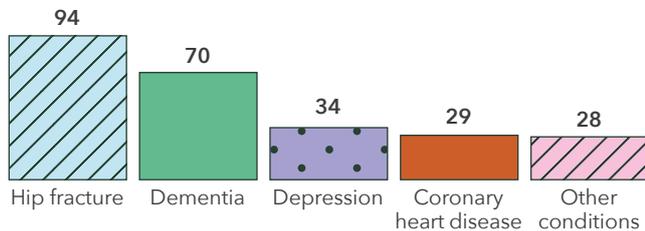
2023 model estimates in this report differ slightly to those published in 2023, due to being recalculated to include cycling trips as part of work. Census 2022 population data has also been used instead of 2021 mid-year estimates, as it is a more reliable source. Edinburgh provided median cycle trip distances as an input for modelling. See methodology report for details.

Cycling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Cycling in the city prevents 255 serious long-term health conditions each year.

204 in 2023

Cases prevented



This saves the NHS

£3.2 million per year

£2.8 million in 2023

Equivalent to the cost of

71,000

GP appointments

67,000 in 2023

Above figures are based on applying city data to Sport England MOVES tool, which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity. 'Other conditions' includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer and colorectal cancer.

The physical activity benefits from cycling

prevent 25 early deaths annually

30 in 2023

which is valued at

£101 million

£108 million in 2023

Based on WHO/Europe Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), which enables an economic assessment of the health benefits of cycling by estimating the value of reduced mortality resulting from specified amounts of cycling.

People cycling instead of driving improves air quality, saving:

17,000 kg of NO_x

(Nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide)

23,000 kg in 2023

and

1,700 kg of particulates

(PM₁₀, which includes PM_{2.5}) annually.

2,000 kg in 2023

60% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



58% in 2023

Cycling helps mitigate the climate crisis

By cycling instead of driving, residents save

9,800 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) annually.

12,000 tonnes in 2023

This is equivalent to the carbon footprint of

9,400 people

taking flights

from Edinburgh to New York.

In 2023, transport within Scotland (excluding international aviation and shipping) accounted for **28.8%** of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions.

Scottish Government, Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2023.

Cycling keeps the city moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.^[i] This helps to keep the city moving for all road users.

24,000 return trips

are cycled daily by residents who could have used a car.

28,000 in 2023

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back

71 miles

equivalent to the distance from Edinburgh to Pitlochry.

82 miles in 2023

i. Litman, 2023. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept.

Walking and wheeling solutions

What would help make walking and wheeling easier?

New homes and existing communities should have services and amenities within walking and wheeling distance

Putting walking and wheeling at the heart of new and existing communities gives people greater transport choice, while reducing car dependency.

72%

agree they can easily get to many places they need to visit without having to drive

69% in 2023

62%

support stopping new housing developments in areas where driving is the only practical option to visit local services, such as shops and doctors surgeries

58% in 2023

New developments and existing communities can support walking and wheeling by ensuring many of the things people need are found near to where people live.

What percentage of residents would find more local amenities and services useful to help them walk or wheel more?

81%

more shops and everyday services, such as banks and post offices, close to their home

79% in 2023

75%

more government services, such as doctors surgeries and schools, close to their home

71% in 2023

81%

more parks or green spaces close to their home

78% in 2023

77%

more things to see and do close to their home, like cafés or entertainment venues

76% in 2023

Residents want walking and wheeling to better align with buses

While walking and wheeling should be the most attractive option for short journeys, it should also be integrated with public transport for longer trips.

Walking and bus use is the most common form of multi-modal journey across the UK. If we are to increase walking and wheeling and bus trips, residents told us they need practical improvements to better integrate these modes of transport.



What percentage of residents would find these changes useful to help them take journeys that include walking or wheeling and the bus more often?

72%

more information to help them plan and take a journey (such as apps, maps, signage or public transport staff)

64%

more direct walking and wheeling routes from housing estates to bus stops

66%

accessible walking and wheeling routes to and from bus stops

69%

improved safety while walking or wheeling to and from the bus stop

72%

improved walking and wheeling crossing facilities near bus stops

85%

improved bus stops (such as accessible, well lit and maintained, cover from rain, display of service information)

Residents want better streets

There are many ways to make our streets and neighbourhoods safe, welcoming and comfortable for everyone to walk or wheel in.

What percentage of residents think that these changes would help them walk or wheel more?

71%

wider pavements
68% in 2023

70%

more frequent road crossings, with reduced wait times
66% in 2023

76%

nicer places along streets to stop and rest, like more benches, trees and shelters
71% in 2023

73%

better pavement accessibility, like level surfaces and dropped kerbs at crossing points
72% in 2023

67%

fewer cars parked on the pavement
67% in 2023

66%

less fear of crime or antisocial behaviour in their area
62% in 2023

In the city, for each road making up a junction with traffic lights

85% have a pedestrian crossing



15% don't have a pedestrian crossing



For example, a T-junction has three roads making up the junction, and a crossroads has four.



Pete, e-trike user

I started cycling when I was around 12.

I became involved with Friends of the Earth in Edinburgh in the early 70s and then became involved with the Lothian Cycle Campaign. All this combined with my role in the anti-nuclear movement and bicycles became a big part of that.

I led some cyclists to the demonstrations in Torness. So it's become far more than simply a recreational activity. I think a bike can be a political weapon, which is good.

I had a stroke in 2019 which affected the left side of my body. At that point I had three bicycles: a work bike, quick bike and mountain bike. I knew I wouldn't be able to use them again.

A friend suggested that we could try a tricycle. Thanks to

Cycling Scotland and Saughton Park in Edinburgh, we were able to ride a sociable, side-by-side trike. To experience what it was like to still pedal made me weep with joy. I wanted my own one after that.

Then I found out about Laid Back Bikes, who kindly adapted an e-trike to fit my body because I'm quite tall.

Now I've got a team of pedal buddies who I ride with.

I use my motorised wheelchair to get around and I use my recumbent E-trike for my physical well-being.

It's incredibly satisfying to be able to choose where I go and it gives me a chance to socialise with people in places I would never be able to get otherwise.

Cycling solutions

What would make cycling better?



Many residents want to cycle

There is considerable appetite to start cycling from residents who don't already.

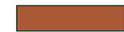
To meet this demand we must address safety, ensuring people have dedicated space for cycling, as well as supporting access to a cycle, training, cycle parking, and better integration of cycling with public transport.

How do residents see themselves when it comes to cycling?



What proportion of residents said they 'do not cycle but would like to'

26% of women



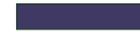
27% in 2023

44% of people from ethnic minority groups



42% in 2023

31% of disabled people



32% in 2023

Residents want more support to cycle

What percentage of residents think that these kinds of support would help them start cycling or to cycle more?

55%
access to a bicycle
50% in 2023

44%
access to an electric cycle
43% in 2023

31%
access to a cargo cycle with space to carry children or shopping
31% in 2023

22%
access to an adapted cycle, like a tricycle or handcycle
18% in 2023

46%
access or improvements to a city cycle hiring scheme
44% in 2023

58%
access to secure cycle parking at or near home
56% in 2023

40%
cycling training courses and organised social rides
35% in 2023

Proportions of residents with access to an adult cycle

54% of all residents



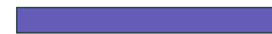
57% in 2023

44% of socio-economic group DE



44% in 2023

63% of socio-economic group AB



67% in 2023

Residents want improved cycling infrastructure

People want networks of dedicated and safe cycle paths, cycle parking and better integration with public transport.

In the city there are:

37% of households

are within 125 metres of either traffic-free cycle paths away from the road, cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians, or signposted routes along quieter streets

36% in 2023

111 miles

of traffic-free cycle paths away from the road

110 miles in 2023

7 miles

of cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

5 miles in 2023

17 miles

of signposted routes along quieter streets

17 miles in 2023

586

cycle parking spaces across 15 railway and bus stationsⁱ

529 spaces across 13 stations in 2023

What percentage of residents would be helped to start cycling or to cycle more by better facilities?

72%

more traffic-free cycle paths away from roads, like through parks or along waterways

73% in 2023

63%

more cycle paths along roads that are physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

65% in 2023

63%

more signposted local cycle routes along quieter streets

65% in 2023

66%

better links with public transport, like secure cycle parking at train stations, bus stops/stations

66% in 2023

Among residents:

82%

support improving and increasing local off-road walking, wheeling and cycling paths

56%

support building more cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians, even when this would mean less room for other road traffic

58% in 2023

75%

support improving walking, wheeling and cycling access to bus stops and coach or rail stations

i. 2025 data includes cycle parking at Park and Ride stations.



Emily, new cyclist

I have agoraphobia so my bike's been essential in doing exposure therapy, which is the main way that people with agoraphobia recover.

I really struggle with not feeling in control and I can't drive so it just got more and more difficult to get around. I tried out my friend's e-bike and I was like "this is the best thing in the whole world" and so I saved my money and bought one.

I didn't see myself as a cyclist at all, but I suppose I am.

I honestly never thought I'd ever be able to get into town again. I actually don't mind cycling on roads. It does feel quite empowering sometimes.

Neighbourhood solutions

Thriving places, centring children



Neighbourhoods should prioritise the needs and wellbeing of the people who live there and visit. They should be planned to support community, foster social connection, and be places where everyone feels welcome.

Designing neighbourhoods with children in mind means they work better for everyone.

Improving the journey to school

Schools are at the centre of many neighbourhoods and should be part of any plan to make neighbourhoods better.

This means working with schools to encourage walking, wheeling and cycling, but also improving the neighbourhood around schools to reduce traffic and improve pavements, crossing points and cycle provision.

61% support



18% oppose

closing residential streets outside schools to cars during drop-off and pick-up times

73% support



10% oppose

reducing speed limits, improving crossing points and introducing protected cycle paths in school neighbourhoods

These are known as 'School Streets'.

14 schools

in the city have School Streets schemes

12 schools in 2023



Giving children the independence to roam, play and develop

Neighbourhoods should be places for children to thrive. Well-designed neighbourhoods can give children freedom to move around, play and socialise, helping children's independence, social skills, and autonomy.

Average age when parents and carers would let children travel independently in their neighbourhood

10 years old
to walk or wheel

12 years old
to cycle

12 years old
to use public transport

56%

agree there is space for children to socialise and play

55% in 2023

Fewer children play out on their streets than ever before. Just 27% of children said they regularly play outside their homes, compared to 71% of those born between 1946 and 1964.

Save the Children, Summer of Play campaign survey, 2022.



Residents support child-safe neighbourhoods

Adults support child-safe neighbourhoods, including traffic-reduction targets and measures to reduce through traffic and traffic speed, but this must be done fairly.

35%

of residents think that their streets are not dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles

30% in 2023

59%

support setting traffic-reduction targets and taking action to achieve these

59% in 2023

65%

support low-traffic neighbourhoods

61% in 2023

18%

of the total length of unclassified roads in the city have nothing to prevent through traffic. This can result in rat running.^[i]

18% in 2023

Residents would find fewer motor vehicles on their streets useful to:

65% walk or wheel more



58% cycle more



63%

support reducing speed limits on local roads in built-up areas to 20 mph speed limits

74%

of the city's streets have 20 mph speed limits (excludes motorways and trunk roads)^[ii]

76% in 2023

Residents would find more streets with 20 mph speed limits useful to:

51% walk or wheel more



53% cycle more



Everyone should feel welcome in their neighbourhood

Improvements to neighbourhoods must also recognise the needs of adults, for example women, disabled people and people from ethnic minority groups.

54%

agree they regularly chat to their neighbours, more than just to say hello

53% in 2023

54%

feel able to participate in making their neighbourhood a better place to live

44% in 2023

Proportion of residents that feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood

84%

of all residents



79% in 2023

85% of women



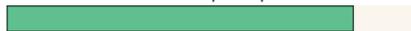
78% in 2023

83% of men



80% in 2023

84% of LGBTQ+ people



78% in 2023

85% of non-LGBTQ+ people



79% in 2023

83% of people from ethnic minority groups



80% in 2023

84% of white people



79% in 2023

80% of disabled people



73% in 2023

86% of non-disabled people



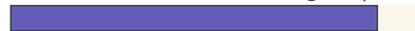
81% in 2023

72% of socio-economic group DE



65% in 2023

89% of socio-economic group AB



84% in 2023

i. Based on analysis by CycleStreets www.lowtrafficneighbourhoods.org. Unclassified roads are all public roads that are neither motorways, A, B nor C roads.

ii. 2023 data includes part time 20 mph streets in the total. The decrease since 2023 is due to newly adopted Council roads.



Developing the city

Improving walking, wheeling and cycling

Expanding active travel routes in the Capital continues to be a key priority for us and is central to Edinburgh's goal of becoming a net zero city by 2030.

Since 2023, we've delivered three significant active travel projects: City Centre West to East Link (CCWEL); Roseburn to Union Canal; and Leith Connections - Foot of the Walk to Dock Street. This marks a significant step in improving the active travel network in Edinburgh with links between all three projects providing increased connectivity. The demand for cycling remains strong in Edinburgh; cycling and walking numbers on CCWEL have already shown year-on-year growth and daily cycling journeys on Leith Walk recently hit a record high.

The Roseburn to Union Canal link was officially opened in December 2024. It has created a new green corridor for walking, wheeling and cycling, significantly enhancing public safety and access to greenspace, and brought disused land back into community use. It has also been recognised at the 2025 National Transport Awards for Exemplary Approach to Active Travel and Public Space.

In early 2024, Edinburgh became the first city in Scotland to enforce a pavement parking ban. The new rules make our streets safer for pedestrians and road users. Since enforcement

began there has been an overall decreasing trend in fines being issued for pavement parking - with the exception of the busier summer months. In another first for Scotland, we set up an independent Accessibility Commission to provide advice on the challenges, opportunities and actions required to ensure the city's public streets and spaces are as accessible as possible for disabled people.

|||
... significantly enhancing public safety and access to greenspace, and brought disused land back into community use.
|||

We recognise that people often use multiple ways to travel within one trip - a significant proportion of bus and tram journeys start with walking or wheeling. Our award-winning public transport system provides a low carbon alternative to car use across the city. In 2025, a new tap-on-tap-off integrated ticketing system was launched across Edinburgh Trams and Lothian Buses with ticket prices automatically capped at the cheapest rate. This boosts transport connectivity, affordability and allows people to travel more efficiently, which in turn can support modal shift.



Our liveable neighbourhood schemes

Our liveable neighbourhood schemes have delivered important walking and wheeling improvements including new crossing points, dropped kerbs and narrowing entrances to side roads to reduce speed.

Following our trials in Leith and Corstorphine, we've seen increases in pedestrian levels and received positive community feedback. We've learned from implementation and are adapting the permanent schemes based on these lessons. Leith's new Foot of the Walk to Dock Street cycle scheme connects the most densely populated part of the city to the city centre and beyond, further delivering on the aims of the surrounding Leith Connections liveable neighbourhood.



Cleaner air and safer streets

In summer 2024, Edinburgh began enforcement of a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) which restricts the most polluting vehicles from the city centre. An independent study found evidence of a shift towards active travel and public transport use within the zone and a decrease in private vehicle use within the first few months of enforcement.

In addition to our extensive 20 mph network, we've recently reduced more speed limits from 40 mph to 30 mph in many parts of the city. Slower speeds make our roads safer for everyone, encourages active travel and has a wider impact on societal wellbeing.

Looking forward

Better places and streets for everyone



Recently, Councillors in Edinburgh agreed a ten-year prioritisation programme for capital projects under the City Mobility Plan (CMP).

This programme effectively manages the resources we have: to continue to deliver walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport priority projects; to meet our CMP objectives; and to ultimately make Edinburgh's streets and places better for everyone.

Approved projects

The approved programme of capital projects being progressed in the coming years include:

- Queensferry - high street improvements and a new active travel route linking new housing developments with a new school.
- Travelling Safely - temporary infrastructure installed during the Covid-19 pandemic will be made permanent at prioritised locations.
- West Edinburgh Link - walking, wheeling and cycling improvements between the Gyle and Clovenstone, linking communities across West Edinburgh.
- 7-7-7 bus lane trial - trialling the extension of bus lane operating hours from peak-only on weekdays to 7am-7pm, 7 days a week on one trial route. This trial aims to improve bus journey times and provide greater reliability, to make sustainable travel more attractive for everyday journeys.
- Dalry Town Centre - road space improvements in the Dalry neighbourhood so that everyone can meet most of their daily needs within a short walk, wheel or cycle from their home.
- Cameron Toll to BioQuarter - proposals for a separated cycling and walking route providing an important link between Cameron Toll shopping centre, the hospital, and Edinburgh BioQuarter.
- Meadows to Union Canal - this connecting route will provide a safe, direct route between two destinations whilst improving public spaces.

Percentage of residents who would like to see more government spending in their local area:

52% on walking and wheeling



43% on cycling



57% on buses



53% on trains



35% on trams



33% on other forms of public transport such as community transport, metro or subway, local ferry



30% on driving



This trial aims to improve bus journey times and provide greater reliability.

City Centre Transformation

Work to transform and revitalise Edinburgh's iconic city centre will continue with significant active travel and place improvements being made through the Meadows to George Street scheme. This will connect into the George Street and First New Town project which puts people first through reallocation of space away from cars while maintaining the street's rich heritage. A new strategy for Princes Street and Waverley Valley is being developed to guide future development towards making the heart of our city centre a more vibrant and welcoming place for locals, visitors and businesses.

Neighbourhood interventions

We will continue to make improvements in local neighbourhoods to create a more pedestrian friendly and accessible city. This includes a programme to permanently widen pavements in high footfall areas, install more dropped kerbs and remove street clutter to give more space to pedestrians.

We recognise that a lack of suitable cycle storage and parking is one of the most common barriers to cycling. That's why we have plans to roll out even more secure on-street cycle storage to bring the citywide total to 380 secure hangars. We will also continue to install more public cycle parking around the city.



Robbie, bike bus volunteer

I've been cycling to work for a long time. My work moved from one office to another so rather than trying to find a new flat to rent, I ended up just cycling to get to that new office and then kept it up. It's really convenient.

I've also started cycling at work. I work in construction as a civil engineer, so I go to construction sites which are usually in the city centre. It's actually easier to get there by bicycle than buses or walking or driving.

I've been trying to give back a bit recently so I help out with the bike bus at a primary school every Friday. My wife does it as well.

They've got lots of parents with children, but they need to supervise their children. So you need stewards at the front and the back and the sides who are not looking after children. In the last few months the school bike racks have been completely full. So even when we're not doing the bike bus people are still cycling to the school.

They seem to enjoy it and it gets more children into walking, cycling, which will give them more independence when they get into their teenage years.

Notes on methodology

The attitudinal survey was conducted from March to June 2025 (and 2023) by independent social research organisation NatCen.

The survey is representative of all Edinburgh residents, not just those who walk, wheel or cycle.

All other data are sourced from our regional and local partners, national data sets or modelled and calculated by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust. All locally-sourced data are correct as of 28 May 2025.

Trip estimates use a model developed by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust. When comparing to other travel surveys, some variation may exist in the proportion of journeys travelled by journey purpose.

Trip estimates now include cycling trips as part of work for both 2025 and 2023. Previously published 2023 model estimates have been recalculated to include these and allow for direct comparison, and to use population data from the 2022 Census, instead of 2021 mid-year estimates as a more reliable source. This has also impacted walking trip estimates from 2023.

Rounding has been used throughout the report. In many cases we have rounded to the nearest whole number. Rounding is avoided where this may cause confusion, for example with modelled estimates shown in the summary and benefits sections.

More information on data sources and calculations, including strengths and limitations of the survey and model methodology, are available at www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/walking-cycling-index

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust is the charity making it possible for everyone to walk, wheel and cycle.

Because people powered movement changes everything. Our health. Our wellbeing. Our world.

www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk

Funding and support

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Walk Wheel Cycle Trust is a registered charity in the UK number 326550 (England and Cymru), SC039263 (Scotland) and 20206824 (Republic of Ireland).

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