



Greater Manchester

Walking and Cycling Index 2025



Our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling

Dr Richard Nickson

Network Director: Active Travel at Transport for Greater Manchester

In Greater Manchester we are building the Bee Network to meet the demand for greater transport choice from people of all ages and backgrounds.

Walking and cycling are the 'glue' that connects our public transport system; walking remains the most common way to travel short journeys, and demand for longer journeys by bike continues to rise.

The Index shows strong public support for sustainable transport and improved neighbourhoods, reinforcing Greater Manchester's commitment to the Bee Network: an affordable, safe, accessible and frequent public transport network with walking and cycling embedded. The goal is for 50% of all journeys to be made by public transport or active travel by 2040.

We welcome the continued support for enabling active travel around schools. GM's School Travel Strategy aims to create safer streets, enabling walking, wheeling and cycling as the easy choice for young people. By 2030, the target is 70% of primary pupils travelling actively, with 60 schools benefitting from a 'school street' by the end of the 25/26 academic year.

Findings show us that infrastructure enables people to travel actively, and since the last Index, GM has delivered Bee Network-standard segregated routes and safer crossings, whilst integrating active travel with public transport. In 2026, plans will begin for a 600km strategic cycle network connecting centres and outlying areas.

Active travel is more than transport: it supports health, economic growth, better neighbourhoods, reduced congestion, improved air quality, and will help Greater Manchester reduce deaths and serious injuries on our roads to zero by 2040. Continued investment will make walking and cycling the natural choice for everyday journeys.



Dame Sarah Storey, Active Travel Commissioner, Greater Manchester Combined Authority:



We're investing across the city-region to make journeys easier and safer, bringing health and economic benefits, as set out in our Greater Manchester Strategy. The active travel programme continues to contribute to creating a safe and vibrant region for everyone to enjoy.



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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 Greater Manchester, produced in partnership with Transport for Greater Manchester. The data in this report includes local walking, wheeling and cycling data, behavioural and attitudinal data from an independent, demographically representative survey of 1,364 residents aged 16 or above, and modelling of trips data using Greater Manchester's Travel Diary Survey. 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 Greater Manchester 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

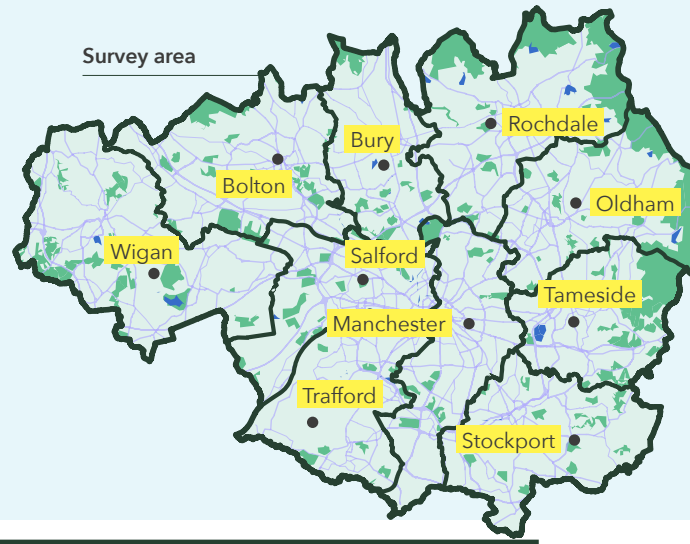
Some people who use a wheelchair or a mobility scooter may not identify with the term walking and may prefer to use the term wheeling. We use the terms walking and wheeling together to ensure we are as inclusive as possible.

Headlines

Greater Manchester

Population^[i]
3,009,664

2,402,706 adults
606,958 children

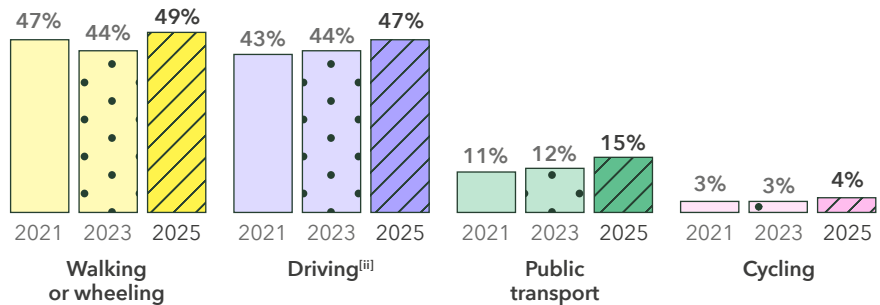


Frequency of different modes of travel

Walking and wheeling as well as driving are the most common modes of travel amongst residents in Greater Manchester. Since 2023 walking and wheeling appears to be increasing.

i. ONS mid-year 2024 population estimates. This is the most recent available for Greater Manchester.

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



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.

49%

of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week

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

56% of people aged 16-25

43% of people aged 66+

13%

of residents cycle at least once a week

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

8% of women

17% 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

58% of disabled people

71% of non-disabled people

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

40% of women

46% of men

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

59% of socio-economic group DE

75% 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 Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey data, every year, walking, wheeling and cycling:

prevents
3,685
serious long-term
health conditions

creates
£894.1 million
in economic benefit for
individuals and the region

saves
84,000 tonnes
of greenhouse gas emissions

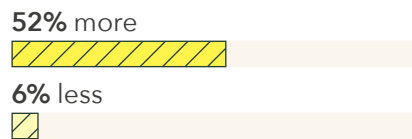
Walking, wheeling and cycling reduces congestion by taking up to 500,000 cars off the roads every day.

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

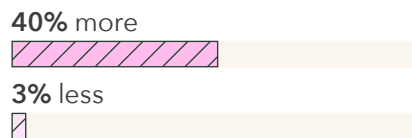
Percentage of residents who would like to use different types of transport more or less in the future:

22% of residents want to drive less. 43% of residents agree that they often use a car because no other transport options are available.

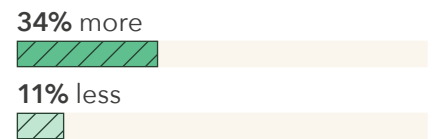
Walk or wheel



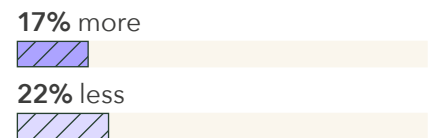
Cycle



Take public transport

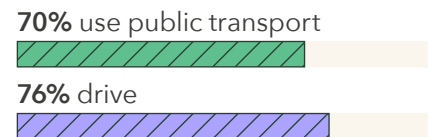
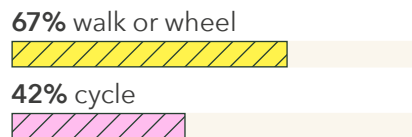


Drive



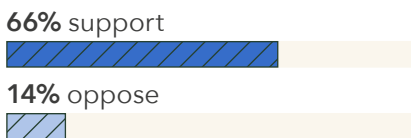
Cycling is seen as less safe than other forms of transport

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

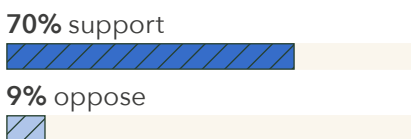


Residents support more connected neighbourhoods

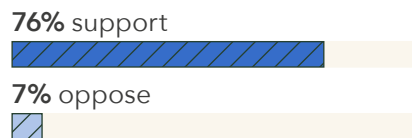
55% of residents support shifting investment from road-building schemes to fund walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. 16% oppose such a shift.



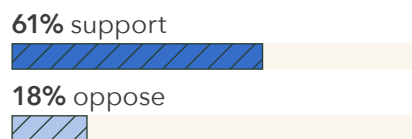
stopping vehicles parking on the pavement



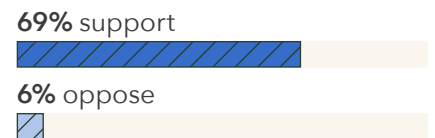
reducing speed limits, improving crossing points and introducing protected cycle paths in school neighbourhoods



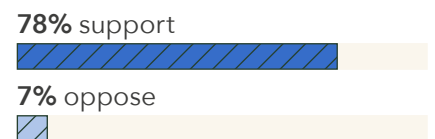
improving and increasing off-road walking, wheeling and cycling paths



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



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



having shops, schools, green space and public transport within a short walk or wheel of their home^[v]

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 Greater Manchester the number of residents walking and wheeling at least five days a week has increased since 2023.

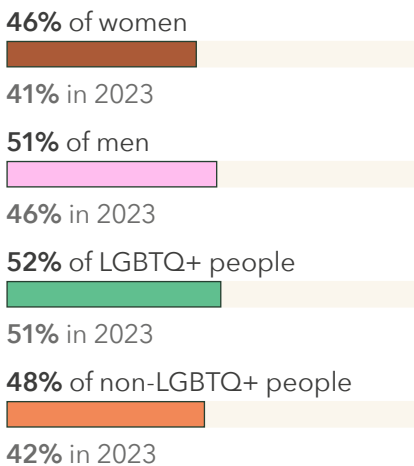
Half of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week and encouragingly, the majority of residents thinks it's safe to walk or wheel in their local area.

94%
of all residents
walk or wheel
91% in 2023

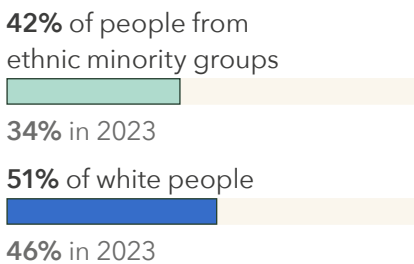
49%
of all residents
walk or wheel
at least five
days a week
44% in 2023

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

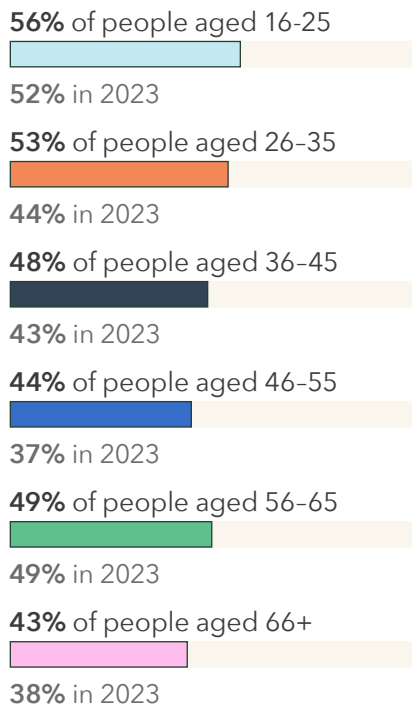
Gender and sexuality⁽ⁱ⁾



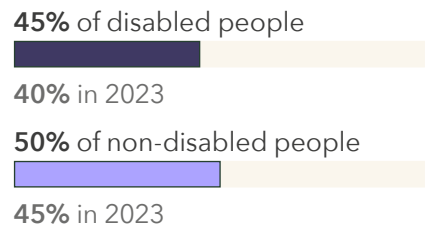
Ethnicity



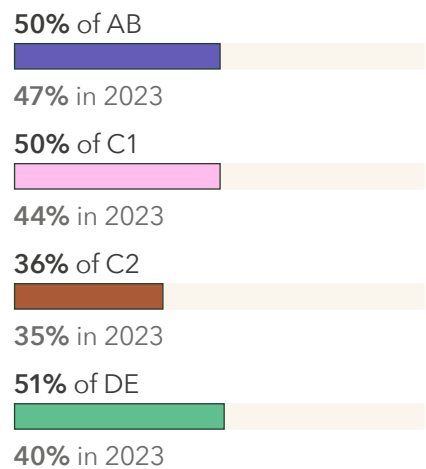
Age



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

67%

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

59% in 2023

45%

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

46% in 2023

71%

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

68% in 2023

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

Gender and sexuality

67% of women



60% in 2023

68% of men



59% in 2023

65% of LGBTQ+ people



62% in 2023

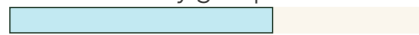
68% of non-LGBTQ+ people



60% in 2023

Ethnicity

64% of people from ethnic minority groups



59% in 2023

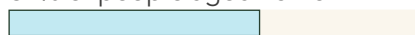
68% of white people



60% in 2023

Age

61% of people aged 16-25



56% in 2023

69% of people aged 26-35



67% in 2023

70% of people aged 36-45



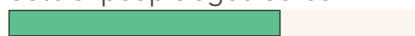
53% in 2023

73% of people aged 46-55



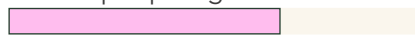
57% in 2023

66% of people aged 56-65



68% in 2023

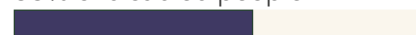
66% of people aged 66+



57% in 2023

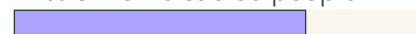
Disability

58% of disabled people



52% in 2023

71% of non-disabled people



62% in 2023

Socio-economic group

70% of AB



65% in 2023

65% of C1



61% in 2023

70% of C2



58% in 2023

65% of DE



50% in 2023



Rabiya

I'm a car user, but I enjoy walking – green spaces are good for your health. Consistent public transport helps; we get the train into Manchester city centre and hop on the free bus or just walk around. It's easier to walk with the buggy in the city centre – it's very pedestrianised and the edges of the pavement aren't uneven.

My daughter loves going outside, walking just calms her down and there's a lot to learn from being outdoors. She's very inquisitive, she likes pointing out the yellow buses. So, I think making the surroundings more visually appealing with public artwork is great.

Cycling

Participation, safety and satisfaction



Cycling participation

There is great potential for cycling in Greater Manchester and encouragingly, perceptions of safety have improved since 2023.

The proportion of residents cycling at least once a week has also increased, however, safety, including road safety and personal safety, remains the biggest barrier to cycling.^[i]

31%

of all residents cycle
28% in 2023

13%

of all residents cycle at least once a week
10% in 2023

Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

Gender and sexuality

8% of women



6% in 2023

17% of men



14% in 2023

18% of LGBTQ+ people



16% in 2023

12% of non-LGBTQ+ people



9% in 2023

Ethnicity

14% of people from ethnic minority groups



6% in 2023

12% of white people



11% in 2023

Age

12% of people aged 16-25



10% in 2023

14% of people aged 26-35



8% in 2023

11% of people aged 36-45



10% in 2023

17% of people aged 46-55



13% in 2023

13% of people aged 56-65



15% in 2023

8% of people aged 66+



4% in 2023

Disability

6% of disabled people



5% in 2023

15% of non-disabled people



12% in 2023

Socio-economic group

16% of AB



12% in 2023

12% of C1



7% in 2023

12% of C2



13% in 2023

8% of DE



8% in 2023

i. See Bike Life 2019 Greater Manchester report.

Cycling safety and satisfaction

42%

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

35% in 2023

30%

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

28% in 2023

45%

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

41% in 2023

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

Gender and sexuality

40% of women



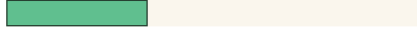
35% in 2023

46% of men



37% in 2023

34% of LGBTQ+ people



42% in 2023

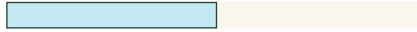
44% of non-LGBTQ+ people



35% in 2023

Ethnicity

51% of people from ethnic minority groups



49% in 2023

40% of white people



32% in 2023

Age

45% of people aged 16-25



46% in 2023

43% of people aged 26-35



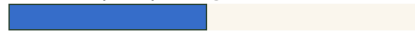
42% in 2023

46% of people aged 36-45



36% in 2023

48% of people aged 46-55



31% in 2023

38% of people aged 56-65



34% in 2023

34% of people aged 66+



24% in 2023

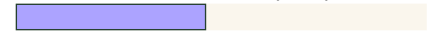
Disability

32% of disabled people



30% in 2023

46% of non-disabled people



37% in 2023

Socio-economic group

45% of AB



32% in 2023

39% of C1



38% in 2023

48% of C2



43% in 2023

41% of DE



36% in 2023



Freshta

When I started cycling, I knew I wanted to do long distance. I had lessons with the Bike Project - they support refugees and asylum seekers. When I came to Manchester, they supported me with a road bike.

I started mountaineering in Afghanistan - I'm hoping to climb Everest. Cycling became part of my training. I cycled from Stockport to the Lake District in two days - it was amazing.

The cycle lanes absolutely need improvement. Where I cycle to work there's no lane, and buses are constantly coming and drive by very close. When there's a lane, I'm much more confident.

Benefits of walking and wheeling

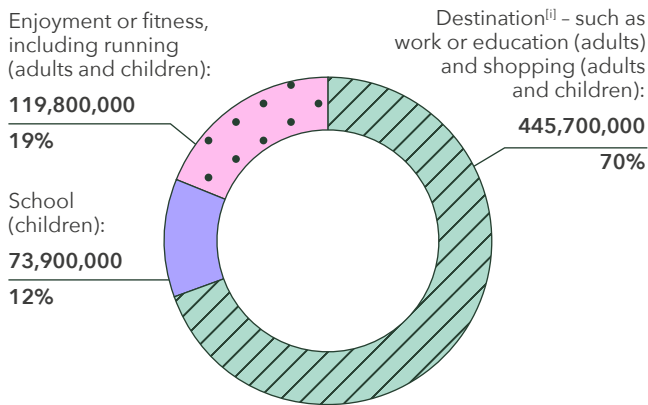
Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

Together, Greater Manchester residents walk or wheel 60 times around the world every day

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

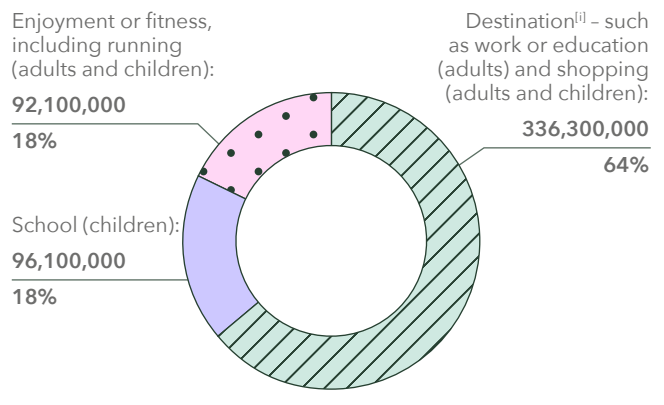
Annual walking and wheeling trips by purpose^[i]

639.5 million trips in 2025 which add up to **542.2 million miles**



Average walking or wheeling trip distance: 0.8 miles

524.6 million trips in 2023 which add up to **433.1 million miles**



Average walking or wheeling trip distance: 0.8 miles

i. Destination trips also includes shopping trips by children, due to using Greater Manchester's Travel Diary Survey data as an input for modelling.

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 Greater Manchester is

£640.7 million

£315.3 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 **£1.13** is saved for each mile walked or wheeled instead of driven. Over a year this adds up to **£226.7 million** in economic benefit for residents and society from **200.5 million miles** walked or wheeled by those that could have used a car.



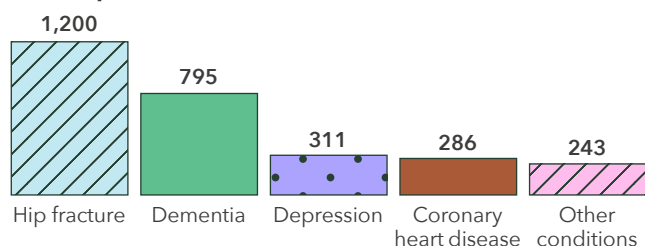
Modelling uses inputs from the Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey from 2024 and 2022 to understand trips and benefits from walking and wheeling across the region. 2023 model estimates in this report differ slightly to those published in 2023, due to being recalculated for the inclusion of walking trips as part of work under destination trips. See methodology report for details.

Walking and wheeling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Walking in the region prevents 2,836 serious long-term health conditions each year.

2,050 in 2023

Cases prevented



Above figures are based on applying Greater Manchester Combined Authority 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.

This saves the NHS

£34.8 million per year

£25.1 million in 2023

Equivalent to the cost of

770,000

GP appointments

610,000 in 2023

The physical activity benefits from walking

prevent 571 early deaths annually

473 in 2023

which is valued at

£2.35 billion

£1.71 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:

130,000 kg of NO_x

(Nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide)

100,000 kg in 2023

and

12,000 kg of particulates

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

8,700 kg in 2023

39% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



39% in 2023

Walking and wheeling helps mitigate the climate crisis

By walking or wheeling instead of driving, residents save

54,000 tonnes

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

42,000 tonnes in 2023

This is equivalent to the carbon footprint of

50,000 people taking flights

from Manchester to New York.

In 2023 domestic transport accounted for **29%** of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2023 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures.

Walking and wheeling keeps the region moving

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

440,000 return trips

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

340,000 in 2023

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

1,318 miles

equivalent to the distance from Manchester to Plymouth and back twice.

1,005 miles in 2023

ii. 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

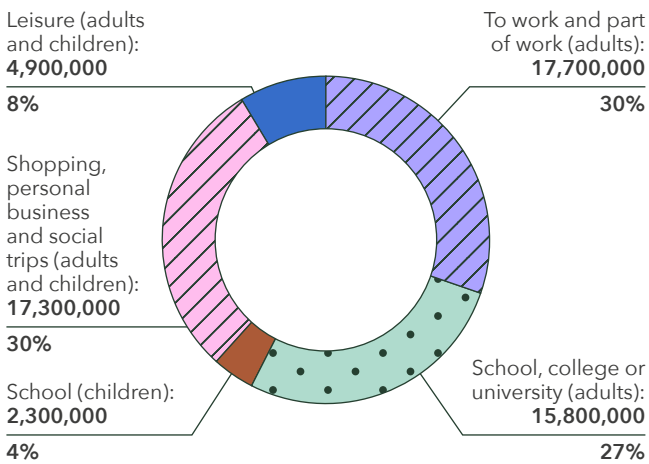


Together, Greater Manchester residents cycle 21 times around the world every day

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.

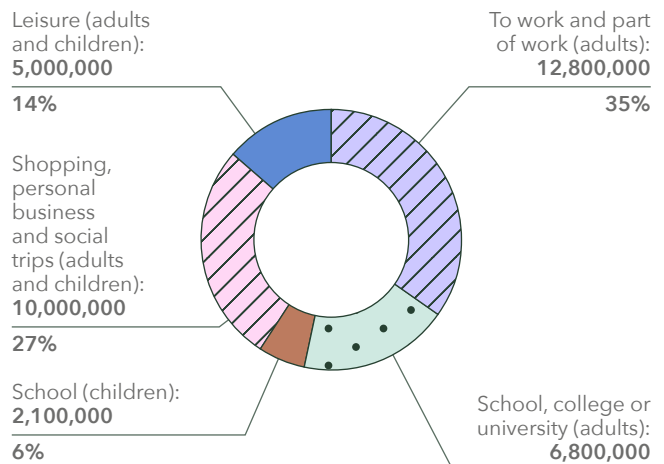
Annual cycling trips by purpose^[i]

58.1 million trips in 2025 which add up to **193.3 million miles**



Average cycling trip distance: 3.3 miles

36.8 million trips in 2023 which add up to **133.3 million miles**



Average cycling trip distance: 3.6 miles

i. Shopping, personal business and social trips also includes trips by children, due to using Greater Manchester's Travel Diary Survey data as an input for modelling.

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 Greater Manchester is

£253.4 million

£153 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 **£1.84** is saved for each mile cycled instead of driven. Over a year this adds up to **£206.2 million** in economic benefit for residents and society from **112.2 million miles** cycled by those that could have used a car.



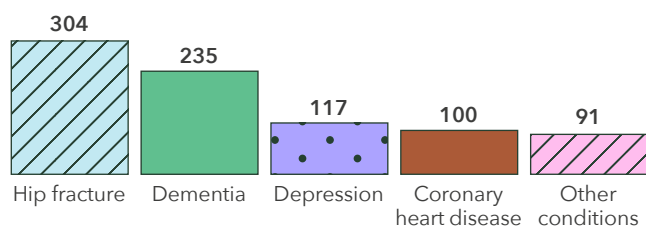
Modelling uses inputs from the Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey from 2024 and 2022 to understand trips and benefits from cycling across the region. 2023 model estimates in this report differ slightly to those published in 2023, due to being recalculated for the inclusion of cycling trips as part of work. See methodology report for details.

Cycling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Cycling in the region prevents 849 serious long-term health conditions each year.

521 in 2023

Cases prevented



This saves the NHS

£10.8 million per year

£6.7 million in 2023

Equivalent to the cost of

240,000

GP appointments

160,000 in 2023

Above figures are based on applying Greater Manchester Combined Authority 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 72 early deaths annually

53 in 2023

which is valued at

£295 million

£191 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:

48,000 kg of NO_x

(Nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide)

32,000 kg in 2023

and

5,200 kg of particulates

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

3,100 kg in 2023

39% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



39% in 2023

Cycling helps mitigate the climate crisis

By cycling instead of driving, residents save

30,000 tonnes

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

19,000 tonnes in 2023

This is equivalent to the carbon footprint of

28,000 people taking flights

from Manchester to New York.

In 2023 domestic transport accounted for **29%** of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2023 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures.

Cycling keeps the region moving

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

53,000 return trips

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

32,000 in 2023

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

159 miles

equivalent to the distance from Manchester to Bedford.

96 miles in 2023

ii. 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.

54%

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

53% 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

53% 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?

84%

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

79% in 2023

79%

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

73% in 2023

86%

more parks or green spaces close to their home

83% in 2023

83%

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

79% 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?

78%

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

68%

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

68%

accessible walking and wheeling routes to and from bus stops

76%

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

75%

improved walking and wheeling crossing facilities near bus stops

84%

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?

74%

wider pavements
70% in 2023

75%

more frequent road crossings, with reduced wait times
71% in 2023

80%

nicer places along streets to stop and rest, like more benches, trees and shelters
78% in 2023

77%

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

73%

fewer cars parked on the pavement
67% in 2023

77%

less fear of crime or antisocial behaviour in their area
72% in 2023

14% of junctions with traffic lights have no red or green light for pedestrians



Damian

Over the past few years there's been a noticeable change in opportunities to blend wheeling with public transport.

These, complemented by positive staff attitudes, have made me more confident to travel independently.

Uneven roads and pavements make getting around very difficult. When combined with pavement parking and bin collection day it becomes more like a slalom course.

These obstacles mean I have to plan my journeys very carefully and/or take longer routes.

Similarly, using my handcycle has proved too risky on the roads so I would like to see more segregated cycle paths. For now, I have to be content to go off road for my cardio exercise.

Overall though things are looking up for integrated accessible travel in Greater Manchester.

What would make cycling better?

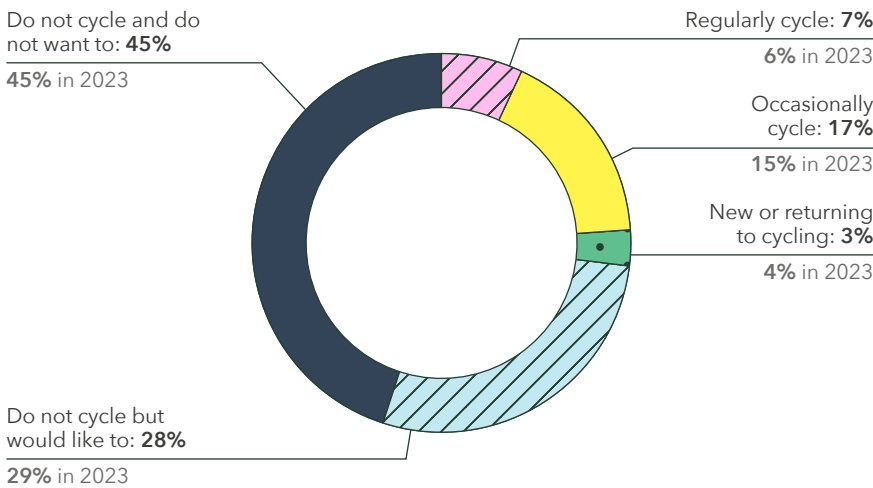


Many residents want to cycle

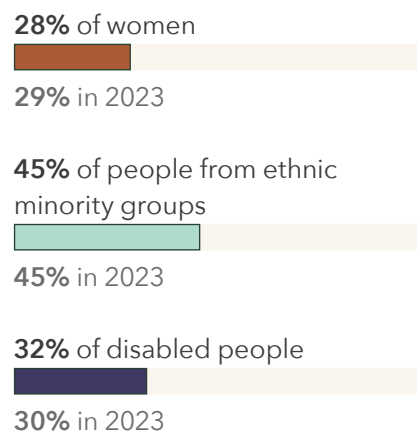
There is considerable appetite to start cycling from residents who don't already.

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?

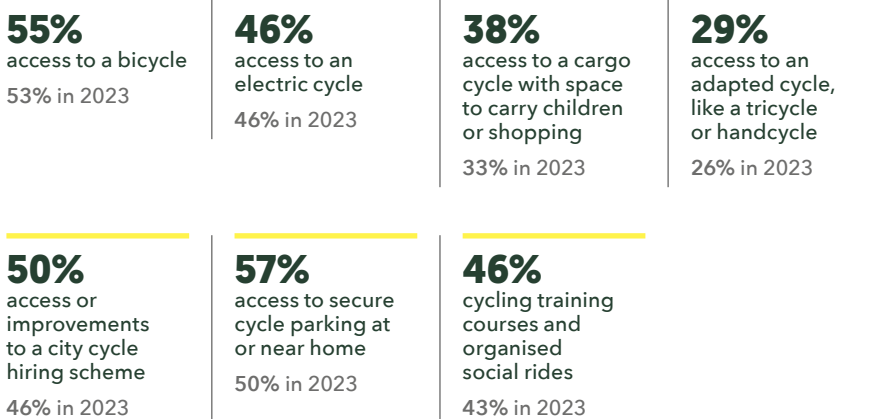


What proportion of residents said they 'do not cycle but would like to'

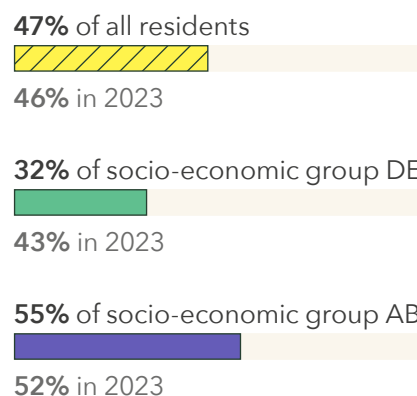


Residents want more support to cycle

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



Proportions of residents with access to an adult cycle



Residents want improved cycling infrastructure

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

In the region there are:

17% of households

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

528 miles

of traffic-free cycle paths away from the road^[i]

504 miles in 2023

50 miles

of cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

22 miles in 2023

2,224

cycle parking spaces across 204 railway, bus and tram stations^[ii]

1,851 spaces across 187 stations in 2023

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

67%

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

64% in 2023

62%

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

59% in 2023

62%

more signposted local cycle routes along quieter streets

60% in 2023

68%

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

62% in 2023

Among residents:

76%

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

58%

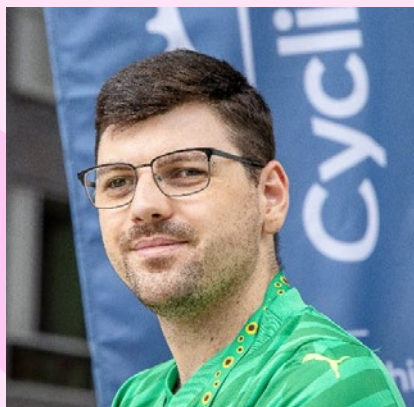
support building more cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians, even when this would mean less room for other road traffic

55% in 2023

69%

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

- i. This includes some stretches of farm/access tracks which vehicles occasionally use.
- ii. 2025 data includes cycle parking at bus stations and Park and Ride stations which were not included in 2023.



Nathan

My experience of cycling hasn't been great because I have limited peripheral vision. If I check behind me, I can't see in front of me, so I felt unsafe.

When I attended the Cycling UK sessions, I saw the easy rider and instantly said 'that's the bike I've been waiting for'.

I've got anxiety, autism and a learning disability; it's given me confidence so I'm able to go out more. You can access the bike anytime and they get you on the road at your own pace.

Barriers limit my independence - I need someone with me to help me lift the bike over.

Nathan accessed the cycle loan through Inclusive Cycling Experience, a Cycling UK pilot programme funded by the Motability Foundation.

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

70% support



9% oppose



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

These are known as 'School Streets'.

26 schools

in the region have School Streets schemes

6 schools in 2023

Includes School Streets operating under permanent Traffic Regulation Order. There are further schemes operating on a trial basis which have not been included.

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

12 years old
to walk or wheel

12 years old
to cycle

13 years old
to use public transport

45%

agree there is space for children to socialise and play

45% 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.

29%

of residents think that their streets are not dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles
26% in 2023

61%

support setting traffic-reduction targets and taking action to achieve these
57% in 2023

66%

support low-traffic neighbourhoods
63% in 2023

24%

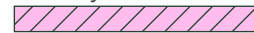
of the total length of unclassified roads in the region have nothing to prevent through traffic. This can result in rat running.^[i]
25% in 2023

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

67% walk or wheel more



59% cycle more



58%

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

44%

of the region's streets have 20 mph speed limits (excluding motorways)

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

57% 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.

55%

agree they regularly chat to their neighbours, more than just to say hello
47% in 2023

48%

feel able to participate in making their neighbourhood a better place to live
43% in 2023

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

69%

of all residents



64% in 2023

68% of women



64% in 2023

71% of men



66% in 2023

71% of LGBTQ+ people



63% in 2023

71% of non-LGBTQ+ people



66% in 2023

71% of people from ethnic minority groups



62% in 2023

69% of white people



65% in 2023

61% of disabled people



58% in 2023

73% of non-disabled people



67% in 2023

59% of socio-economic group DE



53% in 2023

75% of socio-economic group AB



74% 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.

Developing the region

Improving walking, wheeling and cycling



In Greater Manchester we're committed to building the world-class Bee Network – an integrated, affordable, accessible public transport system – with walking, wheeling and cycling at the very heart.

Since the start of the Bee Network, around £40 million a year has been invested in the city region's active travel programme and infrastructure. More than 140km of Bee Network standard active travel infrastructure has now been delivered, including 29 protected junctions and delivery continues at pace. 142 new crossings and 55 signalised junctions have also been introduced and a further 78km of schemes are due to be completed within the next three years.

Whilst improving infrastructure is vital to our active travel ambitions, it is not the only way Greater Manchester is investing in active travel. We've identified the barriers people face when walking, wheeling or cycling and are supporting individuals to travel actively.



In September 2025 the scheme clocked 1.5 million rides, with bike hire users having pedalled more than 3.7 million kilometres.



During 2023-25 our bike library programme, which allows people to borrow a bike for free, continued to grow to almost 40 local libraries. We've trained over 4,000 people to cycle more confidently and funded over 1,800 cycle parking spaces. The Cycle and Stride programme has also encouraged 12,000 people to cycle and walk during this time, with the new 'Wheels and Walks' programme launched in January 2025 continuing this good work.

Greater Manchester's Starling Bank Bike Hire scheme has also played an integral role in enabling more people to cycle. In September 2025 the scheme clocked 1.5 million rides, with bike hire users having pedalled more than 3.7 million kilometres.



Youth Travel Ambassador programme

The Youth Travel Ambassador (YTA) programme provides young people aged 11 to 19 with the skills and confidence to address transport issues impacting their school and community.

During this time, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) has worked closely with 28 secondary schools to deliver the YTA programme, encouraging 32,000 students to develop their own behaviour change campaigns and to walk, wheel or cycle. The impact of this programme can clearly be seen. Changes in travel behaviours towards active travel modes have been recorded in YTA schools, with schools such as Stretford High School reporting a 6% increase in cycling and a 7% increase in walking rates over the summer terms since 2022/23.



Chorlton-Deansgate route

The Manchester to Chorlton Cycle Way is Manchester's flagship cycle route. The 6km protected cycleway runs between Deansgate Interchange and Chorlton, making it the longest cycle route in Greater Manchester. It features segregated cycle tracks in both directions and has several protected junctions, separating cyclists from motorised traffic and pedestrians which allows all users to navigate the junctions safely.



School Streets in Greater Manchester

By 2030, Greater Manchester's aim is for 70% of primary school pupils to walk, wheel, scoot or cycle to school and the School Streets programme plays an important role in reaching this goal.

A School Street makes it safer for students to travel actively to and from school, restricting access to motorised vehicles outside a school at drop-off and pick-up times during the term.

Greater Manchester is on track to reach 60 School Streets by the end of the 2025-26 academic year, with £1.3m of funding allocated. The ambition to boost the number of School Streets to 100 by 2028 was set out by Mayor Andy Burnham in his manifesto, with Dame Sarah Storey taking the commitment forward with TfGM.

Looking forward

Better places and streets for everyone

Our vision for the Bee Network is for active travel and public transport to be truly integrated, so people can move easily between walking, wheeling or cycling for shorter journeys, and catching a bus, tram or train for longer journeys.

In 2024 it was agreed that as well as the delivery of new and improved active travel infrastructure, creating a strategic cycle network was a priority. This includes creating a core network of routes that will connect to the main district centres and is scheduled to be completed by 2037. Greater Manchester's Local Transport Plan will also include a walking and wheeling section, with its own specific delivery plan to connect people to the wider network.

Since buses were brought under local control in September 2023, journeys are up 12% year on year, and the 2024 Active Travel Annual Report noted the number of people walking short journeys has increased from 52% to 57% over the last five years.

The inclusion of rail in the Bee Network from 2027 will also include measures to improve accessibility, walking and wheeling routes to rail stations.

School travel

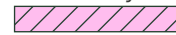
In peak periods almost half of Greater Manchester trips are education related and many of these could be made by active travel or public transport. This is having a negative impact on health, road safety, the environment, congestion, and children's independence.

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

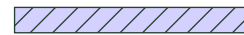
55% on walking and wheeling



41% on cycling



58% on buses



64% on trains



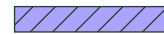
54% on trams



42% on other forms of public transport such as community transport, metro or subway, local ferry



38% on driving



Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate deaths and life-changing injuries on Greater Manchester's roads by 2040.

The vision behind Greater Manchester's School Travel Strategy is to enable more children and young people to travel to places of education in an active and sustainable way, including via public transport.

Actions include creating safer streets around schools, continuing to deliver walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, increasing access to cycles and engaging schools and local communities, so the transport system better serves young people.

Cycle hire and access to cycles

Greater Manchester's Starling Bank Bike Hire enables people who either don't own their own bike, or don't have it with them, to opt for an active mode of travel.

Operating in parts of Manchester, Trafford and Salford, the hire bike stations are now within 400m of 84% of the population where the scheme is operating.

The long-term ambition is to grow the scheme. Cycle stations will be added to new areas within Greater Manchester in 2025-26, with further expansion scheduled from 2028 onwards.

As part of our ongoing commitment to reducing the barriers to cycling and enabling more people to use a bike for free, support of Greater Manchester's bike libraries continues.

Road danger reduction

In November 2024, a new Vision Zero Strategy and Action Plan for the city region was unanimously approved, with leaders from Greater Manchester's ten local authorities giving their strong support.

Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate deaths and life-changing injuries on Greater Manchester's roads by 2040.

Although collisions between vehicles on the road may occur, deaths and life changing injuries can be prevented, and the Safe System - the internationally endorsed model of best practice across the road safety industry - aims to minimise the impact of a collision.



Steve, Headteacher

Russell Scott has been running a School Street for three years.

We started to change the culture of the school run by advising parents and carers about the benefits of active travel and the right of all children to clean air. The children are the best advocates of School Streets - give them a voice because it's about them and their health!

The School Street has been a game changer. Blocking off

the roads around school means families are walking, scooting and cycling... and guess what? Talking to each other.

Parents are really enthusiastic and have told us that they talk more and spot things walking to school that they would never come across whilst driving.

We've fitted bike and scooter racks to encourage the children to choose active travel.

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 Greater Manchester 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. In Greater Manchester, the Travel Diary Survey is used for modelling. 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 walking, wheeling and 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.

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

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The project is co-ordinated by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust.

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