

Aberdeen

Walking and Cycling Index 2025



Our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling



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Councillor
Aberdeen City Council

Aberdeen City Council is shaping streets and public spaces that are accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

Walking, wheeling and cycling are not only practical and sustainable ways to travel, but they also improve mental and physical health, reduce emissions, and make our communities more vibrant.

The latest Walking and Cycling Index shows encouraging progress. 94% of residents walk or wheel, and more than half do so at least five days a week. Cycling participation remains lower at 34%, but the potential is clear; 44% of residents want to cycle more, and 52% support shifting investment from road building to active travel and public transport.

Since 2023, Aberdeen City Council and its partners have worked hard to deliver significant improvements to active travel infrastructure and behaviour change initiatives. These efforts are helping to create safer streets, reduce transport poverty, and make it easier for people of all ages and abilities to choose active travel. From

new cycle shelters at multi storey buildings to expanded 20 mph speed limits, and from community-led bike recycling schemes to inclusive cycling projects, the city is taking meaningful steps forward. These developments are complemented by major infrastructure upgrades, such as segregated cycle tracks on South College Street and Craigshaw Drive, and improved crossings that make school journeys safer and more accessible.

Looking ahead, ambitious plans within the City Centre and Beach Masterplan and the forthcoming Local Transport Strategy will continue to transform Aberdeen's streets and public spaces. These projects will not only enhance connectivity but also create greener, more welcoming environments for everyone.

The data in this report demonstrates why continued investment matters: every year, active travel in Aberdeen prevents 605 serious long-term health conditions, delivers £217.9 million in economic benefits for the city, and cuts 9,900 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. By working together, we can build a healthier, greener and more connected Aberdeen for generations to come.

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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 third report from Aberdeen, produced in partnership with Aberdeen City 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 1,223 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 Aberdeen 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

Aberdeen

Population^[i]
231,780

194,067 adults
37,713 children

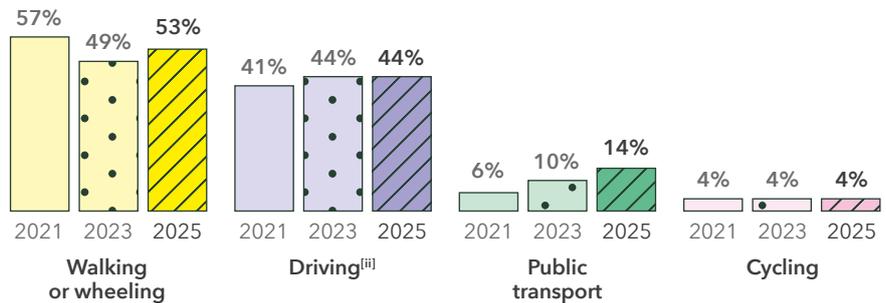
Survey area



Frequency of different modes of travel

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

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



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

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.

53%

of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week

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

63% of people aged 16-25

50% of people aged 46-55

13%

of residents cycle at least once a week

Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

11% of disabled people

14% of non-disabled people

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^[iii]

67% of socio-economic group DE

80% of socio-economic group C1

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

65% of people from ethnic minority groups

44% of white people

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

63% of people aged 16-25

85% of people aged 66+

iii. Socio-economic group C1 is supervisory/clerical and students 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
605
serious long-term
health conditions

creates
£217.9 million
in economic benefit for
individuals and the city

saves
9,900 tonnes
of greenhouse gas emissions

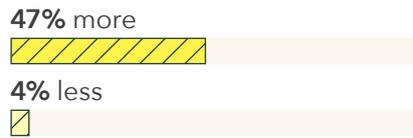
Walking, wheeling and cycling reduces congestion by taking up to 57,000 cars off the roads every day.

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

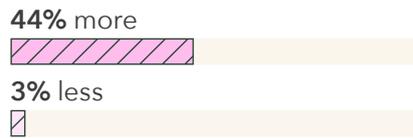
Percentage of residents who would like to use different types of transport more or less in the future:

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

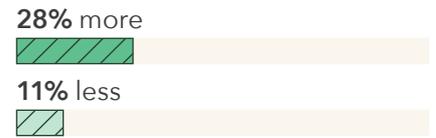
Walk or wheel



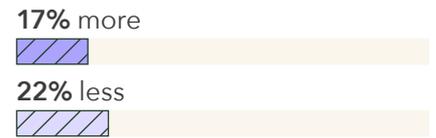
Cycle



Take public transport

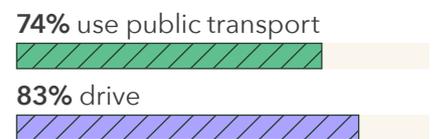
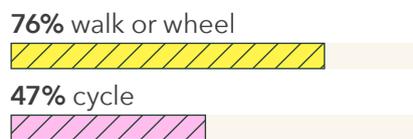


Drive



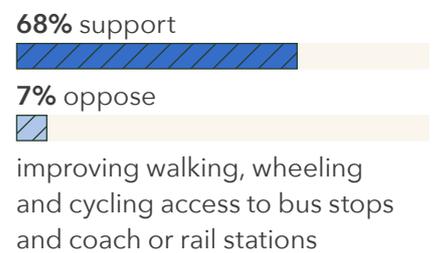
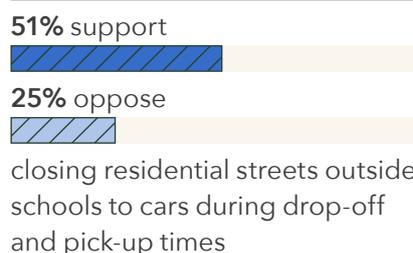
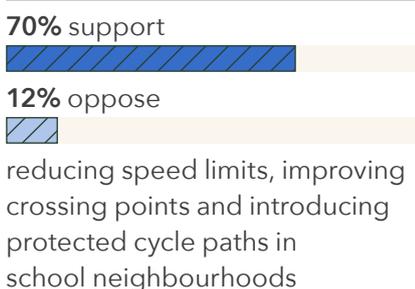
Cycling is seen as less safe than other forms of transport

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



Residents support more connected neighbourhoods

52% of residents support shifting investment from road-building schemes to fund walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. 22% oppose such a shift.



iv. 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 the number of Aberdeen 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.

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

53%
of all residents walk or wheel at least five days a week
49% in 2023

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

Gender and sexuality^[i]

52% of women
49% in 2023

55% of men
50% in 2023

62% of LGBTQ+ people
57% in 2023

53% of non-LGBTQ+ people
47% in 2023

Ethnicity

49% of people from ethnic minority groups
41% in 2023

54% of white people
50% in 2023

Age

63% of people aged 16-25
53% in 2023

56% of people aged 26-35
51% in 2023

50% of people aged 36-45
49% in 2023

50% of people aged 46-55
48% in 2023

49% of people aged 56-65
46% in 2023

52% of people aged 66+
48% in 2023

Disability

46% of disabled people
43% in 2023

56% of non-disabled people
51% in 2023

Socio-economic group^[iii]

52% of AB
55% in 2023

60% of C1
49% in 2023

51% of C2
33% in 2023

46% of DE
50% in 2023

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

76%

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

63% in 2023

54%

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

49% in 2023

76%

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

71% in 2023

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

Gender and sexuality

78% of women



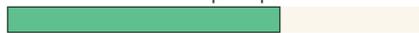
63% in 2023

74% of men



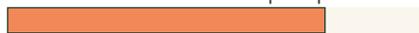
63% in 2023

66% of LGBTQ+ people



58% in 2023

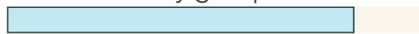
77% of non-LGBTQ+ people



65% in 2023

Ethnicity

84% of people from ethnic minority groups



65% in 2023

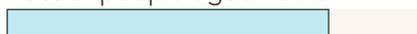
75% of white people



63% in 2023

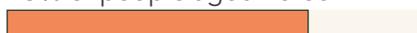
Age

78% of people aged 16-25



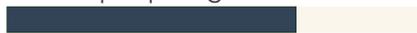
65% in 2023

73% of people aged 26-35



59% in 2023

70% of people aged 36-45



66% in 2023

80% of people aged 46-55



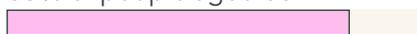
59% in 2023

76% of people aged 56-65



69% in 2023

83% of people aged 66+



60% in 2023

Disability

72% of disabled people



57% in 2023

78% of non-disabled people



65% in 2023

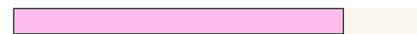
Socio-economic group

76% of AB



67% in 2023

80% of C1



63% in 2023

79% of C2



55% in 2023

67% of DE



60% in 2023



Joseph, commuter

I moved to Aberdeen as a student. I started cycling to work and it became the best way to get around. Cycling gives me a real sense of freedom - I can hop on my bike and get anywhere pretty quickly. I became more confident as I learned the city's roads, junctions, and traffic patterns. Now I know where to be on the road, where to avoid, and when the best times to ride are.

I love cycling home after work. I find it helps me relax.

The cycling infrastructure here is pretty good, but there's room for improvement. I think cycling is becoming more popular in Aberdeen, which is great to see.

Participation, safety and satisfaction



Cycling participation

Currently, 13% of Aberdeen 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]

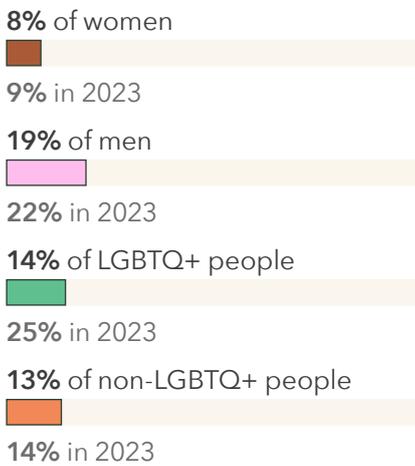
The potential for cycling is huge, and unlocking it depends on providing safe, dedicated space for cycling.

34%
of all residents cycle
36% in 2023

13%
of all residents cycle at least once a week
16% in 2023

Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

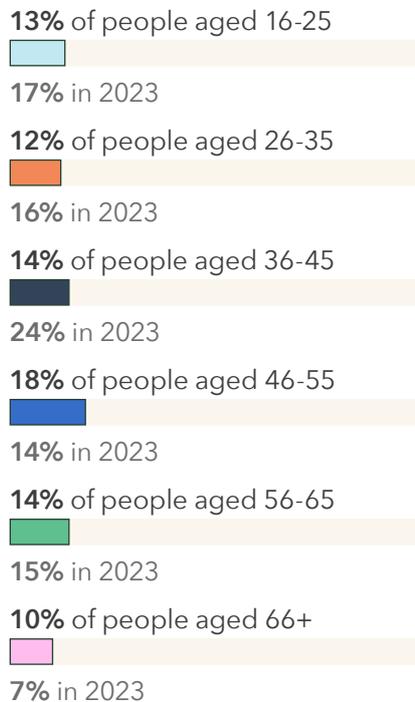
Gender and sexuality



Ethnicity



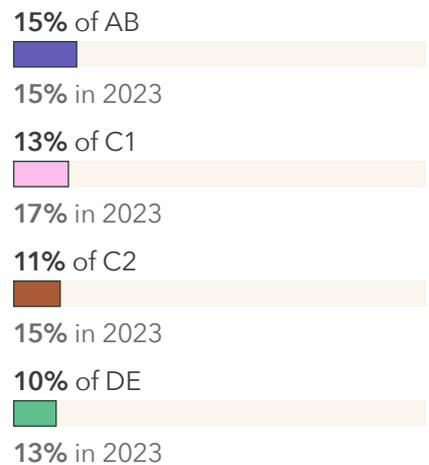
Age



Disability



Socio-economic group



i. See Bike Life 2019 UK report.

Cycling safety and satisfaction

47%

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

34% in 2023

35%

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

29% in 2023

45%

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

38% in 2023

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

Gender and sexuality

44% of women



32% in 2023

49% of men



37% in 2023

32% of LGBTQ+ people



26% in 2023

49% of non-LGBTQ+ people



36% in 2023

Ethnicity

65% of people from ethnic minority groups



45% in 2023

44% of white people



33% in 2023

Age

49% of people aged 16-25



42% in 2023

44% of people aged 26-35



30% in 2023

44% of people aged 36-45



36% in 2023

51% of people aged 46-55



34% in 2023

46% of people aged 56-65



34% in 2023

48% of people aged 66+



31% in 2023

Disability

44% of disabled people



30% in 2023

47% of non-disabled people



36% in 2023

Socio-economic group

45% of AB



35% in 2023

52% of C1



30% in 2023

43% of C2



34% in 2023

41% of DE



43% in 2023



Phil, school runner

I enjoy cycling as a way of getting around and the physical fitness benefits but sustainability is the main reason I do it.

I cycle with my son to school. He has his own bike. I hope that, maybe directly or indirectly, it encourages the younger generation.

In Aberdeen, we're quite a small city. I have a car and I do use it but the bike is just so cheap to run and a good way of getting from A to B.

It makes me feel a lot calmer and relaxed than being in a car. It's a bit of headspace time before work or home to compose yourself.

I think that Aberdeen needs more cycle infrastructure like at Craigshaw Drive where it's segregated for cycle use.

Benefits of walking and wheeling

Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

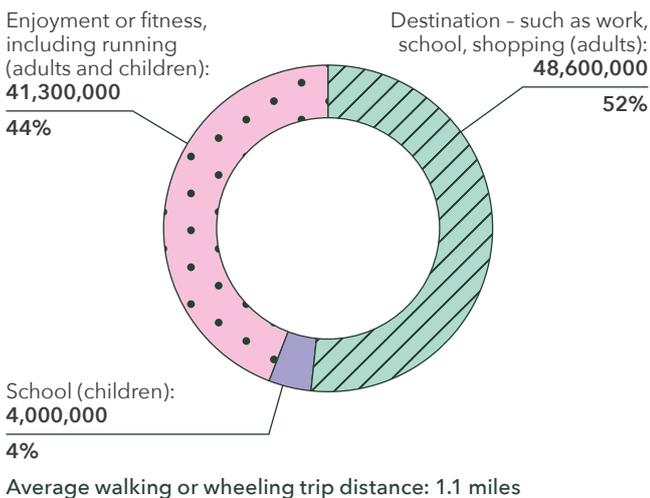


Together, Aberdeen residents walk or wheel 12 times around the world every day

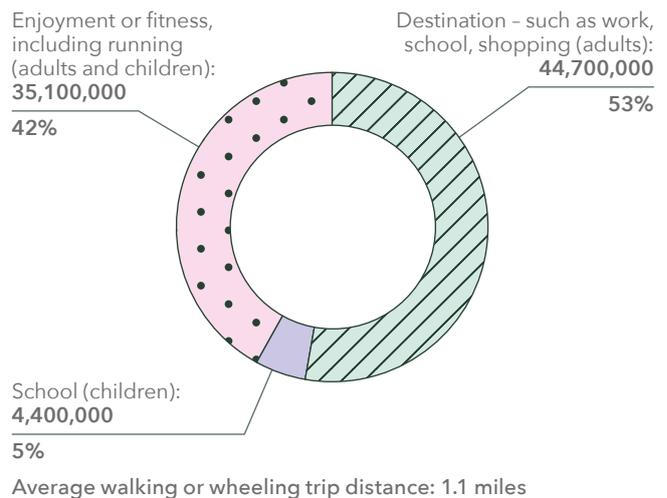
Walking and wheeling improves health and air quality, saves the NHS money, and reduces congestion.

Annual walking and wheeling trips by purpose

93.9 million trips in 2025 which add up to **105.4 million miles**



84.2 million trips in 2023 which add up to **92.9 million 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 Aberdeen is

£180.4 million

£129.3 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 **86p** is saved for each mile walked or wheeled instead of driven. Over a year this adds up to **£19.4 million** in economic benefit for residents and society from **22.6 million miles** walked or wheeled by those that could have used a car.



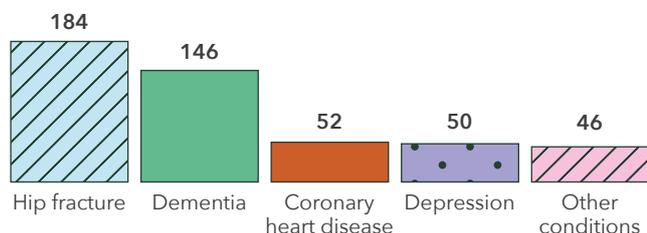
2023 model estimates in this report differ slightly to those published in 2023, due to being recalculated using Census 2022 population data instead 2021 mid-year estimates, as a more reliable source. See methodology report for details.

Walking and wheeling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Walking in the city prevents 477 serious long-term health conditions each year.

458 in 2023

Cases prevented



This saves the NHS

£5.9 million per year

£5.6 million in 2023

Equivalent to the cost of

130,000 GP appointments

140,000 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 138 early deaths annually

127 in 2023

which is valued at

£566 million

£462 million 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:

15,000 kg of NO_x

(Nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide)

15,000 kg in 2023

and

1,300 kg of particulates

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

1,200 kg in 2023

62% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



61% in 2023

Walking and wheeling helps mitigate the climate crisis

By walking or wheeling instead of driving, residents save

6,100 tonnes

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

5,800 tonnes in 2023

This is equivalent to the carbon footprint of

34,000 people taking flights

from Aberdeen to London.

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.

50,000 return trips

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

47,000 in 2023

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

149 miles

equivalent to the distance from Aberdeen to Glasgow.

140 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

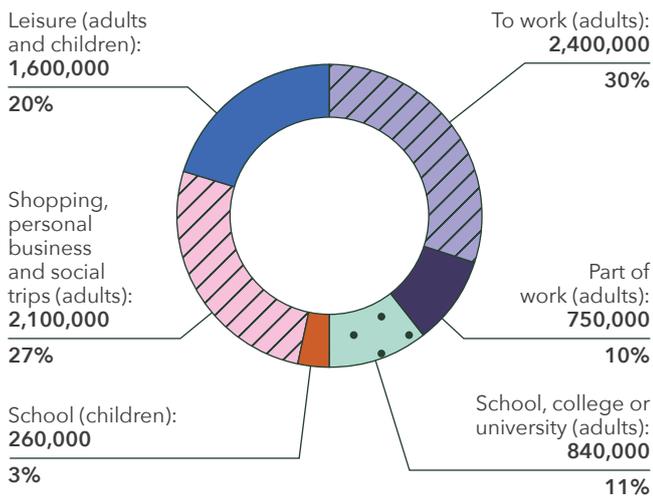


Together, Aberdeen residents cycle 3 times around the world every day

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.

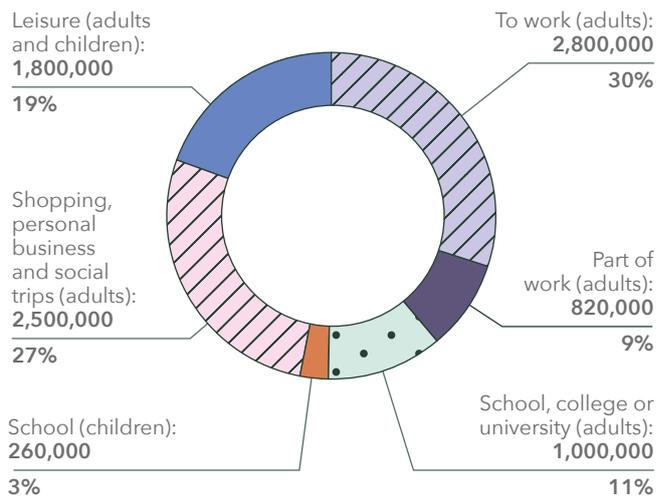
Annual cycling trips by purpose

7.9 million trips in 2025 which add up to **31.6 million miles**



Average cycling trip distance: 4 miles

9.2 million trips in 2023 which add up to **33.6 million miles**



Average cycling trip distance: 3.6 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 Aberdeen is

£37.5 million

£34.8 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 **£22.1 million** in economic benefit for residents and society from **14.1 million miles** cycled by those that could have used a car.



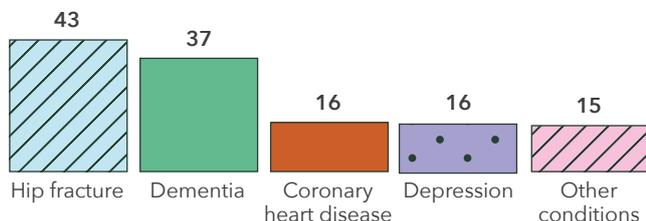
2023 model estimates in this report differ slightly to those published in 2023, due to being recalculated for the inclusion of cycling trips as part of work and using Census 2022 population data instead 2021 mid-year estimates, as a more reliable source. See methodology report for details.

Cycling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Cycling in the city prevents 127 serious long-term health conditions each year.

116 in 2023

Cases prevented



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.

This saves the NHS

£1.6 million per year

£1.5 million in 2023

Equivalent to the cost of

35,000

GP appointments

36,000 in 2023

The physical activity benefits from cycling

prevent 14 early deaths annually

15 in 2023

which is valued at

£55.8 million

£54.1 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:

6,200 kg of NO_x

(Nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide)

7,600 kg in 2023

and

653 kg of particulates

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

694 kg in 2023

62% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



61% in 2023

Cycling helps mitigate the climate crisis

By cycling instead of driving, residents save

3,800 tonnes

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

4,000 tonnes in 2023

This is equivalent to the carbon footprint of

21,000 people taking flights

from Aberdeen to London.

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.

6,800 return trips

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

7,900 in 2023

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

20 miles

equivalent to the distance from Aberdeen to Banchory.

24 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.

50%

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

50% in 2023

56%

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

50% 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

76%

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

72% in 2023

82%

more parks or green spaces close to their home

80% in 2023

82%

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

80% 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?

76%

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

69%

accessible walking and wheeling routes to and from bus stops

73%

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

73%

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?

67%
wider pavements
69% in 2023

68%
more frequent road crossings, with reduced wait times
68% in 2023

77%
nicer places along streets to stop and rest, like more benches, trees and shelters
76% in 2023

71%
better pavement accessibility, like level surfaces and dropped kerbs at crossing points
70% in 2023

63%
fewer cars parked on the pavement
66% in 2023

69%
less fear of crime or antisocial behaviour in their area
65% in 2023

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

83% have a pedestrian crossing



17% don't have a pedestrian crossing



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



Laura and Fiona, Sport Aberdeen

Our Community Sport Team run Scottish Cycling's Rock Up & Ride programme. The project is funded by Nestrans and offers a pathway to recreational cycling. We work in the Northfield, Seaton and Torry areas to provide community cycling opportunities for adults and children as well as groups traditionally underrepresented in cycling.

Our wide programme includes fun and friendly led rides for groups; tailored sessions for beginners building cycle confidence, through to those with more experience who want to cycle on the road. We

also offer priority group lessons for children and adults who want to learn to cycle.

Accessibility is important to us so bikes and helmets can be borrowed for free.

Similarly, Grampian Inclusive Cycling Bothies was set up to help people get active and engaged with cycling through adapted cycles. We have set up inclusive cycling hubs around Grampian like the one here in Seaton. We want to remove barriers to cycling and get more people enjoying the health and social benefits of cycling.

Cycling solutions

What would make cycling better?

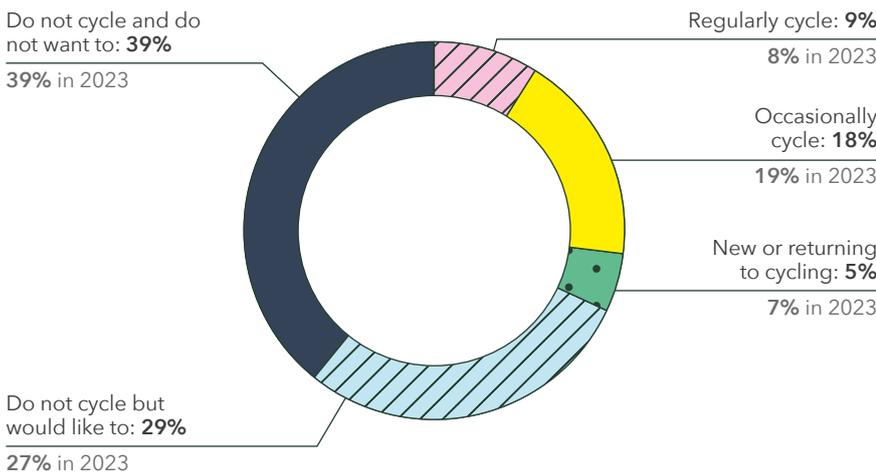


Many residents want to cycle

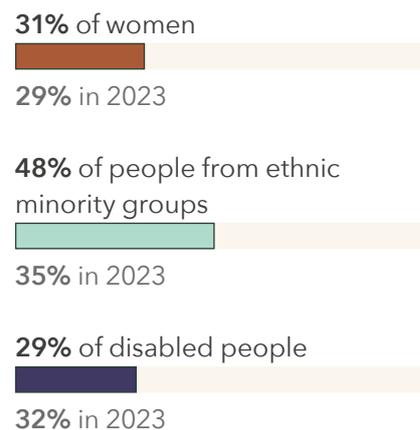
There is considerable appetite to start cycling from residents who don't already.

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?

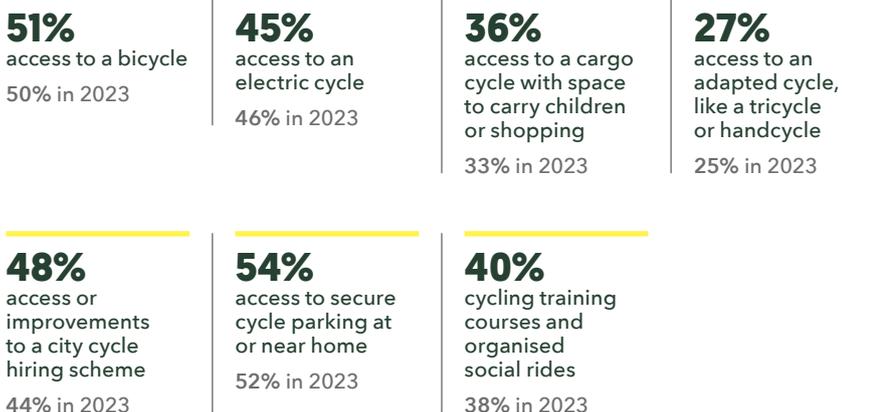


What proportion of residents said they 'do not cycle but would like to'

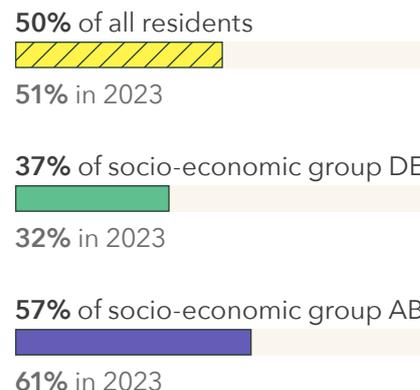


Residents want more support to cycle

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 city there are:

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

Among residents:

16% 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

15% in 2023

37 miles

of traffic-free cycle paths away from the road

36 miles in 2023

3 miles

of cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

2 miles in 2023

188

cycle parking spaces across 7 railway and bus stationsⁱ⁾

146 spaces across 3 stations in 2023

70%

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

70% in 2023

66%

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

66% in 2023

65%

more signposted local cycle routes along quieter streets

63% in 2023

63%

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

62% in 2023

78%

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

58% in 2023

68%

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.



Alistair, Cycling Without Age

Our trained volunteers take elderly and less able people out on rides on our pioneering Trishaws to let them enjoy the outdoors.

We'll talk about what they did in their younger days or which part of the city that they lived in. It's really satisfying and fulfilling to be able to do that.

We can carry up to six passengers in our two trishaws and two wheelchair bikes. We work with about 12 care homes across the city.

Very few of the routes that we go on have cycle paths. We need more cycle lanes and to put them in the right places.

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.

51% support



25% oppose



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

70% support



12% oppose



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

These are known as 'School Streets'.

0 schools

in the city have School Streets schemes

0 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

49%

agree there is space for children to socialise and play

52% 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.

38%

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

34% in 2023

53%

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

50% in 2023

59%

support low-traffic neighbourhoods

54% in 2023

21%

of the total length of unclassified roads in the city have nothing to prevent through traffic.^[i]

22% in 2023

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

58% walk or wheel more



54% cycle more



58%

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

28%

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

24% in 2023

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

49% walk or wheel more



50% 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.

48%

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

48% in 2023

47%

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

75%

of all residents



72% in 2023

76% of women



73% in 2023

74% of men



73% in 2023

64% of LGBTQ+ people



65% in 2023

77% of non-LGBTQ+ people



73% in 2023

80% of people from ethnic minority groups



77% in 2023

74% of white people



72% in 2023

70% of disabled people



63% in 2023

77% of non-disabled people



76% in 2023

66% of socio-economic group DE



67% in 2023

78% of socio-economic group AB



79% 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.

Improving walking, wheeling and cycling



Since 2023, Aberdeen City Council and partners have made significant improvements to walking, wheeling, and cycling across the city by delivering infrastructure and behaviour change projects that enable residents and visitors to enjoy the benefits of active travel.

In response to 2023 data showing that 52% of residents want secure cycle storage, 10 new cycle shelters have been installed at multistorey housing blocks. These shelters provide secure, weatherproof storage space for 250 bikes, helping to reduce transport poverty among low-income households.

Following the introduction of a mandatory 20 mph speed limit in key city centre areas, Aberdeen City Council is now extending the limit to cover most built-up areas and residential roads across the city.

Local charity Stella's Voice has established collection points across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire to encourage residents to recycle their unwanted bikes. Bikes are assessed and refurbished before being resold at low-cost or given to those who would not be able to obtain a bicycle otherwise.



In response to 2023 data showing that 52% of residents want secure cycle storage, 10 new cycle shelters have been installed at multistorey housing blocks.



Bike and helmet loans, lessons, led rides, and maintenance sessions are some of the opportunities available at Aberdeen Cycle Hub at Seaton. The hub serves as a base for organisations to deliver a wide range of work with mental health groups, menopause groups and young people's summer activities. Organizations working out of the hub include Scottish Cycling who run the Rock Up and Ride programme and Grampian Disability Sport who host Grampian Inclusive Cycling Bothies, both are funded by Nestrans with Aberdeen City Council providing referrals from families looking to learn to ride or benefit from the wellbeing effects of recreational cycling.

Aberdeen City Council appointed a Cycling UK Connecting Communities Officer to support and promote walking, wheeling and cycling across the city. This post is funded by Nestrans with the aim of increasing walking, wheeling and cycling journeys and reducing car use for short journeys. In addition to led walks, bike rides and bike repair workshops, the Connecting Communities Officer is trialling a trishaw cycle service to health centres in Middlefield.



Infrastructure Improvements

Improvements for pedestrians and cyclists on South College Street include a new bidirectional segregated cycle track and shared use path from Riverside Drive to Wellington Place. Access to residential properties on South College Street is enhanced by a continuous path.

New unidirectional segregated cycle tracks and footway on Craigshaw Drive prioritises walking, wheeling and cycling between Wellington Road and Abbotswell Road. Tiger crossings on Craigshaw Drive and Abbotswell Road enhance safety by combining a pedestrian zebra crossing with a parallel cycle crossing. This route connects with Tullos Park, providing onward journey options along Riverside Drive to Duthie Park and National Cycle Network route 195, also known as the Deeside Way.



School Journeys

Infrastructure improvements across the city are enhancing pedestrian and cycle experiences. These improvements include a new pedestrian crossing on Skene Street, providing safe access for children and young people travelling to Gilcomston School. Journeys to Kittybrewster School are also more accessible after footway changes and the introduction of new dropped kerbs. And a one-way system with new build out on Davidson Drive is making it safer for people travelling to Heathryburn School.

Active Journeys is a project run in collaboration with Walk Wheel Cycle Trust to encourage children and young people to travel actively and safely to school. Activities are outdoors, inclusive and linked to curriculum subjects, such as citizenship, maths and local history. To ensure behaviour change interventions are long lasting, teacher training is offered to schools so staff can carry on activities when the Project Officer is working elsewhere. Local volunteers provide invaluable help with sessions, making Active Journeys a community-wide project.

Aberdeen's first School Street is expected to be delivered in Summer 2026. This will include temporary traffic restrictions during school drop-off and pick up times with the aim of reducing the number of car journeys to school and encourage children and young people to walk, wheel and cycle.

Looking forward

Better places and streets for everyone



City Centre and Beach Master Plans

Significant regeneration in the city centre and beach area is well underway, enhancing provision for walking, wheeling and cycling. Widened footways and bidirectional cycle tracks will be included on Union Street Central. Placemaking features, such as seating and green infrastructure, will transform both the Castlegate and Queen Street into key destinations, while the construction of a new traffic-free path along the Beach Boulevard to the Beach Esplanade will contribute to the development of a high quality walking, wheeling and cycling connection a between Union Street and the beachfront.

Ashgrove Connects

Ashgrove Connects will see significant improvement to active travel and green infrastructure on Ashgrove Road and Ashgrove Road West between Berryden Road and North Anderson Drive. The project is currently at Stage 4 of development (Detailed Design) outlined by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). Enhanced walking and wheeling provision as well as unidirectional segregated cycle infrastructure will run along the north side of Foresterhill, the site of Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. Junction improvements at Foresterhill Road and Westburn Drive will improve safety and efficiency for pedestrians and cyclists.

Local Transport Strategy

Aberdeen City Council is currently revising its Local Transport Strategy, a long-term plan for improving the transport network. Following consultation on an initial draft strategy in winter 2023/24, the outcomes of this consultation exercise, as well as the outcomes of Community Planning Aberdeen's 'Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future' consultation, are being used to inform a revised draft strategy. The intention, subject to Committee approval, is to consult on the revised document at the same time as consultation happens on the next Local Development Plan for the city in late 2026.

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

53% on walking and wheeling



43% on cycling



58% on buses



52% on trains



30% on trams



35% on other forms of public transport such as community transport, metro or subway, local ferry



36% on driving



ART would connect major destinations in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

Regional Active Travel Network

Nestrans are leading the development of a Regional Active Travel Network (RATN) in partnership with Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council. The RATN identifies aspirations for a high-quality, cohesive network of walking, wheeling and cycling routes across the Northeast of Scotland. This regional network will feed into the prioritisation plan outlined in Aberdeen City Council's Local Transport Strategy and the development of routes within built-up areas of the city. Appreciating that full delivery of the network will be a multi-decade process, prioritisation of the network will be undertaken as part of the Local Transport Strategy development, to inform short and medium-term infrastructure planning.

Aberdeen Rapid Transit

Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) is a proposed Bus Rapid Transit system that aims to transform public transport across the Aberdeen City region. With two cross-city routes and Mobility Hubs at each terminus point, ART would connect major destinations in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. The project seeks to reduce car dependency by offering faster, more reliable, and frequent services, alongside comfortable zero-emission vehicles, safe and accessible waiting areas, and seamless integration with other transport and active travel networks. ART would represent a significant step towards delivering sustainable, inclusive, and efficient mobility for the region and is currently undergoing business case development to assess the benefits, costs, and risks of delivery options.



Jon, walking tour guide

I walk to and from work every day because it is the most efficient way to get around. On my way I take in the environment and walk past places that hold memories from throughout my life.

Sometimes I change route to incorporate green space.

I like walking because it's a public way to navigate a city. You bump into people or friends and have a chat - you can't do that in a car because you're in a bubble.

I used to lead the walking tours of street art and found that most people are happy to walk for 2 hours if they know there are regular breaks with attractions to look at.

On the tours the group would form a critical mass showing the limitations of streets for pedestrians.

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 Aberdeen 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

Walking and Cycling Index Aberdeen has been funded and supported by Transport Scotland. The project is co-ordinated by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust and has been supported by Aberdeen City Council.

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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