

Comprehensive Travel Study  
Executive Summary  
Nestrans

October 2023

**nestrans**



**Aberdeenshire**  
COUNCIL



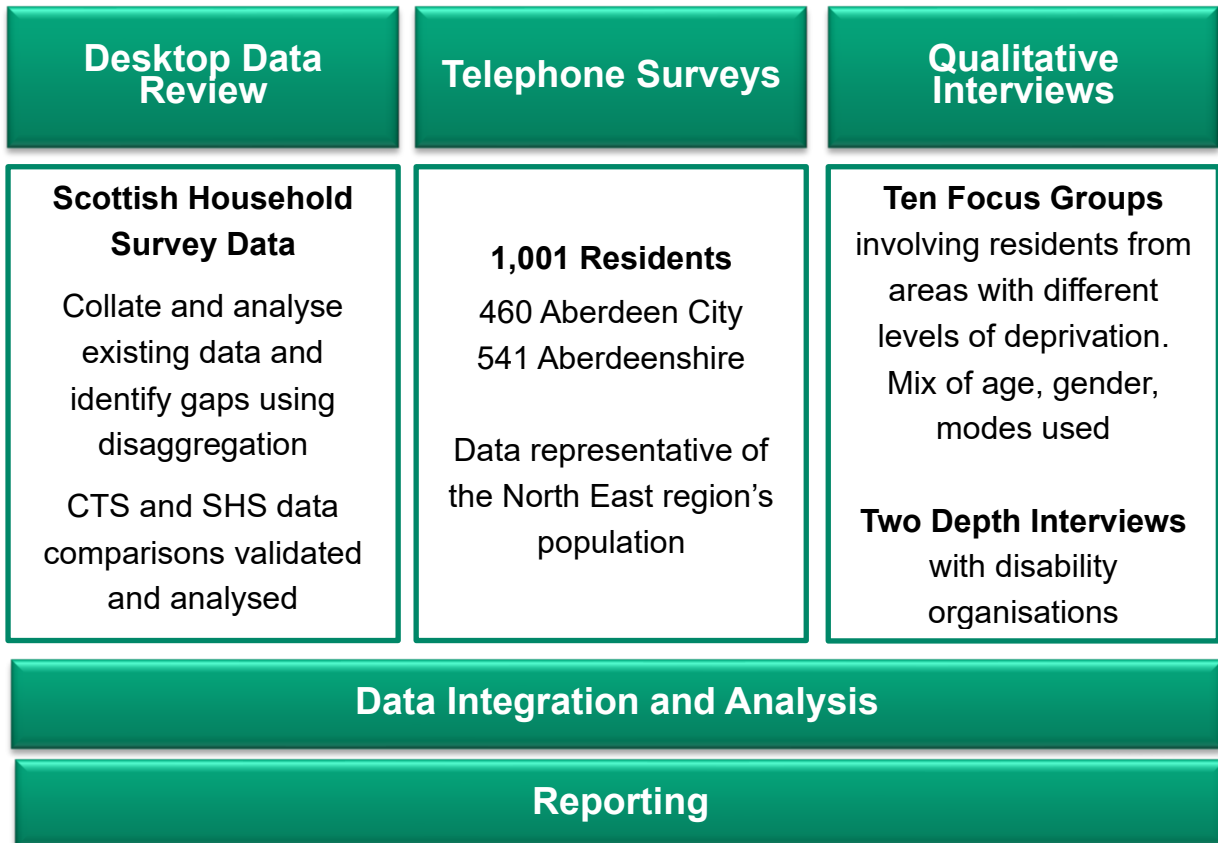
## Introduction

Nestrans, in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council, and with funding from Paths for All, Smarter Choices, Smarter Places Open Fund, has commissioned AECOM to conduct a Comprehensive Travel Survey (CTS) study in the North East of Scotland.

The purpose of the CTS is to support the robust monitoring of Nestrans' Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) by developing a better understanding of travel patterns in the North East and to identify and address gaps in knowledge related to travel behaviours and barriers to travel, particularly with regards to equalities / social inclusion impacts.

## Methodology

The study has been based on execution of the following methodology with Telephone Surveys and Focus Groups taking place over the period April to June 2023.



## Findings: Mode Used

**Walking and car are the modes used most by residents, followed by bus**

Mode	Aberdeen City	Aberdeenshire	North East region
Walk	93%	89%	91%
Car or van	88%	93%	90%
Bus	24%	13%	18%
Train	2%	3%	2%
Cycle (pedal)	9%	13%	11%
Taxi	8%	5%	6%
<b>Base</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>1001</b>

**Modes used at least once a week (% of total population)**

**More residents with a protected characteristic used a bus at least weekly**

<b>Live in areas of deprivation</b>	24% who live in an area of highest deprivation; this compares to 17% who live in areas with least deprivation
<b>Had a health limitation</b>	33% who had a health limitation or disability this compares to 15% who did not have a health limitation or disability
<b>Gender</b>	21% of females; this compares to 15% of males
<b>Age*</b>	26% of residents aged 60 or over; this compares to 18% of all North East region residents

\*Too few 16 to 21 year olds in the sample to draw statistically robust conclusions, however indicative results show more 16-to-21-year-olds used a bus than the North East population.

**Fewer residents who lived in rural areas used a bus at least weekly\***

<b>Accessible rural areas</b>	10% who lived in this area
<b>Remote rural areas</b>	5% who lived in this area; these compare to
<b>Large and other urban areas</b>	22% who lived in these areas

\*Too few residents of remote small towns in the sample to draw statistically robust conclusions, however, indicative results show more residents used a bus than those who lived in large and other urban areas. 19% of residents of accessible small towns used buses at least once a week, albeit this data is not statistically significant.

## Findings: Modes used

### Nearly 9 out of 10 residents in North East Scotland have access to a car

Access to mode	Aberdeen City	Aberdeenshire	North East region
Car or van	85%	92%	88%
<b>Base</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>1001</b>

71% of residents who live in an area of highest deprivation based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation had access to a car or van, while 91% of residents in the least deprived areas had access to a car or van.

### Car is the main mode used by most residents for all journey purposes

Aberdeenshire residents are more likely than Aberdeen City residents to have driven to work, for shopping, for personal business and on day trips.

Journey purpose	Aberdeen City	Aberdeenshire	North East region
Work (travel at least once a week)	69%	85%	78%
Shopping (supermarket) (travel at least once a year)	77%	86%	82%
Shopping (in city or town) (travel at least once a year)	54%	77%	67%
Escort children to school (travel at least once a year)	65%	65%	65%
Personal business (travel at least once a year)	69%	82%	77%
Day trips (travel at least once a year)	72%	84%	79%

### The main mode used, other than car, were usually bus or to walk, more residents in Aberdeen City used a bus or walked

#### Aberdeen City

15% of workers walked; 11% took a bus  
 18% walked to a supermarket; 4% took a bus  
 20% walked to a town centre; 22% took a bus  
 32% walked with their child to school  
 14% walked on personal business; 11% took a bus  
 11% used the bus for day trips; 7% took a train

#### Aberdeenshire

6% of workers walked; 5% took a bus.  
 9% walked to a supermarket; 4% took a bus  
 7% walked to a town centre; 11% took a bus.  
 27% walked with their child to school.  
 11% walked for personal business; 5% took a bus.  
 5% used the bus for day trips; 4% took a train.

### Around two-thirds of bus users are satisfied with their experience

Satisfaction level	Aberdeen City	Aberdeenshire	North East region
Very satisfied / satisfied	61%	64%	62%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	18%	16%	17%
Very dissatisfied / dissatisfied	21%	16%	19%
Don't know	1%	4%	2%
<b>Base</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>514</b>

### Over a quarter of North East region residents could switch from car to bus to travel for work and over a third could switch to train for day trips

**Switch for work:** 27% of North East residents felt they could switch from car to bus to travel to work, most of these residents lived in Aberdeen City.

**Switch for day trips:** 35% of North East residents felt they could switch from car to train, with very little difference between Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire residents.

Journey purpose	Aberdeen City could switch to bus / train	Aberdeenshire could switch to bus / train	North East region could switch to bus / train
Work	39% / 7%	18% / 6%	27% / 7%
Day trips	35% / 39%	25% / 31%	29% / 35%

#### Aberdeen City:

25% of workers who drove to work felt switching to bus would be easy; 55% felt it would be difficult, 15% felt it would be impossible (4% neither easy nor difficult).

#### Aberdeenshire:

12% of workers who drove to work felt switching to bus would be easy; 51% felt it would be difficult, 31% felt it would be impossible (4% neither easy nor difficult).

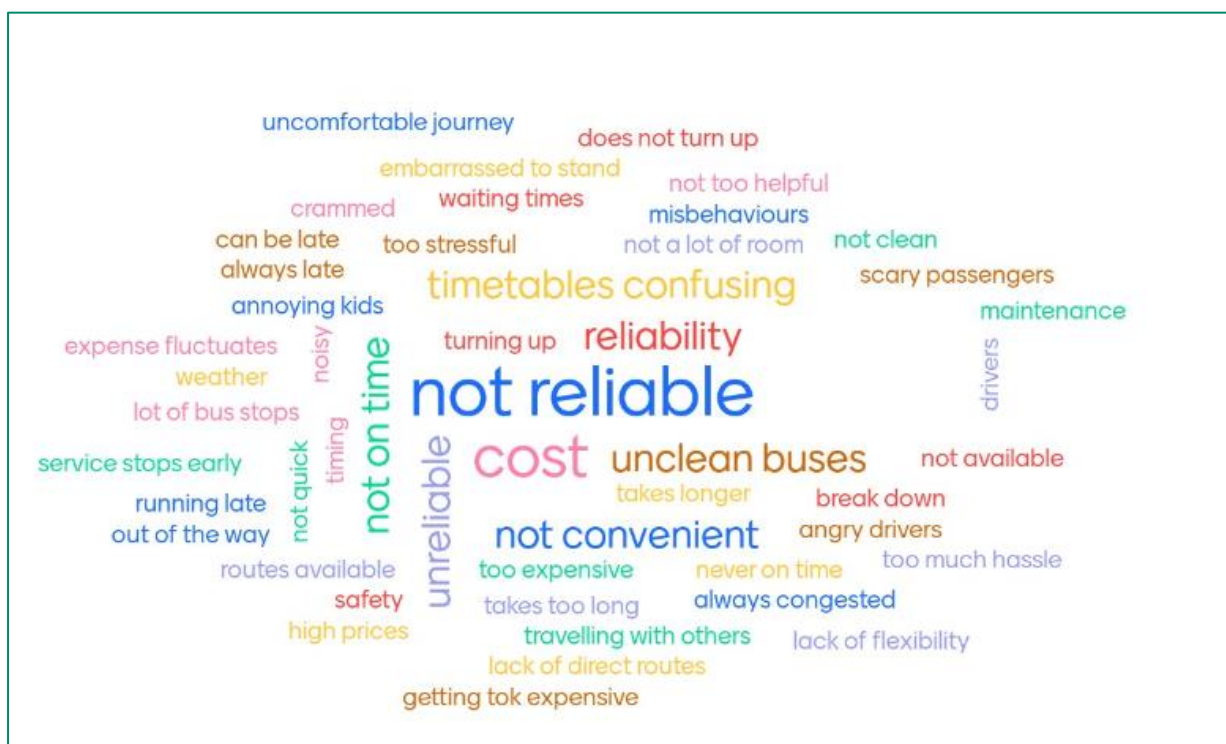
### A quarter of residents' trip-chain

Shopping is the trip most residents chain more than one trip together and escorting children to school is the least. One possible reason is that most of the population travel for shopping, while a sub-set travel for work or escort children to school.

Journey purpose	Aberdeen City	Aberdeenshire	North East region
Any journey purpose	24%	30%	27%
Work	9%	10%	10%
Shopping	13%	20%	17%
Escorting children to school	6%	6%	5%
<b>Base</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>1001</b>

## Barriers to Switching to Bus

Trip chaining may be one barrier to switching to buses. Focus Group participants provided other reasons they did not use a bus more often, with bus reliability, cost and a lack of convenience being the most common reasons given.



Other barriers to bus use were noted as follows:

- A lack of trust in service reliability;
- Bus frequency and levels of service were said to be reducing 'all the time';
- A lack of trust in real-time information and information available on online apps;
- A lack of orbital bus services operating routes around Aberdeen City, causing people to travel to the city centre first before travelling to their final destination;
- Lack of express or direct buses to Aberdeen City from Aberdeenshire;
- Crowding and over-capacity on buses as they leave Aberdeen City, adds risk to Aberdeenshire residents that a bus may be unavailable;
- A lack of evening bus services led to the perception that bus is not an option for late night travel home; and
- Safety concerns when buses are used by large groups of young people, especially in the evenings.

Focus group residents commented that bus use was considered a risk when there was an important appointment, such as a trip to a hospital. Residents did not feel the risk of a using a bus was one worth taking if they could avoid it. Residents felt, if they could, they would use a car or taxi for these trips. Taxi users would use a bus for their return journey.

Another example of time critical trips was provided by workers who were conducting personal business during their work lunch hour and felt a car was their only option.

## Findings: Active Travel Modes

**Nine out of ten residents in the region walked at least once a week. Younger residents were more likely to walk every day than older residents**

Frequency of walking	16-to-34-year-olds	35-to-59-year-olds	60 and over	All residents
Every day	71%	61%	54%	62%
At least weekly, not every day	23%	30%	33%	28%
Less than weekly	1%	3%	5%	3%
Never	4%	7%	7%	6%
<b>Base</b> (16 did not give their age)	<b>314</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>1001</b>

**Other Findings:**

48% of residents whose day-to-day activities were limited due to a health condition walked every day; but this was less than those without these limitations (67%).

Of those residents who walked every day, 14% walked to work (main mode); a further 20% walked for part of their journey to work.

One in five North East residents felt they could switch from car to walking to travel to work (21%); this was higher amongst residents of Aberdeen City (25%) than Aberdeenshire residents (15%).

### Barriers to Switching to Walking

Focus Group participants provided other reasons they did not walk more frequently. The reasons provided most often were the weather, safety, distance and, in Aberdeenshire, the lack of pedestrian infrastructure. Some Aberdeen City participants walked to their local shop or gym, as parking is expensive.



**Four in ten residents have access to a usable bike, a quarter of these used their bike at least once a week, two-thirds used it least once a year**

Access to mode	Aberdeen City	Aberdeenshire	North East region
Pedal bike or e-bike	40%	46%	43%
Bike used at least once a week	9%	13%	11%
Bike used at least once a year	25%	31%	28%
<b>Base</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>1001</b>

**Barriers to Switching to Cycling**

Focus group participants gave specific reasons why they did not cycle more often, namely:

- No bike lanes or separation from traffic, and resulting concerns with both the volume and speed of traffic;
- Drivers not considerate or do not give enough space to cyclists;
- Individuals own confidence to cycle; and
- Risk of the weather changing.

**Behaviour Change**

One respondent in Aberdeen City changed their mode of transport to work from car to bike. The initial reason for their change was temporary roadworks extending their journey time and general congestion. Once they had established and grown confident in their new route, they realised they were saving up to 30 minutes per trip (around 45 minutes by car, 15 minutes by bike). The result was a decision to permanently change mode.



## Findings: Specific Protected Characteristics

### 17% of North East residents felt their activities were limited due to a health problem or disability, which has lasted or will last at least 12 months

Travel behaviour differences of these residents, compared to those without these limitations were being\*:

- Less likely to have access to a car or a van (75% and 91%)
- More likely to use a bus at least weekly (33% and 15%)
- More likely to use a taxi at least weekly (14% and 5%)
- More likely to work from home at least weekly (24% and 12%)
- Less likely to shop in a supermarket at least weekly (77% and 85%)
- More likely to travel on personal business at least monthly (59% and 43%)

\*Comparisons shown in brackets, residents with limitations always shown first

### 5% of North East residents lived in the most deprived areas\*

Travel behaviour differences for these residents, compared to those who lived in least deprived areas were being\*\*:

- Less likely to have access to a car or a van (71% and 91%)
- Less like to hold a full driving license (60% and 88%)
- Less likely to have travelled by car (81% and 93%)
- More likely to use a bus at least weekly (24% and 17%)
- More likely to use a taxi at least weekly (15% and 6%)

\*Using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), 20% most deprived.

\*\*Comparisons shown in brackets, residents from most deprived areas always shown first

### 11% of North East residents were from an ethnic background other than White British\*

Travel behaviour differences for these residents, compared to those who have a White British ethnic background were being\*\*:

- More likely to have used a bus at least weekly (25% and 17%)
- More likely to use a taxi at least weekly (16% and 5%)

\*.85% were White British, 4% preferred not to provide their ethnic background

\*\*Comparisons shown in brackets, residents with an ethnic background other than White British always shown first

## Findings: Urban-Rural living

**948 of the 1001 residents provided their postcode to enable analysis based on urban-rural living. Of these, residents lived in:**

- Large urban areas (43%)
- Other urban areas (15%)
- Accessible Small Towns (8%)
- Remote Small Towns (4%)
- Accessible Rural Areas (23%)
- Remote Rural Areas (6%)

Differences between **residents who lived in accessible small towns** and residents of large and other urban areas were being\*\*:

- More likely to have travelled 10km or more to work (65% and 37%)
- More likely to have used a car to travel to a town centre for shopping (70% and 56%)

Differences between **residents who lived in accessible rural areas** and residents of large and other urban areas were being\*\*:

- Less likely to have used a bus at least once a week (10% and 19%)
- More likely to have travelled 10km or more to work (75% and 37%)
- More likely to have used a car to travel to a town centre for shopping (85% and 56%)

Differences between **residents who lived in remote rural areas** and residents of large and other urban areas were being\*\*:

- Less likely to have used a bus at least once a week (5% and 19%)
- More likely to have travelled 10km or more to work (79% and 37%)
- More likely to have used a car to travel to a town centre for shopping (86% and 56%)

\*Remote small towns sample sizes too low for analysis

\*\*Comparisons shown in brackets, residents living in the named area always shown first and compared with large and other urban areas

