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Bonneagair

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Cycling in Northern Ireland 2019/2020

Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2019/2020



An Official Statistics Publication

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um Staitisticí agus Taighde

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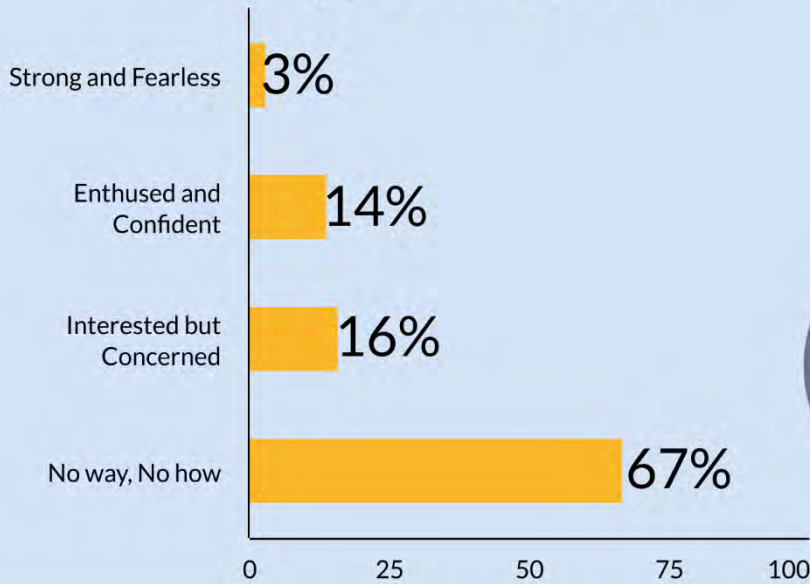
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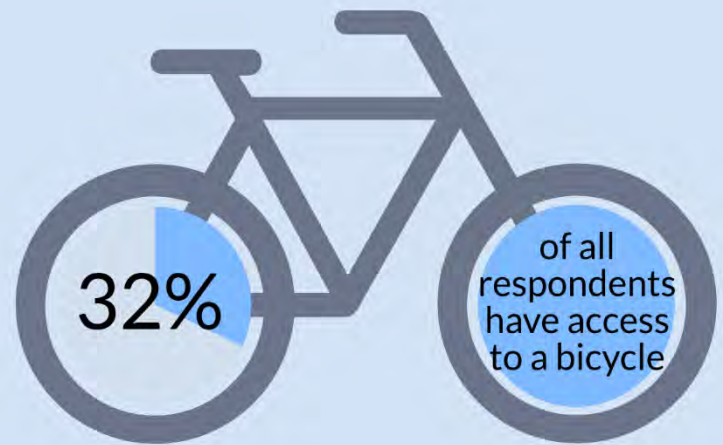
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This publication and associated data tables are also available on the [Walking and Cycling Research webpage \(opens in a new window\)](#)

Four types of cyclist

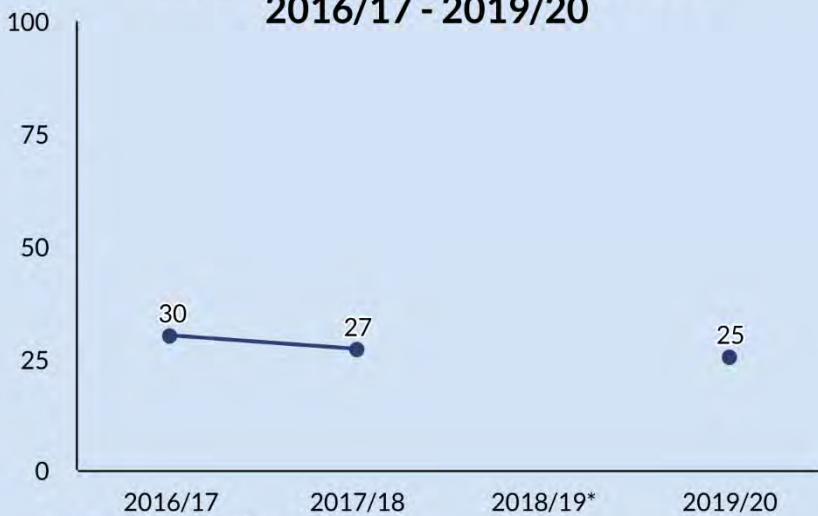


Access to a bicycle



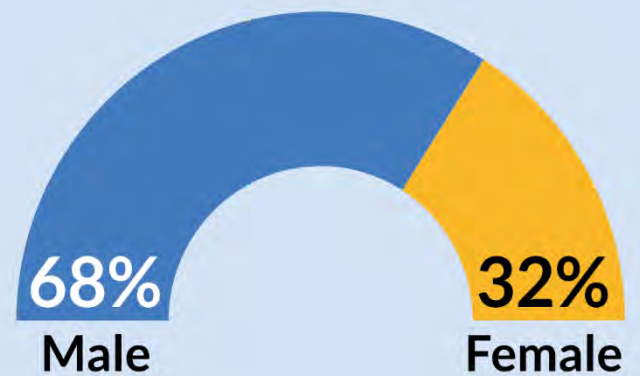
Of those who have access to a bicycle...

% who cycled in the past 4 weeks
2016/17 - 2019/20



*not asked in 2018/19

Gender of cyclists[†] in 2019/20



[†]cycled in the last 4 weeks

Top 5 reasons for cycling



87%

Exercise



80%

I enjoy it



22%

I find it convenient



20%

It's a cheap way to travel



19%

Environmental reasons

KEY POINTS

Attitudes towards cycling

- When asked to describe their attitudes to cycling¹;
 - 3% described themselves as 'strong and fearless',
 - 14% of respondents were 'enthused and confident',
 - 16% said they were 'interested, but concerned'.
 - Around two thirds (67%) of respondents considered themselves to be in 'No way, no how' group.
- A higher proportion of male respondents said they were 'strong and fearless' (5%) and 'enthused and confident' (20%) when it comes to cycling, compared with female respondents (1% and 7%, respectively).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of female respondents (73%) said 'no way, no how' compared with 62% of male respondents.

Bicycle Access

- In 2019/20, almost a third (32%) of respondents had access to a bicycle, down from 36% in 2017/18 and similar to 2016/17 (32%).
- Bicycle access was highest among those aged 35-49 (43%) and 16-24 (40%) when compared to all other age groups. Access to a bicycle was lowest among those aged 65 and over (13%).
- Overall, male respondents (37%) were more likely to have access to a bicycle compared with female respondents (27%).
- Access to a bicycle was highest among respondents living in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council (41%), and lowest among respondents from Derry and Strabane District Council (22%).

Cycled in the last 4 weeks

- In 2019/20, a quarter (25%) of respondents said that they had cycled in the last 4 weeks, similar to results from 2017/18 (27%), and down from 30% in 2016/17.
- Male respondents (31%) were more likely than female respondents (16%) to say they had cycled in the last 4 weeks.
- Of the 210 respondents who said they had cycled in the last 4 weeks, almost two-fifths (39%) cycled at least once a fortnight, similar to previous years. One-fifth (20%) cycled once every 4 weeks and a small proportion (6%) said they cycled 5-7 days a week.
- The most popular reasons for cycling in the last 4 weeks was for 'exercise' (87%) and because they 'enjoy it' (80%).

¹ Each of the statements can be associated to a general category of cyclists taken from the 'Four Types of Cyclists' typology developed by the Portland Office of Transportation

INTRODUCTION

The Department for Infrastructure's Active Travel Branch provides a focus and co-ordination role for cycling issues and active travel in general. The Branch works towards delivering better cycling infrastructure routes in Northern Ireland to enable infrastructure that delivers more sustainable transport and explores ways of enhancing safer, cleaner travel that connects communities and enhances lives.

Provision of infrastructure to facilitate sustainable transport and the associated promotion of active travel are therefore key activities for the Department as it also seeks to make a significant contribution to the alleviation of traffic congestion and reduction in CO₂ transport-related emissions.

Uses of the data

This publication presents information from the 2019/20 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) to ascertain attitudes to, and the extent of, cycling in Northern Ireland. This question set was first asked in 2016/17 and was included for the third time in 2019/20. Since 2017/2018, it has been included biennially and hence, there are no results for 2018/2019.

The findings include the proportion of people who have access to a bicycle, who have cycled in the last 4 weeks, reasons for cycling, and attitude towards cycling. The Department may use information from this report to monitor the effectiveness of its active travel initiatives. The Cycling in Northern Ireland 2019/20 questions commissioned by DfI are included in Appendix 3 of this report.

Part 1: Attitudes towards Cycling

In 2019/20, respondents to the Continuous Household Survey were shown four statements and asked which best describes their attitude towards cycling. Each of the statements can be associated to a general category of cyclists taken from the 'Four Types of Cyclists' typology developed by the Portland Office of Transportation² and are summarised below;

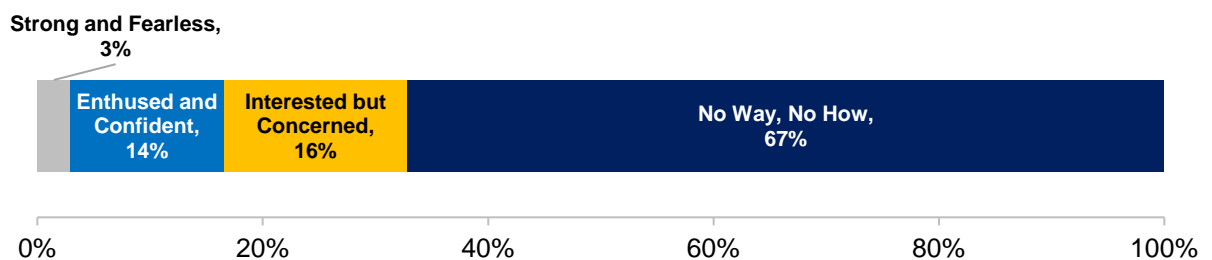
Table 1: Four types of cyclists developed by the Portland Office of Transportation*

Category	Description
Strong and fearless	I will ride my bicycle regardless of road conditions. I am a cyclist; cycling is a strong part of my identity and I am generally undeterred by road conditions
Enthused and confident	I am comfortable riding my bicycle and sharing the roadway with other vehicles. I could be attracted to more regular cycling if the barriers on shorter trip distances continued to be addressed. For example, better bicycle facilities (more cycle lanes, cycle paths, cycle priority at junctions) and better end of trip facilities (showers at work, safe bike storage etc.)
Interested but concerned	I would like to use my bicycle more but I am afraid to cycle. I don't like the cars travelling at speed and I get nervous thinking about what would happen to me on a bicycle when a car passes too closely and/or too fast. I would cycle if I felt safer on the roads - if cars were slower and less frequent and if there were more quiet streets with few cars and paths without any cars at all
No way, no how	I am not interested in cycling at all as I am not able or simply have no interest

*subsequent results will be reported using the four general categories

In 2019/20, around two-thirds (67%) of respondents were in the 'No way, no how' group – an increase in the proportion from 2017/18 (63%) and 2016/17 (64%). 16% said they were 'interested, but concerned' – similar to 2017/18 (17%), but down from 19% in 2016/17. Similar to previous years, 14% of respondents were 'enthused and confident'. A small proportion (3%) were 'strong and fearless' in regards to cycling, down from 4% in 2017/18.

Figure 1: Attitudes towards cycling in 2019/20 (%)

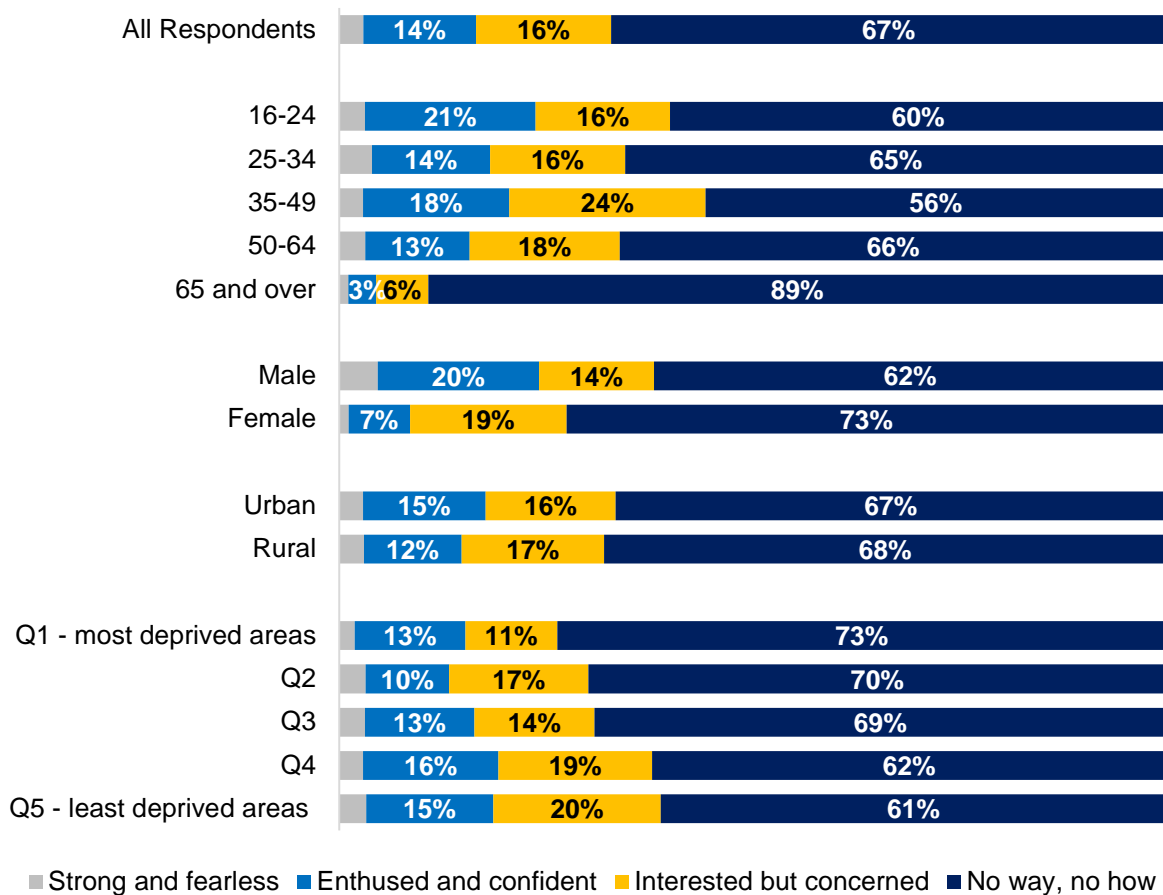


Base = 2,942

² [Portland Bureau of Transportation webpage \(opens in a new window\)](#)

Attitudes towards Cycling (by respondent group)

Figure 2: Attitudes towards cycling (by respondent group)



Respondents aged 65 and over (89%) are more likely to be in the 'no way, no how' group than all other age groups whereas, those aged 35-49 (24%) are more likely to consider themselves 'interested, but concerned' when compared to all other age groups.

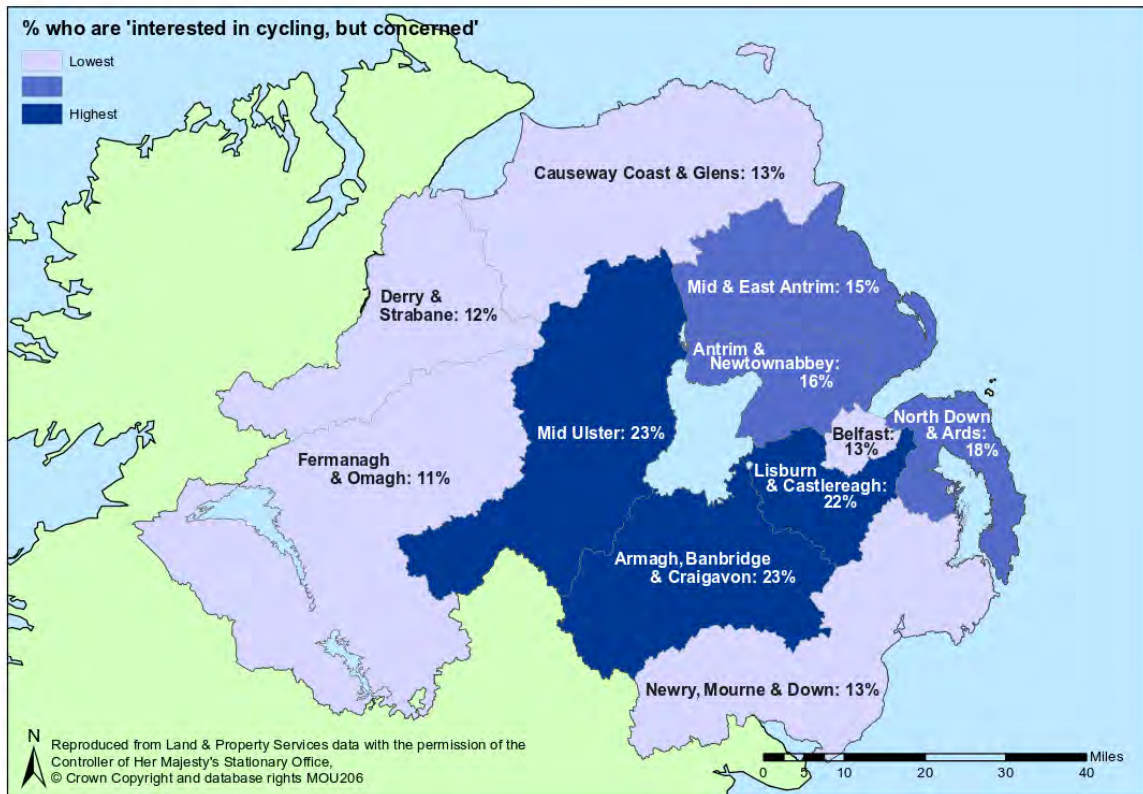
A higher proportion of male respondents said they were 'strong and fearless' (5%) and 'enthusied and confident' (20%) when it comes to cycling, compared with female respondents (1% and 7%, respectively). Conversely, a higher proportion of female respondents (73%) said 'no way, no how' compared with 62% of male respondents.

Those respondents living in the most deprived areas were more likely to say 'no way, no how' (73%) when asked about their attitude to cycling, compared with 61% of those living in the least deprived areas. Those in the most deprived areas were also least likely to fall into the 'interested, but concerned' group.

Complete breakdowns, including 'strong and fearless', are available in the associated data tables.

Respondents attitude to cycling: 'interested but concerned' (by local government district)

Figure 3: Proportion of respondents who are 'interested in cycling, but concerned' in 2019/20 (by local government district)



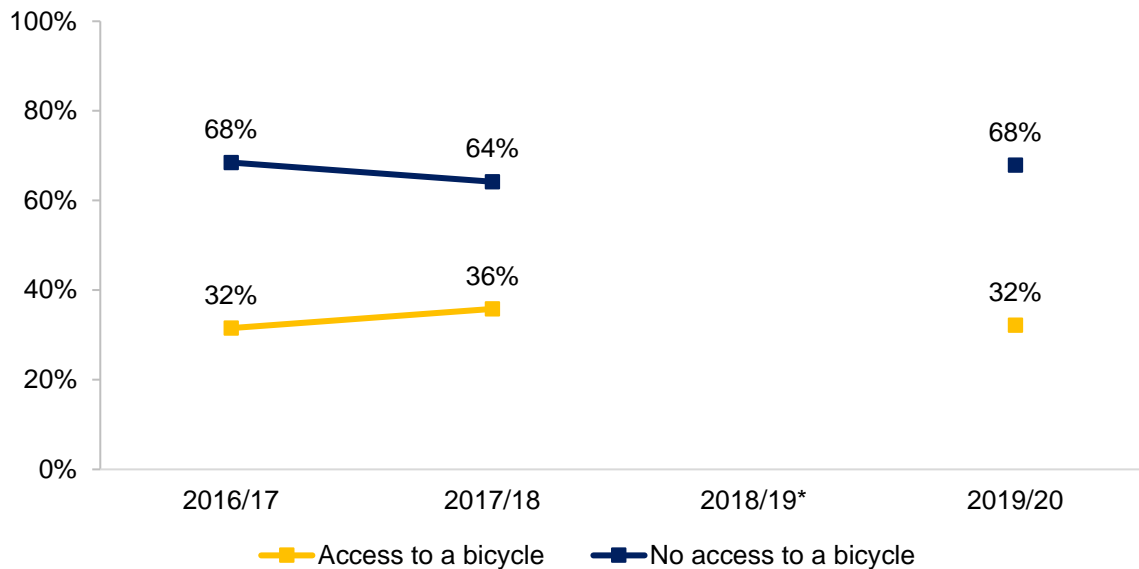
The map above displays the proportion of respondents within each council area whose attitude towards cycling could best be described as 'interested, but concerned'. This group is considered as having the most potential for increasing overall participation and are the most likely, amongst those who currently do not cycle, to take up cycling if they felt safer on the roads.

The proportion describing themselves as 'interested but concerned' is highest in Mid Ulster District Council (23%) and Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council (23%), and lowest in Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (11%).

Part 2: Access to a Bicycle

All respondents were asked about their access to a bicycle (excluding exercise bikes). Almost a third (32%) said they have access to a bicycle³, down from 36% in 2017/18 and similar to the proportion in 2016/17 (32%).

Figure 4: Proportion of respondents with access to a bicycle (2016/17 – 2019/20)

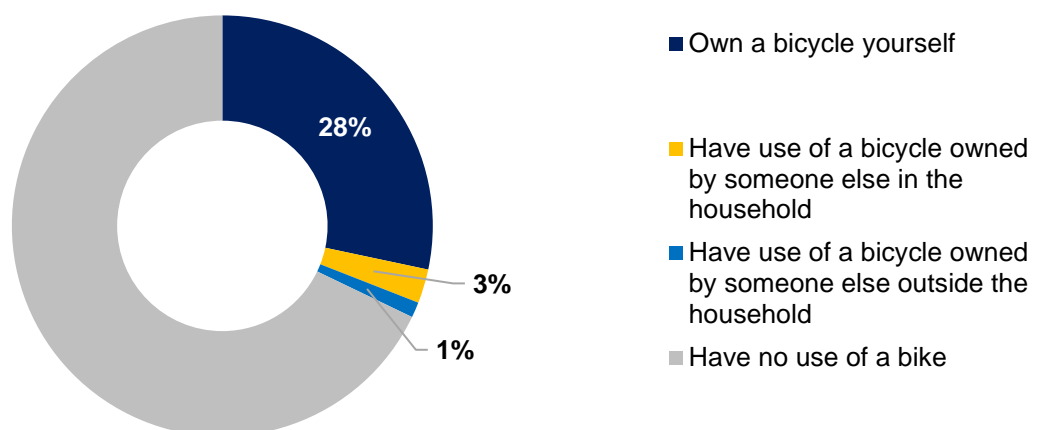


*not asked in 2018/19

Base: 2019/20 = 2,952

Of these, 28% said they 'own a bicycle' while a small proportion said they have access to a bicycle 'in the household' (3%), or 'outside the household' (1%).

Figure 5: Proportion of respondents with access to a bicycle, 2019/20

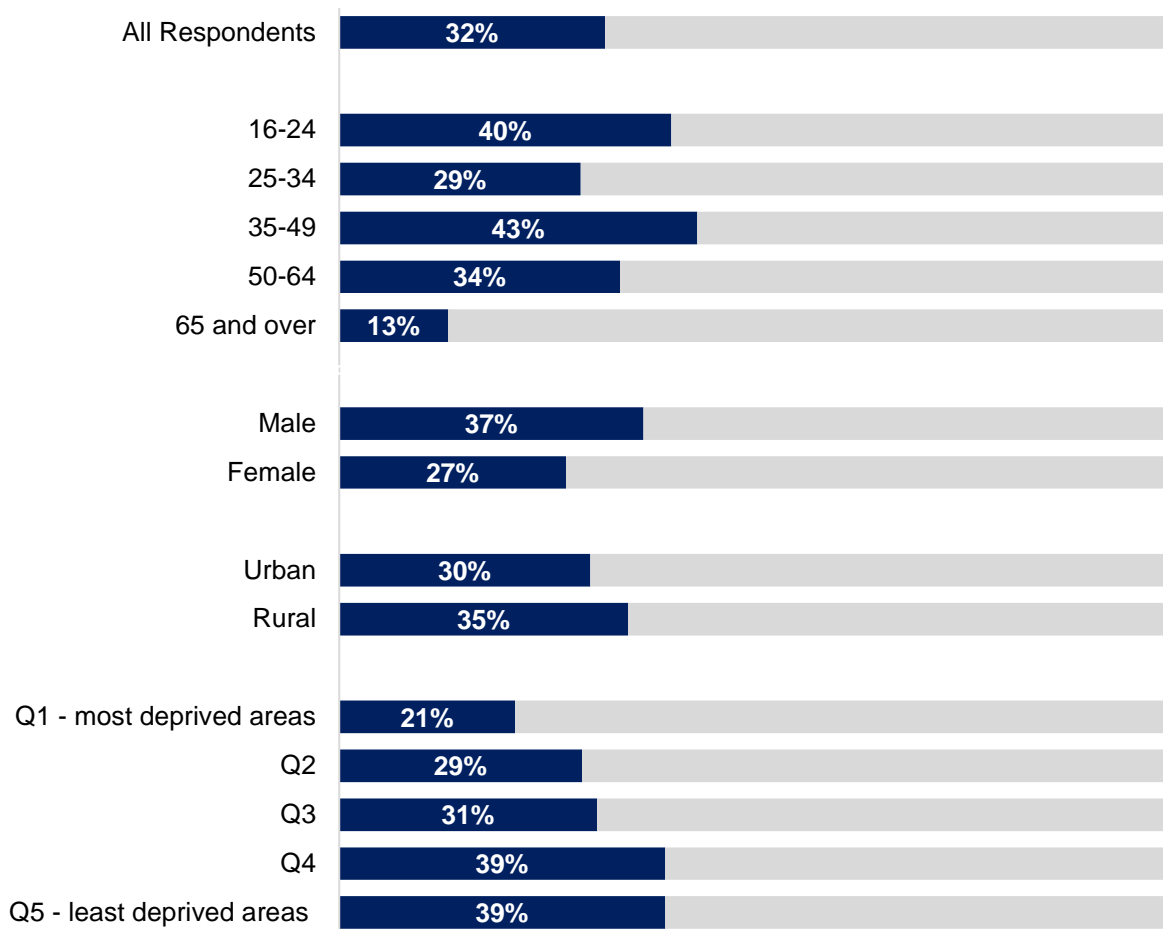


Base = 2,952

³ Access to a bicycle includes those respondents who said they own a bicycle themselves, have access to one in their household, or have access to one outside their household

Access to a bicycle (by respondent group)

Figure 6: Proportion of respondents with access to a bicycle by respondent group



In 2019/20, bicycle access was highest among those aged 35-49 (43%) and 16-24 (40%) when compared to all other age groups. Access to a bicycle was lowest among those aged 65 and over (13%).

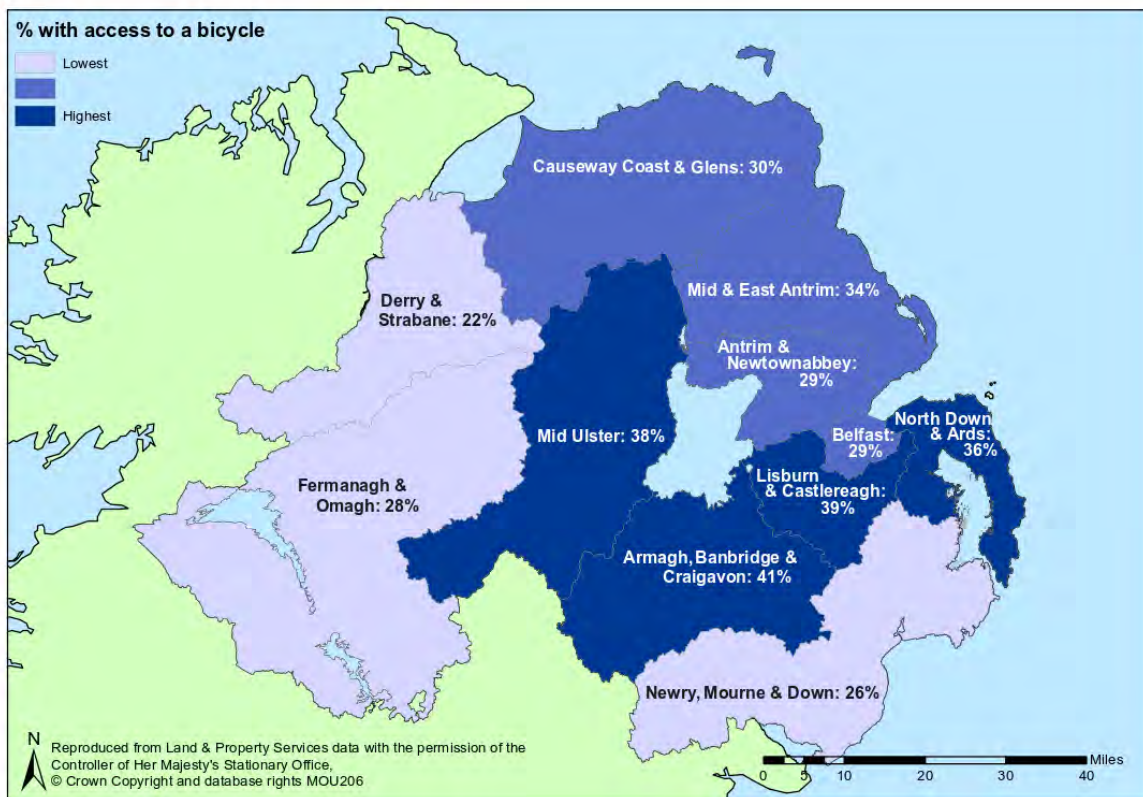
Male respondents (37%) were more likely to have access to a bicycle compared with female respondents (27%).

Respondents living in rural areas (35%) were more likely to have access to a bicycle compared with those in urban areas (30%).

Access to a bicycle is significantly lower among those living in the most deprived areas (21%) compared to all other quintiles.

Access to a bicycle (by local government district)

Figure 7: Proportion of respondents with access to a bicycle in 2019/20 (by local government district)



Access to a bicycle was highest among respondents living in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council (41%), and lowest among respondents from Derry and Strabane District Council (22%).

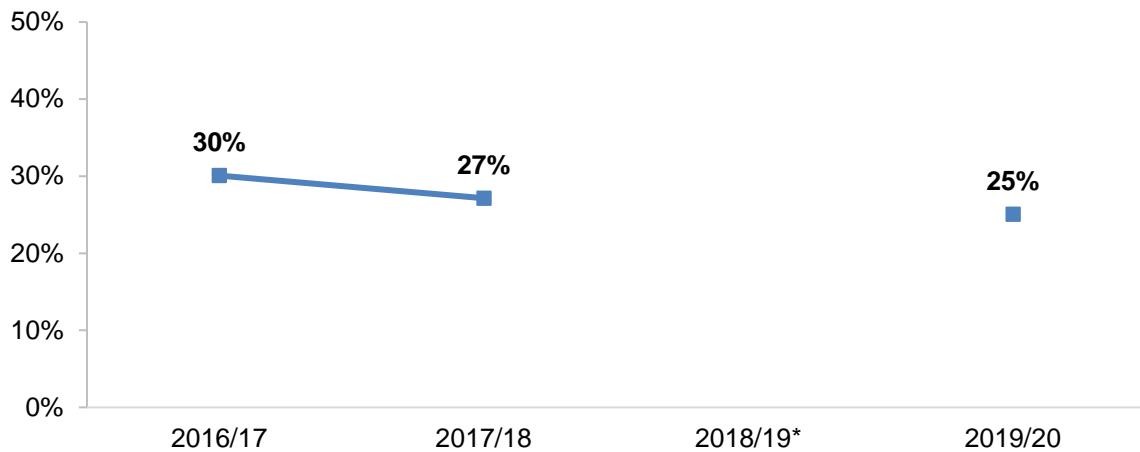
Around 3 in ten respondents (29%) from Belfast City Council said they had access to a bicycle.

Part 3: Cycling in the last 4 weeks

Respondents who said they had access to a bicycle were asked if they had done any cycling in the last 4 weeks. Those who said they had cycled within the last 4 weeks are described as 'cyclists' for the purposes of this report.

In 2019/20, a quarter (25%) of respondents said that they had cycled in the last 4 weeks. While this is a similar proportion to 2017/18 (27%), it is a decrease from the proportion who said this in 2016/17 (30%).

Figure 8: Proportion of respondents who had cycled in the last 4 weeks

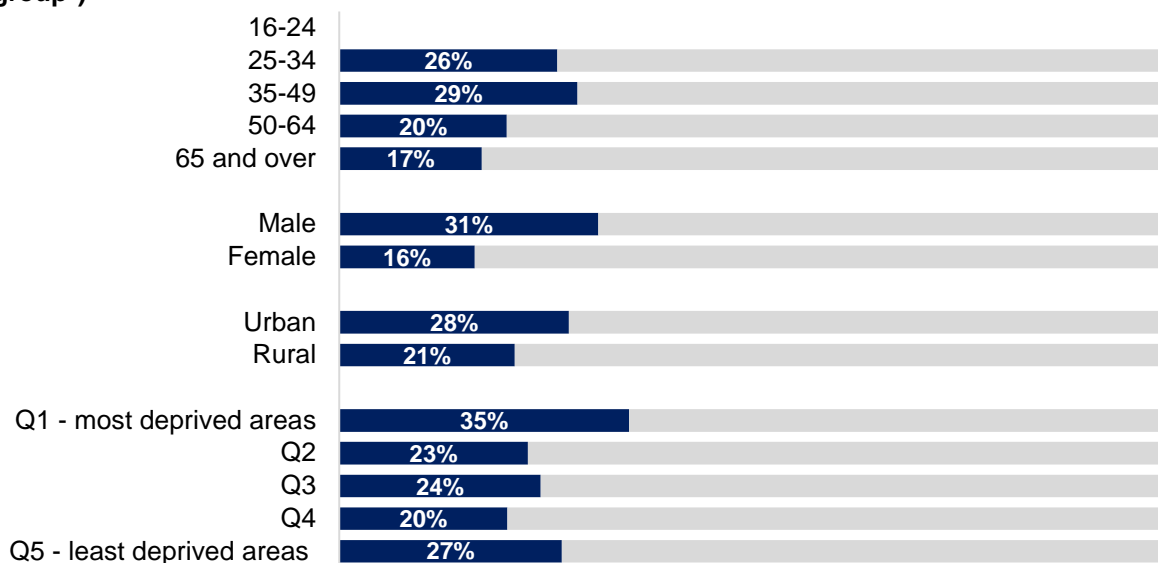


*not asked in 2018/19

Base: 2019/20 = 882

A higher proportion of those aged 35-49 (29%) said they cycled in the last 4 weeks compared with those aged 65 and over (17%). Male respondents (31%) were more likely to say they had cycled in the last 4 weeks than female respondents (16%). Respondents living in urban areas (28%) were more likely than those living in rural areas (21%) to have cycled in the last 4 weeks.

Figure 9: Proportion of respondents who had cycled in the last 4 weeks (by respondent group*)



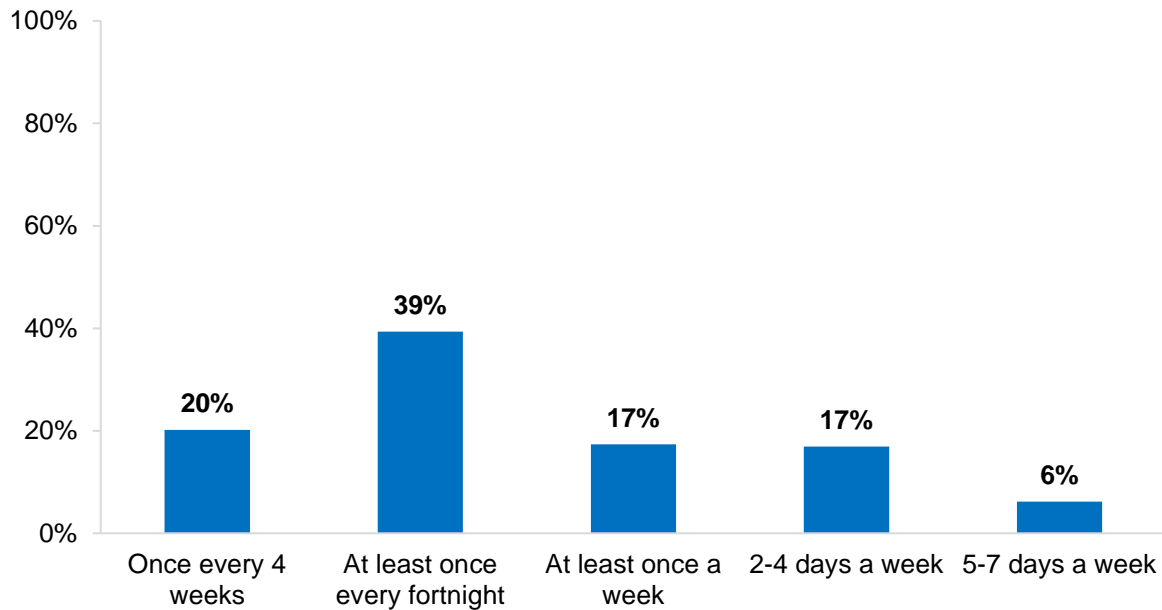
*due to small sample size, data for 16-24 is not shown

Respondents who had cycled in the last 4 weeks

Of the 210 respondents who said they had cycled in the last 4 weeks, almost two-fifths (39%) cycled at least once a fortnight, similar to previous years. One-fifth (20%) cycled once every 4 weeks and a small proportion (6%) said they cycled 5-7 days a week.

In 2019/20, 17% of respondents said they cycled at least once a week which is less than the proportion who said this in 2016/17 (30%). Similar to previous years, 17% of those who cycled said they did so 2-4 days a week.

Figure 10: Frequency of cycling in the last 4 weeks



Base = 210

Of those who cycled in the last 4 weeks, more than two-thirds (68%) were male and 32% were female. To put this in context, according to the most recent⁴ population estimates, 49% of the population is male and 51% female.

Figure 11: Proportion of cyclists who were male and female in 2019/20

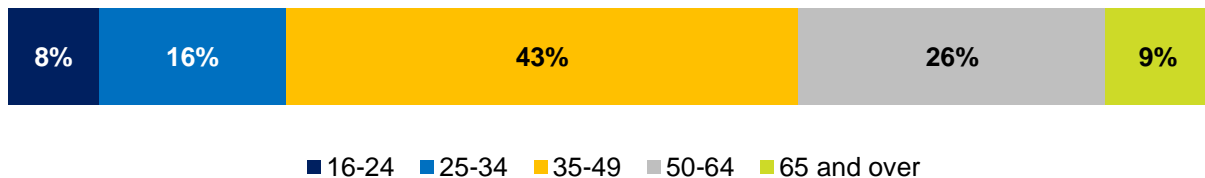


Base = 210

⁴ [NISRA 2019 Mid-Year Population Estimates webpage \(opens in a new window\)](#)

More than two-fifths (43%) of cyclists were aged 35-49 despite accounting for 19%⁵ of the population and over a quarter (26%) were aged 50-64. Those aged 25-34 account for 16% of cyclists. Around one in ten (9%) were aged 65 and over, and 8% were aged 16-24.

Figure 12: Proportions of Cyclists by age group in 2019/20

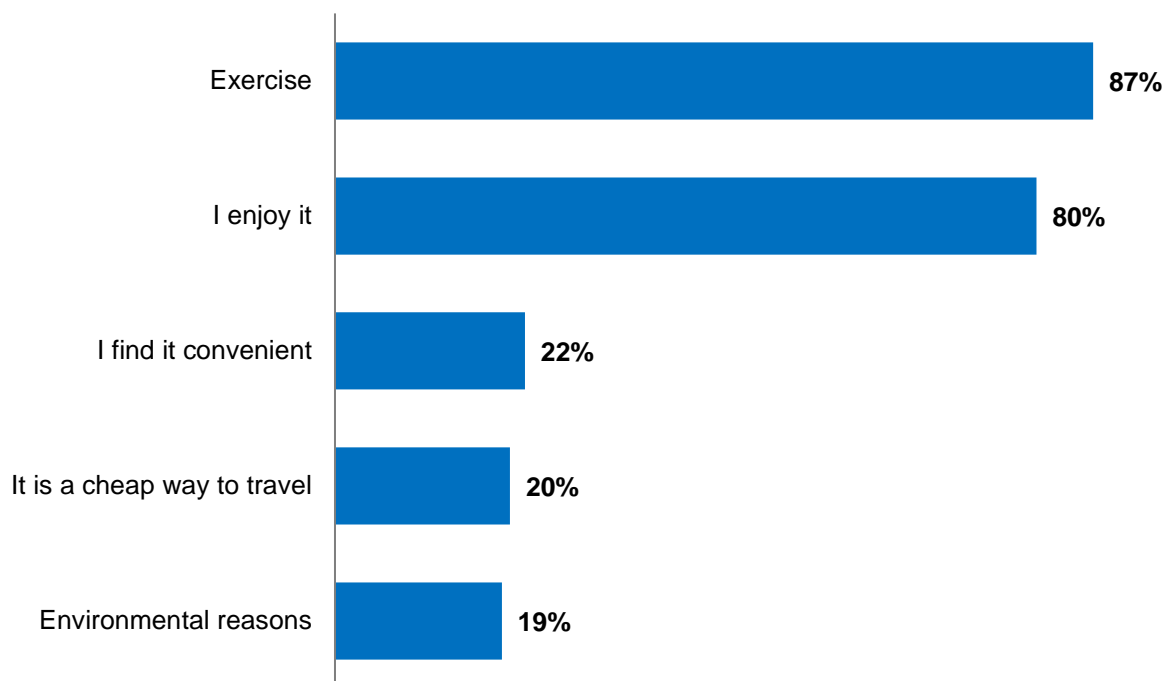


Base = 210

Reasons for Cycling

In 2019/20, the main reason respondents said they cycled was for 'exercise' (87% said this). Eight in ten (80%) respondents said they cycle because they 'enjoy it', 22% said they 'find it convenient' while one-fifth (20%) said it was a 'cheap way to travel'. 19% of respondents said they cycle for 'environmental reasons'. These figures would suggest that cycling is predominantly seen as a leisure activity rather than as a form of transport.

Figure 13: Top 5 reasons for cycling, 2019/20



Base = 210

The full list of reasons given, and results from previous years, are available in the associated data tables.

⁵ [NISRA 2019 Mid-Year Population Estimates webpage \(opens in a new window\)](#)

Appendix 1: Technical Notes

The Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey

Data Collection

The information presented in this publication derives from the Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey (CHS), a Northern Ireland wide household survey administered by Central Survey Unit (CSU), Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

The survey is based on a sample of the general population resident in private households and has been running since 1983 and is designed to provide a regular source of information on a wide range of social and economic issues relevant to Northern Ireland. The nature and aims of CHS are similar to those of the General Household Survey (GHS), which is carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in Great Britain.

Data Quality

Data were collected by Central Survey Unit (CSU) and various validation checks are carried out as part of the processing. CSU is the leading social survey research organisation in Northern Ireland and is one of the main business areas of NISRA, an Agency within the Department of Finance.

CSU has a long track record and a wealth of experience in the design, management and analysis of behavioural and attitude surveys in the context of a wide range of social policy issues. CSU procedures are consistent with the Code of Practice for Statistics⁶ and the CHS sample was assessed and considered to be a representative sample of the Northern Ireland population at household level.

Whilst data quality is considered to be very good, note that all survey estimates are subject to a degree of error and this must be taken account of when considering results (see notes on Confidence Intervals on page 16). This error will be reasonably small for the majority of Northern Ireland level results but care should be taken when looking at results based on smaller breakdowns.

Respondents

The 2019/20 CHS was based on a random sample of 9,000 domestic addresses drawn from the Land and Property Services list of addresses and interviews were sought with all adults aged 16 and over in these households. The survey is split into two versions with each version is distributed to around 4500 addresses. This dataset contains the records for 2,962 adults aged 16 and over.

The number of respondents who answered each question, i.e. the base number, is stated in the commentary and/or the associated chart. The base number is the unweighted count. Some questions were only asked if the respondent had answered 'yes' to a previous question. The base number may also vary between questions due to some respondents not answering certain questions.

⁶ [Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Statistics webpage \(opens in a new window\)](#)

Weighting

Analysis of the Cycling in Northern Ireland module of the CHS has been weighted for non-response. A chi square goodness-of-fit test showed that the CHS sample was not representative of the population by age and sex when compared with 2019 Mid-Year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland. As a result, three separate weights were produced for age, sex and age and sex combined.

Non-response weighting sometimes increases standard errors, although the impact tends to be fairly small, i.e. the adjustment may be less or greater than 1, but will generally be reasonably close to 1. In the case of the Cycling in NI module of the CHS, the values of the adjustment for all three weighting systems are so close to one, it is not necessary to take account of this in the calculation of standard error and confidence intervals.

While weighting for non-response (also called post-stratification) should reduce bias, it must be acknowledged that it will not eliminate bias altogether. The reasons individuals choose to take part in surveys are complex and depend on lots of factors specific to the individual. As a result, the non-response biases in surveys are likely to be complex. Post-stratification works on the assumption that, by aligning the survey to the population along a small number of dimensions such as age and gender, many of these complex biases will reduce. However, it would be misleading to suggest that they will be eliminated.

Confidence Intervals

No sample is likely to reflect precisely the characteristics of the population it is drawn from because of both sampling and non-sampling errors. An estimate of the amount of error due to the sampling process can be calculated. For a simple random sample design, in which every member of the sampled population has an equal and independent chance of inclusion in the sample, the sampling error of any percentage, p , can be calculated by the formula:

$$\text{s.e. } (p) = \sqrt{p*(100 - p)/n}$$

where n is the number of respondents on which the percentage is based.

The sample for the CHS Survey is drawn as a random sample, and this formula can be used to calculate the sampling error of any percentage estimate from the survey.

Multiple Response Questions

Multiple response questions are those for which respondents can give more than one response if they wish. For example, respondents who had cycled in the last 4 weeks, were asked 'Why do you cycle?' and they were able to select, from a show card, one or more reasons. In such questions, when individual percentages are summed they may add to more than 100%.

Rounding Conventions

Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers and as a consequence some percentages may not sum to 100. 0% may reflect rounding down of values under 0.5.

Significant Difference

Any statements in this report regarding differences between groups such as males and females, different age groups, religion, etc., are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% confident that the differences between groups are actual differences and have not just arisen by chance. Both the base numbers and the sizes of the percentages have an effect on statistical significance. Therefore on occasion, a difference between two groups may be statistically significant while the same difference in percentage points between two other groups may not be statistically significant. The reason for this is because the larger the base numbers or the closer the percentages are to 0 or 100, the smaller the standard errors. This leads to increased precision of the estimates which increases the likelihood that the difference between the proportions is actually significant and did not just arise by chance.

Respondent Groups

The following respondent groups were considered:

Age Group

The age of the respondent is grouped into the following age bands; 16-24, 25-34, 35-49, 50-64, 65 and over.

Gender

Gender of respondent is defined as whether the respondent is male or female.

District Council (LGD14)

Northern Ireland is divided into 11 district councils.

Urban and Rural Areas

Urban and rural areas have been classified using the statistical classification of settlements defined by the Inter-Departmental Urban-Rural Definition Group.

- Bands A to E are classified as Urban

This includes Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (Band A), Derry Urban Area (Band B) and large, medium and small towns (Bands C-E) with populations greater than or equal to 5,000 people.

- Bands F to H are classified as Rural

This includes intermediate settlements (Band F), villages (Band G) and small villages, hamlets and open countryside (Band H) with populations of less than 5,000 and including open countryside.

Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 (NIMDM2017)

These are the official measures of deprivation in Northern Ireland and replace the NIMDM2010. These measures were informed through public consultation and Steering Group agreement and provide a mechanism for ranking the 890 Super Output areas (SOAs) in Northern Ireland from the most deprived (rank 1) to the least deprived (rank 890). They include ranks of the areas for each of the 7 distinct types (or domains) of deprivation, which have been combined to produce an overall multiple deprivation measure (MDM) rank of the areas.

Attitudes to Cycling

For conciseness, results were reported using the four general categories outlined in the 'Four Types of Cyclists' report which can be accessed on the [Portland Bureau of Transportation webpage \(opens in a new window\)](#).

'Four Types of Cyclists'

This report by Roger Geller, Bicycle Coordinator in Portland Office of Transportation describes how Portlanders can be placed into one of four groups based on their relationship to bicycle transportation: 'The Strong and the Fearless', 'The Enthused and the Confident', 'The Interested but Concerned'. The fourth group are non-riders, called the 'No Way No How' group. This 'Four Types' categorization was first developed in 2005 and addresses only willingness to use a bicycle as a main means of transportation. The report concludes that the typology was developed using professional knowledge and experience in a field where data is woefully inadequate and vetted with many professionals in the field, representing hundreds of years of bicycle planning, policy and operational experience. Since then, survey polling data continues to support the description of the categories. They are fundamental to understanding both the market for increasing bicycle transportation and what needs to be undertaken to cater to them. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it is likely that continued survey and study will continue to support this typology.

Appendix 2: Confidence Intervals

A confidence interval represents the range of values in which the true population value is likely to lie. It is based on the sample estimate and the confidence level. As the percentages are calculated from a representative sample of the Northern Ireland population (aged 16 and over), a confidence interval can be calculated to estimate the level of uncertainty in the sample estimate.

All the differences which have been highlighted in the commentary have been tested for statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). This means that there is at least a 95% probability that there is a genuine difference between results and the difference is not simply explained by random chance or sample error. Where the term 'similar', 'no real difference', 'no real change' or 'around the same' has been used when comparing results, it means that there is no significant difference between the results being compared.

By means of illustration, the 95% confidence intervals for the headline figures are summarised in Table B1 below.

Table B1: Confidence Intervals for Cycling in Northern Ireland

	Estimate	Confidence Interval +/-	95% Confidence Range
Proportion of respondents who own or have access to a bicycle.	32%	2%	30% - 34%
Proportion of respondents who cycled in the last four weeks.	25%	3%	22% - 28%
Proportion of respondents who said they cycle for exercise.	87%	5%	82% - 92%
Proportion of respondents who said they are not interested in cycling at all.	67%	2%	65% - 69%

Note: Confidence Interval is calculated using unrounded percentages.

- The 95% confidence interval for respondents who own or have access to a bicycle is 32% +/- 2%. This means that there is a 95% probability that the proportion of the Northern Ireland adult population who own or have access to a bicycle lies between 30% and 34%.
- The 95% confidence interval for respondents who had cycled in the last 4 weeks is 25% +/- 3%. This means that there is a 95% probability that the proportion of the Northern Ireland adult population who cycled in the last 4 weeks lies between 22% and 28%.
- The 95% confidence interval for respondents who said they cycle for exercise is 87% +/- 5%. This means that there is a 95% probability that the proportion of the Northern Ireland adult population who cycle for exercise lies between 82% and 92%.

- The 95% confidence interval for respondents who said they are not interested in cycling at all is 67% +/- 2%. This means that there is a 95% probability that the proportion of the Northern Ireland adult population who are not interested in cycling lies between 65% and 69%.

Appendix 3: Cycling in Northern Ireland Questionnaire

[BIKE1] Excluding exercise bikes, do you . . .

RUNNING PROMPT

CODE OWN A BICYCLE IF OWNS A BICYCLE AND HAS USE OF ANOTHER

1. own a bicycle yourself
2. have use of a bicycle owned by someone else in the household
3. have use of a bicycle owned by someone else outside the household
4. or have no use of a bicycle? -> [BIKE5]

[BIKE2] In the last 4 weeks, that is since XX/XX/XXXX have you done any cycling?

1. Yes
2. No -> [BIKE5]

[BIKE3] How many days in the last 4 weeks have you cycled? 1-28

[BIKE4] SHOWCARD (CYCLE REASON)

Could you look at this show card and tell me the reasons why you cycle?

1. I find it convenient (I live close to work/education/shops etc)
2. It is a cheap way to travel (no fuel costs/car parking/bus/train fares)
3. I enjoy it
4. Environmental reasons
5. Exercise
6. It saves time (for example to avoid traffic jams)
7. I have no car
8. I cannot drive
9. I don't like using public transport
10. There is no suitable public transport where I live
11. I cycle with my children to ensure they are safe
12. Other -> [BIKE4oth]

[BIKE4oth] Please specify the other reason for cycling

[BIKE5] SHOWCARD (CYCLING ATTITUDE)

Could you look at the statements on SHOWCARD and tell me which statement best describes your attitude to cycling?

1. I will ride my bicycle regardless of road conditions. I am a cyclist; cycling is a strong part of my identity and I am generally undeterred by road conditions
2. I am comfortable riding my bicycle and sharing the roadway with other vehicles. I could be attracted to more regular cycling if the barriers on shorter trip distances continued to be addressed, for example, better bicycle facilities (more cycle lanes, cycle paths, cycle priority at junctions) and better end of trip facilities (showers at work, safe bike storage etc.)
3. I would like to use my bicycle more but I am afraid to cycle. I don't like the cars travelling at speed and I get nervous thinking about what would happen to me on a bicycle when a car passes too closely and/or too fast. I would cycle if I felt safer on the roads - if cars were slower and less frequent and if there were more quiet streets with few cars and paths without any cars at all
4. I am not interested in cycling at all as I am not able or simply have no interest