



National Travel Survey

Disability and travel: 2007-2014

Share of trips, by mode 2014

	Disability	No disability
Car driver		41% 52%
Car passenger		23% 14%
Walk		19% 20%
Other		17% 14%

Two thirds of trips are by car, but those with a disability are more likely to be passengers than drivers.

Travel per person per year, 2014

	Disability	No disability
Trips	688	993
Distance		4,245 miles 7,670 miles
Time		244 hours 424 hours

Adults with a disability make fewer trips, and shorter trips (by distance and time).

Purpose of trips

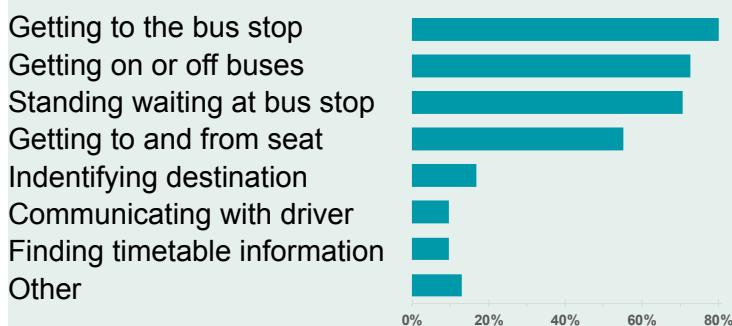
	Disability	No disability
Shopping		32% 20%
Personal business		17% 9%
Commuting		8% 21%
Other		43% 49%

Adults aged 16-69 make a smaller proportion of commuting trips, and a larger proportion of trips for non-work purposes, if they have a disability.

Of those with a disability:

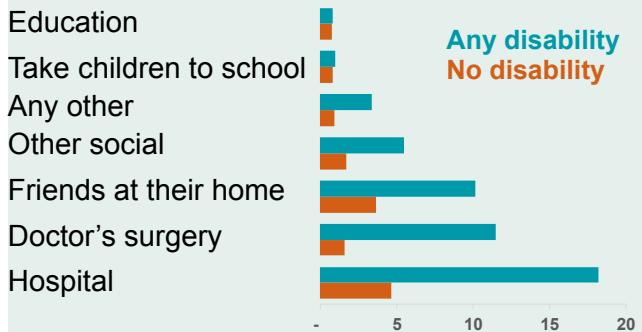
	52%	have a full car licence
	37%	have no access to a car
	95%	have a blue badge

Health problems: Difficulties using buses (England 2007-2014)



For those whose health problems make it hard to use buses, the most common problem is getting to the bus stop.

% reporting travel difficulties, by purpose (England, 2010-14)



For those with a disability who report (non-work) travel difficulty, the most common problems are getting to a hospital or GP.



Definitions

The definition of “**disability**” in this factsheet is based on two questions asked of all adults aged 16 or older, and which have been used every year since 2007.

For the purposes of this analysis, disability is based on those adults who responded to say they have long-standing difficulties travelling on foot, by bus, or getting in or out of a car, and/or respond to say they have any other disability or long standing health problems that limit activities in any way. This definition differs from the NTS definition of having a mobility difficulty (such as table NTS0622), and differs from definitions used by other data sources.

Notes on the NTS

The NTS is a survey of private households. Data is collected from around 16,000 individuals a year through a face-to-face interview and a 7-day travel diary. As these statistics are derived from a sample survey, resulting estimates can fluctuate as a result of sample variability. Therefore users should be careful when drawing conclusions, particularly from short-term changes or analysis based on small sample sizes. Where stated, years have been combined in the analysis that follows to provide a larger sample size. For more information about the NTS, please see the 2014 NTS [publication](#).

In the NTS, a **trip** is defined as a one-way course of travel with a single main purpose. A trip can involve one or more stages, by different modes. The **main mode** of a trip is the mode used for the longest part of the trip, by distance.

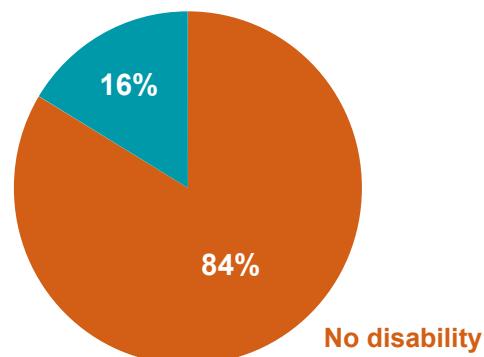
The average annual sample size, 2007-2014, for adults with a disability, was 2,663.



Prevalence

Proportions of adults with and without a disability (England, 2014)

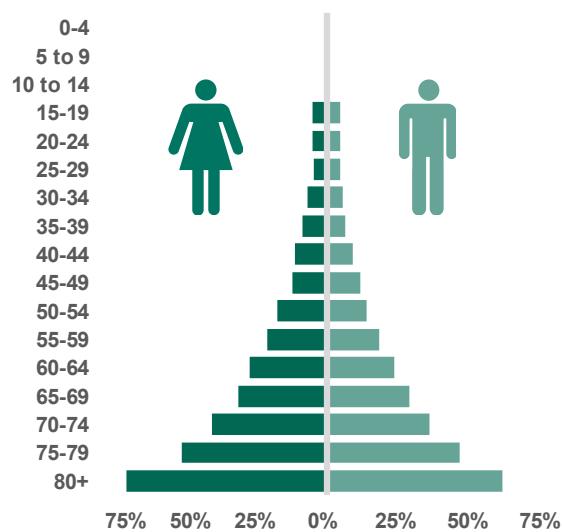
Any disability



No disability

The sample within the NTS shows 16% of adults with some disability in 2014. Over the 8 years since 2007 that the questions have been asked, there has been a slight decline, by about 2 percentage points, in the proportion of adults with a disability, as defined here. These levels compare well with the 17.6% of people in England and Wales reporting limitations on daily activities in the 2011 Census.

Self-reported disability, by sex and age (England, 2014)

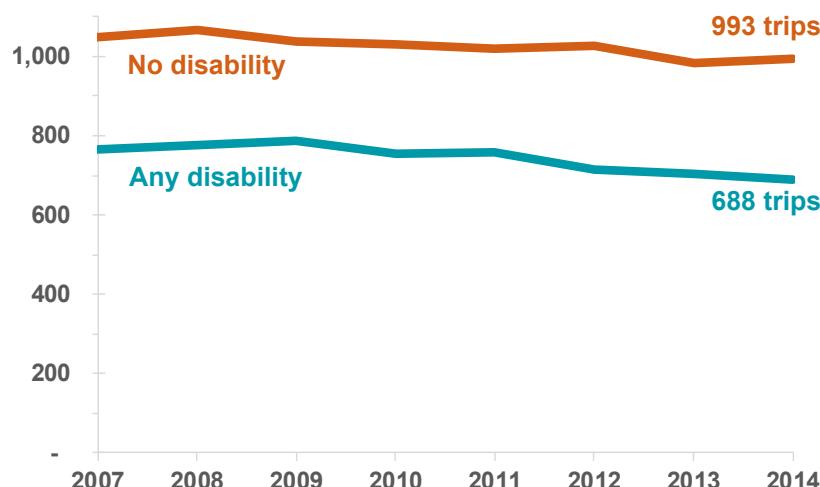


The proportions reporting a disability increase with age. In the oldest groups, slightly more women than men report some disability. (This may reflect a higher mortality rate for older men with a disability than for older women.) Over the years 2007-2014, 14% of adults are aged 70 or more. Close to half of adults aged 70 or more report a disability. By comparison, among adults aged 16-69, only 12% report a disability.



Trends in Trips, Distance and Time

Trips made, per person per year (England, adults)



On average, adults with a disability made just under three quarters (73%) the number of trips per person per year made by adults without a disability. In 2014, those with a disability made 688 trips per year, compared with 993 trips by those without a disability. For both groups, the trend since 2007 has been declining, but by a similar rate.

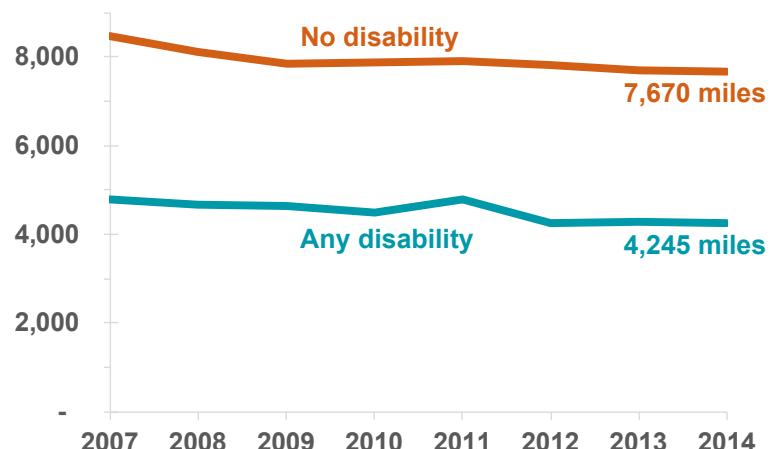
The pattern for distance travelled is similar to that for trips made. On average, adults with a disability travelled just over half (57%) the distance per person per year travelled by adults without a disability.

In 2014, those with a disability travelled 4,245 miles per year, compared with 7,670 miles by those without a disability.

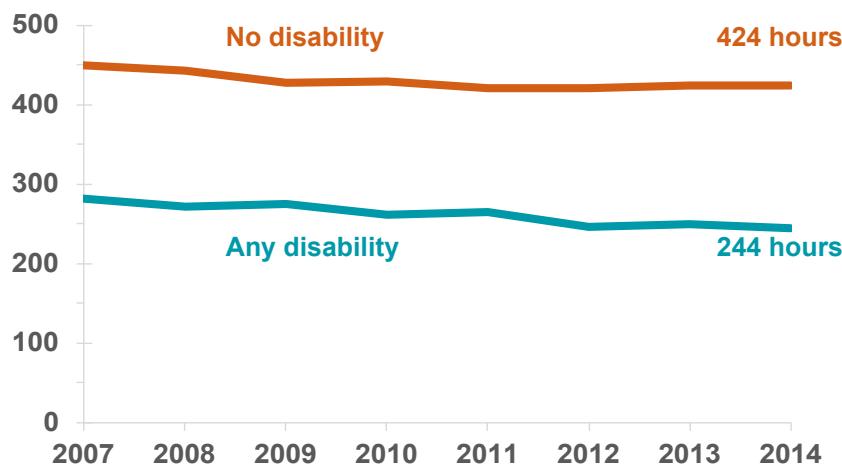
Whilst the trend since 2007 has been declining by a similar rate for both groups, the difference in the proportions for trips and distance (73% compared with 57%) means that trips made by those with a disability are, on average, shorter than trips made by adults without a disability.



Miles travelled, per person per year (England, adults)



Hours travelled, per person per year (England, adults)



We see the same pattern in the time spent travelling. Since 2007, time spent travelling by adults with a disability was 61% of the time spent travelling by adults without a disability.

In 2014, those with a disability spent 244 hours per person travelling, compared with 424 hours travelled by those without a disability. The slight decline over time is similar for both groups.



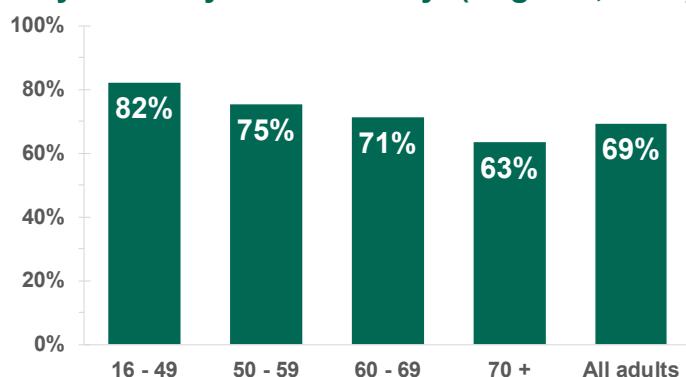
Trips by age, mode and purpose

Ratio of trips per person per year: Any disability / No disability: (England, 2014)

Age	16 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69	70 +	All adults
Any disability	810	774	749	562	688
No disability	987	1,030	1,053	887	993
Any disability as % of No disability	82%	75%	71%	63%	69%

Because impairments are more common among the elderly, who have also mostly retired, it is important to account for the effect of ageing. Even within similar age groups, the impact of disability on reduced trips becomes progressively more marked with age. For example, in 2014, among adults aged 16-49, those with a disability made 82% of the trips made by those without a disability; by contrast, for those aged 70 or more, people with a disability made only 63% of the trips, on average, made by those with no disability.

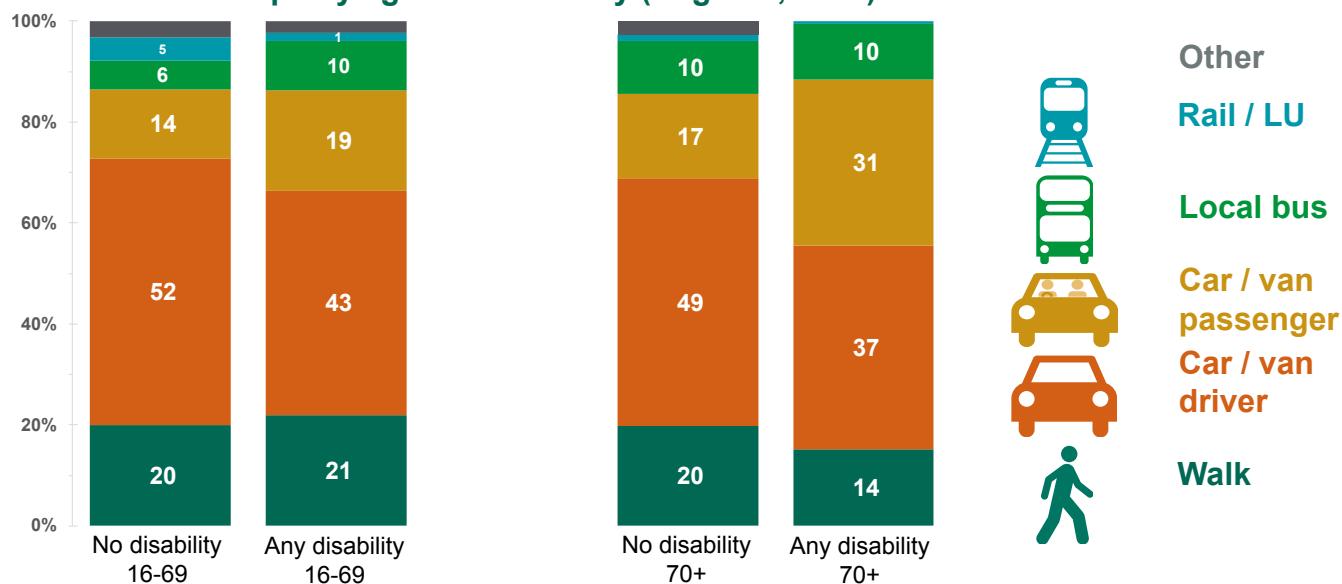
Ratio of trips per person per year, by age: Any disability / No disability: (England, 2014)



Mode share

For both groups, about two thirds of trips are by car, but those with a disability are much more likely to be passengers than drivers (especially over age 70). Those with a disability make a smaller proportion of rail trips than those without, but make a higher proportion of trips by bus or other public transport. (This may be related to income, since higher-income individuals make more rail trips than those on a lower income.) For people aged under 60, the share of trips as pedestrians is hardly different for those with a disability and for those without; but for those aged 70 or more, the impact of disability results in a lower share of trips on foot.

Mode share of trips by age and disability (England, 2014)



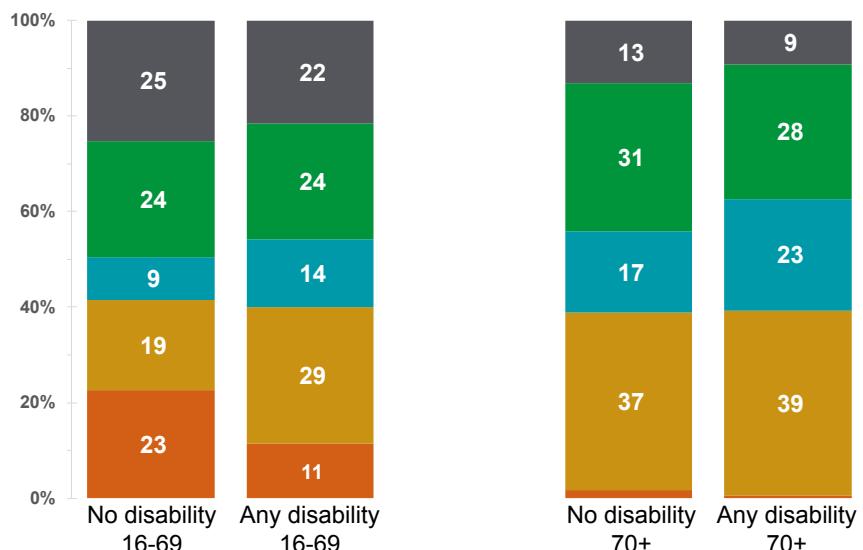


Trip purpose by age

At all ages, those with a disability make a higher share of trips for shopping or personal business, compared with those without any disability. Among those aged 16-69, those with a disability make a lower share of their trips for commuting. The mode share for leisure trips is much the same for both groups, across all ages. ("Other" purposes include trips on employer's business, education, accompanying others, or just walking.)

- Other**
- Leisure**
- Personal business**
- Shopping**
- Commuting**

Trips share: purpose by age & disability (England, 2014)



Licence holding

54% of adults (16+) with a self-reported disability hold a full car licence, compared to 76% of those with no disability. 42% hold no licence (or some other licence), compared with 16% of adults with no disability.



Personal access to a car

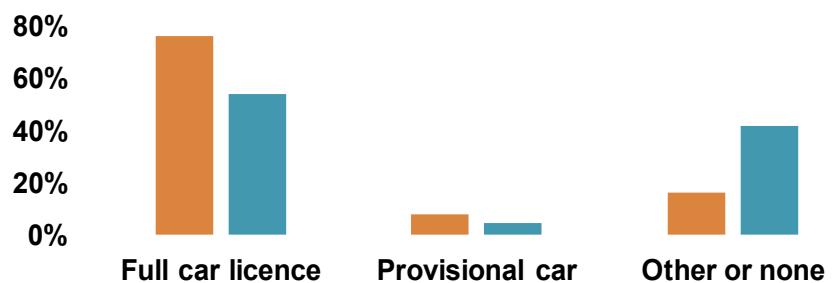
Those with a disability are much more likely to be without access to a car, or to be non-drivers, than those with no disability.



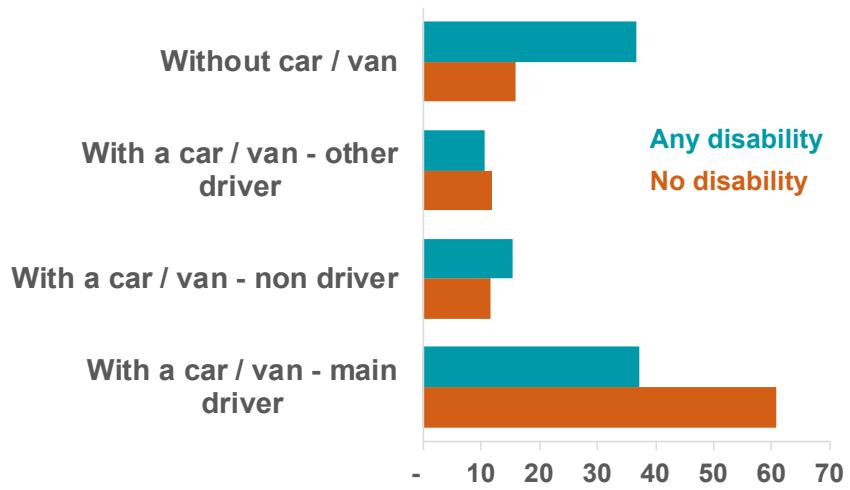
Blue badges

Between 2007 - 2014, 95% of those with "Any disability" have a blue badge, and 13% of those who report no disability also have a blue badge (some may be parents of disabled children).

% of each group holding a car licence (England, 2014)



% with personal access to a car (England 2014)





Difficulties travelling to work



Those who commute by car or private motor vehicle

Respondents who are employed, and who commute by car or motorbike, are asked which of a list of difficulties they face travelling to or from work. They may choose as many as apply.

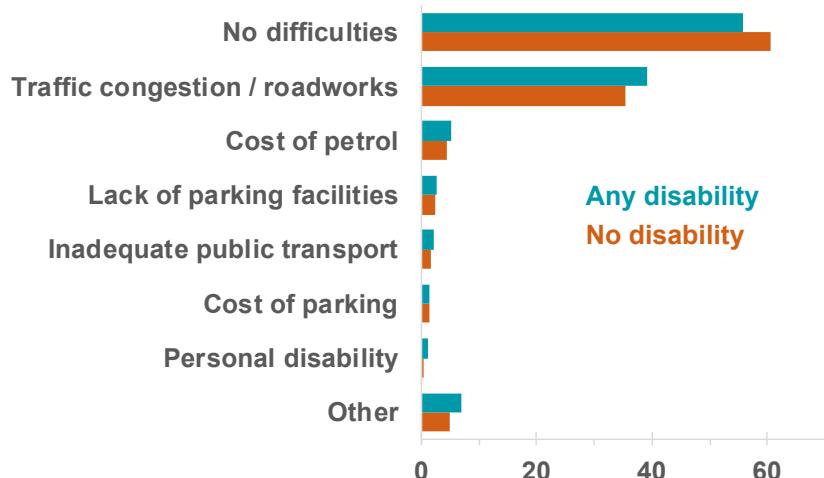
Over half of both groups report no difficulties. For those in both groups who do report difficulties, the overwhelming problem is traffic congestion / roadworks. Other difficulties cited are minimal - including personal disability. Most types of difficulty are more likely to be reported by those with any disability than by those without.

% reporting difficulties commuting by car (England, 2007-14)

This question used to be asked every year from 2007, but from 2013 is asked in even years only, so figures are averages over the years 2007-2014, excluding 2013.

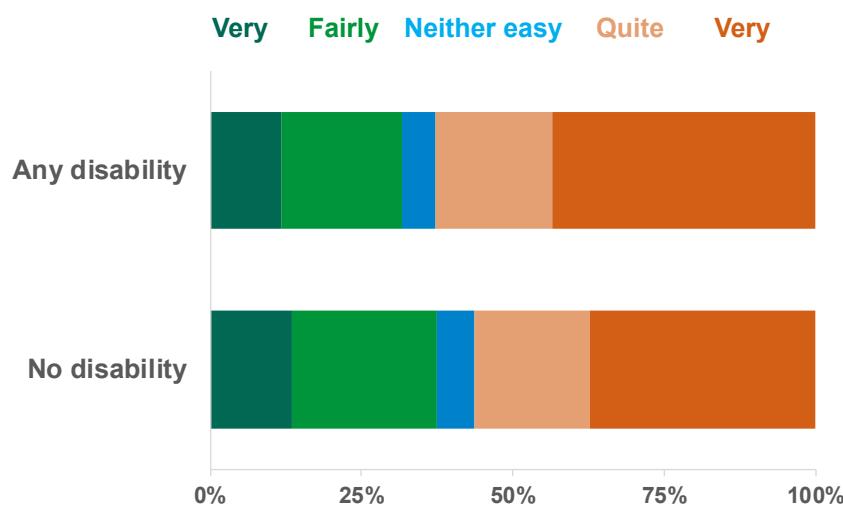
"Other difficulties" (all negligible) include:

- Too far
- Personal safety
- Cost of public transport
- No licence / can't drive
- No car available



Percentages add to more than 100%, as respondents can choose more than one option.

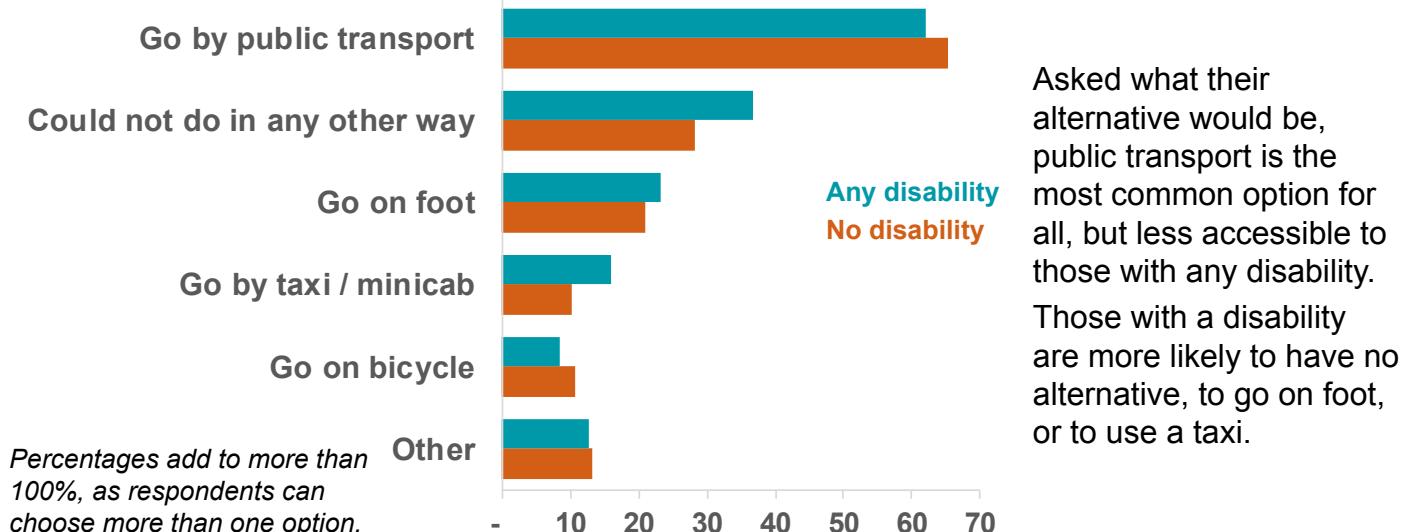
Ease commuting without a private motor vehicle (Ages 21-64): England, 2010-2014



The same respondents who are employed and commute by private motor vehicle are asked how easy or difficult it would be to travel by an alternative mode. Those with any disability are more likely to find an alternative difficult, and less likely to find it easy.



Alternatives to commuting by car, % of each group (England, 2009 - 2012)

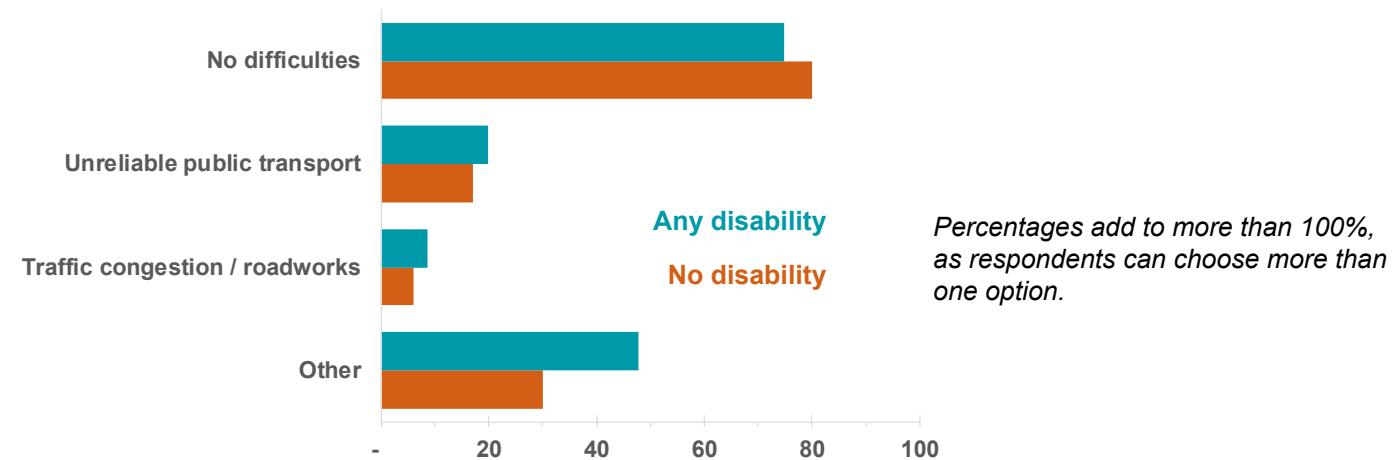


Those who commute other than by car or private motor vehicle

Those employees who do not commute by car or private motor vehicle are asked what difficulties they face, and can choose as many as apply. A clear majority say they have no difficulties, but more so of those with no disability (80% compared with 75%). Of those who do have difficulties, unreliability of public transport is much the biggest single problem for both groups (more than congestion). Except "public transport is unpleasant", those with a disability are more affected by all problems than those without. "Not possible by public transport" especially affects those with a disability more.

Other difficulties asked about include: personal disability, poor connections, weather, personal safety, cost of public transport and taxis, poor information about public transport, distance, journey not possible by public transport, and lack of cycle lanes. However, the sample sizes for those with a disability, even over several years, is too small to be reliable for most reasons; singly, these problems are reported by less than 10% of either group although, in total, the "other" category amounts to more than 20%.

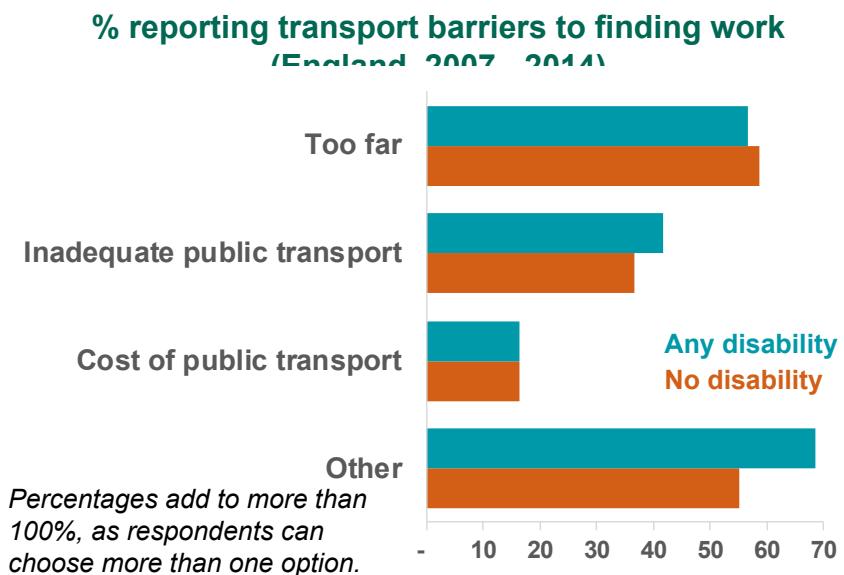
Difficulties commuting without a car (England 2007-2014)



Transport problems affecting employment

Those who have turned down a job offer, or chose not to apply for a vacancy because of transport problems, are asked what sort of problems they faced. The biggest transport barriers to finding work, for both groups, are distance, and inadequate and costly public transport.

The differences between those with and without disabilities are less marked on this issue than for other issues in this factsheet.



Although the "Other" category appears quite large, it includes:

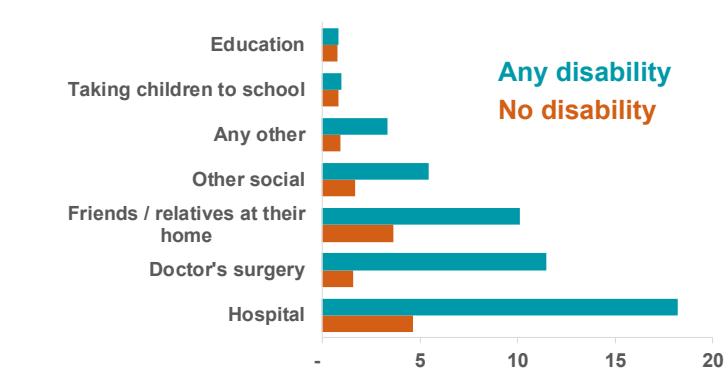
- safety concerns
- inadequate public transport
- can't drive
- lack and cost of parking
- traffic congestion
- cost of petrol
- no car available
- personal disability.

Due to very small sample size responding to this question, none of these factors can be reliably measured singly.



Difficulties travelling for other purposes

**% reporting travel difficulties
(England, 2010-14)**



Respondents are asked if they experience any transport difficulties travelling for various purposes besides work.

Compared with those with no disability, those with a disability are more likely to encounter a travel difficulty for all purposes asked about.

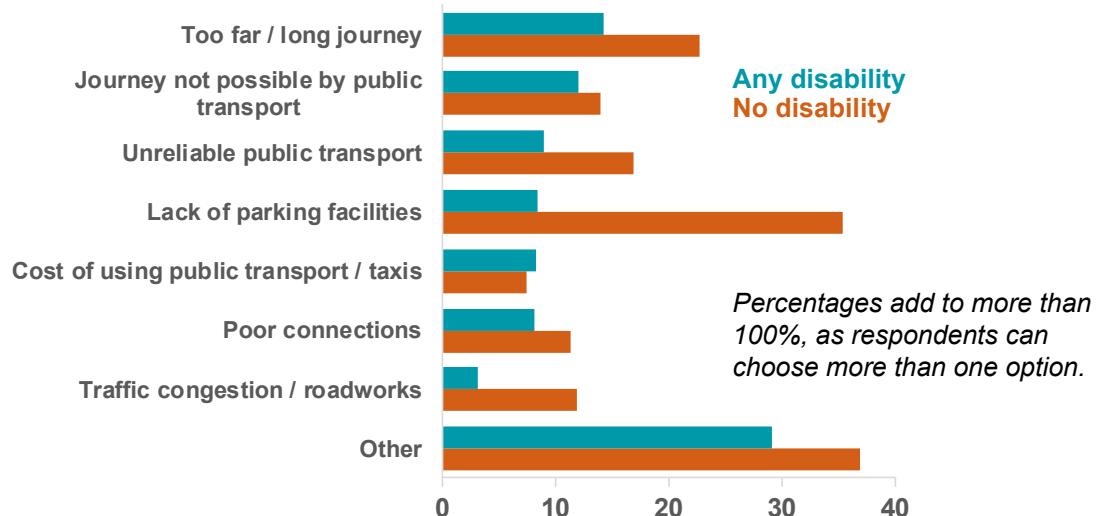
Of those with a disability, the purposes most likely to generate travel problems are going to a hospital, to a GP's surgery, or to visit friends or relatives at their home. The last of these can affect how much social support those with a disability are able to get from friends and family.

Since these questions are asked only every second year, and the categories were changed in 2009, the graph here is a combination of 2010, 2012 & 2014.

The numbers experiencing difficulties travelling for educational purposes, or accompanying children to school, are too small to be reliable or to analyse further – possibly because these purposes affect limited age groups and categories of individual.

For each purpose where respondents reported a travel difficulty, they were then asked which of a list of problems they faced. For all purposes, about half or more of those with a disability who had a travel problem cited their disability as one of the problems. The next most common difficulties cited were the distance, a journey not possible by public transport, unreliable public transport, or lack of parking. However, those without a disability cited these as problems much more commonly than those with a disability. An example is the responses for difficulties getting to a GP's surgery.

% reporting travel difficulties to GP (England 2010-2014)



There are some differences by purpose. For example, lack of parking or the cost of parking are cited as problems for getting to hospitals more commonly than for GPs (and, again, are cited more often by those without a disability). When travelling to GPs, less than 10% of either group cite these as problems. By contrast, when travelling to hospitals, the respective percentages for those with and without a disability are 11% compared with 26% for cost of parking, and 18% compared with 35% for lack of parking.

Among those having travel difficulties visiting friends and relatives, traffic congestion is again much more commonly cited by those without a disability: 27% compared with 6% of those with a disability.



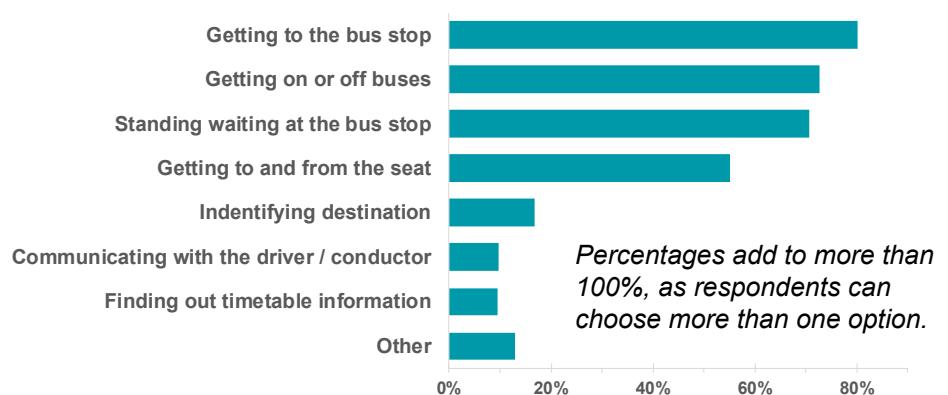
Difficulties travelling by bus

Those who say they have difficulties using buses are asked how often they go out on buses at all nowadays. Although nearly a third (31%) do still use buses, just over two thirds (68%) do not.

% of those whose health problem makes it difficult to use buses reporting difficulties (England 2007-2014)

People are also asked about the nature of their difficulties using local buses. For those who have difficulties using a bus, the percentages reporting each reason are shown here.

The most common difficulties are getting to the bus stop, waiting at the bus stop, and getting on or off the bus.

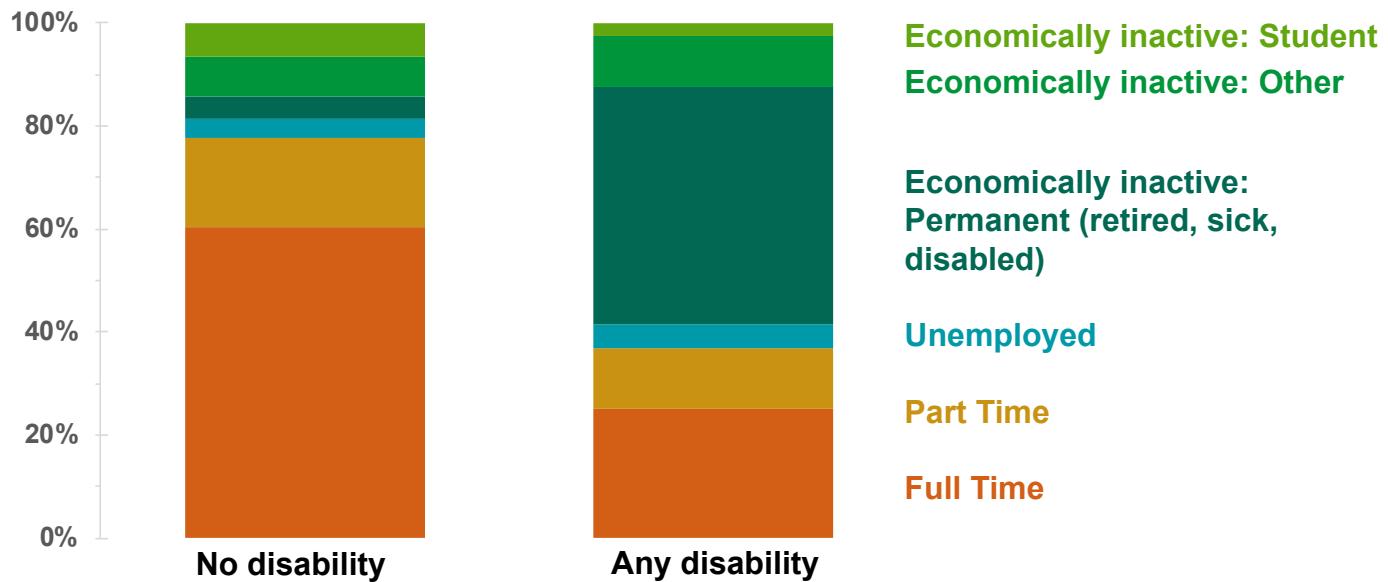




Contextual factors: Employment, Income & Education

Various factors may be seen as contexts which explain some of the differences between travel by those with a disability and by those without: eg employment, income, or educational background. These are examined briefly below.

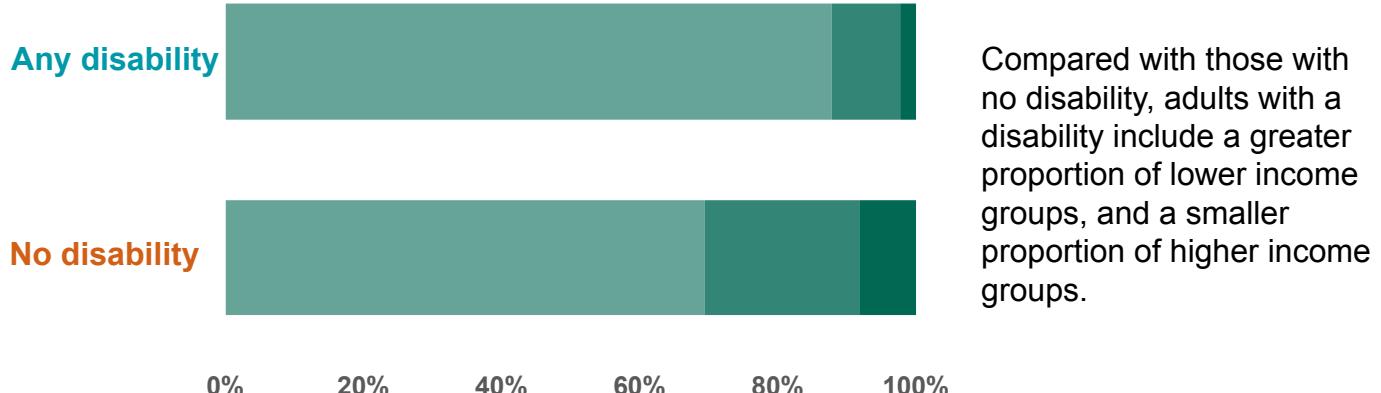
Employment status by disability (England, ages 16-64, 2014)



Those with a disability are much less likely to be employed full-time, and much more likely to be economically inactive.

£ Income group by disability (England, all adults, 2014)

Less than £25,000 £25,000 to £49,999 £50,000 +

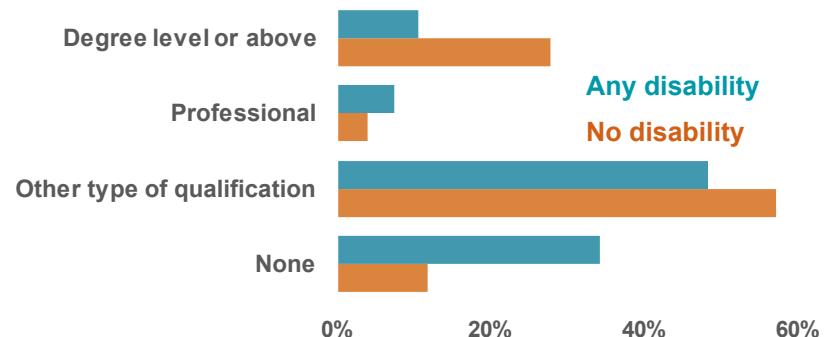


Compared with those with no disability, adults with a disability include a greater proportion of lower income groups, and a smaller proportion of higher income groups.



Those with a disability are much more likely to have no qualifications, and less likely to have a degree or professional qualification.

Educational qualifications by disability (England, 2014)





Background and references

Limitations of the data

Since the data is based upon a random sample survey, results are subject to sampling variation from year to year.

Some questions are not asked every year, and, in others, the range of categories changed between 2007 and 2014, preventing a series from being compared across all years. From 2013 onwards, the NTS has been administered in England only. No data are available on disabilities in children aged under 16.

In the case of some questions, or categories of response, the sample sizes, especially for those with a disability, are small, even when combined across more than one year, and should be interpreted with caution.

Since the NTS is a household survey, people in communal establishments, including nursing homes and hospitals are not covered by the survey. Therefore, any estimates of disability derived from NTS data are likely to be underestimates for the general population, as people in communal establishments are more likely than the general population to have impairments affecting travel.

As explained in the section on definitions (page 2), the definition of disability used here is dependent on two questions about transport or other limitations. Those with a temporary impairment, such as a broken leg, are not included, even though they may face the same limitations as those with long-term conditions.

Currently, there are no questions in the NTS about the nature of impairments; there is no time specified for "long-standing", or distinction of severity. Nor is there any distinction made about the effects of medication or treatment which may mitigate impairments.

Functional limitations asked about are restricted to those affecting travel.

Further references

More details about travel behaviours of English residents can be found in the 2014 National Travel Survey publication: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457752/nts2014-01.pdf

A regularly published table in the NTS on mobility status is [NTS0622 Mobility difficulties by age and gender: England](#)

More factsheets on further specific topics from the National Travel Survey can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nts-factsheets>

Other surveys with information on disability include:

[DfT Blue Badge scheme statistics](#)

[Family Resources Survey](#) (See Chapter 4)

[Life Opportunities Survey](#) (2009 - 2014)

Definition of disability under the [Equality Act \(2010\)](#)

Contact us

For any questions or queries in relation to this factsheet, please contact the National Travel Survey team:

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