

## Travel to Work Survey 2025: Comments Analysis

A total of 8,148 comments were recorded in response to the 2025 survey's open question:

*“Do you have any other comments on your travel to and from work?”*

Analysis of comments over the last four survey years (2022–2025) shows a high level of consistency in the **five most common themes**, which are:

- Transport and traffic policy, planning and management
- Location and organisation specific issues
- Travel choices: influences and considerations
- Bus-related comments
- Cycling-related comments

In 2025 (as in 2024 and 2023), respondents who work predominantly from home and those who work mainly in a workplace raised broadly similar issues in their responses to the open question.

The first section of analysis presented here focuses on key comment themes and suggested improvements relating to different modes of travel: car, cycling, bus, train, walking and running. It also includes a section on micromobility.

The final section explores wider themes relating to transport and traffic policy, planning and management, and travel choices, influences and considerations.

### CAR TRAVEL

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#### Parking

- Respondents expressed widespread frustration with car parking, citing high costs, limited availability, and stress linked to unreliable access. Many described needing to arrive early to secure a space, with some resorting to long walks from distant on-street parking due to lack of public or workplace provision. Staff without permits often parked in residential areas, leading to conflict with local residents and feelings of guilt or tension.
- There were also concerns about infrastructure and access: tight or poorly designed parking bays, inadequate motorcycle and bike parking, and cars frequently blocking cycle lanes or pavements, causing safety hazards for cyclists and pedestrians. Collectively, these issues contributed to commuting stress, disrupted routines (especially for those managing school drop-offs), and influenced decisions to avoid the office or even change jobs.

#### Essential car usage

- Many respondents described being essential car users due to the nature of their jobs, which require travel to multiple sites, carrying tools or equipment, or being on-call for emergencies. For these individuals, public transport was not a realistic option.
- Comments frequently highlighted that timing, flexibility, and geographic spread of their work meant that no viable alternatives to driving existed – especially in rural areas or roles with unpredictable schedules.

- Some respondents noted that time was routinely lost searching for parking at work or site visits, resulting in inefficiencies and added stress, despite having no practical choice but to use a car.

## **School traffic**

- Comments in this section come both from those having to build childcare drop-offs and pick-ups into their journeys and those impacted by school-related traffic.
- Respondents highlighted the significant impact of school traffic on their commutes, with congestion and delays during drop-off and pick-up times regularly extending journey times.
- Several mentioned that parking near schools is difficult or unsafe, both for parents dropping off children and for through-traffic navigating narrow or obstructed roads.
- The timing and volume of school-related traffic were seen as major contributors to peak-hour gridlock, with some suggesting improved planning or dedicated drop-off solutions to ease pressure.

## **Commuting concerns**

- Respondents often described their commute as a source of stress, fatigue, and frustration, blaming long travel times, congestion, and unpredictable delays as daily challenges that negatively affect their wellbeing and energy levels.
- Several highlighted the emotional toll of time lost in traffic or on unreliable transport, noting that this time could be better spent with family or being productive.
- The mental burden of commuting was especially acute for those balancing work, childcare, and long or variable shifts, with some reporting they avoid the office entirely to minimise this strain.

## **Car share**

- A number of respondents expressed a desire to car share but faced practical barriers such as lack of suitable matches, inconsistent schedules, or colleagues living too far away to coordinate effectively.
- Some had tried car sharing in the past but found it unreliable or unsustainable over time due to changing work patterns or limited flexibility.
- There was interest in more structured car share schemes or better communication tools to help match people with similar routes and schedules, especially in larger organisations.

# CYCLING

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## Network

- Many respondents raised concerns about disjointed or incomplete cycle routes, reporting the need to switch frequently between roads, pavements, and shared paths due to missing links or unclear signage.
- There were many mentions of the lack of continuous or direct routes, particularly between residential areas and key employment hubs - making cycling feel impractical or unsafe for longer commutes.
- Respondents described the cycle network as inconsistent across areas, with infrastructure quality and availability varying widely even along a single journey.
- Several comments highlighted frustration that cycling infrastructure often felt like an afterthought, poorly integrated into road layouts, lacking priority at junctions, and failing to separate cyclists from high-speed or heavy vehicle traffic.

## Safety concerns

- Many comments expressed anxiety about sharing the road with fast or aggressive drivers, frequently highlighting incidents of close passing, intimidation, or vehicles failing to give way at junctions.
- A key concern was the lack of physical separation between cyclists and motor traffic, particularly on busy roads and roundabouts, where cyclists reported feeling especially vulnerable.
- Some comments described specific danger points along routes, such as poorly designed junctions, confusing layouts, or bus lanes shared with bikes, all of which heightened the perceived risk.
- In addition to traffic-related risks, some respondents raised personal safety concerns, including poorly lit cycle paths and fear of crime or harassment on isolated or unmonitored sections of the network.

## Path condition and maintenance

- Respondents frequently raised concerns about poor surface quality on cycle paths, citing potholes, cracked tarmac, loose gravel, and uneven repairs that make cycling uncomfortable and potentially hazardous.
- Many comments highlighted inadequate maintenance, including overgrown vegetation, poor drainage, and a build-up of debris or litter – especially on less visible or off-road sections of the cycle network.
- Several cyclists noted insufficient lighting or unclear signage, particularly on shared-use or segregated routes, which increased safety risks during winter or evening commutes.
- Some respondents felt that cycle path layouts were poorly designed, with awkward junctions, unnecessary detours, or paths that merged unpredictably with pedestrian areas or motor traffic.

## Potential and barriers

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## **Fewer hills**

- Numerous respondents said that steep or hilly terrain made cycling impractical or physically demanding, especially for return journeys or those with health conditions. Some noted that hills, combined with other barriers like childcare or safety concerns, discouraged them from cycling at all, even if they were otherwise willing or able.

# BUS TRAVEL

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## Reliability

- A large number of respondents reported that buses were frequently late, cancelled without notice, or failed to show up entirely, making the service feel unreliable and stressful - especially for commuting.
- Many described the inconsistency of bus arrival times, with buses arriving early or late compared to timetables, leading to long waits or missed services.
- Evening and weekend travel were seen as particularly vulnerable, with comments highlighting limited service coverage and unpredictability at off-peak times, including for shift workers.
- As a result of ongoing reliability issues, some respondents said they avoided using the bus altogether, even when they would have preferred to choose public transport.

## Accessibility

- Respondents frequently described gaps in the bus network, noting that key destinations – such as workplaces, hospitals, or rural communities – were poorly served or not covered at all.
- Several mentioned route reductions or cuts to previously reliable services, which had forced them to change routines, take longer journeys, or stop using the bus altogether.
- The need to walk considerable distances to reach bus stops or take multiple buses due to a lack of direct routes, was highlighted as a major deterrent – particularly for those with mobility issues or caring responsibilities.
- Overcrowded buses and poor connections between services also featured prominently, with some respondents highlighting the difficulty of coordinating journeys across disconnected or infrequent routes.

## Frequency

- Many respondents called for more regular services throughout the day, pointing out that current timetables leave long gaps that make the bus impractical for commuting or flexible working hours.
- The absence of early morning and late evening buses was a recurring issue, especially for shift workers or those with non-standard schedules who rely on transport outside of peak times.
- A lack of weekend coverage was also raised, with several noting that Sunday services were limited or non-existent – making it difficult to travel without a car.
- Some comments suggested that if buses ran more frequently and reliably, they would be a much more attractive option – particularly for those currently defaulting to driving due to long waits or missed connections.

## Journey time

- Many respondents felt that bus journeys took significantly longer than necessary, often because of extended, circuitous routes or the need to stop frequently along the way.
- Congestion was frequently mentioned as a contributing factor – with buses getting caught in general traffic and losing time, particularly during peak hours.

- Several people expressed a desire for faster, more direct services that would make bus travel competitive with driving, especially for longer commutes.
- There was also a sense of frustration that bus travel felt inefficient – not just in terms of speed, but because of the accumulated delays from multiple small issues like stop-and-go movement, timetable slippage, and overcrowding.

## Affordability

- A common theme was the perception that bus fares were too high, particularly for short journeys where the cost seemed disproportionate to the distance travelled.
- Some respondents felt they were not getting good value for money, especially when factoring in issues like reliability, journey time, or comfort.
- The cost of regular travel – whether for daily commuting or part-time work – was described as a barrier to using buses more often, with several noting that driving was actually cheaper in practice.
- A few comments also questioned the effectiveness of existing concessions or fare caps, suggesting they didn't go far enough to make buses genuinely affordable for most users.

## Usability

- This category included comments which raised concerns about the onboard experience, referring to issues like uncomfortable temperatures, unclean buses, and crowded conditions – all of which led to unpleasant journey experiences.
- Others pointed to wider usability frustrations, from unreliable real-time information and ticketing apps to difficulties with boarding for those using wheelchairs or pushchairs – with some also mentioning negative interactions with drivers or fellow passengers.

## Bus lanes

- A number of respondents made positive remarks about existing bus lanes, highlighting how they helped reduce delays and made journeys quicker and more reliable.
- There were also calls for greater investment in bus priority measures – including extending lane coverage, improving placement, and even allowing shared use with motorcycles to maximise their impact.

# TRAIN TRAVEL

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## Affordability

- Expensive train fares were often discussed as a key reason for not using rail services, with many describing them as poor value compared to driving or bus travel—especially for regular or short-distance commutes.
- Some expressed frustration that railcards or season tickets did not offer sufficient savings, particularly for part-time workers or those with hybrid schedules.
- Several noted that the cost of combining train travel with parking or onward transport (e.g. bus or bike hire) made it unaffordable overall.
- A number of comments reflected a broader perception that train travel was priced more like a premium service, but without the reliability or comfort to justify the cost.

## Reliability

- Unreliable train services were a common source of frustration, with delays, last-minute cancellations, and poor punctuality listed as barriers to regular use.
- Many respondents described the service as unpredictable, making it difficult to plan journeys with confidence – particularly when connections or fixed start times were involved.
- Several comments referred to long waits or awkward scheduling gaps that disrupted travel routines and made commuting more stressful than necessary.
- These reliability issues often led people to avoid the train altogether, especially when other modes of transport felt more dependable, even if slower or less sustainable.

## Accessibility

- Comments here included many referring to the inconvenience of getting to and from stations, with respondents living too far from rail access or facing poor connections between trains and their final destination by foot or bus.
- A lack of direct routes and the need to change trains at major hubs added time and complexity to journeys, especially for those with limited flexibility or caring responsibilities.
- Others pointed to insufficient station facilities, such as expensive or limited parking, no secure bike storage, or overcrowded trains with too few carriages – making the experience uncomfortable or impractical.
- Some comments raised accessibility concerns, particularly for disabled passengers, those with children, or people carrying equipment, where both station layout and onboard conditions were described as inadequate.

## Journey time

- Many respondents felt that train journeys were too slow overall, especially when factoring in connections, delays, or extended travel times compared to driving.
- Comments often referenced long or inefficient transfers between services, with waits at hubs or poorly coordinated timetables adding significant time to what should be short commutes.
- Engineering works and timetable gaps were seen as frequent causes of disruption, leading to unpredictable and extended travel times. For some, the cumulative effect of these issues made rail an unviable option, even when they would have otherwise preferred a more sustainable mode of transport.

## **Frequency**

- Respondents frequently noted that existing train timetables didn't reflect the realities of their working hours, with early shifts, late finishes, and part-time patterns poorly served by the current schedule.
- The infrequency of trains – particularly outside peak times – left many feeling restricted, with some avoiding rail altogether due to the risk of long waits or missed connections.
- Several comments described inflexible or poorly timed services that made commuting feel more challenging than it needed to be, especially when transfers didn't line up.
- Overall, the lack of regular, reliable options was a major deterrent, with many explaining that they would switch to train travel if services were better tailored to modern commuting needs.

## **Usability**

- Some passengers described the onboard experience as uncomfortable, referring to issues such as dirty carriages, poor temperature control, and overcrowding, particularly during peak hours. A number of comments raised concerns about safety and behaviour, noting incidents of anti-social conduct and a lack of visible staff presence, which made some journeys feel intimidating.
- Accessibility was also a common frustration – people shared difficulties with boarding or moving through trains when using wheelchairs, pushchairs, or carrying bikes, alongside limited seating availability for those who needed it. Several respondents felt that basic facilities were lacking or unreliable, from ticket machines and waiting areas to Wi-Fi access, undermining the convenience of using the train.

## **WALKING AND RUNNING**

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- Many participants who walk or run to work described their commute in positive terms, valuing the physical and mental health benefits, low cost, and reliability of active travel.
- However, a range of infrastructure-related issues were highlighted, including narrow or obstructed pavements, poorly maintained surfaces, and crossings that felt unsafe, too slow, or inconsistently placed.
- Several respondents raised safety concerns about fast-moving traffic, inconsiderate driver behaviour, and shared paths where cyclists or e-scooters posed a hazard to pedestrians.
- Environmental factors such as pollution, litter, poor lighting, and antisocial behaviour along key walking routes were mentioned as deterrents or sources of discomfort.
- A number of participants said they would like to walk or run more often, but faced barriers such as long distances, lack of workplace facilities (e.g. showers), or caring responsibilities that made travel without transport impractical.
- Some described adapting their travel routine to incorporate walking part of the way, for example by parking outside of city centres or clean air zones, while others said that future housing or job changes might affect their ability to continue walking to work.

## **MICROMOBILITY**

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- Respondents sometimes spoke positively about e-scooters and e-bikes, describing them as quick, convenient, and a practical alternative to driving or public transport – especially for short, urban journeys.
- Others appreciated the environmental benefits and flexibility of shared micromobility schemes, though some wished they were more widely available across neighbourhoods and at key travel hubs.
- However, the majority of comments on this theme were critical and included comments linked both to the rider experience and to the behaviour of riders.
- There were frustrations with current services, including poorly maintained vehicles, limited availability, and concerns around cost or app usability. Safety was a recurring theme – with issues ranging from riding behaviour and pavement use to a perceived lack of safe infrastructure - and some expressed disappointment about changes in providers or a reduction in service coverage.

# TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC POLICY, PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

## Congestion

- Among respondents who chose to answer the open question, congestion once again emerged as one of the most prominent themes in 2025. This year, 1,861 comments referenced congestion, making it the most frequently applied individual response code in the survey—second only to the general ‘location specific’ tag. In 2024, around 2,000 comments were coded to this theme.
- As in previous years, comments about congestion were most likely to come from those who commute by car alone. This year, 35% of lone car drivers commented on congestion and this group accounted for 74% of all comments coded to the congestion category.
- The table below provides a summary of the 15 most-mentioned locations in 2025 where congestion was also referenced and the number of separate comments per location.

Congestion hotspots	
Location	2025 comments
Bath (and vicinity)	675
Bristol Central   Park Street / Baldwin Street / Centre / Clifton / St James Barton / Anchor Road / The Downs / Hotwells / Coldharbour Lane / Cabot Circus etc.	208
Filton (including Filton Road and Filton Avenue, junctions and roundabouts)	199
M4 (including junctions)	187
A4 / Temple Meads/ Redcliffe/ Wells Road/ Totterdown/ Old Market/ Wapping Wharf	163
M5 (including junctions, Avonmouth Bridge)	161
A4174/ Ring-road	159
Wales/ Severn Bridge/ Newport etc.	157
Hambrook/ Bradley Stoke/ Patchway/ Stoke Gifford/ Little Stoke/ Concorde Way/ Brabazon	152
MOD/ Abbeywood/ UWE/ Frenchay/ Parkway	137
M32	117
Keynsham/ Wellsway	109
A38	107
Yate/ Chipping Sodbury/ Pucklechurch/ Frampton Cotterell	106
Southmead Hospital (and vicinity)	106

## Highway maintenance

- A large number of respondents voiced frustration with the state of road surfaces, citing issues such as deep potholes, cracked tarmac, and uneven carriageways – all of which made driving, cycling, or using e-scooters uncomfortable or even hazardous.
- Ongoing and poorly managed roadworks featured heavily in the feedback, with comments noting that works often overran, were left unfinished, or caused unnecessary disruption due to poor traffic management or a lack of communication.
- Visibility and navigation were also impacted by worn or missing road markings, unlit stretches of road, and signage obscured by vegetation, which some described as dangerous, particularly at night or in poor weather.

- Several participants reported that damaged roads had caused physical damage to their vehicles, including flat tyres or suspension problems, while cyclists and micromobility users described having to swerve or dismount to avoid unsafe sections.

## **Lack of options**

- Respondents often described an absence of viable public transport connections, with no routes serving their home, workplace, or both – effectively leaving car travel as their only practical option.
- Some highlighted that while buses or trains technically exist, poor coverage, infrequent services, or convoluted journeys involving multiple changes made them unworkable for commuting.
- There were also frequent references to unreliable or inconsistent services, with cancellations, delays, or last-minute timetable changes undermining confidence in using public transport regularly. In rural areas especially, and for those with early starts or late shifts, public transport was described as nonexistent or incompatible with work patterns, reinforcing a sense of dependence on driving.

## **Road safety concerns**

- Many comments reflected a growing sense of tension between different types of road users, with people describing frequent conflict or unease when drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians interact in busy or poorly managed spaces.
- Risky and inconsiderate behaviour was a recurring theme – examples included drivers ignoring speed limits, texting behind the wheel, cyclists weaving through pedestrian areas, and road users disregarding signals or crossings altogether.
- Poorly designed junctions and crossings were also flagged as a safety issue, particularly where visibility was low or signage was unclear, making it harder for people to predict one another's movements.
- Several respondents called for greater emphasis on education and enforcement, suggesting that without clearer rules and more consistent messaging, tensions between road users would continue to grow.

## **Traffic management**

- A number of respondents raised issues around poor access to key routes, including difficulties joining or exiting motorways and delays caused by inadequate junction layouts or outdated road infrastructure.
- Suggestions for improvement ranged from smarter traffic light sequencing and better use of variable speed limits to clearer signposting at complex intersections and more intuitive lane markings to ease congestion and reduce hesitation.
- There was also interest in the use of technology to manage traffic flow more efficiently – including cycle-sensitive lights, real-time signal adjustments, and motion sensors at crossings – particularly in high-traffic or shared spaces.

## **Strategic planning**

- Respondents often voiced frustration with the lack of joined-up thinking across transport projects, noting that overlapping or poorly timed roadworks, neighbourhood schemes, and traffic interventions often created unnecessary disruption. Many felt that planning decisions failed to consider real-world behaviours and pressures, such as school run congestion or peak-time commuting – with night works or diversions sometimes worsening traffic in other areas.

- There were repeated calls for more strategic, long-term thinking, including holistic approaches that coordinate public transport improvements, road access, and sustainable travel options instead of tackling issues in isolation.
- Some participants also pointed out the unintended consequences of local schemes – for example, traffic displacement from low-traffic neighbourhoods into adjacent streets – and questioned whether wider impacts had been properly assessed.

# TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT CHOICES - INFLUENCES AND CONSIDERATIONS

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Many of the comments coded to this category in 2025 (as in previous years) relate to explanations and reflections from respondents about the way they are working currently and how in some cases this involves more than one place of work (e.g. working from home and travelling to a workplace).

## Multiple modes used

- Many respondents described using more than one mode of transport during a typical commute, often combining walking, driving, cycling, or public transport depending on distance, weather, or work location.
- Some shared that their travel habits had shifted over time or varied week to week, with different modes used for the journey to work versus the return, or depending on whether childcare or other responsibilities were involved.
- A number of respondents mentioned they were actively considering changes to how they travel – such as buying a bike, switching to public transport, or moving house to enable more sustainable or flexible options.
- Comments also reflected a pragmatic and flexible approach, with many choosing routes and modes based on what worked best each day in terms of cost, time, and reliability.

## Family commitments and considerations

- For many, commuting patterns fit around school and nursery drop-offs, often requiring specific routes, flexible departure times or the use of a car to accommodate younger children's schedules and requirements.
- Some mentioned the need to support family members with care responsibilities, including elderly relatives or partners who share lifts or rely on their transport – making shared journeys or quick switches between locations essential.
- Comments also referred to pet care, household errands, or shopping as factors that influenced whether and how people travelled on certain days, especially when juggling multiple responsibilities before or after work.
- A number of respondents explained that their current mode of travel was chosen less out of preference and more because it was the only practical way to manage family routines and work commitments together. Comments about ensuring children and families remain safe when travelling – for example by bike or on foot – have also been coded to this theme.

## The weather

- Many respondents described how weather directly influences their choice of travel mode, with rain, wind or cold conditions making cycling or walking less appealing – prompting a switch to driving or public transport when possible.
- For those reliant on 'active' travel, seasonal changes and unpredictable weather were noted as key factors in deciding whether a commute felt manageable or not, especially where alternative options were limited.
- Comments often reflected practical adaptations, such as keeping a car or bus route as a fallback during poor weather or timing journeys earlier to avoid difficult conditions.

- Some respondents suggested that lack of covered facilities, like bike storage or waiting areas, discouraged sustainable travel in bad weather – or simply commented on the challenges of commuting when the weather is poor.

## Change travel times

- Many respondents described adjusting their working hours or daily routines to avoid peak-time congestion, often choosing to leave earlier or later to shorten journey times or reduce stress during the commute.
- For some, this shift had become a deliberate long-term strategy, with flexible hours or hybrid working allowing them to tailor their travel patterns around traffic volumes and school run bottlenecks.
- Comments also reflected a strong preference for predictability and control, with some respondents indicating they were more likely to use sustainable or public transport options when not pressured by tight arrival windows or unreliable peak-time services.

## Electric vehicles and electric cycles

- Many respondents expressed interest in switching to electric vehicles – whether cars or e-bikes – but pointed to high upfront costs, limited range, and insufficient charging infrastructure as key barriers to making the transition. Alongside these comments, references were also made to the need for greater investment in accessible, reliable and bookable charging points, both at home and enroute, noting that inconsistent access was a major deterrent to EV adoption.
- A number of comments were from respondents who had invested in e-bikes and were pleased with their decision.
- While some had already made the switch or were actively considering it, others felt that current incentives and government support were inadequate – with calls for more affordable purchase schemes, salary sacrifice options, and fairer tax policies to make EVs a viable alternative for everyday use.

## Health and wellbeing

- Many reflected on how commutes directly influence mental and physical wellbeing – with active travel options like walking or cycling contributing positively to fitness, stress reduction, and improved mood, while long or congested car journeys were often described as draining and detrimental to work-life balance.
- Some shared that travel routines had become a valued part of their daily rhythm, offering time to decompress or build healthy habits, while others raised concerns about fatigue, anxiety, or health setbacks caused by unreliable or extended commutes.

## Working patterns and working from home

- A wide range of working patterns was described – including early starts, late finishes, and shift-based roles – with many respondents highlighting how non-standard hours limited their ability to use public transport or share travel arrangements, often leaving driving as the only viable option.
- Others commented on hybrid or flexible working arrangements, noting that the ability to occasionally work from home reduced commuting stress, helped manage other responsibilities, and influenced how often and when they chose to travel into a workplace. In some cases, comments referred to employers' future plans with regard to home and/or hybrid working arrangements. Working from home is the clear preference of many with respondents enjoying significant time savings, reduced commuting stress, and improved productivity.

- Some shared concerns about limited access to home working opportunities, noting that employer policies, role requirements, or inconsistent support made it difficult to adopt or sustain flexible arrangements – even when it would benefit work–life balance and transport efficiency.

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