

# Let's Get Walking!

56°  
DEGREE  
INSIGHT



FOR A HAPPIER,  
HEALTHIER SCOTLAND

Paths for All work with a number of partner organisations to deliver the Scottish Government's National Walking Strategy – Let's Get Scotland Walking. Their vision is for Scotland to become one of the world's most walking friendly countries with everyone benefitting from walking, everyday in welcoming and safe environments.

Paths for All's work is central to the delivery of this strategy: promoting everyday walking through a wide range of activities from supporting community paths and active travel projects to the promotion of places for recreational walking.

Earlier this year Paths for All commissioned 56 Degree Insight to undertake their 2019 National Survey. The survey has provided an updated picture of the Scottish population's participation and attitudes to walking, updating information last collected in 2014 and complementing other sources such as the Scottish Household Survey and Scotland's People and Nature.

## Our approach

The survey fieldwork was undertaken in partnership with Kantar, using their monthly online omnibus survey Onlinebus Scotland. This provided a fast and cost-effective way to reach the Scottish population, and backed up by Kantar's quality assured data collection methods, Onlinebus Scotland focuses on delivering quick, accurate and affordable insights. Features of Onlinebus Scotland include:

- A monthly quick turnaround survey of a representative sample of around 1,000 online Scottish adults aged 16+
- Quotas used to obtain a representative sample distribution.
- Data weighted to match Scottish population profile estimates.

Fieldwork was undertaken from 14<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> June 2019 with a total of 1,001 interviews completed.

## Key findings

### ***Most Scots walk nearly every day...***

We found that 55% of Scottish adults walked every day and 26% walked several times a week. The most common reasons for walking were leisure and exercise and walking to local shops or public transport connections. In the month prior to the survey while the vast majority had walked in urban places (87%), in particular roadside pavements (71%), fewer had walked in more rural places (55%).

We also found that levels of walking participation were lower amongst those aged 55 and over, people who were not working, and people with no children. Levels were also slightly lower amongst residents of rural areas and residents of the 10% most deprived areas.

### ***Health and wellbeing is the top motivation for choosing to walk...***

The majority of Scottish adults agreed that they like to walk because of its benefits to their health or because it helps them to relax (78% and 72% respectively). A smaller proportion walked because it is good for the environment (62%).

### ***Walking participation is on the up...***

Reflecting the trends seen in other surveys (including the Scottish Household Survey and SNH's Scotland's People and Nature), our survey suggested that there has been an overall increase in walking participation across the Scottish population. 2 in 5 Scottish adults (42%) claimed to walk more often now than 5 years ago while a much smaller proportion (24%) walk less often (the remaining third walk the same amount).

Frequency of walking increased most amongst younger age groups (aged 16-34), people with children and people who are working.

In terms of reasons for the change, while 40% of those who were walking more often said this was due to a change in personal circumstances (e.g. moved house or job) almost as many (37%) were walking more to gain health benefits.



Other motivations mentioned by much smaller proportions of respondents related to saving money (3%) and protecting the environment (2%).

### **Improving path networks and accessibility would encourage even more walking...**

Around three-quarters of Scots would be interested in walking more often if certain changes were made. This was especially the case amongst women, many of whom stated that they would walk more often if they had someone to walk with, felt safer walking at night or improved local paths.

Notably, most Scots (63%) had recently experienced problems that forced them to change their walking route or made them less likely to walk in the same place in future. The most common issues were cars parked on pavements, cyclists on pavements and poor pavement maintenance.

In general, views towards local paths were extremely varied. While 41% of Scots agreed that pavements in their local area were in a good condition, almost as many (37%) disagreed. Only a quarter felt that the condition of paths in their local area has improved in the last 5 years (25%).

If they were moving house, having local shops and facilities and a regular bus service within walking distance would be important to the majority of Scottish adults (74% and 64% respectively). In contrast, far fewer stated that convenience of routes to drive to the nearest town centre (33%) or to retail parks (26%) would be important.

### **Our 56DI point of view**

It has been a pleasure to work with the team at Paths for All on this important survey which will support the work they are doing with partners to improve opportunities for walking and cycling in Scotland. The results are clear – recognising the benefits of walking for our health

and mental wellbeing, Scots are walking more than before, and for a wide range of reasons including leisure and routine journeys. However, to support this increasing demand, we need continued investment in better quality path networks and, rather than focusing on car usage, planners need to make it easier for us to be able to walk or cycle to local amenities like shops, schools and public transport links. And while environmental concerns are currently a less important factor in many people's travel choices, rising awareness of the environmental damage caused by short car journeys - at both a local and global level - should only add to our demand to be able to walk and cycle on journeys.

Given the survey findings we welcome the new Transport Bill approved by the Scottish Parliament last week. This legislation will help Scotland to have a cleaner, smarter transport network which is fit for the future - reforms include a ban on pavement parking and measures that will give local authorities more options to improve local bus services.

Let's get walking!

### **Find out more**

The full report from this study is available on the Paths for All website [www.pathsforall.org.uk](http://www.pathsforall.org.uk) or you can find out more about the Scottish Government's strategy for walking here - [www.gov.scot/publications/lets-scotland-walking-national-walking-strategy/](http://www.gov.scot/publications/lets-scotland-walking-national-walking-strategy/)

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