

Introduction

This factsheet summarises findings from the National Travel Survey (NTS) about the travel patterns of people with health problems that affect their personal mobility. The figures quoted are based on the 2005 survey and cover Great Britain. The NTS covers adults and children, but asks only people aged 16 and over about personal mobility difficulties.

The NTS asks whether respondents have any disability or other long standing health problem that makes it difficult to:

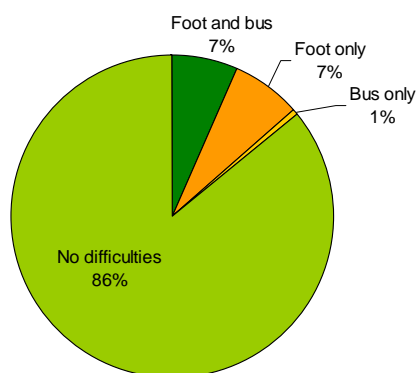
- (a) go out on foot
- (b) use local buses

Throughout this factsheet, all those who say yes to at least one of these questions are defined as having a mobility difficulty.

Who do mobility difficulties affect?

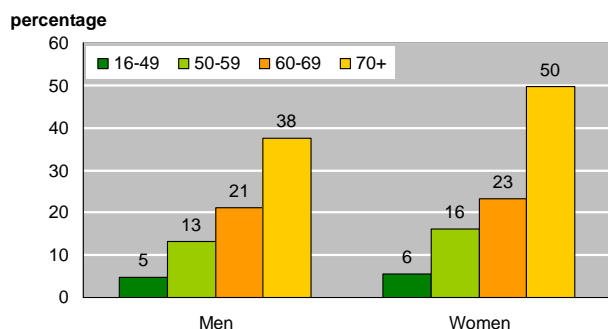
- In 2005 14% of adults experienced mobility difficulties (Chart 1).

Chart 1: Percentage of adults (16 years and over) with and without mobility difficulties: 2005



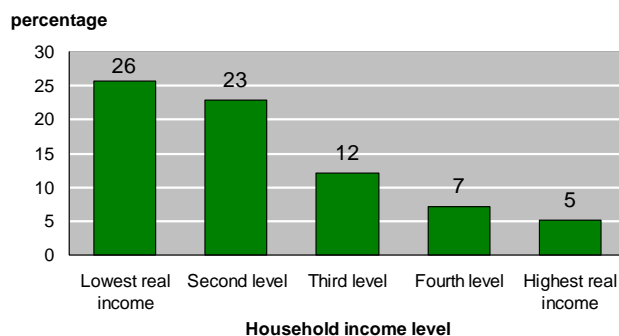
- Mobility difficulties are much more common among older people. 45% of those aged 70 and over experience mobility difficulties, compared with 5% of those aged 16 to 49. Rates are also higher among women than men (Chart 2).

Chart 2: Percentage of individuals with mobility difficulties by age and sex: 2005



- There is a strong association between mobility difficulties and household income. Adults who live in the poorest fifth of households are five times as likely to have mobility difficulties as those in the wealthiest fifth (Chart 3). This pattern broadly holds for all age groups.

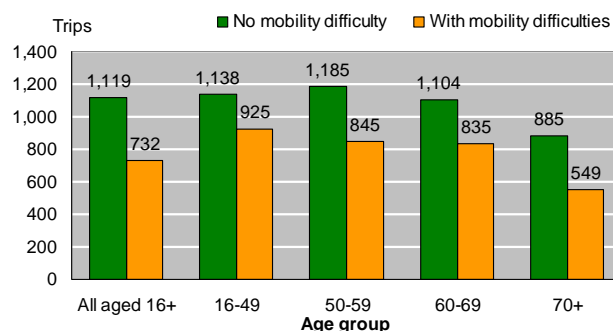
Chart 3: Percentage of adults with mobility difficulties by household income quintile: 2005



How do mobility difficulties affect personal travel?

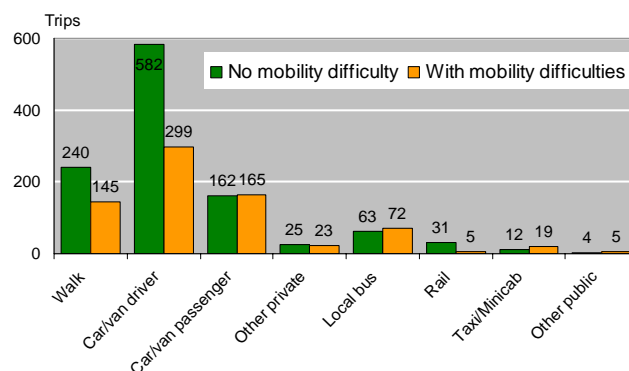
- Adults with mobility difficulties make a third fewer trips on average than those without (Chart 4).
- The difference is greatest among those aged 70 and over; those with mobility difficulties average 549 trips per year, while those with no mobility difficulties average 885.

Chart 4: Trips per person per year by age for those with and without mobility difficulties: 2005



- This difference in average number of trips made can largely be accounted for by much lower trip rates on foot, as a driver and by rail among those with mobility difficulties (Chart 5).
- People with mobility difficulties make more trips by local bus and taxi or minicab.

Chart 5: Trips per person per year by main mode by those aged 16 or over with and without mobility difficulties: 2005



Adults who said they had difficulty going out on foot were asked if they go out on foot alone, if they go out only with someone to assist them, or if they never go out on foot at all.

- Although more than three fifths do go out on foot alone despite their walking difficulties, a fifth go out only with assistance, and nearly a fifth do not go out on foot at all.

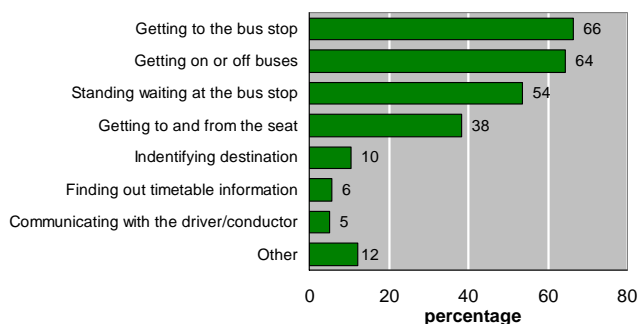
The NTS asks people how often they walk for 20 minutes or more, for any reason.

- 29% of adults who have mobility difficulties (but who do sometimes go out on foot) said that they did so at least once a week and 61% said they did so less than once a year or never, compared with 60% and 19% respectively among adults with no mobility difficulty.

Adults who said they had difficulty using local bus services were asked what problems they had with this and whether they used local buses at all.

- Two-thirds said they had difficulty getting to the bus stop, and a similar proportion said they had difficulty in getting on or off buses. Just over half cited difficulty with waiting at the bus stop (Chart 6).
- 69% said they did not use local buses at all.

Chart 6: Reasons cited by adults who say they have difficulties using local bus services: 2005



Difficulties with particular journeys

The NTS asks all adults whether they have difficulties in making journeys for particular purposes. The proportions who say they have difficulties with particular journeys due to personal disability are much smaller than the proportion defined as having mobility difficulties.

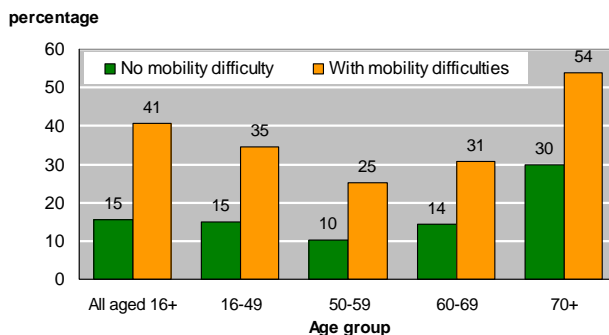
- While 7% of all adults report some kind of difficulty in travelling **to visit friends or family**, only 1% say that personal disability is a cause. A similar proportion (1%) say that personal disability makes it difficult to travel to **other social activities**.
- Among people aged 70 and over, the proportions citing personal disability rise to 5% and 4% respectively for these journey purposes.
- 8% report some kind of difficulty in travelling **to the doctor or a hospital**. Around 2% mention personal disability, rising to 7% among those aged 70 and over.

Coping with mobility difficulties

The NTS shows that access to a car is one of the most important factors in the amount of travelling people do.

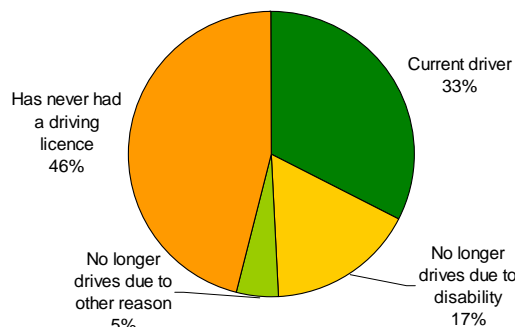
- Two thirds of respondents with a mobility difficulty say they do not have a difficulty getting in or out of a car.
- However, people with mobility difficulties are more than twice as likely as those without to live in a household with no car, regardless of their age (Chart 7).

Chart 7: Proportion of people with and without mobility difficulties living in a household with no car: 2005



- 48% of people with mobility difficulties aged 17 and over hold a full UK driving licence, compared to 75% of those without mobility difficulties.
- Among people with mobility difficulties aged 70 and over, 33% are current drivers, 46% have never owned a licence and 17% no longer drive due to personal disability. (Chart 8)

Chart 8: Proportion of people aged 70 or over with mobility difficulties who drive: 2005



The NTS asks whether respondents with mobility difficulties are aware of any special mobility services, run by local authorities and other organisations, in their local area. (Respondents are not asked whether they use these services.)

- Four fifths of people with mobility difficulties are aware of at least one type of special mobility service in their local area.
- Dial-a-ride and hospital car services are the most widely known to be available (Chart 9).

Chart 9: Awareness of local mobility services among people with mobility difficulties: 2005

