

Tower Hamlets

Walking and Cycling Index 2021





Foreword

Our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling in Tower Hamlets



The pandemic highlighted how important outdoor space is to our health and wellbeing. People wanted to get out and enjoy our beautiful parks, green spaces and canal paths.

Calm places where they could walk and cycle away from motor traffic. Record breaking numbers of people in Tower Hamlets hired Transport for London's (TfL) Santander cycles with hires up by 22% during May-October 2020 compared to the preceding five years.

We are passionate about making our borough a healthier and fairer place for our residents. Poor air quality linked to traffic emissions is a key issue, with local children typically having 10% less lung capacity than the national average as a result of air pollution. To improve air quality around schools we have delivered 34 School Streets in the past two years and the borough is committed to making further improvements for our schools in the future. The School Streets have reduced car journeys and made conditions safer and more pleasant for families to walk or cycle their school journey. The expansion of London's Ultra Low Emissions Zone last year to include the entire borough was also most welcome in improving local air quality.

During the pandemic we created more space for residents to walk and cycle as part of our Streetspace programme, by temporarily widening footways in our town centres, and also implemented temporary road closures to facilitate outdoor dining and support local businesses in Brick Lane. Over the coming years we will be delivering improvements to the borough's walking, wheeling and cycling network in partnership with TfL.

Secure cycle storage is vital, especially in a borough where many people live in flats. We have installed 56 bike hangars and 84 individual cycle lockers during the last two years. We've also secured funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy to deliver additional cycle parking over the next few years.

Through our footway accessibility programme, we are investing in dropped kerb and crossing improvements to our pavements so they can be easily navigated by all residents, regardless of disability. The recent opening of the fully accessible Elizabeth Line, serving Whitechapel and Canary Wharf stations in the borough, is also an exciting development for our residents.

Will Tuckley
Chief Executive of the London
Borough of Tower Hamlets



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The Walking and Cycling Index

The Walking and Cycling Index (formerly Bike Life) is the biggest assessment of walking and cycling in urban areas in the UK and Ireland. This is the first year walking has been included.

It is delivered by Sustrans in collaboration with 18 cities and urban areas. Each city reports on the progress made towards making both walking and cycling more attractive, everyday ways to travel.

The Walking and Cycling Index reports every two years. This is the second report from Tower Hamlets produced in partnership with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The data in this report comes from 2021 and includes local walking and cycling data, modelling and an independent survey of 1,615 residents aged 16 or above in Tower Hamlets. The survey was conducted from June to August 2021 following Covid-19 travel restrictions across the UK being lifted. Social research organisation NatGen conducted the survey which is representative of all residents, not just those who walk or cycle.

We have included comparisons to 2019 data where available.

Our thanks to the people of Tower Hamlets who took part in the survey and shared their stories with us.

More details on all Walking and Cycling Index reports can be found at www.sustrans.org.uk/walkingcyclingindex



Defining wheeling

We recognise some people, for example wheelchair or mobility scooter users, identify with the term wheeling instead of walking. Therefore we use the terms walking and wheeling together and consider walking and wheeling to include the use of mobility aids and pushchairs.

All walking survey responses within this report include responses from people who wheel. However, please note for graph labels we use walking as a shorthand for walking and wheeling.

Report summary

Tower Hamlets

Populationⁱ

324,745

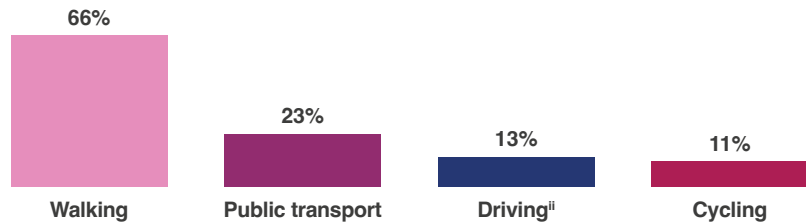


The impact of the pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on how, when and the amount we travel, especially in relation to public transport and driving.

Transport use during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, Department for Transport, June 2020

Residents who travel by the following modes five or more days a week in Tower Hamlets



Two thirds of Tower Hamlets residents walk five times a week. A quarter cycle once a week.

66% of residents walk at least five days a week

25% of residents cycle at least once a week

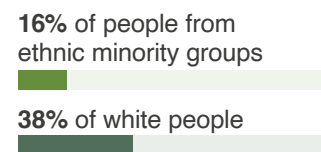
Walking, wheeling and cycling participation is not equal

More work is needed to increase participation in walking, wheeling and cycling, with a particular focus on people from ethnic minorities and disabled people.

Proportion of residents who walk at least five days a week

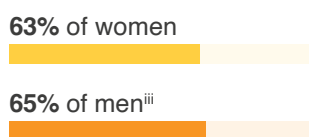


Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week



Not all residents feel safe and welcome in their neighbourhood

Proportion of residents who think walking safety is good



Proportion of residents who think cycling safety is good



Proportion of residents who feel welcome and comfortable walking or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood



Socio-economic group is a classification based on occupation maintained by the Market Research Society. Groups A and B are professional and managerial. Groups D and E are semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, homemakers and people not in employment.

i. NOMIS mid-year 2019 population estimates. This is the most recent available for Tower Hamlets.
 ii. Travelling as driver or passenger of car, van or motorcycle. iii. The sample size for respondents who identified their gender 'in another way' was too low to be statistically significant and therefore is not presented here.

Everyone benefits when more people walk, wheel and cycle

Every year, walking and cycling in Tower Hamlets:

+ Prevents

459

serious long-term health conditions



Creates

£187.4 million

in economic benefit for individuals and the region



Saves

10,000 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions

Walking, wheeling and cycling help to tackle the climate emergency

Every day, walking and cycling in Tower Hamlets takes up to

58,000 cars off the road^{iv}

However,

17.9 million

journeys up to three miles are driven in Tower Hamlets each year

If **80%** of these journeys were walked or cycled it could save approximately

5,900 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions^v

Residents want more funding for walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport

Percentage of residents who would like to see more government spending on:

61% on walking



52% on cycling



69% on public transport



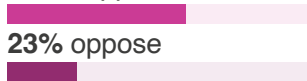
27% on driving



This would help support more liveable neighbourhoods

Among Tower Hamlets residents:

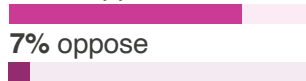
59% support



23% oppose

more cycle tracks along roads, physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

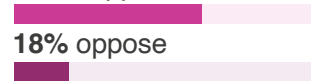
77% support



7% oppose

the creation of more 20-minute neighbourhoods^{vi}

62% support



18% oppose

the creation of more low-traffic neighbourhoods

64% agree



19% disagree

increasing space for people socialising, walking and cycling on their local high street would improve their local area

83% agree



5% disagree

more measures to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour on the street or in public spaces would improve their local area

43% agree



22% disagree

closing streets outside local schools to cars during school drop-off and pick-up times would improve their local area

iv. Based on walking and cycling by residents that live in a household with a car. Does not include leisure cycling or leisure walking trips.

v. Based upon each journey being 1.5 miles in length. vi. See definition on page 14.



Walking in Tower Hamlets

Walking and wheeling participation, safety and satisfaction

Walking and wheeling participation

Walking and wheeling are often overlooked in transport. This is despite being an efficient use of space, good for our health and having no environmental impact.

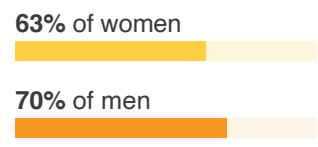
A brisk 10-minute walk every day provides many health benefits.ⁱ More needs to be done to encourage people in underrepresented groups to share in the benefits of walking and wheeling every day.

98%
of all residents walk

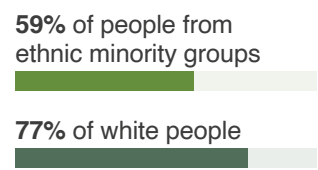
66%
of residents walk at least five days a week

Proportion of residents who walk or wheel at least five days a week

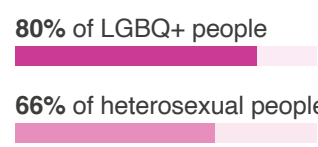
Genderⁱⁱ



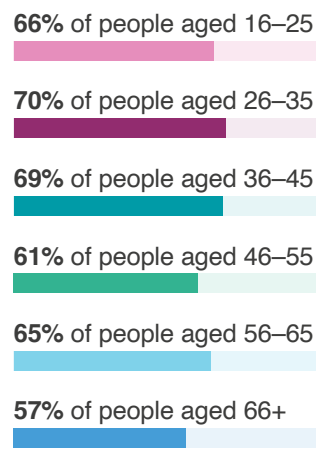
Ethnicity



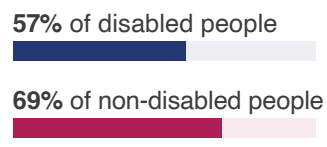
Sexuality



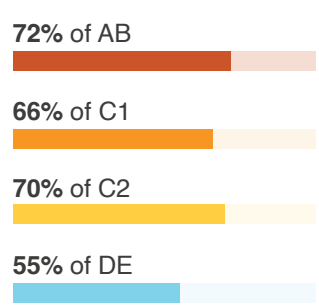
Age



Disability



Socio-economic groupⁱⁱⁱ



i. Walking for health, NHS, July 2019.
 ii. The sample size for respondents who identified their gender 'in another way' was too low to be statistically significant and therefore is not presented here.

iii. Socio-economic group is a classification based on occupation maintained by the Market Research Society. Groups A and B are professional and managerial. Group C1 is supervisory/clerical and students. Group C2 is skilled manual. Groups D and E are semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, homemakers and people not in employment.

Walking and wheeling safety and satisfaction

Important differences exist in how safe people feel when walking or wheeling. Safety includes both road and personal safety.

64% of residents think the level of safety for walking is good

45% of residents think the level of safety for children walking is good

Proportion of residents who think walking or wheeling safety in their local area is good

Gender

63% of women



65% of men



Ethnicity

63% of people from ethnic minority groups



66% of white people



Sexuality

66% of LGBTQ+ people



66% of heterosexual people



Age

71% of people aged 16–25



65% of people aged 26–35



63% of people aged 36–45



61% of people aged 46–55



60% of people aged 56–65



59% of people aged 66+



Disability

50% of disabled people



67% of non-disabled people



Socio-economic group

66% of AB



60% of C1



68% of C2



63% of DE



72%

of residents think their local area overall is a good place to walk



Ferdous Ahmed



I walk a lot in Tower Hamlets. I love getting around on foot. In the car there's a lot of pollution and you're sitting in traffic. I learned to drive in 2000 and haven't driven since. Everything here is close by so I don't need it. Walking is fantastic for your health and your physical and emotional wellbeing.

About two years ago I had a problem with my feet. The doctor said I might need to start taking steroids and that I shouldn't walk too much. I was sad at this because I love walking. Then the lockdown happened and I started walking – one hour, two hours – not to be stuck at home all the time. The pain has gone. I no longer need to go to the doctor or go to a physio.

In lockdown, a lot of ladies I know were saying that they were just moving between the kitchen, bedroom and living room. A lot of people don't have gardens. So going on a walk was a break for them. It's their 'me time'.

We're so lucky to have lots of parks and I generally feel safe in Tower Hamlets.



Cycling in Tower Hamlets

Cycling participation, safety and satisfaction

Cycling participation

Cycling participation is not equal. Barriers to cycling can be far more pronounced for some people. Safety, including road safety and personal safety, is the single largest barrier to cycling.ⁱ

Community cycle groups and cycle tracks physically separated from traffic can make people feel safer and more confident on their cycle. These measures can also encourage more women and people from ethnic minorities to enjoy the benefits of cycling.

47%
of all residents cycle

25%
of all residents cycle at least once a week

Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

Gender

20% of women

32% of men

Ethnicity

16% of people from ethnic minority groups

38% of white people

Sexuality

35% of LGBTQ+ people

24% of heterosexual people

Age

22% of people aged 16–25

35% of people aged 26–35

24% of people aged 36–45

17% of people aged 46–55

21% of people aged 56–65

12% of people aged 66+

Disability

19% of disabled people

27% of non-disabled people

Socio-economic group

31% of AB

26% of C1

13% of C2

16% of DE

i. See Bike Life, 2019 Tower Hamlets report.

Cycling safety and satisfaction

39%

of all residents think the level of safety for cycling in their local area is good

27%

of all residents think the level of safety for children cycling is good

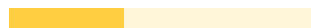
48%

of all residents think their local area overall is a good place to cycle

Proportion of residents who think cycling safety in their local area is good

Gender

38% of women



40% of men



Ethnicity

44% of people from ethnic minority groups



34% of white people



Sexuality

35% of LGBTQ+ people



40% of heterosexual people



Age

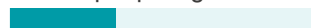
48% of people aged 16–25



39% of people aged 26–35



35% of people aged 36–45



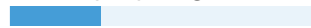
38% of people aged 46–55



44% of people aged 56–65

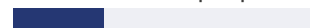


30% of people aged 66+



Disability

30% of disabled people

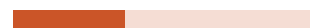


41% of non-disabled people

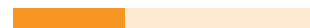


Socio-economic group

37% of AB



37% of C1



49% of C2



45% of DE



Naaema Ali



I began cycling in 2020 to recover from sickness and address weight gain. My experience made me want to make cycling accessible for women in my community. With Cycle Sisters, a group that encourages Muslim women to cycle, and Tower Hamlets Cycling Club, I teach and encourage women to ride. And I work at Chrisp Street Community Cycles (see page 21).

I love encouraging women to cycle. I was teaching a 54-year-old lady who learnt to ride in her first lesson. That was awesome to see.

Breaking down barriers is important. I hear, “I’m too old, I’m not fit, I suffer from depression, I can’t ride in my abaya [a loose-fitting full-length robe worn by some Muslim women].” I say none of these things should stop you, I believe in you and you need to believe in yourself. With encouragement and reassurance, they start to ride and get so much from it. It’s wonderful to see the smiles on these women who were initially extremely nervous. Learning how to cycle isn’t just a new skill, it’s about self-belief, resilience and overcoming mental barriers.

These women become role models, encouraging others to learn. I see them cycling outside with their friends. It’s a beautiful journey to witness. It’s even more beautiful that I was a part of it.



Benefits of walking

Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

The large numbers of walking and wheeling trips in Tower Hamlets produce important health, economic and environmental benefits for everyone.

Tower Hamlets residents walk or wheel 17 times around the world every day

154.1 million

walking and wheeling trips were made in Tower Hamlets in the past year, which adds up to

154 million miles

= 420,000 miles a day.

This equates to each resident spending

6 days

walking or wheeling continuously in the past year.

Annual walking and wheeling trips by purposeⁱ

Enjoyment or fitness – adults and children (including running):
53,100,000

34%

Destination – adults only (eg work, school, shopping):
90,700,000

59%



School – children only:
10,300,000

7%

Walking and wheeling benefit residents and the local economy in the region

In Tower Hamlets, the net annual economic benefit for individuals and society from all walking and wheeling trips is

£152.6 million

Of this total,

£24.5 million

is from people with a car choosing to walk or wheel for transport in the past year.

£1.05

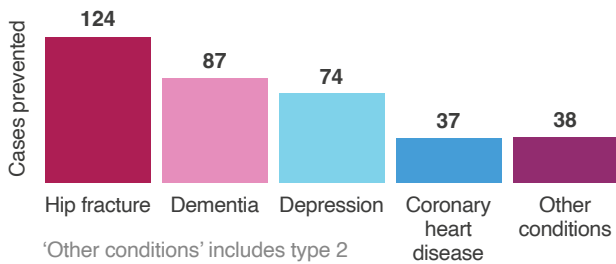
net benefit from each mile walked or wheeled instead of driven



These figures are based upon monetising the costs and benefits of driving and walking. This includes travel time, vehicle operating costs, medical costs, work absenteeism, congestion, infrastructure, local air quality, noise, greenhouse gases and taxation.

Walking and wheeling unlock health benefits for everyone

Walking in Tower Hamlets prevents 360 serious long-term health conditions each year



'Other conditions' includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer, colorectal cancer.

Saving the NHS in Tower Hamlets **£2.5 million per year**

equivalent to the cost of **83,000 GP appointments**

Based on Sport England MOVES tool which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity.

In Tower Hamlets the physical activity benefits of walking

prevent 92 early deaths annually

which is valued at

£304 millionⁱⁱ

Please note wheelchair and mobility scooter trips are modelled as walking trips for the purposes of the MOVES and HEAT models.

People walking and wheeling more instead of driving improves air quality, saving annually:

20,000 kg of NO_x
and

2,700 kg of particulates
(PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

24% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



Walking and wheeling in Tower Hamlets help mitigate our climate crisis

6,400 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by walking or wheeling instead of driving, equivalent to the carbon footprint of

7,800 people taking flights

from London Heathrow to New York.



Transport now accounts for **27%** of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Between 1990 and 2019, transport emissions went down by only **5%**, while overall emissions went down by **44%**.

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2019 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures

Walking and wheeling keep Tower Hamlets moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.ⁱⁱⁱ This helps keep Tower Hamlets moving for all road users.

51,000 return walking trips

are made daily in Tower Hamlets by people who could have used a car.

iii. Litman, 2021. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept.

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back

153 miles

equivalent to the distance from Tower Hamlets to Nottingham.



ii. Based on WHO/Europe Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), which enables an economic assessment of the health benefits of walking by estimating the value of reduced mortality resulting from specified amounts of walking.



Benefits of cycling

Why everyone gains when more people cycle

Tower Hamlets residents cycle 6 times around the world every day

17.7 million cycling trips

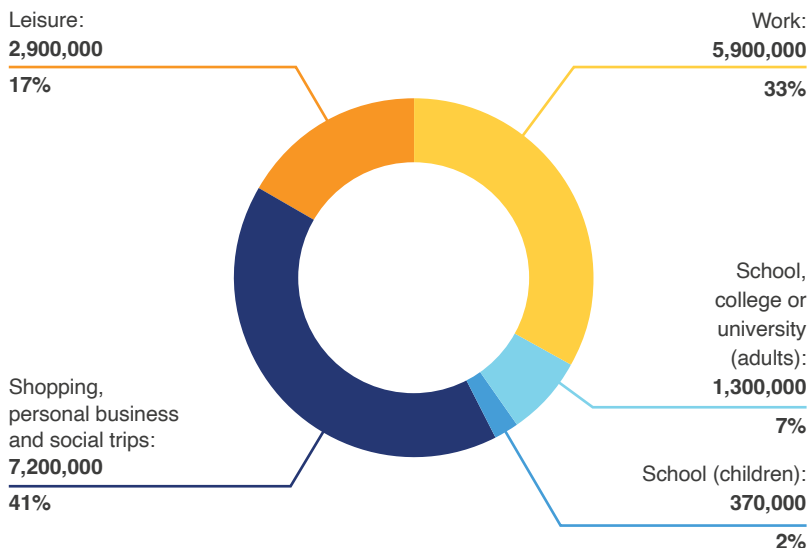
were made in Tower Hamlets in the past year

This adds up to

56.5 million miles

= 150,000 miles a day

Annual cycling trips by purpose in Tower Hamletsⁱ



Cycling benefits residents and the local economy in the region

In Tower Hamlets, the net annual economic benefit for individuals and society from all cycling trips is

£34.8 million

Of this total,

£26.2 million

is from people with a car choosing to cycle for transport in the past year.

£1.94

net benefit from each mile cycled instead of driven

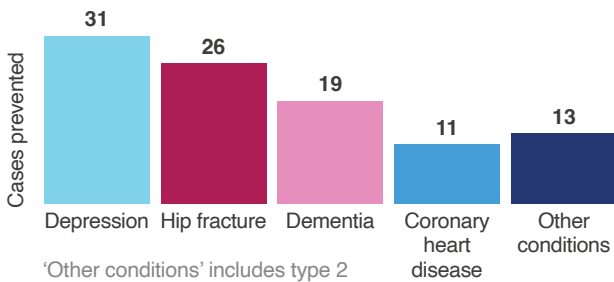


These figures are based upon monetising the costs and benefits of driving and cycling. This includes travel time, vehicle operating costs, medical costs, work absenteeism, congestion, infrastructure, local air quality, noise, greenhouse gases and taxation.

i. Leisure trips include adults and children (with and without adult accompaniment). Education trips are shown separately for adults and children. All other trips are just adults.

Cycling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Cycling in Tower Hamlets prevents 99 serious long-term health conditions each year



'Other conditions' includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer, colorectal cancer.

Saving the NHS in Tower Hamlets **£700,000 per year**

equivalent to the cost of **23,000 GP appointments**

Based on Sport England MOVES tool which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity.

In Tower Hamlets the physical activity benefits of cycling

prevent 11 early deaths annually

which is valued at **£37.6 millionⁱⁱ**

People cycling more instead of driving improves air quality, saving annually:

7,600 kg of NO_x
and
1,100 kg of particulates
(PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

24% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



Cycling in Tower Hamlets helps mitigate our climate crisis

3,700 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by cycling instead of driving, equivalent to the carbon footprint of



4,500 people taking flights from London Heathrow to New York.

Transport now accounts for **27%** of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Between 1990 and 2019, transport emissions went down by only **5%**, while overall emissions went down by **44%**.

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2019 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures

Cycling keeps Tower Hamlets moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.ⁱⁱⁱ This helps to keep Tower Hamlets moving for all road users.

6,700 return cycling trips are made daily in Tower Hamlets by people that could have used a car.

ⁱⁱⁱ Litman, 2021. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept.

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back

20 miles equivalent to the distance from Whitechapel to Upminster.



ⁱⁱ Based on WHO/Europe Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), which enables an economic assessment of the health benefits of cycling by estimating the value of reduced mortality resulting from specified amounts of cycling.

Walking solutions

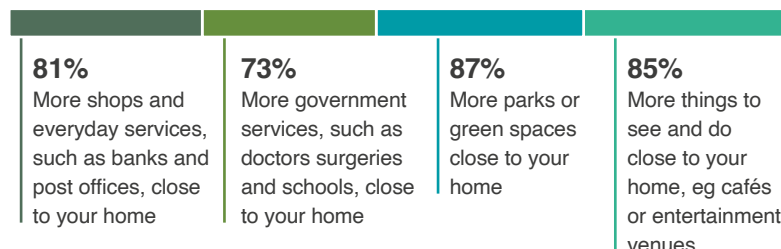
What would help make walking and wheeling better?

Residents want more services and amenities within walking and wheeling distance

Ideally, walking should be the most attractive transport option for the vast majority of short journeys. A city can support this by ensuring many of the things people need are found near to where people live. The walking environment should be safe, comfortable, welcoming and attractive.

Neighbourhoods where many facilities can be reached on foot are known as 20-minute neighbourhoods. You can walk from your home to many of the things you need on a regular basis and back again within 20 minutes. This equates to around 800m each way.

What percentage of residents would find more local amenities and services useful to help them walk or wheel more?



94%

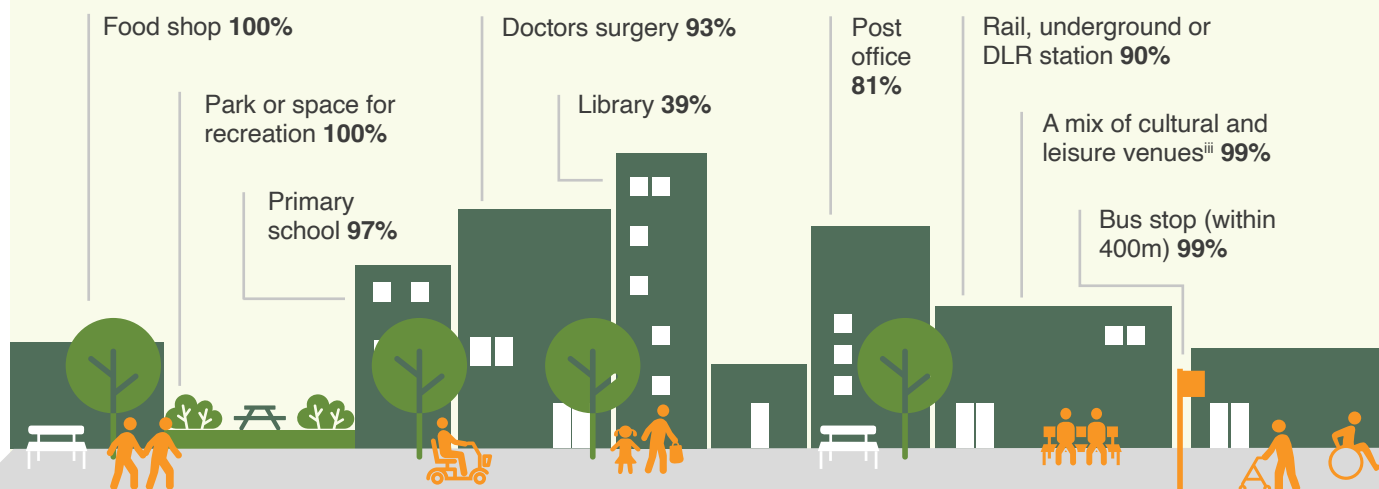
of Tower Hamlets households are in neighbourhoods of at least 40 dwellings per hectare. These are or can become 20-minute neighbourhoods.ⁱ

Lower density neighbourhoods have too few people to make much local business or public transport viable.ⁱⁱ

72%

agree they can easily get to many places they need to visit without having to drive

Proportion of households within an 800m walk or wheel of the following amenities and services



i. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021, National Model Design Code.

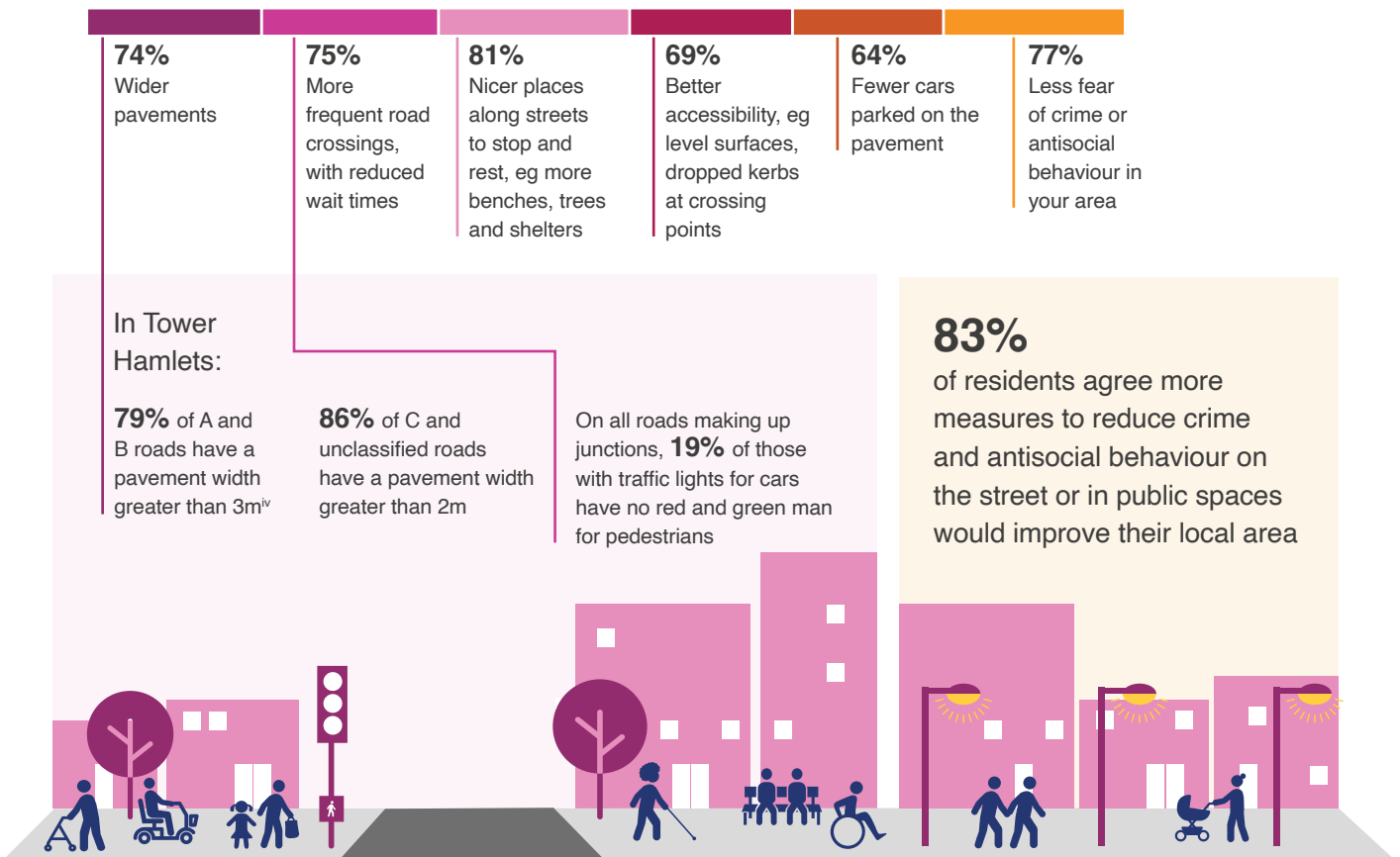
ii. Sustrans, 2017. Linking Active Travel and Public Transport to Housing Growth and Planning.

iii. A minimum of three distinct types of cultural and leisure venues, eg cafés, pubs, bingo halls, cinemas, museums.

Residents want better streets

There are many ways to make our streets and neighbourhoods safe, welcoming and comfortable for everyone to walk in.

What percentage of residents think that these changes would help them walk or wheel more?



Barry Carter



When I turned 70, I sold the car and saved a lot of money on tax, insurance and parking. I have a Freedom Pass for public transport and I try to walk whenever possible.

Walking keeps me fit and the weight down. I definitely think that if you are able to walk, you should do it as much as you can.

I've been living in Bethnal Green for 73 years. I was born here. Funnily enough, I don't know it very well. When I was working, I always worked away from the area. But since retiring, I've discovered more about Tower Hamlets on these walks than I ever knew before. A lot of that is down to the Bethnal Green Thursday Walking Group.

I love walking and never go anywhere without my camera. There's always something to photograph. Sometimes we'll stay in Tower Hamlets, other times we'll get the train out to somewhere and walk.

Graham Barker from Walk East started an Ebb and Flow walk. We cover a stretch of the Thames once a month. We started at Limehouse, then South Quays. We've now got as far as Woolwich. Gradually, we're walking along the Thames and we learn a little history as we go.

iv. A and B roads are main roads. C roads and unclassified roads are more minor roads and often residential streets. Pavement width does not account for obstructions, such as bus stops or litter bins.

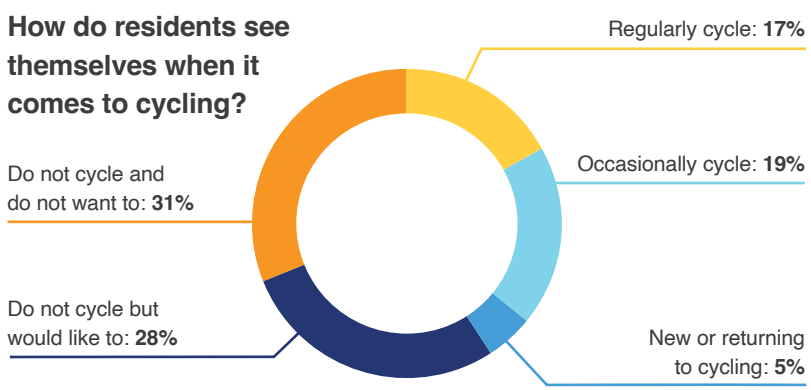


Cycling solutions

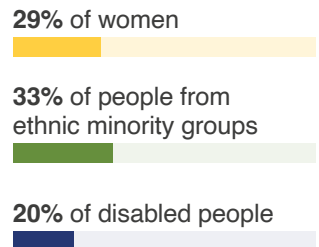
What would make cycling better?

Many Tower Hamlets residents want to cycle

How do residents see themselves when it comes to cycling?

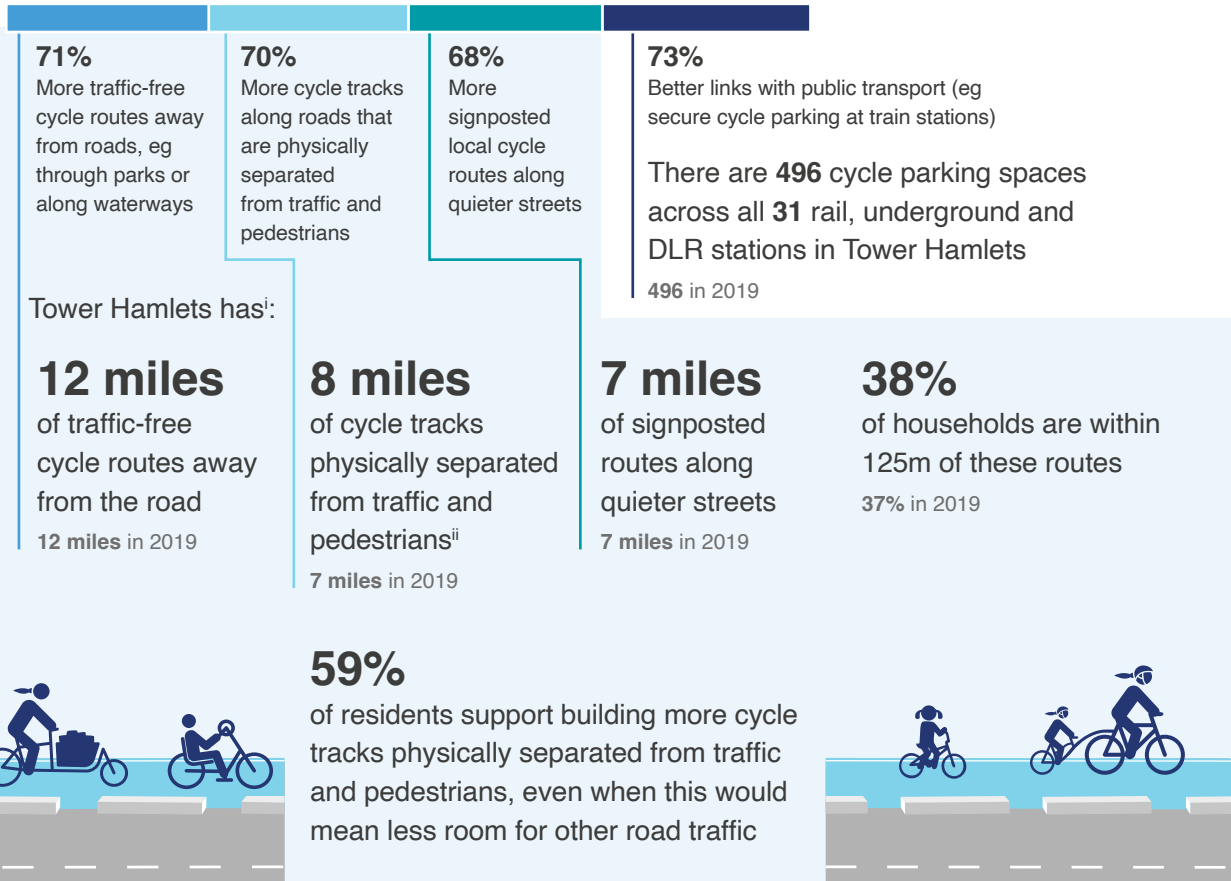


What proportion of residents said they 'do not cycle but would like to'?



Residents want improved cycling infrastructure

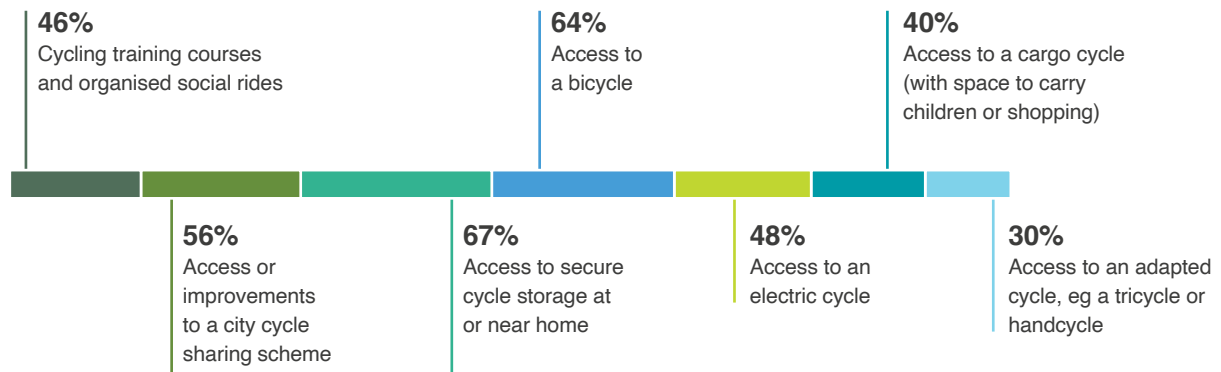
What percentage of residents would be helped to cycle more by better facilities?



i. To ensure comparability, figures given are correct as of 26 May 2021 for all city reports.
 ii. This does not include 'pop-up' cycle tracks installed during the pandemic.

Residents want more support to cycle

What percentage of residents think that these kinds of support would help them cycle more?



Tower Hamlets cycle share schemeⁱⁱⁱ

1,914 shared cycles

1,926 in 2019

120 cycle share stations

119 in 2019

2,851,544 annual trips

1,297,565 in 2019

Reported cycle thefts

There were **2,142** reported cycle thefts in Tower Hamlets in 2020/21.

1,447 in 2019/20

For every **51** people who own an adult cycle in Tower Hamlets, there was **1** reported cycle theft in the past year.

Cycle access

42% of residents have access to an adult pedal cycle

70% of households are within 800m of a cycle shop^{iv}



There is a public cycle parking space for every **19** people who cycle in Tower Hamlets.



Jamie Lawson



Bikeworks' inclusive All Ability Cycling Club has been brilliant for me. I have Cerebral Palsy and started cycling as a child using adapted cycles. They're expensive and need considerable space for storage. Bikeworks provides me with access to a fleet of different cycles and knowledgeable instructors.

Cycling has supported me through life's ups and downs. When I was made redundant, it gave me a routine and kept me socially active. During the pandemic, we were all encouraged to go outside and get active. It's only because of Bikeworks' inclusive cycling clubs that I was able to leave my house and enjoy some freedom. It was good for my physical and mental health.

I am the longest-serving member of the All Ability Clubs. I've been a member of Bikeworks' Inclusive Advisory Board since it was set up five years ago. It represents members of the All Ability Clubs and raises the profile of inclusive cycling. I'm now Advisory Board Coordinator at Bikeworks.

I love cycling and have taken part in several charity rides. Last year I completed a 100-mile ride on a recumbent cycle.

Making inclusive cycling available within the community is vital. Cycling should be a way of life, accessible to everyone.

iii. Santander cycle hire data. 2021 data for July 2020–June 2021 and 2019 data for July 2018–June 2019 (Source: TfL). iv. Credit to the Association of Cycle Traders (ACT) and Cycling UK for their assistance with cycle shop locations and services offered.



Neighbourhood solutions

What would help make neighbourhoods better?

All residents should feel welcome in their neighbourhood

Proportion of residents who feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood

61% of residents



61% of women



61% of people from ethnic minority groups



63% of men



63% of white people



51% of disabled people



66% of LGBTQ+ people



65% of socio-economic group DE



64% of non-disabled people



63% of heterosexual people



61% of socio-economic group AB



The dominance of motor vehicles can discourage walking, wheeling and cycling

Only **27%** of residents think that their streets are not dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles.

Residents would find fewer motor vehicles on their streets useful to:

69% Walk more



66% Cycle more



Unclassified roads are not designed to carry through-traffic, but in Tower Hamlets **26%** of their total length has nothing to prevent it. This can result in rat-running.ⁱ

51% agree that restricting through-traffic on local residential streets would make their area a better place.

90% of Tower Hamlets' streets have 20mph speed limits.ⁱⁱ
90% in 2019

Residents would find more streets with 20mph speed limits useful to:

62% Walk more



62% Cycle more



Residents want local streets to be better spaces for people to spend time in

64%

agree increasing space for people socialising, walking and cycling on their local high street would improve their local area

37%

agree they regularly chat to their neighbours, more than just to say hello

62%

support low-traffic neighbourhoods

i. Based on analysis by CycleStreets www.lowtrafficeighbourhoods.org.

Unclassified roads are all public roads that are neither motorways, A, B nor C roads.

ii. Excludes motorways.

Serena Dang



Cycling is an amazing way to get around. Tower Hamlets has many great routes along canals and rivers and through parks. I love discovering these hidden gems in the borough that would be impossible to enjoy in a car.

Many people think you can't cycle in London because of the traffic. It's understandable that people are nervous. Sometimes they lack belief in themselves or they've had a bad experience. It can also be because they don't own a bike or can't afford one.

It is important to put things in place that overcome these barriers.

The Chrisp Street Market cycle hub resulted from a partnership between Sustrans, Tower Hamlets Council, Sustainability group Hubbub, Poplar HARCA and Great Portland Estates. It's a great example of how partnerships like this can provide people with the opportunity to borrow a bike for free. Cycle training is also important when it comes to building people's confidence and ability.

Learning to cycle six years ago has been so liberating. It sometimes feels like I'm flying! I feel I can conquer the world when I'm on my bike. No distance is too far and no hill too high. Even getting lost on a bike is fun.

Neighbourhoods must be designed with children in mind

Neighbourhoods should be places for children to thrive: to grow up in, live their lives in and grow old in. Increasing independence, providing space to play and socialise, and improving the journey to school are all important.

If we design neighbourhoods with children in mind they will then work better for everyone else too.

13 years old

average age when people living with children would let them walk or cycle independently in their neighbourhood.

Over **80%** of seven-year-olds in Germany are allowed to go alone to places within walking distance, other than school (parents' responses).ⁱⁱⁱ

49% of residents agree there is space for children to socialise and play

100% of households are within 800m of a children's playground

Among Tower Hamlets residents:

43% agree

22% disagree

closing streets outside local schools to cars during drop-off and pick-up times would improve their local area

These kind of closures are known as 'School Streets'.

0 permanent School Streets schemes exist in Tower Hamlets, but there are many trial schemes now in place.^{iv}



iii. Children's Independent Mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action, 2015.

iv. Figure given is correct as of 26 May 2021.



Developing Tower Hamlets

Recent walking, wheeling, cycling and neighbourhood changes

Tower Hamlets has made substantial progress on infrastructure and providing community support for cycling and walking since the borough's first Bike Life report was published in 2020.

We have delivered **34** School Streets that are benefitting over **1,500** children across the borough. Removing through-traffic from outside these schools at pick-up and drop-off time improves air quality, cuts congestion and encourages more children to walk and cycle to school.

We have significantly improved our cycling infrastructure too. Our 2020 upgrade to Cycleway 3 along Cable Street, Shadwell, improves visibility and safety for people walking and cycling at key junctions. There is also more space for walking and more greenery. The first phase of the Mile End to Limehouse cycle route has also been completed, including the provision of protected cycle lanes and floating bus stops installed between Bow Common Lane and Mile End Road connecting to Cycleway 2.

Making cycling accessible to more people has been a major part of our work. We have installed **222** secure cycle parking places. These include cycle hangars and individual lockers on residential estates and side streets. Over **1,500** children have benefitted from our Bikeability programme and more than **800** adults have taken part in in our cycle training sessions since 2020. Over **200** residents with physical and learning disabilities have engaged in the All Ability Cycling Club programme.

We have addressed barriers to cycling amongst our diverse communities by delivering innovative projects with residents. These include build-a-bike cycle maintenance courses with young people and delivery of the Chrisp Street Community Cycles project at Poplar.



Over **1,500** children have benefitted from our Bikeability programme and more than **800** adults have taken part in in our cycle training sessions since 2020.



Ricky Downey, Gardener, Victoria Park Landscape Team, Tower Hamlets Council

“I’m really pleased Tower Hamlets Council bought these cargo bikes for the landscape team. I need to get around all of the park to do my horticultural maintenance work. It’s the size of 120 football pitches. So there’s a lot of land to cover.

“I would choose a cargo bike over a van for work every time. It’s healthier for me and I feel happier as well when I’m working. It’s much more pleasant.

“When I’m weeding the flower beds, it’s so much easier to get to them by bike. That goes for litter picks too. I carry all my brooms, rakes and spades in the front of the bike. It takes 100kg so I can carry the garden waste as I go.

“Park visitors always want to take pictures of the bike and ask where it’s from because they’re interested in buying one themselves. One year a judge from London in Bloom was at Victoria Park and asked if he could have a go at riding the cargo bike. So it’s a real talking point.”



Chrisp Street Community Cycles

During the summer of 2021, the Chrisp Street Community Cycles initiative was launched at Chrisp Street Market, Poplar. It has been funded by Tower Hamlets Council, Hubbub and Sustrans, and provides a safe and encouraging environment to find out about cycling and give it a go.

Housed in a vacant retail unit, Chrisp Street Community Cycles is a one-stop shop where people can try out a cycle for free and get advice about cycling. There are Dr Bike cycle repair sessions, cycle skills training and social rides.

During the first three months of operation, 338 residents engaged with the programme. Over 80% of the participants were female and 88% were from ethnic minority backgrounds. The data clearly demonstrates the project’s success in reaching people who are often under-represented among those who cycle.

To date, 72% reported they are likely to cycle more as a result of their connection with Chrisp Street Community Cycles.



Looking forward

Better streets and places for everyone

In 2019, Tower Hamlets Council unveiled its Transport Strategy committing to 90% of journeys in the borough to be made by walking, cycling and public transport by 2041. This recognises the need to reduce the impact of transport on climate change and air pollution. Key arterial roads running through the borough make it particularly vulnerable to air pollution. 77% of its population and 80% of its schools are based in areas that exceed legal limits for air pollution. Children typically have 10% less lung capacity than the national average.

During October 2021, the borough benefited from Transport for London (TfL)'s expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) now covering the entirety of Tower Hamlets, and therefore reducing the most polluting vehicles on its roads. The council has also installed over 100 electric vehicle charging points since 2020, as part of its commitment to reducing emissions and improving air quality in the borough, with another 150 charging points due to be delivered during 2022-23.

Since 2020, 34 School Streets have been implemented in Tower Hamlets. These have included improved crossing facilities and reduced through-traffic outside schools during the morning and afternoon school run, leading to safety and health benefits for schoolchildren and the wider community, and encouraging parents and children to walk and cycle to school. Safety and public realm improvements benefiting both pedestrians and cyclists have also been delivered along Cycleway 3 at Cable Street, Shadwell.

Further developments to the cycle network include a new segregated cycle route along Mansell Street, providing an important new connection between Cycleways 2 and 3 in the Aldgate area of the borough. The first phase of Cycleway 37 between Mile End and Limehouse along Burdett Road is also due to be implemented during 2022-23. Both of these

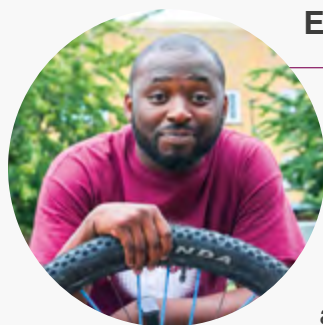


Investment will also be made in cycle parking, with a new cycle hub planned for Whitechapel Station and over 500 secure residential cycle parking spaces on course to be delivered over three years.

schemes are being delivered by TfL. The council will also be working with the Canal & River Trust London in upgrading canal towpath surfaces, which will make these routes more attractive for walking and cycling.

Looking ahead, additional improvements to the cycling network are in development, including a new cycle route between Hackney and Shadwell, improved connections between Fish Island and Bow, and surface improvements to canal towpaths. Investment will also be made in cycle parking, with a new cycle hub planned for Whitechapel Station and over 500 secure residential cycle parking spaces on course to be delivered over three years.

Our vision is for Tower Hamlets to be the best borough for walking and cycling in London.



Emmanuel Baidoo



I work with 11 to 19-year-old girls and boys. Cycling is absolutely in youth culture, but there isn't necessarily the infrastructure to support them in what they want to do or how they want to express themselves. Cycling is all about being out with friends and doing amazing tricks. But young people in groups on bikes aren't always viewed positively by other members of the public.

The great thing about Spotlight is it's a safe space for young people and our work is totally collaborative. The programmes I set up are guided by our young members. Their opinions matter and they make a difference here.

In partnership with Bikeworks, we are delivering the bespoke build-a-bike programme which our young people helped design. They learn how to build their own bike, how to repair and maintain it, and can take it home.

It's so rewarding. You can see their self-confidence grow. They become self-reliant and there's a huge sense of achievement. The young people now join family members on bike rides, explore other parts of London and choose cycling as a healthy way to get around. Some have achieved a City & Guild's Level 2 in Cycle Mechanics and Repair. The social value of the programme is tremendous.

It's great to see lots of girls taking part too. The positive impact the programme has on young people in Tower Hamlets is outstanding. I am totally committed to them and to securing continued funding.

Notes on methodology:

The attitudinal survey was conducted from June to August 2021 by independent social research organisation NatGen.

The survey is representative of all Tower Hamlets residents, not just those who walk or cycle.

All other data is sourced from our city partners, national data sets or modelled and calculated by Sustrans.

Trip estimates use a model developed by Sustrans. When comparing to other travel surveys, some variation may exist in the proportion of journeys cycled by journey purpose.

Rounding has been used throughout the report. In many cases we have rounded to the nearest whole number. Rounding is avoided where this may cause confusion, for example with modelled estimates shown in the summary and benefits sections.

More information and a detailed methodology are available at www.sustrans.org.uk/walkingcyclingindex

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.

We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute. Join us on our journey. www.sustrans.org.uk

Sustrans is a registered charity in the UK No. 326550 (England and Wales) SC039263 (Scotland)

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