

'Are we nearly there yet?'

Exploring gender and active travel

About: Sustrans Scotland researched women's travel choices in order to identify the factors that could encourage them to travel more actively in an urban setting. The study took the form of a literature review to look at what was already known about women and men's travel habits, a survey of almost 2,000 women living, working and travelling in Glasgow and a focus group of a sample of female Glasgow residents.



How do women travel differently from men?

3x The number of times men are more likely to cycle compared to women (16% men vs 5% women).

 Women tend to walk more than men in Glasgow (84% women vs 80% men).

2% The number of women who cycle 1-2 times each week as a means of transport (vs 4% men). (*Transport Scotland, 2015*)

Women and men's journey patterns are different

 Women increasingly balance journeys for work and childcare. (*Fawcett Society, 2016*)

 Women make more journeys using public transport, with children and otherwise 'encumbered'. (*Hine and Mitchell, 2001*)

 Women are more likely to make multi-stop trips (trip chaining), often by different modes. (*Greed, 2016*)



What motivates women in Glasgow to travel actively?

 **Health and fitness**
For many women, cycling is seen as an easy way to fit in regular exercise into a daily routine.

 **Mental health**
Women are aware of the benefits of physical activity to their mental health and well-being. Walking in particular was felt to be beneficial.

 **Social connections**
Cycling and walking were perceived as a great way to meet people, make friends and feel part of a wider community.



What stops women from choosing to walk and cycle?

 **Time and trip chaining**
A lack of time, travelling with children and a need to take multiple, non-direct journeys everyday were specific barriers for women choosing to walk or cycle.

In Glasgow, our study found that choosing the method of travel depended on the type of journey a woman planned to take in both directions of travel.

 **Personal Safety**
Women in Glasgow said concerns about their personal safety was one of the biggest barriers to cycling and walking after dark.

This was even more apparent for women who worked shifts or whose work patterns were not traditional nine-to-five during weekdays.

 **Appearance**
Women mentioned how physical appearance and the expectation to look a certain way at their destination often deterred them from travelling by bike or foot, especially for travel to work.

This is different from countries with high levels of cycling where travelling with children or in work clothes is normalised.

What about road safety?



Women and men are just as likely to say road safety is a barrier to cycling and walking.

However there is evidence that, when it comes to cycling, road safety concerns and risk to injury disproportionately impacts on women.

Women are twice as likely to report 'frightening

near misses' on the road compared to men. They are also more likely to be travelling with children, taking non-direct routes and trip chaining, all of which slow you down.

There is a current expectation that women need to change their cycling behaviour to be faster, more direct and avoid trips with children on UK roads to be seen as unsafe.

? Where can gender inequality in active travel be addressed?



Infrastructure

Traditionally, providing ways to improve confidence and skills, has been cited as the main way to increase the number of women on bikes.

However improving route infrastructure and design is instrumental in addressing the barriers stopping women from moving around cities more actively.

Infrastructure designed for trip-chaining, travelling with children and cross-city routes could help ensure the gap between the levels of women and men cycling is closed.



Active Travel and Policy

Transport has the lowest percentage representation of women within the public sector with only 6.25% compared to other public bodies (*Engender, 2017*).

Europe-wide research has shown that transportation as a sector is dominated by men, with most political committees and advisory boards having less than 15% female membership (*Transgen 2007*).

There is a lack of detail in Scotland's national and local transport policies on how equality and diversity issues will be addressed and promote equality.



What does Sustrans want to see happen?

Though some barriers to walking and cycling are universal, our research shows that women's experience of transport is different to men's.

Addressing the inequalities between women and men in transport will help get more people walking and cycling for their everyday journeys.

Greater representation of women at all levels of transport planning, from users to planning

and decision making, is needed to ensure the needs of women are taken into account.

The narrative to date has been about improving women's confidence to deal with the 'difficulties' faced in walking and cycling. Wouldn't it be better to simply make walking and cycling safer, easier and more convenient?

Because by getting it right for women, we get it right for everyone.

About Sustrans

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