

PEDESTRIANS QUALITY NETWORK

COUNTRY REPORT FOR BRITAIN

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1. Facts and Figures

Demography

A full census of the population is undertaken every 10 years with some kind of intermediate survey at the halfway point between census points. The census is a full survey of the population, the last taking place on 29th April 2001, the next in 2011. There are a wide range of questions asked of all contributors, including some relating to transport and travel.

Further information can be found on the census website:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census/default.asp>

Transport and Travel Data

Various information published nationally through the Department for Transport website (www.dft.gov.uk). Much is based on the National Travel Survey. This is a series of household surveys designed to provide regular, up-to-date data on personal travel and monitor changes in travel behaviour over time.

The first NTS was commissioned by the Ministry of Transport in 1965/66. Further periodic surveys were carried out in 1972/73, 1975/76, 1978/79 and 1985/86 (data is available from 1972 onwards). Since July 1988 the NTS has been carried out as a continuous survey with field work being carried out in every month of the year and an annual set sample which is currently just over 8000 households. The advantage of the continuous study is that users will be able to discern seasonal and cyclical movements as well as trend changes over time.

The NTS is carried out primarily for the purposes of government. It is used to develop consistent sets of transport policies; because it relates travel to travellers, it makes it possible to relate policies to people and to predict their impact. The survey provides detailed information on different types of travel, where people travel from and to (county level), distance, purpose and what kinds of people are doing the travelling and how often. The NTS is the only source of national information on subjects such as cycling and walking which provide a context for the results of more local studies.

The NTS continuous dataset is usually analysed in three year periods (1989/91, 1992/94, 1995/97, 1998/2001) and new variables have been introduced at the start of each new three year period in 1992, 1995, 1998 and 2001. Further information can be found at <http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/nts/>. The latest NTS data for 2002-2004 were published in 2006.

Various annual publications are produced on transport and travel – Transport Trends, Transport Statistics Great Britain. These contain standardised tabulations of commonly used data. It is also possible to access the original databases to provide further interrogations.

In terms of pedestrians the NTS data contain some information about numbers of trips made on foot, length and duration of trips. It will also be possible to get breakdowns by geographical region, journey purpose etc.

(Urban) land use

I need to look further to see what is available in this category. I suspect it is patchy and variable, though at one level there will be fairly good GIS based map data for most parts of

the country which will identify some aspects of land-use. Many local and highway authorities will also have their own databases which they maintain and update.

Health and competences

Some further definition of what this category means would help. There are national annual databases on things such as mortality and causes of death. There is also the Hospital Episode Statistics which is the national statistical data warehouse for England of the care provided by National Health Service hospitals and for NHS hospital patients treated elsewhere. HES is the data source for a wide range of healthcare analysis for the NHS, government and many other organisations and individuals. Further information on this can be obtained through the Department for Health website (<http://www.dh.gov.uk>).

Time spending

Again, I am not entirely clear about what this category is asking for. There are annual databases of social trends which cover a wide range of topics, but include information of what people chose to do with their time, how they spend their money etc.

Safety

Various databases are available, but the most commonly accessed and easily accessible is Stats 19, which is the database of information on injury accidents which are reported to the police. This is summarised annually in a publication called Road Casualties Great Britain. The full database can be made available also for further interrogation. Currently there are 100 plus variables on the police form, covering details about the accident, the casualties and the vehicles involved. There is some specific information collected regarding pedestrians, though this is limited. There is also now some contributory factor information collected for all accidents, but again this is very limited in terms of pedestrians.

Reporting rates are variable by type and circumstance of accident. There is some evidence that pedestrian reporting rates are lower than those for vehicle-vehicle accidents. Also some evidence that reporting rates are lower for younger people.

Other sources of information on accidents are, for example the Hospital Episode Statistics mentioned above and Coroner's office data on fatalities. The police do collect some further information about accidents beyond that which is published through Stats 19 in their more detailed police accident files, though access to these is difficult. They often contain things such as witnesses statements, photos, information on court cases and other evidence.

2. Publications on pedestrian issues

A reference list is given below. It needs to be updated for the last couple of years.

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3. Current Research Projects

Below are a list of current projects being undertaken in the UK – they include a range of funding sources.

Project: Why walk? Exploring attitudes and barriers to walking (ESRC Studentship) based at the University of Leeds. Researcher: Anzir Boodoo.

Walking is an integral part of any "sustainable" transport policy. It is clean, with virtually no emissions, and promotes improved health and social wellbeing. However, walking seems to be largely ignored in transport policy, where at best, only passive provision is made, but almost no active encouragement is given to walking outside of town centres and to or from primary schools.

Walking is most suited to short journeys (under about 2 km), and currently many of these journeys are made by car or short distance public transport. In a context where car use continues to grow (especially for short journeys, where cars are at their most polluting), and growth in transport CO2 emissions is faster than reductions in CO2 output from all other activity, there is a need to encourage people to make their short distance journeys on foot.

The research being undertaken here is aimed at exploring attitudes to walking, and how the demand for walking can be influenced. The reasons for doing this are:

- realisation that there is a gap in current transport policy and implementation
- walking has benefits beyond being virtually non polluting (higher numbers of pedestrians can be accommodated on streets than any other mode, walking improves health and social wellbeing, walking encourages shorter journeys which can lead to more use of local facilities and shops, and also a higher propensity to use public transport)
- to investigate how attitudes to walking may be influenced by peer pressure and discourses in popular culture

Objectives

- to understand the determinants that influence the level of walking within a local area, and how this is influenced by individual attitudes, society, policy and the characteristics of the local area itself
- to investigate what the main barriers to increasing walking levels are and positive ways in which these may be overcome

The study will begin with a literature review of previous studies into the factors influencing levels of walking. Following this, we plan to use a variety of ethnographic methods to study

perceptions of walking and the behaviour of people as they walk in urban areas. This will involve a series of "one on one" interactions with participants drawn from a variety of backgrounds, some whom regularly make journeys on foot, and others who walk only to catch public transport, or always drive.

In these interactions, we will explore:

- peoples' attitudes to walking and how they are externally influenced by peers
- discourses and imagery relating to walking in the media and popular culture
- the experience of making a journey on foot along with the participant, including the effects of local connectivity and urban morphology, the dispersal of activities in the urban area and the influence of road traffic and junction design on the journey
- the perception of time whilst walking, and whether regular walkers perceive it differently to non walker
- the nature of demand for walking, and whether people perceive time spent walking is "lost" or can be used for other things whilst walking

Expected duration: October 2007 – September 2010

Project: The influence of area and person deprivation on pedestrian casualties (EPSRC studentship). Researcher: Helen Muir

Pedestrians travelling in the most socio-economically deprived areas are up to five times more likely to be killed in road traffic accidents than those in the least deprived areas (DfT, 2000). Research into reasons for this association found that a number of factors associated with deprived areas partly explain disparities in pedestrian casualty rates by deprivation, but the influence of differences in travel patterns and behaviour of pedestrians within these areas have yet to be established and accounted for. The main aim of the study is therefore to assess the relative contribution to higher pedestrian casualty rates in deprived areas of a range of factors relating to area deprivation and person deprivation.

The methodology to achieve the study aim involves creating an accident prediction model into which pedestrian casualty, deprivation, population and area-factors data will initially be input. This will enable the extent to which area and population factors associated with deprived places influence pedestrian casualty rates. To understand the differences in travel patterns and behaviour of differently deprived people, two types of surveys will be conducted. A survey using GPS tracking devices will monitor distances and routes walked by pedestrians in order to calculate exposure to risk, and a self-report questionnaire will be used to obtain information on pedestrian behaviour and attitude. The outputs of these surveys will be quantified for inclusion within the accident prediction model, and their relative influences on higher pedestrian casualty rates in deprived areas examined in conjunction with the area factors data.

Expected duration: October 2005 – September 2011

Project: Facilitating walking as a means of urban transport (ESRC Studentship)

Reference: STP 14/5/19

Last update: 21/11/2006 16:55:56

Objectives

The project aims to: examine the motivations for and barriers to walking as a mode of transport for everyday activities in urban areas; assess the likely effectiveness of different strategies to promote walking; examine the potential of increased walking in urban areas as a means to reduce congestion, enhance the environment and improve individual health; compare strategies to increase walking with similar schemes to promote cycling; assess the potential for switching travel from motorised transport to walking for short trips in urban

areas; and, propose a framework within which walking as a means of everyday transport can be situated more centrally within urban transport policy.

Description

The research will adopt a comparative approach and use a mixed methodology to achieve its aims. It is intended that three urban areas of different size should be compared.

In each town a variety of research methods will be used including: Questionnaire surveys to establish patterns of walking activity and general attitudes to walking in comparison to other transport modes; In-depth walking ethnographies - interviews conducted with participants whilst walking to record attitudes to and experiences of walking in different parts of the towns; Observation of pedestrians using video in key locations; and, Interviews with gatekeepers: planners, councillors, police etc.

At all stages, respondents will be chosen to reflect a broad cross-section of the population.

Contractor(s)

University of Lancaster University House, Bailrigg, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 4YW +44 (0)1524 65201

Contract details

Cost to the Department: £27,500.00

Expected completion date: 30 September 2008

Project: Improving the Delivery of Road Safety Education

Reference: T101E

Last update: 06/10/2006 15:56:16

OBJECTIVES

Identify how RSOs and educators can work best together to maximise the delivery of high quality road safety education.

ROAD SAFETY OFFICERS

Identify how the status of road safety education can be raised and sustained in the long term
Review the current state of the RSO profession, local provision and practice and identify ways in which professional standards can be raised and sustained. This should include:

- an assessment of current roles, responsibilities and resources and working practices, -related roles and responsibilities and links with other local issues such as sustainable travel, community safety etc,
- profiles of people in the profession- their experience and qualifications, training and development opportunities and take-up of such opportunities, carrer progression,
- a comparison with other professional groups in road safety, in local authorities and in health and education professions,
- assess the contribution of road safety education to road safety at local level.

Identify good practice and make recommendations for national and local policy/best practice.

EDUCATORS

Identify the most effective ways to ensure road safety education is more appealing to educators. For effective resources to be used it is necessary to understand :

- how teachers identify and access resources;
- what makes teachers receptive to using resources/ what do they want;
- which areas of the curriculum do teachers identify as appropriate channels for delivery of road safety education; and
- what makes resources 'easy/attractive' for teachers to use.

Review good practice in education and identify how road safety education can respond to the current demands upon teachers and educators.

Identify good practice and make recommendations for national and local policy/best practice.

Description

OVERALL AIMS

Improve the quality and delivery of road safety education, especially in schools, in England.

Raise the status of road safety education.

Contractor(s)
MVA Limited MVA House, Victoria Way, Woking, Surrey, GU21 1DD +44 (0)1483 728051
Contract details
Cost to the Department: £76,457.00
Actual start date: 01 November 2005
Expected completion date: 31 March 2007

Project: Review of Pedestrian Accidents Involving LGVs

Reference: T101F
Last update: 06/10/2006 15:41:43

Objectives

The aim of this project is to improve understanding of the nature and underlying causes of the changing proportions of pedestrian accidents involving goods vehicles, buses and coaches, to determine whether there is a growing problem, and to assess possible interventions to tackle any issues.

Phase I of the project will be a desk based review of police accident data and other evidence to identify important characteristics of pedestrian accidents involving goods vehicles, buses and coaches and any changes over time.

Depending on the findings of Phase I, the specific objectives of Phase II will be:

- To analyse further evidence from the contributory factors records within the STATS19 database, the on the spot study and other sources to improve understanding of causality
- To undertake qualitative research with stakeholders including drivers, employers and trade associations to improve further understanding of risks and help assess possible solutions
- To organise a workshop near the end of the study to present the findings to stakeholders

Description

DfT wishes to commission a review of pedestrian accidents involving goods vehicles, buses and coaches. The aim of the project is to improve understanding of the nature and underlying causes of the changing proportions of pedestrian accidents involving goods vehicles, buses and coaches, to determine whether there is a growing problem, and to assess possible interventions to tackle any issues.

The study is concerned with pedestrian accidents involving Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs), Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), and buses and coaches.

Contractor(s)
TRL Limited Crowthorne House, Nine Mile Ride, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 3GA
+44 (0)1344 773131
Contract details
Cost to the Department: £88,530.00
Actual start date: 01 August 2006
Expected completion date: 31 July 2007

4. Policy statements

There is no White Paper on pedestrians or walking issues. There have been a series of White Papers on transport, which make mention of pedestrian issues. There has been some argument that there should be a stronger national statement of pedestrian issues and some kind of centralised planning for their needs. Some of this discussion is covered in the papers referenced above. At a local level the experience is varied, though local authorities now have to create a Local Transport Plan which should touch upon planning for pedestrians in their areas. There is now starting to be greater collaboration between the health authorities and the transport authorities at local level, particularly in relation to health issues, such as lack of exercise and obesity, for which transport is seen as a potential partial solution (i.e. if we could encourage more people to walk then we might reduce the obesity problem etc).

In the education sector schools are encouraged to produce school travel plans (many employers also produce workplace travel plans or green travel plans) which examine transport options for the school and seek to encourage healthier alternatives. Results of these have been varied, though they have certainly highlighted the issues.

5. Legal position of pedestrians

There is limited specific information of the legal position of pedestrians. There is a Highway Code in Britain which outlines the main rules for road users, some of which are founded in law, though most are advisory and to a large part common sense. There are relatively few rules for pedestrians which are embedded in law. Those that exist are as follows:

You must not:

- loiter on any type of pedestrian crossing
- wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway
- walk on motorways or their slip roads
- proceed along or cross a carriageway when told not to by a police officer controlling traffic
- without authority or reasonable cause, hold onto or get on a motor vehicle or trailer in motion
- be drunk in any highway or public place

The rules for drivers in relation to pedestrians are again largely advisory, though those related to law mainly concern crossing facilities where they are required to give way if the pedestrian has right of way on the facility (this may be a pelican. Other light controlled crossing, zebra or school crossing patrol/police officer). The Code also suggests that turning traffic should give way to pedestrians, though it is a brave or foolhardy pedestrian who crosses the road on the assumption that the traffic will stop!

6. Best practices

Need to think here about what the criteria for defining best practice are. I guess you could have indicators relating to safety, accessibility, pleasantness etc, which may in some cases be conflicting (e.g. the safest may not be the most accessible).

7. Innovations

Hard to say. Depends on how far back in time you go. Much good practice has derived from good practice elsewhere and it is difficult to seek out the origins of particular ideas.

One recent interesting development in the Methley's area of Leeds where local residents, tired of traffic disruption and problems laid an artificial lawn on their road one night and turned the road back into a space for people i.e. reinforcing the rights of pedestrians and residents over that of traffic.

Home zones

20 miles per hour zones

Traffic calming

Maybe these should be in the best practice section. Not really innovative, but can be applied in innovative ways in specific locations.

Also innovative work being undertaken by Transport for London on wayfinding for pedestrians in London.

8. General atmosphere

To summarise, I would argue that pedestrians are tolerated mostly by other roads users, as long as they do not demand too much. Many highway authorities would like to do more for pedestrians, but find it difficult given the power of the motoring lobby. In general city centres have reasonable pedestrian provision. It is rather poorer in the suburbs and many residential areas.

There is a Pedestrian's Association which is now called Living Streets. This organisation acts as a champion of pedestrian's rights and contributes practically through projects to creating better streets for those on foot. It is very difficult to judge the power or effectiveness of this organisation.

The strengths of the pedestrian situation is that we are all pedestrians, at least for some of the time and therefore all have an interest in provision. Growing levels of congestion perhaps are already, or will at some point in the future, start to make us realise that motorised transport is not the only answer.

Weaknesses include the lack of power, lack of representation in government, poor lobbying power, vulnerability.....

Opportunities perhaps include the growing health message, the recognition of the benefits of exercise and the link between this and walking (though maybe the increasing tendency to take exercise in the gym instead of on the streets is counter to this argument).

Threats are many. In a recent survey of a sample of pedestrians in Leeds in the UK (Tight et al, 2004) they were asked about the quality of their environment. The key outcomes showed that a number of attributes were considered important by pedestrians to create a good environment, including: pavement cleanliness (in particular absence of dog mess), safe (and designated) crossing places, good street lighting, exclusion of cyclists from pavements and good connectivity (i.e. the pedestrian network takes you places you want to be). Table 1 shows the level of importance placed by pedestrians on a number of attributes of their environment.

Table 1 Relative importance of different features of the pedestrian environment

How important is...	% of respondents answered very/extremely important
Low Vehicle Speed	46.5%
Cyclists not using the pavement	60.2%
Pavements free from obstructions	63.8%
Space to walk at your own pace	53.2%
Wide Pavements	67.1%
Safe crossing places	71.7%
Pedestrian crossing places	66.1%
Street Lighting	76.0%
Large Volume of Cars	49.1%
Dog Mess	83.5%
Dirty Pavements	69.2%
Litter	78.5%
Graffiti	57.7%

Smooth Pavement Surfaces	57.8%
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Other things which the surveys highlighted was that the existence of greenery of any type comes out as important, not just the more obvious gardens and parks of suburbia, but also tiny patches of grass and stunted bushes in more central urban settings. There was more variation in the perception of buildings. However, certain types of buildings were uniformly highly valued (in particular older buildings or buildings with individual character). A key positive aspect of walking was felt to be that it encouraged a 'slower pace of life' and offered the opportunity for people to appreciate the urban environment.

The relationship between motorised vehicles and pedestrians is considered important with many pedestrians recognising that motor vehicles are given more consideration in the planning and design of streets. However, whilst there was a perception that motor traffic added to the economy, there was a feeling that walking was considerably undervalued and seen as a second class activity. As one volunteer remarked,

"It's all geared up for cars to get them moving and to get them out of the city or in to it. They're not too bothered about pedestrians"

Another similarly said

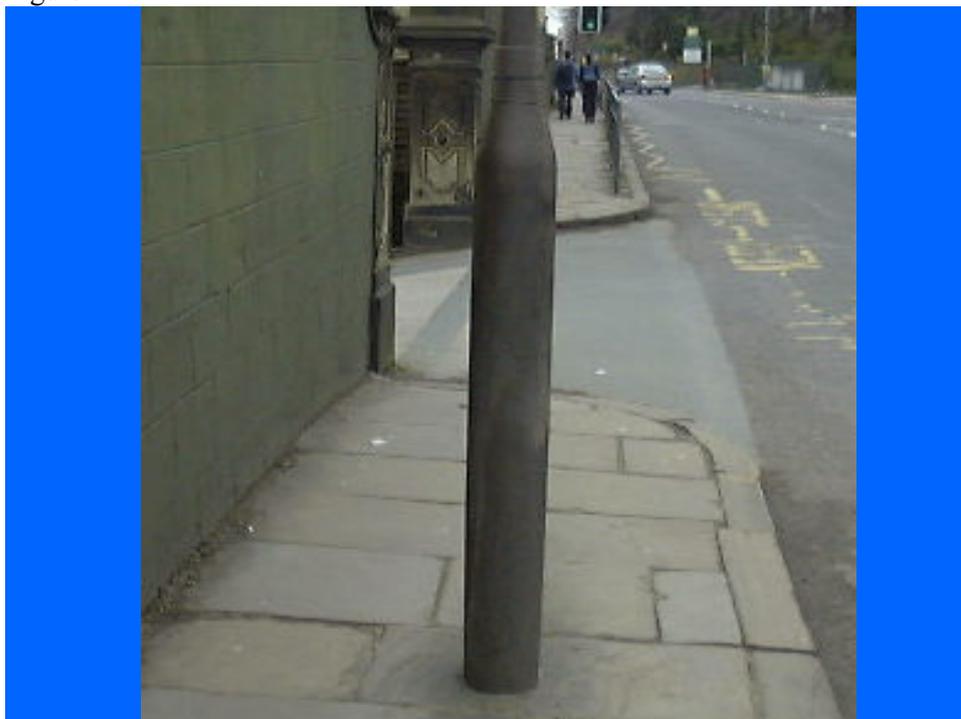
"more priority is given to the motorists, they seem to take priority over pedestrians all the time. You know the pavements just seem, oh we've got a little space here so we'll put a pavement and we'll put some barriers and then everyone's happy".

The common feeling was that pedestrians were an afterthought, though many considered this inevitable particularly given the emphasis placed by people on the importance of getting to places quickly and also the perceived association between motor traffic and the economy and hence its high priority in the minds of many politicians and decision-makers. Figures 1 and 2 show typical pedestrian environments in our cities, clearly not designed with pedestrians in mind. The figures show locations with heavy levels of traffic, where crossing will be difficult and risky, where the scale of the road environment clearly is not in tune with the scale of the pedestrian environment and where there are insufficient facilities for a reasonable standard of experience.

Figure 1



Figure 2



As well as poor or bad design the participants in the surveys identified poor maintenance resulting in shabby, broken and redundant facilities, provoking a sense that they were ‘second class citizens’. The scale of the walking experience is a much finer one compared to that of road traffic driving through an environment and this has to be taken into account when planning and designing for pedestrians. Volunteers in surveys undertaken on-street and with pedestrians walking through the urban environment were used to assess changes in their environment on a metre-by-metre basis. The volunteers regularly observed disconnections between footpaths and junctions, the equivalent of which they rarely experienced in planning

for road traffic. Connectivity of pedestrian provision appears of equal importance in planning for pedestrians as when planning for road traffic and needs to be considered and designed at a micro scale. A key conclusion from this survey work is that the transport planning profession appears to be failing to make the transition from the much coarser scale traditionally used for designing for motor traffic to the finer level of detail required to design for pedestrians where errors at the microscale (lack of dropped curve in the right place, broken pavements, poorly placed crossings, inappropriate surfacing etc) can have a large effect on perceived quality.

Reference

Tight, M.R., Hodgson, F. and Page, M. (2004) Measuring pedestrian accessibility – final report to EPSRC for project GR/R18543/01.