

Time taken to travel to work (Autumn 2003)

Background

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) provides estimates of the time it takes people to travel to work. The LFS is carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and is one of the largest regular household surveys in the UK.

This note summarises key data on travel to work times by region, gender and working patterns. All data are based on those people in employment who work at a place separate from their home and relate to the Autumn quarter of 2003 (Sept-Nov).

Table 1 shows travel to work times by region on both workplace and residence bases. Tables 2 and 3 focus on London residents and profile travel times by gender, part and full-time working and occupation.

Key points

- On average, UK workers take around 25 minutes to travel to work. Journey times for Londoners are far longer and average 36 minutes for people who live in London and 42 minutes for those who work in London. Travel time is longest for those who work in Central London (56 minutes).
- On average, Londoners working full-time tend to have longer travel times (39 minutes) than those working part-time (28 minutes). Men have slightly longer travel times (38 minutes) than women (34 minutes), reflecting their higher propensity to work full-time.
- Travel times are typically longer for those working in professional and managerial jobs and shortest for those working in lower paid occupational groups such as sales and customer service and elementary occupations.
- The regional differential in travel times between London and the UK persists when analysed by gender, occupation and work patterns.

Further information:

If you would like further information about this data or the Labour Force Survey, please contact Lorna Spence in the Data Management and Analysis Group on 0207 983 4658 or by e-mail: lorna.spence@london.gov.uk

Table 1. Time taken¹ to travel to work by region of workplace and residence, Autumn 2003

	Mean travel to work time (minutes) ¹
UK	25
<i>Region of workplace:</i>	
Tyne and Wear	24
Rest of North East	19
Greater Manchester	25
Merseyside	23
Rest of North West	21
South Yorkshire	24
West Yorkshire	25
Rest of Yorkshire and Humberside	21
East Midlands	22
West Midlands and Met. County	26
Rest of West Midlands	20
East of England	22
Greater London	42
- Inner London: Central ²	56
- Rest of Inner London	42
- Outer London	32
South East	24
South West	21
Wales	21
Strathclyde	25
Rest of Scotland	23
Northern Ireland	21
<i>Region of residence:</i>	
North East	23
North West	23
Merseyside	24
Yorkshire & Humberside	24
East Midlands	22
West Midlands	23
Eastern	27
Greater London	36
- Inner London	36
- Outer London	36
South East	27
South West	22
Wales	21
Scotland	24
Northern Ireland	22

Source: Labour Force Survey, Autumn 2003

Notes:

1- Data relate to those in employment who work at a place separate from their home.

2 - Central London refers to the area as defined by the Department for Transport as the area within the bounds of the main London British Rail termini.

Table 2. Travel time to work¹ by gender and work patterns, London & UK, Autumn 2003

	London Residents			All UK Residents		
	% totals			% totals		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
All employees	100	100	100	100	100	100
10 minutes or less	15.1	12.5	18.0	31.5	26.8	36.5
Between 11 and 20 minutes	20.6	19.7	21.7	28.5	28.0	29.0
Between 21 and 30 minutes	18.8	19.5	18.0	18.1	19.2	16.9
Between 31 and 40 minutes	9.3	10.1	8.3	5.6	6.3	4.8
Between 41 and 50 minutes	13.1	13.3	12.8	6.2	7.0	5.4
Between 51 and 60 minutes	14.3	14.8	13.8	5.6	6.6	4.6
More than one hour	8.8	10.0	7.3	4.5	6.1	2.7
<i>Mean travel time</i>	36	38	34	25	28	22
Full time	100	100	100	100	100	100
10 minutes or less	12.3	11.8	13.1	26.9	25.3	29.6
Between 11 and 20 minutes	19.4	18.9	20.2	27.9	27.8	28.3
Between 21 and 30 minutes	18.6	19.3	17.6	19.4	19.6	18.9
Between 31 and 40 minutes	10.1	10.2	10.0	6.5	6.6	6.3
Between 41 and 50 minutes	14.1	13.9	14.6	7.2	7.4	7.0
Between 51 and 60 minutes	15.7	15.5	15.9	6.6	6.9	6.0
More than one hour	9.8	10.5	8.7	5.5	6.5	3.9
<i>Mean travel time</i>	39	39	38	28	29	26
Part time²	100	100	100	100	100	100
10 minutes or less	26.4	19.8	28.6	44.6	41.2	45.4
Between 11 and 20 minutes	25.8	28.3	25.0	30.0	30.1	30.0
Between 21 and 30 minutes	19.5	21.3	18.9	14.5	15.1	14.4
Between 31 and 50 minutes	14.7	17.7	13.7	6.5	7.4	6.3
More than 50 minutes	13.6	12.9	13.8	4.4	6.2	4.0
<i>Mean travel time</i>	28	29	28	19	20	18

Source: Labour Force Survey, Autumn 2003

Notes:

1 Data relate to those in employment who work at a place separate from their home.

2 All data are survey estimates and are subject to a degree of sampling variability. This particularly affects estimates of travel time for part-time workers, which are based on smaller samples, hence fewer categories are used. LFS definitions of part-time and full-time are determined by self-assessment by respondents.

Table 3. Travel to work times¹ by occupational group, Autumn 2003

	London Residents		All UK Residents		Difference (London-UK)	
	% travelling for more than 20 minutes	Mean travel time (minutes)	% travelling for more than 20 minutes	Mean travel time (minutes)	Percentage point difference in % travelling >20 minutes	Difference in mean travel times (minutes)
All occupations	64.3	36	40.1	25	24.2	11
1 Managers & senior officials	72.8	41	51.8	31	21.0	9
2 Professional occupations	70.0	39	53.1	31	16.9	8
3 Assoc. professional & technical	71.9	40	49.8	31	22.1	9
4 Administrative & secretarial	65.2	37	41.4	25	23.8	13
5 Skilled trades	69.1	39	38.8	25	30.3	14
6 Personal service occupations	48.6	30	25.7	19	22.9	10
7 Sales & customer service	52.1	30	30.1	20	21.9	10
8 Process, plant & machine	46.3	27	31.1	21	15.2	6
9 Elementary occupations	49.1	28	24.2	18	24.9	10
Persons (all occupations)	64.3	36	40.1	25	24.2	11
- Groups 1-3	71.6	40	51.5	31	20.1	9
- Groups 4-9	56.6	33	32.4	22	24.2	11
Males (all occupations)	67.8	38	45.3	28	22.5	10
- Groups 1-3	73.8	41	55.8	34	18.1	8
- Groups 4-9	60.1	34	36.6	24	23.5	10
Females (all occupations)	60.2	34	34.5	22	25.7	12
- Groups 1-3	68.4	38	45.7	27	22.8	11
- Groups 4-9	53.2	31	28.6	20	24.6	12
Full-time² (all occupations)	68.4	39	45.2	28	23.2	11
- Groups 1-3	73.2	41	53.3	32	19.9	9
- Groups 4-9	61.7	35	37.9	24	23.8	11
Part-time (all occupations)	47.8	28	25.4	19	22.4	10
- Groups 1-3	57.1	33	39.3	25	17.8	8
- Groups 4-9	44.4	26	21.9	17	22.6	9

Source: Labour Force Survey, Autumn 2003

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