

Study finds only 44% of people in England capable of getting to work by walking or cycling

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Most people in England could not get work without motorised modes of transport, according to new research by the University of Leeds.

Dr Ian Philips from the School of Geography modelled the capacity of individuals to complete journeys by walking or cycling in the event of a fuel shock, finding that capacity varies significantly depending on location – both at the district level and within districts.

The model results were also set in context against the Index of Multiple

Deprivation (IMD), a UK government qualitative study of deprived areas at local authority district level, to provide an overall picture of exclusion from the mobility system in the event of a fuel shock.

The research gives a clear picture to policy-makers of the spatial variation in adaptive capacity and the characteristics of areas most and least reliant on motorised transport.

In identifying the types of areas which enable particularly high or low levels of active transport, the research has implications for both local and national transport policy-makers and allows the effects of various policies to be tested.

The research was presented to the Royal Geographical Society, with the Institute of British Geographers, at the Annual International Conference, the largest geography conference in Europe (1 – 4 September 2015).

"The factors that affect your chances of being able to get to work depend on where you live, meaning the results of this study are particularly useful when mapped for small areas. For example, bicycle availability has a bigger effect in Cambridge than in Sheffield," Dr Philips told the conference.

"When I chose to look at some walking and cycling-related policies at a small scale – what if everyone had access to a bicycle, exercised each week to achieve a healthy BMI, and children could get to school without being escorted by parents – I found that the policy package had an effect in 99% of English Output Areas.

"The largest effects were found in the suburbs of larger cities usually about 5-10km from the centre. Affluent towns were less improved by the policy package possibly because of the large amount of long-distance commuting."

Key area findings included:

- The districts at the outer edge of London's travel to work area have a particularly low capacity to get to work by walking or cycling.
- Districts like Epping Forest, Sevenoaks and Tandridge came in at under 35%.
- The Isles of Scilly was the district with the highest indicator score at around 80%.
- Within districts, areas classified as 'countryside' and 'prospering suburbs' were most likely to have a low indicator score.
- The most [deprived areas](#) had a relatively high adaptive capacity, but by comparing with the IMD some of the least resilient areas were found: these were concentrations in East London, the former Yorkshire coalfield and South Birmingham.

More information: Further details of sensitivity tests and limitations of the data are available at the LEP network blog at www.lepnetwork.net/blog/resilient-economies-moving/

Provided by University of Leeds

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