

Borders Railway Travel Pattern Survey Report

(3rd issue)

May 2017



Out and about **Midlothian**

This report has been prepared by Midlothian Council as part of the Scottish Government funded 'Smarter Choices Smarter Places' initiative. The project 'Out and About Midlothian' aims to promote the benefits of sustainable travel, to enhance the health and wellbeing of the local community and to make sure Midlothian continues to be a great place in which to live, work, shop and relax.

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Background and objectives

This report outlines the results of Midlothian Council's Borders Railway Travel Pattern Survey 3 undertaken between February and March 2017. The research is part of the 'Out and About Midlothian' project, jointly funded with Smarter Choices Smarter Places. The project seeks to encourage and promote the benefits of active travel and bus use, including to and from the four new railway stations in Midlothian.

The survey aimed to explore Borders Railway users' travel patterns at Eskbank, Newtongrange and Gorebridge railway stations. In addition to current railway usage, the results will provide a useful insight regarding access to the railway stations, as well as a comparison with the results released in February 2016. This will also allow the council to consider what actions could be taken to promote sustainable travel, with potential to improve journey information and enhance the quality of journeys to and from the stations.

Additionally, the survey also allowed participants to contribute with feedback by providing general comments or suggestions, as well as stating any issues they might encounter when travelling to and from the railway stations.

Summary of results

Current railway usage and travel patterns

Figures 1, 2 and 3 show current usage of the stations, the most responses showing very frequent usage (5 or more times a week) are at Eskbank 34%, followed by Newtongrange at 30.9% and Gorebridge at 13.7%.

The most commonly occurring answer regarding respondents' main purpose of trips at Eskbank and Newtongrange stations was work/business at 51% and 45.3%, respectively. At Gorebridge, however, leisure was the most common response at 61.1%, followed by work/business at 28.7%. At Eskbank and Newtongrange stations, leisure accounted for 29.2% and 31.6%, respectively. (**Figures 4, 5, 6**).

Most respondents travelled up to one mile to the railway station from home, with 43.6% at Eskbank, 41.7% at Newtongrange and 56.3% at Gorebridge (**Figures 7, 8, 9**). Journey times of 15 minutes or less from home to the railway station prevailed at Eskbank (81.7%) and Gorebridge (72.1%), while at Newtongrange most people seemed to travel between 16 and 30 minutes to the station (53.1%) (**Figures 10, 11, 12**).

Regarding the mode of transport used to travel to the railway station, walking was the most prevalent at all three stations (over 45%), with cycling levels at 7.3% at Eskbank station, 9.4% at Newtongrange station and 6.5% at Gorebridge station. The highest amount of bus use to and from the station took place at Gorebridge with 7.4% of respondents using one bus and 0.9% using 2 or more buses to get to the station from home (**Figures 13, 14, 15**).

Suggestions for increasing active travel and bus use

The most frequent responses regarding ways of encouraging rail users to walk or cycle more regularly to and from the stations were 'improved cycle paths and signage on my journey' for Eskbank (23.8%, [Figure 16](#)), the same answer being the most popular one for Newtongrange (35.7%, [Figure 17](#)) and 'meeting people who walk or cycle in the same direction' for Gorebridge (28.6%, [Figure 18](#)).

According to respondents, they would be more encouraged to use the bus to travel to and from the stations if there were 'more direct bus routes' to Eskbank station (44.4%, [Figure 19](#)), 'better connections from home' to Newtongrange station (77.8%, [Figure 20](#)) and 'more direct bus routes' to Gorebridge station (50%, [Figure 21](#)).

As shown in [Figures 22, 23, and 24](#), if the suggested measures were in place, the majority of those questioned at Eskbank (47.8%), Newtongrange (54.2%) and Gorebridge (54.3%) would travel actively or by bus 'sometimes', while an average 12% of respondents from would do it all the time. To be noted that the sample of respondents for the three questions above (Figures 16 – 24) was smaller than the total sample for the survey, as many regarded the question as 'not applicable' due to them already using sustainable travel modes or having no answer.

Considering safety at the railway stations ([Figures 25, 26, 27](#)), the majority of respondents felt very safe, with the most respondents feeling very safe at Gorebridge station (81.4%), followed by Newtongrange station (71.1%) and Eskbank station (69.5%).

Follow-up - comparison with previous Borders Railway usage results

According to the survey results, there has been an overall increase in very frequent users (5 or more times a week) of the stations compared to last year, for all the stations, with the most pronounced difference being at Eskbank, where 34% of respondents now use the station very frequently compared to only 2.5% doing so the previous year ([Figures 28, 29, 30](#)).

Follow-up comparison and percentage change with previous Borders Railway travel modes

Results showing a comparison with survey results from the 2016 winter survey can be found in [Figures 31, 32, 33](#).

[Figures 34, 35, 36](#) examine the percentage change of these results, showing a clear picture of any increase or decrease in every travel mode. For Eskbank and Newtongrange, increases of 6 – 11% in walking and 2.9 - 4.4% in cycling have been observed based on respondent's answers. For Gorebridge station, however, walking decreased by 13.6% and car use (lone driver) increased by 6.7%. On the other hand, cycling increased by 5.8% at Gorebridge. Car sharing, car use (lone driver) and bus use have decreased for both Eskbank and Newtongrange stations, while bus use increased by 1.7% at Gorebridge.

Survey method

Data collection

One data source was taken into account for the survey by the use of questionnaires.

- Platform questionnaire at Eskbank, Newtongrange and Gorebridge railway stations. (293 responses)

Platform questionnaires have been completed in collaboration with Gorebridge Community Development Trust as part of their Climate Challenge Fund project called 'Greening Gorebridge'. The help of the Trust and the volunteers who worked hard to collect responses is greatly appreciated.

The platform questionnaires were conducted among passengers alighting or boarding trains between February and March 2017. The time slots when passengers were interviewed range from 8:00 am to 6:30 pm. The times of day for undertaking the questionnaires were distributed in an even manner between the three railway stations.

Sample population

Based on Scottish Government transport figures released on 31 May 2016, the number of journeys between 6 September 2015 and 31 March 2016 were 694,373. The population size of the survey (Borders Railway users) is estimated based on these figures using a weekly average. Based on the 30 weeks these results are representative for, an average of 23,145 passenger journeys per week would be accountable for this period. Assuming these figures include return journeys, we could estimate 11,572 individual users per week which makes the survey's target population.

Accordingly, based on this estimate and a sample size of 293 respondents from the survey, there is a 6% margin of error assuming a 95% level of confidence. This indicates that there is 95% likelihood that the sample accurately reflects the attitudes of at least 89% of the target survey population.

Survey results

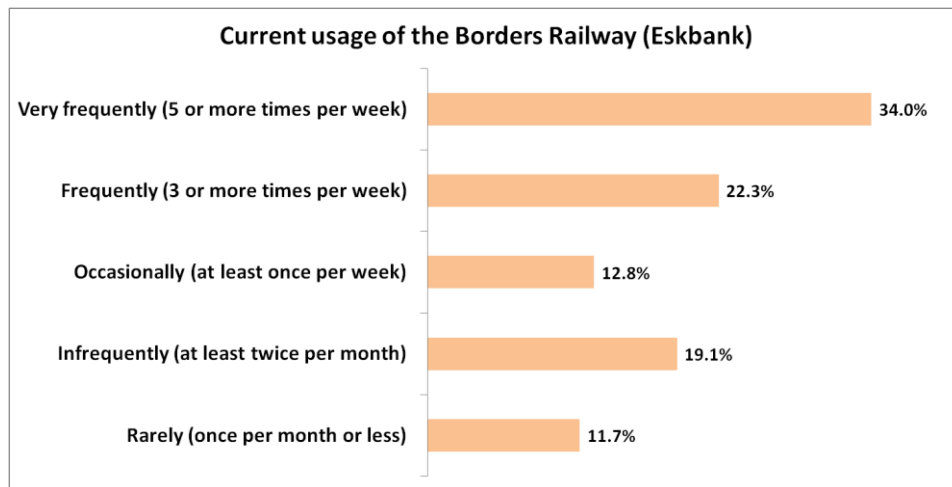


Figure 1 Current usage of the Borders Railway (Eskbank Station)

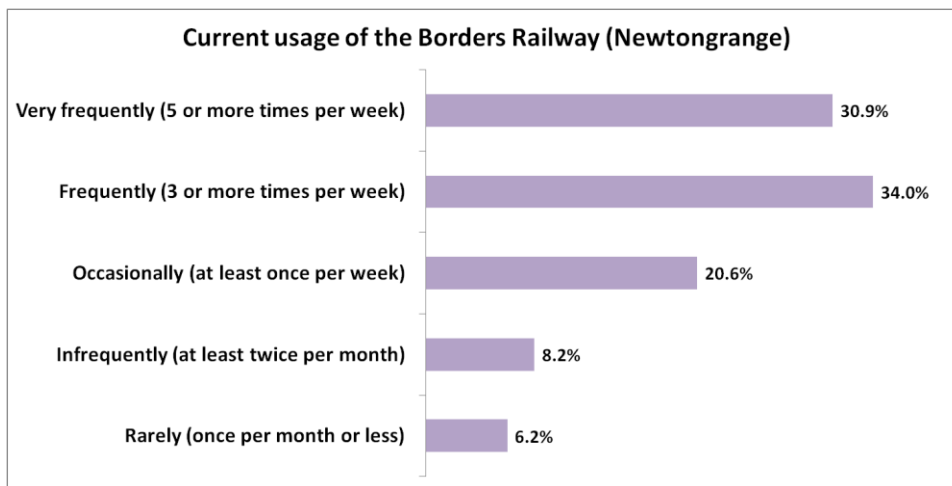


Figure 2 Current usage of the Borders Railway (Newtongrange Station)

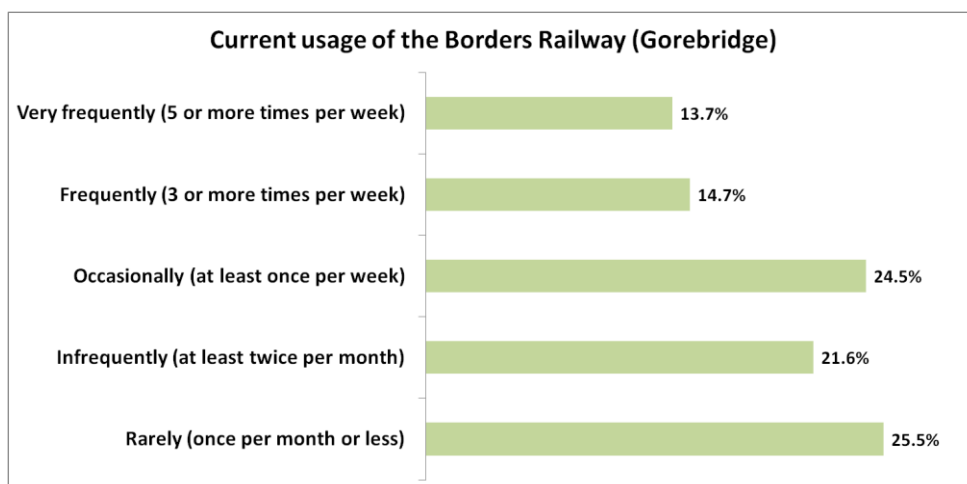


Figure 3 Current usage of the Borders Railway (Gorebridge Station)

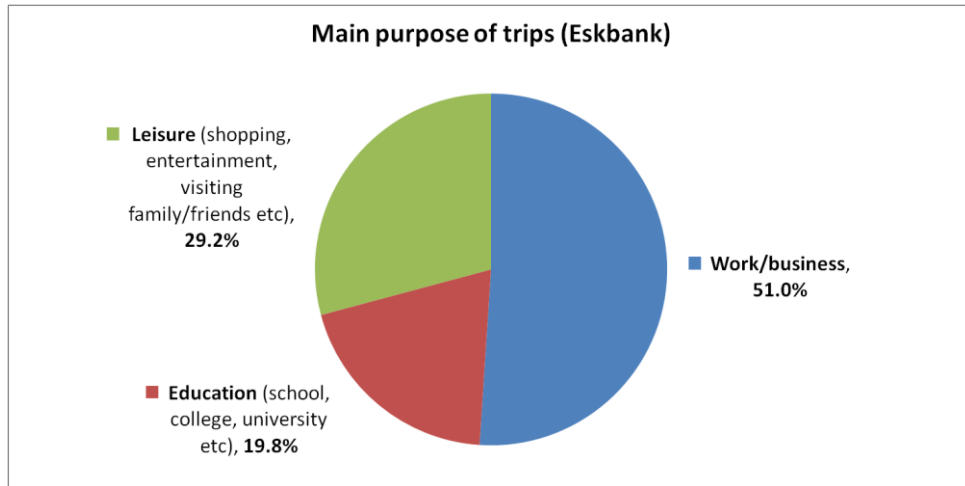


Figure 4 Main purpose of trips (Eskbank Station)

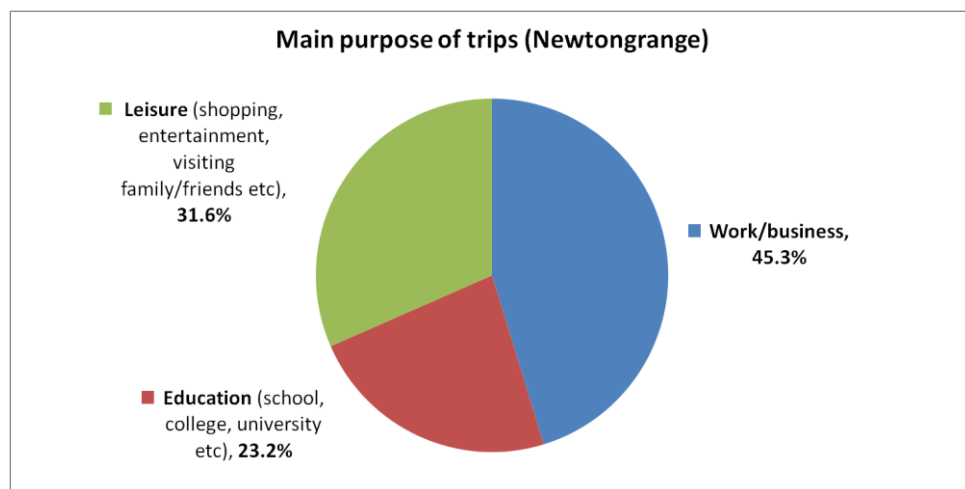


Figure 5 Main purpose of trips (Newtongrange Station)

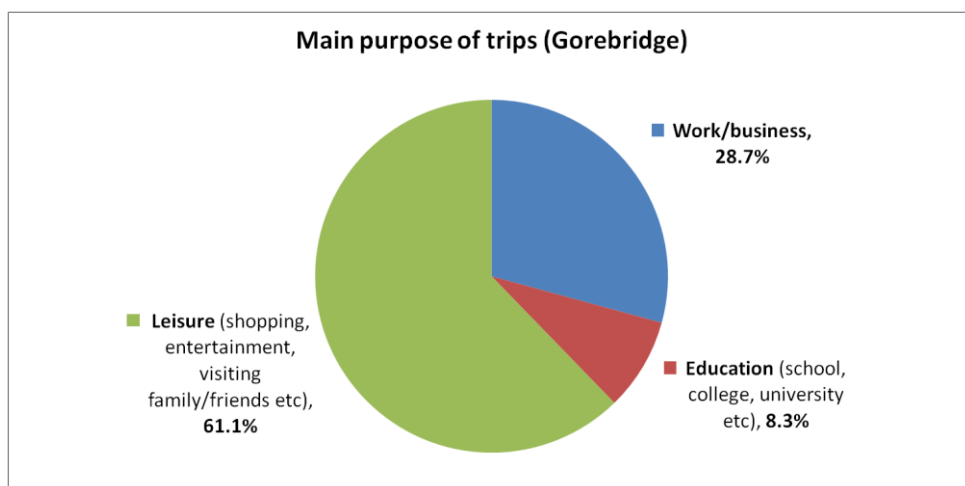


Figure 6 Main purpose of trips (Gorebridge Station)

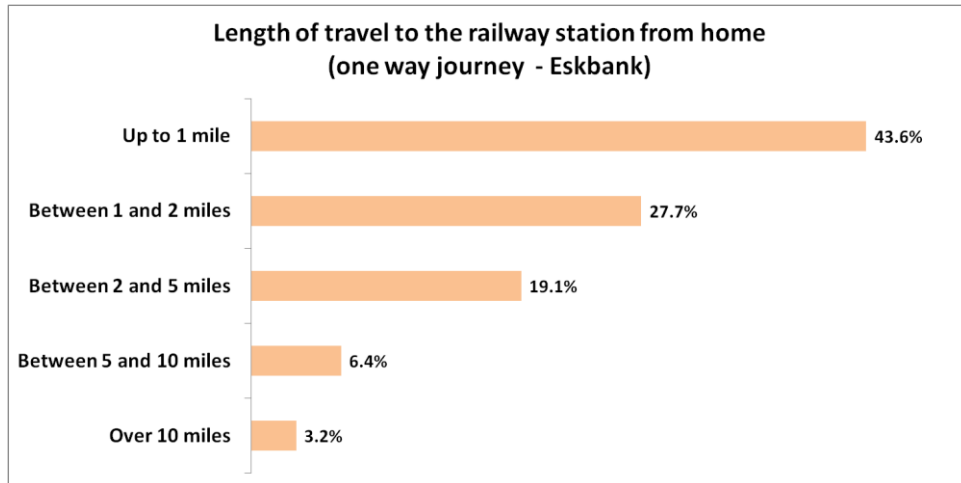


Figure 7 Length of travel to the railway station from home (Eskbank Station)

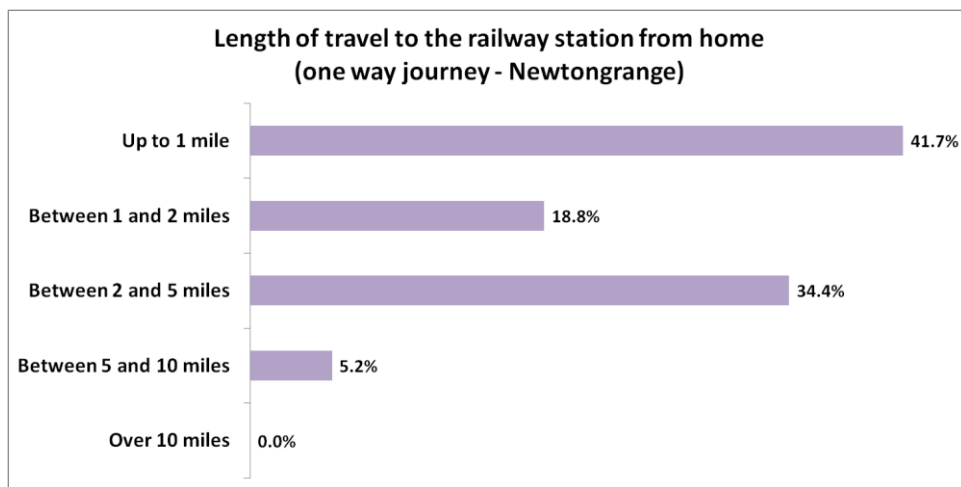


Figure 8 Length of travel to the railway station from home (Newtongrange Station)

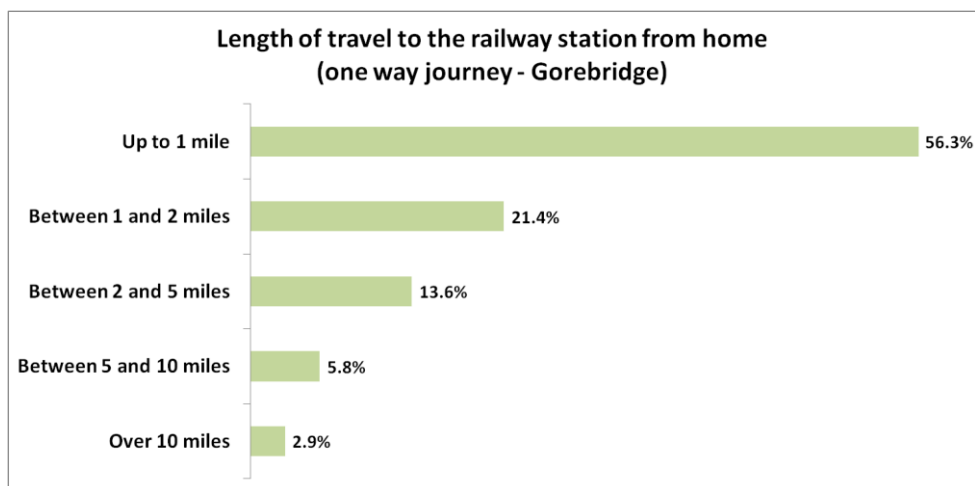


Figure 9 Length of travel to the railway station from home (Gorebridge Station)

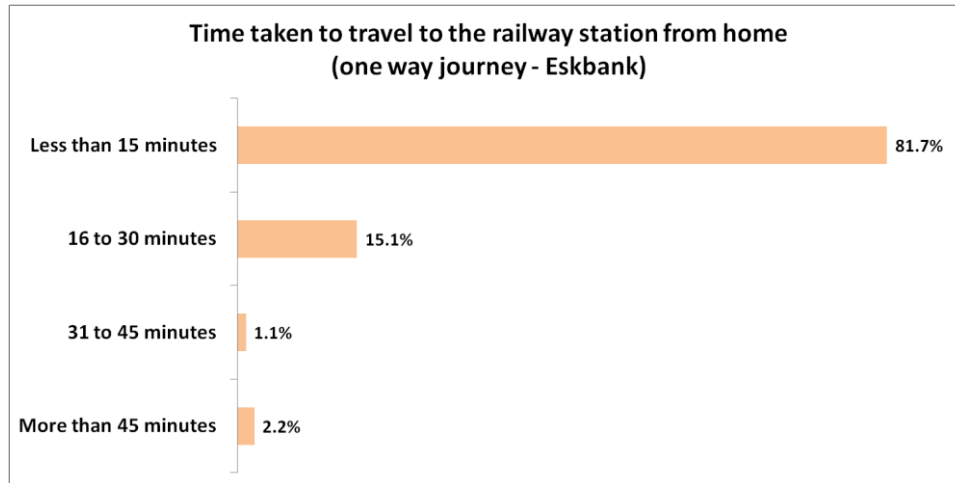


Figure 10 Time taken to travel to the railway station from home (Eskbank Station)

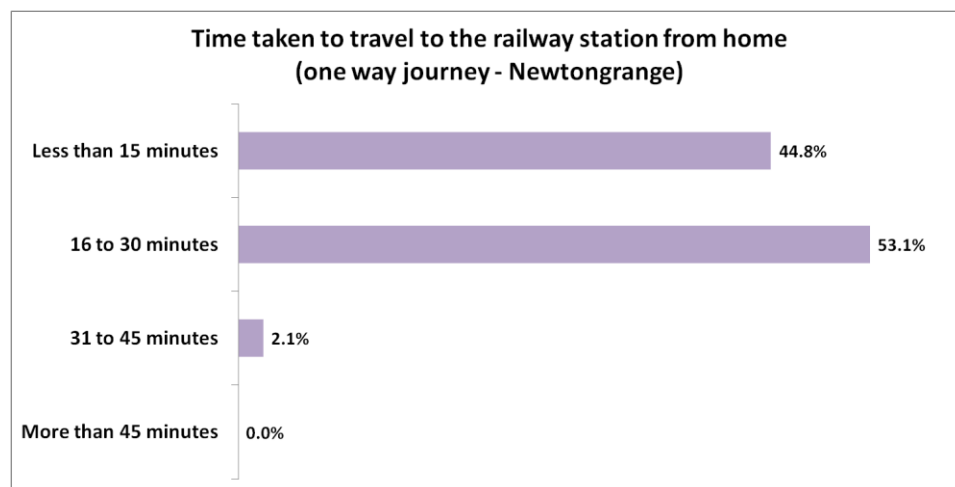


Figure 11 Time taken to travel to the railway station from home (Newtongrange Station)

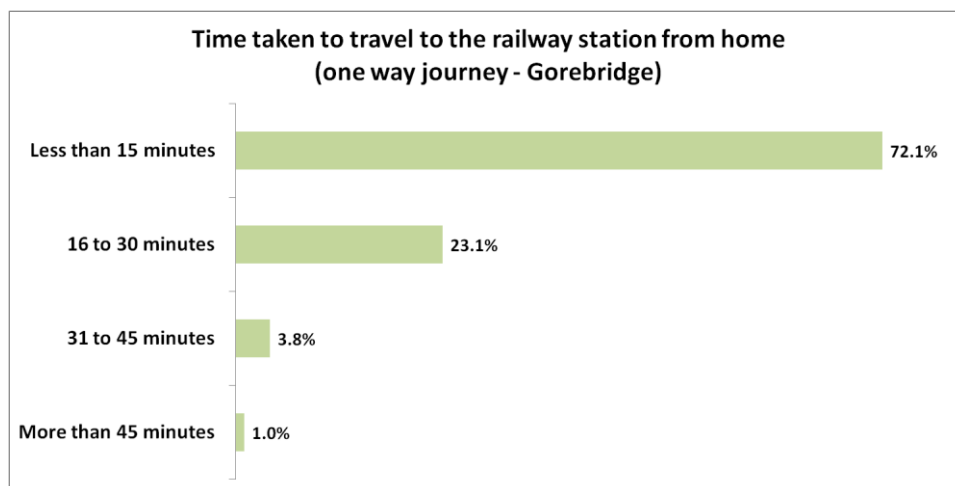


Figure 12 Time taken to travel to the railway station from home (Gorebridge Station)

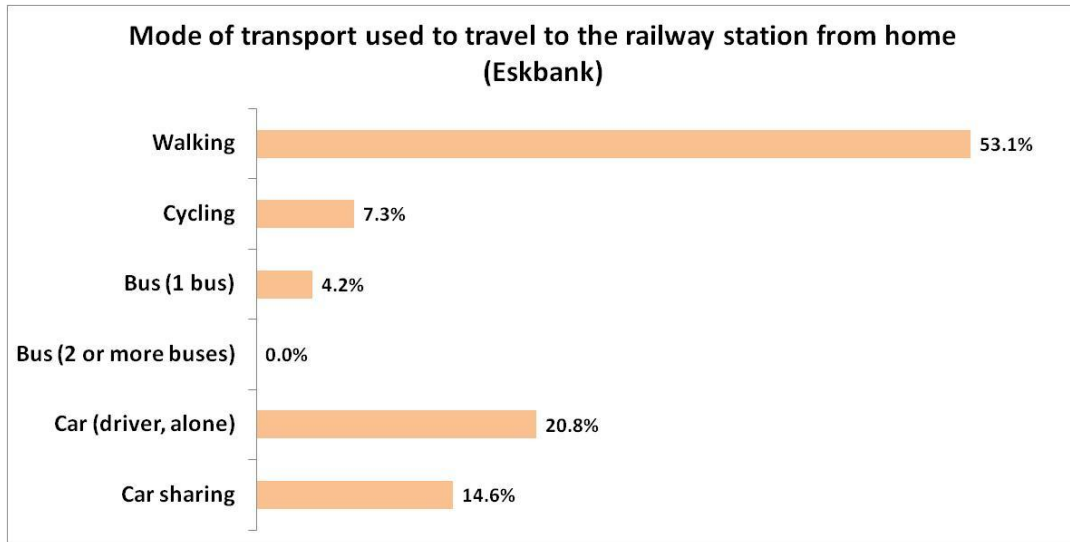


Figure 13 Mode of transport used to travel to the railway station (Eskbank Station)

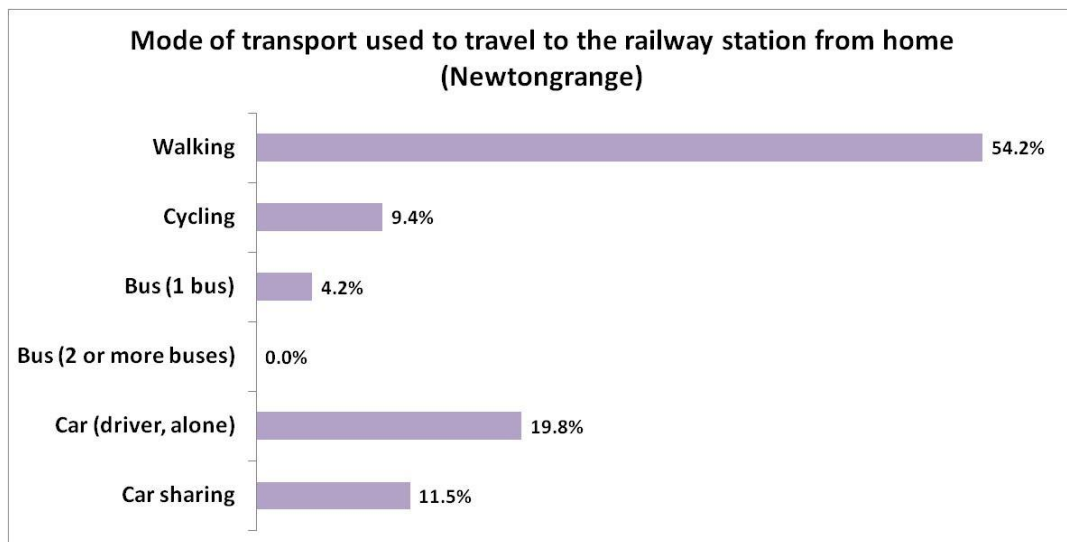


Figure 14 Mode of transport used to travel to the railway station (Newtongrange Station)

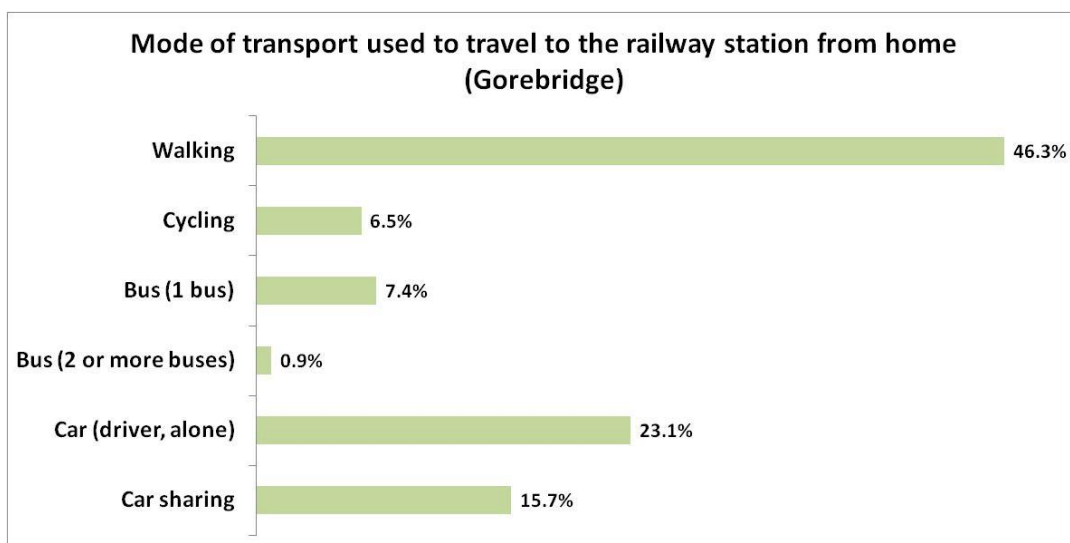


Figure 15 Mode of transport used to travel to the railway station (Gorebridge Station)

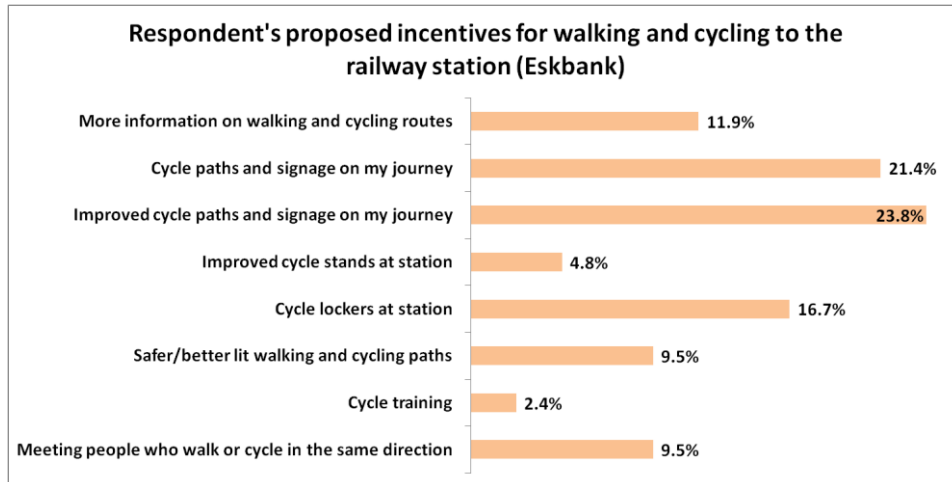


Figure 16 Proposed incentives for walking and cycling to the railway station (Eskbank Station)

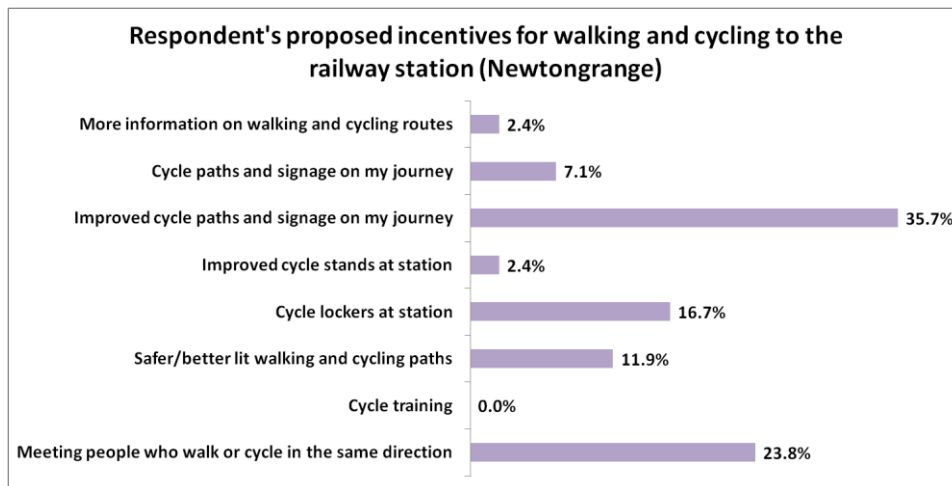


Figure 17 Proposed incentives for walking and cycling to the railway station (Newtongrange Station)

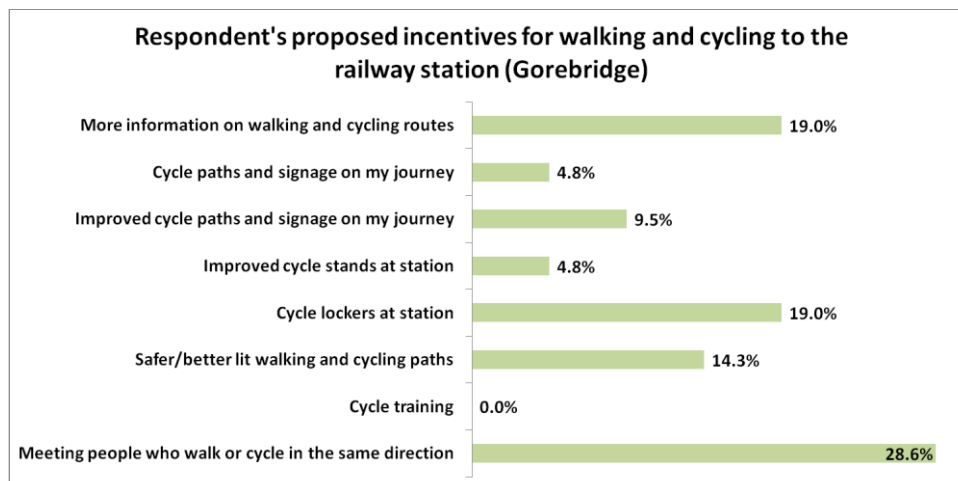


Figure 18 Proposed incentives for walking and cycling to the railway station (Gorebridge Station)

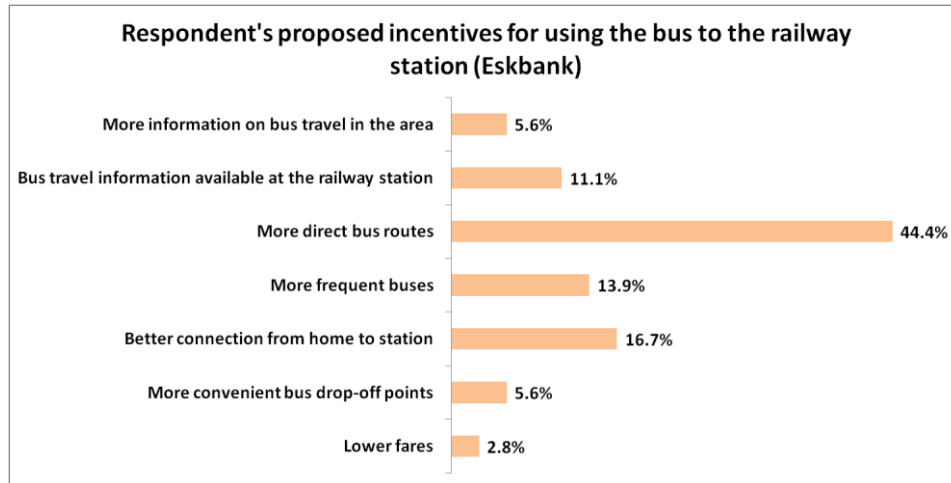


Figure 19 Proposed incentives for using the bus to the railway station (Eskbank Station)

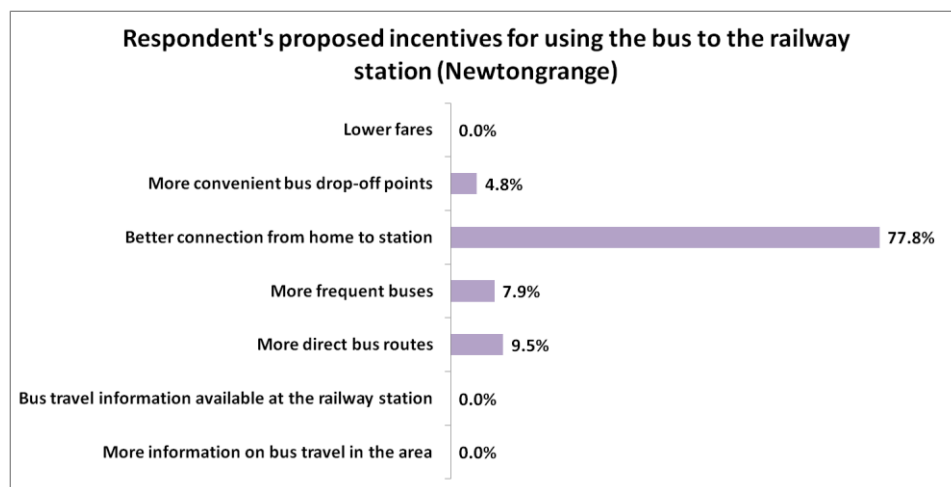


Figure 20 Proposed incentives for using the bus to the railway station (Newtongrange Station)

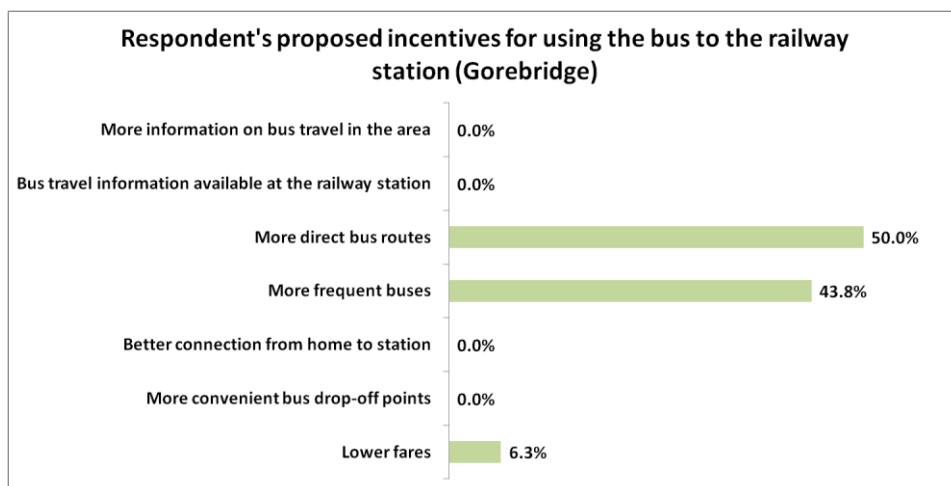


Figure 21 Proposed incentives for using the bus to the railway station (Gorebridge Station)

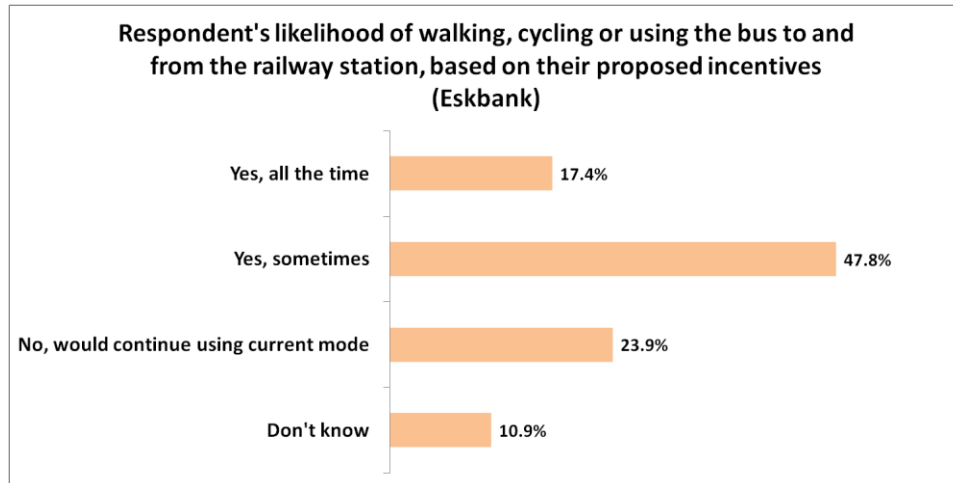


Figure 22 Likelihood of using sustainable travel modes to the railway station (Eskbank Station)

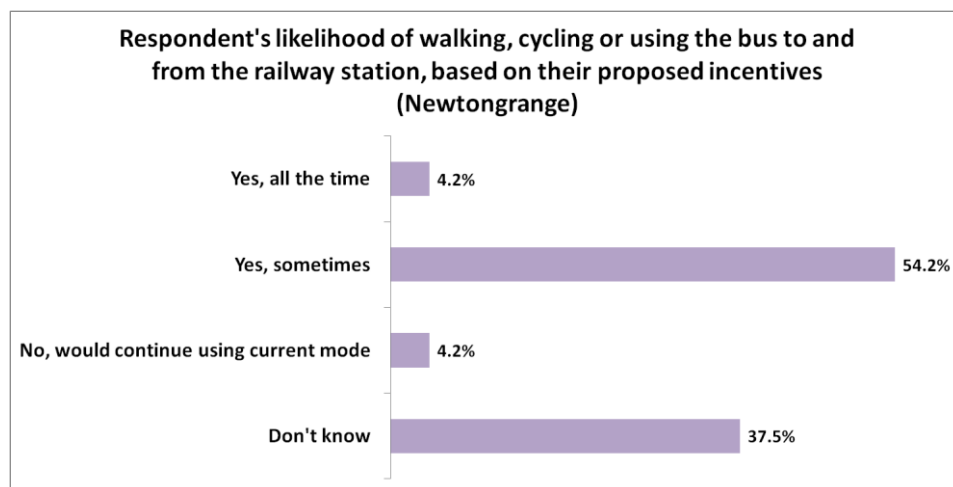


Figure 23 Likelihood of using sustainable travel modes to the railway station (Newtongrange Station)

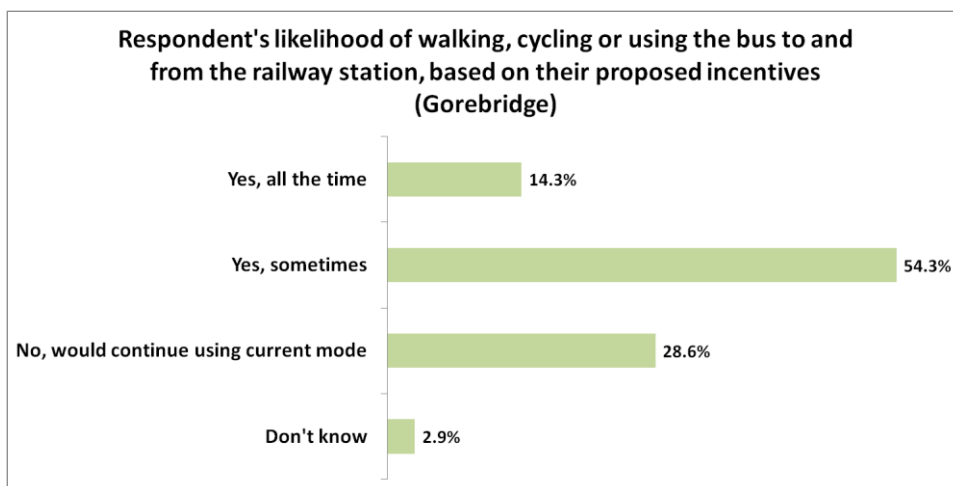


Figure 24 Likelihood of using sustainable travel modes to the railway station (Gorebridge Station)

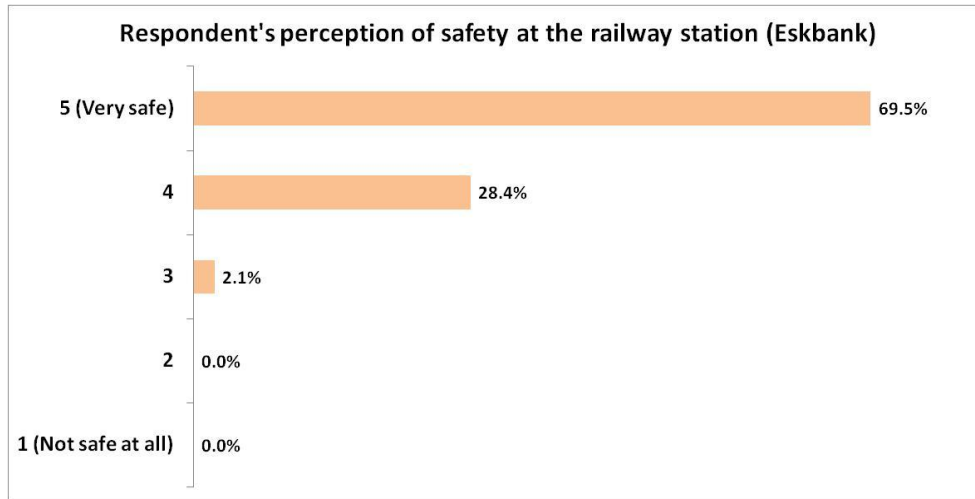


Figure 25 Perception of safety at the railway station (Eskbank Station)

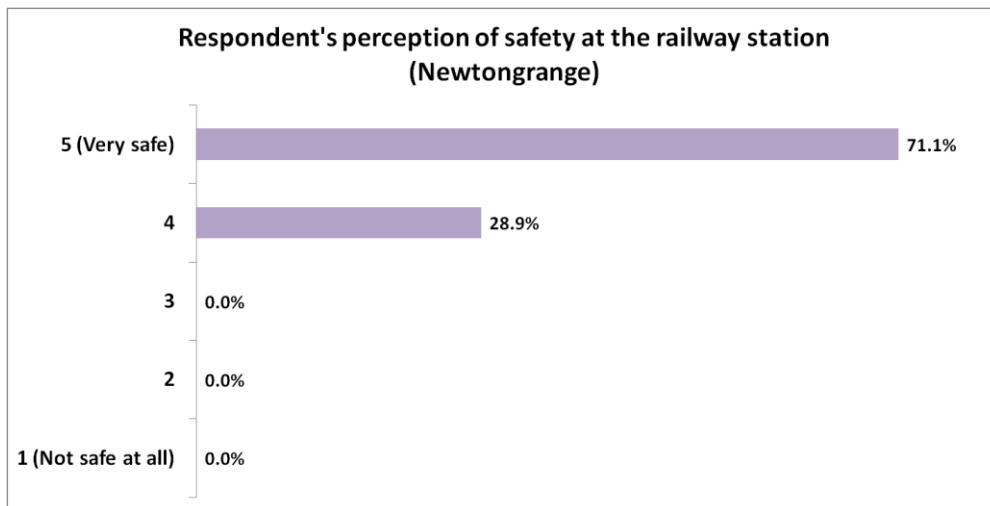


Figure 26 Perception of safety at the railway station (Newtongrange Station)



Figure 27 Perception of safety at the railway station (Gorebridge Station)

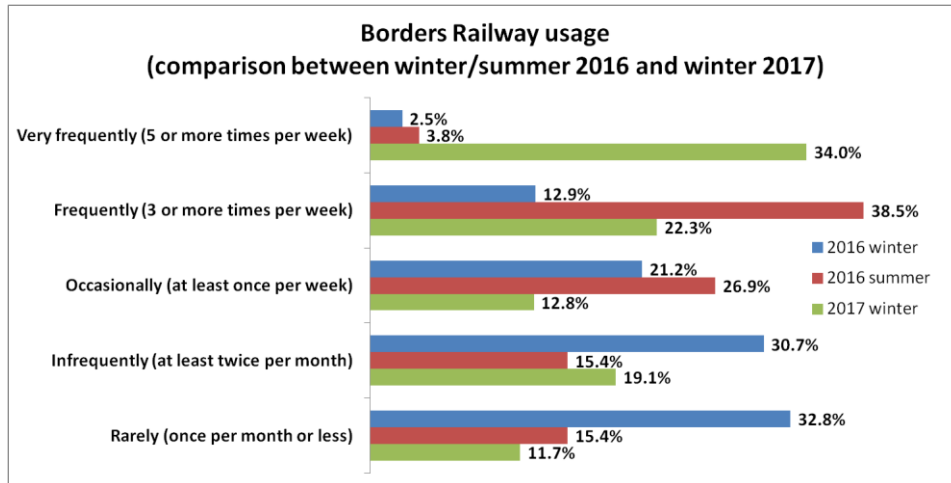


Figure 28 Borders Railway usage comparison between 2016 and winter 2017 (Eskbank Station)

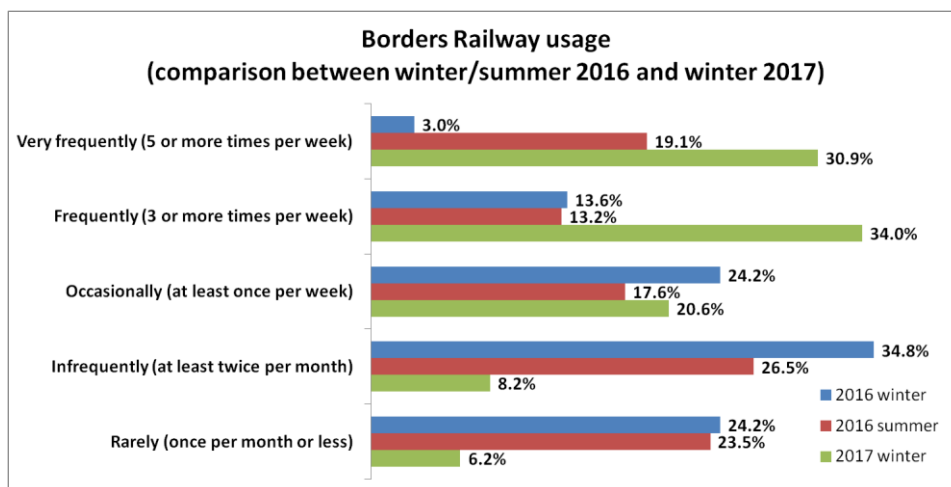


Figure 29 Borders Railway usage comparison between 2016 and winter 2017 (Newtongrange Station)

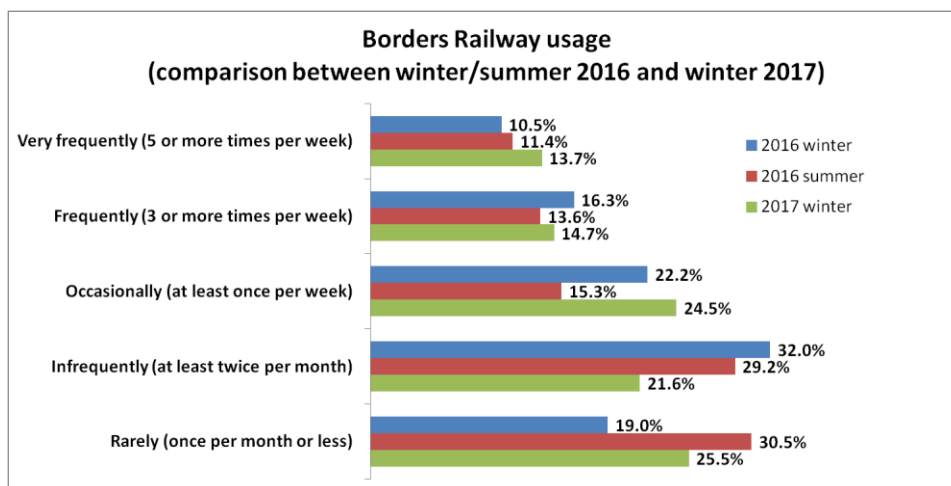


Figure 30 Borders Railway usage comparison between 2016 and winter 2017 (Gorebridge Station)

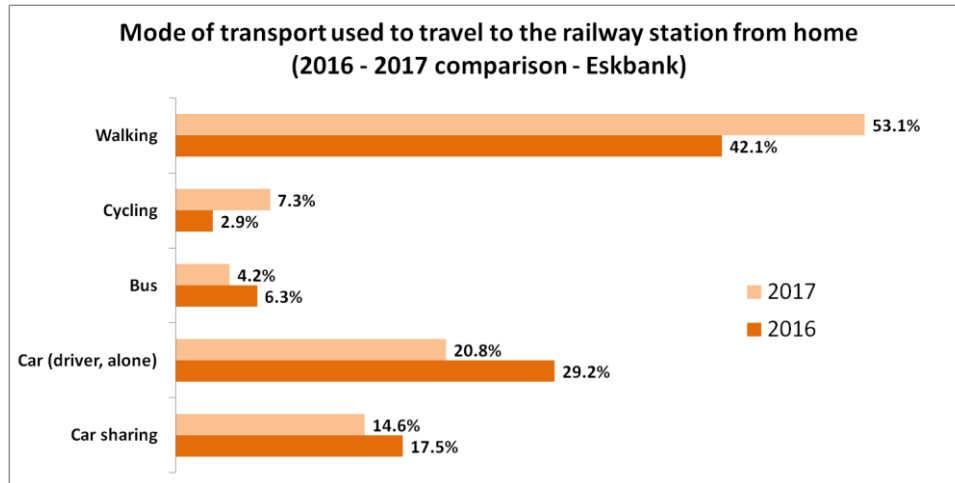


Figure 31 Mode of transport comparison between winter 2016 and winter 2017 (Eskbank Station)

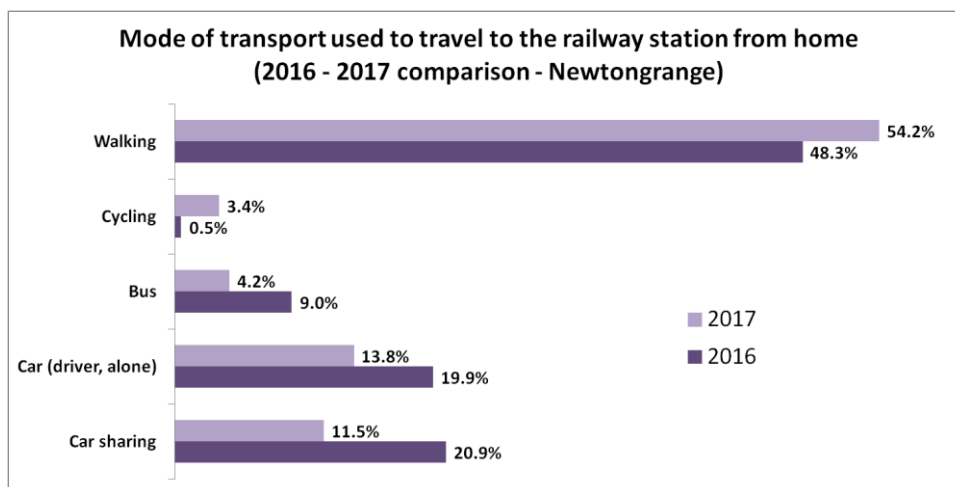


Figure 32 Mode of transport comparison between winter 2016 and winter 2017 (Newtongrange Station)

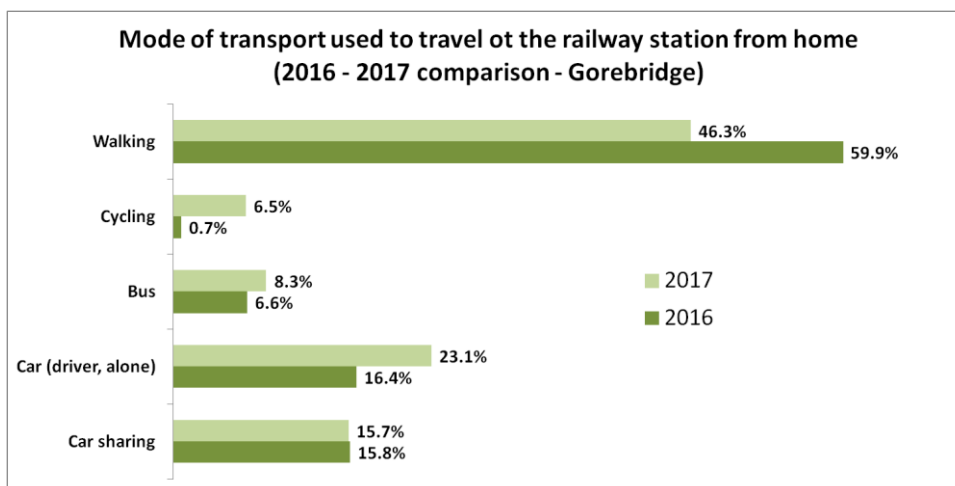


Figure 33 Mode of transport comparison between winter 2016 and winter 2017 (Gorebridge Station)

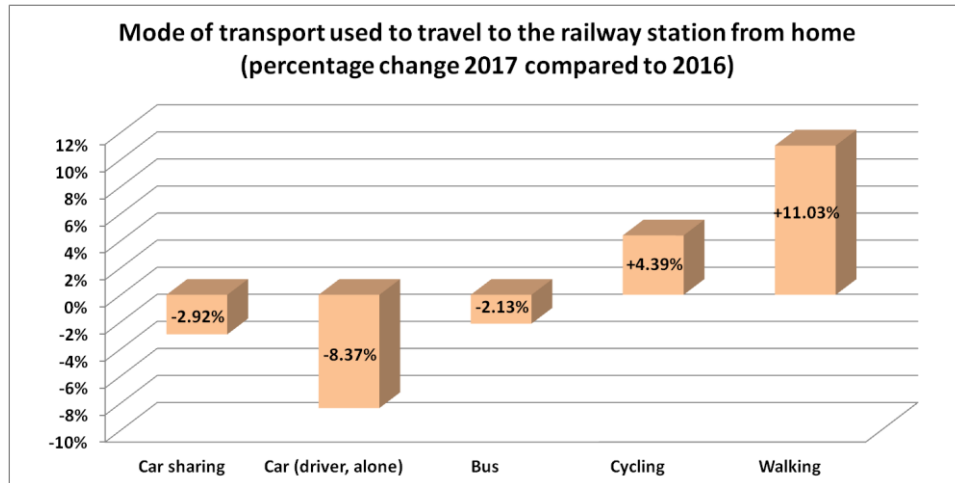


Figure 34 Mode of transport percentage change between winter 2016 and winter 2017 (Eskbank Station)

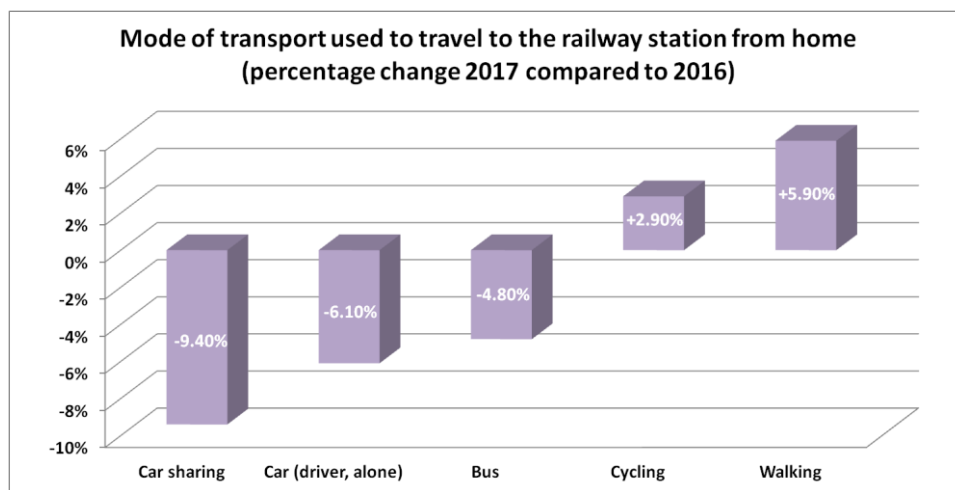


Figure 35 Mode of transport percentage change between winter 2016 and winter 2017 (Newtongrange Station)

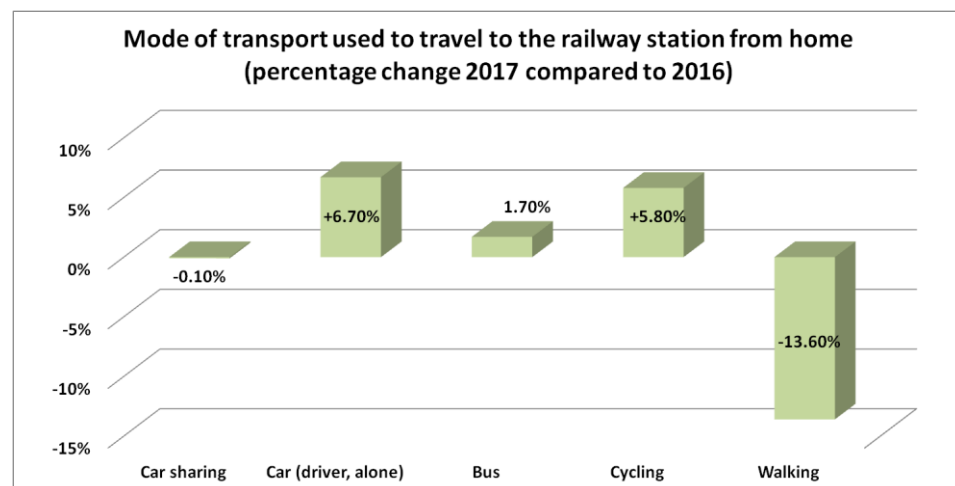


Figure 36 Mode of transport percentage change between winter 2016 and winter 2017 (Gorebridge Station)

Open-ended question results

Additional comments and suggestions for increasing active travel and bus use to and from the stations, as well as general and access related comments (comments quoted in their original form).

<p>Newtongrange</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safer cycling routes - Safer cycling routes, especially with children - More carriages on trains - Toilets at station - Not enough carriages - No toilets - Trains late and not enough carriages - Not enough carriages - More carriages at busy times - No bus to station - Better bus routes, especially at night 	<p>Eskbank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More room on trains for bikes - Eskbank station clean, good car park - No seats in the morning - Lack of carriages - Delays not good - Better carriages - Line should be double-tracked - Old carriages - More carriages at busy times - Excellent service
<p>Gorebridge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lighting at far end - Gorebridge signage poor - Service improved during the last few months - More carriages as very busy in the morning - Services too crowded - Lack of facilities at stations - Not enough carriages - Overcrowded train - Good/brilliant with disabled travellers - Marvellous, very convenient - Really good service - Train cancelled, had to get taxi – sent all receipts to Abellio as a season ticket holder. Never heard anything back – no refund. - Good service, enables traveller to have job and drop off/pick up children - Service now more reliable - Cancellations, missed exam, no discounts for railcards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs enclosed waiting area - No provision for events i.e. rugby international or shows - Really good, no complaints but trains could be better - More carriages and too many cancellations - Trains dirty - Overcrowded, cancellations not good - More carriages - Doors didn't work, had to carry on to Tweedbank - Positive experience - Fine service - More carriages, could be warmer. Cancellations annoying. - Don't use for work, too unpredictable. 1 in 3 trains cancelled. - Speakers too quite, complained but nothing done – quite rude. - Gate needs opening up - Needs gate opening up - Great need for toilet facilities - Toilets and tea, coffee

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service fine, although there is litter on the ground beside trains - More carriages needed - Stopped using trains but started again and the service feels better - Not good at festivals, needs more carriages. - Not enough carriages and not too clean - More carriages, trains late - Add newer trains, faults are annoying and too few carriages - Unreliable sometimes - I drive because there are no buses - Service is good. Trains sometimes a bit grubby - Good service, although cancellations are annoying - More carriages at peak times and school holidays. Service has improved over the last 6 months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Toilets needed. What is happening with station building?
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Table 1 Open-ended question results and comments (all stations)

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 Report released 29 May 2017