

Older people

Key findings

- Twelve per cent of the London population is aged 65 and over (three per cent are aged over 80). With increasing age, the likelihood of being a woman, white, retired, disabled and/or on a lower income also increases
- With increasing age, people tend to make fewer journeys by public transport
- Concerns over safety and security are less acute amongst older Londoners compared to younger people
- The possession of passes/cards to reduce transport costs is high amongst older Londoners – especially possession of free bus passes or free train/Tube passes
- Older people tend to give higher overall satisfaction ratings for various transport modes compared to younger people. Satisfaction with the Dial-a-Ride service is particularly high

Summary

Those aged 65 and over make up 12% of the London population. Older Londoners have a different demographic profile to the total London population in a number of ways. Compared to all Londoners, those aged 65 and older are more likely to be women (56% vs. 51%), white (80% vs. 65%), retired (88% vs. 16%), on an annual household income of <£20,000 (77% vs. 44%) and have an impairment or health issue (40% vs. 10%)[2]. These factors affect the travel behaviour and attitudes of older people in London.

Transport use

People tend to travel less frequently as they get older. The bus is a key mode of transport for those aged 65+ with 63% saying they use the bus at least once a week (compared to 61% of all Londoners). With the exception of buses and trams, older Londoners use all forms of transport less frequently than the total London population [2].

- Important transport modes for older people, alongside the bus, are walking (86% of those aged 65+ walk at least once a week) and the car (both as a driver 39%, and a passenger 42%) [2]
- The proportion of 80+ year olds driving at least once a week falls to 16%, though the proportion using the car as a passenger remains steady at 40% [2]
- Older people can be reluctant to give up driving as a mode of transport. Those aged 80+ tend to drive less frequently which can affect levels of safety on the road [45]
- Those aged 65+ show little engagement with cycling as a mode of transport [2]

- 53% of weekday journeys made by 65+ year olds are for shopping/personal business, a further 28% are for leisure purposes[2]

Barriers

Many of the barriers to greater public transport use that affect all Londoners have less of an impact on those aged 65+. For example, slow journey times are seen as a barrier for 43% of all Londoners but only 24% of those aged 65+. This is most likely linked to journey purpose, with fewer older people making work related trips [2,14].

- The single greatest barrier to increased public transport use amongst older Londoners is concern about anti-social behaviour (45%) [14]
- The cost of public transport is considered a barrier to increased use by only 10% of older people [14]. Public transport is made more affordable by the passes available to older people [2]
- Older people give higher satisfaction scores for various transport modes compared to all Londoners [6]

Safety and security

Concerns over crime and anti-social behaviour are less acute for people aged 65+ compared to younger Londoners. For those aged 65+, 52% say their concerns over crime and anti-social behaviour affect the frequency with which they use the Tube/bus/train 'a lot/a little'. For 16-24 year olds, this figure is 71%. These concerns decrease with increasing age (even when modal use is taken into account) [14].

- The proportions of those aged 65+ who feel safe travelling by various modes during the day are similar to all Londoners. However, older Londoners are less likely to feel safe travelling after dark compared to all Londoners [14]

Seeking travel information online

Use of the TfL website declines with age – 49% of those aged 65+ access the website compared to 78% of all Londoners [10]. Those that do visit the website do so less frequently than all Londoners [34].

Similarly, a much lower proportion of those aged 65+ use a smartphone (11%per cent) compared to all Londoners (58%), which limits the proportion of older Londoners accessing travel information through their smartphone [10].