



A just transition for rural transport

September 2024

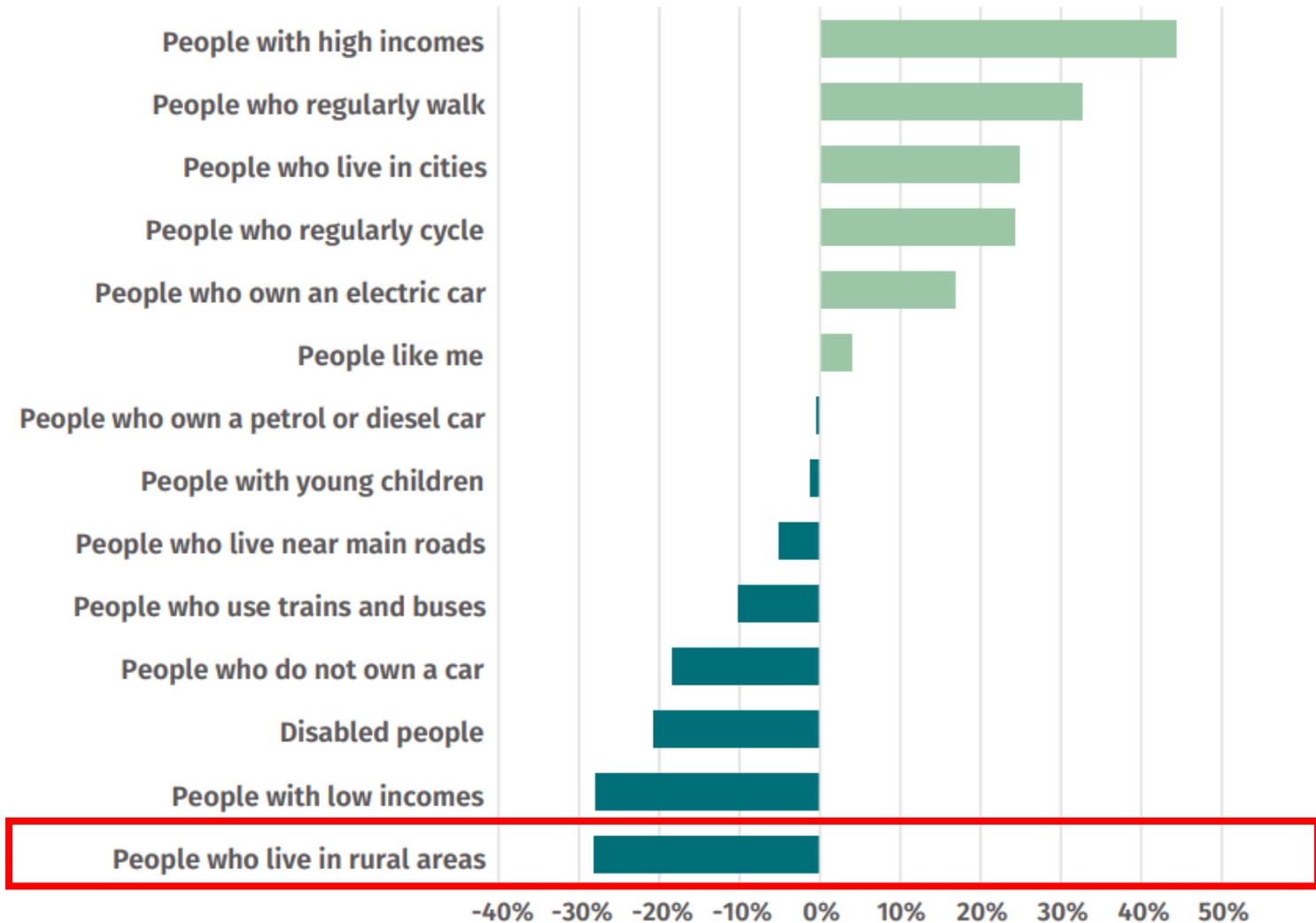
The progressive
policy think tank

Accelerate the transition to a fairer, greener and healthier transport system by mainstreaming the policies and ideas to deliver faster climate action and a nature recovery in a way that allows everyone to thrive



Transport isn't working for people

Net responses to the question 'Thinking about the current transport system, do you think that the following groups of people get a good deal or a bad deal?' Positive figures indicate a 'good deal', negative a 'bad deal'



Source: Authors' analysis of polling commissioned for this report

Percentage of respondents who considered the following item to be a necessity for people living in the UK today, with transport responses highlighted

Item	All respondents	Those own a car	Those who do not own a car
Energy to heat the home	71%	70%	72%
Clothing	59%	58%	60%
Food for three meals a day	58%	59%	58%
Public transport to and from work	53%	49%	61%
A phone	46%	45%	48%
Internet connection at home	43%	43%	45%
Public transport to see family and friends	35%	33%	42%
A car	20%	25%	9%
A bike or adapted cycle	8%	7%	9%
Holidays	6%	6%	6%
More than one car per household	4%	5%	2%
Alcoholic beverages	3%	4%	2%
Eating out at a restaurant once a month	2%	3%	1%
Going to the cinema once a month	2%	2%	2%

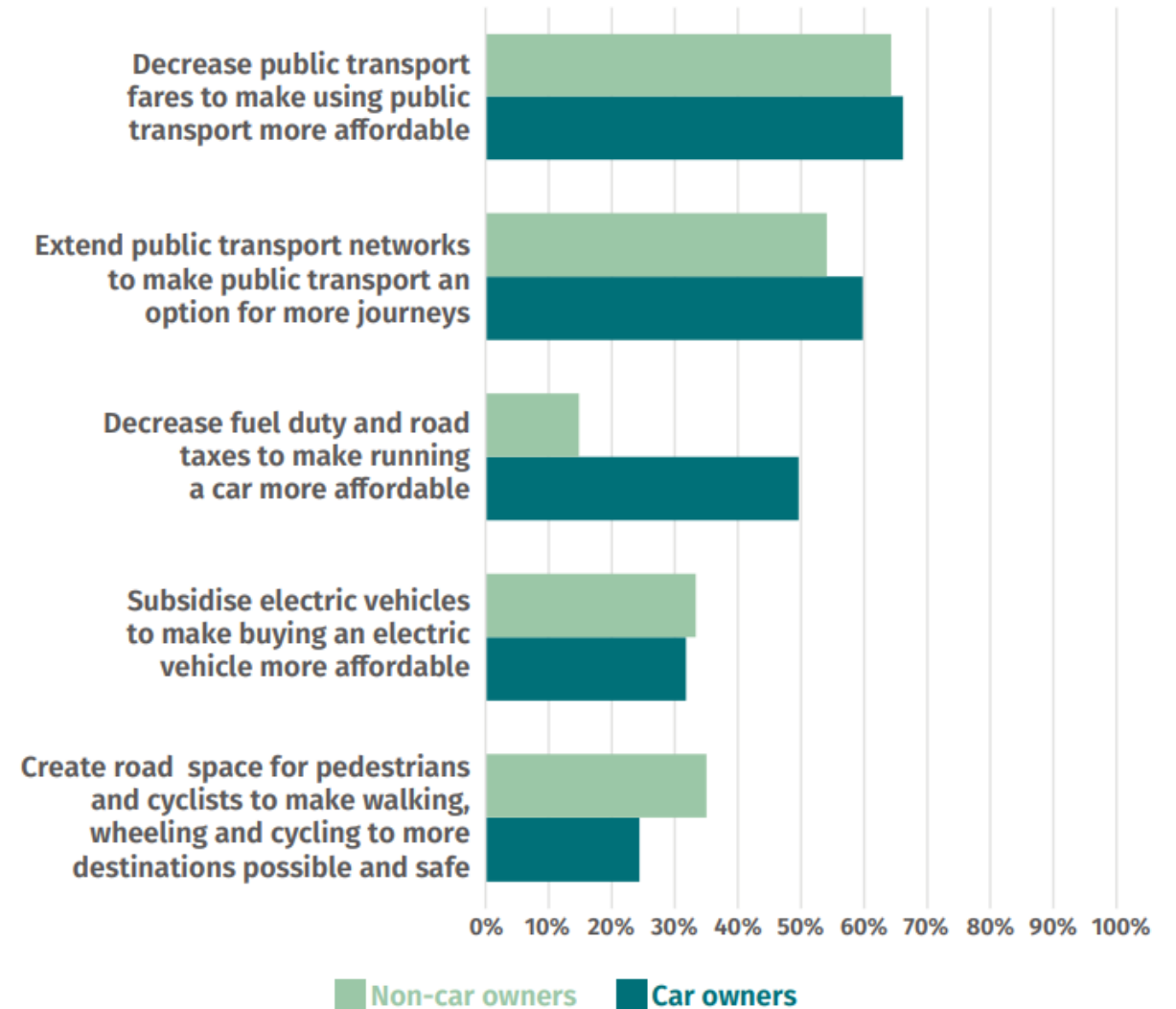
People value public transport highly

Note: Question asked: 'Thinking about life for people living in the UK today, would you consider each of the following a necessity or a luxury?' Respondents were given five response options rated 1 to 5, where 1 is a necessity and 5 a luxury – the above captures those who rated these items the highest level of necessity.

Source: Authors' analysis of polling commissioned for this report

... and they want to see investment in it

Net effectiveness of policies based on the response to the question 'Below are some ways the government could reduce transport costs for people. How effective would you consider the following?'

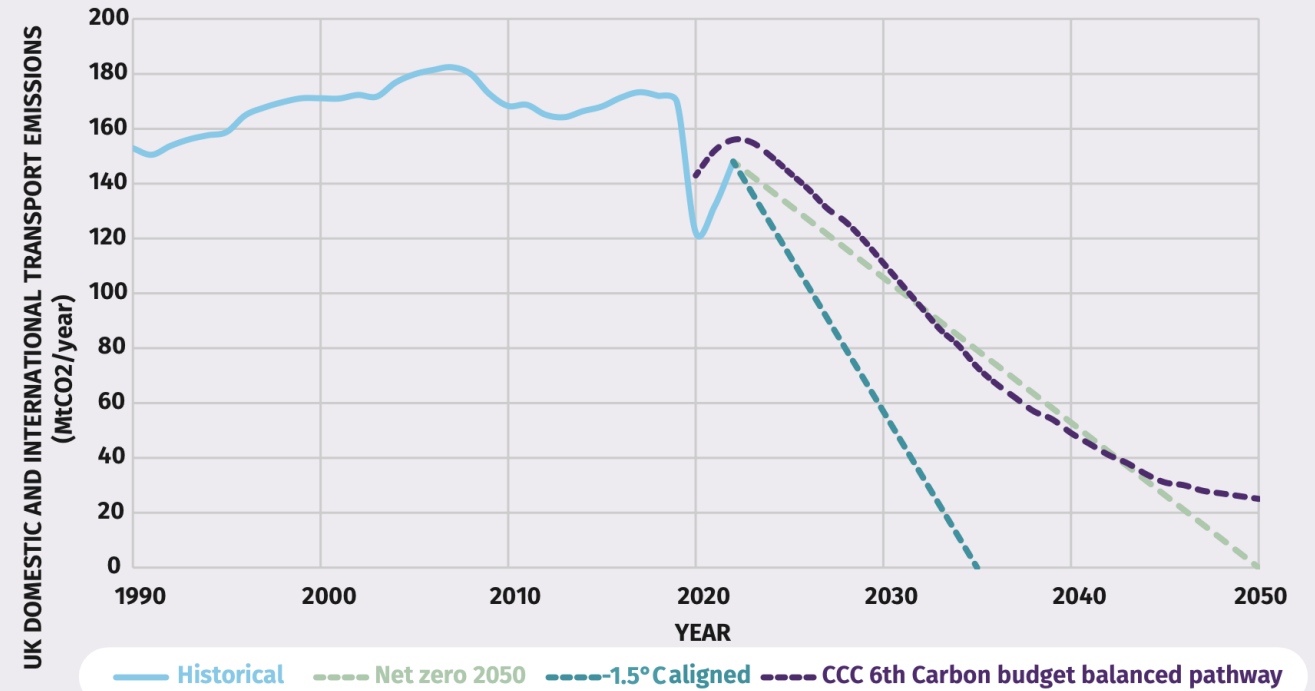


Note: Net score is calculated as the percentage who think a policy would be 'very' or 'quite' effective minus those who think it would be 'not very' or 'not at all' effective.

Source: Authors' analysis of polling commissioned for this report.

There is an urgent need to address transport emissions

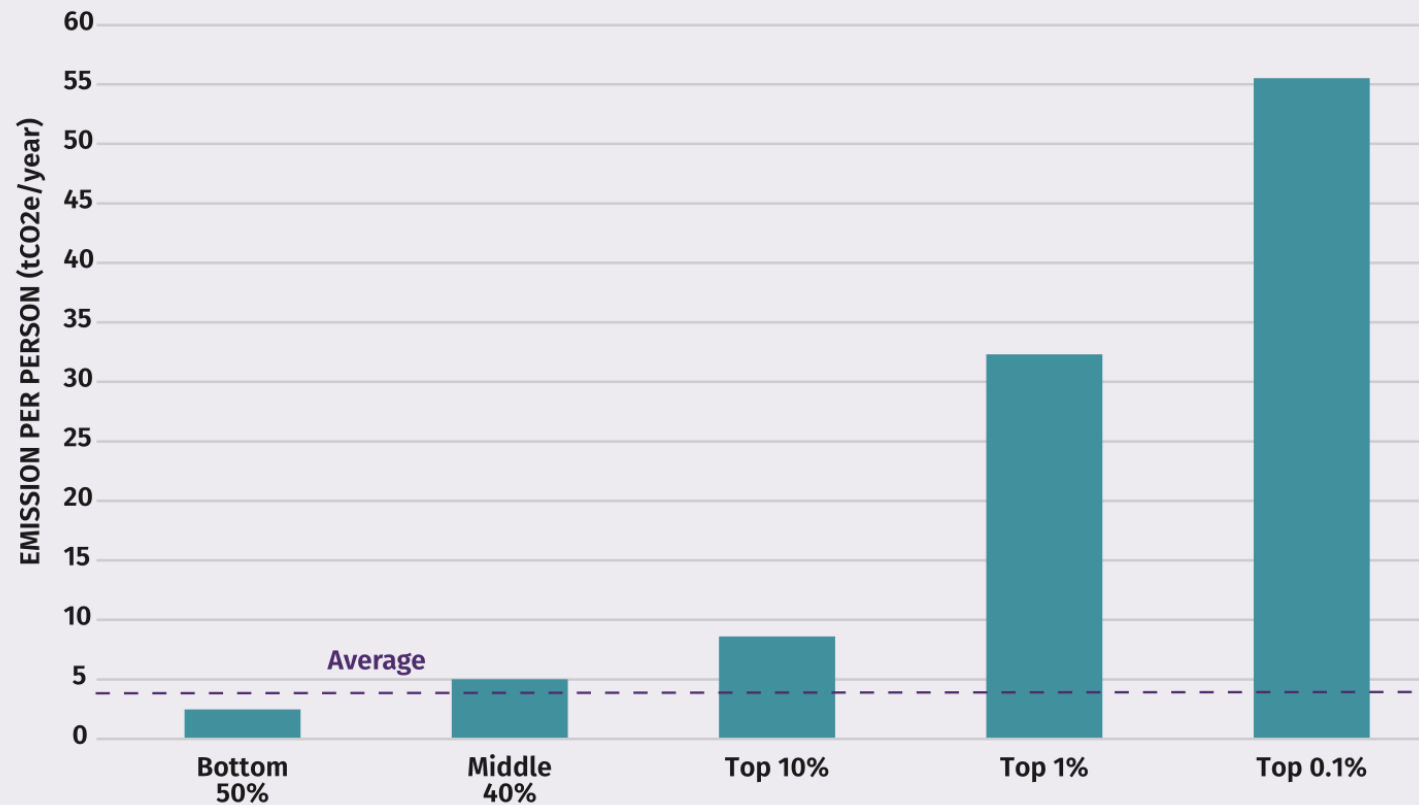
FIG. 1: THE PACE OF TRANSPORT EMISSION REDUCTIONS HAS TO INCREASE THIS DECADE



Source: Authors' analysis of [DESNZ](#) historical emissions, [CCC](#) 6th Carbon Budget and [Zeke Hausfather's](#) reporting on the remaining carbon budget for a 50 per cent chance of staying within 1.5°C

FIG. 4: THOSE ON THE HIGHEST INCOME EMIT THE MOST TRANSPORT EMISSIONS

Transport emissions per person by income groups in Great Britain



Source: Authors' analysis. See methodology section for data source.

But... those emissions
are not shared fairly

INTRODUCING OUR 12 TRANSPORT PROFILES



Emissions ranking, 12 is lowest level of emissions



Income ranking, 12 is lowest average income



Surface travel ranking, 12 is lowest for travel on land

MOST FREQUENT FLYERS



**1: HIGHLY AFFLUENT,
UNRESTRICTED MOBILITY**

1 £ 1 1



**2: FREQUENT FLYERS,
LOW DAILY TRAVEL**

11 £ 9 2

HIGHLY MOBILE, REGULARLY FLY



**3: CAR FREE,
FREQUENT FLYERS**

2 £ 11 3



**4: HIGH CAR USE,
HIGH FLYING**

5 £ 3 4



**5: HIGH RAIL, HIGH
FLYING**

4 £ 5 5

CAR RELIANT



6: CAR RELIANT

6 £ 2 7

HIGH PUBLIC TRANSPORT



**7: HIGH PUBLIC
TRANSPORT**

3 £ 10 12

AVERAGE TRAVELLERS



**8: HIGH CAR USE, FLIES
ONCE A YEAR**

7 £ 4 6



**9: AVERAGE DAILY TRAVEL,
NO FLYING**

8 £ 6 8



**10: OLDER, AVERAGE
DAILY TRAVEL, NO FLYING**

10 £ 7 9

LESS MOBILE



**11: LIMITED MOBILITY,
CAR RELIANT**

9 £ 8 11

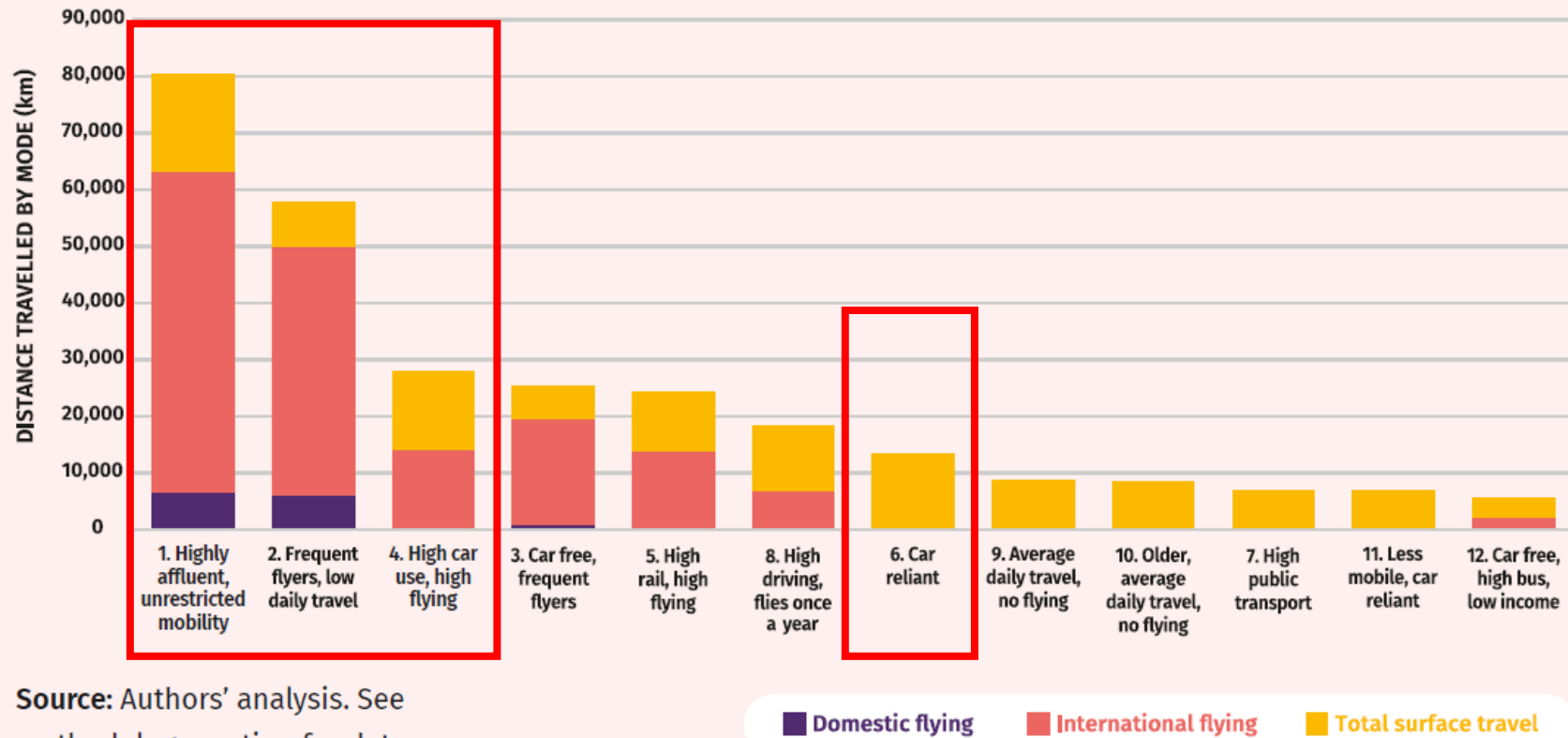


**12: CAR FREE, HIGH BUS,
LESS AFFLUENT**

12 £ 12 10

FIG. 6: THE DISTANCE TRAVELLED BY EACH GROUP SHOWS BIG DIFFERENCES IN BOTH FLYING AND SURFACE TRANSPORT BEHAVIOURS

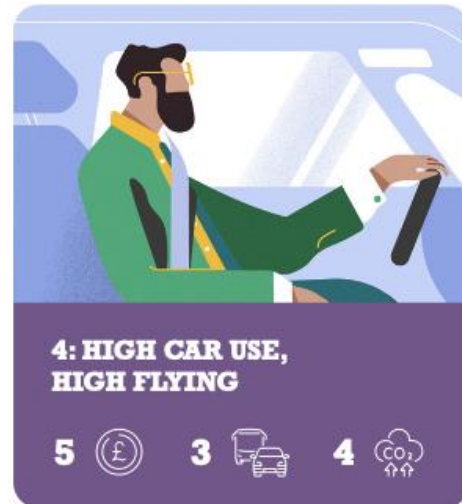
Share of transport emissions by population in Great Britain



Source: Authors' analysis. See methodology section for data source.

How much people travel varies considerably

Who makes up those four groups?



Policy interventions to reduce emissions

FLY LESS



1: Highly affluent, unrestricted mobility



2: Frequent flyers, low daily travel



3: Car free, frequent flyers



4: High car use, high flying



5: High rail, high flying

MORE PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ACTIVE TRAVEL



1: Highly affluent, unrestricted mobility



2: Frequent flyers, low daily travel



3: Car free, frequent flyers



4: High car use, high flying



5: High rail, high flying



6: Car Reliant



7: High public transport



8: High car use, flies once a year



9: Average daily travel, no flying



10: Older, average daily travel, no flying



11: Limited mobility, car reliant



12: Car free, high bus, less affluent

SHIFT TO AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE



1: Highly affluent, unrestricted mobility



4: High car use, high flying



6: Car Reliant



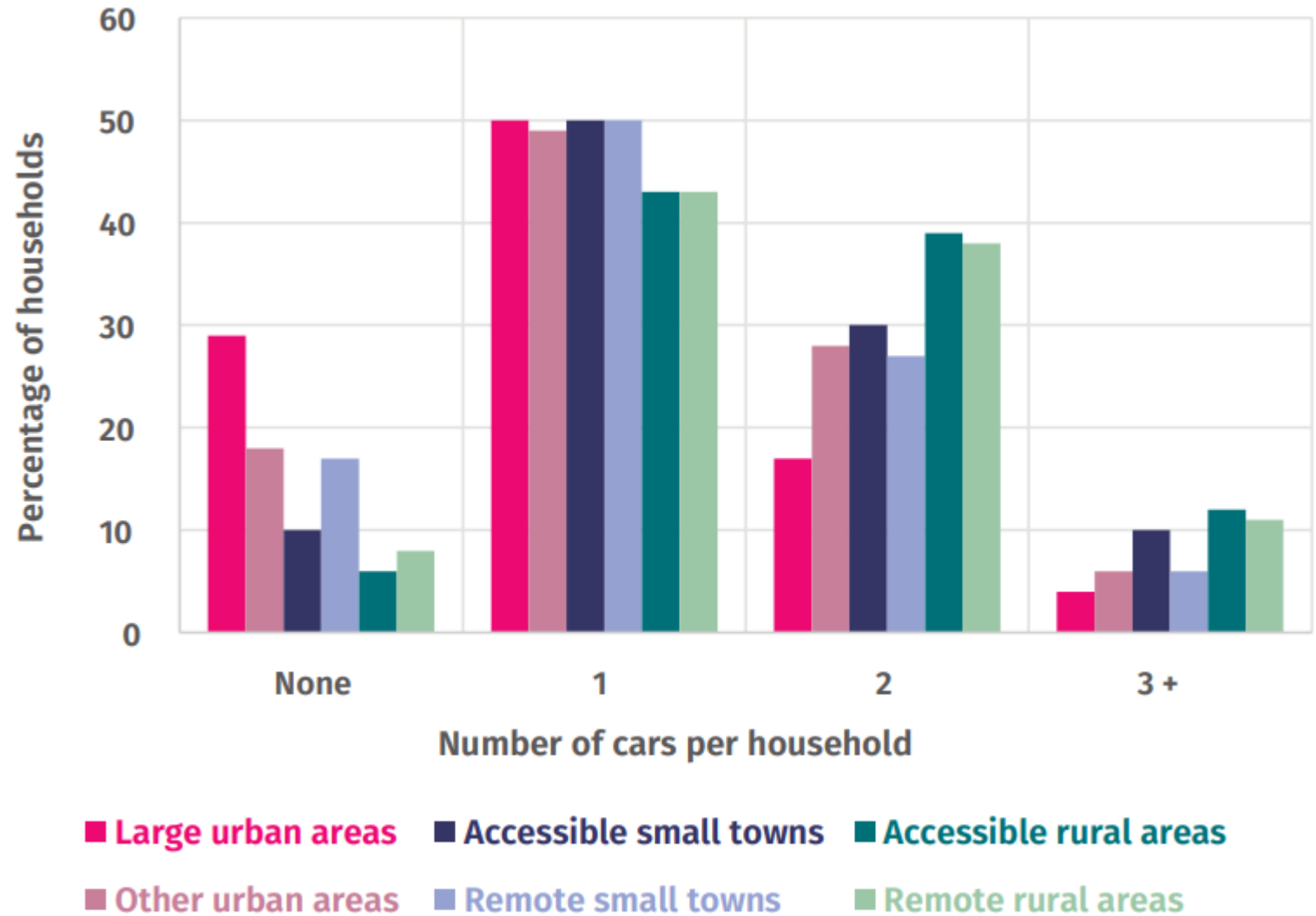
11: Limited mobility, car reliant

Source: Authors' analysis.

A JUST TRANSITION FOR RURAL SCOTLAND

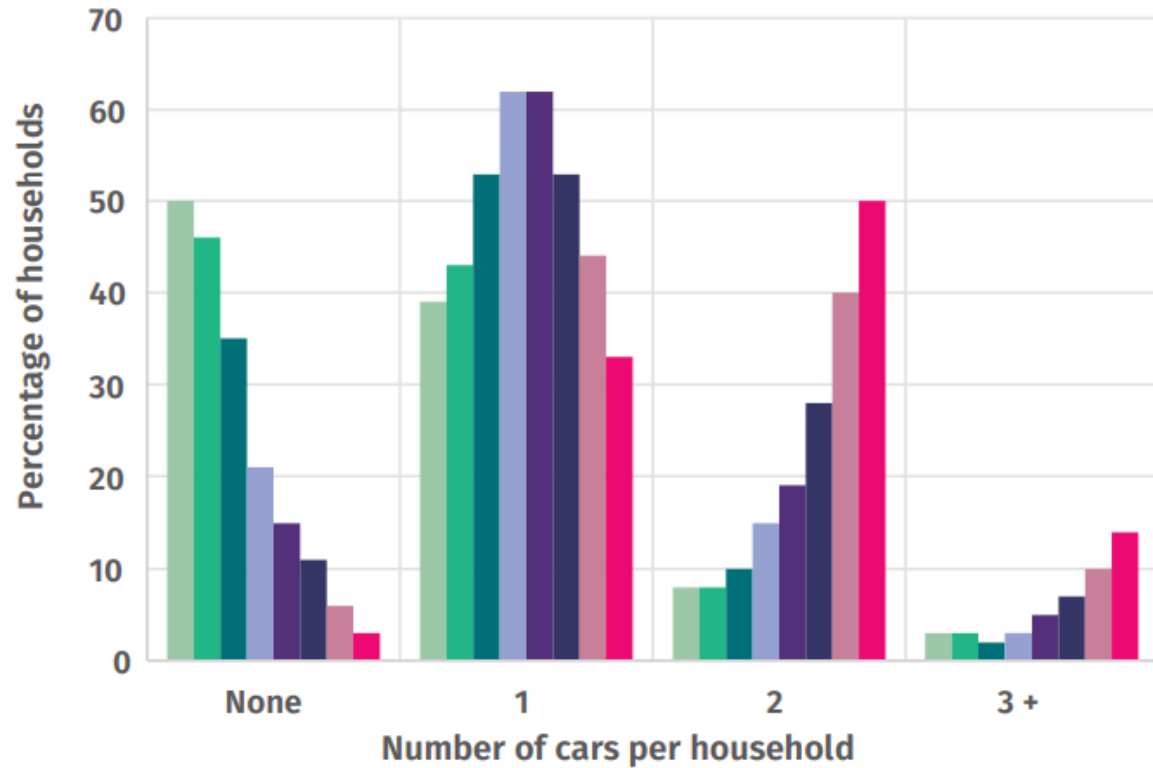
There are not insignificant numbers of people without access to a car in Scotland

Percentage and location of households with access to a car



Source: Transport Scotland (2023b)

Percentage of households with access to a car against household income



People living on the lowest incomes are least likely to have access to a car

Insights from the public

“My son got offered a job, but he had to turn it down because he couldn’t get there on the bus, and he doesn’t have a car”

“I have to drive for work because I can’t get between my patients in the time allotted otherwise”

“I’m in a transport crisis. The cost of living has had a massive impact – rent has gone up, everything has gone up, I can’t cut back on anything else. On the car, my insurance premiums have gone up, maintenance has gone up, fuel has gone up. I feel priced out of owning a car, but I can’t afford the buses.”

Insights from the public

Insights from the public		Recommendations
Getting around in rural Scotland	Driving for work	EV and e-bike grant schemes
	Buses and other public transport	Bus franchising Transport hubs, anchor towns and multimodal travel Ensuring delivery of socially and economically necessary bus routes Fare caps and passes for people living on low incomes
	Active travel	Active travel infrastructure within and between rural communities Reduction of speed limits EV and e-bike grants and loans
Meeting people where they are	Cost of living and the rural premium	Income support for people living rurally
	The mental load of living rurally	Income support for people living rurally Local public services Transport hubs, anchor towns, multimodal travel
	Shifting behaviours and attitudes	Public engagement
	Meaningful engagement and transparency	Funding for local authorities, transport Scotland and regional transport authorities to carry out public engagement
	Reflections on car use reduction initiatives	Meaningful public engagement Government strategy with a credible delivery plan that outlines how emissions reductions will be achieved in rural areas
Strategic approaches	Transport in the wider context	Transport hubs, anchor towns, multimodal travel
	Rural transport as a priority not an afterthought	Government strategy with a credible delivery plan that outlines how emissions reductions will be achieved in rural areas

Principles for action

Action should be taken first by those who are most able to make changes: this includes people who are wealthy and/or live in cities, and people who make unnecessary car journeys.

People in positions of power (political, financial or otherwise) should lead the way: decision makers and businesses must be seen to be making changes to reduce their emissions.

Infrastructure first: for people to make changes, there need to be viable alternatives, and people need to feel that they have a choice which goes beyond just car ownership or buses.

The aim should be to make the transport system fairer: this means that while some will have to reduce their car use, others will see their mobility increase.

Engagement: the needs of people living in rural areas vary significantly, and those who will be impacted should have an opportunity for meaningful engagement.

Affordability: public transport must be made more affordable to ensure it is accessible to those living on low incomes.

Discussion questions – your thoughts on:

A national bus company

- Would serve to “derisk” franchising decisions

Total transport authorities (TTAs)

- A consolidation and expansion of local transport authority powers

Network safeguards

- Statutory definition of socially and economically services