

# JUST RECOVERY

REVERSING THE  
LOCKDOWN  
INEQUALITIES

**JUNE 2020**



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# CREDITS

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# FOREWORD



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What will be the memories that we keep when looking back over the first three months of the coronavirus lockdown? In these extraordinary times there will be much to choose from: the key workers in hospitals and care homes, or those in transport and retail, that put themselves repeatedly in harm's way. Perhaps it will be the thousands of volunteers that have worked to make sure nobody goes without. Or it could be the sudden appearance of pop-up bike lanes or people taking an evening walk and getting to know the place they live a little better.

We have undoubtedly seen the best in our society whilst we have been experiencing some of the worst times. There has been compassion and solidarity on display like never before. But some of the worst failings in our society have also been exposed – the undervaluing of key workers, the inadequacies of our social safety net, the inequality that has cut across all aspects of this crisis.

This report shows how this inequality affects the transport systems we all rely on. It highlights that those who were reliant on public transport have been further disadvantaged by the measures brought in as a result of the lockdown. The changes that have been made to transport, and the likely continuing restrictions, will have an impact on our health, our environment and our incomes, with the biggest impacts on those with the lowest incomes.

As we begin to move out of lock down it is time to redesign our transport systems – and our wider public services – in ways that lock in social justice and reduce inequalities. Implementing the proposals in this report will go some way to helping to do this, and to supporting a just and green recovery that ensures we build back better than before.

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# WHERE ARE WE NOW?

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The mantra “We’re all in this together” perhaps gained some temporary credence when it was demonstrated that a UK prime minister surrounded by scientific, medical and political advisers could be as vulnerable to Covid-19 as a bus driver in daily contact with the general public. But before the pandemic reached significant levels in Britain it was already apparent from experience elsewhere in the world that the impact and severity of the virus differed between age groups and by gender and ethnicities, and that pre-existing medical conditions also influenced vulnerability.

As the disease has spread across the UK, evidence has increasingly emerged of profoundly unequal impacts, not only in the incidence of infection, but also from the public health measures to contain it. There is a clear correlation between levels of deprivation and the occurrence of Covid-19 cases,<sup>1</sup> and the effects of lockdown on the economy and on personal and familial circumstances and opportunities have also fallen very unequally on different groups within society.<sup>2</sup> Although evidence relating to consequential impacts has to date largely been derived at a UK, GB, or England level, there is now specific Scottish evidence of the statistical association between deprivation and the incidence of confirmed cases,<sup>3</sup> and there is no reason to expect that the wider societal impacts north of the border will be significantly different from those evident elsewhere in the UK. Indeed, important causalities such as housing densities and employment characteristics clearly influence variations across society and geographies both in the levels of exposure to Covid-19 itself and in the impacts of measures to contain it. Despite the Scottish Government’s overarching commitment to social justice, the current pandemic has inevitably caused a deepening of inequalities, as the First Minister has acknowledged.<sup>4</sup>

This is as true of transport, and the mobility and accessibility it provides, as it is in other areas of public policy. The basis of the initial lockdown legislation was the principle that it was an offence for a person to leave their home for anything other than essential

reasons. These were defined mainly as: travel to and from work by those in key sectors who could not work from home, and to and from school for children of these workers who could not be left at home or by children who had other grounds for prioritised school attendance; journeys to buy food and other essentials or for medical purposes; or for outdoor exercise.<sup>5</sup> While there was policy encouragement to use active means of travel whenever possible, no specific statutory limitation was placed on the use of private motor vehicles other than that of journey purposes. In parallel, however, the supply of public transport was drastically reduced, partly for commercial reasons in the face of greatly reduced demand, and partly because of concerns about levels of staff availability during a health emergency.

While doubtless not an intended policy objective, the combination of the legislation and the reduction in the availability of public transport resulted in an immediate relative and quantitative deterioration in the mobility and access opportunities available to non-car households, perhaps exacerbated by the panic buying at the start of the lockdown period. Except by resorting to taxis or private hire vehicles, such households’ access to shopping remains limited to what they can physically carry on foot or bike or on reduced public transport. Consequently, they do not have the range that car-users have to shop more widely nor their ability to buy in bulk to limit the numbers of times they have to queue because of the physical distancing constraints imposed on retailers. And despite the official encouragement to use home delivery services to cut down on shopping trips, the chief executive of Tesco pointed out earlier in the emergency that, even with the sector’s increase in home delivery capacity, 80% of all food shopping would probably still depend on a personal trip to a store.<sup>6</sup>

For longer journeys to work, school, or medical purposes, public transport users’ journey times have in many instances been extended because of reduced bus or train frequencies. Where interchange between services is required these impacts are compounded. In contrast, car users are benefiting from quicker journeys because of reduced congestion, and, partly coincidentally, from the lowest petrol and diesel prices for at least three years. In the

absence of more transparent provision within the legislation, there is also substantial ambiguity about travel for outdoor exercise: the official interpretation of the parallel English regulations was that a journey by car for outdoor exercise was permissible provided that the period of exercise was longer than the car journey;<sup>7</sup> no equivalence was provided for public transport users. Yet the lockdown in England has now been further relaxed so that a car journey of any length within England's borders can now be made in order to take a walk at the destination, while public transport remains restricted, as in Scotland, to "essential" journeys that cannot be made by other means.

These concerns about the differential impact of the travel restrictions on car users and those relying on public transport would be valid even if the situation had remained static since Scotland's lockdown began on 23 March. But the weekly tables of journeys by different modes that have been issued by Transport Scotland<sup>8</sup> reveal a situation where the balance is in practice tipping even further in favour of car use, despite the fact that the underlying legal basis of the regulations has not been changed.

These statistics are presented in graph form in the Appendix, together with comments on the source data and on methodology. In summary, though, it is clear that the lockdown measures had an immediate and substantial impact on the levels of travel by motorised land transport modes within Scotland, although the public health guidance had already resulted in significant voluntary reductions in travel in the week preceding the introduction of statutory restrictions. The second week of the restrictions, commencing 30 March, has been used as the base week by Transport Scotland, and the trunk road figures show that in that week car journeys were fewer than a third of those in the week commencing 9 March. Over the same period concessionary bus travel was down to less than a sixth of the previous level, and ScotRail passenger journeys down to almost to a seventh.

However, the statistics also show that there have been significant variations since the base week, with car traffic showing a consistent and substantial rebound. The most recent set of tables at the time of writing was for

the week commencing 11 May, and these figures show that trunk road car journeys had increased by 37% since the base week, averaging out at almost a million extra car journeys a day *on trunk roads alone*. Transport Scotland estimates that trunk road journeys account for 40% of all car traffic in Scotland, so if that factor is accurate it implies that, after allowing for some transfer of journeys from public transport to car, approximately two and a quarter million more car journeys were being made in mid-May than during the base week. By the same week bus journeys had recovered slightly, by 10%, but rail travel had fallen even further, to half of its base week level. Train journeys during the week commencing 10 May were down to only 7% of their daily average in the equivalent week in March; car journeys had recovered to 39% of their levels in that week, and concessionary bus journeys were at 17%.

So although the Transport Scotland figures show that very substantial reductions in travel have been achieved across all motorised modes, the greatest relative decrease has been in rail travel, followed by concessionary bus journeys. Car travel has exhibited the largest rebound since lockdown. Since the Scottish Government's definition of essential journeys remained unchanged during this period, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that observance of the regulations applying to travel has been weaker among trunk road car users than among public transport users.

It is therefore clear that users of public transport have been worst affected during the lockdown, not only by the application of the regulations themselves but also by the significant reduction in services and therefore in their opportunities to travel. In contrast, motorists' freedom of choice in making essential journeys will in many instances have increased because of easier road traffic conditions. While it is probable that some public transport journeys will have switched to car, not all households have that choice.

Unfortunately, as noted in the Appendix, no statistics appear to be publicly available which would make it possible to estimate whether and how many users of scheduled public transport have opted to travel instead by taxi or private hire vehicles, although the latter in particular often become the default mode of transport for non-car households. Yet it

is impossible to achieve 2-metre physical distancing for even one passenger in most hire vehicles, other than a traditional “black cab” where the driver is separated from the passenger space by a partition. Recent ONS evidence from England & Wales shows that male taxi drivers and chauffeurs have a significantly higher mortality rate from Covid-19 than other road transport workers.<sup>9</sup> If the reduction of scheduled public transport services is resulting in a greater proportion of non-car households in Scotland having to make their necessary journeys by taxi or pre-booked private hire vehicles, then they

are being exposed to a public health risk which appears to be at least comparable with travelling on buses and trains without physical distancing, and which, according to the ONS data, puts those driving them at greater risk than bus and coach drivers. The most recent guidance issued by the Scottish Government has begun to address part of this problem by recommending the use of face coverings in taxis and identifying hygiene precautions, and now requires physical distancing at taxi ranks, but there appears to be no other specific advice for operators in the taxi and private hire sector.<sup>10</sup>



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**MOVING  
FORWARD**

On 21 May the Scottish Government published its “Route map” for moving out of lockdown, which defines four successive phases after the end of the current “Phase 0” lockdown and sets out the expected restrictions associated with each. It is however made clear that the timetable for moving through these phases is dependent on satisfying specific public health indicators, together with wider policy considerations. In addition, as each phase commences, previous restrictions will continue to apply unless explicitly modified or withdrawn.<sup>11</sup>

From a transport equalities perspective the precedents from England are not encouraging: as noted above, discretionary journey opportunities there have been extended for motorists but not public transport users, while those now permitted to return to work are advised to use public transport only as a last resort. It is therefore worrying that the Scottish route map, in its present form, appears to follow suit by containing some provisions which would worsen the existing imbalances described above. For example, the “Getting around” section for Phase 1 contains the statement:

**“ Permitted to travel short distances for outdoor leisure and exercise but advice to stay within a short distance of your local community (broadly within 5 miles) and travel by walk, wheel and cycle where possible. [page 39] ”**

While a distance definition may be helpful in removing existing ambiguities, it is difficult to see how this can be enforced effectively for motorists who choose to take advantage of the “where possible” proviso, except by comprehensive monitoring, such as ANPR tracking. And for many active travellers, but especially cyclists, 5 miles would in practice be significantly more restrictive than the present regulation.

Then on the same page, for Phases 2 and 3, further easings are suggested for motorists –

**“ People are permitted to drive locally for leisure purposes. [Phase 2]; Can drive beyond local area for leisure and exercise purposes.[Phase 3] ”**

These comments are accompanied by references to continuing limitations on public transport, though with an apparent suggestion that there might be geographical differences. It is particularly disappointing that such additional discrimination against public transport users is suggested in the context of access to leisure and exercise, since in many parts of Scotland coastal, loch, and countryside recreation has traditionally been accessed from urban communities by train or bus – the proposals in their present form would make such enjoyment a privilege *de facto* restricted to car users. Even hardier cyclists would apparently be debarred until Phase 4 by the proposed restrictions, as anyone other than motorists would seemingly still be subject to the new “five mile” restriction until then.

Beyond that, it is unclear what specific public health reasons exist for applying varying “reasonable excuse” criteria to different households as grounds for leaving the place where they live, or indeed whether there is a legal basis under the Coronavirus regulations or other legislation for drawing such a distinction between car owning and other households. But if these proposals are instead prompted by the capacity limitations that strict physical distancing could impose on public transport it must be surely evident from any objective assessment that leisure access is most likely to be sought in the opposite direction to peak travel demands – for example, daytime travellers from Glasgow seeking to reach Largs, Milngavie, Balloch or Arrochar for recreational purposes will be not be competing for public transport capacity with city-bound commuters.

In the first phase of England’s relaxation of lockdown and employment restrictions, the differential approach to public and private transport use demonstrates the same underlying confusions of purpose – are the differences based upon public health concerns or the need to reserve public transport (by extension from the “protection” of the NHS) for “essential” users only? But that then raises the question of why journey purpose should become a more restrictive constraint upon public transport users than upon motorists? While in practical terms the effects of this new English guidance are being reinforced by widespread perceptions that mass transit systems have become an unsafe travelling

environment, many commuters in larger cities have no practical alternative, whether or not they have access to cars. Consequently, their journeys have become more stressful, since, despite the policy intention, physical distancing cannot always be assured.<sup>12</sup> As a result, pressures are already emerging for restrictions on car access to central London to be removed,<sup>13</sup> and will no doubt be replicated in other major English conurbations.

Scottish Ministers have already recognised the problems that public transport will face as lockdown is eased,<sup>14</sup> and the Cabinet Secretary for Transport has now published a Transport Transition Plan to address these issues, together with guidance for travellers and operators.<sup>15</sup> The challenges facing government, operators, and public transport users should not of course be underestimated. These challenges will be further compounded by inevitable financial pressures; the lead times in making physical adjustments to public transport infrastructure and vehicles to accommodate physical distancing; and the urgency in reopening the wider economy as quickly as possible to begin to overcome the setbacks caused during the first part of 2020.

It is understandable that, with so many current uncertainties, the Transition Plan concentrates more on the liaison and other arrangements that are necessary to steer Scotland's transport through the future phases of lockdown than on immediate changes. However, it reaffirms the necessity for the moment that only essential journeys are made, and strengthens previous guidance about physical distancing. With immediate effect, the use of face coverings is now strongly encouraged on all forms of shared surface transport, except for children and those with conditions that make them inadvisable.

The Plan fully acknowledges the unequal social impact of the measures that have been necessary during the lockdown phase, and which have been discussed in this document. Consequently, the Cabinet Secretary's explicit commitment to a Fair and Sustainable Restart is extremely welcome, as is that to taking forward an Equalities Impact Assessment as part of the Transport Transition Plan process. That is essential, since social justice would be further compromised if the imbalances in access and mobility that have been generated, largely unavoidably, during the lockdown became embedded in the "New Normal". Beyond that, the Scottish Government's decarbonisation targets would also be put at risk, as would the continuing effective functioning of Scotland's largest cities.

Other than its emphasis on ensuring safe travel, the Transport Transition Plan is clearly not yet at a prescriptive stage, so its subsequent development

provides an opportunity for identifying and addressing equality and equity impacts in a more finely-grained manner when setting out transport priorities for and during the recovery phase. At the same time, though, short-term flexibility should be retained to secure quick wins for the whole community as opportunities emerge. It is difficult to be exhaustive in the present state of knowledge about possibilities and outcomes, but the following comments are offered as to what should be included in the approach:

- Consistent with Section 2 of the Scottish Government's route map document and the Plan's commitment to a Fair Transition, there needs to be complete transparency and balanced consideration of all impacts before any changes to regulations and guidance are pursued which would have the effect of increasing the flexibility and choices available to motorists without equivalent relaxations for those dependent on public transport and active travel modes. Mileage and other restrictions or demarcations should be defined in a manner that is equitable to the access needs of all sections of the Scottish community, and capable of being enforced even-handedly without any discrimination between different categories of traveller.
- The temporary measures that have already been implemented to encourage active travel during the lockdown period should be built into permanent plans, and the scope of such measures should be extended wherever possible. For example, the general adoption of 20 mph speed limits in urban areas would contribute significantly to maintaining a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists as road traffic levels increase after lockdown.
- As the Plan notes, other measures such as home working and video conferencing that have been successful in compensating for travel restrictions have a clear role to play in continuing to reduce peak demand for travel, and could be supported by accelerating and improving broadband access. Enhancing measures that reduce the necessity to travel will particularly benefit the more vulnerable members of society who may have to continue to isolate themselves or reduce contact for a period beyond the easing of the lockdown.

All of these suggestions are policy-neutral in their distributional effects: increased active travel and home working directly benefit both car and public transport users through reducing total demand on those modes. Recent research has however identified that younger workers – who as a cohort appear to be facing disproportionate challenges in gaining or returning to a place in the workforce post-lockdown – are less able to work from home and are more dependent on public transport for access to employment.<sup>16</sup>

The following suggestions therefore relate particularly to public transport.

- The financial model for the commercial provision of public transport has been largely undermined by the pandemic. Existing fare levels will remain insufficient to cover the normal costs of operation while capacities are reduced by physical distancing, and additional government financial support will continue to be necessary for a considerable period if adequate service levels are to be maintained. While recognising the role that fares can play in operational demand management, any increase in existing fares would be an additional burden on public transport users who have as a category been badly impacted by lockdown, and there must be a case for extending free or significantly discounted public transport travel to categories other than the elderly and disabled: most obviously, young workers or trainees.
- Since reduced public transport capacity will remain a significant constraint on public transport users' ability to travel so long as physical distancing is in place, it is essential that pre-lockdown service frequencies are restored as quickly as possible to enhance overall capacity and to minimise any extension of journey times resulting from queuing or denial of boarding. On the bus network, this may entail putting more vehicles into service as duplicates at times of highest demand; on the rail network this will require additional peak services and running longer train formations whenever possible, peak and off-peak.
- If pre-booking is made a requirement for use of rail services within Scotland, whether across the network or on particular routes, it is essential that the process is made as friction-free as possible, with easy on-line booking processes (including bookings for any connecting services within a single transaction), automated station booking facilities for last-minute passengers, and adequate telephone access for those unable to book on-line.

- The use of face coverings is now strongly encouraged for public transport users, without any prior notice. The guidance places responsibility for obtaining such coverings on individual travellers, although suggesting that operators may wish to make them available to encourage uptake. In this respect, the guidance is inadequate: because of the UK Government's long-standing resistance to recommending the general use of face coverings there is not yet a robust retail supply chain which could ensure the immediate availability of suitable face coverings throughout Scotland at reasonable cost. Instead, the Scottish Government should make its procurement resources available to operators so that adequate face coverings can quickly be made available to passengers at boarding points, either free of charge or at nominal cost. Such a measure has been put in place in other transport administrations, such as Spain, as part of their recovery plans.<sup>17</sup>

The Scottish Government's first strategy document for the post-lockdown period, *Covid 19 – a framework for decision making*, emphasised the government's central and overarching commitment to equality and social justice as part of the handling of the crisis and the emergence from it. That document openly acknowledged the unequal impacts of the pandemic on Scotland which were a consequence of the unprecedented nature of the emergency and of the measures necessary to contain it. That acknowledgment has now been repeated both by the First Minister in the Route Map document,<sup>18</sup> and by the Cabinet Secretary in the Transition Plan. Nevertheless, as is evident from the analysis on page 9, there are some apparent inconsistencies between detailed elements of the current "Getting around" proposals in the Route Map Appendix and the tone of the Transition Plan's approach.

It is important that such inconsistencies are resolved. It is common ground between the two documents that transport inequalities have deepened as a consequence of the emergency. As Scotland develops its own agenda for the "New Normal", there is an opportunity to begin to offset these unequal transport impacts and outcomes. According to the latest published data, 29% of Scottish households do not have access to a car – a figure which is much higher in larger urban areas.<sup>19</sup>

The most deprived areas of the UK have been the hardest hit by the virus,<sup>20</sup> and these are also the communities that are most reliant on the provision of regular, reliable and affordable public transport to access jobs and essential services – the percentage of households without access to a car is as high as 49% in the most deprived areas of Scotland.<sup>21</sup> It is essential that the plans for transport's emergence, recovery and renewal contain targeted and financially-prioritised policy

interventions, not only to protect the active travel advances that have been achieved, but also to ensure easy access to public transport to those who require it in the radically changed circumstances affecting its provision. Without such measures, lockdown will in effect be prolonged indefinitely for those Scottish households in Scotland whose mobility and access has already been most severely affected in the first phase of the nation's pandemic response.

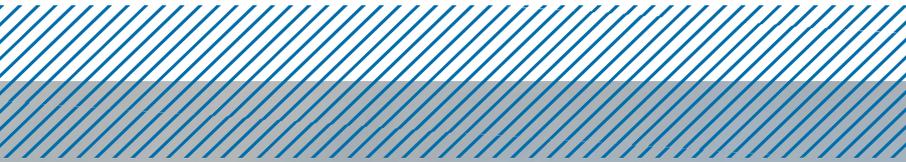


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# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



# 1

**SERVICE FREQUENCIES.** It is essential that pre-lockdown service frequencies are restored as quickly as possible to enhance overall capacity and to minimise any extension of journey times resulting from queuing or denial of boarding. On the bus network, this may entail putting more vehicles into service as duplicates at times of highest demand; on the rail network this will require additional peak services and running longer train formations whenever possible, peak and off-peak.

# 2

**FARES.** Any increase in existing fares would be an additional burden on public transport users who have as a category been badly impacted by lockdown, and there must be a case for extending free or significantly discounted public transport travel to categories other than the elderly and disabled: most obviously, young workers or trainees.

# 3

**FACE COVERINGS.** The Scottish government should make its procurement resources available to operators so that adequate face coverings can quickly be made available to passengers at boarding points, either free of charge or at nominal cost.

# 4

**TICKET PURCHASES.** If pre-booking is made a requirement for use of rail services within Scotland, whether across the network or on particular routes, it is essential that the process is made as friction-free as possible, with easy on-line booking processes (including bookings for any connecting services within a single transaction), automated station booking facilities for last-minute passengers, and adequate telephone access for those unable to book on-line.

# APPENDIX:

As noted, Transport Scotland is issuing weekly summaries of the number of journeys made in Scotland during the present emergency.<sup>22</sup> Series are provided for most domestic modes of travel except the Glasgow Subway and Edinburgh Tram, though the aviation data appears to be limited to overflights. Cycling and walking are included, but these series are based upon less comprehensive material. The discussion above and in this Appendix uses only the car trips, concessionary bus travel counts, and ScotRail passenger journey series,<sup>23</sup> as these provide the available data relating to the land travel modes that are the focus of this paper.

The tables present only index numbers, not actual counts, and the recent releases have adopted the week commencing 30 March – ie the second week of lockdown – as the baseline value of 100. However, an absolute value is given for each mode in that week, and this provides the basis for deriving the absolute values quoted in this paper.

Chart 1 (below) plots the movement in the index numbers of car journeys, concessionary travel bus journeys, and rail journeys in Scotland from week commencing 9 March to the end of the week commencing 4 May.

To remove the effects of variations in travel patterns on different days of the week, the values in the chart have been totalled for each week and then divided by 7 to derive a daily average for the week in question; this appears to coincide with Transport Scotland's procedure in establishing the base week index value. It should be noted that the car figures are based on trunk road counts, so do not include journeys on local authority roads, and the bus figures, as mentioned already, cover only concessionary passenger journeys. This aspect will be discussed subsequently, but for much of the analysis the index numbers provide a sufficient framework for comparison, since they reflect what Transport Scotland regards as indicative trends for each mode regardless of underlying volumes. As already discussed, and as detailed in Chart 1 below, there was an immediate and substantial reduction in travel by car, bus and train as a result of the lockdown measures, but bus and car use have rebounded, the latter significantly, while ScotRail journeys showed continued overall decline in the period covered by the graph.

**CHART 1:  
CAR, BUS & TRAIN JOURNEYS, SCOTLAND**

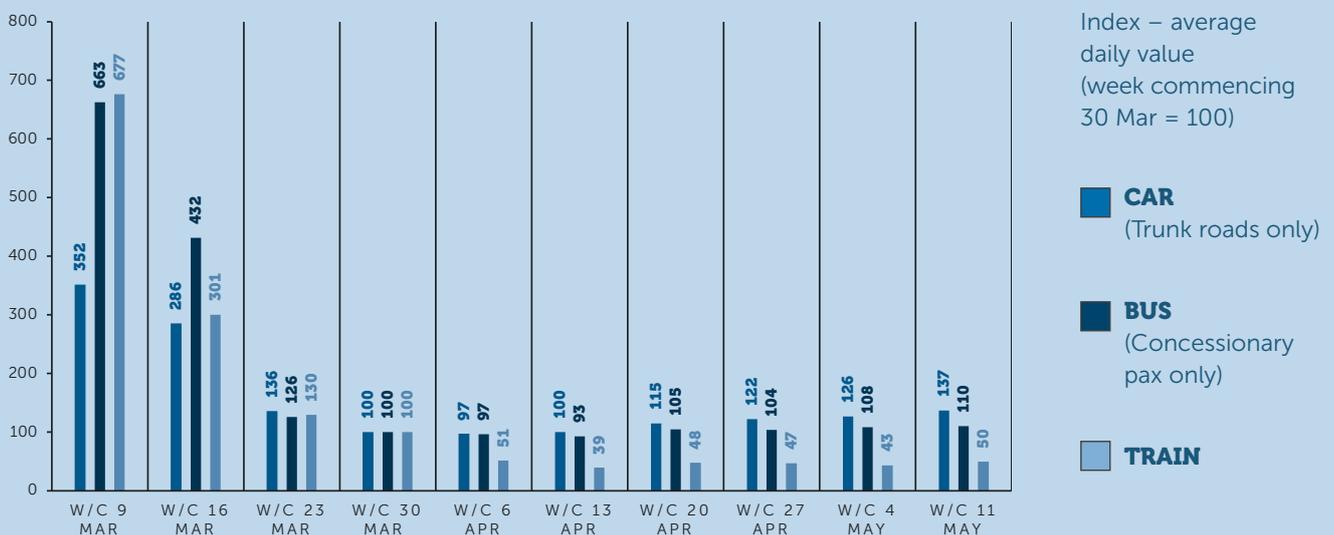
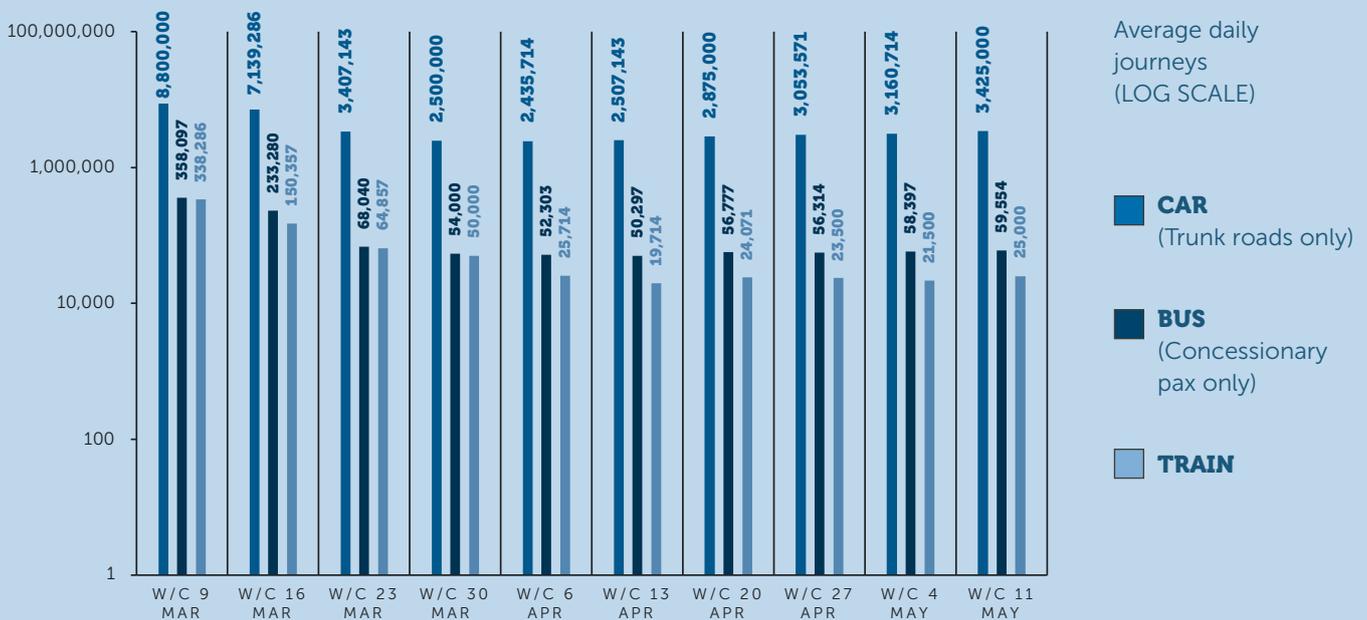


Chart 2 shows the same trends, but is derived by converting the index numbers to absolute values, using the base week average daily volumes given in the TS tables. These are 2,500,000 trunk road car trips, 54,000 concessionary bus journeys, and 50,000 train journeys. These are obviously rounded figures, and this must be borne in mind when considering values derived from them which have been left unrounded, but the graph emphasises two points: the scale of the numerical reduction in daily journeys from pre-lockdown levels, and the widening of the volumetric difference between car and public transport trips during lockdown.

## CHART 2: CAR, BUS & TRAIN JOURNEYS, SCOTLAND



There is a further consideration. The car use figures are taken from automatic count data on trunk roads, so while the trend probably represents a reasonable proxy for all car journeys in Scotland, the volumes do not show the full picture: Transport Scotland estimates trunk road car traffic to be 40% of traffic on all roads. If it is correct to assume that lockdown influenced traffic levels on trunk and on local authority roads in exactly the same proportions, a multiplier of 2.5 would scale up the trunk road volumetric changes to an all-Scotland figure. However, in the absence of more detailed information about how “essential” car journeys are distributed across the trunk and local road

networks, the result of that calculation can only be regarded as a provisional estimate: the balance of possible factors suggests that the 40:60 ratio could be different in the current circumstances, and that traffic conditions and changes on local road networks might have resulted in a smaller proportionate share of total car traffic in Scotland being carried on the trunk road network.

Caution is also needed when scaling up the concessionary bus journeys to an all-passenger number. Though TS again suggests a 40:60 ratio in this case, a different caveat applies: in most circumstances the national travel concession is not available for

use before 9am on weekdays, so there is an asymmetry between the morning and the evening peak, when no restriction applies to concessionary travel. Since fare-paying journeys in the “essential” category are likely to be concentrated in the peaks, an upward adjustment to allow for the exclusion of the morning peak in concessionary travel data would appear to be required if deriving all-passenger estimates from these figures in the circumstances applying during lockdown.

These additional caveats apply only to the bus and car series, and since Transport Scotland suggests the same expansion factor for both, although for different reasons, they need not unduly inhibit bus:car modal comparisons. However, more significant approximation cannot be avoided when considering car and bus journey volumes alongside those for rail.

Starting from the base week beginning 30 March, the initial reduction in trunk road car traffic volumes was then offset by an increase of 925,000 daily trips by the week commencing 11 May. Application of the Transport Scotland ratio therefore suggests an overall increase of 2,312,500 in car journeys on Scotland’s roads following the base week. Without any change in lockdown observance, some of that increase could reasonably be accounted for by public transport users displaced by service changes. The rail figures show a net loss of 25,000 daily journeys at the end of the same period, so that provides a reasonable upper bound for rail to car switches, though it is possible that within that 25,000 some local train journeys were made instead by active travel modes, and others transferred to bus.

As discussed in the main text, some modal switches could also have been made to taxis and private hire vehicles from both train and bus; these transfers would however have been directly reflected in automatic traffic counts, which do not distinguish between cars and taxis. The lack of specific data about the taxi and private hire vehicle sector could be a significant gap in current understanding of the transport and public health implications of travel choices during the emergency.

Assessment of mode transfer from bus to cars (inclusive of taxi and private hire vehicles) is however much more difficult, because of the slight net growth (+5,554) in concessionary travel journeys between the weeks of 30 March and 11 May, and also the issue about morning peak journeys discussed previously. It seems reasonable to assume that there was some increase in the number of “essential” bus journeys by concessionary passengers as lockdown progress, but that need not exclude a loss of other bus passengers, either to make journeys in their own cars, or in taxis or private hire vehicles. But even allowing for the relatively larger volume base of total bus journeys when compared with train, it is difficult to envisage a churn within the bus statistics that could account for a transfer of bus passengers to car or hire vehicles on a scale any greater than the net rail loss of 25,000. That suggests 50,000 would be a generous upper estimate for public transport journeys transferred to such vehicles, leaving an estimated net increase of 2.26 million car journeys daily on the Scottish road network between lockdown and the middle week in May.

# ENDNOTES:

1. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsinvolvingcovid19bylocalareasanddeprivation/deathsoccurringbetween1marchand17april>
2. For recent examples, see  
<https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/the-effects-of-the-coronavirus-crisis-on-workers/>  
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/were-all-in-this-together/>  
<https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/risky-business/>  
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/blog/coronavirus-response-must-include-digital-access-connect-us-all>
3. <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/news/2020/deaths-involving-covid-19-week-19-4th-to-10th-may>
4. Scottish Government, *Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis* (May 2020), page 3.
5. The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 (Scottish Statutory Instruments 2020 no 103), Regulations 5 and 8. Other permitted reasons include attendance at a funeral; travelling to assist a vulnerable person or in relation to children who do not live in the same household as both or one parent, to access critical public services, to fulfil a legal obligation, to move house where reasonably necessary, to avoid injury, illness or to escape a risk of harm, and, for ministers of religion, to go to their place of worship.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/may/03/how-tesco-doomsday-exercise-helped-it-cope-with-the-coronavirus>
7. <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/COVID-19/Documents/What-constitutes-a-reasonable-excuse.pdf>, page 2.
8. <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/covid-19-transport-trend-data-11-17-may-2020/>
9. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/causesofdeath/bulletins/coronaviruscovid19relateddeathsbyoccupationenglandandwales/deathsregistereduptoandincluding20april2020#coronavirus-covid-19-related-deaths-by-occupation-data> (Table 6a)  
Deaths from Covid 19 registered from 9 March to 20 April 2020 accounted for just under half of all deaths in that period for taxi drivers and chauffeurs; for bus drivers the proportion was 38% of all deaths.
10. <https://www.transport.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/transport-transition-plan/advice-on-how-to-travel-safely/#section-63888>
11. *Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis*, see especially pages 12-16 and Annex.
12. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/may/18/coronavirus-commuters-england-report-more-traffic-busier-trains>
13. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/may/20/petition-key-workers-exempt-london-congestion-charge>  
See also <https://d3cez36w5wymxj.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/16085036/Coronavirus-travel-survey.pdf>

14. *Official report (Draft), Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, 29 April 2020, col 28.*
15. <https://www.transport.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/transport-transition-plan/>
16. <https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/Final-BN287-Changes-down-the-line-Flattening-the-curve-of-public-transport-use.pdf>
17. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/04/11/spain-hand-face-masks-allow-limited-return-work/>
18. *Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis, page 3.*
19. <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/scottish-transport-statistics-no-38-2019-edition/chapter-1-road-transport-vehicles/>
20. <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/will-covid-19-be-a-watershed-moment-for-health-inequalities>
21. <https://foe.scot/press-release/transport-statistics-show-political-capitulation-to-cars/>
22. <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/covid-19-transport-trend-data-11-17-may-2020/>
23. Some rail journeys are made within Scotland on services provided by cross-border operators, and ORR statistics suggest that these previously represented around 5% of total passenger journeys within Scotland. However, a significant proportion of the longer distance through operations beyond Edinburgh ceased as a result of the agreed service reductions. Essential journeys displaced by these changes may to some extent have been reflected within the ScotRail figures, though these tables will continue to omit journeys such as Dunbar-Edinburgh or Lockerbie-Glasgow that are made on cross-border trains.



F 240	Overton	14min
F 20h	Easthouse	14min
F 2	Ballinacran	18min
F 2	Ballinacran	22min

Bus Stop

Photo by Euan Cameron on Unsplash

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The text in this report reflects on the situation as at **26 May 2020** following the publication of the Scottish Government's *Transport Transition Plan*.



Transform Scotland is the national alliance for sustainable transport, bringing together organisations from the private, public and voluntary sectors.

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