

Distance Travelled to Work

Summary Bulletin for Shropshire

March 2023

Key Points

- The number of Shropshire residents employed remained virtually unchanged between 2011 and 2021. However, the strong up-lift in people working from home due to restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic at the time of the 2021 Census means that numbers actually travelling to their place of work are much reduced.
- As the public was tasked with working from home where possible during the height of the pandemic this increase was to be expected. However, of note is the fact that compared to regional and national averages, home working was more prevalent in Shropshire in 2011. In 2021 however, a higher proportion of the national workforce was based primarily at home than was the case in Shropshire (31.5% compared with 27.2%). This will be because more people in Shropshire work in sectors where home working is not possible.
- Of those that do travel to work, most people travel less than 10km (just over half of all those travelling to a permanent workplace). More than a fifth travel less than 2km – this proportion is higher than in the West Midlands or in England, while the proportion travelling between 2 and 10km is much lower. Shropshire's numerous small and medium sized market towns and lack of cities has a strong influence on the length of journeys made at the shorter end of the spectrum.
- The proportion travelling further than 10km is much higher in Shropshire than in either the West Midlands or England and while numbers have fallen in 2021 compared with 2011, the decline has been more moderate than for shorter distances.
- The distance people travel to work does vary across Shropshire, with those living rurally more likely to work from home and more likely to travel further to access employment. In contrast, those living in the towns – especially Shrewsbury – are much more likely to travel shorter distances for work.

Distance Travelled to Work

The total number of Shropshire people in employment rose only very marginally between 2011 and 2021. However, over the decade, the distances people travel to work underwent significant change, primarily because of the Covid-19 pandemic. 17,958 more people were working mainly from home in 2021 than in 2011, which equates with growth of 76.2%. Except for the “other” classification, which almost doubled, and a very marginal rise in the number travelling between 40km and 60km, the number travelling any distance declined.

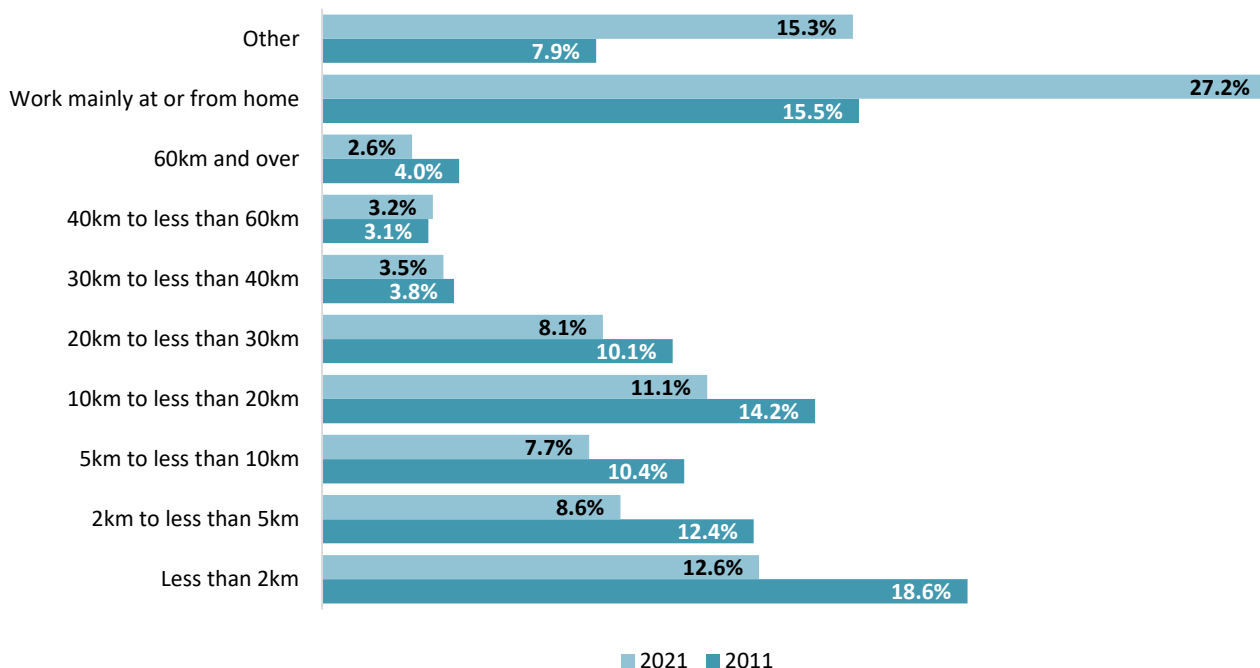
Numbers in Employment by Distance Travelled to Work

	2011	2021	% Change
Less than 2km	28,323	19,254	-32.0%
2km to less than 5km	18,952	13,148	-30.6%
5km to less than 10km	15,897	11,755	-26.1%
10km to less than 20km	21,641	16,975	-21.6%
20km to less than 30km	15,393	12,384	-19.5%
30km to less than 40km	5,801	5,287	-8.9%
40km to less than 60km	4,674	4,854	+3.9%
60km and over	6,025	3,947	-34.5%
Working mainly at or from home	23,567	41,525	+76.2
Other*	12,036	23,294	+93.5
Total	152,309	152,423	+0.1%

* Defined as works mainly at an offshore installation, in no fixed place or outside the UK in the 2021 Census

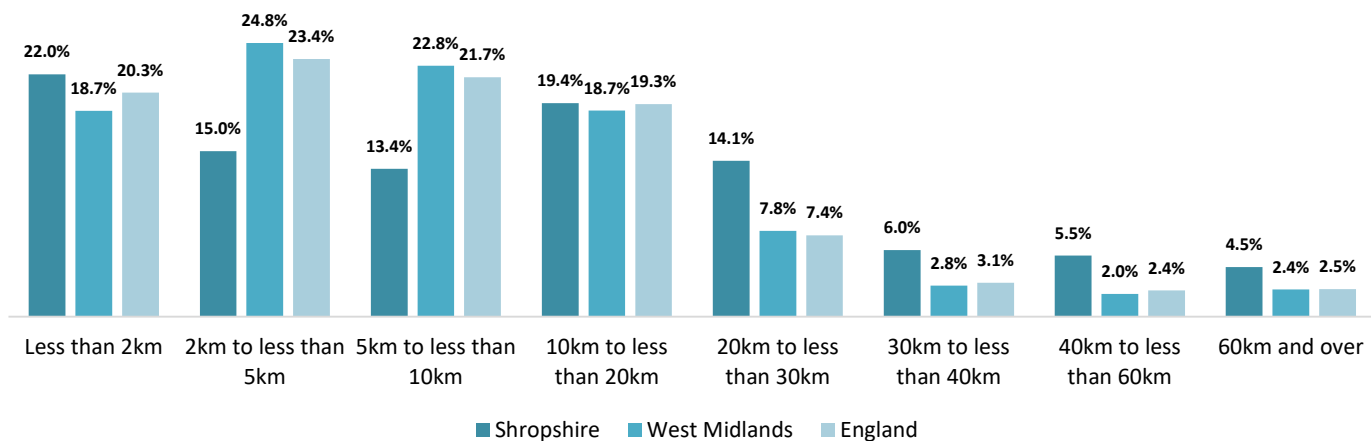
The chart below shows the breakdown of Shropshire workers by the distance they travelled to work in 2011 and 2021.

Distance Travelled to Work, 2011 & 2021



The following chart shows the distances travelled by those working from a permanent work base which is not their home address (i.e. excluding all those working from home or at no fixed address) to show how distances travelled by Shropshire workers compare to regional and national averages. The data shows that Shropshire residents are more likely than their West Midlands or English counterparts to travel very short distances to work (2km or less) but that they are also more likely to travel further (10km or more).

Distance travelled to Permanent Workplace, 2021



Note: Excludes those working from home

Short Journey Times (10km or less)

28.9% of all Shropshire workers based outside the home in a permanent work location travelled less than 10km for employment in 2021 compared with 41.5% of the workforce in 2011. This is the equivalent of 19,015 fewer people (down 30.1% over the decade). Numbers regionally and nationally have fallen at a comparable rate, but account for a higher proportion of the work force than in Shropshire.

Number Travelling less than 10km

	2011		2021		% Change 2011-2021
	Number	As % all Workers	Number	As % all Workers	
Shropshire	63,172	41.5%	44,157	28.9%	-30.1%
West Midlands	1,406,779	55.1%	1,051,916	39.8%	-25.2%
England	13,220,038	52.2%	9,334,244	35.3%	-29.4%

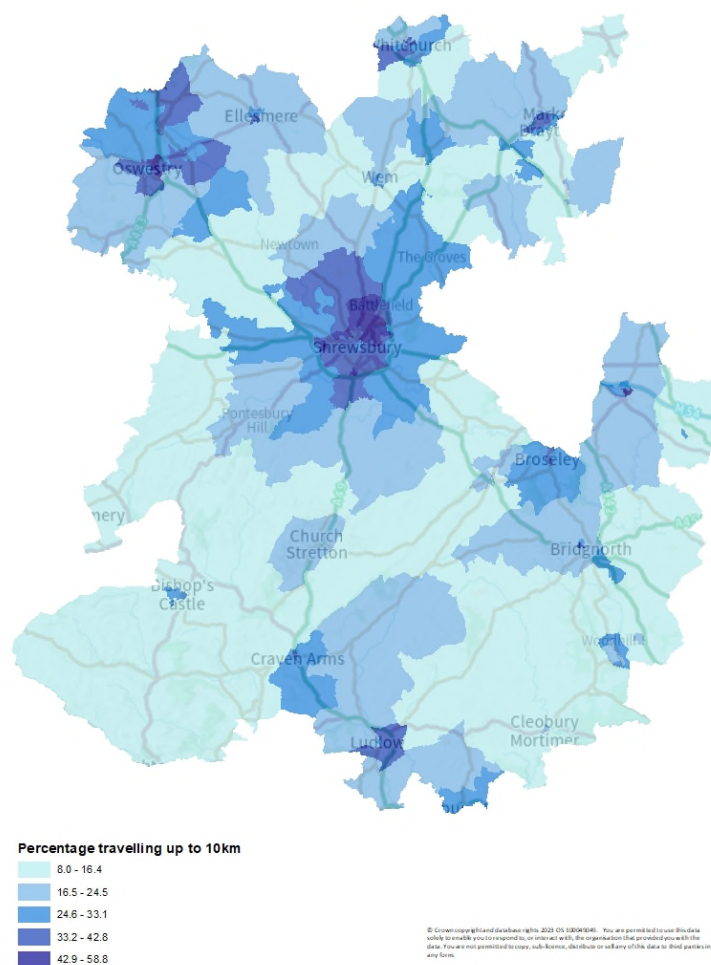


The map opposite shows the proportion of the labour force travelling up to 10km from home to their place of work in March 2021 by lower-level super output area (LSOA). Rates ranged from 8% of the workforce to 58.8% and varies across Shropshire, with rates generally lowest in rural locations and highest in the towns where employment is concentrated, especially Shrewsbury and Oswestry.

Of the 10 electoral divisions with the highest proportion of workers travelling less than 10km, nine are in Shrewsbury and one in Oswestry:

- Harlescott (52.7%)
- Sundorne (47.0%)
- Monkmoor (46.7%)
- Castlefields & Ditherington (46.7%)
- Battlefield (43.7%)
- Underdale (43.6%)
- Oswestry East (43.0%)
- Bowbrook (43.0%)
- Bagley (43.0%)
- Meole (41.6%)

Proportion travelling less than 10km



Medium Journey Times (10km to less than 30km)

The number travelling between 10km and 30km to get to work fell by 20.7% (7,675 fewer people) between the 2011 and 2021 Censuses. The proportion of the workforce travelling this far fell from almost a quarter to less than a fifth. This notwithstanding, a higher proportion of Shropshire workers travel this far than in either the West Midlands or England.

Number travelling 10km to less than 30km

	2011		2021		% Change 2011-2021
	Number	As % all workers	Number	As % all workers	
Shropshire	37,034	24.3%	29,359	19.2%	-20.7%
West Midlands	521,361	20.4%	420,520	16.0%	-19.3%
England	5,307,261	21.0%	3,802,269	14.4%	-28.4%

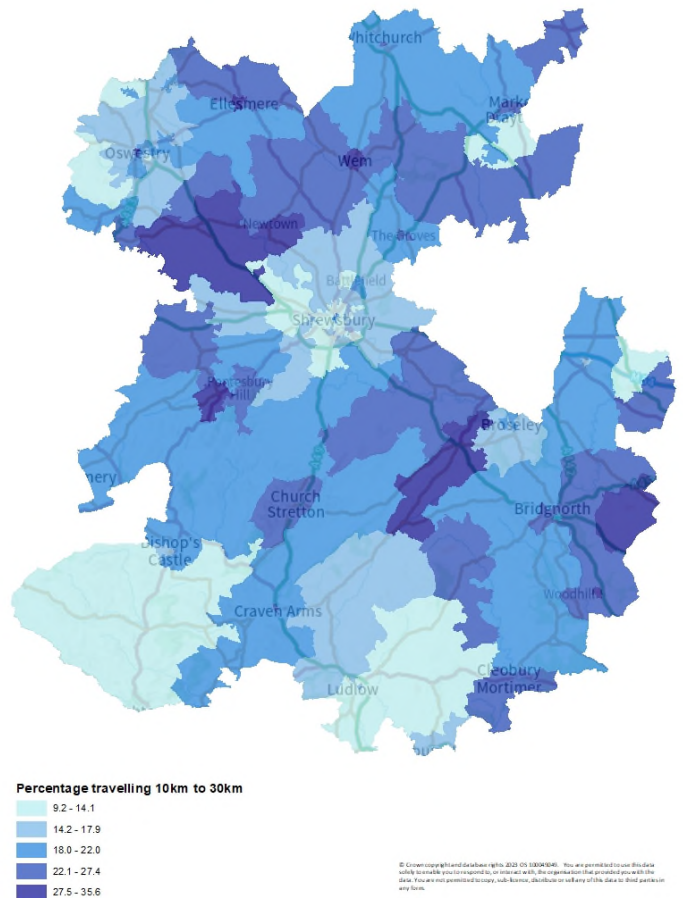


The map opposite shows the proportion of the population by lower-level super output area (LSOA) travelling between 10km and 30km between their home and workplace as at Census 2021. The proportion varies across Shropshire, ranging from 9.2% of the workforce to 35.6%. Typically, rates are lower in towns where access to employment is easier but is also low in some rural areas where rates of home working are high.

The following are the 10 electoral divisions which have the highest proportion of workers travelling between 10 and 30km to work. They are spread across the county.

- Ruyton and Baschurch (30.3%)
- Rea Valley (29.8%)
- Ellesmere Urban (29.3%)
- Wem (28.7%)
- Alveley & Claverley (27.9%)
- Albrighton (26.8%)
- Much Wenlock (26.7%)
- Llanymynech (25.4%)
- Loton (25.0%)
- The Meres (24.2%)

Proportion travelling 10-30km



Long Journey Times (30km and above)

2,412 fewer Shropshire residents travelled 30km or above to get to work in 2021 than they did in 2011, which constitutes a decline of 14.6%. Between the two Censuses, the proportion travelling this distance contracted to 9.3% from 10.8%. Despite the decline in numbers, the reduction has been much lower than for other shorter distances and Shropshire workers remain much more likely to travel upwards of 30km than their regional or national counterparts.

Number travelling 30km and over

	2011		2021		% Change 2011-2021
	Number	As % all workers	Number	As % all workers	
Shropshire	16,500	10.8%	14,088	9.3%	-14.6%
West Midlands	180,960	7.1%	115,947	4.4%	-35.9%
England	2,009,280	7.9%	1,130,937	4.3%	-43.7%



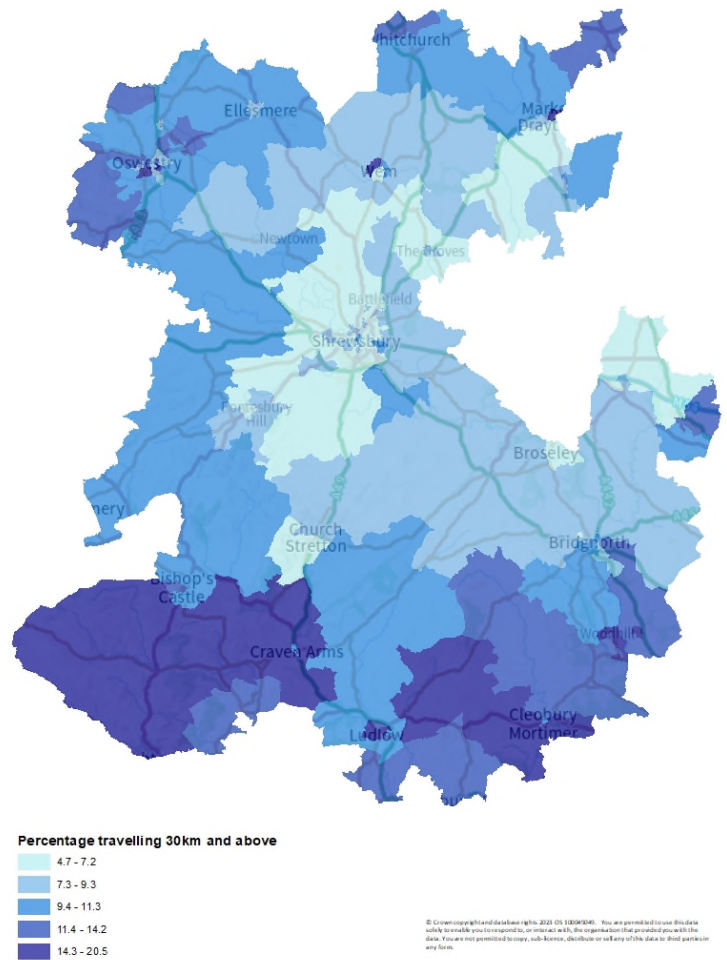
The map opposite shows the proportion of the Shropshire working population by lower-level super output area (LSOA) which travelled a minimum of 30km from home to their place of work in March 2021.

Rates range from 4.7% of the population to 20.5% and tend to be lowest in the central area of Shropshire and towards the East of the county and higher in the peripheral rural areas, where travelling into Shrewsbury or a main employment hub outside the county would entail distances of more than 30km.

The 10 electoral divisions with the highest proportion of resident workers travelling at least 30km to work are:

- Ludlow North (17.2%)
- Clun (16.3%)
- Highley (14.5%)
- Cleobury Mortimer (14.2%)
- Ludlow East (14.0%)
- Clee (13.5%)
- Market Drayton East (13.3%)
- Bishop's Castle (13.2%)
- Oswestry South (12.4%)
- Oswestry West (11.5%)

Proportion travelling 30km and above



Definitions

Employed (In employment)

- A person aged 16+ is defined as employed (or in employment) if in the week before the census they carried out at least one hour's paid work, either as an employee or self-employed.

This includes casual or temporary work, on a government-sponsored training scheme, doing paid or unpaid work for their own or family business, being away from work ill, on maternity leave, or on holiday or temporarily laid off.

Main job

- The 'Main job' of a person aged 16+ is the job in which they usually work the most hours. For people not working at the time of the census the main job relates to the person's last job. Topics based on employment all relate to a person's main job.

Travel to Work

- Census 2021 travel to work data use the 2001 travel to work specification, which is a method consistent with variables from the 2001 and 2011 Censuses. Data relates to the main method of transport used.

Distance travelled to work

- The distance, in kilometres, between a person's residential postcode and their workplace postcode measured in a straight line. A distance travelled of 0.1km indicates that the workplace postcode is the same as the residential postcode. Distances over 1200km are treated as invalid, and an imputed or estimated value is added.
- "Work mainly at or from home" is made up of those that ticked either the 'Mainly work at or from home' box for the address of workplace question, or the "Work mainly at or from home" box for the method of travel to work question.
- "Other" includes no fixed place of work, working on an offshore installation and working outside of the UK.
- Distance is calculated as the straight line distance between the enumeration postcode and the workplace postcode.

The data in this bulletin have been extracted from 2021 Census table TS058 and from 2011 Census DC7701EW1a

For more information please contact: BusinessIntelligence@shropshire.gov.uk

Or refer to ONS website:

[Labour market and travel to work: Census 2021 in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

