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Driving » Why drive?



Is your journey an essential trip?

Most households in York own or drive a car and we all love the convenience of using cars to keep up with our busy lifestyles. But there are many people in York for whom a car is absolutely essential and perhaps their only way of getting from A to B - whether that's due to where they live, or health or mobility issues. It's important to keep our roads moving and reduce congestion so that these essential users can get about easily. There are lots of tips on this site about other ways to travel that you might find just as convenient to use, if not more convenient, such as our fast **Park & Ride** services or regular **Buses**. If you're making a short journey around York of less than a couple of miles, **Cycling** is proven to be the fastest mode of travel for short urban trips.

Would you like to save on driving costs?

In these tough economic times, the cost of running a car can significantly eat into already tight household budgets. The price of fuel remains high and Vehicle Excise Duty (VED), or road tax as it used to be known, is levied according to engine efficiency. So it pays to conserve fuel as best you can while driving, use your car as little as possible and consider opting for a low emission or electric vehicle next time you are looking to change your car. For tips on saving fuel visit our **Smarter Driving Tips** page. If you have to travel by car, sharing lifts can be an easy way to halve your fuel costs. Find out more at **Car Sharing**. You can also swap car journeys for **Walking** for a pleasant, stress-free - and cheap - way to travel.

Environmental and health considerations

Sitting in a queue of traffic whilst driving, or living in a congested city is not a pleasant experience for anyone. High volumes of vehicles on our roads also cause the build up of emissions from exhaust fumes. These can have serious impacts on our environment and on our health.

Effects on local air quality

Cars create lots of unpleasant chemicals which have a direct impact on human health. These include airborne Particulates, Nitrogen Dioxide, Carbon Monoxide, Sulphur Dioxide and heavy metals. Our lungs readily absorb these and there is a clear link between both short and long term health impacts from exposure to traffic fumes.

York, like most local authorities, is in breach of EU legislated limits of Nitrogen Dioxide and City of York council has an Air Quality Action Plan to tackle breaches in the affected areas.

The worst types of cars for air pollution are those with diesel engines. Even the latest Euro 5 standard engines, diesel cars generate many times more harmful gases than petrol or alternative fuel models. Euro standards have failed to improve the amount of Nitrogen Dioxide gas that is emitted in city driving situations. If you do choose to drive through the city, you can reduce your impact on the environment by choosing petrol or **alternatively fuelled** cars.

Climate change

Using fuel causes the emission of greenhouse gases, which is a main contributor to climate change. Petrol and Diesel cars are comparable in their emissions of these gases. The average UK car emission is around 148g of Carbon Dioxide per km. The level of road tax you pay depends on these emissions, so choosing a car with low CO2 will save you money and reduce your impact on the environment.

Running an **electric car** typically uses half the amount of greenhouse gas per km. This is because although the electricity is generated in part from fossil fuels, it is done in a more efficient way. Charging electric cars overnight, rather than during the day, reduces the impact further as the UK electricity grid is low in carbon intensity at night.

Using Compressed Natural Gas or Biomethane in your car can also reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions. For more information on alternative fuel types see **Fuels**.

Actions

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Today's Weather

17°C

Short term forecast

T	W	T
18°C	18°C	17°C

Source: bbc.co.uk

Links

Air Quality Management for York
Air Quality Management Areas are declared where pollutants exceed a specified level.

My Journey to work - watch our series of short films.

Love to Ride - bike week challenge
Join Love to Ride's Bike Week challenge for the chance to win great prizes!

Our Travel2Campus project provides help and advice for students across York

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