

What you can do



Why use public transport



Public transport can provide a sustainable viable alternative to car travel.

Evidence suggests that public transport has the potential to replace 21% of existing car journeys in urban areas around the UK. And, although buses are used more than any other public transport option for local journeys their use has declined by 11% over the last decade.

Public transport needs improving

So what's stopping people from hopping on to buses and trains? Expensive fares, the need to pay twice to change and complete your journey, and the notion that public transport - particularly bus travel - isn't very pleasant to use and takes more time.

A better public transport system will not only offer smarter travel choices, it will also enable people to leave their car behind and travel more sustainably - and be more inclusive for those who can't afford to run a car. This is why **Sustrans is calling on the UK government** to invest in affordable and reliable public transport.

Create demand for better public transport

While our public transport system clearly needs improving, it's also down to the public to create more demand for it. Swapping as many car journeys as we can for those by public transport is the best way to prove that we want - and need - better travel options.

Nearly 40% of journeys of less than two miles are made by car. Short car trips create much higher levels of harmful emissions, as engines are not operating at their optimum temperature.

Many of these short journeys can easily be made on public transport - or on foot or by bike - making a surprising difference to your carbon footprint. Plus, the journeys will usually take no more time than driving - or even be quicker.

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Benefits of using public transport

- › public transport users are more active by walking to stops and final destinations
- › your journey is less stressful compared to driving. You can use the time to read, listen to music or simply relax
- › it saves you money as you only pay for the trips you make
- › it is better for the environment than driving motor vehicles
- › a full bus can take 50 cars off the road
- › reduces the need for building car parks, meaning more land can be used for parks and community spaces
- › provides freedom to people of all ages to go places, particularly in later life

Better ways to travel further

In an ideal world, we would only ever make short journeys and we'd travel by public transport or on foot or by bike. In the real world, this isn't possible, but there are friendlier alternatives when you're travelling further afield:

- › long car journeys within the UK can often be made by coach or train instead. CO2 emissions per passenger for train and coach are, on average, six to eight times lower than car travel
- › going abroad does not necessarily mean you need to get on a flight. On average, trains create one third of the CO2 emissions of a plane, and many arrive in city centres, reducing the need for a hire car during city breaks
- › boats and ferries – if time is less of an issue a cargo ship could be cheaper, greener and even show you the beauty of 'slow travel'.

Reducing the impact of longer journeys

- › aim to reduce the number of flights you take each year or even set yourself the target of a 'flight-free' year;
- › if you do have to fly, try to avoid flights at night – research shows that trails of condensation from aircraft - contrails - have a greater warming effect at night;
- › winter flights are also best avoided. While they make up only 22% of annual traffic, they account for more than half of aviation's annual warming effect.

Read more about combining cycling with rail travel

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