

Transport

Making the switch

Every day millions of people in the UK prefer to walk, cycle, or take the train or bus to go about their business. By making the switch you could save thousands of pounds per year, improve your health and radically cut down your impact on climate change. Doing so is a lot easier than you may think; the advice on this page should help you get started.

Shorter journeys

Walking and cycling are best suited to journeys under five miles.

Why?

In urban environments cycling is often quicker and more predictable than a car, as you have access to cycle and bus lanes to cut through congestion, ride straight from door to door and usually don't have to worry about parking. Regular cyclists typically enjoy a fitness level equivalent to being ten years younger than the rest of the population, and live longer. Additionally, walking and cycling produce absolutely no CO₂ emissions.

Choosing a bicycle

There are a few factors to consider in choosing a bicycle:

Thick vs Thin: Thicker tyres provide more stability and are easier to ride, but are less efficient than thinner (road) tyres. There are sizes in-between!

Hub vs External: Most UK bikes have external gears which are more efficient but need to be changed on the move. Hub gears are more reliable with less maintenance, and can be changed while stationary.

Old vs New: Second hand bicycles will cost a lot less and can be good value, but may hide unobvious problems that are expensive to fix.

Folding bikes: For easy use with public transport and can be taken into your workplace. More expensive though; good quality folding bikes start at £500 if bought new.

Security: A quality D-lock will usually prevent theft.

Cost savings

The potential cost savings are huge: the RAC say the cost of car ownership over a year is £5,539. Depending on your travel habits, a minority of the savings will be taken up with train or bus fares for longer trips (see right) and the initial cost of purchasing a bicycle (from £300 new including accessories), plus occasional servicing (about £75 a year parts and labour).

Tip: For food trips you can load food into panniers (side bags). For larger trips most supermarkets now offer home delivery services.



Useful links

National Rail Enquires - for information on train journeys and tickets
www.nationalrail.co.uk - 08457 48 49 50

Megabus and National Express - the two national coach companies
www.megabus.co.uk - www.nationalexpress.co.uk

Traveline Cymru - door to door journey planner and general information
www.traveline-cymru.org.uk - 0871 200 22 33

Sustrans - cycling help and home of the National Cycle Network
www.sustrans.org.uk - 0845 113 00 65



Time check

To prevent dangerous climate change we must urgently cut our emissions from transport. The only really effective way to do this is through switching to walking, cycling, trains and buses.

Photo Credit:
J Bewley/Sustrans

Longer journeys

Trains, buses and coaches are best suited to journeys over five miles.

Why?

Travelling on trains can be cheap, is commonly much quicker than car travel (especially at peak times), and allows you to read, relax or chat instead of concentrating on the roads. Travelling on buses and coaches is cheaper still, starting at £2 return from Cardiff to London, although you lose the advantage of speed and extra comfort. People over 60 are eligible for free local buses throughout Wales with a bus pass. Trains emit only 14.2% of the CO₂ that cars do per passenger, coaches emit only 11.7%.

Buying a cheap train ticket

To buy a cheap train ticket you need to book earlier, and if possible travel at non-peak times. Local services usually have no advance purchase discount but you can benefit from season tickets if you travel several times a week. Long distance trips are expensive if bought on the day, especially in peak time.

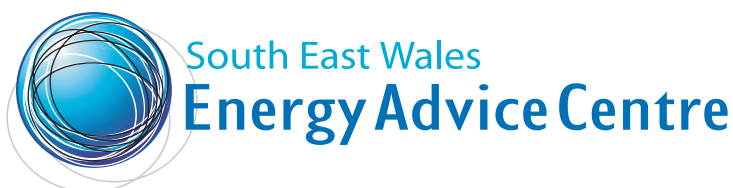
People under 26, over 60, who are disabled or travel with children are eligible for a discount of a third off most fares by purchasing a railcard. Groups of three or more often get discounted tickets too.

Example journeys (information checked on 21st May 2008)

	Newport to Cardiff	Bridgend to Swansea
Time by car	1 hour (peak) / 30 mins	35 mins
Time by train	15 mins	35 mins
Day return <i>(before 9am)</i>	£3.60	£5.10
Day return <i>(after 9am)</i>	£3.20	£4.20
7 day season ticket	£12.50	£18.90
Month season ticket	£48.00	£72.60

Cardiff to London	Peak (5.25am - 8.25am)	Off peak
Time by car	4 hours	3 hours
Time by train	2 hours 5 mins	2 hours 5 mins
Return <i>(14+ days advance)</i>	£95.00	£23.00*
Return <i>(day before)</i>	£158.00**	£39.50*
Return <i>(on the day)</i>	£158.00**	£57.00

* it's important to remember that availability determines advance prices
** a £79 peak single there and an off peak single back is better value



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Registered Charity No. 1055753