

Short journeys, big savings

As car use has grown, travel by foot, bike and public transport has fallen. Only two out of five short journeys (under 5 miles) are currently made by foot, bike or public transport.*

The latest figures show that for all the short journeys made by car – 11 per cent are under a mile, 29 per cent are between one and two miles, and the remainder 60 per cent are between two and five miles.

Driving short journeys is costly both to the driver and to society in terms of the impact on our pockets, wider economy, health and environment. By 2020, Sustrans wants four out of five short journeys to be made by foot, bike or public transport.

If the target of four out of five short journeys were achieved, the savings in running a car could total £279 a year per driver, or £8.5 billion for all drivers in Great Britain.

Similarly, enabling people to drive less will unlock economic benefits for the government.

* Sustrans defines a short journey as one under five miles.



Key findings

- Up to **£279 a year per driver could be saved** in fuel costs, car maintenance and parking, if four out of five short journeys were made by foot, bike or public transport. This totals **£8.5 billion** for all British drivers.
- Each car user makes **464** short journeys covering a distance of over **1,200 miles a year**.
- 11% of short car journeys are under one mile, 29% are from one to under two miles, and 60% are from two to five miles.
- The cost of short journeys to society including factors such as road accidents, infrastructure, traffic jams and air quality is **£750** per car user or **£23 billion** for Britain.
- **15,000 lives** could be saved through increased physical activity if more short journeys were made on foot or by bike, equivalent to **£20 billion**.
- Over a third (37.5%) of the commuting trips made by car are short journeys costing British drivers £2bn a year with the cost to society being nearly £3.5bn a year.

Key recommendations

Through taking very simple and affordable measures, UK governments could be making massive steps to improving the number of journeys made by bike or on foot (particularly in combination with improving public transport). Sustrans' *More Haste Less Speed* report (ref), published in February 2010, contains the following recommendations to achieve four out of five short journeys by bike, on foot or by public transport.

1. Encourage people to change their travel behaviour

- Establish UK-wide travel behaviour change programmes using proven, cost-effective techniques to encourage and support people to travel more sustainably within communities and to workplaces, schools, leisure and retail centres.
- Give every child and young person the knowledge, skills and confidence to establish the habit of travel by foot and bike early in life.

2. Create safe, attractive walking and cycling conditions

- Invest in high quality walking and cycling networks in rural and urban areas – re-allocating road space to provide safe routes to everyday destinations that are integrated with public transport.
- Redesign streets to reduce traffic speeds, and enforce speed limits of 20mph or less in all residential and built-up areas.
- Create and enforce traffic laws to protect the most vulnerable users of public space and roads.

3. Increase public transport usage by improving and integrating services and reducing fares

- Introduce national travel cards, building on the success of the Oyster Card in London and travel cards in other cities, to enable greater flexibility, choice and integration.
- Provide more demand-responsive transport services to people living in rural and urban areas so that they can choose to travel sustainably.

4. Ensure that planning policy and practice reduce the need to travel

- Grant planning permission only to mixed use developments, where high-quality sustainable transport and restricted parking already exist.

5. Reform taxation and increase spending on sustainable travel

- Invest only in schemes and initiatives that reduce high carbon travel.
- Re-establish a fuel duty escalator UK-wide to reverse the current decline in the cost of motoring.
- Introduce work and retail place parking levies with revenues invested in improving environments for walking, cycling and public transport.
- Establish UK-wide road pricing programmes with revenues invested in improving environments for walking, cycling and public transport.

Other benefits of walking, cycling and using public transport

Health

The health benefits of physical activity are well established and can help reduce the risk of obesity and obesity-related conditions such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and certain cancers. A report by Sustrans and the South West Public Health Observatory (SWPHO) published in March 2013 revealed over 36,000 people die every year as a result of physical inactivity.

Social and economic inclusion

For decades transport and planning policy has focused on the needs of motorists and daily destinations have been planned on the assumption that everyone has access to or can afford to own and run a car.

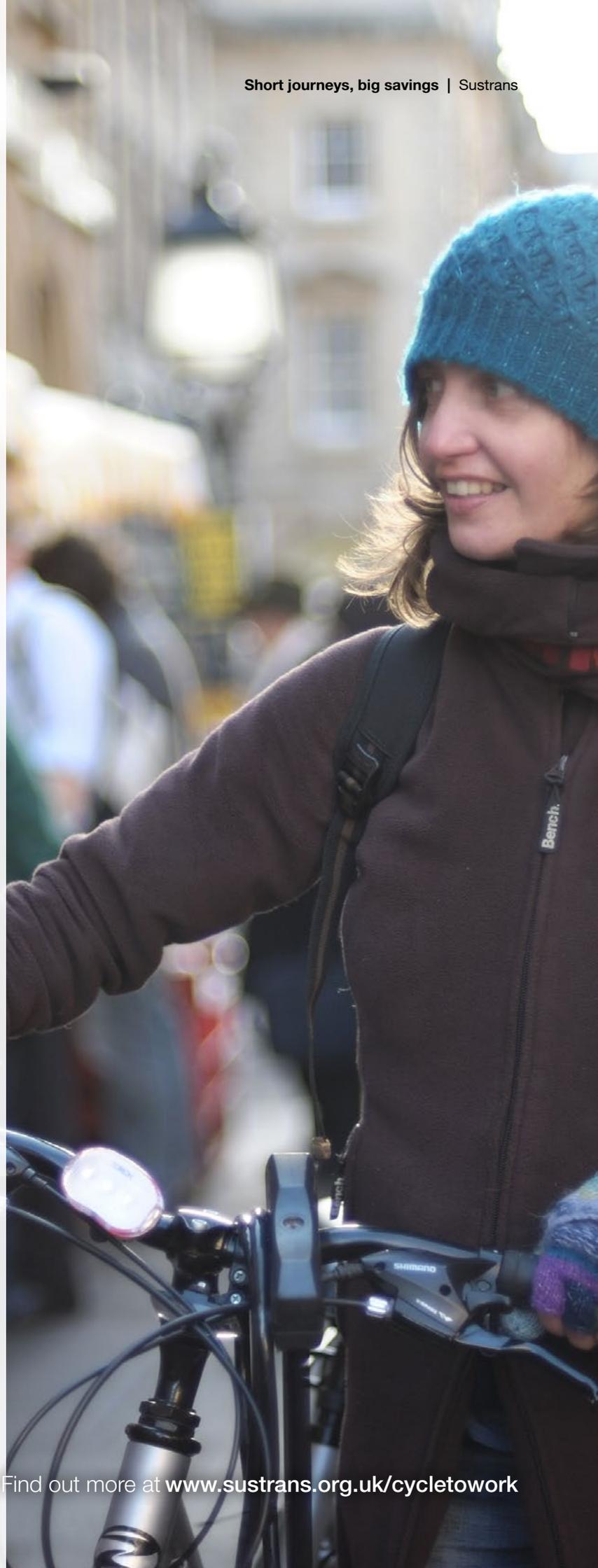
Sustrans Locked Out report, published in 2012, showed that 35 million people in the UK are at some risk of 'transport poverty', of which 1.5 million people are at high risk. Transport poverty is a complex issue and is defined by three indicators:

- Low income (where the costs of running a car or using public transport would place a significant strain on household budgets)
- Where a significant proportion of residents live further than a mile from their nearest bus or railway station
- Where it would take longer than an hour to access essential goods and services by walking, cycling and public transport.

For millions of people, poor walking and cycling environments and the lack of reliable and affordable transport can restrict or deny people access to job opportunities, educational choices, healthcare, community and leisure services, leaving many people trapped in poverty, isolated from their community and frontline services.

Environment

The benefits of encouraging people to use their cars less will also mean less congestion and cleaner air. After energy consumption, the transport sector is the next largest contributor of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions with private motor vehicles accounting for 13% of the country's total emissions. If four out of five short journeys were made on foot, by bike or public transport, carbon emissions would be reduced by 7.7 million tonnes.





Sustrans makes smarter travel choices possible, desirable and inevitable. We're a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in.

It's time we all began making smarter travel choices.