



HOPE FOR
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FUTURE

**HOW CAN YOU SPEAK
TO YOUR MP
ABOUT TRANSPORT?**



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How we travel: why does it matter?

The way we travel has a huge impact on our ability to meet legally binding carbon targets and address nature loss. Transport generates the largest share of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK. The air pollution impacts of our transport options and choices are very significant too, with transport being a key source of nitrous oxide and harmful particulate emissions. You can find a briefing on air pollution here on the [resources hub](#) for United for People Climate and Nature.

In this guide we will refer to public transport and active travel options and you'll find an overview of the key issues that could feed into your MP meeting, suggestions for areas of common ground, and potential policy asks. Changing the way that we travel reduces air pollution, helps us meet our 2030 carbon goals, and brings many co-benefits to our health, wellbeing and economic development. We can make our own individual climate-friendly choices but we need politicians to step up alongside us and champion projects that will help us take affordable journeys in less polluting ways. You can help your MP make this an incredibly significant legacy of this parliament.

Some background

60% of all trips were taken by car or van in 2023, according to the [National Travel Survey](#). In 2023, 25% of trips were under one mile, and 71% under five miles. Investment in active travel would support many of these shorter trips being taken walking, wheeling or cycling, and accessible, affordable bus routes would give a range of more sustainable options.

To meet our Net Zero targets and make our air cleaner, we have to make the shift away from the most carbon-intensive and polluting modes of travel. In some areas, though, we've been going in the wrong direction. Since the Transport Act of 1985, when buses were 'deregulated', transferring ownership and control to the private sector, thousands of bus routes have been cut and fares are less affordable. This has led bus use outside London to fall since 2009. Interestingly there was a small rise in bus use in 2023, which coincided with the £2 fare cap under the 'Help for Households' banner, thus showing the potential to increase public transport use if it is made affordable.





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Co-Benefits: Alternative Approaches

Your MP might have a longstanding interest in sustainable travel, and many MPs will have had some experience of issues such as cut bus routes or a campaign for safer cycling through their area. However, if it appears that transport isn't your MP's passion, looking at co-benefits is a great approach to finding common ground where you can have the greatest impact.

Examples of co-benefits for sustainable transport

Beyond the environmental impacts of investing in public transport and active travel, you might speak to your MP about areas such as enabling opportunities for younger people who couldn't afford to run a car to get to work and leisure, or keeping older people who may not have access to a car connected to their communities. Active travel is of course important for exercise, but using public transport also means we walk a little more, with the health benefits that brings.

How sustainable travel benefits add up

Persuading car commuters to take the bus, walk or cycle makes a huge impact on congestion - which currently costs the economy £7 billion per year. Congestion increases the amount of air pollution particularly in urban areas - costing us our health, and the NHS to treat avoidable health issues. Public transport connectivity doesn't just help our environment, it helps people access employment and brings new employers to an accessible workforce and an attractive urban centre. Running a private car is expensive, so you could, for example, ask your MP to support measures to cap the cost of public travel so that more people make the choice to take the bus or tram, saving themselves money and helping the environment at the same time.



Do consider co-benefits but also think about how they will interest your MP. Take some time to research and understand what your MP is passionate about. It might be the local economy, but it could be health and wellbeing that is their main area of interest. Where the benefits of sustainable transport meet their key interests is where you'll find the best common ground on which to build your productive relationship with your MP.



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What can we do now?

It's clear that we need this new parliament to drive a step change in support of 'modal shift' - moving us from private car use to more sustainable modes such as buses and trams, walking and cycling.

Organisations such as the [Campaign for Better Transport](#) are campaigning for improvements in public transport and [Sustrans](#) for advancement in the area of active travel. Many other groups, from [Friends of the Earth](#) to the [Trades Union Congress](#), are working to advocate for change to support sustainable travel.

You could meet with your MP to discuss how they can support the shift from private car to public transport and active travel. From shifting funding from roads to investment in public transport and active travel, to actions to make public transport the most affordable and convenient option. There are many areas where this new parliament can take decisive action to cut emissions from transport. A great start, would be to support legislation for minimum bus service levels. You can use our guide '[How to craft an ask](#)' guide to help you put that to your MP in a way that encourages meaningful action. You can also explore campaign groups in this area for inspiration!



Through connected action across the UK, we can build a community standing for stronger government action on the issues that matter most for people and the planet. If you want to get involved, reach out to the [Climate Coalition](#) and [Hope for the Future](#) today.

