Fewer than 40% of commuters are driving alone, Commuter Census® 2024 reveals

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The annual survey of UK commuters shows more people than ever are choosing more sustainable and affordable modes of transport to get to work

Now in its 4th year, and with 10,325 responses, Commuter Census® has never previously recorded a smaller share of workers who commute via single occupancy vehicles (SOVs), with just 38% of respondents travelling to work in a petrol or diesel SOV, and less than half (45%) commuting by any form of SOV, including hybrid and electric vehicles. In fact, 17% of those who were commuting to work by petrol or diesel car just two years ago are now finding other, more sustainable methods of getting to work.

The results are a promising sign for Mobilityways, which compiles Commuter Census. The mission of the climate tech organisation and social enterprise is to make zero-carbon commuting a reality. Mobilityways products and consultancy enable employers to measure, reduce and report their commuter emissions.

One reason for this shift in driving alone seems to be cost. Mobilityways founder Ali Clabburn, told BBC Radio 4 recently:

*"*We've seen the biggest increase in car sharing in the last year that we've ever seen. It's up 22%, which is huge.

"Sentiment from the survey is that people are thinking about costs more now. They used to think about trying to travel the quickest way and now they are definitely trying to find the cheapest way, because the cost of driving a car is prohibitive. It's rocketed and is now, on average, over £5,000 per person each year. So, many people are giving up a car and now looking at alternatives such as buses and car sharing.

"We've now got over 700,000 members of the national Liftshare.com community and each member saves an average of £1,034 a year on commuting by sharing lifts."

Commuter Census 2024 revealed that 15% of employees now carpool to work, which represents a return to pre-pandemic levels. Meanwhile, six in ten people would consider carpooling or carpooling in an EV as an alternative to their current commute.

After carpooling, the bus was the second most popular alternative, with 43% of respondents saying they would consider commuting by bus or electric bus. There has been a 17% increase in usage since last year, with one in ten respondents now using a bus to get to work. This upturn in usage could be attributed to the £2 bus fare cap that has been in effect across many parts of the country this year.

Commuter Census 2024 has also revealed a desire from commuters to receive more help from their employers in their bid to help decarbonise the commute. More than half of respondents said they would like more help to commute sustainably, meaning the onus is now on large organisations to make sustainable commuting as easy as possible – for the planet, their employees' pockets, and their net-zero goals and Scope 3 emissions reporting.

Julie Furnell, Managing Director of Mobilityways, said*: "In the past year, we have seen Government initiatives that have illustrated the impact of policy on commuter choices.*

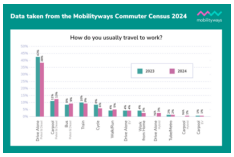
The results highlight areas where further intervention is necessary to encourage sustainable options. That is what our suite of solutions aims to do, through data-led decisions and targeted engagement."

Another insight to come from Commuter Census 2024 was the changed attitude to hybrid working – from employers and employees alike. Remarkably, just 26% of respondents said they would consider working from home as an alternative to their current mode of commuting – a huge 42% decrease compared to last year.

Meanwhile, the return to the office continues at a rapid pace, with 41% of employees now required to be on-site every day, even though just 15% of respondents would prefer not to work from home.

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Read the full Commuter Census report here, including commuting mode changes, work travel patterns, attitudes towards commuting methods and commuting emissions calculations.

Company Contact:

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Mobilityways

E. team@mobilityways.com
W. https://www.mobilityways.com

Additional Contact(s):
Jack Goddard

View Online

Additional Assets:
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