

# The Exeter Travel to Work Tally 2009

## Report





## Introduction

The Exeter Travel to Work Tally is a survey conducted annually to collect information on the travel habits of the employees in the city.

The Tally has been carried out for the past 4 years and we intend to continue running it for a number of years to come. Devon County Council and local businesses can use this information to create travel plans, monitor newly implemented schemes, look at ways to improve travel or highlight areas for attention.

The Tally asks respondents how they usually travelled to work before asking a set of questions on any changes to their travel over the last year. Other information including home postcode, hours of work and gender is collected to help us analyse the data further. Respondents are also asked for suggestions on how travel could be improved in Exeter.

In September 2009, letters were sent out to local businesses inviting them to involve their staff in the Travel Tally. More than 6700 people from over 380 companies and organisations responded. Nineteen larger companies and organisations participated directly in the survey and individual reports were produced for these companies.

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# Summary of results

This section of the report aims to summarise some of the initial findings from the Exeter Travel to Work Tally 2009 that are also displayed in chart form.

It was found that 64% of people responding travelled to work by car. 13% of respondents walked, 10% cycled, 8% took the bus, 4% the train, and 1% motorcycled. 14% of respondents had changed the way they travelled to work over the past year due to wanting to improve their health, 14% due to delays caused by congestion and 11% due to concerns about the environment.

25% of respondents who drove to work alone were doing so less and only 12% were driving more often. 39% of those who had worked at home, 39% of those who cycled, 35% of those who car shared, and 32% of those who walked or ran to work said they were doing this more often.

42% of respondents would consider using an alternative form of transport to travel to work in the next 12 months. 85% of respondents said they commuted during the rush hour and 58% said they were able to vary their start and finish times. 58% of respondents were female and 93% of respondents were in the 25 to 64 age range. Of those respondents who were able to vary their start and finish times at work, 89% still chose to commute during the morning and evening rush hours.

When asked which one thing respondents thought would help improve travel to work in Exeter, the main issues were around

public transport, cycling, road alterations, and traffic management.

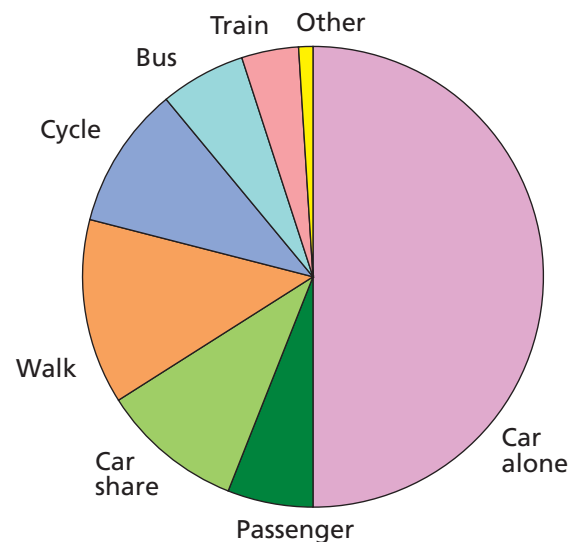
Suggestions included: cheaper public transport services, and services suiting working hours better. A number of suggestions were made for alterations to traffic lights systems and road layout, including cycle lanes.

The County Council's responses to the main suggestions can be seen later in the report.

## Results

### How did respondents usually travel to work?

The following pie chart shows that less than half of the people responding to this tally said they drove to work into Exeter by car on their own. 16% said they were a passenger in a car or 'car shared'. 13% walked, and 10% cycled to work.



## Had any of the following changed how respondents travelled in the last year?

### Reasons for change

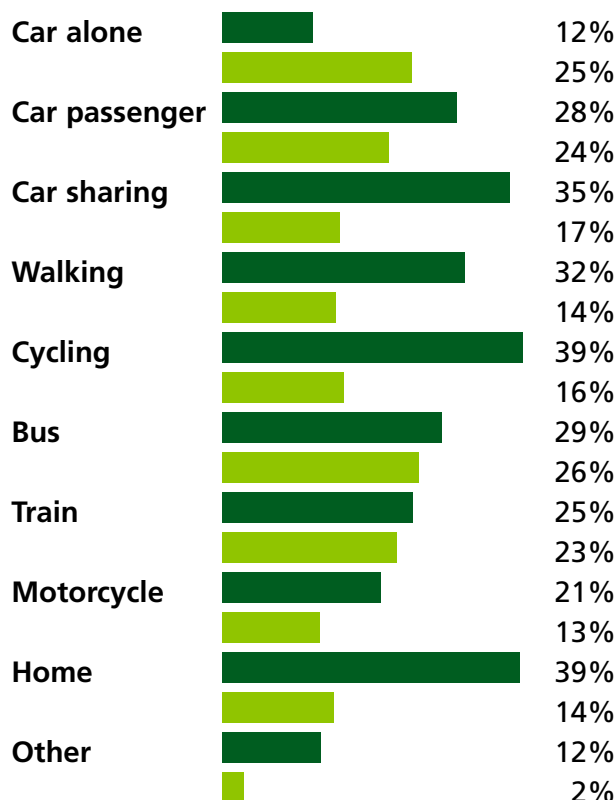
Wanting to improve health	14%
Delays caused by congestion	14%
Concerns about environment	11%
Public transport costs	9%
Workplace travel plan	6%
Parking charges	6%
Improved cycling routes/lanes	5%
Cycle purchase scheme	5%
Improved public transport	2%
Improved walking routes	1%
Improved travel information	1%

### Other reasons given for changing travel to work included:

- Change of job/workplace
- Moving house
- Lack of public transport provision
- Availability of car share partner
- Availability of parking spaces
- Medical issues
- Family needs (e.g. child care)

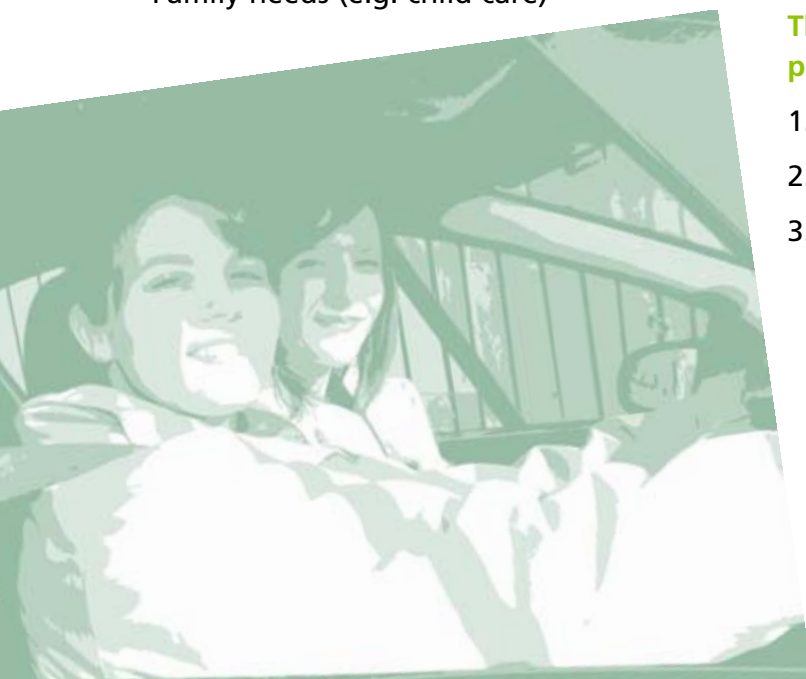
## How have respondents changed how they commute over the last year?

The following graph shows percentage of people using a type of transport MORE OFTEN in ■, while those using a type of transport LESS OFTEN are shown in ■.

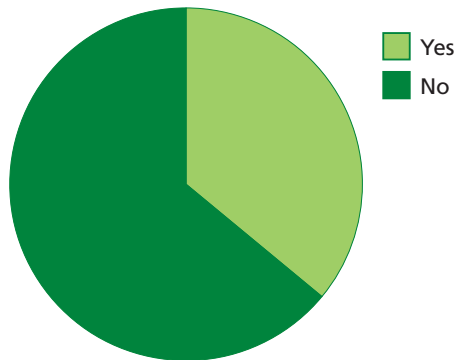


### The top three answers for things that people are using more often were:

1. Working from home (39%)
2. Cycling (39%)
3. Car share (35%)

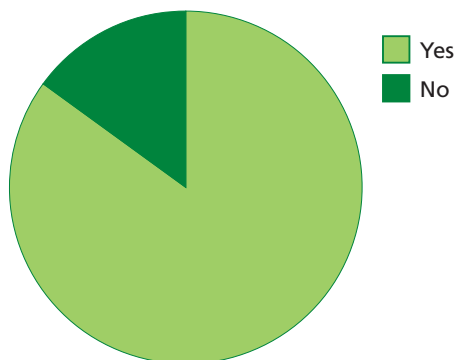


## Would respondents consider trying an alternative form of transport to work in the next twelve months?



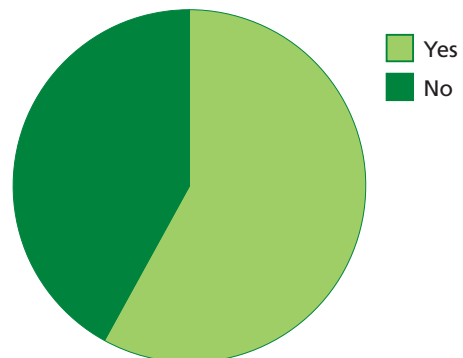
36% of respondents said they would consider an alternative form of transport in the next 12 months.

## Did respondents usually start work between 7.30 and 9.30am, and finish between 4 and 6pm?



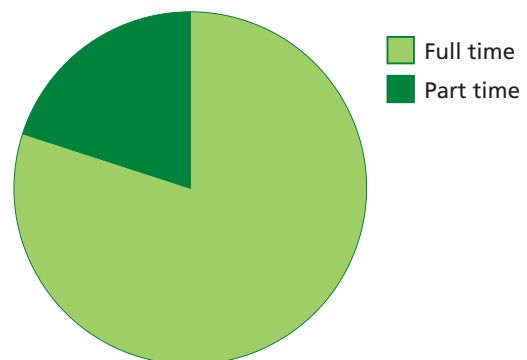
The majority of people, 85%, said they travelled during the morning and afternoon peak periods.

## Were respondents able to vary their start and finish times?



The majority of people, 58%, said they were able to vary their start and finish times at work.

## Did respondents work full-time or part-time?



80% of respondents said they worked full time. 28% of females and 8% of males said they worked part time.



# Main issues raised in the suggestions section

Respondents were asked to briefly outline one thing they thought could be implemented that would help improve travel to work in Exeter. The following broad categories were formed from these suggestions made in the Travel to Work Tally. The following section will look at the main suggestions. Further work will be needed to look at specific suggestions made, working with employers and employees through travel plans where we can.

The top ten suggestion areas that were mentioned were public transport fares, service, and frequency, cycle routes, Park & Ride, road layout, traffic lights, parking, school travel, and flexible working. Car sharing, road works and road maintenance were amongst the other ideas mentioned more frequently. The County Council does not have direct influence over all of these areas. The following gives some of the principle ideas and how the Council may influence them.

# Suggestions on public transport

More than a quarter of respondents made suggestions around public transport as an area for improvement. The three main suggestions for improvement were reduced fares, new or improved services, and a higher frequency of buses and trains.

## Public transport Fares

- **Reducing the cost of public transport was suggested. Respondents compared the cost of public transport to the cost of driving to work.**
- **Cost was weighed against reliability, journey times, and times of services. More 'affordable' fares were suggested.**

When comparing the costs of public transport against the private car people often don't take into account all the costs associated with car use; the loss of value of the vehicle (depreciation), the cost of capital used for the vehicle, insurance, annual road tax, MOT, maintenance, breakdown cover and fuel. Bus and train fares have to cover all the costs of operation and fares may often appear relatively expensive compared to just the fuel costs of running a car. When the full costs of car travel are taken into account bus and train fares are often very competitive.

There are a number of cheaper fares available for regular travellers and in the future it is hoped that new ticketing methods will improve the ease and speed of paying. Under transport legislation in place since 1986, Local Authorities are not allowed to generally subsidise fare levels. However we will continue to work with bus operators to try and encourage good value.

## Public transport services

- A number of suggestions were put forward for new services, including new rail services.
- Services were suggested for the main business and industrial areas as well as bus times to coincide with start and finish times of work.
- The amount of bus changes people had to make to complete their commute seemed to be a problem for some.

Exeter has traditionally had town bus services which cross the city centre, in order to assist through journeys and minimise both changes and disruption to passengers. The longer inter urban routes need to use the bus station as their destination.

Although we realise that changing buses can be unpopular it will never be possible to provide through journeys between every possible combination of places. Routes via the city centre offer the possibility to connect to the largest range of other bus services.

Reducing journey times using bus priority measures is introduced wherever possible, and opportunities to reduce boarding times at bus stops by using smartcards and other 'fast' ticketing options is being actively explored.

## Public transport frequency

- Some respondents said more buses and trains operating over a longer peak travel time would help improve commuting.

Most local buses in the Exeter area are operated commercially and the County Council has no direct influence on these commercial services. The service frequency, fares and route are determined by the operator as part of their business.

However, we work closely with all bus operators to improve the quality and extent of the commercial bus network where we can. In certain circumstances the County Council do support socially necessary bus services but we need to balance limited resources with maximising journey opportunities. The new Local Transport Act provides further opportunities for a closer partnership approach and we will continue to work with bus operators to improve services and journey times where possible.

The level of service provided by train operators is determined by the Department for Transport as part of the franchising process.

However, with Devon County Council financial support, frequencies have been improved with a greater number of trains, on the Barnstaple line since December 2009, and First Great Western is working to increase capacity on busier trains in Devon.



## Cycle routes

- Respondents suggesting better cycling provisions in Exeter have requested that cycle lanes, where implemented are not shared with pedestrians or other vehicles. It is thought that the current shared cycle paths discourage cyclists since they are considered unsafe or no use.

The current policy is to develop a network of both on-road and off-road routes in order to provide choices for cyclists of all types and abilities. It is not always possible or appropriate to provide a separate off-road route for cyclists, but a shared use path can provide a traffic-free option for less confident cyclists in these circumstances. They are often constructed to benefit school children and their families, enabling them to travel together, despite different modes of travel.

- **Cycle paths should be continuous, direct, and be maintained like roads with street lighting, around the city as well as the housing areas on its outskirts.**

Routes linking the Exeter cycle network to the surrounding industrial and residential areas are currently being developed.

As a Cycling Demonstration Town, Devon County Council is investing heavily to make Exeter more cycle friendly. The aspirations of the project are to enable more people to cycle, more safely, more often. Where possible, we aim to provide new routes and facilities at the highest standard. However, there are limitations when trying to improve facilities retrospectively.

## Park & Ride

- Respondents suggested Park & Ride schemes at new locations around the city. Some suggested a service on the north side of the city to facilitate those travelling from Crediton and Tiverton.
- Buses did not appear to run for part-time workers, those on the 'school run', or for out of hours travel.

Our overall strategy is to provide a Park & Ride on the main radial routes into Exeter to try and capture car trips and thereby manage congestion and improve air quality on already congested routes. This is why we are seeking to secure Park & Ride sites on Alphington Road (Alphington Interchange) and the Crediton corridor. For information, the Cowley Bridge Road corridor (serving Crediton and Tiverton) has been investigated previously but environmental constraints (EA - flooding issues) have proven problematic. Nonetheless, we are still keen to find a location on this corridor as it serves a sizeable population catchment within the travel to work area.

An interchange facility is available at Crediton station, to allow people to park and then continue to Exeter Central, Digby & Sowton and Exmouth directly by train.



## Road layout

- **Suggestions included widening roads, bypasses and removing or installing bus lanes.**

Providing road capacity to meet the highest demand is not always possible where land pressures for other uses are equally challenging. More can be made of the existing highway capacity through measures such as car sharing, promoting more flexible working practices and planning to reduce the need to travel at all. While these measures may not be practical for everybody, small changes to travel can have a large impact on the highway network.

## Traffic lights

- **3% of respondents suggested alterations to traffic lights in the city could ease congestion. Some felt that traffic lights in some areas were "unnecessary", including pedestrian lights, were as some felt there should be more pedestrian lights.**
- **Respondents suggested altering the sequencing of some traffic lights and the possibilities of having traffic lights working only during certain parts of the day.**
- **Some felt that traffic lights on roundabouts disrupt the flow of traffic and increase congestion in these areas.**

Many sets of traffic signals in Exeter have been installed to address safety and visibility concerns, aid pedestrians to cross the road, or motorists to get out of side roads more easily. In each instance the consequence is that at some point in the cycle a red signal will be shown to the main road, and so motorists on the main road will inevitably experience a short delay.

The design of roundabouts and signalled roundabouts has to achieve a balance between capacity and safety. On a conventional roundabout safety is improved by profiling the roundabout and its approaches in a way which slows approaching traffic. Where there is insufficient capacity on a particular approach to a roundabout, it may be widened to reduce any queues. However, widening the approach onto a roundabout will result in some motorists entering the roundabout too quickly which can result in collisions and problems for other motorists entering the roundabout. By adding traffic signals it is possible to provide an increase in capacity, associated with the widening, but with the safety being ensured by the signals. Signalling roundabouts creates small gaps in the traffic, which can help pedestrians to cross the roundabout without the need for formal crossings.

Roundabouts work well when traffic flows for each of the 'arms' approaching the roundabout are balanced. If one arm is particularly busy compared to the others, then traffic on this approach can "take control" of the roundabout, causing delays to motorists on the other approaches. In this instance signals can be used to give motorists on each approach a chance to enter the roundabout.

Where traffic can not leave a roundabout because an exit is blocked, this can result in the roundabout "locking up". Yellow box markings on roundabouts without signals are not permitted because of associated safety concerns. In such circumstances installing signals allows the rate at which traffic enters the roundabout to be controlled, and this together with the use of yellow box markings, reduces the "free for all" that can occur otherwise.

## Parking

- respondents commenting on parking in Exeter have suggested that there could be more and better parking made available at some workplaces with reduced charging, though others suggested increased charging.

Increasing parking provision or reducing the price of parking within the city centre would increase the level of traffic on routes in and out of the centre and as such we are working instead on improving access to the city centre through Park & Ride and other alternatives.

The cost of commuting by car can be reduced by sharing the costs of fuel and parking with passengers. Car sharing can be organised either with friends and colleagues or through formal car sharing arrangements such as [carsharedevon.com](http://carsharedevon.com)

## School travel

- comments on this topic mentioned the increased congestion during school start and finish times. The main suggestion was to provide more school transport for pupils so that less vehicles were needed to transport children to and from school each day.

Devon County Council spends £22 million per year on transporting eligible children across the County to their nearest school. Also, 92% of schools in Devon have travel plans which have helped teachers, parents and pupils to find alternatives to driving to school, raising awareness and participation in sustainable travel.

Reduction in traffic during school holidays will be in part due to working parents taking holidays with their children.

## Flexible working

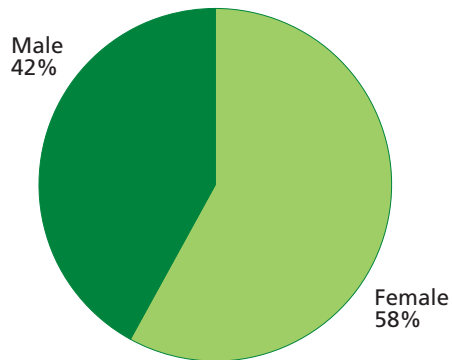
- Flexible working suggestions were primarily around more flexible working times and the ability to work at home.

There are plenty of things which individual workplaces can do – including the area of flexible working. Contact [travelplans@devon.gov.uk](mailto:travelplans@devon.gov.uk) for more details on what businesses can do for staff.

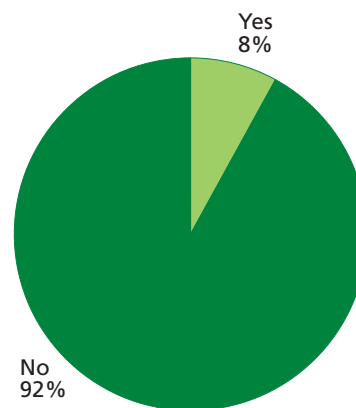


# Respondents' demographics

## Respondents' sex



## Did respondent, or someone they were responsible for, have any long-term illness or disability?



## Respondents' age

