



25 September 2017

Traffic jams – are they getting better or worse?

Britons are in love with their cars, and millions of us use them to get to and from work each day. But what is your daily commute like? Does the traffic leave you fuming? Has the journey to work got worse or is it getting better?

Last year there were 31.7million cars on the road, but while owning a car is a sign of the UK's growing prosperity, more cars bring more congestion, and traffic jams rank high on the list of 'things drivers hate about driving.'

If you use your car to get to and from work, you may be interested in the latest driving statistics from the Department of Transport, published this month. Government statisticians spend every year looking at the time it takes to travel on our roads.

If you mainly use motorways and trunk roads to get to work:

Things have improved (a little). Average delays on the strategic road network or SRN (trunk roads and motorways) improved by 1.5%. The average speed on these roads is just under 60 mph. The stats show that delays cost drivers nine seconds per mile, so on a 100 mile journey, the delays average around 15 minutes. Not much for one journey, but lose 15 minutes every day in traffic and it soon adds up.

If you use local A roads to get to work:

It's not such a happy story. The average delay was 46.2 seconds per mile, compared to free flowing traffic, and the average speed was 25.2mph, again similar to the previous year. So, for just a 20-mile journey, drivers can expect 15 minutes of delays. That is a lot for a 20 mile round trip.

The Department for Transport says the local 'A' road network accounts for around 10% of all English roads by length, but carries around a third of all traffic. One third of the A road network is urban, while two thirds are in the country.

That means local A roads are overstretched. In big cities like London, the average road speed is down to 8mph, but even in smaller towns, it's clear life is getting worse for drivers. It's not just the lost time, but also lost productivity. It is hard to do very much when you are stuck in a traffic jam.

The delays in urban areas were 76 seconds per mile, an average 13 minute delay for a 10 mile round trip. And for all drivers delays are worse in the evening, when drivers are coming home.

Road traffic organisations have called for the government to spend more money on the local road network, instead of motorways. The increasing delays in towns and villages seem to bear out the fact that local roads are crumbling, while car use is increasing all the time, putting even more pressure on the tarmac, and drivers' tempers.

Brightside wants to hear from our commuting customers:

What is your daily commute like?

Is it quicker for you to get to work in the morning than getting back home in the evening?

What's your nightmare traffic blackspot on your daily commute. Have you measured how much time you lose each week?

We'd welcome your own stories and feedback. Let us know and comment below.

Much as we love driving, perhaps the joy of the open road really is a thing of the past.