

# Government urged to promote rail to avoid annual bank holiday gridlock

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As millions take to the roads for the long weekend, Campaign for Better Transport is calling on the Government to help prevent the annual bank holiday weekend gridlock by encouraging more people to take the train in future.

As part of its *The Way Forward is public transport* campaign, the charity is urging Ministers to make it easier and cheaper for holidaymakers and tourists to travel by train to help reduce congestion, air pollution and carbon emissions.

Paul Tuohy, Chief Executive of Campaign for Better Transport, said: "With a permanent move to homeworking for many people, leisure travellers could soon outnumber rail commuters. As the Government looks to promote greener travel to help tackle climate change it needs to create a modern railway that takes advantage of this new market. But to encourage more people to choose the train for leisure trips we need to see an end to swathes of the network closed for weekend engineering works, better storage for bikes and luggage, and tickets that are cheaper than flying or driving."

To encourage more people to choose the train for leisure trips, Campaign for Better Transport is calling for:

- The cost of a return train journey to be cheaper than the equivalent domestic flight
- More services to connect to popular attractions and tourist destinations
- Better onboard facilities including more space for luggage and bikes
- Changes to the way engineering works are scheduled to avoid disruption during busy holiday periods
- Rail timetables and services that adapt to changing travel patterns post-Covid.

Alongside swapping to cleaner fuels, increasing public transport use is a key component of the Government's plans to reduce carbon emissions from transport and help it reach net zero by 2050. With traffic levels set to soar this weekend, Campaign for Better Transport is urging the Government to do more to promote rail travel.

Mr Tuohy added: "If the Government is serious about its environmental ambitions, it should make it easier and cheaper for people to make greener transport choices."

*Photo credit: Cycling UK*