

Public transport in UK cities most expensive in Europe

February 24, 2022



A new report out today (24 February) has highlighted how the UK's largest cities – Birmingham, London and Manchester – are ranked the worst in Europe for public transport affordability.

The *Clean Cities: Benchmarking European cities on creating the right conditions for zero-emission mobility* [report](#), ranked 36 European cities by how much progress they are making towards achieving net zero mobility by 2030, based on measures ranging from more space for walking and cycling to road safety and policies to phase out polluting cars.

When ranked by affordability of public transport, London came 36th, followed by Manchester (35th) and Birmingham (34th). The three cities are bottom of the table with residents being asked to fork out 8-10 per cent of their household budget on monthly travel costs.

By contrast, in Oslo, which came top overall in the report, passengers spend just two per cent of their household budget on public transport fares.

With rail fares set to increase a further 3.8 per cent next week, along with London tube and bus fares by

4.8 per cent, Campaign for Better Transport is calling the report 'a wake-up call for the UK government'. The transport charity is calling for more action from central government to make buses and trains affordable. Helping more people to use public transport is essential to tackling air pollution and traffic congestion in cities, as well as meeting our net zero targets.

Paul Tuohy, Chief Executive of Campaign for Better Transport, said: "This report makes clear the link between the cost of public transport and efforts to decarbonise transport and must therefore act as a wake-up call for the UK Government. We currently have a situation where it is often cheaper to drive or fly short distances than take the train or the bus, whereas the greenest option should always be the cheapest. We need more affordable public transport to help us achieve the government's vision where public transport, cycling and walking are the first choice when it comes to transport."

When ranking overall progress towards achieving zero emission mobility, London came 12th in the overall rankings with a score of 55.8 per cent. Birmingham was **17th** with a score of 52.8 per cent and Manchester was 30th with a score of 42.1 per cent.

Oliver Lord, UK Head of Clean Cities Campaign, which produced the report, said: "The only way to address our air pollution and climate crisis is to ensure public transport is a cheap, reliable and accessible alternative to the car. Our new report shows that UK cities have the least affordable public transport in Europe, which will inevitably get worse given this government's decision to increase fares in a cost of living crisis. This government should be helping, not hindering, our cities to play their role in meeting the UK's clean air and climate goals."

To improve affordability and help ensure the greenest transport option is always the cheapest, Campaign for Better Transport is calling for the UK government to:

- Introduce Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG) ticketing with daily price capping within towns and cities as soon as possible
- Improve the flexible rail season ticket offer to ensure it provides comparable savings to a full-time one
- Expedite the promised reform of rail fares and ticketing to provide more affordable options and eliminate inconsistencies
- Improve incentives for bus operators to implement contactless payment options and cross-operator ticketing.

Mr Tuohy added: "We are running out of time to tackle the climate crisis. Transport is still the biggest single emitter of carbon in the UK. The government must do more to get people using public transport by making it more affordable and encouraging its use."

[Click here for more details.](#)

Photo credit: British Cycling