

Commuting Cost

What the journey to work costs - October 2026



How Britain gets to work: car 67%, walk 11%, rail 11%, bus 7% - DfT TSGB 2024

THE COMMUTE

9.2 miles

each way, 18.4 a day - NTS 2025

THE FUEL, A YEAR

£815

petrol - diesel £833, five days

THE SAME DRIVE, ALL-IN

£2,488

petrol basis - diesel £2,077

THIS YEAR

+£185

petrol up 29% while fares froze

PROVISIONAL - MONTH IN PROGRESS

Prepared by findpetrol.co.uk Research

Provisional edition, as at 24 October 2026, fuel at this edition's 3 weekly snapshots

Methodology: findpetrol.co.uk/reports/methodology

Every component sourced: our collection, DfT, ONS, ORR, TfL, GOV.UK, Ofgem, Zapmap.

Executive summary

The average British commute is 9.2 miles each way, and two thirds of commuters drive it. At October 2026 prices the fuel for that drive - five days a week, 47 working weeks - is £815 a year in a typical petrol car. Count the whole cost of the car, on the basis of our Annual Cost of Motoring report - tax, insurance, servicing and depreciation as well as fuel, about 57.5p a mile - and the same journey costs £2,488. A diesel does the same week for £833 of fuel - and, its £3,987 annual bill spread over a longer typical year, £2,077 all-in.

This is the year the comparison changed. Petrol has risen 39.5p a litre since last October - the fuel alone is £185 a year more - while rail fares were frozen for the first time in thirty years and the bus single cap is cut from £3 to £2 in January. On the longest corridors the season ticket now undercuts the fuel alone: Southampton to London by car costs £7,001 in fuel against a £6,168 season.

Where the remote-working era shows up is in the working week. With 27% of working adults hybrid and the average worker at home 1.8 days a week, each home day saves the average car commuter £3.47 in fuel and £10.59 counted properly. And where you live barely moves the bill - £781 to £823 across every region - but whether the commute is a fuel bill at all varies enormously: 79% of Welsh workers drive to work; in London, 26%.

The edition's figures

Measure	Figure	Detail
Average commute, each way	9.2 miles	NTS 2025: 1,031 miles over 112 trips
Petrol commute, a year	£815	fuel only, five days, 47 weeks
Diesel commute, a year	£833	fuel only; £2,077 all-in at 46p a mile
The same drive, all-in	£2,488	petrol profile, 56p a mile - diesel £2,077
Electric commute, at home	£317	price-cap rate; £84 on an overnight tariff
Bus commute, at the cap	£1,410	£3 a single; £940 at the £2 cap from January
Rail season, by corridor	£2,364 - £6,168	Leeds-York to Southampton-London, frozen
One home day saves	£3.47 fuel	£10.59 counted properly
Petrol vs last October	+39.5p a litre	+£185 on the year; fares froze
Fuel basis	3 weekly snapshots	October 2026, provisional

The typical commute

The profile behind every figure in this report comes from two official series. The National Travel Survey 2025 - the DfT's diary of personal travel - counts 112 commuting trips and 1,031 commuting miles a person: 9.2 miles each way on average, the longest of any trip purpose. Commuting is still 19% below its 2019 level; the hybrid era is baked in. The average journey to work takes 28 minutes.

How Britain commutes	Share of commutes	Typical time
Car or van	67%	26 minutes
Walk	11%	15 minutes
Rail, tube and tram	11%	64 minutes
Bus or coach	7%	40 minutes
Cycle, motorcycle, other	5%	-

Shares: usual method of travel to work, Great Britain - Labour Force Survey, Oct-Dec 2024 (DfT TSGB). Times: TSGB 2024.

Working patterns set the multiplier. The ONS counted, in July 2026, 40% of working adults travelling to work every working day, 27% hybrid and 14% fully remote. Across all workers the average is 1.8 remote days a week - which is why this report prices the week at five, four, three and two days rather than pretending there is one typical commuter.

The car line uses the same assumptions as our Annual Cost of Motoring report: Which? real-world economy of 42 mpg for petrol and 47 for diesel, at our own 174.2p and 199.2p a litre - the same 3 weekly snapshots behind the UK Fuel Price Index.

The car commute, priced

The same 18.4-mile round trip, priced for the four working weeks of 2026: five days is the full-time anchor, two days the committed hybrid. The all-in column carries the whole cost of the car onto the commute, at the Annual Cost of Motoring report's 57.5p a mile.

Working week	Miles	Petrol	Diesel	Electric	All-in petrol	All-in diesel
5 days a week	4,324	£815	£833	£317	£2,428	£2,077
4 days a week	3,459	£652	£667	£254	£1,910	£1,662
3 days a week	2,594	£489	£500	£190	£1,413	£1,246
2 days a week	1,730	£326	£333	£127	£995	£831

Fuel only in the petrol, diesel and electric columns; the all-in column is the full cost of a mile from our Annual Cost of Motoring report - petrol at 56.1p a mile, diesel at 46.4p over its longer typical year. Electric at the Ofgem price-cap rate; 42 and 47 mpg; 3.59 miles per kWh; 47 working weeks.

Read the two ends together and the stakes appear: the committed hybrid saves £489 of fuel a year against the full-timer - but £1,493 counted properly, because the car's fixed costs ride along with every plan. An electric car cuts the energy line to £317 at the price-cap rate, £84 on an overnight tariff - a quarter of the petrol bill for the same miles. The diesel columns tell the same story a pound dearer in fuel and £411 cheaper all-in, because its fixed costs spread over a longer typical year.

This year: the train froze, the fuel didn't

- Petrol: 134.7p last October to 174.2p - up 39.5p, or 29%. The five-day commute costs £185 more in fuel alone.
- Diesel: up 56.4p to 199.2p - 40% on the year.
- Rail: fares frozen in 2026 - the first freeze in thirty years - and regulated seasons held until March 2027 (ORR).
- Bus: the £3 single cap holds to 31 December, then falls to £2 for 2027 (GOV.UK).

The alternatives, priced

The same job - the 9.2-mile trip each way, five days, 47 weeks - priced every way it can be done. One honest caveat before the table: in life, mode and distance choose each other. Nobody walks 9.2 miles each way, and the average rail commute is far longer than the average car one; the rail lines here are the named corridors of the next page, not this distance.

Mode	A year	Basis
Walking	£0	free, where you live close enough
Cycling	£90 - £270	running costs only; commercial estimates, bike purchase excluded
Electric car, overnight tariff	£84	home charging at about 7p/kWh
Electric car, price-cap rate	£317	home charging at 26.32p/kWh
Car, petrol - fuel only	£815	42 mpg at 174.2p a litre
Car, diesel - fuel only	£833	47 mpg at 199.2p a litre
Car, diesel - all-in	£2,077	the diesel profile, £3,987 over 8,300 miles
Bus, at the £3 cap	£1,410	England outside London; £940 at the £2 cap
Bus, London	£823	TfL £1.75 a single - £1.85 from 1 November
Tube, Zones 1-2, London	£2,092	at the £8.90 daily cap, frozen to March 2027
Car, petrol - all-in	£2,488	the petrol profile, £3,567 over 6,200 miles
Rail season, short corridor	£2,364	Leeds-York, 24 miles by road
Rail season, long corridor	£6,168	Southampton-London, 79 miles by road

The finding worth staring at: the £3 bus cap prices the average commute at £1,410 a year - close to twice the fuel bill of driving the same miles (£815). Even at January's £2 cap the bus stays dearer than the petrol for this distance, which is not an argument against the bus - most bus commuters have no car option for these trips - but is exactly why fare policy is the cheapest lever governments hold over commuting costs.

The same corridor, both ways

The honest comparison is not the average commute against the average season ticket - it is the same road against the same railway. Four named corridors, five days a week, 47 weeks: the frozen annual season against the fuel, and then the whole cost, of driving them.

Corridor	By road	Season	Petrol	Diesel	All-in, petrol
Leeds-York	24 mi	£2,364	£2,127	£2,173	£6,490
Manchester-Liverpool	34 mi	£2,840	£3,013	£3,079	£9,195
London-Brighton	54 mi	£5,204	£4,786	£4,890	£14,604
Southampton-London	79 mi	£6,168	£7,001	£7,154	£21,364

Season tickets: standard class annuals, frozen since 2 March 2026 - the Guardian, 11 March 2026 (Southampton-London) and trainticketcost.com pricing checks, July 2026. Road distances approximate; petrol at 174.2p and 42 mpg, diesel at 199.2p and 47 mpg; all-in on the petrol profile.

On the longest corridors the maths has flipped: Southampton to London costs £7,001 in fuel alone against a £6,168 season - the train is now cheaper than the petrol, before a single pound of the car's other costs. Manchester to Liverpool is near parity at £3,013 against £2,840. Only on the short corridors does fuel undercut the season - and even Leeds-York, at £2,127 of fuel, costs £6,490 all-in, nearly three times its season. A diesel runs the same roads dearer still - £7,154 on Southampton-London, where even petrol beats the season. For two- and three-day commuters, the flexi season - eight day-passes a month - is the product that matches the hybrid week.

The regional commute

Our own contribution: the five-day petrol bill of the average commute in each region, at that region's own pump prices from this edition's 3 snapshots - beside the share of workers there who commute by car. The distance is held at the national average on purpose: there is no fresh official regional distance series, and we would rather state one honest number than vary it on five-year-old data.

Region	Petrol	Fuel, a yr	Diesel	Diesel, a yr	By car
North East	173.1p	£810	198.9p	£832	75%
Wales	173.7p	£813	198.9p	£832	79%
West Midlands	175.1p	£820	199.8p	£836	78%
Yorkshire and The Humber	173.1p	£810	198.8p	£831	74%
North West	174.2p	£815	198.9p	£832	75%
East Midlands	175.0p	£819	199.6p	£835	78%
Northern Ireland	166.8p	£781	192.3p	£804	n/a
Scotland	175.5p	£821	200.5p	£839	70%
South West	175.0p	£819	200.0p	£836	74%
East of England	175.1p	£820	199.9p	£836	75%
South East	175.9p	£823	200.4p	£838	74%
London	174.7p	£818	200.1p	£837	26%

Car share: usual method of travel to work, region of workplace, LFS Oct-Dec 2024 (DfT TSGB0109). Fuel bills: 468 litres of petrol and 418 of diesel at each region's prices. Northern Ireland sits outside the LFS table, so its share is n/a.

The spread is £43 on petrol and £34 on diesel, cheapest in Northern Ireland - the price of two months' worth of commuting. The share column is the real regional story: whether the commute is a fuel bill at all. In Wales 79% of workers drive; in London 26%, where 45% take the train and the commute is a fare instead. The share of income that fuel takes in each region is the subject of our Regional Fuel Affordability report.

The hybrid factor

The working week is now the biggest single variable in the cost of commuting. One day a week at home - the difference between five and four - is worth £163 a year in fuel and £498 counted properly.

What one home day saves

Fuel not burned, petrol	£3.47	18.4 miles at 42 mpg, 174.2p a litre
Cost not carried, petrol	£10.59	every cost of the car, at 57.5p a mile
The diesel driver	£3.55 fuel	£8.84 all-in, at 47 mpg and 199.2p
Bus fares not paid	£6	two singles at the £3 cap
The average worker, a year	£294 fuel	1.8 home days a week - £896 counted properly

The saving is real but unevenly distributed. A season-ticket holder saves nothing by staying home - the ticket is bought - which is why flexi seasons and contactless capping matter more than any fare freeze for the hybrid commuter. A driver saves the full cost of the miles. And the fully remote worker - 14% of working adults - has no commute bill at all, which is the quiet subsidy behind every return-to-office mandate.

The diesel commuter saves £3.55 of fuel a home day against the petrol driver's £3.47, but only £8.84 counted properly. And the other half of the arithmetic: moving the same week from petrol to an electric car charged overnight saves £731 a year - more than most families' energy-efficiency projects - and unlike a home day, it does not depend on the employer.

Methodology

The commute profile

Distance: DfT National Travel Survey 2025 (published 11 September 2026) - 1,031 commuting miles over 112 commuting trips a person, 9.2 miles each way. Working year: 47 weeks - five weeks' annual leave - so the five-day commuter covers 4,324 miles. Modes and times: DfT Transport Statistics Great Britain 2024 (published December 2025), Labour Force Survey October to December 2024. Working patterns: ONS Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, July 2026; remote days from the 2025 Global Survey of Working Arrangements.

The car

Fuel: our own weekly collection, the same 3 snapshots behind the UK Fuel Price Index and both sister reports - petrol 174.2p, diesel 199.2p a litre this edition. Consumption: Which? real-world economy, 42 mpg petrol and 47 diesel. Electric: HMRC's sales-weighted 3.59 miles per kWh at the Ofgem price-cap rate of 26.32p/kWh and published overnight tariffs of about 7p/kWh. The all-in lines carry the Annual Cost of Motoring report's full profiles onto the commute: petrol at 57.5p a mile (£3,478 over 6,200 miles) and diesel at 48.0p (£3,847 over 8,300 - its fixed costs spread over a longer typical year, which is stated wherever the figure appears).

The alternatives

Rail: ORR Rail fares index 2026 - fares frozen in 2026, the first freeze in thirty years, regulated seasons held to March 2027. Corridor seasons are named route prices: the Guardian (11 March 2026) and trainticketcost.com checks (July 2026); road distances approximate. Bus: the £3 England single cap to 31 December 2026 and £2 through 2027 (GOV.UK); London bus and Zones 1-2 caps from TfL. Cycling running costs are commercial estimates of £90-£270 a year, stated as such.

What this is not

This is the cost of stated commute profiles, not a survey of household spending. Parking, tolls, congestion charges and station parking are excluded - they vary too widely to average honestly - and so are car-sharing and the cost of the bike itself. The regional table holds distance constant and varies only price, because no fresh official regional distance series exists; Northern Ireland is outside the Labour Force Survey travel-to-work table. Fuel prices move weekly and this edition's are provisional, from a month in progress.

Using this data

These figures are free to use in articles, research and reporting. We ask only that you credit findpetrol.co.uk and link to this report, so readers can see the current figures and the method behind them.

Suggested citation

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