

NEWS RELEASES

THE DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

20 September 2006

CAR COMMUTING CAN ADD AN EXTRA DAY TO THE WORKING WEEK

Commuters using cars to get in and out of Belfast spend, on average, the equivalent of a full working day travelling to and from work each week.

The survey conducted amongst a sample of 500 commuters who travel by car into Belfast each day, showed that the average commuter journey in and out of the city takes 45 minutes which equates to 1.5 hours per day and 7.5 hours per week spent in traffic.

The survey also found that just under one third of car commuters (31%) are car sharing while two out of three cars travelling in and out of Belfast each day during the commuter rush hours are transporting only a driver. And only 52% of respondents said that they required their car for work which means that 48% of car commuters simply drive to work, park their car and drive home again.

The survey of car commuters was carried out last week on behalf of Travelwise NI, an initiative of the Department of Regional Development Roads Service to encourage a more sustainable approach to travel. Only people who commute into the city from beyond the Outer Ring where interviewed.

Commenting on the findings Brian Moreland, Head of Travelwise NI, said: **"It is startling to think that many of us are spending the equivalent of an extra working day in the car trying to get to and from work each week. When you look at the distances involved it is clear that car journeys are taking twice as long as they should be because of the volume of traffic on our roads during the rush hours.**

"It is encouraging that 45% of those respondents who do not currently car share said they would like to and our Travelwise NI Car Share initiative www.travelwisenicar-share.com will help them to get started.

"As for the 48% of people who commute by car but who do not need their car for work I would encourage them explore the alternatives open to them, to stop and think about how they could save time, money and the environment by car-sharing, using public transport or if possible walking or cycling. There are also additional benefits for those who use public transport for example, where you can take some time for yourself and read a book or newspaper on the way into the office."

The Travelwise NI campaign is encouraging commuters to consider the alternatives to being stuck in traffic by trying sustainable transport options such as car-sharing, public transport or depending on the distance walking and cycling are healthy and cheap alternatives.

For further information please contact Ross Williamson or Ursula Kelleher, Inform Communications Tel: 028 9023 3550 Mob: 07734821070 (RW)

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Brian Moreland, Head of Travelwise NI is available for interview through Inform Communications

Survey sample - 500 commuters who travel to and from work by car everyday were surveyed in Belfast City Centre between 11-15 September.

Travelwise NI is an initiative of the Department for Regional Development's Roads Service that promotes sustainable transport options to employers, commuters and schools throughout Northern Ireland. For further information please contact the Travelwise NI team on 0845 378

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