

## GOING MY WAY?

### Liftshare Car-Sharing Scheme, Nationwide

*There have been plenty of slogans to try and get people to consider using their cars less – ‘my other car is a bike’ has been popular, and more recently ‘my other car is a bus’. But what about if your other car is owned by the person who lives three streets away who wants to travel to the same place as you? Welcome to the world of Liftshare.*

Like the stories behind so many innovative transport schemes, this one starts in Europe. When travelling through Germany Ali Clabburn noticed that using the network of car sharing bureaux was cheaper to get around than by train or bus. When he returned to the UK he decided that it would be a good idea to find out about the same service here so that he could travel more cheaply for his frequent visits between Bristol, where he was studying, and his hometown of Norwich. When he discovered that no such scheme existed, an idea was born: “I knew somebody must be making that same journey and that they would be happy to share the costs. The question was how to link up with them. It was a market that nobody was tapping into.”

Ali set up Liftshare to begin to service this market. The core idea is a simple one: to use the internet to link up drivers with other people who make the same journey as they do. The passengers usually make a contribution towards fuel costs, which means that taking part in a scheme saves money for the individuals involved, and makes wider use of the convenience of cars without adding further to congestion and pollution. Nationally, 134,000 people have registered to use the service.

Liftshare estimates that it is currently saving more than 10,000 tonnes of carbon (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions every year, which is equivalent to planting almost 3.5 million trees. And there are social benefits too, as Ali explains: “People in rural areas, where public transport is poor or doesn’t exist at all, use Liftshare for everyday journeys like going to the doctor or for shopping. It is a way of bringing people into contact with one another.”

Liftshare has worked with almost 600 businesses, charities, hospitals, universities and local authorities to help them increase the number of people who share cars either in their organisations or local area. For example, Liftshare has developed a bespoke website for the west of England in the region around Bristol ([www.2carshare.com](http://www.2carshare.com)). One of the councils involved in this project, South Gloucestershire, has also introduced dedicated lanes on some roads for the use of cars (or other vehicles) with more than one person traveling in the car. ‘2+ Lanes’ are available only to buses, coaches and other vehicles carrying two or more people, motorcycles and pedal cycles. The idea is that 2+ Lanes reallocate road space to more sustainable forms of transport. Restricting use of the carriageway to vehicles with two or more people in them provides a real incentive to car sharing – not least because it beats the queues!

The council has been monitoring the implementation of the lane and found that the proportion of driver-only vehicles has decreased from 80% to 74% during the morning peak. The 2+ Lane only carries one third of all vehicles on this stretch of road, yet carries half of all people who are using it.

Cllr Pat Hockey, Executive Member for Planning, Transportation and Strategic Environment at South Gloucestershire Council, says that, “It is encouraging that so many residents of South Gloucestershire have signed up to the website [www.2CarShare.com](http://www.2CarShare.com). Thanks to this initiative, there are currently 1,000 fewer cars on the A4174 Ring Road per day and if more people sign up to car sharing this will continue to help reduce congestion in the area.”

## Facts

- Since 1997 average car occupancy has fallen, creating 129 million new car journeys (one additional car journey for every 127 previously).
- A 50% increase in car occupancy (from 1.58 per car to 2.37 per car) would result in a 33% reduction in traffic (from 450billion km to 300billion km).
- With almost 140,000 registered car shares around the UK Liftshare, operators of the UK's largest car share network, now estimate that more than 10,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> are being saved each year by people sharing their empty car seats and travelling together.
- Dr. Keith Tovey, Energy Science Director for CRed and Reader of Environmental Sciences at the University of East Anglia has calculated that if the average car occupancy could be increased from where it currently stands at 1.7 occupants per car to 2 people per car then the UK could save over 9.9 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> each year. (Source: <http://www.liftshare.org/news.asp?ns=17&tb=g>)

## Further Resources

For more information, check out the following websites:

- [www.liftshare.com](http://www.liftshare.com)
- [www.2carshare.com](http://www.2carshare.com)
- [www.bikebudi.com](http://www.bikebudi.com)
- [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)