

Home movers more likely to be green commuters, study finds

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A study of 18,000 UK residents has found that people who have just moved house are significantly less likely to travel to work by car, opting for a greener mode of transport instead.

By identifying this change in [behaviour](#), the researchers, from Cardiff University, believe there is a "window of opportunity" for [policy makers](#) to promote pro-environmental behaviours among the general population.

The change in behaviour was observed during the first six months of a person living in a new house, after which residents were shown to lapse back into old habits and were more likely to start using a car to commute again.

Writing in the journal *PLOS ONE*, the team believe that this initial change in attitude is partly down to the large upheaval associated with moving house, forcing residents to re-consider their existing habits.

Dr Gregory Thomas, from the University's School of Architecture, said: "Moving home is often a large change in people's lives where habits and old routines are broken. We've shown that during this time, a large proportion of residents in the UK will re-consider the way in which they [travel](#) to work."

The researchers arrived at their findings by analysing the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) 'Understanding Society' dataset - a longitudinal study of 40,000 households in the UK measuring [attitudes](#)

and behaviour over time. The survey is the largest of its kind in the world and provides a broad understanding of how 21st century life in the UK is changing.

The results showed that environmental attitudes also played a big part in an individual's decision to seek alternative methods to travel to work once they had moved house.

"People with greener attitudes who hadn't lived at their current home for long were far less likely to commute by car than those with weaker environmental attitudes," continued Dr Thomas. "But even though greener attitudes predicted lower car use immediately after moving, as time spent living in the same location increased we find that people's green attitudes became less and less predictive of their travel mode choice."

Professor Wouter Poortinga, also from the University's School of Architecture, added: "Natural breaks in behaviour, such as moving home, offer an excellent opportunity where people may be more receptive to new information or support, which could encourage them to maintain healthy and sustainable travel mode choices. Policy makers could use this break to deliver key information at a time when people are ready to engage with a new behaviour."

Provided by Cardiff University

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