

Frequently Asked Questions



Q: Would I benefit from joining a car club?

A: Car club members tend to fall into the following categories:

- People who do not currently own a car, but would like to have access to a car for occasional use, perhaps two or three times per week for social or business trips.
- Two-car families, who would not need their second car as a result of car club membership
- People who currently run a car and are doing a low mileage - e.g. less than 8,000 miles per annum - or who own an older more unreliable vehicle, or whose finances are stretched by car ownership could find car club membership an attractive alternative.
- Businesses who use pool cars or staff's own vehicles for business trips could use car club vehicles instead.

Q: Will a car be there when I need it?

A: Reliability of access is typically 90%, with cars being more in demand at evenings and weekends. If all the cars are booked, members can use taxis or rental cars, often at discounted rates, or choose another booking time.

Q: Where are the vehicles based?

A: Convenient locations will be chosen throughout the club catchment area, and should meet the following criteria:

- Located to ensure that the maximum number of people can access a vehicle within a five to ten minute walk.
- Well lit and overlooked, and with good access routes to ensure personal safety.
- Marked parking bays specially designated for car club cars; this ensures a guaranteed parking space - a particular advantage in areas with parking problems.

Q: Will I be able to use the car club to book a car for longer periods, e.g. to use on holiday?

A: Most clubs will have negotiated a special rate with a car rental firm for members who want to book cars for a longer hire period so that the car club vehicles are still available for short-term use. You will be able to book the car to be delivered to your home or to your holiday location. Some operators allow members to book cars at any of their clubs, so you can travel by public transport to your holiday location and make use of car club vehicles when you arrive.

Q: Can I book at the spur of the moment?

A: Yes! One car club member noticed one of the cars at its station, booked it using a mobile phone and was moving two minutes later. Many cars now have an on-board computer which can also be used to book the car on the spot.

Cars can also be booked up to 3 months in advance to ensure peace of mind for important engagements or regular trips.

Q: Can a car club provide a range of cars to choose from?

A: This will depend on the size of your local club, but even a club with 2 cars could offer a city car and an estate. As clubs grow they should be able to offer a greater choice; continental car clubs offer a range of vehicles including cabriolets, vans and minibuses. The link with the car rental firm mentioned earlier could also will allow members to hire larger vehicles, such as vans for moving furniture.

Q: How does the insurance work?

A: As a car club member, you will sign a contract to become a member of the car club's insurance scheme. Following address and credit checks, you will be covered to drive cars booked through the club. Membership is only available to people with a fairly clean driving licence, usually over 21 years old, depending on the insurance. There is sometimes an upper age restriction, typically of 75 years.

Q: What happens if I have an accident in the car?

A: You will be made aware of the procedure on how to report any accidental damage. The police must be informed if you are involved in anything other than a minor accident, or if anyone is injured.

Q: What happens if the car breaks down?

A: Car club vehicles will have breakdown cover (e.g. with the Environmental Transport Association, AA or RAC).

Q: Don't car clubs just reduce the number of cars not the number of journeys?

A: Most trips by car are local journeys of less than 5 miles. When you own a car the majority of your costs are fixed and petrol costs form a low percentage of your overall car costs. Therefore, especially with the car parked right outside the door, the temptation is to use the car for journeys that could be made by public transport, walking or cycling.

Members of a car club have low overheads and pay the full cost of car use each time they use the car, so the temptation to use a car unnecessarily for short journeys is removed. Research shows that in Europe, on average, one car club car replaces five privately owned cars, and members who previously owned a car cut down on their overall travel, reducing their car mileage by over 50%.