

# Facts and figures to support school travel initiatives in Wales

Information for parents and schools



## Sustrans

Sustrans makes smarter travel choices possible, desirable and inevitable. We're a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in.

It's time we all began making smarter travel choices. Make your move and support Sustrans today.

## Introduction

School travel initiatives encourage children to walk and cycle to school through practical and educational measures. These facts and figures provide evidence to support school travel projects in Wales and inspire staff, pupils, parents and the local community to work together to make the school journey safer, healthier and more enjoyable for everyone.

## Journeys we make

### Road traffic is growing

- In 2009, the overall motor vehicle traffic volume in Wales was 27.95 billion vehicle kilometers, an increase of 12% from 1999.<sup>(1)</sup>
- The growth in car travel has been accompanied by a reduction in motoring costs.<sup>(2)</sup>

- In 2009 bus and rail fares were respectively 24% and 13% higher than in 1997 (in real terms).<sup>(2)</sup>
- Total traffic in Wales, measured in vehicle kilometres, is forecast to grow by 22% between 2003 and 2025 and 39% by 2035.<sup>(3)</sup>

### We are travelling further

- In Great Britain, average journey length has increased from 5.2 miles in 1985/86 to seven miles in 2009.<sup>(4)</sup>
- On average people in Wales travelled 7,026 miles in 2009, compared to 5,317 miles (travelled by people in Great Britain) during 1985.<sup>(1)</sup>

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### We are walking and cycling less

- In 2008 people in Wales made an average 206 walking trips per person per year, compared to 350 trips (in Great Britain) in 1985/86.<sup>(1)</sup>
- In Great Britain, we made an average 15 bicycle journeys per person per year in 2009, compared to 25 in 1985/86.<sup>(4)</sup>
- 42% of people in the UK own one or more bicycles, but only 2% of all journeys are made by bicycle.<sup>(4)</sup>

### We are using cars more

- In 2008/09 people in Wales made an average 413 trips per person (as car drivers) compared to 395 in 1999/2001 – an increase of 5%.<sup>(1)</sup>
- In Great Britain, trips by car (as driver or passenger) accounted for 63% of all trips made and 79% of distance travelled in 2008/09.<sup>(4)</sup>

### Yet most journeys could be cycled or walked

- 20% of the journeys made in 2009 were less than one mile.<sup>(4)</sup>
- 54% of all the journeys under five miles were made by car in 2008.<sup>(5)</sup>
- The average car or van journey in 2009 was only 8.4 miles.<sup>(4)</sup>
- At a leisurely pace, you can cycle one mile in five minutes (which is twice the speed of a car in rush-hour traffic),<sup>(6)</sup> and on average people walk between two and four miles per hour.<sup>(7)</sup>
- Nearly half of all car trips in Wales could be replaced by walking, cycling or public transport.<sup>(3,3)</sup>

## Travelling to school

In general, the patterns of travel of primary (age five -10) and secondary school (age 11-16) children are different, partly due to increasing independence with age, but mainly because primary school children live much closer to their schools.<sup>(4)</sup>

### School journeys are getting longer

- The average length of a trip to school in Wales has increased from 3.0 miles in 1995/99 to 3.5 miles in 2008/09.<sup>(1)</sup>
- The average annual cost of the school run by car per primary school child is £367.<sup>(8)</sup>

### Recently, fewer children are walking to school

- In 2008/09, 34% of children in Wales aged between five and 16 travelled to school by car, an increase of 5% on the 1995/99 figure. 36% walked to school in 2008/09, a decrease of 1% from 1995/99.<sup>(1)</sup>

### Trend for independent travel has changed

- In 1971 80% of seven to eight year olds walked to school independently,<sup>(9)</sup> whereas in 2009 only 11% of seven to 10 year olds and 60% of 11–13 year olds were usually unaccompanied by an adult.<sup>(4)</sup>
- In all age groups the main reasons given for accompanying children to school were traffic danger and fear of assault.<sup>(4)</sup>
- The NSPCC estimates that on average 11 children a year are killed by strangers, whereas 49 were killed travelling as passengers in cars in 2008.<sup>(10)</sup>

## Journeys to School (Great Britain)<sup>(4)</sup>

	1985/86		1995/97		2009	
	5-10 year olds	11-16 year olds	5-10 year olds	11-16 year olds	5-10 year olds	11-16 year olds
walk	67%	52%	53%	42%	50%	38%
cycle	1%	6%	0%	2%	1%	3%
car	22%	10%	38%	20%	42%	22%
bus	4%	20%	7%	33%	7%	32%
other	2%	1%	2%	3%	0%	5%

Please note that differences in the way the statistics above were collated each year mean that they are not directly comparable.



In 2008 64 million journeys on the National Cycle Network were made by children to get to school or for play





## Pollution and climate change

### Provisional statistical data shows:

- Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), the main greenhouse gas associated with climate change, accounted for about 85% of total UK greenhouse gas emissions in 2008.<sup>(11)</sup>
- The majority of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transport sources are from road transport which produced 117 million tonnes in 2008 compared with 109 in 1990.<sup>(11)</sup>
- Since 1990, greenhouse gas emissions from road transport have increased by 7%.<sup>(11)</sup>
- The Climate Change Act 2008 introduced a legally binding target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% (below 1990 levels) by 2050. The interim target for 2020 is a 34% reduction.<sup>(11)</sup>

## Road casualties

Information about road casualties in a particular area can be obtained from the Road Safety Team of your local authority, which is usually located within the Highways Department.

### Traffic injuries cause most child deaths

- In 2009 there were 10,354 reported casualties from personal injury road accidents across Wales. 1,010 of these were children.<sup>(13)</sup>
- 61% of children killed or seriously injured in 2009 were pedestrians, 20% were car passengers and 15% were cyclists.<sup>(13)</sup>
- In 2009, there is a morning peak in reported child casualties between 8am and 9am coinciding with school travel and another peak from 3pm - 8pm.<sup>(4)</sup>

### Our child road safety record is improving

- In Wales, the number of children reported killed or seriously injured due to road accidents in 2009 was 53% lower than the 1994-1998 average.<sup>(13)</sup>
- An increase in cycling often leads to a reduction in cyclist casualties. A doubling of cycling would lead to a reduction in the risks of cycling by around a third.<sup>(14)</sup>

### Children need to develop road safety skills

- Children who walk to primary school develop road safety awareness and are less vulnerable when they walk independently to secondary school.<sup>(15)</sup>

- Young children perceive the world differently to adults, for example they have difficulty judging the speed and distance of vehicles and so need to be taught how to negotiate traffic.<sup>(15)</sup>
- Children who walk to school are actively engaged with their local community, have wider social networks, and have greater spatial awareness and road sense.<sup>(15)</sup>

### Speeding is the biggest problem

- Speed is one of the biggest contributory factors in fatal road accidents. In 2009, 1,880 people in Wales were killed or seriously injured in crashes where a speed contributory factor was reported. 29 of these were fatalities.<sup>(16)</sup>
- A pedestrian struck by a car driven at 20 mph has a 95% chance of survival. This reduces to 80% if driven at 30 mph and 10% at 40 mph.<sup>(16)</sup>
- A London survey showed that the introduction of 20 mph zones was associated with a 42% reduction in road casualties between 1986 and 2006. The percentage reduction was greatest in younger children.<sup>(16)</sup>

## Health

### Car fumes are bad for us

- Children living near roads with heavy vehicle traffic have twice the risk of respiratory problems as those living near less congested streets.<sup>(18)</sup>
- Car passengers in slow-moving traffic face pollution levels two to three times higher than those experienced by pedestrians.<sup>(19)</sup>
- The catalytic converter, which can destroy many polluting chemicals in a car's exhaust gases, only works well when it is hot. The school run is usually too short to allow the catalytic converter to reach the necessary temperature. As more children are driven to school, the air near the school becomes more polluted.<sup>(20)</sup>

### Asthma is on the increase

- 10% of all children in Wales are currently being treated for asthma.<sup>(21)</sup>
- Environmental pollution can make asthma symptoms worse and may play a part in causing some asthma.<sup>(22)</sup>
- 66% of people with asthma say that traffic fumes trigger their symptoms.<sup>(23)</sup>

### We are getting more overweight

- In 2009, one in five children in Wales was obese, a 3% increase from the previous year.<sup>(24)</sup>
- By 2050 it is predicted that 70% of girls and 55% of boys will be overweight or obese.<sup>(25)</sup>
- Obesity is known to lead to both chronic and severe medical problems.<sup>(25)</sup>
- In 2050 obesity is predicted to cost the NHS and wider society a total of £49.9 billion (at 2007 prices).<sup>(25)</sup>

### Physical activity

- The health benefits of cycling greatly outweigh any risks involved – on average cyclists live two years longer than non-cyclists.<sup>(14)</sup>
- In 2008 56% of children in Wales aged 7 to 11 and 65% aged 11 to 16 did not achieve the recommended level of physical activity which is one hour per day.<sup>(26)</sup>
- A study showed that Year 8 pupils walking the school journey each day used more calories than during the 2 hours of PE they receive each week.<sup>(27)</sup>
- The reduction in levels of physical activity due to increased car use affects children's stamina, alertness at school and academic performance.<sup>(28)</sup>
- By achieving the recommended levels of physical activity children can maintain a healthy body weight; develop healthy bones, muscles and cardiovascular system and improve coordination and movement control.<sup>(29)</sup>
- Physical activity has also been associated with psychological benefits in young people by improving their control over symptoms of anxiety and depression.<sup>(29)</sup>
- Inactivity in Wales costs at least £500m per year in lost output, sickness and healthcare provision for entirely avoidable illness.<sup>(30)</sup>

## Context in Wales:

### Legislative Context

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 sets out the statutory duties of local authorities for the provision of school transport. Local authorities are under a duty to make travel arrangements for children receiving primary education if they live two miles or more from their nearest suitable school, and for children receiving secondary education if they live three miles or more from their nearest suitable school.

The Learner Travel Measure also places a duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel when considering learner travel. The Measure allows local authorities to change school session times where it would promote sustainable modes of travel or would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of travel arrangements.

In addition, there are several initiatives and strategies already in Wales that relate to the active school travel agenda. These may prove useful in developing your own school transport plan:

### Wales Spatial Plan (WSP)

The Spatial Plan is a 20-year vision for Wales structured into national and area level sections. The Plan was developed to ensure the Welsh Assembly Government and its partners and agents develop policy in ways which take account of the different

challenges and opportunities in the different parts of Wales; and to provide a basis and momentum for working together on a shared agenda locally, so that the different parts of Wales can establish their own approaches to meet the objectives set.

The Vision of the National Framework is: To sustain communities by tackling the challenges presented by population and economic change; to grow in ways which will increase competitiveness while spreading prosperity to less well-off areas and reducing negative environmental impacts; to enhance the natural and built environment for its own sake and for what it contributes to well-being; and to sustain Wales' distinctive identity.

At the area level, the Wales Spatial Plan divides Wales into six Wales Spatial Plan Areas, enabling different parts of Wales to provide a distinctive response to delivering the national vision. In-keeping with the Plan's vision of 'fuzzy boundaries', many local authorities are defined as sitting within more than one spatial area:

Wales Spatial Plan Areas	Local Authorities
North West Wales	Anglesey; Gwynedd; Conwy
North East Wales	Wrexham; Flintshire; Denbighshire; Conwy
Central Wales	Denbighshire; Conwy; Powys; Ceredigion; Carmarthenshire; Gwynedd
Pembrokeshire	Pembrokeshire; Carmarthenshire
Swansea Bay	Swansea; Carmarthenshire; Bridgend; Neath Port Talbot
South East Wales	Cardiff; Newport; Monmouthshire; Blaenau Gwent; Rhondda-Cynon-Taff; Bridgend; Vale of Glamorgan; Merthyr Tydfil; Caerphilly; Torfaen

### Wales Transport Strategy

The Wales Transport Strategy launches a new approach to transport policy which focuses on how transport can contribute to a better quality of life by recognising that transport has to be planned, implemented and managed in co-ordination with all other policy areas. Published in May 2008, the Strategy proposes a series of outcomes based on the three 'pillars of sustainability', social, economic and environmental, that transport policies and projects in Wales should seek to deliver.

### National Transport Plan

The National Transport Plan, published in March 2010, sets out in detail how the Wales Transport Strategy will be delivered over the next five years. It builds on previous plans, adding and integrating public and community transport, walking and cycling.

### Regional Transport Plans

To improve the effectiveness of transport planning, the Welsh Assembly Government grouped local authorities in Wales into four regional transport consortia. Each consortium is required to



prepare a Regional Transport Plan, seen as the operational documents which will implement the intentions of both the Wales Transport Strategy and the Wales Spatial Plan.

Regional Transport Consortia	Local Authorities
TAITH	Conwy; Denbighshire; Flintshire; Gwynedd; Isle of Anglesey; Wrexham
TRACC	Ceredigion; Gwynedd; Powys
SWWITCH	Pembrokeshire; Carmarthenshire; Swansea; Neath Port Talbot
SEWTA	Blaenau Gwent; Bridgend; Caerphilly; Cardiff; Merthyr Tydfil; Monmouthshire; Newport; Rhondda Cynon Taf; Torfaen; Vale of Glamorgan

The Welsh Assembly Government uses the Regional Transport Plans developed as a mechanism for assigning funding to the regions.

**Targets**

The following targets have been made in Wales that relate directly to the sustainable travel agenda:

The **One Wales** agreement between Labour and Plaid Cymru sets out a target for three per cent annual reductions in carbon equivalent emissions by 2011 ‘in areas of devolved competence’.<sup>(31)</sup>

The **Climate Change Strategy** expands on the commitments set out in the One Wales document, providing further detail as to how the Welsh Government plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by three per cent in areas of devolved competencies. It also commits to the UK’s long term target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80 per cent by 2050.<sup>(32)</sup>

The **Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales 2009-13** brings together all the key initiatives which the Welsh Assembly Government and its partners are undertaking or planning to undertake in support of increasing walking and cycling in Wales.

A key aim of the plan is to help secure a change in behaviour - so that more people, young and old, walk and cycle more often. Regarding Travel to School, the Strategy has two targets:

**Walking:** Increase the percentage of children who walk to school to match the UK National Average from its current level of 39% to 46% in 2013.

**Cycling:** To triple the percentage of children cycling to school in Wales, from one per cent (ages 11 – 16) and two per cent (ages 7-11) to three per cent and six per cent respectively in 2013.

Progress against the actions set out in the plan are reported on annually. The first annual report on progress (2009/10) has been published on the Welsh Assembly Government website.

**Creating an Active Wales<sup>(26)</sup>** outlines how Wales will encourage increased levels of physical activity. The plan has two measurable high level targets which aim to get everybody to do ‘one day more’. For children, the target is to shift the average point of physical activity for 11 to 16 year olds from 60 minutes per day on 3.9 days to 60 minutes per day on 4.9 days by 2020. Within this target, there is the following requirement aimed at school travel:

Action	Date
All schools to develop active travel plans, including providing appropriate cycling and road safety training for children and young people.	2010-2015
Prioritise action to increase participation in physical activity of teenage girls.	2010-2015



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## Further information

Visit the School Travel website [www.sustrans.org.uk/schooltravel](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/schooltravel) for:

- latest news and information on Safe Routes to Schools
- specific information and events for each of the UK regions
- downloadable resources including other information sheets
- case studies, curriculum materials and newsletters

**For School Travel enquiries call 0117 915 0100 or email [schools@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:schools@sustrans.org.uk)**

## About Sustrans

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Welsh Assembly Government

