# Tyneside Walking and Cycling Index 2023

Published March 2024

Newcastle City Council

Gateshead Council

North Tyneside Council

Sustrans

## Foreword

Our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling in Tyneside

We know that active travel, whether it is cycling, walking or wheeling, helps achieve our aims of improving people’s health, supporting better local air quality and contributing to our carbon net zero ambitions through modal shift.

All three local authorities featured in this report – Gateshead, Newcastle and North Tyneside – have put detailed plans in place to move towards carbon net zero.

To help achieve this, walking, wheeling and cycling need to be the natural and safe ways for people to make everyday journeys, in the area where they live or getting around city, town and district centres.

We need to make the best use of the finite space we have available, especially in busy urban areas.

The three authorities have worked together with Sustrans on this important report, which sets out where we are now, as well as identifying some of the barriers to active travel which still exist.

We all want to help people choose active travel for more of their everyday journeys and the data in this report provides us with additional evidence to put our plans into practice.

The report also highlights that there is more to be done – 28% of women said they do not cycle but would like to; whilst only 56% of disabled people say safety when walking or wheeling is good, compared with more than two-thirds of people with no disability. It is important that active travel choices are as inclusive as possible.

Our authorities have continued to invest; securing substantial external funding, to improve active travel infrastructure, deliver cycle training and promote active travel in our communities.

With partners across the region we will continue working to achieve the aims and objectives of the North East Transport Plan.

We need to ensure that our towns, cities and neighbourhoods support safe and easy cycling, walking and wheeling for all, through good design, improved crossings, lighting and signage. This will help people to choose cycling, walking and wheeling for their everyday journeys, or to combine with public transport for longer trips.

Developing our transport network in this way, along with training and promotion, will help support our economy, improve accessibility and help address long-standing health, social and economic inequalities, while supporting carbon reduction and providing better air quality for people across our region.

**Martin Gannon, Chair of North East, Joint Transport Committee**

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## The Walking and Cycling Index

The Walking and Cycling Index (formerly Bike Life) is the biggest assessment of walking, wheeling and cycling in urban areas in the UK and Ireland.

It is delivered by Sustrans in collaboration with 23 cities and urban areas. Each city[[1]](#footnote-1) reports on the progress made towards making walking, wheeling and cycling more attractive, everyday ways to travel.

The Walking and Cycling Index reports every two years. This is the third report from Tyneside produced in partnership with Gateshead Council, North Tyneside Council and Newcastle City Council. The data in this report comes from 2023 and includes local walking, wheeling and cycling data, modelling and an independent survey of 1,191 residents aged 16 or above in Tyneside. The survey was conducted from March to June 2023. Social research organisation NatCen conducted the survey, which is representative of all residents, not just those who walk, wheel or cycle.

Across this report we have included comparisons to 2021 data where available.

Our thanks to the people of Tyneside who took part in the survey and shared their stories with us.

More details on all reports can be found at [www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index](https://www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index). For more data, including 2019 figures where available, see the [Index Data Tool](https://www.sustrans.org.uk/index-data-tool).

Map of the UK and Ireland showing the cities participating in the Walking and Cycling Index: Aberdeen, Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Cork Metropolitan Area, Dublin Metropolitan Area, Dundee, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Galway Metropolitan Area, Glasgow, Greater Cambridge, Greater Manchester, Inverness, Limerick Metropolitan Area, Liverpool City Region, Perth, Southampton City Region, Stirling, Tower Hamlets, Tyneside and Waterford Metropolitan Area.

### Defining wheeling

We recognise that some people who use wheeled mobility aids, for example a wheelchair or a mobility scooter, may not identify with the term walking and may prefer to use the term wheeling. We use the terms walking and wheeling together to ensure we are as inclusive as possible.

## Headlines

Tyneside

Population**[[2]](#footnote-2)**:

**705,230**

### Survey area:

Map showing the area covered by the survey with Gateshead, Newcastle and Tynemouth highlighted. The area is approximately **133** square miles and covers all of Tyneside.

### The impact of the pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic had a big impact on travel. In 2021 whilst most restrictions had been lifted, many people were taking fewer journeys and working from home.

#### Residents who travel by the following modes five or more days a week in Tyneside

##### Walking or wheeling

**50%** in 2019

**49%** in 2021

**49%** in 2023

##### Driving[[3]](#footnote-3)

**50%** in 2019

**36%** in 2021

**42%** in 2023

##### Public transport

**19%** in 2019

**11%** in 2021

**16%** in 2023

##### Cycling

**4%** in 2019

**5%** in 2021

**3%** in 2023

Participation in walking, wheeling and cycling remains at a similar level to in 2021.

**49%** of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week (**49%** in 2021)

**14%** of residents cycle at least once a week (**16%** in 2021)

### Walking, wheeling and cycling participation is not equal

Residents’ travel choices and their perceptions of walking, wheeling and cycling sometimes vary widely between different groups.

#### Proportion of residents who walk or wheel at least five days a week[[4]](#footnote-4)

**50%** of women

**47%** of men

#### Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

**10%** of people aged 16–25

**19%** of people aged 46–55

### Not all residents feel safe and welcome in their neighbourhood

#### Proportion of residents who think walking or wheeling safety is good

**68%** of non-disabled people

**56%** of disabled people

#### Proportion of residents who think cycling safety is good

**51%** of people aged 36–45

**33%** of people aged 66+

#### Proportion of residents who feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood

**65%** of LGBTQ+ people

**72%** of non-LGBTQ+ people

### Everyone benefits when more people walk, wheel and cycle

Every day, walking, wheeling and cycling in Tyneside take up to **140,000** cars off the road.[[5]](#footnote-5) Each year in Tyneside these three modes combined:

* Prevent **1,536** serious long‑term health conditions
* Create **£388.1 million** in economic benefit for individuals and Tyneside
* Save **24,000 tonnes** of greenhouse gas emissions

### Residents want to walk, wheel and cycle more and drive less

**21%** of residents want to drive less, yet **35%** of residents often use a car because no other transport options are available.

#### Percentage of residents who would like to use different types of transport more or less in the future:

##### Walk or wheel

**49%** more

**4%** less

##### Cycle

**39%** more

**5%** less

##### Take public transport

**31%** more

**10%** less

##### Drive

**13%** more

**21%** less

### Residents want more funding for walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport

#### Percentage of residents who would like to see more government spending in their local area:

**53%** on walking and wheeling (**49%** in 2021)

**42%** on cycling (**47%** in 2021)

**77%** on public transport (**65%** in 2021)

**33%** on driving (**29%** in 2021)

### Increased funding would help support more liveable neighbourhoods

#### Among Tyneside residents:

**52%** support, while **27%** oppose, more cycle paths along roads, physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

**56%** agree, while **20%** disagree, that increasing space for people socialising, walking, wheeling and cycling on their local high street would improve their local area

**72%** support, while **10%** oppose, the creation of more 20-minute neighbourhoods[[6]](#footnote-6)

**61%** support, while **19%** oppose, banning vehicles parking on the pavement

**57%** support, while **18%** oppose, the creation of more low‑traffic neighbourhoods[[7]](#footnote-7)

**53%** support, while **21%** oppose, shifting investment from road building schemes to fund walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport

## Walking in Tyneside

Walking and wheeling participation, safety and satisfaction

### Walking and wheeling participation

Overall in Tyneside the number of people walking and wheeling regularly (at least five days a week) has stayed the same since 2021.

Walking and wheeling are often overlooked in transport. This is despite being an efficient use of space, good for our health and having no environmental impact.

**93%** of all residents walk or wheel (**93%** in 2021)

**49%** of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week (**49%** in 2021)

#### Proportion of residents who walk or wheel at least five days a week

##### Gender[[8]](#footnote-8) and sexuality

**50%** of women (**48%** in 2021)

**47%** of men (**50%** in 2021)

**64%** of LGBTQ+ people

**47%** of non-LGBTQ+ people

##### Ethnicity

**50%** of people from ethnic minority groups (**29%** in 2021)

**48%** of white people (**51%** in 2021)

##### Age

**58%** of people aged 16–25 (**57%** in 2021)

**49%** of people aged 26–35 (**47%** in 2021)

**51%** of people aged 36–45 (**47%** in 2021)

**45%** of people aged 46–55 (**46%** in 2021)

**43%** of people aged 56–65 (**51%** in 2021)

**46%** of people aged 66+ (**46%** in 2021)

##### Disability

**46%** of disabled people (**44%** in 2021)

**50%** of non-disabled people (**52%** in 2021)

##### Socio-economic group[[9]](#footnote-9)

**47%** of AB (**51%** in 2021)

**48%** of C1 (**55%** in 2021)

**50%** of C2 (**45%** in 2021)

**54%** of DE (**41%** in 2021)

### Walking and wheeling safety and satisfaction

**64%** of residents think the level of safety for walking or wheeling is good (**74%** in 2021)

**50%** of residents think the level of safety for children walking or wheeling is good (**57%** in 2021)

**70%** of residents think their local area overall is a good place to walk or wheel (**76%** in 2021)

#### Proportion of residents who think walking or wheeling safety in their local area is good

##### Gender and sexuality

**64%** of women (**72%** in 2021)

**64%** of men (**77%** in 2021)

**68%** of LGBTQ+ people

**65%** of non-LGBTQ+ people

##### Ethnicity

**68%** of people from ethnic minority groups (**82%** in 2021)

**64%** of white people (**73%** in 2021)

##### Age

**77%** of people aged 16–25 (**79%** in 2021)

**60%** of people aged 26–35 (**70%** in 2021)

**68%** of people aged 36–45 (**73%** in 2021)

**61%** of people aged 46–55 (**73%** in 2021)

**64%** of people aged 56–65 (**77%** in 2021)

**56%** of people aged 66+ (**73%** in 2021)

##### Disability

**56%** of disabled people (**66%** in 2021)

**68%** of non-disabled people (**78%** in 2021)

##### Socio-economic group

**67%** of AB (**77%** in 2021)

**66%** of C1 (**78%** in 2021)

**64%** of C2 (**65%** in 2021)

**57%** of DE (**68%** in 2021)

### Quote from Lee

I’m registered blind and have a guide dog. I walk into North Shields every weekday to take my kids to school.

The street isn’t level, with a lot of potholes and poor drainage. Sometimes there’s no kerb. Guide dogs are trained to go from kerb to kerb so the dog gets confused if the kerb’s not there.

Clear street corners and edges help, with contrasting colours. Straight lines and landmarks like bollards or bins are useful to navigate.

## Cycling in Tyneside

Cycling participation, safety and satisfaction

### Cycling participation

Over a third of residents cycle, with potential for many more to take part. **14%** cycle at least once a week, a slight decrease since 2021, although it has increased for some age groups.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Barriers to cycling include safety concerns or lack of confidence, which can be reduced by providing more traffic-free routes and cycle training. Perceived cycling safety has marginally improved, but has decreased for some groups in society.

**34%** of all residents cycle (**36%** in 2021)

**14%** of all residents cycle at least once a week (**16%** in 2021)

#### Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

##### Gender and sexuality

**8%** of women (**10%** in 2021)

**20%** of men (**22%** in 2021)

**16%** of LGBTQ+ people

**14%** of non-LGBTQ+ people

##### Ethnicity

**14%** of people from ethnic minority groups (**12%** in 2021)

**14%** of white people (**16%** in 2021)

##### Age

**10%** of people aged 16–25 (**14%** in 2021)

**13%** of people aged 26–35 (**15%** in 2021)

**17%** of people aged 36–45 (**21%** in 2021)

**19%** of people aged 46–55 (**18%** in 2021)

**14%** of people aged 56–65 (**24%** in 2021)

**11%** of people aged 66+ (**7%** in 2021)

##### Disability

**12%** of disabled people (**8%** in 2021)

**15%** of non-disabled people (**19%** in 2021)

##### Socio-economic group

**16%** of AB (**20%** in 2021)

**12%** of C1 (**17%** in 2021)

**17%** of C2 (**15%** in 2021)

**12%** of DE (**10%** in 2021)

### Cycling safety and satisfaction

**44%** of all residents think the level of safety for cycling in their local area is good (**44%** in 2021)

**38%** of all residents think the level of safety for children cycling is good (**35%** in 2021)

**49%** of all residents think their local area overall is a good place to cycle (**47%** in 2021)

#### Proportion of residents who think cycling safety in their local area is good

##### Gender and sexuality

**44%** of women (**44%** in 2021)

**43%** of men (**46%** in 2021)

**44%** of LGBTQ+ people

**46%** of non-LGBTQ+ people

##### Ethnicity

**52%** of people from ethnic minority groups (**63%** in 2021)

**43%** of white people (**43%** in 2021)

##### Age

**57%** of people aged 16–25 (**57%** in 2021)

**39%** of people aged 26–35 (**47%** in 2021)

**51%** of people aged 36–45 (**44%** in 2021)

**41%** of people aged 46–55 (**42%** in 2021)

**43%** of people aged 56–65 (**40%** in 2021)

**33%** of people aged 66+ (**38%** in 2021)

##### Disability

**36%** of disabled people (**35%** in 2021)

**47%** of non-disabled people (**49%** in 2021)

##### Socio-economic group

**44%** of AB (**44%** in 2021)

**45%** of C1 (**48%** in 2021)

**45%** of C2 (**38%** in 2021)

**40%** of DE (**44%** in 2021)

### Quote from Muhammad

I enjoy being on my bike. I find it quite easy to get around. I can switch off and ride, have a nice time, and get somewhere too.

You do have to be quite careful in some places.

I recently started working in Gateshead. It’s quite far from here, the traffic is busy and there are dual carriageways. But I’d consider cycling it if I could find a nice route.

If they had separate cycle lanes there it would be much more accessible. I’d like to see some better signs and simpler routes.

## Benefits of walking

Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

### Tyneside residents walk or wheel 27 times around the world every day

The number of separate walking and wheeling trips has decreased somewhat compared with 2021. The decrease was greater for enjoyment or fitness (including running) than for trips to a destination.

#### Annual walking and wheeling trips by purpose[[11]](#footnote-11)

##### 2023: 252.4 million trips

Destination – adults only (like work, school, shopping): **134,100**,**000** or **53%**

School – children only: **16,300**,**000** or **6%**

Enjoyment or fitness – adults and children (including running): **102,000**,**000** or **40%**

This adds up to **243.7 million** **miles** = **670,000 miles** a day

##### 2021: 272.7 million trips

Destination – adults only (like work, school, shopping): **141,300**,**000** or **52%**

School – children only: **18,300**,**000** or **7%**

Enjoyment or fitness – adults and children (including running): **113,100**,**000** or **41%**

This adds up to **308 million** **miles** = **840,000 miles** a day

### Walking and wheeling benefits residents and the local economy

The Walking and Cycling Index uses a model to understand the costs and benefits of driving and walking. For example travel time, vehicle operating costs, health benefits, air quality and taxation.

**60p** is saved[[12]](#footnote-12) for each mile walked or wheeled instead of driven in Tyneside. (**26p** in 2021)

Over a year this adds up to **£36 million** from adults with a car in their household walking or wheeling to work, school and other destinations. (**£16.2 million** in 2021)

The total annual economic benefit from all trips walked and wheeled in Tyneside is **£310.3 million**[[13]](#footnote-13) (**£370.5 million** in 2021)

### Walking and wheeling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Walking in Tyneside prevents **1,192** serious long-term health conditions each year (**1,428** in 2021)

##### Cases prevented

Hip fracture: **480**

Dementia: **359**

Depression: **121**

Coronary heart disease: **124**

Other conditions: **108**

‘Other conditions’ includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer, colorectal cancer.

Saving the NHS in Tyneside **£14.6 million** per year (**£9.3 million** in 2021), equivalent to the cost of **360,000** GP appointments (**310,000** in 2021)

These figures are based on Sport England MOVES tool which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity.

In Tyneside the physical activity benefits of walking prevent **313** early deaths annually (**354** in 2021)

which is valued at **£1.13 billion**[[14]](#footnote-14) (**£1.16 billion** in 2021)

Please note wheelchair or mobility scooter trips are modelled as walking trips for the purposes of the MOVES and HEAT models.

People walking and wheeling more instead of driving improves air quality, saving annually:

**41,000 kg** of NOx (**48,000 kg** in 2021)

and

**5,800 kg** of particulates (PM**10** and PM**2.5**) (**6,900 kg** in 2021)

**51%** of residents agree the air is clean in their local area (**52%** in 2021)

### Walking and wheeling in Tyneside helps mitigate our climate crisis

**17,000 tonnes** of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by walking or wheeling instead of driving (**17,000 tonnes** in 2021), equivalent to the carbon footprint of **35,000** people taking flights from Newcastle to Tenerife (**37,000** people in 2021)

In 2021 transport accounted for **26%** of the UK’s greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2021 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures.

### Walking and wheeling keeps Tyneside moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.[[15]](#footnote-15) This helps to keep Tyneside moving for all road users.

**130,000** return walking and wheeling trips are made daily in Tyneside by people that could have used a car. (**140,000** in 2021)

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back **397 miles** equivalent to the distance from Newcastle to Plymouth. (**412 miles** in 2021)

## Benefits of cycling

Why everyone gains when more people cycle

### Tyneside residents cycle 9 times around the world every day

The number of separate cycling trips has decreased somewhat compared with 2021, when many Covid restrictions were still in force. However, cycling trips for shopping/personal/social purposes have increased.

#### Annual cycling trips by purpose in Tyneside[[16]](#footnote-16)

##### 2023: 16.9 million trips

Work: **5,700**,**000** or **34%**

School, college or university (adults): **820,000** or **5%**

School (children): **1,300**,**000** or **8%**

Shopping, personal business and social trips: **4,600**,**000** or **27%**

Leisure: **4,500**,**000** or **27%**

This adds up to **77.3 million** **miles** = **210,000 miles** a day

##### 2021: 17.3 million trips

Work: **6,300**,**000** or **36%**

School, college or university (adults): **900,000** or **5%**

School (children): **1,300**,**000** or **7%**

Shopping, personal business and social trips: **4,000**,**000** or **23%**

Leisure: **4,800**,**000** or **28%**

This adds up to **77.3 million** **miles** = **210,000 miles** a day

### Cycling benefits residents and the local economy

The Walking and Cycling Index uses a model to understand the costs and benefits of driving and cycling. For example travel time, vehicle operating costs, health benefits, air quality and taxation.

**£1.53** is saved for each mile cycled instead of driven in Tyneside. (**£1.15** in 2021)

Over a year this adds up to **£41.9 million** from adults with a car in their household cycling to work, school and other destinations. (**£31.1 million** in 2021)

The total annual economic benefit from all trips cycled in Tyneside is **£77.8 million**[[17]](#footnote-17) (**£66 million** in 2021)

### Cycling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Cycling in Tyneside prevents **344** serious long-term health conditions each year (**294** in 2021)

##### Cases prevented

Hip fracture: **120**

Dementia: **101**

Depression: **42**

Coronary heart disease: **43**

Other conditions: **38**

‘Other conditions’ includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer, colorectal cancer.

Saving the NHS in Tyneside **£4.3 million** per year (**£1.9 million** in 2021), equivalent to the cost of **100,000** GP appointments (**63,000** in 2021)

These figures are based on Sport England MOVES tool which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity.

In Tyneside the physical activity benefits of cycling prevent **31** early deaths annually (**27** in 2021) which is valued at **£114 million**[[18]](#footnote-18) (**£88.9 million** in 2021)

People cycling more instead of driving improves air quality, saving annually:

**13,000 kg** of NOx (**14,000 kg** in 2021)

and

**2,000 kg** of particulates (PM**10** and PM**2.5**) (**2,100 kg** in 2021)

**51%** of residents agree the air is clean in their local area (**52%** in 2021)

### Cycling in Tyneside helps mitigate our climate crisis

**7,500 tonnes** of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by cycling instead of driving (**7,500 tonnes** in 2021), equivalent to the carbon footprint of **16,000** people taking flights from Newcastle to Tenerife. (**16,000** people in 2021)

In 2021 transport accounted for **26%** of the UK’s greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2021 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures.

### Cycling keeps Tyneside moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.[[19]](#footnote-19) This helps to keep Tyneside moving for all road users.

**11,000** return cycling trips are made daily in Tyneside by people that could have used a car. (**12,000** in 2021)

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back **34 miles** equivalent to the distance from Newcastle to Darlington. (**36 miles** in 2021)

## Walking solutions

What would help make walking and wheeling easier?

### Residents want more services and amenities within walking and wheeling distance

Walking, wheeling and cycling should be the most attractive options. An area can support this by ensuring many of the things people need are found near to where people live. The environment should be safe, comfortable and welcoming.

20-minute neighbourhoods are places where you can walk from your home to many of the things you need on a regular basis. In this time most people can walk or wheel 480m and back, or further.[[20]](#footnote-20)

**64%** of Tyneside households are in neighbourhoods of more than 40 homes per hectare (**64%** in 2021). These are or can become 20-minute neighbourhoods.

These higher-density neighbourhoods with more people can sustain local businesses and public transport routes.[[21]](#footnote-21)

**55%** agree they can easily get to many places they need to visit without having to drive (**56%** in 2021)

#### What percentage of residents would find more local amenities and services useful to help them walk or wheel more?

**80%** More shops and everyday services, such as banks and post offices, close to your home (**79%** in 2021)

**74%** More government services, such as doctors surgeries and schools, close to your home (**73%** in 2021)

**84%** More parks or green spaces close to your home (**84%** in 2021)

**80%** More things to see and do close to your home, like cafés or entertainment venues (**80%** in 2021)

#### Proportion of households within a 400m radius of the following amenities

This is modelled as a straight-line distance, as opposed to the actual walking distance based on street layout which is likely to be longer (approximately equivalent to 480m).

Food shop **74%**

Park or space for recreation **95%**

Doctors surgery **27%**

Primary school **56%**

Post Office **32%**

A mix of cultural and leisure venues[[22]](#footnote-22) **83%**

Railway station or metro station (within 800m) **36%**

Bus stop **99%**

### Residents want better streets

There are many ways to make our streets and neighbourhoods safe, welcoming and comfortable for everyone to walk or wheel in.

#### What percentage of residents think that these changes would help them walk or wheel more?

**68%** Wider pavements (**71%** in 2021)

**68%** More frequent road crossings, with reduced wait times (**72%** in 2021)

**78%** Nicer places along streets to stop and rest, like more benches, trees and shelters (**76%** in 2021)

**73%** Better pavement accessibility, like level surfaces, dropped kerbs at crossing points (**71%** in 2021)

**65%** Fewer cars parked on the pavement (**68%** in 2021)

**86%** Less fear of crime or antisocial behaviour in their area (**78%** in 2021)

#### In Tyneside:

**45%** of A and B roads have a pavement width greater than 3m if unobstructed[[23]](#footnote-23)

**64%** of C and unclassified roads have a pavement width greater than 2m if unobstructed

**86%** of residents agree more measures to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour on the street or in public spaces would improve their local area (**78%** in 2021)

### Quote from Kevin McVittie, Head Teacher, Hotspur Primary School

We were the first school in Newcastle to join the Council’s trial school street programme.

We aimed to reduce traffic and air pollution around the school gate, and to encourage more children to get active.

During peak hours the Council uses an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to exclude motor traffic (except local residents, teachers and other exemptions) from six streets in the zone around the school. There is no enforcement, but a camera monitors the streets.

It’s been a great success. Over 86% of people want the scheme to continue. It’s created a quieter, cleaner and calmer school run.

Many more children now walk, wheel or cycle to school, particularly in summer. And the residents don’t complain about parking any more!

## Cycling solutions

What would make cycling better?

### Many Tyneside residents want to cycle

#### How do residents see themselves when it comes to cycling?

Regularly cycle: **8%** (**8%** in 2021)

Occasionally cycle: **17%** (**20%** in 2021)

New or returning to cycling: **4%** (**7%** in 2021)

Do not cycle but would like to: **26%** (**23%** in 2021)

Do not cycle and do not want to: **45%** (**42%** in 2021)

#### What proportion of residents said they ‘do not cycle but would like to’?

**28%** of women (**27%** in 2021)

**54%** of people from ethnic minority groups (**33%** in 2021)

**21%** of disabled people (**25%** in 2021)

### Residents want improved cycling infrastructure

#### What percentage of residents would be helped to cycle more by better facilities?

**63%** More traffic‑free cycle paths away from roads, like through parks or along waterways (**64%** in 2021)

**56%** More cycle paths along roads that are physically separated from traffic and pedestrians (**59%** in 2021)

**61%** More signposted local cycle routes along quieter streets (**60%** in 2021)

**59%** Better links with public transport, like secure cycle parking at train stations (**59%** in 2021)

There are **607** cycle parking spaces across all **45** railway and metro stations[[24]](#footnote-24) (**609** in 2021) and **4** cycle parking spaces across all **5** bus stations (**0** in 2021) in Tyneside

#### Tyneside has:[[25]](#footnote-25)

**190 miles** of traffic‑free cycle paths away from the road (**171 miles** in 2021)

**10 miles** of cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians (**10 miles** in 2021)

**14 miles** of signposted routes along quieter streets (**1 mile** in 2021)

**22%** of households within 125m of these routes (**15%** in 2021)

**52%** of residents support building more cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians, even when this would mean less room for other road traffic (**53%** in 2021)

### Residents want more support to cycle

#### What percentage of residents think that these kinds of support would help them cycle more?

**39%** Cycling training courses and organised social rides (**38%** in 2021)

**41%** Access or improvements to a city cycle hire scheme (**40%** in 2021)

**48%** Access to secure cycle storage at or near home (**48%** in 2021)

**49%** Access to a bicycle (**48%** in 2021)

**38%** Access to an electric cycle (**38%** in 2021)

**28%** Access to a cargo cycle with space to carry children or shopping (**31%** in 2021)

**22%** Access to an adapted cycle, like a tricycle or handcycle (**21%** in 2021)

#### Public cycle parking

There is a public cycle parking space for every **158** people who cycle in Tyneside. (**169** in 2021)

#### Reported cycle thefts

There were **1,103** reported cycle thefts in Tyneside in 2022/23.

**1,220** in 2021/2022

For every **267** people who own an adult cycle in Tyneside, there was **1** reported cycle theft in the past year.

#### Proportions of residents with access to an adult cycle

**51%** of residents (**50%** in 2021)

**37%** of socio-economic group DE (**35%** in 2021)

**57%** of socio-economic group AB (**63%** in 2021)

**51%** of residents support financial discounts for people on low incomes or not in employment to help them buy a cycle

**21%** of households are within 800m of a cycle shop[[26]](#footnote-26)

### Quote from David Buchan, Director, Bike4Health

A teacher at school introduced me to cycling. It gave me freedom and opened up the world.

I wanted to give kids that experience. Since 2014 we’ve worked with tens of thousands of children. We’ll take them on traffic free paths to the coast, National Cycle Network route 72 along the Tyne, or the old waggonways.

The bike is an education tool. Children learn history of the old railway paths, experience nature, and see first-hand problems like litter, climate change and car fumes.

Traffic levels are much worse during term time. If we make it safer for children to ride, walk or wheel to school that would make a massive difference. We need more off-road routes and segregated paths.

## Neighbourhood solutions

What would help make neighbourhoods better?

### All residents should feel welcome in their neighbourhood

#### Proportion of residents that feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood

**71%** of residents (**68%** in 2021)

**74%** of people from ethnic minority groups (**82%** in 2021)

**71%** of white people (**67%** in 2021)

**72%** of women (**69%** in 2021)

**68%** of men (**67%** in 2021)

**65%** of LGBTQ+ people

**72%** of non-LGBTQ+ people

**64%** of disabled people (**58%** in 2021)

**74%** of non-disabled people (**73%** in 2021)

**58%** of socio-economic group DE (**56%** in 2021)

**75%** of socio-economic group AB (**76%** in 2021)

### The dominance of motor vehicles can discourage walking, wheeling and cycling

Only **30%** of residents think that their streets are not dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles. (**30%** in 2021)

#### Residents would find fewer motor vehicles on their streets useful to:

**60%** Walk or wheel more (**63%** in 2021)

**53%** Cycle more (**55%** in 2021)

Unclassified roads are not generally designed to carry through traffic, but in Tyneside **24%** of their total length is accessible to through traffic (**25%** in 2021). This can result in rat-running.[[27]](#footnote-27)

**51%** agree that restricting through-traffic on local residential streets would make their area a better place. (**54%** in 2021)

**68%** of Tyneside’s streets have 20mph speed limits.[[28]](#footnote-28) (**67%** in 2021)

#### Residents would find more streets with 20mph speed limits useful to:

**56%** Walk or wheel more (**58%** in 2021)

**51%** Cycle more (**54%** in 2021)

### Residents want local streets to be better spaces for people to spend time in

**56%** agree increasing space for people socialising, walking, wheeling and cycling on their local high street would improve their local area (**60%** in 2021)

**55%** agree they regularly chat to their neighbours, more than just to say hello (**56%** in 2021)

**57%** support low‑traffic neighbourhoods (**65%** in 2021)

### Quote from Alison Stenning, PlayMeetStreet

We started PlayMeetStreet North Tyneside in 2017. Since then we’ve supported almost 100 streets to set up play streets. Play streets give children space to play and for neighbours to meet. There are water fights, chalking, football, and always a lot of scooting, cycling, skateboarding and rollerskating.

Often parents don’t know each other particularly well before the children start playing out. It leads to all sorts of neighbourhood connections.

Children learn to cycle or scoot on the street then they often start travelling to school together. People start to reimagine how their street is used.

We’d love to see more walking and cycling infrastructure close to our streets. We’re now one of the biggest play streets projects in the country. It would be great to spread to more diverse communities, particularly those which have low car ownership.

### Neighbourhoods must be designed with children in mind

Neighbourhoods should be places for children to thrive. Increasing independence, providing space to play and socialise, and improving the journey to school are all important.

If we design neighbourhoods with the safety of children in mind they may then work better for everyone else too.

**11** **years old** average age when people living with children would let them walk, wheel or cycle independently in their neighbourhood. (**11** **years old** in 2021)

**80%** of seven-year-olds in Germany are allowed to go alone to places within walking distance, other than school.[[29]](#footnote-29)

**47%** of residents agree there is space for children to socialise and play (**49%** in 2021)

**50%** of households are within 400m of a children’s playground

Among Tyneside residents:

**51%** agree, while **22%** disagree, closing streets outside local schools to cars during drop-off and pick-up times would improve their local area (**49%** agreed, while **21%** disagreed in 2021)

These are known as ‘School Streets’.

**4** **schools** in Tyneside have School Streets schemes[[30]](#footnote-30) (**0** schemes in 2021)

## Developing Tyneside

Recent walking, wheeling, cycling and neighbourhood changes

All three of our authorities have plans in place, and are seeking further investment, to work towards being carbon net zero by 2030. We know climate change poses a significant threat to people’s health, wellbeing and livelihoods. Conversely, supporting people to get around by walking, wheeling and cycling can contribute to carbon reduction, benefit local air quality, support local shops and businesses, and improve health and wellbeing.

The three authorities carry out training and promotion measures which support active travel, for example delivering national standard ‘Bikeability’ cycling training to young people in schools.

In Newcastle, trials of four School Streets (which create a safe space for active travel at school start and finish times) have been carried out during 2022 and 2023, piloting the schemes in different settings. The council has worked closely with Sustrans to deliver a programme of engagement work around school road safety and active travel promotion.

A Social Prescribing Pilot has been launched in east Gateshead, with partners aiming to improve physical and mental well-being of individuals referred to the pilot, using active travel to manage existing physical and mental health conditions, and reduce the prevalence of future conditions. This links with the development of Gateshead’s Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and funding has been secured for infrastructure improvements in the pilot area.

At the Team Modeshift National Sustainable Travel Awards 2023, Gateshead Council and Living Streets were nominated for their collaboration on ‘Be Cool Birtley’, which brought together children from five schools to compete in a ‘Walk of Fame’ to see who could increase the number of people walking, cycling and scooting to school, and encourage more parents to park away from school and using ‘park and stride’.

North Tyneside’s popular Summer of Cycling programme of events took place once again in 2023, and included cycling training, adapted cycle sessions and ‘Dr Bike’ cycle maintenance tips and assistance. The council has worked with schools to put in place several School Street schemes and offers road safety education to schools in the borough.

In Newcastle, the Council has continued to build high quality walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure in different parts of the city and delivered a number of temporary trial schemes outside hospitals, in the city centre, schools and neighbourhoods to make active travel more attractive. The council has made a School Street trial permanent at Hotspur Primary School in Heaton, is developing pocket parks at other locations, and has trialled several pilot neighbourhood schemes to reduce the impact of through-traffic on residential streets.

Gateshead Council has completed the installation of a single-phase crossing at the southern end of the Tyne Bridge, part of a wider package of sustainable travel improvements in and around Gateshead Quays, and has completed a scheme improving cycle facilities on A167 Durham Road through Birtley to Low Fell: both received funding from the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF).

In North Tyneside, the council’s ambitious regeneration plans for North Shields town centre have delivered high quality public realm improvements, such as at Northumberland Square and Howard Street, and improved active travel links in the town centre, to the new Transport Hub and the Fish Quay. With external funding from TCF, cycling, walking and wheeling improvements have been delivered on routes which link to Four Lane Ends interchange and to other Metro stations in the borough.

Our authorities continue to seek to put in place initiatives and routes which help more people to make cycling, walking and wheeling part of their everyday travel.

## Looking forward

Better streets and places for everyone

The figures in this report point to there being a substantial unmet demand for more and better cycling facilities. Our three authorities continue to build new protected infrastructure for people travelling actively and we know that safety and convenience are key factors in helping people to cycle, walk or wheel more widely.

We also continue to deliver active travel training and promotion, including working with local schools.

Where people make more of their everyday journeys by means of cycling, walking and wheeling, this benefits people’s health, supports local air quality and carbon reduction, and can support local businesses and encourage visits to town and district centres.

Newcastle’s city centre improvements are continuing with an emphasis on prioritising pedestrians and improving the quality of a number of key streets, notably Grey Street, Northumberland Street and Ridley Place. Pilgrim Street is also undergoing a significant transformation with work currently underway to introduce better cycling facilities and improve pedestrian crossings at busy locations. Cycling facilities and new crossings for pedestrians are being installed as part of new housing schemes in the west of the city, and new crossings for active travel are being provided on more strategic routes such as Heaton Park Road.

In Gateshead, work is proceeding on the West Tyneside Cycle Route, which will improve cycle links between Team Valley, Metrocentre and Blaydon, with external funding from the Transforming Cities Fund.

Work is underway to deliver the Sea Front Sustainable Route, a permanent, segregated, safe space for active travel along North Tyneside’s coast. The council secured funding from Active Travel England and Sustrans to deliver the works, which will make it easier for people to safely access the award-winning beaches, attractions and local businesses in Whitley Bay, Cullercoats and Tynemouth. The council continues to further develop its regeneration plans for the borough and, subject to funding being obtained, these are to include improved local links for people walking, wheeling or cycling in locations such as Wallsend town centre and the villages in the North West of North Tyneside.

Many people cross our local authority boundaries for work, leisure and other journeys, and we work on making these links easier where we can. The introduction of the new Tyne and Wear Metro fleet, with more space suitable to carry bikes on board, will help people to combine public transport trips with cycling.

Equally, with more people working from home for part of the week, cycling, walking and wheeling links to shops, services and local and district centres become particularly important.

Measures which support cycling, walking and wheeling can help create safer, cleaner and greener neighbourhoods. This can have positive impacts such as better local air quality, reduced carbon footprint, better road safety and improved health and fitness.

### Quote from Alice Wiseman, Gateshead council

The benefits of active travel are well known, but it’s not always easy.

Many people don’t feel fit enough or confident enough to get moving. For those who had to shield during the pandemic, this might be because their strength and balance suffered from such a long period of inactivity. For others, mental health issues could be playing a part.

Meanwhile, Gateshead Council is also working to tackle the climate emergency and improve air quality by shifting the balance away from private cars and towards walking, cycling and public transport.

Funded by Active Travel England, we’re at the beginning of a pilot that aims to address both issues.

Our new Walk and Wheel team works with social prescribing partners at local charity Edberts House to identify people who may benefit from free help to get active.

We work with participants to understand the barriers they’re facing and decide together what’s right for them, but support can range from assisted one to one walking programmes to guided group bike rides.

In turn, the participants help us to understand what more we can do to make active travel in Gateshead easier and more accessible for everyone.

## Notes on methodology:

The attitudinal survey was conducted from March to June 2023 by independent social research organisation NatCen.

The survey is representative of all Tyneside residents, not just those who walk, wheel or cycle.

2021 survey data was collected from June to August 2021, also by NatCen, following the same methodology.

All other data is sourced from our city partners, national data sets or modelled and calculated by Sustrans.

Trip estimates use a model developed by Sustrans. When comparing to other travel surveys, some variation may exist in the proportion of journeys travelled by journey purpose.

Rounding has been used throughout the report. In many cases we have rounded to the nearest whole number. Rounding is avoided where this may cause confusion, for example with modelled estimates shown in the summary and benefits sections.

More information and a detailed methodology are available at [www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index](https://www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index)

Sustrans makes it easier for everyone to walk, wheel and cycle.

We work for and with communities, helping them come to life by walking, wheeling and cycling to create healthier places and happier lives for everyone.

Join us on our journey. [www.sustrans.org.uk](https://www.sustrans.org.uk/)

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Thanks to Open Route Service for their support with their isochrone plugin in QGIS.

Walking and Cycling Index Tyneside has been funded and supported by The Freshfield Foundation and Gateshead Council, North Tyneside Council and Newcastle City Council. The project is co-ordinated by Sustrans.

1. City is used as a shorthand for Walking and Cycling Index cities, city regions, metropolitan areas and boroughs. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ONS Census 2021. This is the most recent available for Tyneside. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Travelling as driver or passenger of car, van or motorcycle. In 2019, questions did not include traveling by motorcycle. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The sample size for respondents who identified their gender ‘in another way’ was too low to be statistically significant and therefore is not presented here. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Based on walking, wheeling and cycling by residents that live in a household with a car. Does not include leisure cycling or leisure walking or wheeling trips. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See definition in Walking solutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. For definition see [Methodology document](https://www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The sample size for respondents who identified their gender ‘in another way’ was too low to be statistically significant and therefore is not presented here. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Socio-economic group is a classification based on occupation maintained by the Market Research Society. Groups A and B are professional and managerial. Group C1 is supervisory/clerical and students. Group C2 is skilled manual. Groups D and E are semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, homemakers and people not in employment. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Based on people who cycle at least once a week. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Trips for enjoyment or fitness include adults and children (with and without adult accompaniment). School trips are shown separately for children only. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Benefits have increased significantly, mainly because of increased costs of driving and greater traffic congestion. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. This includes trips walked or wheeled for enjoyment or fitness, and trips to destinations by people with and without a car. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Based on WHO/Europe Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), which enables an economic assessment of the health benefits of walking by estimating the value of reduced mortality resulting from specified amounts of walking. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Litman, 2023. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Leisure trips include adults and children (with and without adult accompaniment).

Education trips are shown separately for adults and children. All other trips are just adults. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. This includes trips cycled for enjoyment or fitness, and trips to destinations by people with and without a car. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Based on WHO/Europe Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), which enables an economic assessment of the health benefits of cycling by estimating the value of reduced mortality resulting from specified amounts of cycling. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Litman, 2023. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, **1995**. The Time-Area Concept. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Asher et al, 2012. Most older pedestrians are unable to cross the road in time: a cross-sectional study. Age and Ageing. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Sustrans, 2017. Linking Active Travel and Public Transport to Housing Growth and Planning. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. A minimum of three distinct types of cultural and leisure venues, like cafés, pubs, bingo halls, cinemas, museums. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. OS source measurement now excludes grass verges, so is more accurate than in the 2021 report. A and B roads are main roads. C roads and unclassified roads are more minor roads and often residential streets. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. This includes some cycle parking that is shared with bus users. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. To ensure comparability, these figures are correct as of **31** May 2023 for all city reports. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Credit to the Association of Cycle Traders (ACT) for their assistance with cycle shop locations and services offered. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Based on analysis by CycleStreets [www.lowtrafficneighbourhoods.org](https://www.lowtrafficneighbourhoods.org/). Unclassified roads are all public roads that are neither motorways, A, B nor C roads. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Excludes motorways. Data from North Tyneside includes motorways. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Children’s Independent Mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Figure given is correct as of **31** May 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)