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Cycle to Work Scheme sees huge growth as rail fares increase

On the back of rising train fares and fuel prices, ever greater numbers of commuters are getting on their bikes, as the cycle to work scheme sees a huge growth in uptake. With today's RPI figures highlighting that regulated rail fares are to increase, on average, by 4.1% next January, increasing numbers of employees are opting to reap the benefits of cycling to work as a cheap and healthy way to commute.

Figures published today by the Cycle to Work Alliance (Cyclescheme, Cycle Solutions, Evans Cycles and Halfords) highlight a 22.5% increase in take up in the second quarter of 2013, when compared to the same period in 2012. This follows a similarly large 19.3% year-on-year increase for the first quarter of 2013.

Overall, the second quarter has seen the scheme encouraging over 29,000 new cyclists to commute to work by bike*, with over 44,000 new cyclists signing up to the scheme in the first half of this year.

With MPs set to debate the findings of the *Get Britain Cycling* report in Parliament on 2nd September, these latest figures highlight the desire and interest among the UK population to take up cycling and demonstrates that the cycle to work scheme remains a proven, cost effective and affordable way for individuals to do so.

Steve Edgell, Director of Cycle Solutions and Chair of the Cycle to Work Alliance, said: *“These latest figures are hugely encouraging. With rail fares continuing to rise above inflation, they show that there is a popular, affordable alternative to train travel – commuting to work by bike.*

With more and more people signing up to the scheme, despite the cold start to the year, these figures demonstrate that the cycle to work scheme is hugely effective in increasing cycling take-up.

With over 44,000 new cyclists signing up to the scheme this year, 2013 is looking like the year that cycling becomes ever more mainstream.”

-ENDS-

Notes for editors:

- The Cycle to Work Alliance is a group of the leading providers of the cycle to work scheme, including Cycle Solutions, Cyclescheme, Evans Cycles and Halfords.
- The cycle to work initiative is a tax-efficient, and on the whole, salary-sacrificed employee benefit that provides a way of encouraging more adults to take up cycling. Introduced in the 1999 Finance Act, the scheme encourages employers to loan bicycles and cycling safety equipment to employees as a tax-exempt benefit for the purpose of cycling to work. Under the scheme, employers buy cycling equipment from suppliers approved by their scheme administrator, and hire it to their employees. At the end of the loan period, the employer may choose to give the employee the option to purchase the equipment.
- To date over 550,000 people have taken advantage of the scheme, which involves over 2,220 bike retailers and 32,000 employers.
- * Industry data shows that 54% of the scheme uptake each year are new users. Given 54,276 certificates were issued by Alliance members in Q2 2013, there were approximately 29,309 new scheme users.
- For more information please see www.cycletoworkalliance.org.uk or contact Simon Darby at simon@westminsteradvisers.co.uk or 0207 227 1649.