




A manifesto for cycle commuting

Our roadmap to
delivering the next
25 years of success





Introduction

Unlocking cycle commuting

The Labour Government has pledged unprecedented investment in active travel, recognising its crucial role in key national missions, including driving economic growth and productive jobs, improving public health, and reducing the nation's carbon footprint.

In this context, the Cycle to Work Alliance has developed this roadmap in collaboration with industry stakeholders, consumers, parliamentarians and policymakers, supported by exclusive YouGov polling. The manifesto sets out a series of policy recommendations to unlock a cycle commuting eco-system fit for the future and that promotes access for all.

These proposals are designed to align to the Government's active travel agenda, focusing on expanding access to cycle commuting by prioritising infrastructure improvements, ensuring safety, and enhancing accessibility. By doing so, we aim to leverage the full potential of the Cycle to Work Scheme as a key driver of positive behavioural change, productivity and economic stimulus.

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the scheme, we look forward to working with the Government to ensure that cycling remains a vital component of the UK's future transport landscape and delivering on these recommendations.

We are grateful to all who have contributed to this report.



halfords



EVANS
CYCLES



forest

“ green
alliance... ”



Foreword

Celebrating the anniversary

2024 is a special year for the Cycle to Work Scheme as we celebrate its 25th anniversary. Over the last two decades, it has played a key role in supporting workers and employers, enabling healthy behaviours, and contributing to the transition to a lower carbon economy.


Crucially, it has helped millions of people to take up cycle commuting, and it remains a brilliant catalyst to enable more people to cycle across the UK.

As an Alliance, we stand proud of the Scheme's achievements in the last 25 years, but we are not complacent. We know there is much more to do and now, with the advent of a new Government and a milestone anniversary for the Scheme, it is the right time to look back on what has been achieved and how we can continue to grow the Scheme and improve access for all.

A strong track record in greener, affordable and healthier journeys

More than two million people have accessed the Scheme in the last decade alone. Many of these are new cyclists and the Scheme is a gateway to access the right equipment and support. It is responsible for a fifth of new bike sales in the UK every year, helping drive customers into bike shops in all parts of the country, and helping to keep cycling affordable.






At a time of constrained household budgets, the Scheme is helping make commuting cheaper. Users save at least a third of the cost of a new bike and equipment and spread the cost evenly across monthly payments. This is massively valuable at a time of rising public transport and motoring costs.

Cycling to work is also the greener option. The Scheme makes it easier for people to consider active commuting at a time when more people than ever are considering their own carbon footprint. 60% of participants would drive to work if they didn't cycle.

And it is helping make employees happier and healthier. The vast majority of users say their mental wellbeing has improved from cycling to work, and 90% of employers say their workforces are healthier as a result of offering the Scheme.



Shifting up a gear to overcome barriers and encourage participation

We know too well that many people still face barriers to getting in to cycling. We have long focused on unlocking the Scheme for groups who cannot participate, including those earning at or near the National Minimum Wage and the self-employed. We also previously campaigned successfully to lift the cap so that more people had access through the Scheme to the bikes that meet their needs, whether that be e-bikes or specially adapted cycles.

But there is more that needs to happen. This manifesto sets out what we believe needs to change to lower the barriers and encourage more people to participate. In the following pages, we make a series of recommendations which we believe have the potential to significantly shift the dial on cycle commuting in the UK and I am grateful to our peers for their contributions and ideas to this report.

We look forward to actively engaging with our partners to help ensure significantly more people can start cycling to work. Together, we can make the next 25 years of the Scheme even bigger and better.

About us

The story of the Scheme

1999: Launch of the Cycle to Work Scheme

The scheme was officially launched by Tony Blair's Labour Government in July 1999.

2005: First guidance published by DfT

The Department for Transport (DfT) published the first guidance for the Cycle to Work scheme, leading to increased adoption by employers.

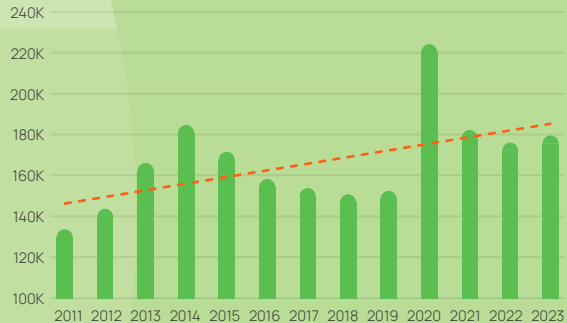
2010: Formation of the Cycle to Work Alliance

Uncertainty around other salary sacrifice benefits led to the formation of the Cycle to Work Alliance. This enabled the promotion of the scheme's contributions to employee health, the environment, and Government transport policies.

2013: Cycling mania following London 2012

Uptake in the Scheme flourished as Team GB won groundbreaking gold medals in cycling events as part of London 2012.

Volume of certificates



2011: Institute of Employment Studies Report

A report published by the Institute of Employment Studies highlighted the economic benefits of the Cycle to Work scheme, estimating a net benefit of £72 million to the UK from improved health, reduced NHS costs, and increased productivity.



2017: Integration into Active Travel

The Cycle to Work Alliance worked closely with the Department for Transport, other Government departments, political parties, and stakeholders to integrate the scheme into the UK's active travel policies.

2019: Updated Scheme Guidance

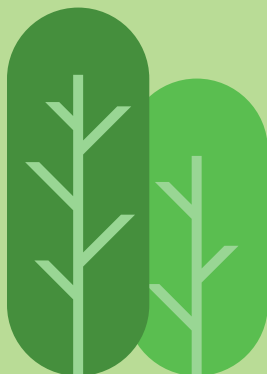
After extensive advocacy, the Cycle to Work Alliance successfully influenced the DfT, HMRC, and HM Treasury to update scheme guidance. This clarification allowed employees to access Cycle to Work packages exceeding £1,000, ensuring everyone could access a bike for their needs – whether that be e-bikes or specially adapted cycles.

2024: 25 years of the Scheme

In its 25th year, more than a fifth of UK bike sales came through the Scheme. We continue to campaign to improve access to the Scheme and ensure those who have most to gain can benefit.

2020: Pandemic Boom

The Covid-19 pandemic led to a significant increase in cycling across the UK as people sought safer, socially-distanced modes of transport. The Cycle to Work scheme played a crucial role during this period, enabling more employees to take up cycling as a practical and healthy way to commute and exercise.



About us

The impact of the Scheme



2.3m

So far, around 2.3 million people have participated.¹



6 in 10

Scheme users would drive to work if they didn't use the scheme.⁴



70%

Of current users pay the basic rate of tax, indicating widespread appeal across different income groups.



4 out of 5

Participants report cycling every week after joining.²



42%

The Cycle to Work scheme saves employees up to 42% off the cost of a new bike.



£1,262

Commuters can save an average of £1,262 a year by switching to cycling, rising to £1,600 in Greater London.⁵



750kg CO₂

A commuter who switches from car to bike for an 8km commute saves 750kg of CO₂ emissions annually.³

1. Data captured by Cycle to Work Alliance members between 2014 to 2025
2. Data from Cycle to Work Alliance research conducted in 2021
3. Data from European Cycle Federation
4. Data from Cycle to Work Alliance research conducted in 2021
5. Research conducted by Blackhawk Network in 2024





The next 25 years

Overcoming barriers to cycle-commuting

The Scheme has achieved a huge amount in the last 25 years, getting millions of people on bikes and encouraging healthier ways of commuting.

Government, employers, and the cycling industry have worked together effectively to ensure Schemes are simple to access, aiming to ensure that everyone who wants to participate, can do so easily.

But several barriers still exist which prevent more people from accessing the benefits of cycling to work. In short, that means more cars on the road and fewer people actively commuting to work.

The scheme is currently at a critical juncture. Either we can double down, reaping the benefits of cycle commuting for the next generation. Or we risk losing an entire cohort of cycle commuters and all of the individual and societal benefits they can collectively deliver.

Getting more people cycling to work has the potential to address two major challenges facing the nation – the climate crisis and the public health crisis.

Over the next few pages, we address some of the key barriers that prevent more people from using the scheme and cycling to work with recommendations that have been developed in conjunction with stakeholders across the cycling sector. These recommendations have been developed in partnership with bike retailers, scheme providers and employers who offer the scheme.

Together, scheme providers, employers, and the wider industry stand ready to work together and ensure the UK seizes the full suite of benefits that cycle commuting can offer. This will ensure the Scheme is an even bigger success for the 25 years ahead.



The next 25 years

Our recommendations for cycle commuting success

Exclusive polling commissioned by the Alliance for this report shows that:

- Safety concerns deter 45% of potential cyclists from commuting by bike – women are three times more likely to fear cycling to work than men.
- Almost three times as many men cycle to work than women, meaning there is a huge gender gap among cycle commuters to address.
- More than 2 million people have used Scheme in the last 10 years, but 80% of potential UK workers could still benefit from participating.

For policymakers and Government

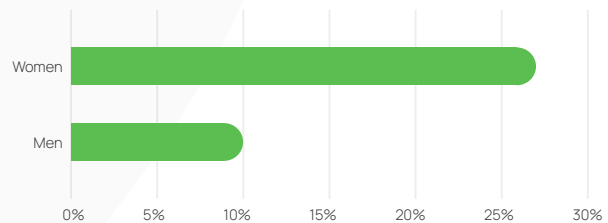
1. The Government has committed to “unprecedented levels” of funding in cycling and walking, and to deliver a new active travel strategy. **Government and policymakers must ensure there remains high political will for active travel. Future active travel strategies must include a continuation of the Cycle to Work Scheme as a driver of behaviour change and modal shift.**
2. More than 40% commuters do not cycle to work due to concerns around safety. **The Department for Transport’s new Road Safety Review needs to consider the needs of active commuters and consult providers of Cycle to Work Schemes and other critical partners in its development.**
3. Bikeability has equipped more than five million children with the skills and confidence to cycle on today’s roads. **To ensure the next generation of commuters are equipped with the skills to commute on bike, we urge Government to continue to commit fully to the Bikeability scheme, and maintain current funding levels to ensure all children receive cycle training by the end of primary school.**

4. Based on polling conducted by the Alliance, we know that nearly half of potential cyclists do not travel by bike due to inadequate cycling infrastructure being in place, with women three times as likely to fear commuting by bike. **Funding and support for developing active travel infrastructure needs to be long-term and consistently allocated, to ensure local authorities can build high quality cycling infrastructure.** This is key to ensuring safe journeys and secure storage is available at the start and end of a journey. **Funding and planning should be coordinated across local authorities to ensure integrated, joined-up approaches to infrastructure delivery.**

Across the UK more than 1 in 4 people are put off cycling by lack of safe infrastructure



When asked why they didn't cycle to work, nearly 1 in 5 said this was because they were scared. Nearly 3 times more women are scared of cycling to work than men.



5. All commuters should have access to schemes like the Cycle to Work Scheme – especially those who can benefit most from the savings available. This includes those being paid at or near the National Minimum Wage and self-employed workers. **Government should explore how it can unlock access to the Scheme for these lower earners, such as by creating a specific exemption on minimum wage rules for Scheme users, and widening access for the self-employed, to ensure equitable access to cycle-commuting.**



6. E-bikes have huge potential to increase active travel participation for groups like older cyclists and those who live further from work or in hilly areas. But there are regularly big misconceptions about e-bike safety in the media, which overshadows their huge benefits. **The debate around e-bikes must reflect their important role in active commuting and any policies restricting access to e-bikes should be focused on illegal e-bikes, rather than the high-quality, road legal alternatives that are available through schemes like Cycle to Work.**

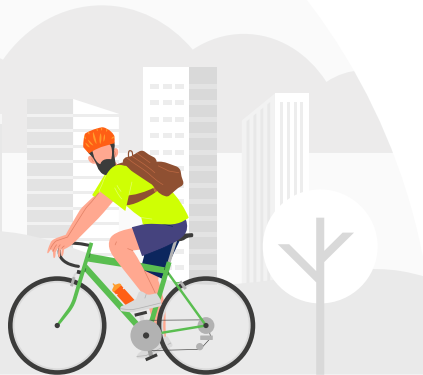
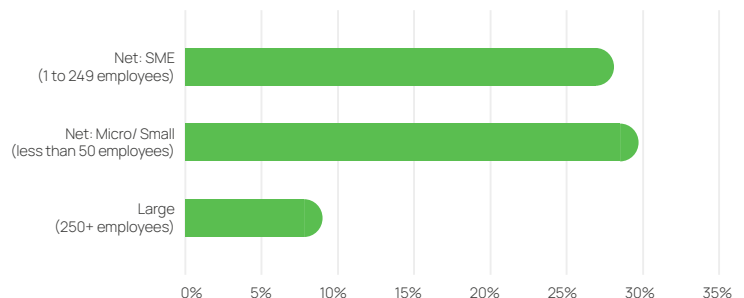
7. A fifth of commuters do not cycle to work because of insufficient or inadequate storage facilities at their workplaces. **It is critical that planning regulations are setup to ensure future residential and commercial developments provide residents with access to safe and secure bike storage. We also encourage employers to provide secure storage facilities to their employees. This may also include provision of spaces for shared bike schemes.**

For employers

8. 17% of commuters don't cycle to work because of a lack of bike storage at their workplaces, or the facilities to shower and change before starting work. Through the Cycle to Work Scheme, employers benefit from national insurance savings of up to 13.8% for every employee who uses the scheme – that's £138 for every £1,000 certificate obtained by an employee. **Employers should consider how they can re-invest this saving back into their places of work to provide employees with safe and secure storage.**

9. A large number of commuters want to cycle to work but are worried about finding a reliable route that they can safely use to commute. **Employers should foster a safe and supportive environment for their employees who want an active commute. This includes preparing guides to show employees the safe routes they can use to get to work or encourage ride clubs to promote uptake.**

Many would-be participants can't use the Scheme because their employers do not offer it. This figure is three times more likely among SMEs than large employers.



The next 25 years

Our commitments

The Cycle to Work Alliance stands ready to champion the recommendations set out in this paper and work with the wider industry to ensure cycle commuting is an option for everyone.

Delivering high quality schemes **A lifeline to industry**

As providers, we will continue to deliver high quality schemes and set the bar for 'best practice' in the Cycle to Work market, whilst working with Government to ensure its objectives on active travel and cycling commuting are championed.

Members of the Cycle to Work Alliance are committed to simplifying and minimising administrative barriers to make it easier and more attractive for employers, especially SMEs, to offer the benefit at their workplace. We are also committed to work with Government to widen access to the scheme for groups like those earning at or near the National Minimum Wage. This will ensure that all workers and their employees can reap the benefits of cycling to work.

The cycling retail market has faced a tricky period over the last couple of years as a result of inflation and the cost-of-living crisis. Bike sales in the UK were down nearly a third in the first half of 2023, compared with 2019 levels. However, the Scheme has demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of this – Alliance members have seen a 19% increase in the volume of bikes supplied through the Scheme in the same period.

The Scheme is therefore helping drive bikes sales and acting as an important lifeline for the industry against the backdrop of a tricky year for the market. The Alliance is proud to be supporting the bike sector and will continue working with stakeholders across the industry to ensure these benefits are shared across the value chain.







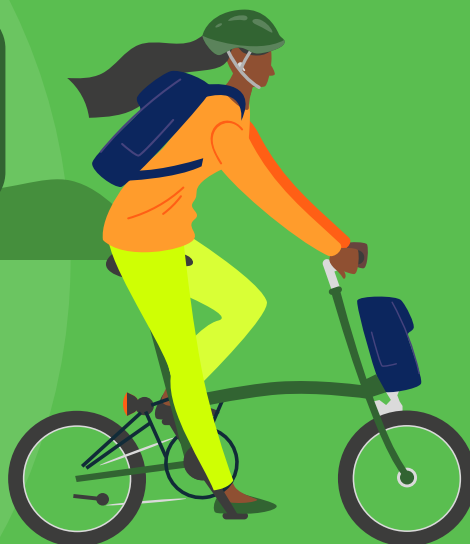
About the Alliance

The **Cycle to Work Alliance** is a coalition of the five largest providers of the Cycle to Work scheme: Cyclescheme, Cycle Solutions, Evans Cycles, Halfords and Vivup. We represent around 80% of the Cycle to Work scheme market and since 2010 have worked collaboratively to highlight the many benefits of regularly cycling to work.

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