

CYCLING YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Plymouth is a great city to cycle in, for both leisure and commuting. We are working to encourage more cycling by developing a network of routes that are safer and pleasant to use.

Cycling in Plymouth has increased by 50% in just 6 years. With more and more people taking up cycling – why not join them and find out how easy and fun it is for yourself?

Why should I cycle?

- Regular cyclists enjoy fitness levels equal to those of people 10 years younger and are much less likely to suffer from some of the common serious illnesses
- A good bike will last for years and cost very little to maintain. It can be parked for free almost anywhere
- Bikes do not pollute the air and are much quieter than other vehicles.

Isn't Plymouth too hilly to cycle in?

Some hills are a challenge, but there's nothing wrong with getting off and walking, and what goes up must come down! Electric bikes are becoming increasingly popular. In mountainous Switzerland around 12% of journeys are by bike, which is three times as many as in Plymouth currently.

Isn't it too dangerous to cycle in the city?

The health benefits of cycling are far greater than the risks. We are building new routes to help people cycling stay safer, and offering free cycle training for all Plymouth residents. Evidence shows that the more people cycle the safer it becomes, as motorists get used to sharing the road.

Why would I cycle when it's quicker for me to drive?

In a busy city like Plymouth, travelling by bike is often quicker and easier than getting about by car especially during the rush hour.

Doesn't it rain too much in Plymouth to cycle?

In Plymouth we have more hours of sunshine than the UK average. Someone who commutes 20 minutes to and from work every day by bike will, on average, get rained on only once every two weeks. This means cycling can be an enjoyable and convenient way to travel all year round.



I'm worried that pollution from vehicles makes it unhealthy to cycle.

Research shows that when you travel by car you can be exposed to higher levels of air pollution from the traffic in front of you than if you walked or cycled. This is because the air intake of the car is low to the ground in the centre of the road where pollution levels are highest. Also, many of our routes are well away from main roads.

It's just too far for me to cycle.

Most trips made around the city are less than three miles long and will take less than 20 minutes by bike. It's not possible to make every trip by bike but there are opportunities to change many trips from car to bike.

Can you provide help for people with disabilities?

Absolutely, we have specialist bikes and instructors that can help anyone try cycling.

Why provide cycle lanes and off-road routes? Most cyclists I've seen don't use them!

We are working towards having a completely joined up network, but we are not there yet and so for some journeys, particularly for faster cyclists, it is better that they stay on road, which is often quicker than the off-road alternative. Less confident cyclists, especially children are more likely to use the off-road option. Cyclists are entitled to cycle on the carriageway, and are only allowed on the footway where it is marked as a cycle route.

Why do cyclists cycle in the middle of the road?

National standard cycle training teaches cyclists to often take a central position in the lane as this is often safest.

Why spend money on cyclists? They don't pay road tax.

The commonly named 'road tax' that car owners pay is Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) and is based on how polluting the vehicle is. So even if it was levied on cycles it would be set at zero like the lowest polluting cars. Many cyclists also own cars and therefore also pay this duty. The wear and tear caused by cycles to roads is negligible compared to motor vehicles.

Investing in cycling and walking is excellent value for money bringing benefits for everyone, as people switching to bikes helps to reduce congestion and improves the health of our city. This means reduced health care costs and less money needed to repair Plymouth's roads. It is estimated that one person regularly cycling, benefits the economy by more than £600 every year.

Most of the money that has been invested in cycle routes in recent years in Plymouth is external funding that has been gained through successful funding bids to national and regional bodies.

Why don't cyclists have to insure themselves, like car drivers?

Cyclists are not required by law to insure themselves. This reflects the fact that very few road traffic accidents are caused by cyclists. However, an increasing number of regular cyclists are opting to take out third-party insurance which is offered as part of membership of organisations such as British Cycling and CyclingUK.

Where can I cycle and where can I securely park my bike?

Our cycle map provides a guide to routes in Plymouth and details about cycle parking and lockers. Visit www.plymouth.gov.uk/cycling to view the map or to request a paper copy. Where dedicated cycle parking is not provided we ask that bikes are secured in a visible location where it is not a hazard or obstruction to others.

What is the National Cycle Network?

The National Cycle Network (NCN) is being developed by Sustrans in partnership with local authorities and other organisations. There are two routes that run through Plymouth;

- NCN route 27 - Devon Coast to Coast route which is mostly off-road from Plymouth to Ilfracombe and includes the recently opened Laira Rail Bridge
- NCN route 2 - Southern Coastal route, from Cornwall to Dover

What are you doing in Plymouth to develop cycle routes?

Through to 2034 we will be implementing our Strategic Cycle Network, which will provide routes across the city for all cyclists. To support and encourage people to cycle we will also:

- address locations that are a problem for cycle safety
- work with developers to provide new routes and on-site facilities such as showers and cycle parking
- create more continuous cycle routes along quiet roads; through green spaces and alongside busier roads
- maintain our existing cycling routes and lanes to a high standard to encourage greater use.

PLYMOTION
Make the connection!