Getting there with cycling
Make it happen
Northern Ireland Assembly Election 2022
cyclinguk.org
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A vision for cycling in Northern Ireland

A place where cycling is a normal way to make day-to-day journeys, rather than solely a leisure activity.

A place where our towns, cities and rural areas have connected, safe and accessible cycle networks, as part of a wider vision for safer, healthier and happier communities.

A place where grandparents and grandchildren alike can confidently cycle to work, to school or for a coffee.

We can change our space, reduce traffic noise, improve air quality, health and happiness and support local business. We can significantly reduce our carbon footprint and be part of the wider green economy.

All the evidence shows that getting more people cycling and walking achieves this and more. The Assembly can enable people to do it, and if they do, we will all wonder why we didn’t do it sooner.

Getting there with cycling – make it happen

Given the climate emergency, the increasing levels or air pollution and the failure of policies designed to reduce traffic congestion, we need to get somewhere fast when it comes to increasing the number of journeys made by cycling.

Quality cycling infrastructure needs to be in place to see a change in attitude and behaviour. We saw modest developments during the Covid-19 lockdown, but not nearly enough.

We can’t consult forever. It’s time for action. We now need to start building. Together we can get there and further, with cycling.
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What we want from the next Stormont Assembly:

Invest in and Prioritise Cycling, Walking and Wheeling

Given the recent investment in active travel to the south and across the water, Northern Ireland is in danger of being left behind. We need to see a significant increase in active travel journeys and a reduction in motor traffic during this Assembly. To do this we need a change in resource allocation, attitudes and accountability within Stormont.

1. Legislation holding the Assembly accountable for considering and improving cycling, walking and wheeling through an **Active Travel Act**. This legislation would require decision makers, including local authorities, government departments and ministers, to prioritise active travel in all infrastructure schemes and developments. It would make active travel a priority, regardless of the minister in charge or whether the Assembly is sitting. It would also give local councils a role in planning local cycling and walking networks in consultation with local communities, and ensuring that new developments are designed to support active travel and reduce car-dependence.

2. Increasing the active travel budget each year, aiming to match the Scottish Government’s commitment to boost active travel spending to **10% of the transport budget** within the Assembly’s next 4-year term. Lasting change will cost money, but only a fraction of what the Department for Infrastructure currently spends on motorised transport, with active travel spending producing a host of environmental, economic, health and quality of life benefits.

The biggest barrier to cycling in Northern Ireland is safety. More people will cycle if they know it is safe to do so and they will encourage their children to do the same.

3. Supporting the introduction of **20mph as the default speed limit** around schools and in streets where people live, work and shop. Many of our school neighbourhoods are overrun with motor traffic twice a day during school term. The rollout of 20mph outside many schools is a positive step, but we also need the areas around schools to have these limits, for the benefit of everyone in the surrounding community. It is one of the easiest and least expensive ways to improve road safety, tackle pollution and create healthier neighbourhoods.

4. Supporting the introduction of **40mph as the default speed limit** on single lane carriageways for all vehicles. This would bring all motor vehicles in line with current speed limits for HGVs and improve safety for rural active travel.

5. Prioritise active travel in the new **Road Safety Strategy** through adequate funding and delivery. The recent changes to the highway code in GB should be adopted creating a ‘Hierarchy of Responsibility’, protecting more vulnerable road users.
A Northern Ireland wide, connected travel system is essential for more people to choose to get somewhere by cycling. Safe cycle networks and linking cycling with public transport are key to any city with a strong active travel culture.

6. Increase the provision for combining cycling and public transport, including better cycle access to and parking at stations, as well as more cycle spaces on trains, enabling people to make door-to-door journeys without depending on a car.

7. Working with local councils in rural areas to designate certain roads as ‘Quiet Lanes’, making them safer and more accessible for all modes of active travel. These quiet lanes should have clear signage so all road users are aware they are using a shared space, and speed limits should be reduced.

8. Delivering a connected network of safe cycle lanes within and linking our cities and towns. These cycle lanes should be built to the highest design standards set out in DfI guidelines.

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Who we are

Cycling UK is a charity that has championed the cause of cycling for 143 years and has 70,000 members, over 900 in Northern Ireland. Here, we campaign for policies and investment which will enable more people to benefit from riding a bike. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to ride a bike in order to live a healthy, active and low-carbon lifestyle.