

# BIKE *life*

NEWCASTLE  
2015



Newcastle  
City Council 



  
**sustrans**  
JOIN THE MOVEMENT





# Stepping up a gear

## Our vision for cycling in Newcastle

Making Newcastle fit for cycling means delivering our transformational long-term cycling strategy. Enabling everyone in the city, including young and old, to feel safe and empowered to consider cycling as a realistic choice is our priority. We're setting targets to significantly increase cycling for everyday trips recognising that providing space for people on bikes is key to both achieving our ambition, and supporting the local and national campaigns calling for this.

With our Re-newcastle programme investing in public space, we are beginning to see the delivery of a more cycle-friendly city, but there is more to do.

We are working to deliver ambitious new routes and places for people cycling with the £16m Cycle City Ambition Grant from the Department for Transport. For example, the major improvements will see John Dobson Street transformed into a new boulevard-style layout featuring widened pavements, new road crossings for people walking, a two-way protected bike lane, seating areas and improved public transport links.

This is typical of how we are developing a city fit for cycling over the next few years, helping achieve our commitment to making Newcastle one of the safest and easiest cities to get around on a bike.

Safe, accommodating public space is crucial. We are committed to expanding and enhancing places and ways for people to ride bikes and walk, particularly between the city centre and surrounding residential areas, wherever possible linking to neighbouring authorities. By focusing on people's door-to-door journeys we are increasing connectivity, critical to enabling people of all ages and abilities to get out more on their bikes.

Enabling Newcastle to be the best place it can be, with everyone having access to opportunities, is central to our ongoing success. We want parents and carers to feel safe letting their kids bike to school, and older people to feel able and confident enough to get about on two wheels. By designing space that works for young and old, we are ensuring it works for everyone.

Of course public space is just part of the equation. We also recognise the importance of ensuring people have the skills and confidence to ride, through training, organised and guided rides or big, promotional events. This is why we're promoting Cycling in the City, offering bike loans, bike servicing sessions and other activities, all aimed at getting people in the saddle.

**Ged Bell**  
**Cabinet Member for**  
**Investment and Development**

# Introducing Bike Life

Sustrans is collaborating with seven cities in the UK – Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Greater Manchester and Newcastle – to report on progress towards making cycling an attractive and everyday means of travel.

Bike Life is inspired by the Copenhagen Bicycle Account, and is an assessment of cycling development including cycling conditions, new initiatives and satisfaction with various aspects of cycling.

This is the first of two reports, with the second being published in 2017. The information in this report comes from local data, including a representative survey of over 1,100 residents in Newcastle. More details on the report findings and methodology can be found at [www.sustrans.org.uk/bikelife](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/bikelife)

Our thanks to the people of Newcastle who took part in the survey and who volunteered to have their photos taken for this report.

## KEY FACTS FOR NEWCASTLE AT A GLANCE

**Over 7 million** bike trips in Newcastle in a year

**12%** increase in trips by bike between 2013 and 2014

**24%** of people ride a bike once a month or more

**8 in 10** people support increasing the safety of cycling, more than any other way of getting around the city

**77%** of people want to see more money spent on cycling

**£15 million** is the benefit to health in the city, in a single year, from the current level of people riding bikes

**6,074 tonnes** of CO<sub>2</sub> saved by people making trips by riding a bike rather than driving – equivalent to the annual emissions of nearly 2,400 cars

**67p per mile** is the saving to individuals and to the local economy, for every mile biked instead of driven – which works out at **over £13.5 million** a year for Newcastle, at current levels of cycling



# OVERVIEW

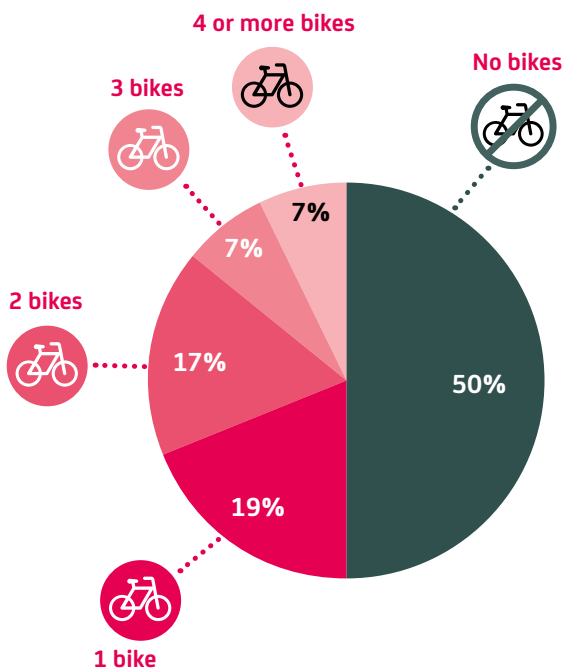
Taking the pulse of bike life in Newcastle



## BIKE OWNERSHIP IS A BIG PART OF LIFE IN NEWCASTLE

Half of people (**50%**) in Newcastle live in households that own at least one bike.\*

HOW MANY ADULT BICYCLES DO YOU OWN IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?



Bike ownership is greatest amongst those aged 45-54, with nearly two thirds (**65%**) having at least one adult bike in their household compared to **16%** amongst those aged over 75.

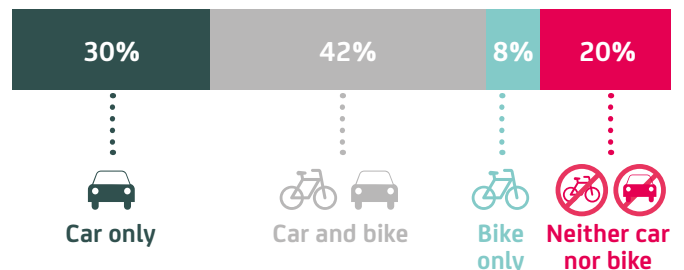
When it comes to children's bikes, more than one in four (**27%**) people live in households with at least one.

There's a big crossover between owning a bike and owning a car – most of those who own or have access to a car also own a bike.

In Newcastle one in five (**20%**) people live in households with neither a car nor a bike and **8%** have access to at least one bike but no car.

Having the choice to ride a bike safely could help many people get to jobs, services, family and friends.

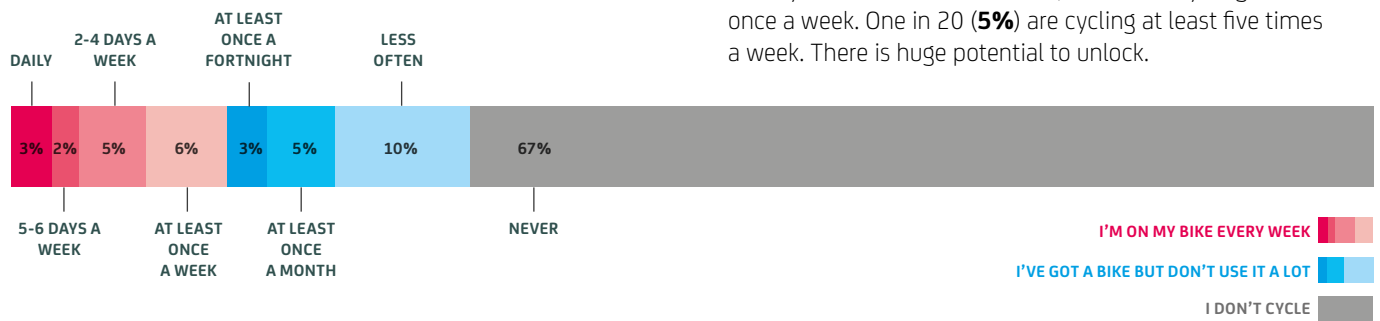
HOW MANY CARS AND VANS ARE OWNED, OR ARE AVAILABLE FOR USE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?



\*Car and bicycle ownership figures refer to percentages of people in households who have them. This is different from the percentage of households that have a car or bike.

# HOW OFTEN ARE PEOPLE RIDING A BIKE?

THINKING OF HOW YOU USUALLY TRAVEL AROUND, HOW OFTEN DO YOU CYCLE?



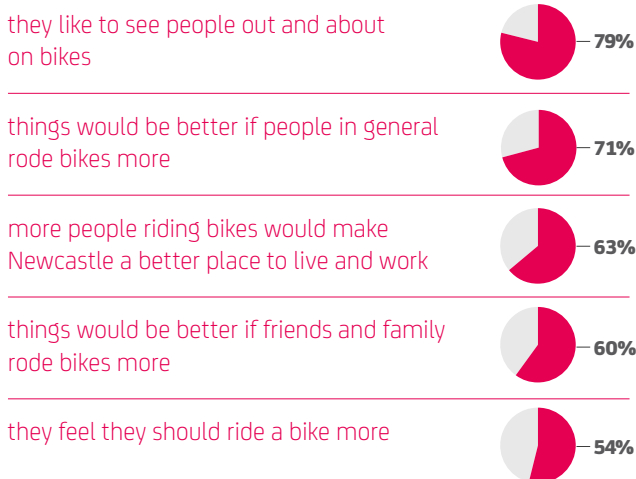
While half of all households have access to a bike, they are not all being used.

About a quarter (**24%**) of people in Newcastle say they usually ride a bike once a month, with **16%** cycling at least once a week. One in 20 (**5%**) are cycling at least five times a week. There is huge potential to unlock.

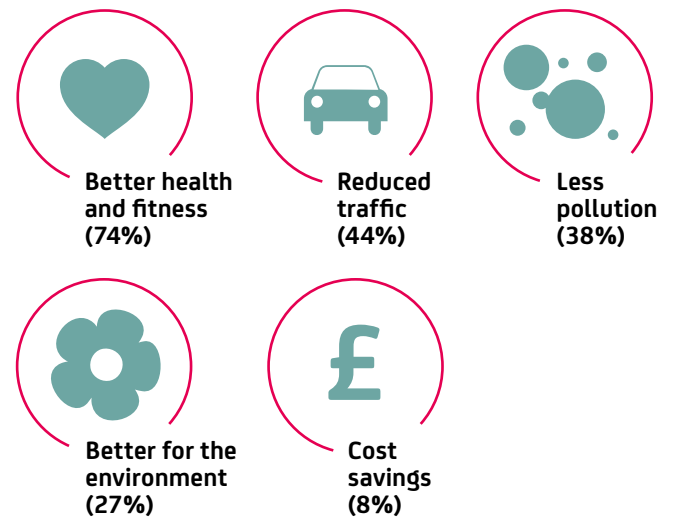
## PERCEPTIONS OF BIKES ARE OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE

The people of Newcastle love what bike life can offer them.

### They agree that:



There are lots of reasons why the people of Newcastle think more people riding bikes would make the city a better place:



## SAFETY IS A CONCERN, AND PEOPLE WANT MORE INVESTED

Just over half (**53%**) of people think Newcastle is a good place to ride a bike overall, but when you dig deeper there are clear concerns about safety.



But it's worth remembering that a serious injury or worse is rare at about **once every 4.5 million miles** pedalled around Newcastle.

**8 in 10** residents want better safety for people riding bikes. Better safety requires more investment.


Across the seven cities involved in Bike Life, the average that people want governments to be spending on cycling is **£26 per person** per year.



\*The question was 'Central and local governments in the UK spend around £300 per person on transport every year. Of this about £3 per person is spent on cycling, rising to £10 per person in some cities. How much do you think should be spent on cycling per person in the UK?'


# VIEWS

from the saddle




"It's cheap. It keeps me fit.  
It gets me to places really  
quickly."

Selma Dimitrijevic



"Cycling is a way of life for me  
and my family. It's in our blood now.  
It gives me a sense of freedom."

Dorothy Crow



"I love to cycle! It makes me feel  
alive! [It's] faster than walking, more  
wholesome than driving. The inner  
city cycling could be easier with more  
separate paths."

Sam Goggin





“Still reliving the excitement of powering the pedals for the first time!”

Councillor Marion Talbot



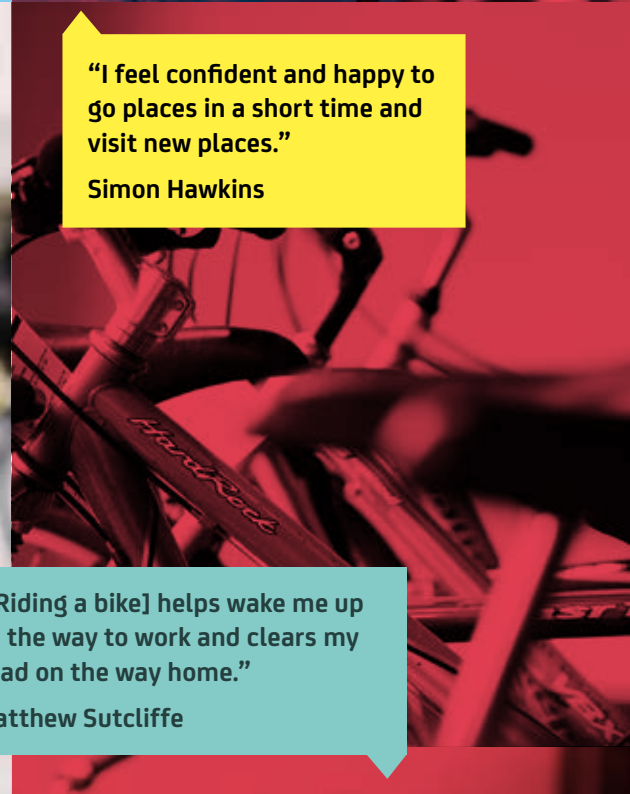
“I feel confident and happy to go places in a short time and visit new places.”

Simon Hawkins



“Making cycle commuting easier helps everyone in the city. It’s great for your health – fitness, weight and stress levels. It’s even good for motorists as it reduces congestion.”

John Simmons



“[Riding a bike] helps wake me up on the way to work and clears my head on the way home.”

Matthew Sutcliffe



# IN DEPTH

Facts and figures  
for Newcastle



## WHAT'S AVAILABLE AND WHO'S IN THE KNOW?

116 miles  
of bike routes

INCLUDING

62 miles  
of traffic-free routes

AND

18 miles  
of cycle lanes

Nearly a third (**30%**)  
of people live within  
125 metres of a  
designated cycle route



Almost 70%  
of streets in  
Newcastle have  
20mph speed limits



Over 4,000  
bike parking  
spaces in the  
city centre

Awareness of bike routes, bike parking and initiatives to increase levels of bike use is relatively low amongst residents, although those who ride bikes regularly have better knowledge.

HOW MUCH, IF ANYTHING, WOULD YOU SAY  
YOU KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING?

Cycle routes on or  
alongside roads

36

60

Traffic-free cycle routes away from  
roads, through parks or along  
canals and former railway paths

27

52

Other cycling facilities such  
as cycle parking

16

37

Initiatives to increase the  
number of people riding a bike

18

26



Residents – % great or fair  
amount of knowledge



Regular bike riders\* – % great or  
fair amount of knowledge

\*Regular bike riders are people who had ridden a bike within four weeks of being surveyed



## HOW DO PEOPLE RATE NEWCASTLE'S CYCLE ROUTES?

Just over half (**53%**) think Newcastle is a good place to ride a bike overall, but less than half rate the following as 'very good' or 'good'. ▶

The **condition** of cycle routes

**46%**

The **amount** of cycle routes

**43%**

The **signposting** of cycle routes

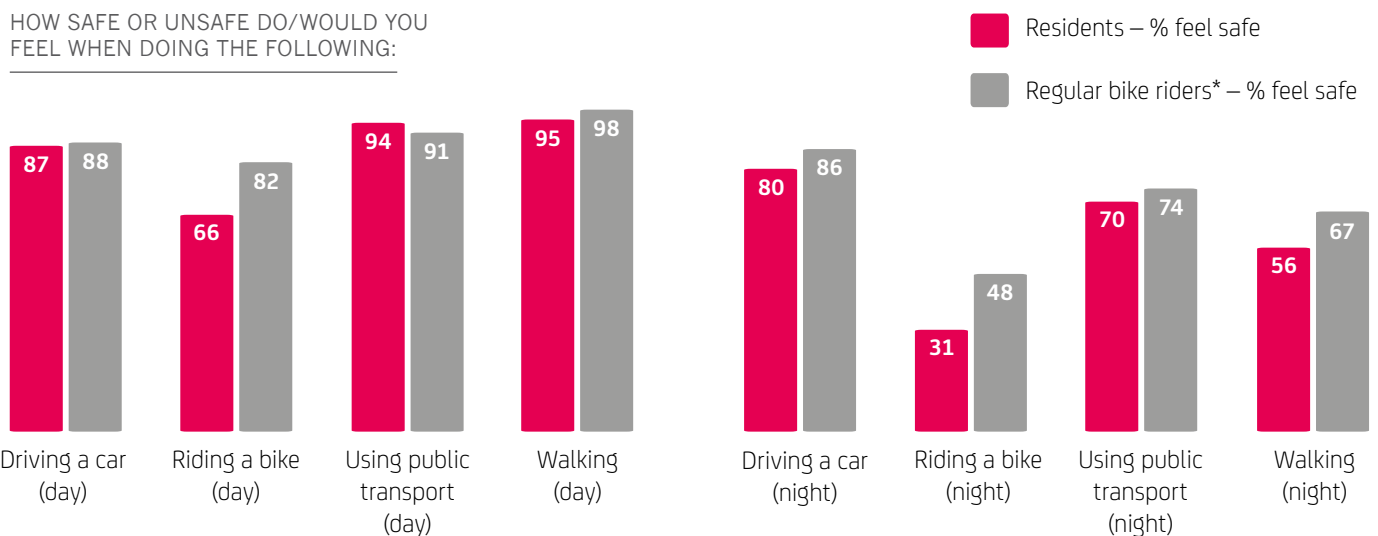
**42%**

The **directness** of cycle routes

**39%**

## RIDING A BIKE FEELS LESS SAFE THAN OTHER WAYS OF TRAVELLING

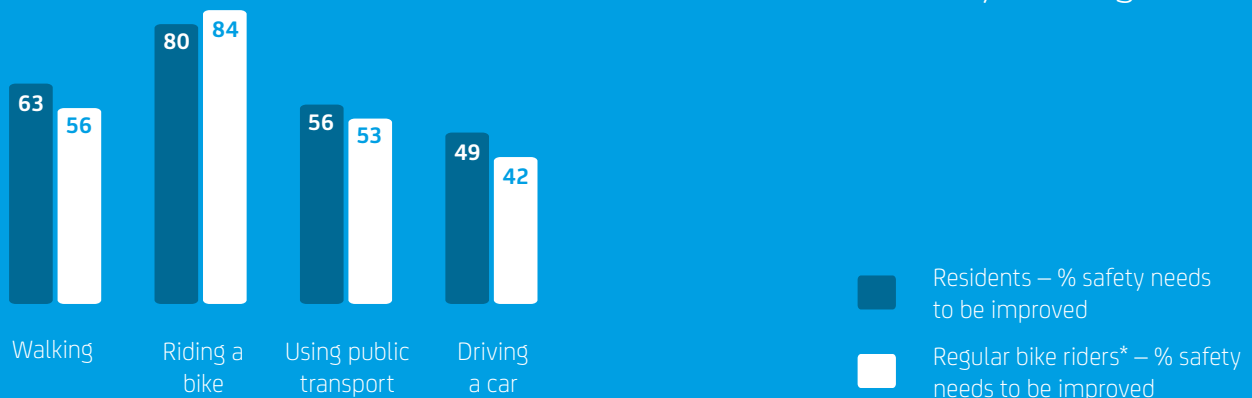
HOW SAFE OR UNSAFE DO/WOULD YOU FEEL WHEN DOING THE FOLLOWING:



## PEOPLE WANT IMPROVED SAFETY FOR CYCLING

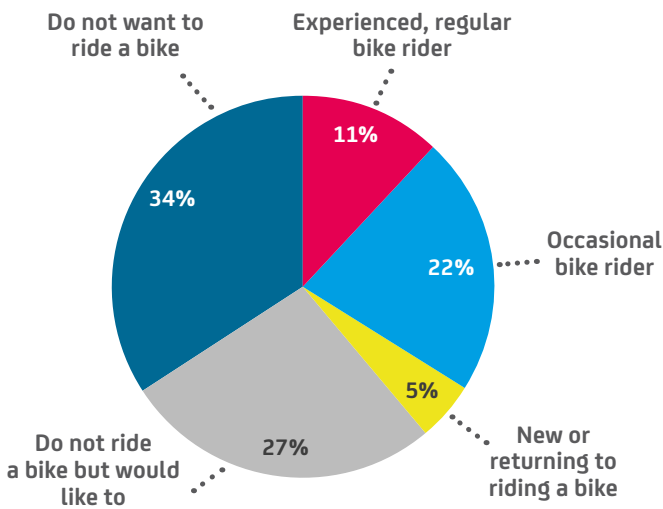
FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING, DO YOU THINK SAFETY NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED?

Eight in 10 residents (**80%**) support improving the safety of riding a bike.



# HOW DO PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES WHEN IT COMES TO RIDING A BIKE?

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BEST DESCRIBES YOU?



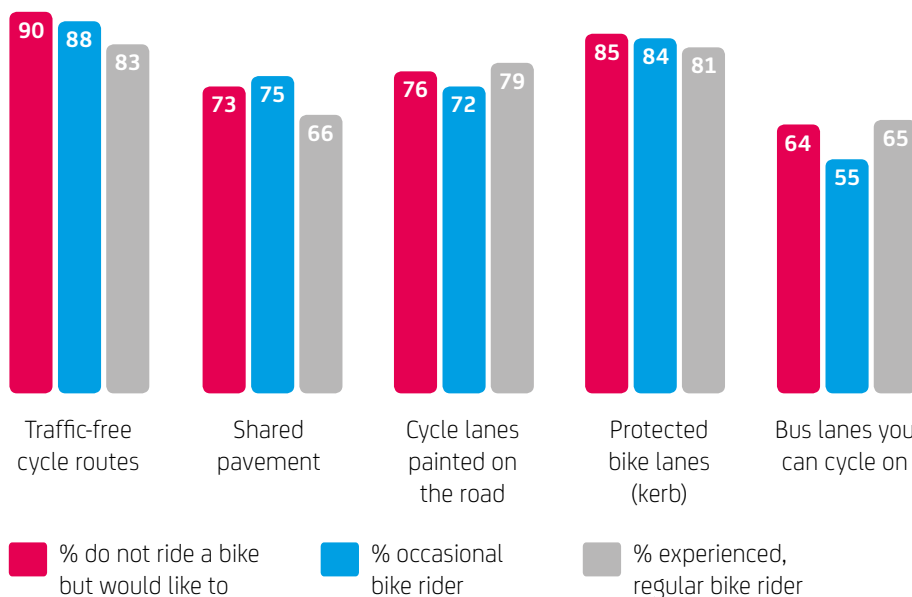
Whilst about a third (**34%**) of people do not want to ride a bike, over a quarter (**27%**) say that whilst they don't currently ride a bike, they'd like to.

Combined with new, returning, and occasional bike riders, **54%** of people in Newcastle could potentially begin to ride a bike or ride their bike more.

# WHAT KIND OF BIKE ROUTES COULD GET MORE PEOPLE CYCLING?

Traffic-free cycle routes are the kinds of routes most people want to help them start cycling or to cycle more – **90%** of people who do not ride a bike but would like to, and **88%** of occasional bike riders say this.

WOULD ANY OF THE FOLLOWING HELP YOU START CYCLING/CYCLE MORE?



A large majority

(**77%**) of residents would like to see more investment in cycling.



Support is high

across all sections of the population, including **73%** of people aged over 75, those least likely to ride a bike.



# WHO'S RIDING AND WHERE?

Between 2013 and 2014 the number of trips made by bike in Newcastle increased by 12%

Over 45 million miles are pedalled by people every year

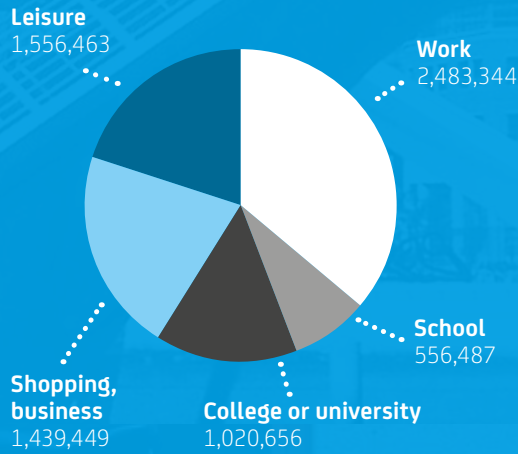
Over 7 million trips are made by bike in Newcastle in a year which, averaged out over the population, means 24 trips per person per year

Men are far more likely to ride a bike than women – 71% compared to 29% female

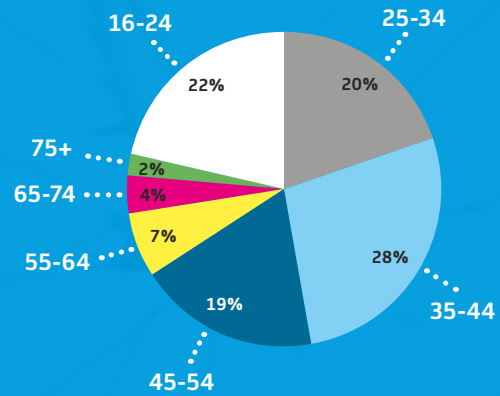


11% of people riding bikes in Newcastle identify as black or minority ethnic compared to just under 15% among the whole population of Newcastle

## Number of bike trips by purpose



## When it comes to the age of people riding bikes in Newcastle, older people are under-represented





# HOW WE'RE DEVELOPING BIKE LIFE IN NEWCASTLE



Our four priorities have helped shape a 10 year plan to hit our ambitious targets for increasing cycling levels, focusing our efforts and resources to make a positive difference.

These are:

- a fit for purpose council
- a working city
- decent neighbourhoods
- tackling inequalities

Some highlights of recent work include:

## The Journey

The Journey is Newcastle's active travel centre located in the heart of the city. It's a one-stop healthy travel shop that's more than the sum of its parts; Sustrans officers give information on sustainable travel, whether it's walking or cycling; Recyke y'bike offer refurbished bikes, perform bike servicing and maintenance; and Colour Coffee supply ethically sourced refreshments.

The Journey seeks to be a catalyst for people who're looking to change the way they travel for the better, whilst supporting people who already travel in ways which are sustainable and that benefit individuals and society as a whole.

## Creating a vibrant cycling economy

Recyke y'bike and the Cycle Hub are two thriving city businesses with charitable aims at their core. Recyke y'bike is an organisation on a mission; to get more people travelling healthily and sustainably, also keeping everyone's wheels turning by offering affordable bike servicing and repairs. Every year Recyke y'bike takes in thousands of unwanted bikes, refurbishing them and selling them on as inexpensive two-wheeled get arounds.

The Cycle Hub is a social enterprise that promotes and facilitates cycling, complete with bike hire facilities, cafe, bike shop and repair workshop.

It provides people riding bikes in Newcastle with a place to meet and chat over cake and coffee. Whether a mountain biker or Bmx'er, single speed aficionado or road purist, everyone is welcome. It's also an information centre for all cycling related things in and around Newcastle, including guided rides, cycle training, transfer services and local clubs.





### **John Dobson Street**

Work has begun on major improvements that will see John Dobson Street transformed into a boulevard-style layout, featuring widened pavements, new crossings for pedestrians, a protected two-way cycle track, seating areas and improved public transport links. The planned changes will bring significant benefits to people walking, riding bikes and using public transport.

The new layout and improved traffic light technology will make it safer and easier for everyone to travel in the city centre. Business will also benefit from the new layout, with a more attractive area for shoppers, visitors, workers and students. This is also part of our Re-newcastle programme of works, which will see over £60 million invested in major junctions and main routes across the city.

### **Cycling in the city**

Cycling in the City is Newcastle's initiative to get more people on their bikes and more active. It encourages people to give cycling a try by providing the skills and information they need to get started. It's all about making cycling a fun, easy choice for people in the city to get around, and make cycling part of their everyday lives. Adult cycle training, Dr. Bike cycle health checks and loan bikes from the cycle library are all on offer, as well as the opportunity to become one of Newcastle's cycling champions encouraging others to ride bikes in the city.

# BIKE TO THE FUTURE



There's big potential to change things, and with **three quarters of people thinking positively about people riding bikes**, there's a big mandate for change across the city.

At Newcastle City Council we have embarked on a 10 year plan to develop a cycling culture in the city, with ambitious targets to increase trips by bike. With funding secured from the Department for Transport's Cycle City Ambition Fund we are determined to make this vision a reality.

In the short term we'll be raising public awareness of city schemes encouraging cycling for all, such as the development of a strategic cycle route in Gosforth, improvements on John Dobson Street, public engagement on city centre north developments and the launch of The Journey, Newcastle's very own active travel centre located in the heart of the city.

And we'll be working harder to meet expectations, because **over a quarter of people have higher expectations** when it comes to a city fit for bikes than last year.

There's a clear need for us to focus on safety for people riding bikes to ensure more of those who would like to ride a bike have that choice.

We'll be using this report to measure progress and to help us prioritise what we need to do to ensure far more of the 27% of our people who don't ride, but want to, can. This means addressing a range of issues, and exploring new opportunities to develop Newcastle further as a cycling city such as:

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**encouraging** schoolchildren, older people, ethnic minority communities and other hard to reach groups to cycle more

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**improving neighbourhoods** to make cycling or walking to local amenities and facilities more attractive

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**improving main cycling routes** into the city centre

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**making improvements** within the city centre

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**raising the public profile** of cycling in the city

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We want to attract more people to come and live in and visit our city. We are committed to providing access to attractions and employment, and want Newcastle to be an attractive place for people to visit, shop, work and learn. We will work to redesign the city so that it works for everyone. This means better use of road space, freeing up pedestrian access and improving the public realm, reducing congestion and pollution and creating better transport links and cycling facilities.

We have great ambitions and, whilst we realise we have a way to go, we will start increasing how much we invest per head on cycling in the city, working towards £26 per head.

Through all these measures we believe we can, and will, get more people out and about on bikes in Newcastle. The opportunity exists to make a great cycling city. We're committed to making it so.





**A note on terminology and methodology:**

We refer to people and residents rather than respondents when reporting findings of the attitudinal surveys.

Due to the rounding up or down of individual figures, the percentages on charts may not total 100% exactly.

Further details are available at [www.sustrans.org.uk/bikelife](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/bikelife)





Sustrans makes smarter travel choices possible, desirable and inevitable. We're a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in.



Sustrans is a registered charity in the UK No. 326550 (England and Wales) SC039263 (Scotland)

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