

## News



## Make the most of your commute with Active Travel Challenge



Staff from Altnagelvin Hospital in L~Derry helped launch the Active Travel Challenge for the North West along with Michele Murphy, Sustrans Workplace Active Travel Officer (centre).



3 May 2018

Tired of the traffic jams? Wish you didn't have to face the daily rush hour to work? Commuters in Northern Ireland are being challenged to leave their cars at home during May and try alternative forms of transport in a bid to get fit and improve the environment.

We are organising the annual **Active Travel Challenge**, funded by the **Public Health Agency**, which runs from the 7 May – 3 June.

The main aim of the Challenge is to get as many people as possible choosing to take more of their journeys to and from work by walking, cycling, using public transport or car-sharing – any sustainable transport journey. It is also aimed at encouraging employees who have mostly sedentary desk jobs to get active

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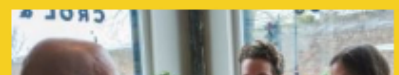
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during their lunch-hour.

**“The Active Travel Challenge has been commissioned by the PHA to encourage and support employees to travel actively as part of their working day. ”**

**- Valerie Watts PHA Interim Chief Executive**



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According to the **Belfast Bike Life 2017** report people cycling in Belfast take nearly 7,000 cars off the roads daily – equivalent to a 21-mile tailback.**[1]**

Many commuters are put off cycling to work because of traffic, however, in the Derry~Londonderry area there are more than 80km of traffic-free paths which are a good way to begin.

Steven Patterson, Sustrans Delivery Manager said:

“Many commuters spend a large chunk of their day sitting in traffic jams to and from work. We believe you can combine active travel into all or part of your daily commute. The **Active Travel Challenge** is a great way to get started!

“You don't have to be super-fit and lycra-clad to take part. We are really keen to attract the ordinary, mainly sedentary worker to take part and enjoy the difference getting active as part of your daily routine can make to your life.”

Valerie Watts, Interim Chief Executive of the **Public Health Agency (PHA)** said:

“The **Active Travel Challenge** has been commissioned by the **PHA** to encourage and support employees to travel actively as part of their working day. We are supporting this Challenge as there are many benefits to being more physically active including helping reduce the risk of many chronic conditions including coronary heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes, while also improving mental health by reducing levels of anxiety and stress. We would encourage everyone to get involved and enjoy getting active on their commute.”

The free Challenge is online and includes a handy mobile App to help you log your journeys when you're on the move. Just register online and log your commute by bus/train, lunchtime walks, cycle rides, car-share journeys or multi-modal journeys.

The more sustainable journeys, the more points on the leader board and points make prizes! These include a commuter pack worth £150, Fitbits, gift vouchers, cycling and walking goodies and much more.

The **Active Travel Challenge** is open to any individual or organisation in Northern Ireland, with a particular focus on workplaces in Belfast and the north west where Sustrans' has programmes.

**Register your workplace, or as an individual**

[1] Belfast Bike Life 2017 report, Sustrans and DfI

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