

NEWS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE USE

New Data Suggests Big Increase in People Cycling Since Social Distancing Measures Introduced in Scotland

---Cycling Scotland's nationwide network of cycle counters shows significant increase in people cycling from mid-to-end March compared to same period last year---

---People cycling urged to follow all public health guidance including staying at least two metres away from others---

Parts of Scotland have seen a significant increase in people cycling on roads since social distancing measures were introduced to combat Covid-19, new data shows.

According to statistics released today (Monday 13 April) by Cycling Scotland, a counter in Dunfermline recorded an increase of 215 per cent with the number of people cycling at a Dundee location increasing by 94 per cent and Livingston logging a 65 per cent uplift in the last two weeks of March.

Cycling Scotland has a network of 60 automatic cycle counters across Scotland. The data was collected as part of the National Monitoring Framework, managed by Cycling Scotland and funded by Transport Scotland, to monitor cycling rates across the country.

The nation's cycling organisation compared the average number of people cycling per day in the second half of March this year to the same period in 2019. The locations of counters showing the biggest increase in people riding bikes are:

- Dunfermline: 215%
- Newton Mearns (Capelrig Burn): 121%
- Dundee (Arbroath Road): 94%
- Livingston: 66%
- Bathgate: 51%
- Denny: 53%
- Kirkcaldy: 30%
- Dumfries (Cargenbridge): 29%
- Dunoon: 17%
- Helensburgh: 16%

Chief Executive of Cycling Scotland, Keith Irving, said: "Many people are rediscovering cycling during lockdown, for exercise or essential journeys. I hope people continue to cycle when we emerge from this crisis and carry on benefiting from the massive positive impact cycling has on our physical and mental health.

"We would strongly urge anyone getting out on their bike to follow current public health advice, especially on social distancing and hygiene. It's also more important than ever to obey the speed limit, drive to the conditions and give space to people cycling or walking, when driving.

"There are many brilliant organisations offering access to bikes for NHS and other key workers at the moment and we hope this can keep making a difference for people in the weeks to come."

Transport Scotland reported that travel has fallen from an average of 2.7 to 0.9 trips per person per day, with the number of people travelling by road dropping by two thirds since the start of March 2020.

With more people cycling, many organisations, including Cycling Scotland – funded by Transport Scotland – are supporting organisations to help key workers access bikes. More information can be found at cycling.scot/covid19-information

Kirsty Clift is a care assistant in Bishopbriggs, north of Glasgow, where she supports adults with complex additional care needs.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, she has been getting to work on an ebike borrowed from Blackhill on Bikes, a project in her local area.

“Before the outbreak, I’d normally drive to work. I wouldn’t cycle in Glasgow because I’m worried about safety; the roads used to feel too busy and dangerous and I wasn’t confident,” she said.

“The roads have been quieter here so I decided to borrow the ebike from Blackhill on Bikes who have been great; they showed me how to use it and offered to cycle with me from home to work a couple of times so I could get used to it.

“The bike has been fantastic. The quieter roads have given me the confidence boost to ride my bike and you get a bit of exercise in the 20-minute cycle.

“It’s good for mental health too – normally in the car I just listen to music but on the bike, it’s just you and the wind. It makes you feel better, it’s a really nice feeling. I feel more energetic, and more positive.

“I’m definitely going to keep it up. It looks like we’re going to be in this situation for some time, so I’m going to use it to keep practicing, build my confidence and hopefully carry on cycling.”

Lorna King – marketing professional and mum-of-two from Edinburgh – hadn’t been on a bike for seven years before the outbreak of Covid-19. Like many people in Scotland, Lorna had cycled as a child but, due to lack of confidence and a busy family life, had never got into the habit as an adult.

“I’ve always liked the idea of going for a family cycle,” she said, “but, if I’m honest, any time there would have been an opportunity, I just didn’t have the confidence.”

“With social distancing and then lockdown, the time we normally spend taking the girls to gymnastics, dancing and swimming is now freed up and our daily exercise has become more precious.”

Lorna decided to get out her old bike that had been gathering dust in the garage and join her family for her first bike ride in nearly a decade. “I definitely felt a sense of accomplishment after my first cycle. Getting used to the gears again was something I needed some help with a bit at the beginning but got there within a few minutes,” she said.

“The girls have loved us all getting out together on our bikes and we plan to keep cycling as a family.””

ENDS

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

For further media information and pic. of family cycling please contact David Sawyer: 07770 886923 / dave@zudepr.co.uk

Data from 29 counters was reviewed, comparing cycling rates in March 2019 with March 2020. More counters have been added to the network since March 2019, bringing the total to 60.

About Cycling Scotland

Cycling Scotland is the nation's cycling organisation. Working in partnership with other organisations, with funding from Transport Scotland, we help create an environment for everyone in Scotland to cycle easily and safely. Our vision is of a sustainable, inclusive and healthy Scotland where anyone, anywhere can enjoy all the benefits of cycling. For more information please visit www.cycling.scot

Cycling Scotland is a Scottish Charity, SC029760, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).