

ACTIVE TRAVEL
COALITION

DRAFT



MANIFESTO



THE ACTIVE TRAVEL COALITION IS AN ALLIANCE OF HEALTH, MEDICAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND CYCLING CAMPAIGNERS WHO SHARE THE GOAL OF ENABLING PEOPLE OF ALL AGES TO SWITCH TO ACTIVE TRAVEL AND REAP THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF WALKING AND CYCLING FOR EVERYDAY TRIPS.



OUR GOALS ARE TO:



1. ENSURE EVERYONE HAS ACCESS TO ACTIVE TRAVEL OPTIONS

2. GET MORE PEOPLE WALKING, CYCLING AND WHEELING FOR DAILY JOURNEYS

3. PROMOTE THE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF ACTIVE TRAVEL



OUR OBJECTIVES INCLUDE:

1 Ensuring Active Travel. i.e. everyday walking and cycling, is included in Public Health spending

2 Coherent policies on Active Travel by all Government Departments, especially Transport and Health

3 More and better submissions by Public Health groups on transport initiatives

4 Best practice Health Impact Assessments on transport and other new developments

BENEFITS OF ACTIVE TRAVEL



1. Improved
Physical Health



2. Enhanced
Psychological Wellbeing



3. Meet Physical
Activity Targets



4. Cost Effective
Transport Options



5. Quieter, Cleaner
Neighbourhoods
with Less Respiratory Illness



6. Supporting
Climate Action Goals



7. Cost Effective
Public Health



8. Transport
Equity

1. Improved Physical Health

Regular physical activity through active travel has been found to be one of the most sustainable ways of improving health. A review of international evidence by the Institute of Public Health found a strong association between mode of commuting and physical activity [1]. Countries with the highest levels of active travel have the lowest obesity levels. Children who walk or cycle to school are more likely to have higher overall levels of physical activity, and physically active older people continue to live independently for longer.



2. Enhanced Psychological Wellbeing

In addition to physical health benefits, active commuting can also benefit psychological wellbeing. For example, researchers who analysed data from around 18,000 commuters across the UK over eighteen years found that people who walked or cycled to work benefited from improved mental wellbeing in comparison to commuters who travel by car.[2]



3. Effective At Meeting Physical Activity Targets



Regular walking and cycling for everyday journeys, such as trips to work or school, builds exercise into busy lives and can be easier to maintain compared to recreational physical activity. For example, it has been shown that in England, people who cycle for travel purposes are four times as likely to meet physical activity guidelines as those who do not [8].

4. Cost Effective Transport Options



Researchers who analysed the cost-benefit frameworks currently used to assess bicycle infrastructure projects in Copenhagen reported that the cost to society of 1km of car driving is more than six times higher (Euro 0.50/km) than cycling (Euro 0.08/km), when collisions, climate change, health and travel time are considered[6].

5. Quieter, Cleaner Neighbourhoods with Less Respiratory Illness

Enabling more cycling can reduce air pollution problems in urban areas which result from private vehicle use. The World Health Organisation has determined that there is no safe level of air pollution. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, a 'transition away from the use of private diesel and petrol powered motor cars to alternative modes of transport' (including walking and cycling), is vital for Ireland's at-risk urban populations[9].

6. Supporting Climate Action Goals

Transport accounts for 20% of Ireland's overall emissions with 52% of overall transport emissions coming from private cars. Facilitating increased walking and cycling supports several of the Goals in the Action Plan for the National Sustainable Mobility Policy [11].

7. Cost Effective Public Health Measures

A population shift to active travel brings savings through reduced healthcare costs, better productivity and less time off work due to illness or disability. For example in Scotland, it is estimated that if 40% of all short journeys were switched from car to bicycle, this would result in a saving of at least £2 billion per year due to reduced mortality and closer to £4 billion per year when improved health is included. [5]

A 2014 report commissioned by the UK Department for Transport assessed cost benefit evidence for walking and cycling interventions. Almost all of the studies identified by the report author demonstrated that switching to more active modes of travel can reap substantial economic benefits for individuals and for society as a whole [7]. In general, investment in cycling projects provide the highest rate of return of all transport projects.



8. Cost Effective Transport Options

Improving provision for active travel reduces transport-related social exclusion amongst many individuals who do not have access to a car by improving their access to employment, education, shopping and social activities. [3]



Investing in cycling also helps reduce 'Forced Car Ownership' amongst those households who do currently have one or two cars but experience the associated costs as a significant financial burden. The AA have estimated the average cost of running a family car for a year in Ireland at €10,691 [4]. Improving cycling conditions and making cycling an option for all ages and abilities will mean that car ownership and particularly having a second car in a household will become less of a necessity.



References

- [1] Active travel - healthy lives - Institute of Public Health
- [2] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4262577/>
- [3] SDC, S. D. C. 2011. Fairness in a car-dependent society.
- [4] <https://www.theaa.ie/motoring-advice/cost-of-motoring/>
- [5] Transform Scotland Trust, Towards a healthier economy. Why investing in sustainable transport makes economic sense. 2008, Transform Scotland Trust: Edinburgh
- [6] Gossling, S & Choi, A (2015) Transport transitions in Copenhagen: Comparing the cost of cars and bicycles. Ecological Economics
- [7] Davis, A. (2014) Claiming the health dividend: A summary of and discussion of value for money estimates from studies of investment in walking and cycling. Department for Transport (UK)
- [8] Stewart G, Anokye NK, & Pokhrel S (2015) Quantifying the contribution of utility cycling to population levels of physical activity: an analysis of the Active People Survey. Journal of Public Health pp. 1–9 | doi:10.1093/pubmed/fdv182.
- [9] Air Quality in Ireland 2016; Environmental Protection Agency
- [10] European Environment Agency (2014) Noise in Europe. [11] gov.ie - National Sustainable Mobility Policy (www.gov.ie)
- [11] Chen, Chang et al. (2023) Effect of Moderate and Vigorous Aerobic Exercise on Incident Diabetes in Adults With Obesity.