
sustrans
OVEMENT

**Sustrans, supported by a grant from the Big Lottery Fund, completed many new high quality walking and cycling routes between 2009 and 2013. These routes were delivered with a range of partners and extended the National Cycle Network in more than 80 communities UK-wide.**

Few high quality studies have shown how environmental changes like this lead to behaviour change in relation to physical activity. The wider impact on public health has therefore been difficult to estimate. To evidence the impact on people and their communities, leading experts formed the iConnect consortium, which was funded by the Engineering and Physical Science Research Council (EPSRC).

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The iConnect study aimed to measure and evaluate the changes in travel, physical activity and carbon emissions related to schemes across the UK. The five-year study (2008-2013) involved a broad evaluation of the whole programme coupled with detailed investigations at five specific sites.

The study sought to determine whether the new routes have helped more people to switch from using their cars to walking or cycling, getting them more physically active and reducing their carbon footprint in the process. In particular, the study also explored why these interventions are (or are not) effective, in what ways, for whom and in what circumstances.

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Sustrans worked with a large number of partners to deliver 84 networks of walking and cycling routes that opened up links within communities. The networks included new crossings and bridges to cross barriers such as busy roads, rivers and railways. This gave people the opportunity to make healthy travel choices when accessing their local schools, shops, parks and countryside.

Together, this cohort of schemes was called the Connect2 programme. Funding for the programme of £50 million was secured from the Big Lottery Fund by public vote. This was used as the basis for securing

**Main findings from the iConnect research include:**

- **Proximity matters: people living nearby interventions increased their total levels of physical activity,** compared to those living

## [illegible]

A new bridge and path over the busy A10 created a vital connection for people walking and riding a bike between Bury Green and Waltham Cross. Now 23,000 people living within half a mile of the bridge and paths have easy access to work, schools and other every day destinations.

# Planning and design

A pedestrian bridge built over the M8 in the late 1960's was designed to link a shopping complex to the city centre but was left unfinished. It became known locally as 'The Bridge to Nowhere'. The bridge has been completed and is a focal point for a network of new walking and cycling routes across Glasgow. This radically changes the context for movement in that part of the city. The new routes provide a key commuting link between the west of the city to the city centre and the train station.

A number of existing paths along the River Nene were upgraded and Northampton's canal towpath was resurfaced. A new bridge was installed and two existing bridges along the route were restored in order to create safe, easy links. The routes were designed to provide multifunctional corridors connecting residential areas with local amenities, the town centre and on to Upton County Park.

The Comber Greenway is one of Northern Ireland's most popular walking and cycling routes. However, it didn't connect to the newly developed Titanic Quarter and the city centre. A new walking and cycling route was developed to overcome the busy Sydenham Bypass and the rail line, and to extend the Comber Greenway to the Titanic Quarter. Good links were also made to the city centre. The scheme included installing toucan crossings and traffic-calming measures, reopening an old access road into the former docks, improving access to public transport, and linking to the existing riverside paths.

# Planning and design

## What we learned

The research indicates that walking and cycling routes can have the most impact on physical activity when they run close to the places where people

**Main findings from the iConnect research include:**

- **Studies show that new, high-quality, traffic-free cycling and walking routes encouraged more people to get about by foot and by bike.**[1]
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Usage levels on some already busy routes on the Bradford scheme increased dramatically once the network was improved and the bridge was in place. Usage levels average well over a thousand people walking or cycling on the route each day.

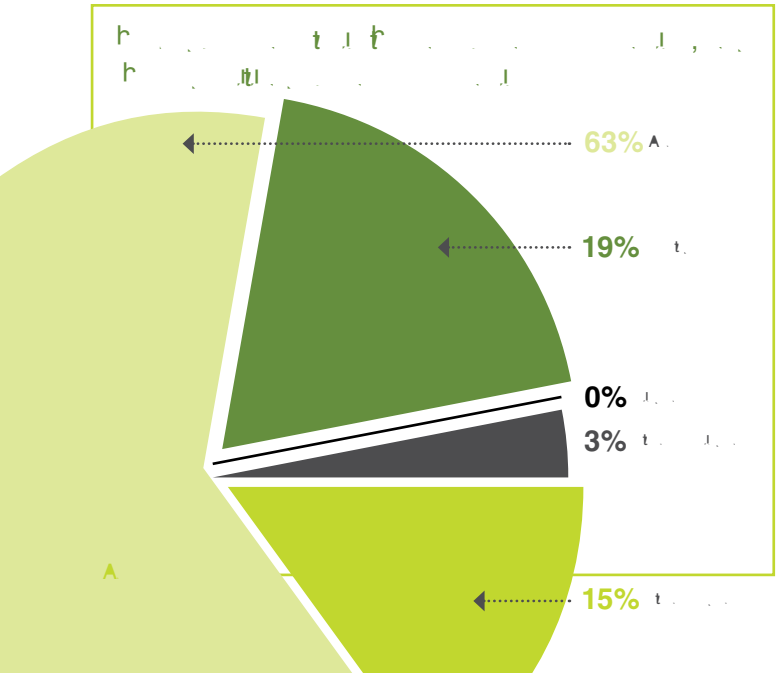
# Impact

In this section we highlight the major research findings relating to the impact of schemes, and highlight schemes that help to illustrate these findings.

**Main findings from the iConnect research include:**

- **The increases in physical activity observed were equally spread between men and women and adults of different ages and social groups.**[1]
- **Gains in walking and cycling were not offset by reductions in other forms of physical activity,** suggesting that new routes have encouraged people to become more active overall.[1,2]
- **People who lived closer to and/or used the routes were more likely to report a more supportive environment** in terms of provision and safety. These changes in perception may have contributed to people taking up the opportunity to use the new infrastructure.[3]

The Glasgow Bridge to Nowhere scheme is encouraging large numbers of people to become more active overall. Of the people making over 900,000 walking or cycling trips on the route every year (2,500 trips per day), 78% stated that the route was either their only source of exercise, or a wholly additional source of exercise (i.e. not displacing any other forms of activity). The balance of gender of people using the route is relatively even, and all age categories are represented.



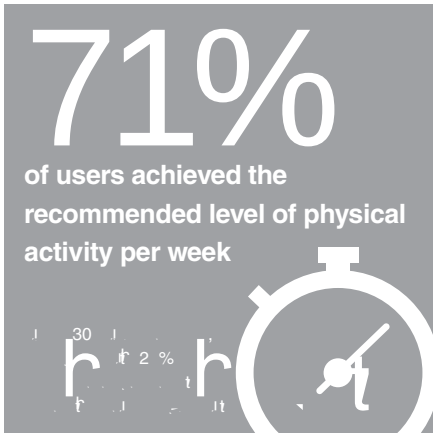

The types of trips made on routes varies enormously. The Titanic Quarter scheme is a good example of that variability. The route carries 1,250 people walking and cycling per day. Close to the city centre 41% of walking and cycling trips are for leisure purposes. Out towards the edge of the city 62% of walking and cycling trips are for leisure purposes. At the very rural end of the greenway 84% of walking and cycling trips are for leisure purposes. Wider travel patterns show high levels of leisure use across all modes. According to the UK National Travel Survey (2014) 47% of weekend trips (by all modes) and 25% of weekday trips are for leisure purposes. We shouldn't be surprised that Connect2 schemes carry large amounts of recreational use. Schemes also carry a lot of commuting use. 27% of walking and cycling trips on the scheme close to the city centre are for commuting purposes (compared with 19% of all trips by all modes for commuting according to the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2012-14).

**100%**
**of route users**
**increased their regular physical activity.**

OVER **90%**
**of women**
**increased their regular physical activity,**
0%

At Cheshunt, 84% of people walking and cycling on the route said that the route was either their only source of exercise, or a wholly additional source of exercise (i.e. not displacing any other forms of activity). People who use the route report that the route provides a supportive environment.

2009 figures relate to usage on existing local routes prior to construction of the bridge




**£9**

**in** bene ts to children **over 30 years: health benefits make up about 80% of these**

## What we learned

The research shows interventions that support walking and cycling enable people to become more active. Increases in physical activity are observed throughout the community. Scheme promoters should ensure that walking and cycling routes address the needs of the whole population. This includes recognising that the nearer people are to a route, and the more they use a route, the more likely they are to view the environment as 'supportive'. This perception encourages further use of the route by those individuals.

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.