The Healthy Travel Charters in Wales

Dr Tom Porter, 9 July 2025

Making healthy travel easier

1. What is/was the challenge/opportunity you sought/are seeking to address?

- The transport system has significant and widespread impacts on health, including normalising sedentary behaviour; injuries and deaths from collisions; increasing social isolation; air pollution; exacerbating inequalities, and climate change
- I edited a report in 2017 setting out the evidence base for the link between transport and health, which made a series of recommendations at a strategy and policy level in Cardiff and Vale to address this
- I presented the report to Cardiff Public Services Board (PSB) where we asked the question 'What can public bodies in Cardiff do to help address this problem?'

2. What have you been doing to respond and why? Who is involved?

- We set up a task and finish group for Cardiff PSB members to look at what actions PSB organisations could take on transport. This included the local Council, Cardiff and Vale UHB, Natural Resources Wales, Transport for Wales, the Senedd (as an employer in Cardiff), Police, Fire and Rescue and Welsh Ambulance.
- This led to the development of the Cardiff Healthy Travel Charter and subsequently a Charter in the Vale of Glamorgan
- The Healthy Travel Charters set out a series of commitments signatory organisations make, to make it easier for staff and visitors to walk, cycle, take public transport, and decarbonise private car journeys
- Welsh Government asked for the Charters to be rolled out across Wales so this process has been happening since then, with the final area (Cwm Taf Morgannwg) launching their Charter this month, in July 2025
- Charters have been co-produced in each area with public bodies, in conjunction with the PSBs, and led by a local co-ordinator. Sustrans have supported the development and implementation of a number of the Charters

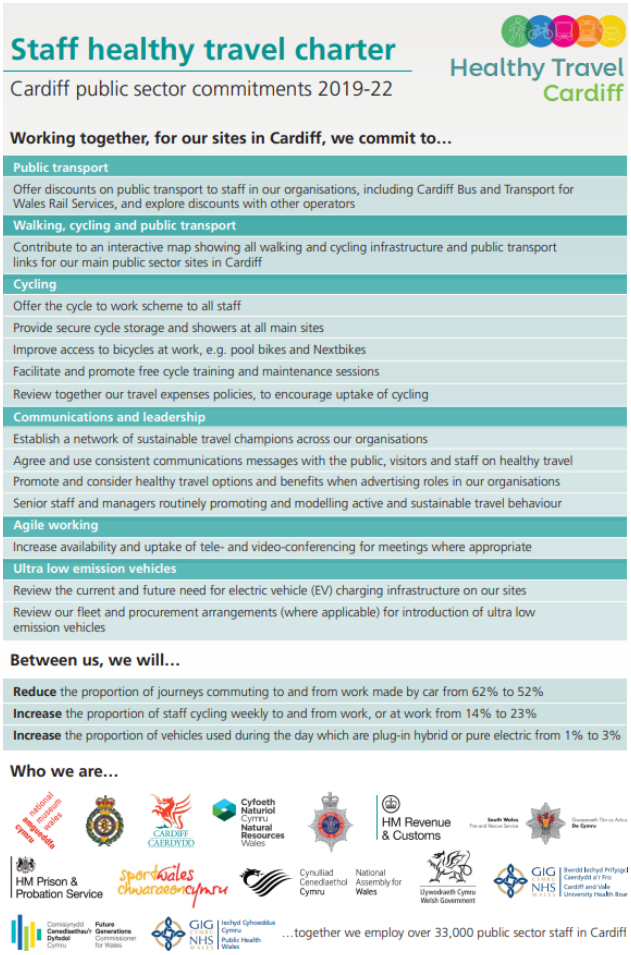
3. What progress/impact has been achieved so far?

- All areas across Wales now have a Healthy Travel Charter, with the majority of public bodies signed up to a Charter
- The Charters feature in Welsh Government policy, including the implementation plan for the national transport strategy, and the current national decarbonisation budget
- There are a number of supporting resources available including a communications toolkit and implementation toolkit for the Charter
- Some organisations in Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan, Swansea and Gwent have now completed all the commitments in the initial Charter, and a 'Level 2' Charter was developed for those organisations

- A Business Charter has also been developed for the private sector, though it was launched shortly before the pandemic and uptake has been relatively low
- I am currently working with PHW, Transport for Wales and Welsh Government to agree the approach to the next phase of the Charter, which will include a tripartite national steering group with representatives from the three organisations to set out a common 'offer' to employers across Wales on sustainable travel for their staff, to consolidate and streamline the approach

4. What learnings or recommendations would you share with other organisations looking to take this approach or get involved?

- Engage with the PSBs at the outset – they are a ready-made forum for engagement with partners, and also a governance route in many areas for regional-level projects.
- The Well-being of Future Generations Act, and the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner, can also be very helpful in enabling, supporting and championing cross-organisational work
- Be persistent and patient – interest and capacity to engage with projects fluctuates over time, often completely unrelated to how good a project it is; rather than take this personally, stay positive, gently persistent, and be patient!
- Be flexible – there isn't always a 'one size fits all' approach – co-production of the Charters in each area was important to ensure voices and local priorities were included in the development of each Charter, helping to increase engagement
- Build in evaluation at the outset; while evaluation was planned with the Healthy Travel Charters as they rolled out, the pandemic removed the support and resource to put this in place; this will be built in for the next phase of the Charters but is important as a project evolves to understand what works and what doesn't



Staff healthy travel charter

Cardiff public sector commitments 2019-22

Healthy Travel Cardiff

Working together, for our sites in Cardiff, we commit to...

Public transport
Offer discounts on public transport to staff in our organisations, including Cardiff Bus and Transport for Wales Rail Services, and explore discounts with other operators
Walking, cycling and public transport
Contribute to an interactive map showing all walking and cycling infrastructure and public transport links for our main public sector sites in Cardiff
Cycling
Offer the cycle to work scheme to all staff
Provide secure cycle storage and showers at all main sites
Improve access to bicycles at work, e.g. pool bikes and Nextbikes
Facilitate and promote free cycle training and maintenance sessions
Review together our travel expenses policies, to encourage uptake of cycling
Communications and leadership
Establish a network of sustainable travel champions across our organisations
Agree and use consistent communications messages with the public, visitors and staff on healthy travel
Promote and consider healthy travel options and benefits when advertising roles in our organisations
Senior staff and managers routinely promoting and modelling active and sustainable travel behaviour
Agile working
Increase availability and uptake of tele- and video-conferencing for meetings where appropriate
Ultra low emission vehicles
Review the current and future need for electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure on our sites
Review our fleet and procurement arrangements (where applicable) for introduction of ultra low emission vehicles

Between us, we will...

Reduce the proportion of journeys commuting to and from work made by car from 62% to 52%
Increase the proportion of staff cycling weekly to and from work, or at work from 14% to 23%
Increase the proportion of vehicles used during the day which are plug-in hybrid or pure electric from 1% to 3%

Who we are...

...together we employ over 33,000 public sector staff in Cardiff