

Walking, wheeling and cycling in South Yorkshire

Celebrating our progress 2024



SOUTH YORKSHIRE
SYMCA
MAYORAL
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

Foreword from Mayor Oliver Coppard

“My ambition is that South Yorkshire becomes the healthiest region in the UK. Helping people to choose walking, wheeling and cycling can help us achieve that goal.”

I want South Yorkshire to become the healthiest region in the UK. We have a long way to go to achieve that goal. We face huge challenges around our health and our economy that are holding us back from becoming the place that we deserve – that is, a wealthier, healthier and happier region.

We won't achieve the growth we so desperately need in South Yorkshire if health is holding people back from work, training and other opportunities. And getting people to be more active, to move more in their daily lives, is just one of the ways we're going to tackle that challenge.

That's why I care passionately about giving freedom and choice about how we travel and move to everyone in South Yorkshire. People won't choose walking, wheeling or cycling if the infrastructure isn't there to support them, if they don't feel safe in their neighbourhoods, or if they don't see the benefit in activity. I want to change people's behaviour so they see the joy in including walking, wheeling or cycling in their daily lives.

Our Year of Active Travel has celebrated the progress we've made not just over the last year – but all the work that went into making that progress possible over the last seven years.

We've made roads and streets safer through better crossings and safer cycle lanes. And we've brought in measures to make where people live safer, such as School Streets and 20mph zones. I've met many, many people over the last year who now have more choice about how they get around, and how they can fit activity into their daily lives.

It's been a huge pleasure to get to know the many communities and groups throughout South Yorkshire who champion active travel and who, every day, advocate for more from myself and others. We need all of our partners – our community groups, schools, public health partners, local and national government and charities.

My Year of Active Travel may be drawing to a close, and I hope you will join with me in celebrating its achievements. But the work goes on and I need all your help to make South Yorkshire a healthier, wealthier, and happier place.



Oliver Coppard, Mayor,
South Yorkshire Mayoral
Combined Authority

Why Active Travel matters

1 in 3 people

in South Yorkshire aren't working because of health problems, and not being active is a big factor.

Over 300,000 people

in South Yorkshire, live in households without access to a car. They need as many options as possible to move around the region.

1 in 4 cars

on the road in England during the morning peak are on the school run.

1 in 4 people

in South Yorkshire are physically inactive.

Walking can play a huge role in improving health – walking just **30 minutes per day** reduces someone's chance of dying of any cause by 10%.



“Being able to walk, learn about the area – you feel more content with yourself... our outside is a medicine that you take to feel good.”

Yvonne Witter, Social Prescribing Link Worker



How we are supporting walking, wheeling and cycling in South Yorkshire

Our mission is simple: to transform South Yorkshire into a healthier, wealthier, happier place, through helping more people choose to walk, wheel and cycle.

Our ambitious plans include investing in healthier neighbourhoods, safer streets and better connections – to give everyone freedom and choice about how they get around for shorter journeys.

We know an inclusive transport network helps to support a successful and healthy society, improves productivity and achieves economic growth.

Making South Yorkshire the best place in the country to walk, wheel and cycle is a team effort.

Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield councils – together with their community groups, partners and stakeholders – have all achieved so much since 2020.

Working together we have made roads and streets safer through better ‘hardware’ on the ground, like more road crossings, School Streets, 20mph speed limits and separate cycle lanes.

We’ve led ‘software’ projects that help people feel confident being active and benefit their physical and mental health – such as helping children learn to ride a bike or community walking groups.

We’ve helped thousands of people to move more and move differently so no one is left behind.



Across the region we have also:

- Set up a new design review panel with Active Travel England to ensure new schemes are high quality and inclusive because we know this will help the people who need the most support to get active.
- Strengthened and increased the teams working on active travel across the Mayoral Combined Authority and our four local authorities.
- Started developing a new overarching South Yorkshire strategy at the same time as each local authority has started working on their own Local Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Investment Plans.

- Invested £160m from 2020 to 2027.
- Built 67km of new or improved walking, wheeling and cycling routes.
- Installed 65 new or improved crossings.
- Built 249 new cycle parking spaces.
- Improved 4,208m² of public places.
- Directly supported over 13,000 people to walk, wheel and cycle.

Our future focus



Healthier neighbourhoods

Every walk, wheel or cycle starts at someone's front door. We want every neighbourhood across South Yorkshire to feel safe, welcoming and fun for a three-year-old to learn to ride their balance bike on the pavement; for an older person to use their mobility scooter to access the local shops; and for a parent or carer to walk their child to school.

Schools are at the heart of our neighbourhoods. Our local authorities work hard to support schools and we are working together:

- To introduce School Streets, making the roads and streets around schools safer and more fun to use, transforming the school run.
- To put in place travel plans and 'software' projects to help families choose to travel actively to school, often in partnership with Bikeability, Living Streets and Modeshift.
- To make sure that journeys to school are prioritised in neighbourhood 'hardware' schemes, through building better crossings, bike lanes and more 20mph zones.
- Our local authority teams and partners also support people from every background to get active in their neighbourhoods.
- In Barnsley, local authority staff provide a fully integrated offer to schools of bike and scooter training through fun and inspirational sessions, as well as the integrated What's Your Move programme.
- 95 schools across South Yorkshire are taking part in Modeshift's STARS programme, which supports pupils to directly to walk, wheel, and cycle more.
- 87 primary schools are supported by Living Streets' WOW Travel Tracker initiative.



The Walk & Wheel challenge

Year of Active Travel

- Our Year of Active Travel included the Mayor's Walk and Wheel Challenge – 78 primary schools took part in a 10-day activity to encourage every child to choose to walk, scoot or bike to school.
- We celebrated more than 150 different groups that help people to get walking in their communities as part of #SouthYorksWalks.
- During the Mayor's challenge at parkrun, we celebrated our 12 parkrun communities across South Yorkshire whose tireless volunteers help thousands of people get active where they live every week, including hundreds of parkwalkers.
- We hosted the Living Streets UK Walking Summit in Sheffield, highlighting the importance of helping our neighbourhoods become more walkable for people from every background.
- We celebrated the joys of cycling with a new 250km South Yorkshire By Bike route through industrial, green and historic spaces.



“Schools are at the heart of our plans here in South Yorkshire. We know walking and wheeling keeps kids active and enables healthy habits for life. Creating neighbourhoods with more opportunities for us all to move more and move differently gives everyone freedom and choice about how to travel. Not just today, but for many years to come.”

Ed Clancy OBE, Active Travel Commissioner,
South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority

“I've got to get fresh air sometimes and Susan takes us down which we couldn't do before. It's like magic now the trails changed and it's a lot easier to walk down. More people use it and I think if they see the change they see the nature at its best. It's essential to keep this going, to fund things like this.”

Barry and Susan, Trans Pennine Trail

Connecting people to opportunities

Through our investment, we’re building a network of key routes to connect people with opportunities in town or city centres, to places of work and education, and to bus, tram and train journeys. And we’re supporting projects in the community that help residents and workers to walk, wheel and cycle to where they need to be.

We’re connecting people into town and city centres

- Barnsley’s traffic-free Tommy Taylor Memorial Bridge into the town centre.
- Doncaster’s tree-lined segregated cycle path between Thorne Road and South Parade.
- Rotherham’s innovative Broom Road cycling scheme connecting the town’s south-east and centre.
- Sheffield’s transformative walking, wheeling and cycling routes into and around the city centre.

- The Modeshift for Business partnership helps NHS employees travel to 60 healthcare settings in Sheffield.
- Our shared e-bike loan fleet across the region is one of the biggest in the country – we’ve provided over 130 additional e-bikes to local authority cycle schemes and half a million pounds to help people to use them
- Active Travel Hubs in South Yorkshire, such as Rotherham’s Journey Matters, are helping thousands of people to walk, wheel and cycle more, through bike loans, maintenance checks, guided trips and travel planning.

We’re connecting people to jobs and education

- Porter’s Bridge in Doncaster offers new connections between Rossington and iPort.
- Sheffield Road Cycleways scheme in Rotherham is part of regeneration bringing better transport links, more jobs and housing to the area.

We’re linking up neighbourhoods

- South Yorkshire By Bike highlighted the traffic-free paths, segregated cycle lanes, quiet roads and family friendly routes connecting communities across South Yorkshire.

- Investment in our region’s Trans Pennine Trail has made it safer and more welcoming, from Warmsworth to Conisborough and at Cusworth.
- Ambitious projects like Connecting Sheffield: Neepsend-Kelham-City Centre are accelerating development and helping to improve the environment for those living in, working in and visiting the area.

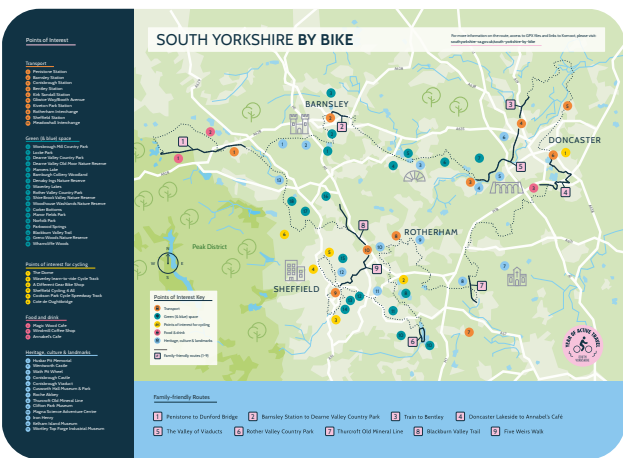
“The NHS is one of the largest employers in South Yorkshire. By working in a UK-first alliance, SYMCA, Modeshift and the NHS are providing travel plans that help key workers and their families get to Sheffield’s Primary Care Network sites using the city’s walking, wheeling and cycling routes. It’s not only benefitting our health and wellbeing, but also the planet.”

Dr Jo Maher, GP Partner at Wincobank Medical Centre

“If you are not sure if cycling’s for you or not, I really believe that e-bikes are a big part of the solution. They can open up cycling to anyone – it just levels the playing field when you’re using pedal assist.”

Ed Clancy OBE, Active Travel Commissioner, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority

Return on investment in Active Travel averages at £5.62 per £1 spent – one of the best in transport across the UK.



South Yorkshire by Bike map



Some of South Yorkshire’s e-bike loan fleet

Engaging our communities

We want to help everyone to walk, wheel or cycle more, especially those that need the most support and have the most to gain from being more physically active and having more travel choices.

Over a third of people in South Yorkshire have a disability or long-term health condition

200,000 people also have mobility issues. For many, wheelchairs, mobility aids, adapted or regular bikes are an important way to get around.

Over 300,000 people across South Yorkshire live in households without a car

Nationally, over 20% of unemployed people either turn down work or don't apply for a job because they can't get to it.

Ethnically diverse communities in South Yorkshire are less likely to be active

Those from ethnically diverse communities, especially Black and South Asian heritage women, are less likely to be physically active than other groups.

14.8 million days per year are lost to sickness across Yorkshire and the Humber

Moving more boosts productivity in the workplace and in boosts economic growth – 30 minutes of activity a day cuts sick days by 25%.

Organisations like Cycling for All and Wheels for All Doncaster help all children and adults with disabilities and differing needs to engage with cycling activity. They use adapted cycles such as handcycles, trikes and wheelchair transporters to assist in building confidence and independence in cycling.

The Barnsley Refugee Bike Project works with volunteer mechanics and residents with refugee backgrounds who are building their lives and supporting the community. The project refurbishes and donates pre-loved bikes into vital tools for affordable transport.

A conclusion from Active Travel Commissioner, Ed Clancy OBE

There's lots to celebrate about walking, wheeling and cycling in South Yorkshire.

As Active Travel Commissioner, I've been inspired by the hard work and passion of our partners and community that are helping people to move more and move differently.

I've seen first-hand the positive impact that both 'hardware' and 'software' projects are already having in neighbourhoods across Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield.

But the changes we want to see in our region won't happen overnight. There are barriers to overcome.

The new active travel strategy we are developing for South Yorkshire will build on the blueprint that our partners and community have put in place, together with each area's Local Investment Plan. We're working as one team to bring about an integrated approach to walking, wheeling and cycling in our region.

A big focus will be helping every child to choose to walk, scoot or bike to school, to encourage healthy habits for life. We'll be working with our communities to create healthier neighbourhoods and safer roads; and concentrating on connecting people to opportunities – particularly our seldom-heard groups.

Our ambition will be underpinned by behavioural science, community engagement and high-quality infrastructure design, with the end goal of giving everyone the freedom and choice to walk, wheel and cycle.

I'm excited for the next steps and hope you'll join me on our journey to make South Yorkshire a healthier, happier and safer place through active travel.

Ed Clancy OBE, Active Travel Commissioner, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority





SOUTH YORKSHIRE
SYMCA
MAYORAL
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

