

# Walking, wheeling and cycling to be offered on prescription in nationwide trial

- trials in 11 areas across the country to help people's mental and physical health
- GPs will issue social prescriptions such as walking, wheeling and cycling, backed by £12.7 million
- schemes will include cycling and walking groups, cycle training and free bike loans

Social prescriptions, including walking, wheeling and cycling, will be offered by GPs as part of a new trial to improve mental and physical health and reduce disparities across the country, the government has announced today (22 August 2022).

The government has awarded £12.7 million in multi-year funding to 11 local authority areas in England. The funding will go towards several pilot projects in each location, including:

- adult cycle training
- free bike loans
- walking groups

Other schemes include all-ability cycling taster days where people who may not have cycled before can try to in a friendly environment, or walking and cycling mental health groups where people can connect with their communities as they get active.

The pilots must be delivered alongside improved infrastructure so people feel safe to cycle and walk.

The 11 local authority areas that will trial social prescriptions are:

- Bath and North East Somerset
- Bradford
- Cornwall
- Cumbria
- Doncaster
- Gateshead
- Leeds
- Nottingham
- Plymouth
- Suffolk
- Staffordshire

The pilots, a commitment in the government's [Gear Change plan](#) published in 2020, aim to evaluate the impact of cycling and walking on an individual's

health, such as reduced GP appointments and reliance on medication due to more physical activity. For the first time, transport, active travel and health officials will work together towards a whole systems approach to health improvement and tackling health disparities.

Walking and Cycling Minister, Trudy Harrison, said:

Walking and cycling has so many benefits – from improving air quality in our communities to reducing congestion on our busiest streets.

It also has an enormous positive impact on physical and mental health, which is why we have funded these projects which will get people across the country moving and ease the burden on our NHS.

National Active Travel Commissioner, Chris Boardman, said:

As a nation we need healthier, cheaper and more pleasant ways to get around for everyday trips. Active Travel England's mission is to ensure millions of people nationwide can do just that – so it's easier to leave the car at home and to enjoy the benefits that come with it.

Moving more will lead to a healthier nation, a reduced burden on the NHS, less cancer, heart disease and diabetes, as well as huge cost savings. This trial aims to build on existing evidence to show how bringing transport, active travel and health together can make a positive impact on communities across England.

The pilots will be delivered between 2022 and 2025 with on-going monitoring and evaluation to support continued learning.

The project is bringing together a range of government departments and agencies including:

- NHS England
- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
- Sport England
- National Academy for Social Prescribing
- Defra
- Department for Health and Social Care