

MEDIA BRIEFING

12th March 2017

New data analysis published by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) show that cycling as a means of commuting is on the rise in Glasgow but more needs to be done to encourage cycling in school-age children.

Glasgow's first public bike hire scheme, has enjoyed considerable success since its launch in 2014. To a large degree the scheme appears to be used for commuting purposes – with peak use in the morning and early evening and on weekdays rather than weekends. Steady growth in use has been observed since the scheme was introduced in 2014. For the two-year period from July 2014 to end-June 2016, there were a total of 191,874 hires, with an average of 262 hires per day. Glasgow Green is the most popular rental location, followed by the Broomielaw and St Enoch Square.

Over 16,000 individuals are registered with the scheme, and a 3:2 ratio of male to female users indicates that the scheme seems to be attracting a greater proportion of female cyclists than might be expected based on other evidence. Over 90% of those registered had home postcodes within the Glasgow area and only 1% had non-Glasgow postcodes. This, and the peak times of use, suggest that the main hires are made by Glasgow residents for commuting purposes, and that hires made by tourists and/or hires made as part of multi-modal trips by visitors to the city are relatively low.

The new 'City Ways' are the subject of two of the reports. The *West City Way* and the *South West City Way* are two of the recently developed cycle routes which provide segregated access for cyclists from different parts of Glasgow into the city centre. Using data from cycle counters on the routes, both routes appear to be heavily used for commuting purposes, and are experiencing increasing use over time.

In a two-year period up to July 2016, the Anderston-Argyle Street Bridge section of the West City Way experienced a total of 116,334 journeys with an average of 159 journeys per day. Data for the South West City Way over the period March to October 2016 (the period for which the data was available) showed 106,980 journeys were made with an average of 519 journeys per day. On both routes more journeys were made on weekdays than weekends,

there were peaks at standard commuting hours with the major direction of travel into the city in the morning and out again in the evening.

The final report looks at travel to school in Glasgow using data from the Hands Up Survey conducted across Scottish schools by Sustrans each year. The results present a less positive picture of cycling activity within the city than the other three reports, suggesting that further work is required to support school-age children to cycle. However, there is growth seen in levels of primary school children cycling to school – from 2 to 4% between 2008 and 2015 – which may partly reflect a recently introduced preschool cycling initiative and increased provision of infrastructure such as cycle shelters.

Reflecting on the findings, Karen Macpherson, author of the reports commented: “These analyses highlight the positive impact of new segregated cycle ways and bikes for hire on cycling levels in the city, particularly for commuting. It is evident from the growing success of the Glasgow bike hire scheme that it is encouraging cycling as a cheap and convenient option for short journeys within the city. The scheme is being well used by locals and appears to be encouraging more women to cycle.”

Commenting on the wider relevance of findings, Bruce Whyte, Public Health Programme Manager at the GCPH added “Despite the positive messages from these reports, much still needs to change. There are growing concerns about childhood obesity and children not being active enough. This analysis of cycling and walking to school in Glasgow suggests that much more needs to be done to enable more children to travel actively and safely to school – which could help tackle these issues.

“We also need to challenge our growing culture of car dependency which is a key component of our obesogenic environment and which is contributing to the air pollution problems we face. To encourage adults and children out of cars – and to be more active – we need to provide cheap, convenient and safe alternative modes of travel that include well-designed walking and cycling routes and good quality public transport services.”

Notes:

1. The Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) is a research and development organisation, set up in 2004 to add value to health improvement in Scotland. The GCPH generates insights and evidence, creates new solutions and provides leadership for action to improve health and tackle inequality. The GCPH is a partnership between NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Glasgow City Council and the University of Glasgow, supported by the Scottish Government. www.gcph.co.uk
2. Nextbike, Glasgow's first public bike hire scheme was introduced on 24th June 2014. Initially 400 bikes were introduced to 31 locations with a further ten locations added in May 2015 and two further hospital locations added in April 2016.
3. The West City Way provides a route from Kelvingrove Park in the west end of the city to Central Station in the city centre. The cycle count data comes from an automatic counter on the Anderston-Argyle Street Bridge and so does not necessarily capture all cycle use on the whole length of the route.
4. The South West City Way provides cyclists with a link from Pollokshields in the south west of the city to the Tradeston (or Squiggly) Bridge over the river Clyde, which leads to the city centre. The cycle count data for this route comes from an automatic counter situated on Shields Road.
5. Download: [*Glasgow's public cycle hire scheme: analysis of usage between July 2014 and June 2016.*](#)
6. Download: [*Cycle journeys on the Anderston-Argyle Street footbridge: a descriptive analysis.*](#)
7. Download: [*Cycle journeys on the South West City Way: a descriptive analysis.*](#)
8. Download: [*Travel to school in Glasgow: a descriptive analysis of results from the Hands Up Survey.*](#)

Issued by: Glasgow Centre for Population Health

Contact:

Jennie Coyle

Communications Manager

Tel: 0141 287 1872/2747

Email: jennie.coyle@glasgow.ac.uk

Web: www.gcph.co.uk

Twitter: [@theGCPH](https://twitter.com/theGCPH)

ENDS