

NATIONAL HEART FORUM

**WALKING AND CYCLING STRATEGY FOR WALES  
RESPONSE FORM**

Please supply the following information about yourself:

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Your completed response should be sent by 11 October to:

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*Please note that comments received as a result of this consultation will be considered in finalising the document for subsequent publication by the Welsh Assembly. Unless you indicate to the contrary, it will be assumed that you have no objection to the Assembly making your comments public. Please tick the relevant box if you wish to treat some or all of your response as confidential:*

I wish for part or all of my response to remain confidential (please tick)	
<input type="checkbox"/> All	<input type="checkbox"/> Part (please provide details):
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If you would like to receive a copy of a report summarising the responses, please tick this box: / Yes

**You are welcome to fill out some or all of the following boxes, depending on your area of expertise or interest. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO ANSWER EVERY QUESTION!**

### **General**

1. The National Heart Forum warmly welcomes the development of a walking and cycling strategy for Wales. Such a strategy has huge potential for the health of the Welsh population and for the environment.
2. **The strategy could benefit from a clear vision statement and aims, such as have been developed in the draft Scottish physical activity strategy document.** These need to state why walking and cycling are important, and outline the broad benefits that a focus on these would bring to local communities.
3. **The strategy needs to demonstrate WAG's clear intention to refocus urban and rural planning and management towards the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, and away from use of the car.**
4. We believe the current document fails to recognise the enormous potential to improve the public's health and well-being that a walking and cycling strategy has.
5. We are particularly concerned that the role of health, and the NHS, in the delivery of the strategy has been overlooked. One of the key motivators for walking, cycling and horse riding among the adult population is health and therefore health and the health service must be one of the central pivots of this strategy.

### **Background information on National Heart Forum**

6. The National Heart Forum (NHF) is the UK alliance of over 45 national organisations working to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease in the UK. Member organisations represent the medical and health services, professional bodies, consumer groups and voluntary organisations. Members also include many individual experts in cardiovascular research. Government departments have observer status.
7. The purpose of the NHF is to work with and through its members to prevent disability and death from coronary heart disease in the UK. In order to achieve this, the National Heart Forum has four main objectives:
  - To provide a forum for members for the exchange of information, ideas and initiatives on coronary heart disease prevention
  - To identify and address areas of consensus and controversy and gaps in research and policy
  - To develop policy based on evidence and on the views of member organisations
  - To stimulate and promote effective action.
8. The NHF embraces professional, scientific and policy opinion on current issues in coronary heart disease prevention. It co-ordinates action to reduce heart disease risk through information, education, research, policy development and advocacy.
9. The main focus of the NHF recently has been the development of policy recommendations to improve and protect the heart health of children and young people. The final policy document, young@heart was published in February 2002.
10. Many of the recommendations contained in the young@heart framework document support the proposals set out in the draft walking and cycling strategy. A copy of the young@heart document is enclosed. Of particular relevance are the sections: Build healthy communities, Make every school a healthy school, and A comprehensive strategy for increasing physical activity (pages 14, 18 and 32, respectively).

11. The NHF is a unique resource and we would be delighted to assist WAG in the development and implementation of this strategy.

### Question Box A

**Do Walking, Cycling and Horseriding contribute to other areas of policy development?**

**What other policy areas could benefit from a strategic approach to walking, cycling and horse riding?**

#### Health

12. The strategy identifies that walking, cycling and horse riding contribute to health but we believe that the enormity of this contribution has been markedly underestimated, both in terms of how the strategy will contribute to health and in terms of how health can contribute to the strategy.
13. **One of the key goals of a walking and cycling strategy should be to increase the level of physical activity undertaken by all people in Wales. This should be made explicit in the strategy, rather than an added benefit.**
14. Only 28% of adults in Wales currently meet the guideline of 30 minutes moderate activity on at least five days per week. The greatest health and well-being benefits to a population are to be gained by encouraging the least active people in society to become moderately active. The greatest dose of physical activity can be achieved through walking and cycling as part of daily life. A fully-implemented strategy which focuses on removal of the barriers to walking and cycling will therefore have an enormous public health impact in Wales.
15. A recent assessment, conducted for the National Heart Forum, of the impact that physical activity could have on the incidence of coronary heart disease estimated that if all those people currently sedentary became lightly active, we would see a 2% decrease in CHD cases. By extending this to all adults becoming slightly more active than they currently are, we would see a 14% decrease in CHD cases. [McPherson K et al. 2002. *Coronary heart disease: Estimating the impact of changes in risk factors*. London: The Stationery Office.]. To these figures need to be added the gains to be made in terms of reductions in Type II diabetes, hypertension, overweight, osteoporosis, falls and some cancers, all of which are mediated by physical activity
16. *Well Being in Wales* outlines the positive effects on well-being that walking and cycling have, and these should be reflected in the current walking and cycling strategy document.
17. **We recommend that the final strategy fully describes the relationship between walking, cycling and horse riding and health and that the role of the health service in delivery of the strategy is well thought-out and described.**

#### Economic impact

18. Walking and cycling can contribute enormously to the health and well-being of the workforce. The cost of days reported lost to commerce through ill-health, combined with the costs to the NHS, could be significantly reduced with the effective implementation of the proposed strategy.
19. We are concerned that little is currently done to identify the costs of existing practice and the potential savings of healthier behaviour. Few statistics are available on the costs to the NHS of inadequate physical activity and the cost effectiveness of different types of programmes such as provision and programmes for walking and cycling to encourage more activity.

20. **The strategy team should work with officials in the Treasury and DTI Wales, and health economists, to begin to estimate the economic implications of the strategy, both in terms of initial outlay and cost-effectiveness.** The physical activity strategies of Northern Ireland and Scotland have both sought to address these questions and would be a good starting point for this strategy.
21. We are delighted to learn that WAG are commissioning Derek Wanless to conduct a review of the future demands on the Welsh NHS. **We strongly recommend that the strategy team works closely with the Wanless review team to ensure that their review takes account of the potential savings of the walking and cycling strategy to the NHS.**

### **Social inequalities**

22. Ensuring equal opportunity for all to access services and amenities without the need for a car, will remove a significant layer of social inequality, particularly within rural communities. Environmental changes to support walking and cycling will also support and enhance social inclusion and regeneration policies, by providing safer, more hospitable environments for people to interact in socially.
23. **We recommend that the suggested Transport Assessments (para 5.2.2) should also explicitly include an assessment of the social and health inequalities impact of policies and proposals.**

### **Sport policy**

24. Walking, cycling and horse riding can contribute to and be influenced by community sport policy. Walking and cycling can assist people to become more accustomed to being active, and therefore more likely to seek out other community activities, and they are also key modes of transport for getting to community sport facilities.
25. Sports development policies are highly important if walking, cycling and horse riding are to be promoted. Walks and cycle rides to promote healthy living should be a critical part of sports development.
26. A key issue with culture and sport, both for spectators and participants, is how to get to venues. **Venues for both should wherever possible be served by good public transport and be reached by high quality walking and cycling routes. The strategy should call for phasing out of free parking at such destinations, or at least for equivalent subsidies to be offered to visitors attending by less damaging modes of transport.**

### **Conservation policies**

27. Walking, cycling and horse riding can make a significant contribution to energy conservation policies. Walking and cycling in particular are the most sustainable forms of transport for the conservation of energy and the environment and combine well with public transport. More is needed to encourage the corporate sector to develop sustainable transport policies. *Well Being in Wales* proposes that the NHS and social care services will be required to develop transport policies – **this needs to be referred to explicitly in this strategy and extended to other organisations, both statutory and private.**

### **Air Quality**

28. WAG and local authority targets and programmes to improve air quality in urban areas have a direct bearing on the propensity to walk, cycle and horse ride. **Reference to this should therefore be included explicitly in the strategy.**

### **Waste management**

29. WAG and local authority policy for waste management have a direct bearing on walking, cycling and horse riding. The presence of litter, broken glass, rubbish, untidy and overflowing

litter bins, graffiti, act as a major deterrent to the whole experience and the propensity to walk and cycle. **Therefore, explicit reference should be made in the strategy to the need for local authorities to maintain regular and effective waste management services in all public areas.**

#### **Road traffic speed**

30. There is no reference in the document to issues connected to road traffic speed such as danger, police enforcement, speed cameras, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and HGV problems. **The National Heart Forum is a signatory to the *Slower Speeds Initiative*, and we recommend that WAG fully endorses and implements the recommendations set out in the Select Committee Report on Road Traffic Speed (<http://www.slower-speeds.surf3.net/>).**

#### **Green Space Strategies**

31. Walking, cycling and horse riding would benefit from a strategic approach to the protection, enhancement and management of green open spaces, which are vital in urban areas and for the connections they provide between neighbourhoods. **This can be achieved through planning processes combined with countryside, forest management and Environment Agency measures.**

#### **Question Box B**

**Should we make greater use of Local Transport Plans and Public Rights of Way Improvement Plans to promote walking, cycling and horse-riding? If so, how?**

32. **All authorities in Wales should prepare and implement strategies for walking and cycling as part of their LTP's. Wide consultation with all stakeholders should be a requirement in their preparation in order to clarify roles and responsibilities and to maximise ownership of the plans.** Such consultation will also raise the awareness of individual organisations of the need to develop their own travel plans.
33. **Schools (and workplaces) should include safe routes/active travel information in welcome packs to parents of new pupils (and to new employees).**
34. **All local authorities should have in post a school travel plan coordinator to help schools to develop school travel plans.**
35. **Local transport plans must consider the contribution of the NHS and social care services which is two-fold; the *Well Being in Wales* consultation proposes that these organisations develop transport plans which should be reiterated in this strategy; and these organisations can promote walking and cycling to their service users.**

**Should Local Authorities have specific targets for producing School and Work based Travel Plans to promote walking and cycling?**

36. The local authorities should not set specific targets for producing travel plans – this must be the responsibility of individual schools and workplaces with the assistance of the local authorities (see para 28 above).
37. **However, it is important for local authorities to have targets and these could focus on the proportions of schools and workplaces which have developed and implemented travel plans. From this could be developed targets for the numbers of individuals**

walking or cycling to work or school. Targets should also reflect the desire to see changes in travel mode from car use to public transport, walking or cycling.

**How can we use Best Value to greater effect to set targets and monitor progress on these three modes of travel?**

38. The Best Value process should be considered the main vehicle to improving the services provided by local authorities that deal with the whole range of issues relating to walking, cycling and horse riding. These include public health, planning, transport, environment, housing, economic development, leisure and other key functions. **Best Value inspection of performance should be closely linked to performance targets and outputs in LTPs.**

**Whether the provision for cycle storage, changing area and showers for employees who walk or cycle to work should be a mandatory requirement under planning regulations for new commercial premises?**

39. Yes. Planning regulations for new commercial premises need to take a wide view of the health needs of prospective employees. **Items we believe must be included in planning regulations are:**
- **easily accessible stairs at the ground floor level (currently staircases are not generally signposted on the ground floor and are only signposted on upper floors for the purposes of emergency escape).**
  - **provision of appropriate cycle storage (adequate capacity, security and shelter)**
  - **provision of changing areas**
  - **provision of showers**
40. **Planning regulations must always take account of the size of the workforce if active travel plans are to be realised.**
41. **Planning regulations also need to consider the citing of buildings with regard to the health and well-being of employees. Cycling and walking are unlikely to be adopted as means of travel to buildings if they are cited alongside motorways or on poorly designed industrial sites, regardless of the number of showers or cycle storage facilities provided.**

**Should we promote ‘Safe Routes to Work’ as part of Travel Plans?**

42. YES. Safe Routes to Work are a vital component of travel plans and should stimulate better quality safe routes for walkers and cyclists. **Safe routes to work must also be applied to schools in terms of their employees, alongside the safe routes to school for the pupils (see also paras 27, 29 and 30 above).**

**Question Box C**

**Should other walking and cycling targets be set for sustainable travel?**

43. Sustainable travel tends to imply environmental considerations such as energy conservation and emissions. **We also need to set targets for the improvement and maintenance of roads and pathways in order to sustain alternative modes of transport. This could be achieved by setting service standards, for instance:**
- **Improving pavement condition and maintenance**

- Reducing the number of people falling and being injured on cracked, uneven pavements
- Clearing litter and dog mess
- Improving street lighting
- Developing new walking routes and improving existing ones

**What criteria should be used to measure our progress?**

44. **Criteria to measure progress should include distance, safety, trip numbers and modal shift for both utility and leisure journeys.**
45. There should be a range of indicators, most of which should be optional, covering different aspects of active transport. **This could include the following:**
- **Number of cycling trips**
  - **% reduction in car journeys**
  - **% reduction in use of car-parks**
  - **Travel to work**
  - **Travel to school**
  - **Safety training**
  - **Number of cycle parking spaces**
  - **Number of cycles parked**
  - **% of road network that is friendly to cyclists and walkers**

**Question Box D**

**This Analysis identifies Sustainability, Health, Social Inclusion and Economic benefits. Are there other important benefits that we have missed?**

46. Yes, see our response to Question Box A, paras 11-25.

**What further research is necessary to improve our understanding of the extent of walking, cycling and horse riding in Wales, and the potential benefits and gaps in support for these activities?**

47. **There needs to be greater understanding of the travel needs and preferences of different populations in Wales before a full raft of targets can be set as these must reflect the fullest yet realistic potential for change.**
48. **Good practice research is needed in order to develop specific guidance on encouraging walking and cycling in urban and rural areas.**
49. **A full analysis of the benefits of physical activity to the Welsh economy should be conducted. Such analyses have been carried out in Scotland and in Northern Ireland and provide strong arguments for the implementation of strategies such as this one to encourage greater levels of physical activity among the population.**

**Question Box F**

**Is there a need for better design guidance for the provision of facilities for walking, cycling and horse-riding to meet the varying needs in town and country?**

50. **There is a need for joint design guidance to cover walking, cycling and horse riding issues together to ensure full integration and consideration of the three modes in urban and rural situations. Any new guidance needs to reflect current best practice on rural and urban design.**

**Is the Hierarchy of Measures a realistic set of solutions?**

51. **Yes, but it is vital that the Welsh LTP guidance and other related policy statements by WAG give clear guidance on the adoption and use of this hierarchy.** In particular the aim should be for cyclists to be on the road where possible, reducing traffic speeds and volumes where appropriate, with specific cycle facilities provided where this is not feasible. In practice cycle routes generally comprise a mixture of different types of provision. They require coherence, directness, attractiveness, safety and comfort.

**How can we help ensure the potential of Wales' extensive rights of way network is maximised?**

52. By giving priority to the creation of missing links for walkers, cyclists and horseriders alongside narrow busy roads, behind hedgerows and other highway boundaries.
53. By ensuring close links with LTP's.

**Question Box G**

**Should we have targets for increasing levels of walking and horse riding in Wales?**

54. YES but they should be discrete, measurable and realistic, reflecting the step changes required to optimise walking and horse riding (e.g. environmental changes).
55. In para 4.5.1, a very important and related target is the need for the reduction in the use of the private car for journeys to school – by addressing issues of safety and perceived safety for example.

**How should we take account of experiences in other European countries?**

56. The European Commission funded the Health-Enhancing Physical Activity Network (HEPA) which produced several useful documents and which provided a forum for EU-wide discussions and sharing of best practice. The network is still informally in operation, with some limited support from the Commission and with funds from Sweden and Finland. **The National Heart Forum has links with the network and could assist WAG in this respect.**
57. The European Heart Health Initiative, of which the UK is a very active member through the NHF, has EU funding to carry out a project looking at how physical activity networks can be set-up and utilised to encourage implementation of recommendations developed by the EHHI to increase children and young people's physical activity levels. **These networks could be used to develop intelligence in the UK.**

**Question Box H**

**How can publicity and promotion be made more effective?**



58. **Local authorities should be encouraged to report on the progress they are making, particularly with regard to areas of concern identified by the public through the consultation process.**
59. **Urban areas should develop promotional and diagrammatic maps showing main origins and destinations, main walking and cycling routes, and distances involved.**
60. **Schools (and workplaces) should include safe routes/active travel information in welcome packs to parents of new pupils (and to new employees).**
61. There are examples of workplaces which have developed incentives to active travel. Pfizer have begun a scheme of charging a fee to employees who drive to work and of paying the same fee to those employees who cycle or walk to work.
62. Another incentive suggested by Sustrans is to give employees who walk or cycle to work additional days' leave. This is in recognition of the fact that an employee who takes moderate regular exercise may take as many as 10 sick days fewer than other employees.
63. **There is scope for more promotional events such as *bike 2 work day* and route openings. We are pleased that the CCW/BHF *Walking the Way to Health Initiative* has recently been extended.**

#### **How do we tackle issues of crime prevention and enforcement?**

64. Improvements in street lighting and extension of the CCTV network will reduce the dangers and perceived dangers to walkers and cyclists.
65. A visible police presence will discourage would-be criminals.

#### **How do we improve and implement better design?**

66. Create a target of establishing Home Zones with safe, low speed limits and a legal right of way for pedestrians.
67. See para 43 above.

#### **Question Box I**

##### **How should Welsh Assembly Government and its partner organisations take forward these proposals?**

68. Regarding the implementation of the strategy, careful consideration is needed of the best administrative structures and advisory bodies required. **In any event, additional specialist assistance is needed together with the full cross cutting involvement of staff of different divisions within the assembly. This needs to be replicated at local government level.**
69. There is likely to be a current shortage of skilled and qualified persons both in local and central government suitable for the implementation of many of the policies and programmes arising from the walking and cycling strategy. **In particular, there needs to be a series of seminars, workshops, and CPD exploring the roles of all those whose work affects walking and cycling, in particular those working in the wider related aspects of transport, environment, and health in Wales.** It has to be recognised that walking and

cycling matters are more staff intensive than most other areas of policy, due to the needs of interaction with so many policy areas.

### Question Box J

#### How do you think community participation can be best promoted?

70. Community participation should be integral to the LTP and community strategy processes undertaken by local authorities. Early local consultation on particular schemes is a statutory condition in many cases and should in any case be encouraged.

#### Which bodies/agencies should be involved?

71. The list is very large and depends on the type of scheme involved. It should include all relevant statutory bodies, the NHS and social care services, police, local authorities including education, the environment, town and community councils, social exclusion partnerships and National park authorities. Many voluntary bodies have a key role to play, for example the British Heart Foundation, which supports many physical activity projects.

### Question Box K

#### How can we help to ensure that funding for walking, cycling and horse riding is more joined up “to promote this strategy”.

72. The WAG *Well Being in Wales* consultation document demonstrates a shift in resources from tackling ill-health towards the promotion of good health and a better quality of life. We advocate a strengthening of this proactive and cross-cutting approach. Health promotion is best carried out by people working in a wide range of sectors: health, transport, housing, environment, sport, culture and business. The best way to ensure the collaboration of these potential partners is to commit resources to collaborative work.
73. **WAG should set up a cross-government steering committee to lead the implementation of the strategy. The Committee should be charged with identifying divisions within the Assembly and bodies to be responsible for funding particular elements of the proposals. A checklist and matrix approach would be useful.**
74. We are concerned that little is currently done to identify the costs of existing practice and the potential savings of healthier behaviour. Few statistics are available on the costs to the NHS of inadequate physical activity and the cost effectiveness of different types of programmes such as provision and programmes for walking and cycling to encourage more. **All new initiatives should be fully funded to enable their thorough evaluation.** Wales should play a lead role in the development of the evidence base for health promotion.
75. **Incorporate walking and cycling initiatives as a priority in regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal plans.**

#### How should this strategy identify bodies to be reasonable for funding particular elements of these proposals?

76. A checklist and matrix approach would be useful, based on local transport plan (and other partnerships (as per para 73 above).

**Whether the Welsh Assembly Government should increase its contribution to the construction and maintenance of cycling and walking routes since this is a matter for local authorities?**

77. We believe that WAG should increase its contribution to local authorities for the construction and maintenance of routes for walking, cycling and horse riding. This extra money should be sliced from the health, environment and transport budgets. Such expenditure needs to be ring fenced to avoid it being spent on other services but clearly it will have a broad impact on many other policy areas as outlined above and this should be emphasised in the spending plans.

**NATIONAL HEART FORUM  
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