

# BIKE *life*

BRISTOL  
2015



  
**sustrans**  
JOIN THE MOVEMENT



# The spirit of the bike in Bristol

We have come an extremely long way in Bristol since the foundation of Sustrans, of which I was a founder member in 1977 and helped build the Bristol and Bath path.

When it comes to improving our environment and protecting our health, cycling is a win-win option, which is why I want to see the number of Bristol bike users double again over the next 10 years. It's great to see so many people now using their bikes for commuting or leisure and yet I know we still have much to learn from such places as Copenhagen, who preceded us as European Green Capital.

Cycling is good for the economy.

A healthy workforce, which arrives to work less stressed and on time, is better for productivity and good health.

We now need to raise our ambitions by setting a gold standard for cycle planning and provision in Bristol. I fully endorse the aged 8-80 approach we set out in the Bristol Cycle Strategy and look forward to many more people joining me in Bristol's cycle revolution to help us live up to our reputation as the UK's most liveable city.

**George Ferguson**  
**Mayor of Bristol**

# Introducing Bike Life

Sustrans is collaborating with seven cities in the UK – Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Greater Manchester and Newcastle – to report on progress towards making cycling an attractive and everyday means of travel.

Bike Life is inspired by the Copenhagen Bicycle Account, and is an assessment of cycling development including cycling conditions, new initiatives and satisfaction with various aspects of cycling.

This is the first of two reports, with the second being published in 2017. The information in this report comes from local data, including a representative survey of over 1,100 residents in Bristol. More details on the report findings and methodology can be found at [www.sustrans.org.uk/bikelife](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/bikelife)

Our thanks to the people of Bristol who took part in the survey and who volunteered to have their photos taken for this report.

## KEY FACTS FOR BRISTOL AT A GLANCE

**18 million** bike trips in Bristol in a year

**31%** of people ride a bike once a month or more

**8 in 10 people** support increasing the safety of cycling – more than any other way of getting around the city

**70%** of people want to see more spent on cycling

**£28.5 million** is the benefit to health in the city, in a single year, from the current level of people riding bikes

**11,755** tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> saved by people making trips by riding a bike rather than driving – equivalent to the annual emissions of around **4,629 cars**

**67p per mile** is the saving to individuals and to the local economy, for every mile biked instead of driven – which works out at over **£26 million** a year for Bristol at current levels of cycling



# OVERVIEW

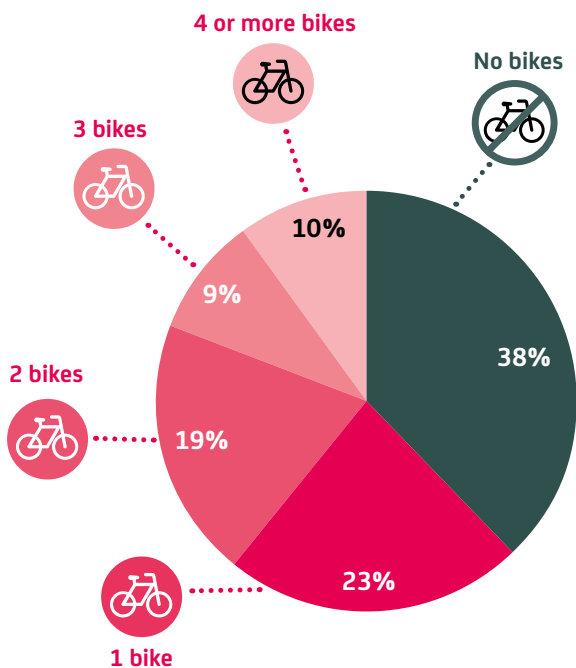
Taking the pulse of bike life in Bristol



## BIKE OWNERSHIP IS A BIG PART OF BRISTOL LIFE

Nearly two thirds (**63%**) of people in Bristol live in households that own at least one bike\*.

HOW MANY ADULT BICYCLES DO YOU OWN IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?



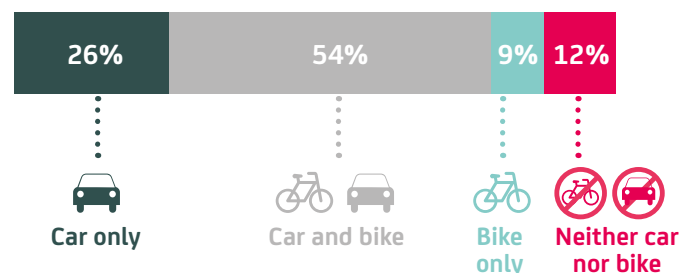
Bike ownership is greatest amongst those aged 34-44, with around three quarters (**77%**) having at least one adult bike in their household compared to a quarter (**23%**) amongst those aged 75 and over.

When it comes to children's bikes, one in four (**27%**) people live in households with at least one.

There's a big crossover between owning a bike and owning a car – most car owners also own a bike.

In Bristol over one in 10 (**12%**) people live in households with neither a car nor a bike, and **9%** have access to at least one bike but no car. Having the choice to ride a bike could help many people to get to jobs, services, family and friends.

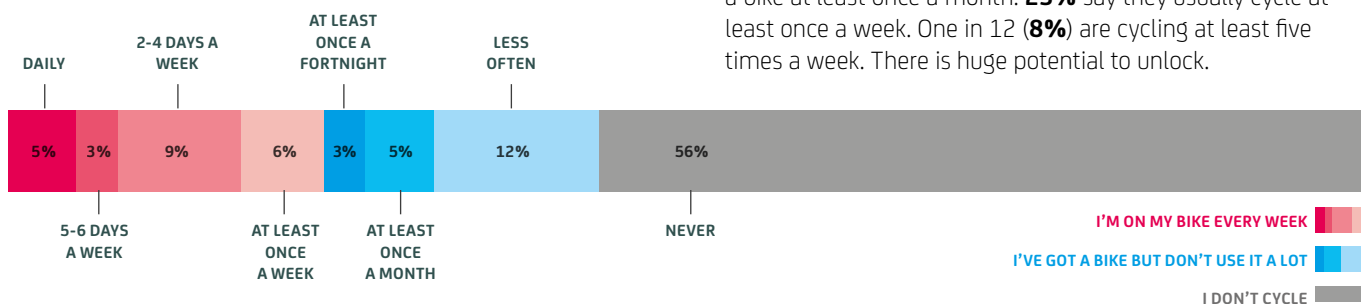
HOW MANY CARS AND VANS ARE OWNED, OR ARE AVAILABLE FOR USE, IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?



\*Car and bicycle ownership figures refer to percentages of people living in households that own them. This is different from how census data is usually reported.

# HOW OFTEN ARE PEOPLE RIDING A BIKE?

THINKING OF HOW YOU USUALLY TRAVEL AROUND, HOW OFTEN DO YOU CYCLE?



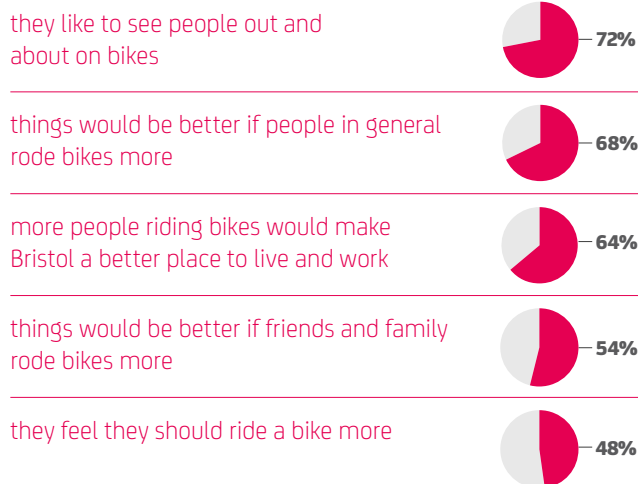
While over six in 10 households have access to a bike, they are not all being used.

Nearly a third (**31%**) of people in Bristol say they usually ride a bike at least once a month. **23%** say they usually cycle at least once a week. One in 12 (**8%**) are cycling at least five times a week. There is huge potential to unlock.

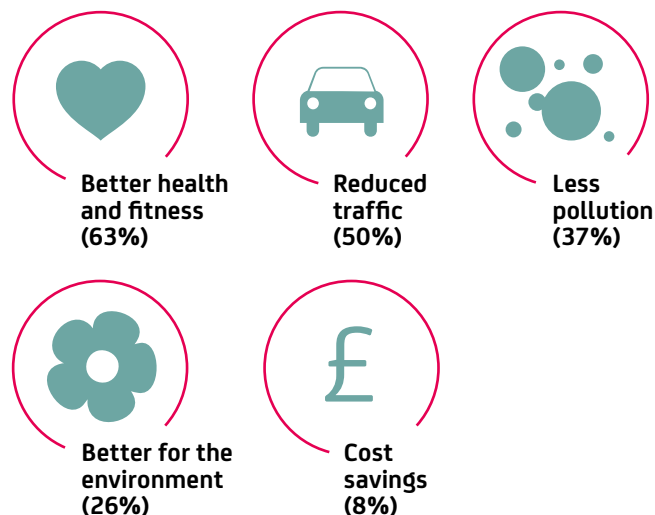
## PERCEPTIONS OF BIKES ARE OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE

The people of Bristol love what bike life can offer them.

### They agree that:



There are lots of reasons why the people of Bristol think more people riding bikes would make the city a better place:



## SAFETY IS A CONCERN, AND PEOPLE WANT MORE INVESTED

Whilst **six in 10 (61%)** people think Bristol is a good place to ride a bike overall, when you dig a little deeper there are clear concerns about safety.



But it's worth remembering that a serious injury or worse is rare at about **once every 4.4 million miles** pedalled around Bristol.

**8 in 10** residents want better safety for people riding bikes. Better safety requires more investment.

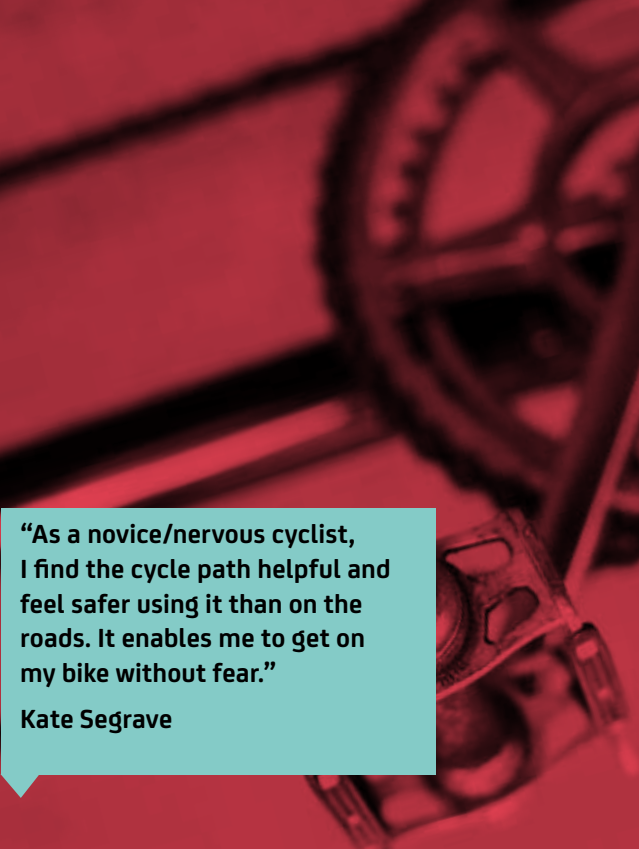
Across the seven cities involved in Bike Life, the average that people want governments to be spending on cycling is **£26 per person** per year.



\*The question was 'Central and local governments in the UK spend around £300 per person on transport every year. Of this about £3 per person is spent on cycling, rising to £10 per person in some cities. How much do you think should be spent on cycling per person in the UK?'

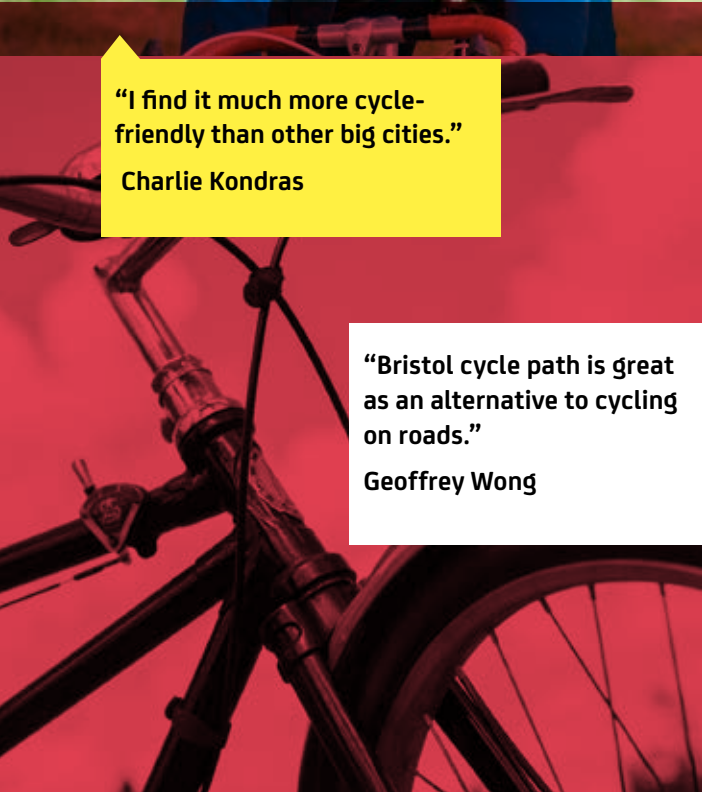
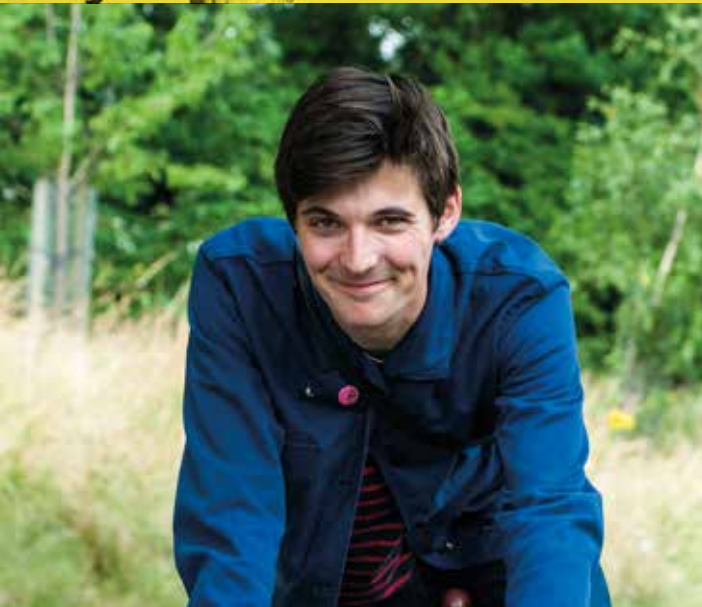
# VIEWS

from the saddle



**“As a novice/nervous cyclist, I find the cycle path helpful and feel safer using it than on the roads. It enables me to get on my bike without fear.”**

**Kate Segrave**



**“I find it much more cycle-friendly than other big cities.”**

**Charlie Kondras**

**“Bristol cycle path is great as an alternative to cycling on roads.”**

**Geoffrey Wong**





**“Distance markers... would be useful, and more maps available.”**

**Jane Handoll**



**“I love the ‘cycle culture’ of Bristol, that there are many cyclists and it comprises a ‘community’.”**

**David Sherring**

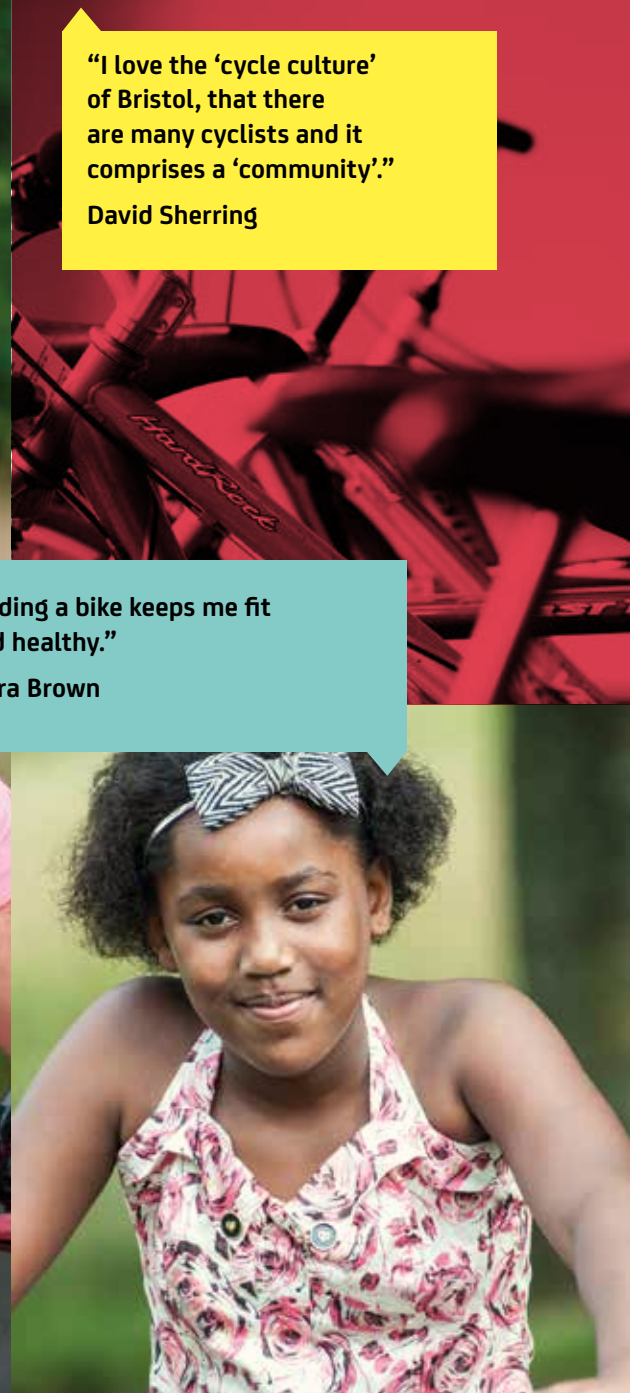


**“Riding a bike keeps me fit and healthy.”**

**Tiara Brown**

**“I gave up the car seven years ago and have cycled full-time ever since.”**

**Jane Norman**



# IN DEPTH

Facts and figures for Bristol



## WHAT'S AVAILABLE AND WHO'S IN THE KNOW?

116 miles of bike routes

INCLUDING

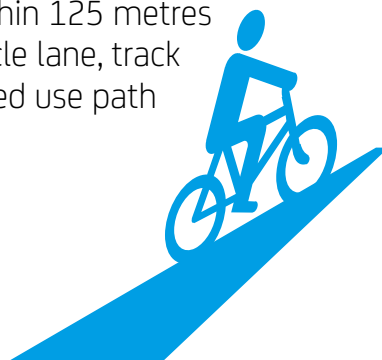
79 miles of traffic-free routes

AND

1 mile

of protected bike lane

27% of people live within 125 metres of a cycle lane, track or shared use path



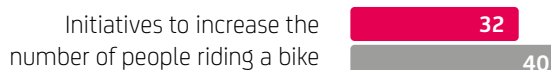
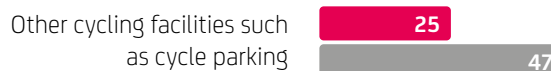
80% of all streets in Bristol are 20mph or traffic calmed



Over 9,000 public bike parking spaces

Awareness of bike routes, bike parking and initiatives to increase levels of bike use is mixed amongst residents generally, although those who ride bikes regularly have better knowledge.

HOW MUCH, IF ANYTHING, WOULD YOU SAY YOU KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING?



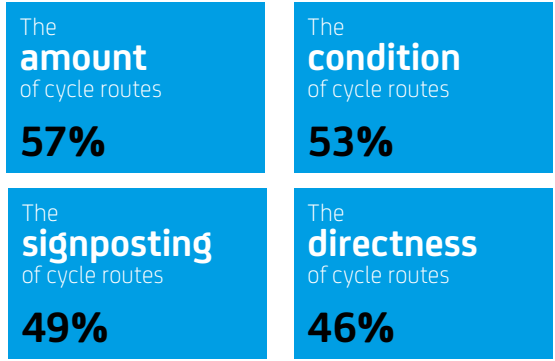
- Residents – % great or fair amount of knowledge
- Regular bike riders\* – % great or fair amount of knowledge

\*Regular bike riders are people who had ridden a bike within four weeks of being surveyed.



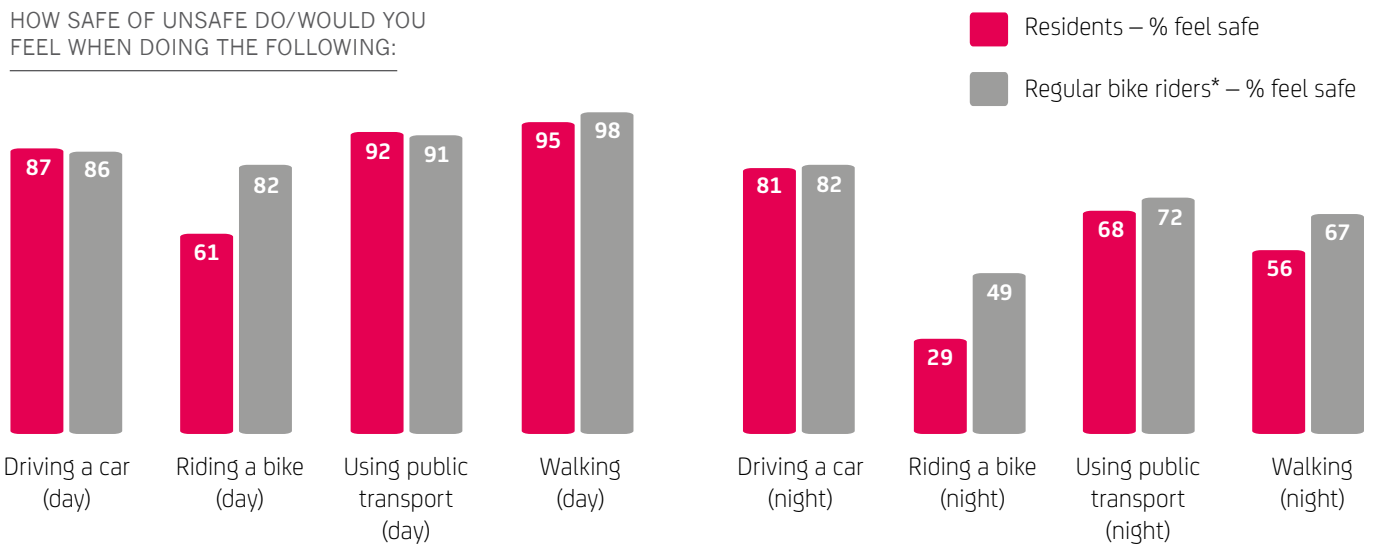
# HOW DO PEOPLE RATE BRISTOL'S CYCLE ROUTES?

**Six in 10 (61%)** think Bristol is a good place to ride a bike overall, and about half rate the following as 'very good' or 'good'. ▶



## RIDING A BIKE FEELS LESS SAFE THAN OTHER WAYS OF TRAVELLING

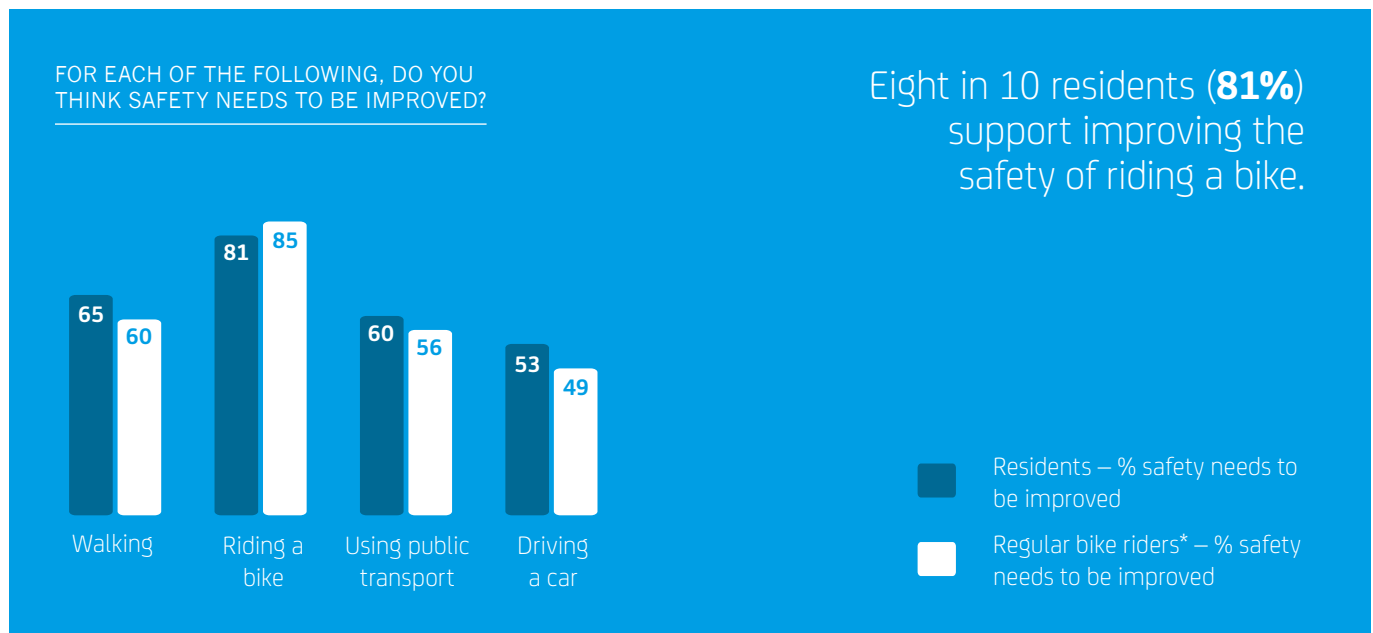
HOW SAFE OF UNSAFE DO/WOULD YOU FEEL WHEN DOING THE FOLLOWING:



## PEOPLE WANT IMPROVED SAFETY FOR CYCLING

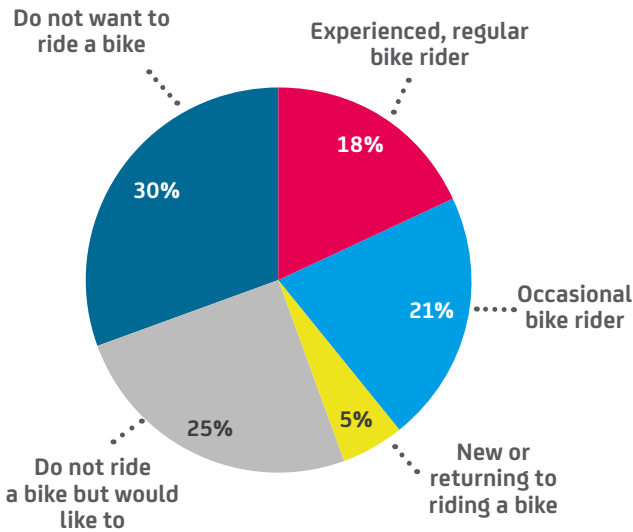
FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING, DO YOU THINK SAFETY NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED?

Eight in 10 residents (**81%**) support improving the safety of riding a bike.



# HOW DO PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES WHEN IT COMES TO RIDING A BIKE?

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BEST DESCRIBES YOU?



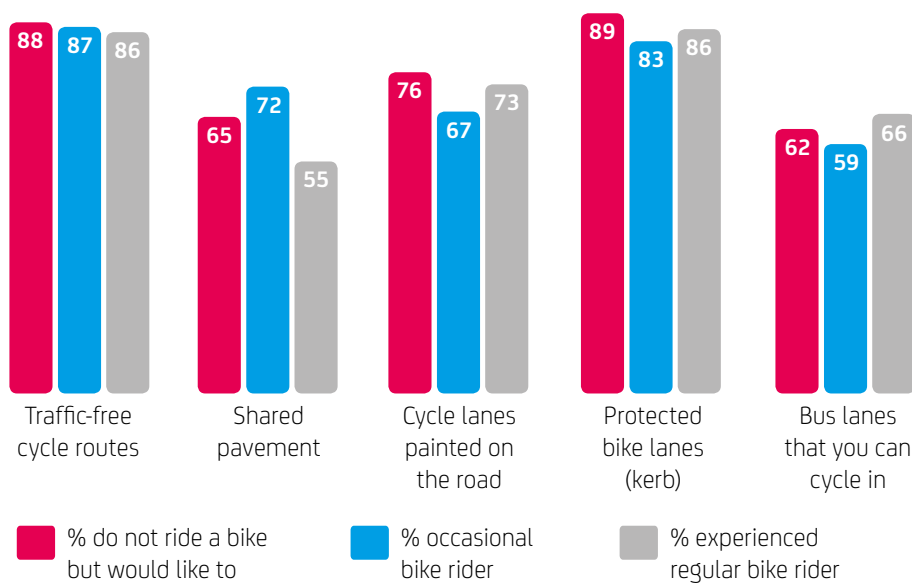
Whilst a third of people (**31%**) do not want to ride a bike, **a quarter** say that whilst they don't currently ride a bike, they'd like to.

Combined with new, returning, and occasional bike riders, **51%** of people in Bristol could potentially begin to ride a bike or ride their bike more.

# WHAT KIND OF BIKE ROUTES COULD GET MORE PEOPLE CYCLING?

Protected bike lanes and traffic-free cycle routes are the kinds of routes most people want to help them start cycling or to cycle more.

WOULD ANY OF THE FOLLOWING HELP YOU START CYCLING/CYCLE MORE?



## A large majority

(**70%**) of residents would like to see more investment in cycling in Bristol.



## Support is high

across all sections of the population, including **61%** of people aged over 75, those least likely to ride a bike.

# WHO'S RIDING AND WHERE?

Between 2013 and 2014 the number of trips made by bike in Bristol increased by 4%

84 million miles are pedalled by people every year

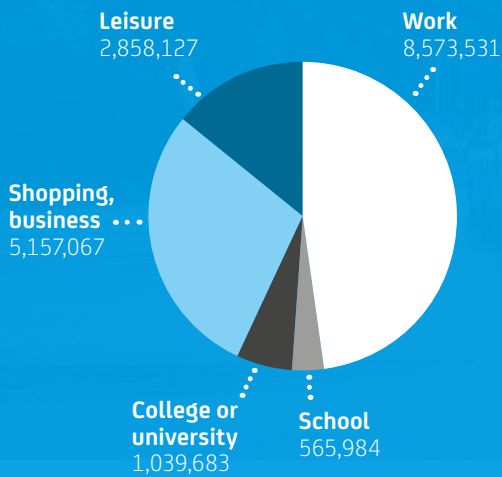
Over 18 million trips are made by bike in Bristol in a year which, averaged out over the population, means **41 trips** per person per year

Men are more than twice as likely to cycle as women – **69%** compared to **31%**

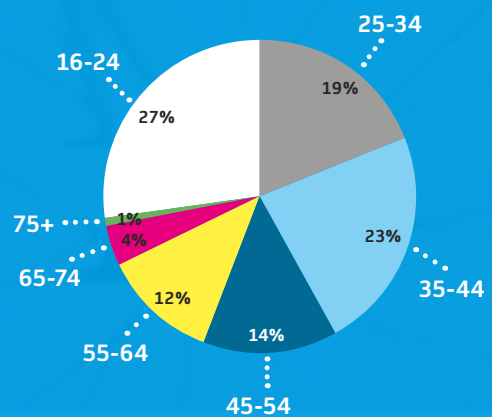


16% of people riding bikes in Bristol identify as black or minority ethnic, the same proportion as in the whole population of Bristol

## Number of bike trips by purpose



## When it comes to the age of people riding bikes in Bristol, older people are under-represented



# HOW WE'RE DEVELOPING BIKE LIFE IN BRISTOL



As European Green Capital 2015, Bristol's reputation for all things green and its quality of life has been cemented. Following on from the city's success as the UK's first Cycling City, the award recognises what Bristol's residents have already achieved in making our city a healthier, happier place to live, work and play.

There is something for everyone, whatever their bike, including beautiful riverside and country rides for leisure and pleasure, and an extensive and growing network of city centre cycle routes for shoppers and commuters. There's also world-class, off-road cycling in Ashton Court and Leigh Woods, just minutes from the city centre.

Since 2001 the number of people cycling to work in Bristol has more than doubled, the biggest growth for a UK city outside of London. Just over one in 10 Bristolians now cycle to work and 31% ride a bike at least once a month.

The Bristol and Bath Railway Path, constructed by Sustrans in the 1980s, now carries over a million walking and biking trips a year, and Gloucester Road, Gaol Ferry Bridge, and Prince Street Bridge have comparable numbers of trips by bike. In fact, people riding bikes account for nearly a third of morning rush-hour traffic on Gloucester Road.

Achieving this has required sustained investment from central government as well as local funding, and business, community and voluntary groups all working together. Bristol is home to Sustrans, part of the vibrant sustainable culture in the city, along with a large number of innovative grass roots organisations such as The Bristol Bike Project, Life Cycle UK, Playing Out, and Roll for the Soul.



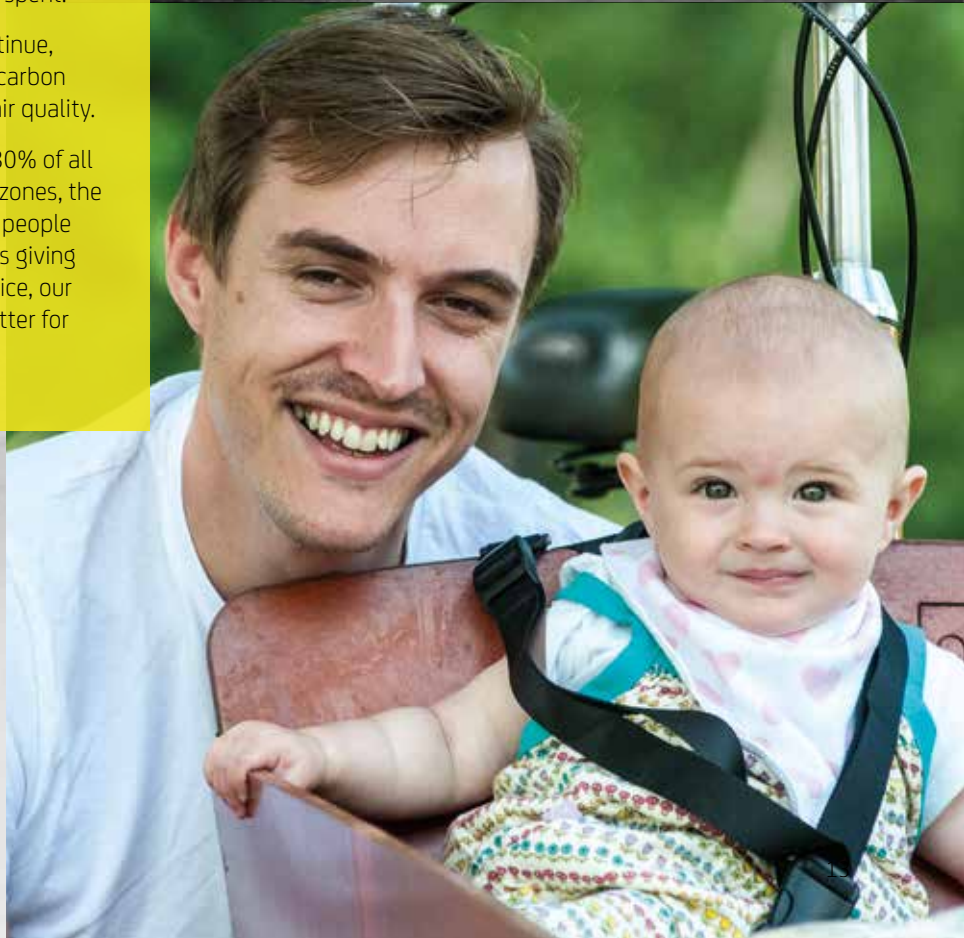
## Our journey

The real shift in bike use came between 2001 and 2011, as cycling to work doubled. This was due in no small part to Bristol being made the UK's first Cycling City in 2008.

- Investing £16 per head on cycling over three years really paid off, returning as much as £20 for every £1 spent.

Ongoing investment has seen the increase continue, with a corresponding drop in car use, reducing carbon emissions and road casualties, and improving air quality.

With the rolling out of 20mph speed limits to 80% of all roads, and the introduction of resident parking zones, the city is becoming a safer and friendlier place for people riding bikes and walking. And with the Metrobus giving hard-pressed commuters even more travel choice, our roads will become even less congested, and better for people on bikes and walking.



# BIKE TO THE FUTURE



Here in Bristol, there's big potential to change things. And with **nearly three quarters of people** already thinking positively about people riding bikes, there's a big mandate for change across the city.

Bikes are a key part of realising Bristol's vision of a happy, healthy, successful city. The Council is committed to doubling cycling levels again through attracting sustained investment in cycling, and creating a 200 mile network of routes to make riding a bike simpler, safer, and more attractive for all.

We'll be working harder to meet expectations, because **over a third of people** have higher expectations than last year when it comes to a city fit for bikes.

Bike life shows there's a clear need for us to focus on safety to ensure more people who would like to ride a bike have that choice, since two thirds of residents would like to ride, or ride more, and just a third have no desire to cycle.

We'll be using this report to measure progress, and to help us prioritise what we need to do to ensure far more of the **25%** of Bristolians who don't ride, but want to, can.

And we heed what people say – we know that to make it safe for people of all ages and all abilities we need to be doing more to protect people on bikes. That means doing the hard things like protected bike lanes on our major roads, and addressing safety on our quieter roads.

We have a way to go, but we will work towards achieving all **our targets for 2020**, reporting on progress every couple of years.



## **£16 per head of population spent on cycling.**

We expect to exceed this target in 2015/16 as several major projects including the Cycle City Ambition Grant are delivered. We spent £14.62 per head in 2014/15.



**Progressing delivery of an attractive, safe, 8-80 cycle network.** Funding secured to deliver at least 20 miles over the next three years. Nearly 2 miles were added in 2014/15.



**75% of pupils receiving Bikeability Level 2 training.** We reached 65% in 2014/15.



**20% of commuter trips into the city centre by bike.** This reached 9% in 2014/15.



**20% of children cycling to secondary school.** This was 4.5% in 2014/15.



**Experimental or cutting edge cycle projects delivered every year.** Examples now include on-road bike hangars, bike pumps, and Dutch style segregated cycle tracks.



**A note on terminology and methodology:**

We refer to people and residents rather than respondents when reporting findings of the attitudinal surveys.

Due to the rounding up or down of individual figures, the percentages on charts may not total 100% exactly.

Further details are available at [www.sustrans.org.uk/bikelife](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/bikelife)



Sustrans makes smarter travel choices possible, desirable and inevitable. We're a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in.



Sustrans is a registered charity in the UK No. 326550 (England and Wales) SC039263 (Scotland)

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To find out more about cycling in Bristol and view the Bristol Cycle Strategy visit: [www.betterbybike.info](http://www.betterbybike.info)

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