

Walking and cycling overview

NICE Pathways bring together all NICE guidance, quality standards and other NICE information on a specific topic.

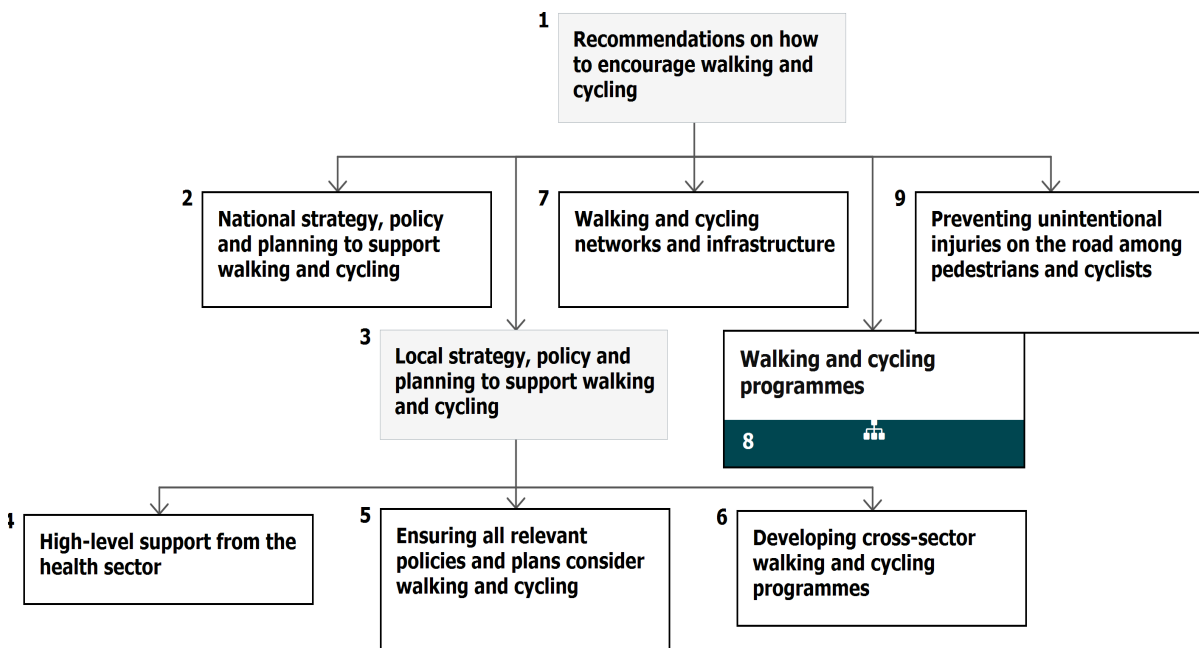
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<http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/walking-and-cycling>

Pathway last updated: 20 June 2017

This document contains a single pathway diagram and uses numbering to link the boxes to the associated recommendations.

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1 Recommendations on how to encourage walking and cycling

No additional information

2 National strategy, policy and planning to support walking and cycling

Promoting physically active travel among children and young people

For details on how to encourage children and young people to walk and cycle and use other physically active modes of transport see [physically active travel](#).

Reducing motor traffic speed

For details on how to reduce dangers on the road to encourage more walking and cycling see 'involving the police in driver education initiatives and activities' in [promoting and enforcing speed reductions](#) in relation to preventing unintentional injuries among the under 15s.

3 Local strategy, policy and planning to support walking and cycling

No additional information

4 High-level support from the health sector

Who should take action?

Directors of public health.

Public health portfolio holders in local authorities.

Clinical commissioning groups.

What action should they take?

Ensure a senior member of the public health team is responsible for promoting walking and cycling. They should support coordinated, cross-sector working, for example, by ensuring programmes offered by different sectors complement rather than duplicate each other (see [ensuring all relevant policies and plans consider walking and cycling \[See page 4\]](#)). The senior

member should also ensure NICE's recommendations on [physical activity and the environment](#) are implemented.

Ensure the joint strategic needs assessment, the joint health and wellbeing strategy and other local needs assessments and strategies take into account opportunities to increase walking and cycling. They should also consider how impediments to walking and cycling can be addressed.

Ensure walking and cycling are considered, alongside other interventions, when working to achieve specific health outcomes in relation to the local population (such as a reduction in the risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer, obesity and diabetes, or the promotion of mental wellbeing¹). These include outcomes identified through the joint strategic needs assessment process.

Ensure walking and cycling are included in chronic disease pathways.

Ensure all relevant sectors contribute resources and funding to encourage and support people to walk and cycle.

Where appropriate, ensure walking and cycling are treated as separate activities which may require different approaches.

Ensure walking and cycling projects are rigorously evaluated. This includes evaluating their impact on health inequalities.

For more on the role of the NHS in promoting walking and cycling see [workplaces](#) and [NHS](#). Also see [health sector involvement in road safety](#) and [aligning local child road safety policies](#) in relation to preventing unintentional injuries among the under 15s.

5 Ensuring all relevant policies and plans consider walking and cycling

Who should take action?

Local authorities, in particular, portfolio holders, lead members and directors responsible for: adult and older people's services, children and young people's services, community safety, countryside management, disability, education, environment, health and wellbeing (including mental health), land use, planning and development control, parks and leisure, planning (including district planning), regeneration and economic development, social services and transport.

¹ Descriptions of the links between physical activity and health outcomes can be found in the Chief Medical Officers' report on physical activity, [Start active, stay active](#).

National parks authorities.

Integrated transport authorities.

Local enterprise partnerships.

Chief constables, police authorities and elected police commissioners.

Agencies with an interest in walking and cycling.

Agencies with an interest in health and wellbeing or that work with population groups such as older people or people with disabilities.

What action should they take?

Ensure local, high-level strategic policies and plans support and encourage both walking and cycling. This includes a commitment to invest sufficient resources to ensure more walking and cycling – and a recognition that this will benefit individuals and the wider community.

Relevant policies and plans include those on:

- air quality
- community safety
- disability
- education
- environment (including sustainability and carbon reduction)
- health and wellbeing
- housing
- land use, planning and development control
- physical activity
- regeneration and economic development
- transport.

Ensure the walking and cycling aspects of these plans are developed in conjunction with relevant voluntary and community organisations.

Ensure strategies to promote walking and cycling address factors which influence activity at various levels – from policy down to the individual. This includes ensuring NICE's recommendations on physical activity and the environment are implemented.

Assess the impact of relevant policies and decisions on people's ability to walk and cycle. Where necessary, amend them to ensure support for walking and cycling.

Ensure plans relevant to walking and cycling are implemented and evaluated¹.

6 Developing cross-sector walking and cycling programmes

Who should take action?

Local authority directors and portfolio holders for: countryside management, environment (including sustainability), leisure services, parks, public health, regeneration and economic development and transport.

Police traffic officers and neighbourhood policing teams.

What action should they take?

Develop coordinated, cross-sector programmes to promote walking and cycling for recreation as well as for transport purposes, based on a long-term vision of what is achievable and current best practice. Ensure the needs of all sections of the population are addressed. Incorporate public health goals to increase the prevalence of people cycling and walking, as well as the distance covered by those who already walk and cycle regularly

Aim to shift attention away from focusing on individual risk factors and isolated, small-scale interventions and ensure programmes comprise an integrated package of measures, implemented by all relevant sectors and stakeholders. Where appropriate, they should link to existing national and local walking and cycling initiatives, and incorporate actions in specific settings, such as workplace or schools (see [workplaces](#) and [schools](#)).

Ensure walking and cycling programmes form a core part of local transport investment planning, on a continuing basis. In line with the Department for Transport's [Manual for streets](#) and the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation's [Manual for streets 2 - wider application of the principles](#), pedestrians and cyclists should be considered before other user groups in the design process – this helps ensure that they are not provided for as an afterthought.

¹ Further advice on evaluation of physical activity can be found in the [National Obesity Observatory guide to evaluation](#).

7 Walking and cycling networks and infrastructure

Road design

Roads, including pavements, can be designed to encourage people to walk or cycle. For details of how this can be achieved see [road design](#) in relation to transport and physical activity.

Workplace links to walking and cycling networks

People can be encouraged to walk and cycle to work and during the working day, if there are enough safe networks and links in place. For details see [buildings – walking and cycling links](#) in relation to physical activity and the environment.

8 Walking and cycling programmes

See [Walking and cycling / Walking and cycling programmes](#)

9 Preventing unintentional injuries on the road among pedestrians and cyclists

Addressing the dangers people face on our roads is a key aspect of activities to encourage people to walk and cycle.

Road safety partnerships and strategies can help, by addressing issues such as motor traffic speed and by encouraging the introduction of a range of engineering measures to make roads safer for both pedestrians and cyclists. For details see below.

Developing road safety partnerships and strategies

For details go to: [managing road safety partnerships](#) and [carrying out local child road safety reviews](#) in relation to preventing unintentional injuries among the under 15s.

Addressing motor traffic speed

For details go to: [promoting and enforcing speed reductions](#) and [needs assessment and planning](#) in relation to preventing unintentional injuries among the under 15s.

Introducing engineering measures

For details go to: [implementing engineering measures](#) in relation to preventing unintentional injuries among the under 15s and [road design](#) in relation to transport and physical activity.

Glossary

Handcycles

two or three-wheeled bikes powered by the arms rather than the legs; they come in a variety of styles which make them suitable for many people with disabilities

Local enterprise partnerships

local enterprise partnerships are led by local authorities and businesses; they provide the vision, knowledge and strategic leadership needed to drive sustainable private sector growth and job creation in their area

Modes of travel

form of transport used (such as by car, lorry, bicycle, public transport or on foot)

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Personalised travel planning

personalised travel planning aims to encourage people to change their travel habits by providing them with detailed information on possible alternatives – people running these schemes provide individuals (usually across a specified geographical area) with information on, and encouragement to use, alternatives to a car for the trips they make

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Portfolio holders

local authority member with a specific responsibility delegated by the leader of the local authority

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Virtual cycle races

these are competitions where participants log the number of miles they have cycled on their own or as part of a team: the aim is to cycle a predetermined number of miles over a certain time; a target could be, for example, to cycle the number of miles it would take to travel from Lands End to John O'Groats

Sources

Physical activity: walking and cycling (2012) NICE public health guidance 41

Your responsibility

The guidance in this pathway represents the view of NICE, which was arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. Those working in the NHS, local authorities, the wider public, voluntary and community sectors and the private sector should take it into account when carrying out their professional, managerial or voluntary duties. Implementation of this guidance is the responsibility of local commissioners and/or providers. Commissioners and providers are reminded that it is their responsibility to implement the guidance, in their local context, in light of their duties to avoid unlawful discrimination and to have regard to promoting equality of opportunity. Nothing in this guidance should be interpreted in a way which would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

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