

Cycling rates double following three week Cycle Challenge

“Many of my happiest childhood memories revolve around my powder blue trike and my Raleigh Chipper...”

29th July 2013: Over 1,000 people across 55 workplaces around the island of Ireland clocked up 29,820 10-minute bike trips in just 3 weeks in June, as part of the cross-border ‘10 Minute Cycle Challenge’. Workplaces, including Accenture, Airtricity, AOL, Belfast City Council, Eirgrid, GlaxoSmithKline, Microsoft, The National University of Ireland Galway, Takeda, Queens University, Royal Group of Hospitals Belfast, Siemens and Seagate Technology took part in the event, which encourages both new and regular cyclists to get pedalling as part of a fun, team event. The Challenge was run by the National Transport Authority in partnership with Travelwise Northern Ireland, as part of the Smarter Travel Workplaces programme.

Cycling on the commute doubled as a result of the challenge. Almost a quarter of participants were new to the bike – which makes the trips cycled even more impressive, at 140 average trips per team. The unprecedented good weather likely had a positive impact on the large number of trips clocked up by participants.

One of the ‘new cyclists’, Eamon Duffy from Dublin City Council, commented, *“Many of my happiest childhood memories revolve around my powder blue trike and my Raleigh Chipper. Now, I have rediscovered the joy, the peace and independence that cycling brings and I have rediscovered old friends. Now I have started I am not going to stop!”*

Gerry Murphy, Chief Executive of the National Transport Authority commented: *“The National Transport Authority recognises that cycling on the commute is a highly sustainable mode of transport and can result in a significant positive impact on employees’ health. It is also a fantastic way to incorporate physical activity into daily life. Notably, 89% of participating cyclists plan to cycle on the commute now that the Challenge has ended – that’s double the number cycling before the event! Congratulations to all of the workplaces and participants, we hope you continue to be active as you travel and enjoy all of the associated benefits.”*

Prize-winners came from workplaces in both the Republic and Northern Ireland, with the overall Challenge winners being ‘The JAG’s Tap Cyclepaths’ team from Eirgrid. The JAG’s Tap Cyclepaths team clocked up an average of 118 journeys each over the course of the three week Challenge. The team ‘P.J. Fenlon’ from GlaxoSmithKline picked up the Smarter Travel Workplaces top prize, and the ‘Digital Donkeys’ from Belfast City Council won the Travelwise Northern Ireland top prize.

Michael Lindsay, Travelwise Northern Ireland commented: *“Once again Travelwise Northern Ireland and its partner organisations in Northern Ireland have been delighted to participate with Smarter Travel Workplaces in the 10 Minute Cycle Challenge. Participation from organisations in Northern Ireland has grown remarkably and some of our cyclists are already looking forward to next year’s event. Travelwise Northern Ireland recognises the link between supporting employees to increase activity levels, using smarter modes of transport, and their health and wellbeing. This challenge has therefore resulted in positive effects on employee health and a shift to a more sustainable mode of transport. We would like to congratulate all participants from right across the island and to thank the staff in the National Transport Authority on behalf of our partner organisations for the opportunity to*

National Transport Authority 10 Minute Cycle Challenge 2013 Press Release

participate and the support they have provided. We look forward to further collaborations in the future.”

ENDS

Editor’s Notes:

The National Transport Authority’s **Smarter Travel Workplaces Programme** is a Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport-funded programme for large employers (over 250 employees) seeking to develop a Workplace Travel Plan. Workplace Travel Plans have been shown internationally to reduce single occupancy car use on the commute by between 10 and 24%. Workplace Travel Plans also impact on costs associated with parking, business travel, fleet, CO2 emissions, absenteeism, and access issues. Further information on the programme and Partners can be found at www.smartertravelworkplaces.ie.

Travelwise Northern Ireland is an initiative within Northern Ireland’s Department for Regional Development tasked with the promotion of sustainable modes of travel. It works with three main target groups, namely schools, commuters and employers to encourage walking, cycling, use of public transport and car-sharing. It works closely with employers across Northern Ireland to help them develop Workplace Travel Plans that will encourage sustainable travel modes. For more information on the work of Travelwise Northern Ireland visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/travelwiseni.

Further information on the **Cycle Challenge 2013** can be found here – www.cyclechallenge.ie

Smarter Travel Workplaces participating workplaces:

Accenture, Airtricity, An Bord Pleanála, AOL, Arup, Atkins, Bord Gáis Networks, Children's University Hospital, Temple Street, Cork City Council, Defence Forces Naval Service, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Dublin City Council, Dunlaoghaire Rathdown County Council, Eirgrid, ESB, Galway City Council, GlaxoSmithKline, IKEA, Institute of Art Design & Technology, Limerick Local Authorities, Microsoft, Mount Carmel Hospital, National Transport Authority, National University of Ireland Galway, National University of Ireland Maynooth, Oracle, Railway Procurement Agency, Roughan & O'Donovan, Siemens, St. James' Hospital, St. Vincent's Hospital, Symantec, Takeda, Trinity College Dublin, University College Cork, University College Dublin, University Hospital Galway & Waterford County Council.

Travelwise Northern Ireland Participating Workplaces

Department of Justice, Seagate Technology, NI Assembly, DOE/N I Environment Agency, Royal Group of Hospitals, Department for Regional Development-Clarence Court, Queens University Belfast, Atkins Northern Ireland, Newtownabbey Borough Council, Probation Board NI, Bombardier Aerospace, Parker Green International/Quays Shopping Centre, University of Ulster Jordanstown, University of Ulster Coleraine, Belfast City Council, Musgrave Park Hospital & Belfast Health and Social Care Trust