



Summary Report 2024

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Executive Summary

The TFI Smarter Travel programme is a national voluntary behaviour change programme, supporting workplaces and third-level institutions to develop and implement sustainable travel plans for staff, students and visitors. As part of an organisation's workplace travel plan, staff and student surveys collect data on how staff and students commute to work or campus and a survey report with proposed action plan guides organisations on how they can best facilitate and support an increase in active and sustainable commuting.

Workplace travel plans make business sense and can result in significant benefits to organisations including reduced carbon emissions associated with commuting and business travel, reduced need for staff car parking, increased accessibility to the employer's site for employees, visitors, and suppliers, compliance with planning permission conditions and reduced employer PRSI payments (through Cycle to Work and TaxSaver schemes).

Behaviour change interventions such as Marchathon, Walktober and Ready-Set-Cycle encourage participants to change their commuting habits in favour of walking or cycling in the commute and beyond.

Organisations that take action and lead the way in facilitating, promoting and encouraging active and sustainable travel are recognised through the Smarter Travel Mark certification which became a new feature of the programme in 2023 and is one of Government's Pathfinder programmes.

35 organisations joined the programme in 2024 while 53 organisations undertook travel surveys. The total number of organisations in the programme reached 282 comprising of 251 workplaces and 31 campuses with a reach amongst active organisations of approximately 246,305 staff and 292,523 students.



New Programme Partners

1. Competition and Consumer Protection Commission
2. Viatris
3. Carlow County Council
4. Trittech Engineering
5. Element Six
6. Blackrock Health Galway
7. Integer New Ross
8. Met Éireann
9. Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
10. Cork College of Further Education - Tramore Road Campus
11. Dublin Business School
12. Pfizer - Newbridge
13. Pfizer - Grangecastle
14. Pfizer - Ringsend
15. Edward Lifesciences Limerick
16. HEAnet
17. Clúid Housing
18. Linesight
19. Cork College of Further Education - Morrissons Island Campus
20. Carbery
21. expleo
22. Business in the Community Ireland
23. Department of Foreign Affairs
24. Boston Scientific Galway
25. Clare County Council
26. Greyhound Racing Ireland
27. Leopardstown Park Hospital
28. Environmental Protection Agency
29. Foras na Gaeilge
30. Kildare County Council
31. Irish Blood Transfusion Service
32. RPS
33. Forensic Science Ireland
34. Arthur Cox
35. St. Francis Hospice

Successful Workplace Travel Plans

When an organisation joins the Smarter Travel Programme, they are assigned a Smarter Travel officer to work through the steps of the programme. This starts with a baseline travel survey to determine actions that should be implemented to increase sustainable travel and reduce single car usage. Essential resources for a successful workplace travel plan include senior management support and a dedicated person or working group responsible for implementation of actions. Existing personnel from various departments can form a working group to ensure cohesive and effective actions. Adequate time and budget resources must be allocated for successful implementation. Without time and resources appropriate to the action plan, change may not be successful. A workplace travel plan is an on-going process, so actions that cannot be resourced initially, can be re-examined at a future point.

The Smarter Travel Mark

The Smarter Travel Mark was launched by Minister Eamon Ryan in May 2023 and is one of the thirty-five Pathfinder projects being developed nationwide. The Smarter Travel Mark is a certification that recognises and celebrates organisations that support active and sustainable travel and a reduction in single-person car usage amongst their staff, students and visitors. Any size employer from the private or public sectors can apply for the Smarter Travel Mark.

Employer led sustainable travel initiatives are essential to reducing the impact of the collective dependence on the car as a mode of travel. Reducing carbon emissions and alleviating traffic congestion is a priority. Part of the solution is to change behaviours regarding walking, cycling, public transport usage and carpooling on the commute and beyond. In 2024, 57 organisations had been awarded the Smarter Travel Mark with a reach of over 43,000 staff and over 50,000 students.



Smarter Travel Marks Awarded in 2024

1. Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
2. LCETB / CFE - Mulgrave Street
3. Law Reform Commission
4. CIE - Heuston Station
5. Triangle
6. Egis
7. University College Dublin
8. University Hospital Limerick
9. Version 1
10. SETU Carlow & Wexford Campus
11. HEAnet & Educampus
12. Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital Dublin
13. Jacobs
14. AECOM
15. Business in the Community Ireland
16. University Hospital Galway
17. Croke Park
18. Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
19. Sport Ireland
20. The Mater Hospital
21. Greyhound Racing
22. Citi Group
23. HSE Limerick - Castletroy
24. HSE Limerick - Roselawn
25. Tuath Housing
26. Dún Laoghaire - Rathdown County Council - County Hall
27. Expleo
28. KPGM
29. Waterford City & County Council
30. An Bord Pleanála
31. MKC Communications
32. Grant Thornton
33. SETU Waterford
34. Clare County Council
35. National Orthopaedic Hospital Cappagh
36. Commission for Regulation of Utilities
37. National Treasure Management Agency
38. Stryker Limerick
39. KPMG Harbourmaster
40. Strata
41. Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
42. Competition and Consumer Protection Commission
43. Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
44. Indecon
45. Ornu
46. Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art Design + Technology
47. Quality and Qualifications Ireland
48. Irish Blood Transfusion Service
49. Deloitte
50. Cavan County Council
51. Eirgrid
52. Merlin Park University Hospital
53. Forensic Sciences Ireland
54. Edwards Lifesciences
55. National Transport Authority
56. Clúid Housing
57. South Dublin County Council

Calendar Highlights

Marchathon 2024

The Marchathon Step Challenge is one of two walking challenges held each year as part of the Smarter Travel programme. Marchathon took place from March 4th to 31st. The aim of Marchathon is to encourage participants to walk on the commute where possible and engage in positive walking behaviours throughout the month, identifying potential opportunities to change their mode of travel from the private car in favour of walking. The principles and techniques of the behaviour change methodology of community-based social marketing is used as a basis for the walking challenges.

Over 8,000 people from 118 Smarter Travel programme partners took part in Marchathon. Results show that participants collectively took more than two billion steps during Marchathon, an average of approximately 10,106 steps per person per day. Several questions were asked of participants to assess their behaviour before, during and after the step challenge.

- » During Marchathon 54% said that they increased the amount they walked on the commute to work or college while 51% said they intended to continue to increase the amount they walked on the commute to work or college after Marchathon.
- » During Marchathon 14% said they increased the amount they walked while dropping children or dependents to school or extracurricular activities. 13% said they intended to continue to increase the amount they walked while dropping children and dependents to school or extracurricular activities after Marchathon.
- » During Marchathon 82% said they increased the amount they walked going to the shops, while 76% said they intended to continue to increase the amount they walked to the shops after Marchathon.
- » During Marchathon 68% said they increased the amount they walked going to social activities while 66% said they intended to continue to increase the amount they walked to other social activities after Marchathon.

There were over one hundred photos submitted across the two photo competitions during Marchathon. Some of the winning photos are shown.

Steps for a Safe & Green Marchathon



Check the Met Éireann App



Be Ready for Rain



Be Sun Safe



Bring your Reusables



Do a Beach Clean Walk



Do a Roadside Clean-up Walk

Ready, Set, Cycle

Following a successful pilot in 2023, the Ready, Set, Cycle programme returned in 2024 with improvements based on feedback from the Smarter Travel Team, participants, and partner organisations. As a result, the programme was streamlined from 10 weeks to 6 weeks for a more focused and engaging experience.

The 2024 programme ran from April 6th to May 17th, followed by a two-week “Getting Winter Ready” refresher campaign in November to support continued cycling throughout the colder months.

Ready, Set, Cycle aims to break barriers to cycling as a form of active travel, both for commuting and leisure. The 2024 programme engaged existing cyclists through active challenges while placing a stronger focus on encouraging new and returning cyclists. Over 50 partner organisations took part in the programme.

Key outcomes included:

- Over 80% of participants said they would encourage their organisation to participate with 90% of participants saying they would take part again.
- After Ready, Set, Cycle, 62% said they cycled when going to the shops and 50% said they cycled when going to social activities.
- 75% of participants reported feeling more confident cycling, with an additional 15% feeling somewhat more confident but keen to improve further.

The six-week programme focused on different aspects of cycling each week, including activities such as ‘Try a Bike Day’ and on-site Bike Clinics. The content guided participants from buying a bike to incorporating cycling into their daily commute and routine.

During weeks 4 to 6, a two-week cycling challenge encouraged participants to create teams and log their cycling journeys on the Active Travel Logger. A weekly leaderboard tracked progress, with prizes awarded to the top 3 teams and additional prizes for randomly selected teams in the top 10 and top 30 placements.

Ready, Set, Cycle 2024 successfully built on the previous year’s achievements, delivering an improved and more engaging experience for participants while driving positive behavioural change towards active and sustainable modes of travel.



Ready, Set, Cycle

Smarter Travel Student Awards

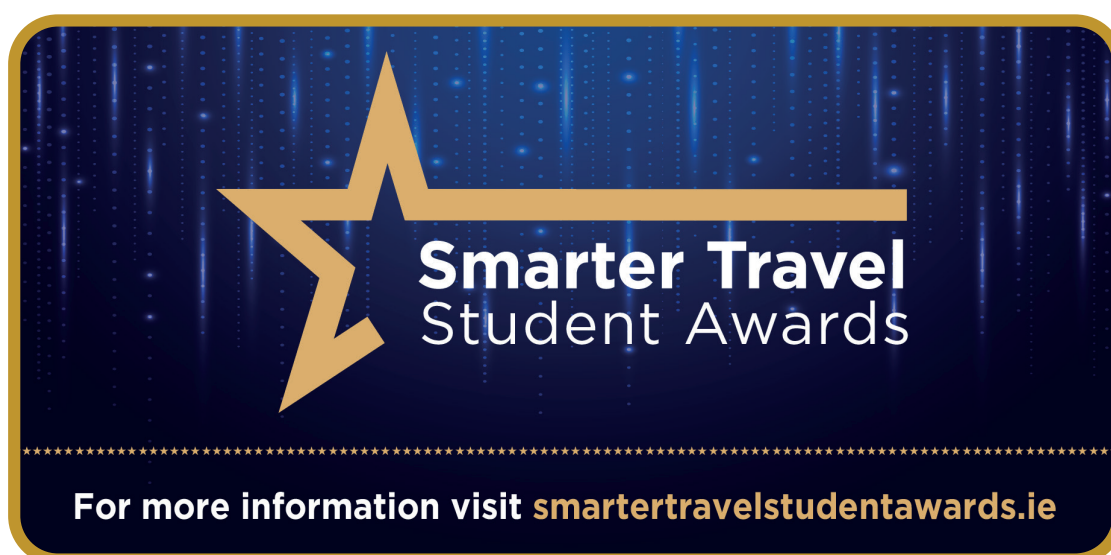
The 2024 Student Awards Ceremony took place on Thursday, April 25th, at the Light House Cinema in Smithfield. The event welcomed finalists, academic staff, and members of the judging panel to celebrate the creativity and innovation of students working to promote sustainable travel.

The Smarter Travel Students Awards aim to engage academic staff and students through their field of interest to consider sustainable and active commuting options for travelling to campus. Students are invited to develop projects that support, facilitate, or enable smarter travel choices with the awards linking in with a broad range of college courses. A Lecturers Award acknowledges lecturers who bring projects into their graded curriculum. Student entries are reviewed by an independent panel of judges who are experts in their industry.

- 194 projects were submitted involving over 500 students.
- 17 third-level campuses were represented at the 2024 Student Awards.

During the awards, finalist projects were displayed in the foyer, giving attendees an opportunity to explore innovative ideas before the winners were announced. Winners were then invited on stage to receive their awards, presented by a member of the judging panel.

The 2024 ceremony successfully highlighted the creativity and dedication of students and staff in driving sustainable travel solutions, reinforcing the positive impact of the programme across campuses nationwide.





National Bike Week

National Bike Week is a celebration, showcasing cycling and encouraging new and lapsed cyclists to get on the bike and make cycling part of their lifestyle. During Bike Week, people across Ireland can join in events, consider their everyday journeys, and make the switch to cycling as a convenient way to travel on the commute, for shopping trips and leisure.

Bike Week took place from Saturday 11th to Sunday 19th May 2024 with events coordinated through the Local Authorities, Local Sports Partnerships and Cycling Ireland. Green-Schools assisted many of the Local Authorities with school events as well as running their own school events during Bike Week.

All 31 local authority areas were represented during Bike Week. Over 700 events were uploaded to the Bike Week website in advance of Bike Week, including Family Fun Cycles, Group Cycles, Bike Festivals, Pedal Parades, Cycle Safety Training, Balance Bike events, Bike Clinics, Bike Fests, Lunchtime City Cycles, Heritage Cycles, School Cycling events, Bike Yoga and much more.

The number of events which took place nationwide was 1,203 with School events accounting for 479. In 2024, approximately 75,576 people took part in the events organised across the county. From 1st April to 30th May, there were 44,446 BikeWeek webpage views across 24,667 users.



BikeWeek



European Mobility Week

European Mobility Week (EMW) is an annual campaign that takes place across Europe from September 16th – 22nd. It ends with Car Free Day on September 22nd. The theme for 2024 was 'Shared Public Space'. The TFI Smarter Travel programme promoted EMW to Workplace and Campus Partners and Local Authorities and issued the EMW information pack and toolkit. A European Mobility Week quiz was circulated to staff and students at partner organisations. There were over 300 entrants to the quiz.



Light Up Your Bike Campaign

Light Up Your Bike is an annual campaign aimed at reminding cyclists to 'Light Up' as the darker evenings approach when the clock falls back in October. Over 24,000 bike lights were distributed to 70 partners nationwide. Organisations were asked to provide details on how they would promote the campaign to their staff and students. 48 organisations outlined their promotions, and 6 winners received prizes. Bike lights were also provided to regional cycling clubs.

Dublin Cycling Campaign received 2500 lights to use for their own promotion. The initiative was launched on October 23rd by Lord Mayor of Dublin, James Geoghegan, with support from Dublin City Council. Volunteers handed out free bike lights to cyclists in various parts of the city.



Walktober

The Walktober Step Challenge is the second of the two walking challenges held each year. Walktober took place from October 1st to 31st. The aim of Walktober is to encourage participants to walk on the commute where possible and engage in positive walking behaviours throughout the month, identifying potential opportunities to change their mode of travel from the private car in favour of walking. Over 8,700 people from more than 123 Smarter Travel programme partners took part in Walktober.

Results show that participants collectively took more than two billion steps during Walktober, an average of approximately 9,483 steps per person per day. Several questions were asked of participants to assess their behaviour before, during and after the step challenge.

- » During Walktober 31% of participants said that they increased the amount they walked on the commute to work or college while 38% said they intended to continue to increase the amount they walked on the commute to work or college after Walktober.
- » During Walktober 73% walked instead of driving as a mode of transport for example to the local shops and on school runs. 14% said they intended to continue to increase the amount they walked while dropping children and dependents to school or extracurricular activities after Walktober.
- » During Walktober 4% increased the amount they walked going to the shops while 70% said they intended to continue to increase the amount they walked to the shops after Walktober.
- » During Walktober 6% increased the amount they walked going to social activities while 59% said they intended to continue to increase the amount they walked to other social activities after Walktober.





Smarter Travel Evaluation

In 2024, an evaluation of the programme was conducted to establish people's experiences with the TFI Smarter Travel Programme and Smarter Travel Mark and to identify the effectiveness that both have had in helping organisations promote active and sustainable travel. Several key groups including programme partners, Smarter Travel Mark awardees, non-programme partners, as well as campus lecturers took part in the interviews and surveys.

The evaluation showed that over 80% of respondents rated both the Smarter Travel Programme and the Smarter Travel Mark as “strong” or “very strong” in promoting sustainable travel. This positive perception was consistent across all audiences. 82% reported that they were “very” or “fairly engaged” with the TFI Smarter Travel Programme with higher levels among Smarter Travel Mark holders.

Activity challenges and the provided toolkit were key motivators to engagement with the TFI Smarter Travel Programme with a notable year on year increase in participation. Partners reported strong satisfaction with the programme's tools and resources, particularly the annual behaviour change challenges.

The Smarter Travel Mark is valued for providing tangible evidence of sustainability commitment, enhancing reputation, offering a competitive advantage, and enabling benchmarking. Almost half of the surveyed partners have received the Smarter Travel Mark, and 74% of them have already implemented further recommendations.

Lecturers reported high engagement and satisfaction with the Smarter Travel Student Awards Programme, highlighting its real-world application and national scope.

The evaluation demonstrated that the increased services offered by the TFI network and the behavioural change interventions provided by the Smarter Travel Programme and Smarter Travel Mark continue to contribute to government policy, particularly, the objectives set out in the National Sustainable Mobility Policy to deliver at least 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys and a 10% reduction in kilometres driven by fossil fuelled cars by 2030 in line with metrics for transport set out in the Climate Action Plan 2021.

Conclusion

The impacts of the TFI Smarter Travel Programme include reduced emissions, encouraging workplace and campus communities to come together, active lifestyles and helping and encouraging people to make positive choices towards travelling sustainably. With more active travel infrastructure coming into place across the country and increased and improved public transport services, the Smarter Travel programme will continue to help organisations encourage behaviour change through their actions, policies and communications.

Looking ahead to 2025, more organisations across Ireland will be awarded the Smarter Travel Mark in recognition of their efforts to reduce single car usage and the resulting carbon emissions. The Smarter Travel programme will continue to help campuses and workplaces to implement workplace travel plans that will have a direct impact on their climate action policies and looks forward to welcoming many new programme partners in the coming years.