



Smarter Travel for Essex: ‘Embracing Active Travel to make a safer, greener and healthier Essex

Briefing for businesses guidance for employees

Published November 2021



Essex County Council

Essex County Council (ECC) understands how vital it is to get the workforce moving again. Our local businesses are essential to the economy, guaranteeing jobs.

Support for businesses is crucial as we return to a new normal, safeguarding our economy and enabling a transition to a better work/home balance through hybrid working and increased use of communications technology.

This guide sets out our latest travel advice for businesses returning to work as we start to come out of the global pandemic.

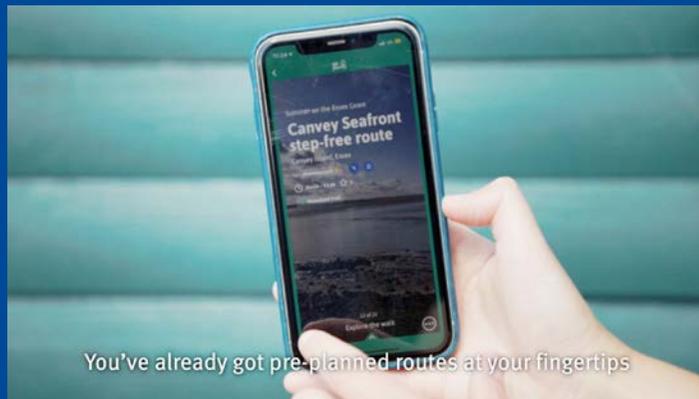
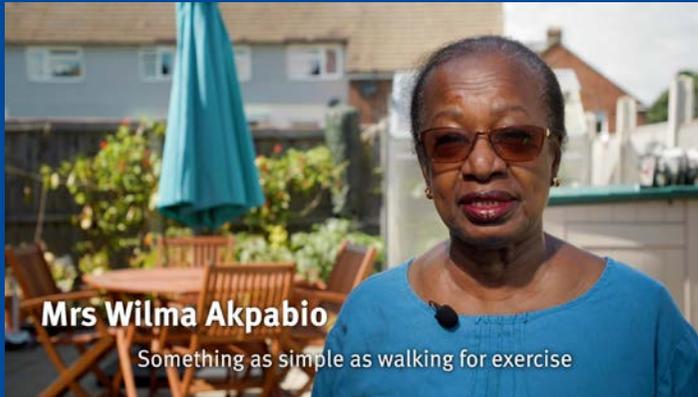
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1. Safer, Greener, Healthier



The Safer, Greener, Healthier vision is to deliver and enable safer, greener and healthier travel for current and future users of the transport network in Essex.

In a recent poll 51% of Essex residents said they would like to walk more and 59% said they'd like to cycle more, once Covid restrictions are fully lifted.

63% also stated they were very concerned about air pollution and traffic congestion in Essex.

And 69% felt that it was very important to have more space and priority for walking and cycling.

The ambition is to create a road environment that is SAFER, encouraging more residents to cycle or walk, especially for shorter journeys.

Work up sustainable transport solutions to ensure that Essex reduces carbon emissions and delivers long-term GREENER benefits.

Deliver long-term public health benefits so that our residents become HEALTHIER.

For more information on the Safer, Greener, Healthier campaign visit www.essex.gov.uk/safer-greener-healthier or email SGH.Routes@essex.gov.uk



2. Help us to help you – what we're asking businesses to do

We are doing all we can to ensure a safe transport network but we need businesses to help us embrace a “new normal” as we move into the return to work phase. You can do this in five ways:



Continue to walk or cycle for short journeys

Plan journeys in advance and travel outside of the busiest times

Consider a hybrid working pattern to allow for more flexibility

1. Ensure your workplace is COVID-secure

Ease your employees back to the workplace with a gradual return over the coming months. For those who are in the workplace, ensure it is COVID-secure. www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19

2. Stagger work times

Consider changing the working hours of your staff so they can avoid peak travel times and free up services/busy roads for those that have no choice but to travel during those periods.

Encourage employees to plan their journey in advance and travel outside of the busiest times, particularly first thing in the morning. Taking the most direct route and avoid busy interchanges is likely to be the quickest.

3. Encourage active travel

The likelihood of COVID-19 being transmitted is reduced when outside. Therefore, active travel modes (walking, cycling and scooting) should be encouraged for all shorter journeys.

4. Encourage socially distanced car sharing

Two or more drivers sharing a car, especially in a largely rural county like Essex, has great potential to reduce road traffic levels. Car sharing with a regular ‘buddy’, keeping the window open and maximising the distance between you, is considered by the Government as a viable travel solution for commuting to work.

5. Non-essential use of public transport is now allowed

Use of public transport is now allowed in England, for all journeys, not just essential travel. Individual transport operators will have their own rules regarding face coverings and these should be followed. Continue to be sensible and maintain a suitable distance from other passengers where possible.

Read on to find out additional details on active travel, using public transport and car sharing.

Advantages to your business

- Increase travel choices to your site
- Reduce the cost of and demand for parking
- Attract and retain employees
- Reduce on-site congestion, air and noise pollution
- Improve visitor/delivery access
- A healthier, happier and more productive workforce
- Corporate Social Responsibility.



Active Travel



GET, SET, CYCLE

Lacking confidence on two wheels?

Don't worry, the Safer Essex Roads Partnership provide one to one cycle confidence courses or training for anyone who would like to learn?

Instructors based all over the county.

Sessions are tailored to your individual level of experience. Arranged at a time and place convenient for you.

Visit <https://saferessexroads.org/road-users/cycling/> to book or for more information.



The likelihood of COVID-19 being transmitted is reduced when outside. Therefore, active travel modes (walking, cycling and scooting) should be encouraged.

Active travel also brings several benefits for both physical and mental health, reduces the risk of serious illness such as heart disease, anxiety, depression, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

Further benefits of active travel include improvements in concentration and mood, allowing for a more productive workforce. In addition, active travel can save both time and money. Not being stuck in traffic not only frees up Essex's already busy network but allows accurate planning for timely arrival at the chosen destination.

Lots of people have enjoyed getting out for exercise while in lockdown and may be surprised to discover how far they have travelled. Many people can very easily walk and cycle 2-5km and it will be the quicker and healthier choice. Incorporating walking and cycling into the daily commute may be more achievable than they previously thought.

There are a variety of resources, information sources and apps available to help support walking and cycling.

[Simply Stride Facebook Live sessions](#)

[Love to Ride Essex](#)

www.livingstreets.org.uk

[Go Jauntly App](#)

www.cyclinguk.org

[Adult Cycle Training](#)

www.sustrans.org.uk

[Essex Cycle Maps](#)

forwardmotionsouthessex.co.uk

www.stopswapgo.co.uk

Employers can encourage active travel by providing bike racks and shower facilities.

Active travel can also be used for journeys to and from school

As we emerge from the pandemic more working parents and carers may be working from home more often. The reduction in time spent commuting gives many greater time to walk, scoot or cycle to school with their children. It's a great opportunity to chat about what they see and what they're learning at school.

A huge proportion of children in Essex live within a short distance of their school, which is ideal for travelling on foot, by scooter or by bike. Many schools have lots of foot and cycleways nearby, allowing those on foot or two wheels to take short-cuts not available by car.



Public Transport

Restrictions on public transport have now been lifted, with both bus and rail services running at full capacity. The legal requirement to socially distance and wear a face covering has also been removed. However, operators are encouraging passengers to continue to wear a face mask in crowded areas.

From 19 July it is not mandatory to wear face coverings on public transport. However, the government expects and recommends that face coverings are worn in crowded and enclosed spaces, such as public transport, when mixing with people you don't normally meet.

Buses:

From the 19 July buses will return to running at full capacity. Operators are following government guidelines and recommend that customers wear a face covering whilst on board. This is a personal choice and not everyone may wish to wear a mask.

If you can:

- Pay in advance using bus apps or use contactless payment methods
- In advance of your journey check the operator's website or App for information on seat availability
- Leave windows open to aid ventilation
- Carry hand sanitiser
- Wash your hands before and after your journey.



Check with the individual operators' guidelines before travelling.

The service operators for Essex include [First Essex](#), [Arriva](#) and [Hedingham Buses](#).

Route journey planning for both bus and rail can be found at [Traveline](#).

Train operators are running a full service. The legal requirement to socially distance and wear masks was removed from the 19 July. However, operators are asking people to follow government guidelines and wear a face covering on busy trains and stations.

Enhanced cleaning of trains will remain as will signage advising people to spread out along platforms.

Passengers are asked to adhere to guidance from the individual operators.

Within Essex these are [Greater Anglia](#) and [c2c](#).



Some general advice if you do need to travel by train:

- Do not travel if you have any symptoms of COVID-19. Please check the [NHS website](#) for information
- Check timetables before you travel
- Carry hand sanitiser
- Wash your hands before and after your journey
- Purchase your train ticket ahead of travel via an app or the train company's website to minimise your time at the station or use a contactless payment method if you are unable to do this



Car sharing

As we head back to our regular workplaces, there will be caution about sharing the relatively confined space of a car with another person, especially one who is not from your household. Visit the Liftshare's [easy to follow guidelines](#) to help you stay safe when travelling with others.

Some simple guidelines are:

- Share with the same person or people each time
- Maximise the distance between people in the car. For example, if there's two of you, the person not driving should sit in the back behind the passenger seat
- Face away from one another if possible
- Keep the car windows open, to allow air to circulate
- Clean the door handles and other parts of the car people touch – steering wheel and gear stick, seat belts, etc – with standard cleaning products while wearing gloves
- Wear a face covering where possible
- Avoid physical contact with the person or people you're sharing with.

If you do have to drive to your place of work, stagger your start and finish times to avoid busy periods.

How do you become an active travel employer?

- Understand employee's travel habits – this will provide a baseline from which you can improve upon, as well as providing an understanding of specific barriers faced by your employees; allowing you to target your time and efforts on solutions that will make a real difference.
- Conduct an assessment of the current infrastructure in and around your workplace – this will help you identify some of the infrastructure that may need improving to enable employees to walk and cycle into the office.
- The [Modeshift STARS Business](#) portal can be used to help you with both of these elements, as well as offering national accreditation for workplace travel plans.
- Awareness and Engagement – once the infrastructure is in place you can start to engage with your employees and get people active. Bring them along with you by using the results from your survey to help define the best methods of communication. Consider recruiting Travel Champions to help spread the word.
- Snap shot surveys can also be used to track the impact of active travel initiatives which you promote. Although the mental, physical, and social benefits of active travel are substantiated, demonstrating the positive impact on your own employees will help to support the business case for further investment.



3. Further information

Government guidance on how to keep safe while travelling is available [here](#).

Our [Smarter Travel for Essex Network \(STEN\)](#) helps businesses prepare and implement effective travel initiatives that promote active and sustainable travel.

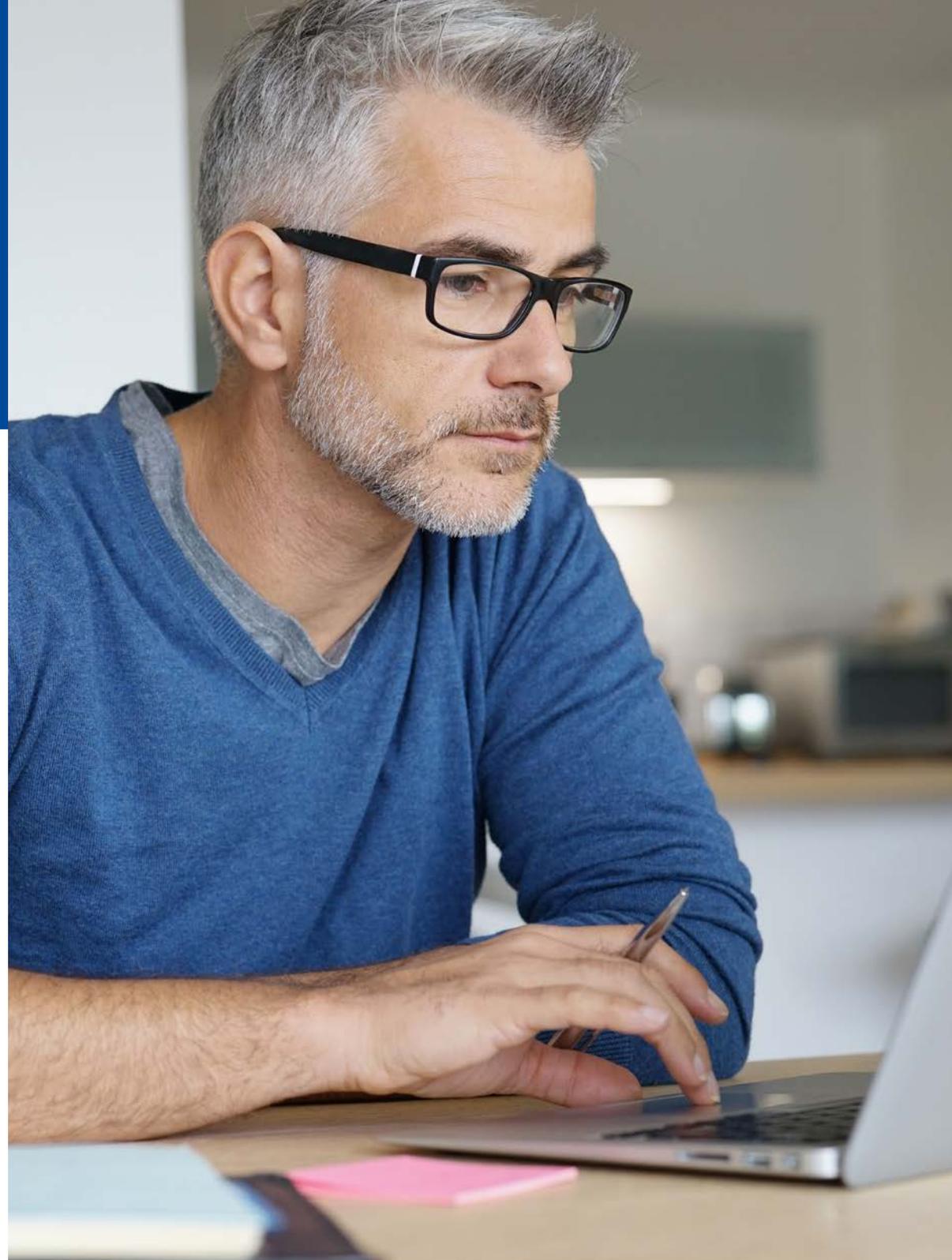
For more information contact the Travel Plan Team travelplanteam@essex.gov.uk

The '[Smarter Working in Essex](#)' toolkit is designed to help support businesses in adopting successful working from home practices in their workplace.

Tips include:

- Applying public health guidance in making decisions on where people work
- Recognising the challenges that people are facing and watching out for signs of problems
- Developing a culture of trust
- Finding new ways to come together
- Preparing to sustain the change.

Further advice and support can also be obtained from the [Best Growth Hub](#).



This information is issued by:
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Highways & Transportation

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formats, on request.

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