



# Smarter Travel for Essex: travelling to work post COVID-19

## Briefing for businesses guidance for employees

Published August 2020



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.**

This guide sets out our latest safe travel advice for businesses planning to reopen or return to work now and in the medium to longer term.

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**1. Emergency Essex Transport Plan**

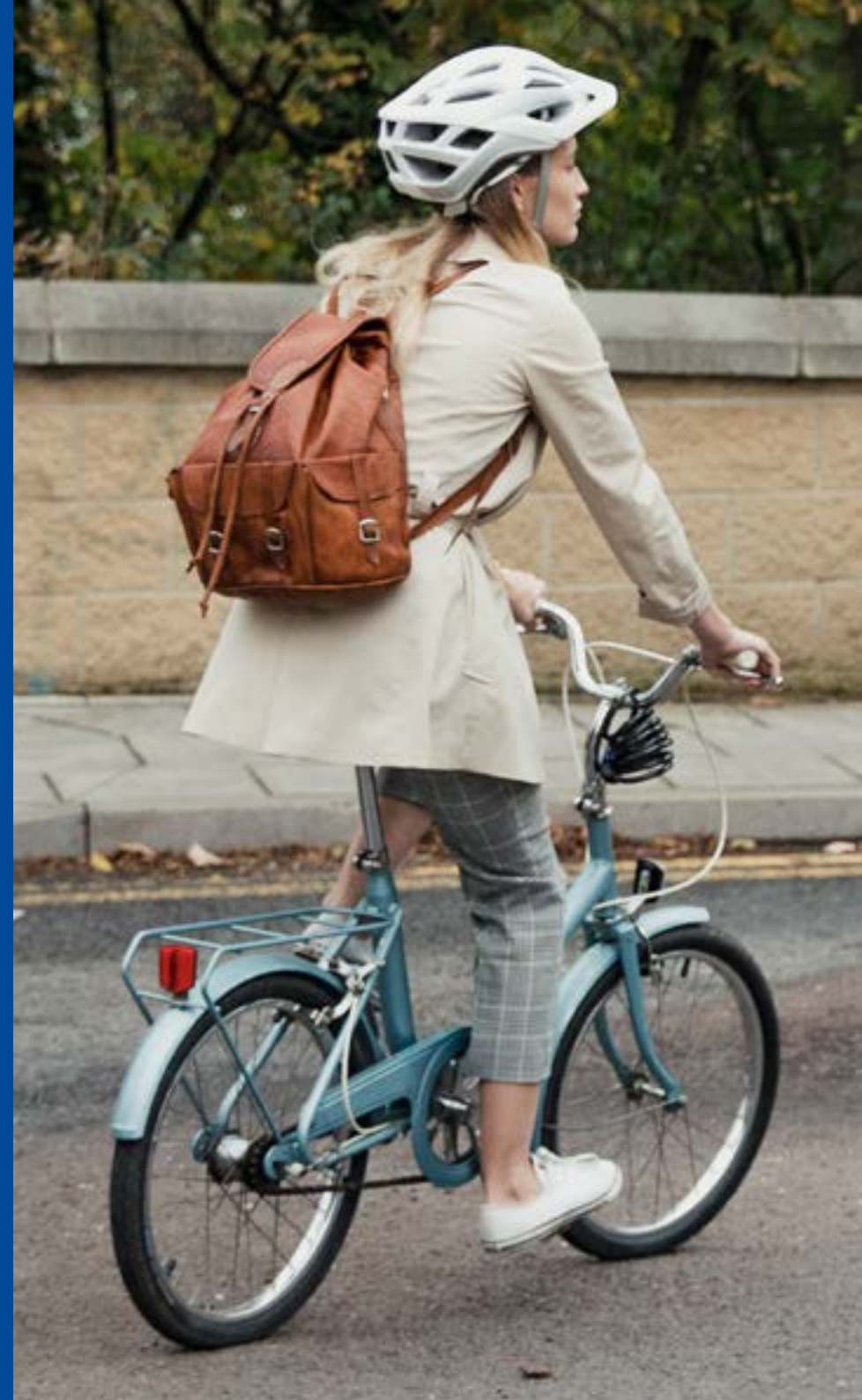
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**2. Help us to help you – what we're asking businesses to do**

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**3. Safer, Greener, Healthier Routes**

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# 1. Emergency Essex Transport Plan

The purpose of this plan is to support local business to reopen while ensuring employees travel safely, adhering to social distancing guidelines.

For this to happen we cannot simply return to how employees travelled in the past. We need to do things differently:

- i. Continue to encourage working from home wherever possible
- ii. Create more pedestrian space to allow for social distancing
- iii. Protect road space for essential journeys
- iv. Encourage walking and cycling – supporting the growth in these modes that has emerged during lockdown
- v. Manage public transport capacity to support social distancing.

The need for social distancing and more space for queuing requires a fundamental redesign of what we do with our streets and other public spaces. With indoor leisure facilities closed and schools open only in a limited way, local streets must be safe for people young and old to exercise and play.

Support for businesses is crucial as we emerge from lockdown, safeguarding our economy and enabling a transition to a better work/home balance through agile working and increased use of communications technology.

The Emergency Essex Transport Plan is the start of our work to build a sustainable, healthy recovery for Essex to ensure we come out of the COVID-19 lockdown with the ability to travel safely, healthily and sustainably.





## 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 enable social distancing by keeping the numbers of people travelling on the network down. You can do this in five ways:

### i. Ensure your workplace is COVID-secure

Continue to help your employees work from home. If they are required to be in the workplace, find out how to make it COVID-secure. [www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19)

### ii. Stagger work times

If your employees are not able to work from home, please consider changing the working hours of your staff so they can avoid peak travel times and free up services/busy roads for those, such as key workers, that have no choice but to travel during those periods.

Please 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.

### iii. 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.



Encourage socially distanced car sharing

Plan journeys in advance and travel outside of the busiest times

You should work from home if possible

### iv. 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.

### v. Non-essential use of public transport is now allowed

Where it is not possible to use active travel modes for a journey, non-essential use of public transport is now allowed in England. Remember to plan ahead, wear a face covering and keep your distance from other passengers.


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

## Advantages to your business

- i. Increase travel choices to your site
- ii. Reduce the cost of and demand for parking
- iii. Attract and retain employees
- iv. Reduce on-site congestion, air and noise pollution
- v. Improve visitor/delivery access
- vi. A healthier, happier and more productive workforce
- vii. 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.

**SAFERESSEX**  
roads partnership

Essex County Council

Adult Cycle Training Poster

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](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk)

[Go Jauntly App](#)

[www.cyclinguk.org](http://www.cyclinguk.org)

[Adult Cycle Training](#)

[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

[Essex Cycle Maps](#)

[forwardmotionsouthessex.co.uk](http://forwardmotionsouthessex.co.uk)

[www.stopswapgo.co.uk](http://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 schools start to re-open, parents and carers may be working from home more frequently than before. This means that on some days they could walk, ride or scoot with their children to and from school. 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

Non-essential use of public transport is now allowed in England, however consideration of alternative modes of transport where they are available is still encouraged. If you do need to use public transport, try to stagger your journey and travel outside of peak hours wherever possible.

Please check with the individual operators' guidelines before travelling.



If travelling by bus, please maintain social distancing at stops and bus stations wherever possible.

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](#).

**Wearing face coverings on public transport became mandatory as of Monday 15 June. Operators are not allowed to provide these for passengers, so individuals will need to have their own.**

### Buses:

Buses will be running with a reduced capacity to ensure that current social distancing guidelines can be adhered to, so please allow plenty of time for your journey. Please continue to travel at quieter times if possible, so that everyone can get to where they need to go.

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
- Keep your distance and follow signage on board
- Leave windows open to aid ventilation
- Carry hand sanitiser
- Wash your hands before and after your journey.

### Trains:

Train operators are now running a full service. Passengers are required to wear a face covering and 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:

- i. Wear a face covering at all times, this includes inside railway stations
- ii. Do not travel if you have any symptoms of COVID-19. Please check the [NHS website](#) for information
- iii. Check timetables before you travel
- iv. Carry hand sanitiser
- v. Wash your hands before and after your journey
- vi. 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
- vii. Maintain a two-metre distance from other people where possible in and around stations
- viii. Sit as far away as possible from others onboard the train.



### 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 DfT'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.**



### 3. Safer, Greener, Healthier, Routes



‘Safer, Greener, Healthier’, is a new scheme to provide bigger, safer spaces for town centre shoppers, residents, workers and visitors to maintain social distancing.

We will introduce a series of interim traffic measures to create more shared space for walking and cycling in different parts of the county. These include 20mph speed limits, new cycle lanes and shared space signage.

This project is driven by our immediate public health requirements but by encouraging walking and cycling, it will enable healthier and greener ways of getting around.

Plans for schemes in Chelmsford and Colchester have recently been published with an emerging programme of future schemes also being developed.

Full details of the schemes can be found at: [www.essex.gov.uk/safer-greener-healthier](http://www.essex.gov.uk/safer-greener-healthier)

Residents can share their comments on the new measures at: [SGH.Routes@essex.gov.uk](mailto:SGH.Routes@essex.gov.uk)





## 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](mailto: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:  
**Essex County Council**  
**Highways & Transportation**

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