

Just Eat bikes – first half hour is free for two weeks from today

Bike share will be cheaper for the next fortnight in both Edinburgh and Glasgow from today all in a bid to encourage people to consider cycling for everyday journeys.

Through Scottish Government funding, the cycle share initiative comes into effect as more Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, easing pressure on public transport and helping those who don't own a bike or have anywhere to store one.

More than 1,300 bicycles at nearly 200 bike stations will be available for free in both cities for the first 30 minutes of every journey.

Anyone who already cycles knows that bikes could play an important role in Scotland's green recovery by providing an alternative to private car journeys, helping to lighten demand on public transport, as well as being good for your health and the environment.

- In Edinburgh, the first 30 minutes of bike hire on pedal bikes will be free for the next 14 days. The usual per-minute charge is 10p. Access fees for e-bikes will also be free, although usage will incur the usual per minute charge. Edinburgh also plans to release a new four month discounted pass from 13 July 2020 to encourage long-term uptake of cycling.

The collaboration is being led by the charity CoMoUK which promotes the use of shared transport, and is funded by Transport Scotland through the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places programme managed by the charity Paths for All.

The scheme is being run in partnership with Glasgow City Council, Transport for Edinburgh, and bike share operators nextbike in Glasgow and Serco in Edinburgh.

In Edinburgh, over 500 'Just Eat' bikes are available for hire, with 107 stations across the capital.



Just Eat Cycles

The bike share operators are undertaking enhanced cleaning regimes, regularly cleaning handlebars and keypads.

The free trips will be available to anyone, for any type of journey, and can be used for exercise, shopping and commuting to work. Bikes can be hired on a 'pay as you go' basis or by subscription, with registration via app or website.

Today marks the next step in Phase 2 of the Scottish Government's COVID-19 route map, with indoor non-office workplaces and street-access retail resuming once relevant guidance is implemented.

As more lockdown restrictions are eased, analysis shows that

up to 55 per cent of employees could be travelling to their normal workplace, a rise from 30 per cent in full lockdown. That could result in an increase in the number of passengers on public transport by around by a third from current levels of 225,000 per day.

Transport Scotland continues to ask people to stay local where possible and to walk, wheel or cycle in order to manage demand on the public transport network and to protect our environment.

Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity Michael Matheson said: "I'm pleased we can offer free access to bikes in Glasgow and Edinburgh through our support of the Smarter Choices Smarter Places programme. We've seen increased rates of cycling and increased use of our public hire bicycle schemes across the lockdown period and this offer will help maintain this shift in travel behaviour at a critical time in our COVID-19 response.

"By offering free 30-minute trips, in conjunction with temporary infrastructure in Glasgow and Edinburgh, we can greatly incentivise more sustainable everyday journeys in Phases 2 and 3 of the Scottish Government route map.

"For people in our two biggest cities, this initiative will benefit our health, our environment and will help to manage demand on our public transport network."



Lorna Finlayson

Lorna Finlayson, Scotland director of CoMoUK, said:

“Investment in cycling capacity and infrastructure is vitally important, however we want to make sure that everyone, from all walks of life, can benefit.

“As bike share is accessible, affordable and flexible it can play an increasingly important role in Scotland’s green recovery by providing an alternative to private car journeys and helping to ease pressure on public transport.”



Councillor Lesley Macinnes, Scottish National Party. Photo: Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

Councillor Lesley Macinnes, City of Edinburgh Council transport and environment convener, said: "We're delighted to be able to offer free trips on our hire bikes. More and more people are making healthy, sustainable choices about how they travel around our capital city and this substantial offer will make it even easier and more attractive for more people enjoy cycling, including by e-bikes. Use of the cycle hire scheme has leapt in Edinburgh over recent months, along with cycling in general, which is very good news for the city and our residents.

"We're implementing significant changes across the city to help people walk and cycle safely while observing physical distancing. Our additional offer of a discounted four-month bike hire membership will help many more people take advantage of these improvements as we emerge from lockdown."

Ian Findlay CBE, chief officer at Paths for All, said: "Having Scotland's two largest cities running an initiative like this

at the same time is hugely significant and sends a very clear message about the importance of a green recovery.

“It’s also the largest public bike hire scheme that our Smarter Choices, Smarter Places programme has ever supported so we hope as many people as possible will take advantage of this project and realise the many benefits of active travel.”



Just Eat e-bikes. Photo: Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com