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BJSM NEWS

Tackling vehicle emissions and physical inactivity. Scottish Government doubles active travel budget.

Aileen Campbell¹ Humza Yousaf² Roy Brannen³ Paul Gray⁴ Graeme Hunter⁵, Nanette Mutrie⁶
Andrew Murray^{6, 7}

¹Minister for Public Health and Sport. Scottish Government

²Minister for Transport and the Islands. Scottish Government

³Chief Executive. Transport Scotland

⁴ Chief Executive Officer. NHS Scotland and Director General Health and Social Care. Scottish Government.

⁵Active Scotland Division. Scottish Government.

⁶Physical Activity for Health Research Centre. University of Edinburgh

⁷Centre for Sport and Exercise. University of Edinburgh

Corresponding author: Dr Andrew Murray, Sports and Exercise Medicine Consultant. Sport and Exercise, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland. Email docandrewmurray@gmail.com

Increasing greenhouse gas emissions, and physical inactivity are major global challenges of the 21st Century (1). Tackling climate change and increasing physical activity are key priorities at local, national and international level. We need to act now to prevent or limit the impacts on our children and future generations.

The Scottish Government has committed to doubling spend on the active travel budget from £40 million per year to £80 million per year from 2018-2019 (2), as part of a programme described by Friends of the Earth Scotland director Dr Richard Dixon as the “greenest programme for government in the history of the Scottish Parliament”. It supports our vision, stated in our Long-Term Vision for Active Transport in Scotland 2030 (3) of walking and cycling being the most popular transport choice for short journeys.

It is an investment in our nation’s health and well-being. Encouraging more people to walk and cycle as a form of transport is the right thing to do. It is a significant step forward in tackling climate change and emissions, and can provide health enhancing physical activity, which improves productivity, mental and physical health, and life expectancy (4). Transport systems that prioritise walking, cycling and public transport are cited by global consensus as one of “the best investments for physical activity” (5), providing opportunities for people to integrate time efficient physical activity into everyday life.

The Scottish Government have also announced plans to phase out new petrol and diesel cars by 2032 and establish Low Emission Zones in Scotland’s four biggest cities by 2020. Our National Walking Strategy (6) has helped us succeed in increasing recreational walking from 54% in 2010 to 67% in 2016 according to the Scottish Household Study (7). Our infrastructure, transport and environment investments that prioritise walking, cycling and putting active travel at the heart of our transport planning can support shifting the culture further towards an active, healthy nation.

We also recognise the opportunity to listen and learn from leaders from beyond our shores. Our actions are taken following discussions with international experts, and align to the World Health Organisation, and their pending Global Action Plan, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

We are committed to making Scotland a greener, fairer, healthier, and more prosperous nation. Encouraging people to walk and cycle (8) more everyday is part of the solution.

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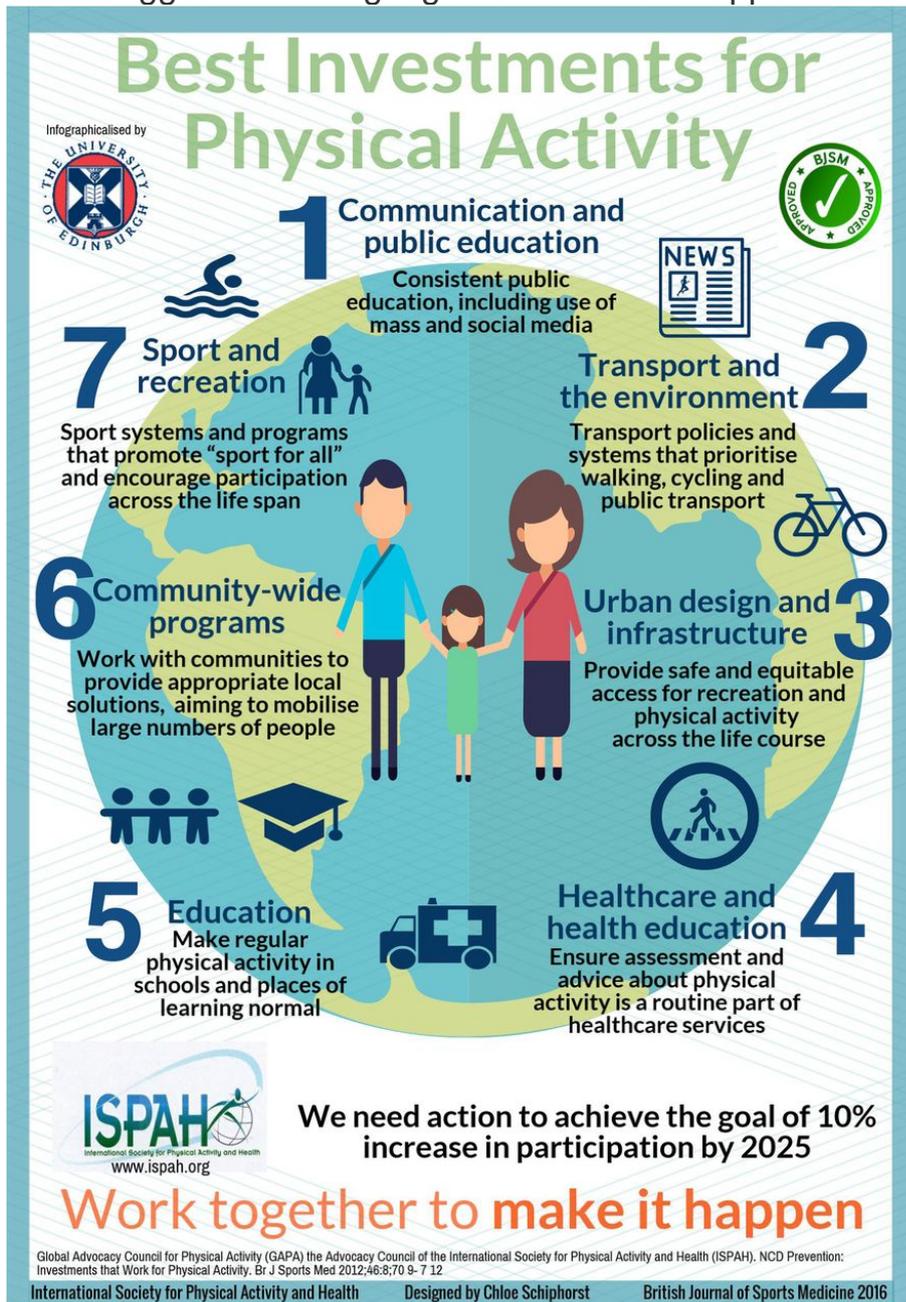
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Accompanying Images

- 1) Best Investments for Physical Activity, includes active travel and suggests “working together to make it happen.”



Bike rack outside the Scottish Parliament

