Our impact
Sustrans’ projects and the National Cycle Network (NCN) improve people’s wellbeing:

**80%**
NCN users said that the network helped them feel happier, less stressed and more relaxed.

"I feel much happier now I’ve come off my tablets for depression and I put this down to my involvement with the project."

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**Physical activity, such as walking and cycling, and public space that encourages people to walk and cycle, protects against mental health conditions and improves self-reported wellbeing.**

**The challenge**

Evidence shows that physical activity may protect against, and have a therapeutic effect on depression, stress and anxiety, dementia and schizophrenia.1 For example, physical inactivity is associated with an increased risk of depression.2

Cycling and walking are enjoyable forms of transport. Increasing how much someone walks or cycles may increase their overall level of physical activity. Increases in physical activity lead to associated health benefits, such as higher self-reported wellbeing.3

**Sustrans’ solution**

Walking and cycling helps to promote mental wellbeing.4 From 2008 to 2011 Sustrans delivered 10 active travel projects across England (as part of the Big Lottery Fund’s National Wellbeing Programme), to give people opportunities to walk and cycle more often.

The evaluation showed increases in physical activity result in a greater overall awareness of health. Beneficiaries self-reported feelings of positivity and happiness; their self-esteem and confidence increased.