



## Muslim NHS nurse leads campaign to get more women cycling

### Description

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Women cycling along a towpath

An NHS worker who learned to cycle in her 40s, is preparing to take on her first ever cycling commute. It's part of a 'Switch Your Journey' challenge encouraging women to swap car and train journeys for cycling in East London.

Nelufa Aziz is leading the campaign. She's a 45-year-old Community Nursery Nurse from Tower Hamlets who learned to cycle just two years ago.

She joined women-only cycling lessons with Cycle Sisters, a charity supporting Muslim and ethnically diverse women to cycle, to become more active. But she's since become a volunteer Ride Leader with the organisation, and now supports other women to cycle with confidence.

Running from 29 June to 12 July 2026, the challenge, led by Cycle Sisters and Muslim Aid, invites women to replace one or more regular journeys with cycling.

## Cycling can boost health and confidence

Aziz said:

I never imagined I would learn to cycle in my 40s. Since joining Cycle Sisters, cycling has improved my confidence, helped me become more active and introduced me to an amazing community of women.

But cycling to work still feels like a big step. The route is busy and I get nervous riding unfamiliar roads on my own.

That's why I'm taking part in Switch Your Journey - it's giving me the motivation to finally give it a go. I hope it encourages other women to realise it's never too late to start cycling.

Switch Your Journey brings together Cycle Sisters and Muslim Aid's shared commitment to healthier communities and a healthier [environment](#). The challenge highlights how choosing to cycle for everyday journeys can improve health and wellbeing. It can also reduce carbon emissions and contribute to cleaner, more liveable neighbourhoods.

Women continue to be underrepresented in cycling. [More than twice as many men as women cycling at least once a week](#). Yet many everyday journeys could be made by bike, with [7 out of 10 car trips in England being under five miles](#)

Sarah Javaid, founder and CEO at [Cycle Sisters](#), said:

We know that women continue to face barriers to cycling that men often don't. Many women tell us they struggle with confidence riding on roads, are nervous about traffic, or simply haven't had the opportunity to start.

Through Cycle Sisters, we've seen how transformative cycling can be when women have access to spaces where they feel welcome and supported.

Switch Your Journey is about helping more women take that next step. Every journey switched is a positive step for our health, our communities and our planet.

Lamees Hafeez, director of strategy and communications at [Muslim Aid](#) said:

Too many women still face barriers to cycling, despite wanting to make healthier and more sustainable journeys in their everyday lives. Research shows that while 74% of people from ethnic minority communities do not currently cycle, more than half would like to start.

Through this partnership, we want to help more women feel empowered to take that first step, whether that's cycling to work, taking children to school, travelling to the shops or visiting friends and family.

Small changes in how we travel can have a powerful impact on confidence, wellbeing and the environment. Being part of a community, can make all the difference. With CycleSisters, together we can uplift and inspire.

To bring costs of renting bicycles down, women taking part in the challenge will have access to bikes through partnerships with Brompton Bike Hire and Santander Cycles.

The campaign also has support from Walking & Cycling Grants London, Cycle Sprog, Komoot and Schwalbe.

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By [The Canary](#)

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