

Ride the Route

A stylized sun icon with a green semi-circle at the bottom and several thin lines radiating upwards, positioned behind the text 'Ride the Route'.

INFORMATION PACK



THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR TAKING PART IN RIDE THE ROUTE, HELPING CHILDREN WHO FIND THEMSELVES VULNERABLE AND ALONE AT STATIONS AND ON STREETS AROUND THE UK, INDIA AND TANZANIA.

Congratulations you are all signed up for the Ride the Route for Railway Children. This event guide contains all you need to know to prepare for the event.

We are very grateful to our event sponsors, for their support of this event. Thanks to them, so much more of your hard-earned fundraising will go to the children who so desperately need our help.

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HIGH SPEED**



If you have any questions after reading this info pack, please get in touch with our events team at events@railwaychildren.org.uk.



**PREPARING
FOR THE EVENT**



**DURING
THE EVENT**



**WHAT TO
BRING**



**REACHING YOUR
FUNDRAISING TARGET**



PREPARING FOR THE EVENT

Medical information:

This is an individual event; however, riders will depart together each day and will naturally form smaller groups along the route. Riders must not ride alone at any time. Safety is our highest priority.

As part of the registration process, you will be asked to confirm that you understand this is a physically demanding, rider-led event. The route includes sections of on-road cycling, including busier roads. While first aiders and bike mechanics will be present, participation in the event is entirely at your own risk.

If you have any concerns about your medical suitability to take part, please contact the events team, who will be happy to advise.



Insurance:

Railway Children has public liability insurance, and this protects participants in the event of negligence on the part of the organisers. However, this is not personal accident cover for individuals.

All participants should ensure that their personal insurance arrangements do not preclude them from participation in this type of activity and that they are adequately covered in the event of an accident.

First Aid support:

There are first aiders from both Railway Children and Innovate Adventures on the event. They will have a small supply of first aid equipment, but you are advised to bring your own first aid kit. This should include blister treatment, e.g. Compeed, support bandages and ibuprofen.





Preparation & training:

Ride the Route is a testing event but is within the reach of most people with a basic level of fitness, provided that they are properly prepared.

The challenge has been structured in such a way that a steady pace is required, although at times the cycling conditions may be steep and difficult. The qualities required are a combination of determination and commitment, but you will also need to have the strength and stamina to sustain you through what is going to be a very physical time. This can only be achieved through training.



5 Reasons to train!

1. You will have a far better chance of completing the challenge.
2. You will enjoy it far more if you have a good level of fitness and you are far less likely to become injured.
3. It will improve your circulation, breathing and endocrine functions and strengthens your heart, reducing the risk of heart attack and stroke.
4. It tones muscles and strengthens bones, reducing the risk of osteoporosis, reduces blood fat and cholesterol and burns calories!
5. It boosts mental performance and improves psychological wellbeing.



We have a great training plan from Innovate Adventures that you can [follow here](#).



Top tips for training:

- The best cardio exercise to prepare for a cycle challenge is...cycling, because it uses all the same movements and muscles that you'll be using on your challenge. You'll strengthen all the right muscles, get used to the kit you will be using and get used to sitting in the saddle.
- Make time to cycle for several long days in a row, as outlined in your training schedule. It's the cumulative effect of riding day after day that truly tests and builds endurance.
- Get up an hour earlier and head out for a short cycle before work, or use your lunch break for regular rides around your work area.
- If you can cycle to work, do so whenever possible. If you use public transport, get off one or two stops earlier and walk the rest of the way. If you drive, park further away or choose a longer walking route. Remember—walking is still beneficial, even for a cycling challenge.
- Ride in the same shoes, shorts, saddle, and helmet you'll use on the challenge.
- Practice in different weather conditions to understand how your body reacts.



A healthy balanced diet is as important as your physical training. Make sure you fuel up on energy-giving carbohydrates and muscle pairing proteins before a long training session and test out the snacks you plan to take on your challenge as you walk. Not everyone gets on with energy gels, but most people can benefit from a slow energy release banana or a quick sugar hit from a jelly baby!





How to avoid injuries:

1. A poor bike setup is one of the biggest causes of cycling injuries (knees, lower back, neck, hands). Make sure saddle height, saddle position, handlebar reach, and cleat alignment are correct. If possible, invest in a professional bike fit and bike 'MOT' before the challenge to ensure you are ready.
2. Eat regularly during rides to avoid fatigue-related poor form. Dehydration increases muscle cramping and tendon strain. Aim to drink little and often, and practice your nutrition during training.
3. Carry basic first-aid supplies (chamois cream, blister care, pain relief if appropriate). Treat hot spots, tightness, or saddle sores early to stop them becoming serious. Use chamois cream daily—don't wait for saddle sores to appear.
4. Always warm up (prior to) and warm down (after) exercise and include stretching.
5. Nothing new on event day—equipment or routine.





MULTI DAY CHALLENGE TIPS

Multi day challenges aren't just about fitness—they're about managing fatigue, comfort, and recovery. Look after your body every single day, and it will carry you through the next one.

Prioritise Comfort Over Speed

- Small discomforts on Day 1 can become serious injuries by Day 3. Minor aches often worsen faster on multi day rides. If something feels wrong:
 - Reduce intensity
 - Adjust bike position
 - Stretch or apply ice/heat where appropriate
- Choose a sustainable pace you can maintain day after day, not your fastest possible speed. Use your gears generously – avoid grinding big gears uphill.
- Stay relaxed on the bike—tight shoulders and locked arms lead to neck, hand, and back pain. Stay seated on long climbs to reduce knee and Achilles strain.
- Rotate hand positions frequently to avoid numbness.
- It's better to ride a little slower for one day, than miss the rest of the event.

Make sure your kit is ready

- Your bike fit must be comfortable for long hours in the saddle on consecutive days.
- Make any saddle, cleat, or handlebar tweaks well before the challenge.
- Recheck saddle height mid-event if knees or hips start to feel off—minor adjustments can make a big difference.
- Keep cycling shorts, gloves, and socks clean and dry; bring spares if possible.

Recovery Is Non Negotiable

- Sleep is your most powerful recovery tool—protect it.
- Change out of cycling kit quickly to avoid chills and saddle issues.
- Elevate legs for 10–15 minutes after riding if possible.
- Light massage or foam rolling helps flush out tired muscles.

Keep on moving!

- Stiffness builds up overnight and between stages.
- Do gentle stretching and mobility every morning and evening, focusing on:
 - Hips and glutes
 - Hamstrings and calves
 - Lower back, neck, and shoulders
- Short walk arounds after finishing each day help reduce stiffness.



DURING THE EVENT

Timings for the event, are approximate and may be subject to change.
Further timings for rest stops and finish times will be released closer to the event.

WEDNESDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER EBBSFLEET INTERNATIONAL

Participants to arrive at hotel. Railway Children will be in reception from 5pm until 7pm for you to collect your jerseys, luggage labels and event info. If you are not there within these times, they will be available to collect on Thursday morning before the event brief.

THURSDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER EBBSFLEET INTERNATIONAL TO DOVER

- 06:45** Event registration opens
Please ensure you have checked in by 07:30.
- 07:30** Event briefing & safety checks
- 07:45** Team photos!
- 08:00** Day 1 cycle starts!
Breaks and stops will be scheduled throughout the day.
You will be required to check in once you reach the Day 1 end point

FRIDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER DOVER TO BRIGHTON

- 07:30** Day 2 check in opens
- 07:50** Day 2 briefing
- 08:00** Day 2 cycle starts!
Breaks and stops will be scheduled throughout the day.
You will be required to check in once you reach the Day 2 end point.

SATURDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER BRIGHTON TO LONDON WATERLOO

- 07:30** Day 3 check in opens
- 07:50** Day 3 briefing
- 08:00** Day 3 cycle starts!
The final push!
Breaks and stops will be scheduled throughout the day.
You will be required to check in once you reach the final point.



Everyone must check in at the start of each day and again at the end of the day. Once you have checked in in the morning, you will be able to put your bag onto a support vehicle, and it will be taken to the next hotel.



DURING THE EVENT



There will be support vehicles throughout the day with snacks and water available, however please ensure you take everything that you need with you on the cycle, as we cannot guarantee access to your overnight bag during the day.

Throughout this event, we will be supported by volunteers in support vehicles. Our sincere thanks to our Rider support sponsors who will provide these vehicles.



Getting to and from the event

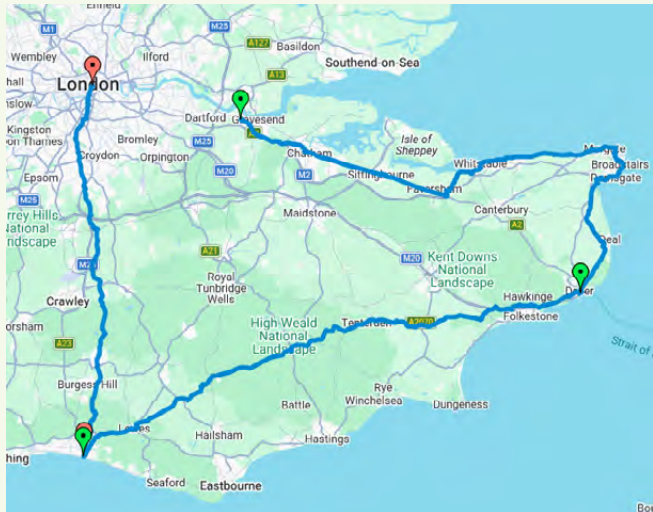
We are looking to seek the support of train operators across the country to help participants travel to and from the event. We will keep you updated on which operators are able to provide travel support, but please be prepared to book and pay for your own travel.

To help us coordinate your journey, please ensure you have completed the [Travel Plans Form](#). This is essential for us to support your arrangements effectively. Further information on travel support will be shared by email.

Although we anticipate being able to provide some travel tickets, bike storage must always be reserved directly with the train operators. Please note that bike storage on trains is limited; with over 70 participants travelling to the same location, travel times will need to be staggered to accommodate everyone safely and comfortably.



THE ROUTE



EBBSFLEET INTERNATIONAL TO LONDON WATERLOO

- 227 miles / 365km distance
- 10,150ft / 3093m of climbing

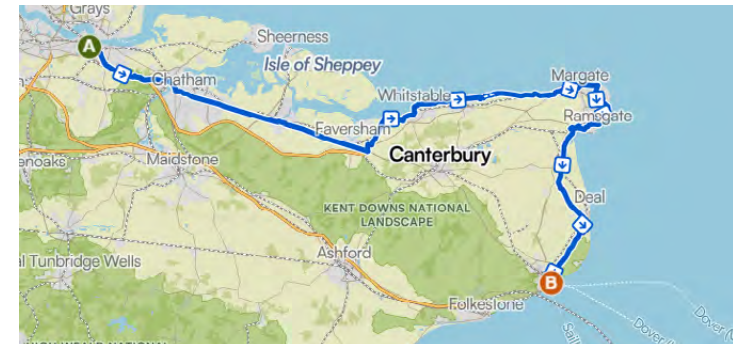


THURSDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER

Day 1 – Ebbsfleet International to Dover

- 85 miles / 137km distance

[View the route](#)



- 2875ft / 876m climbing

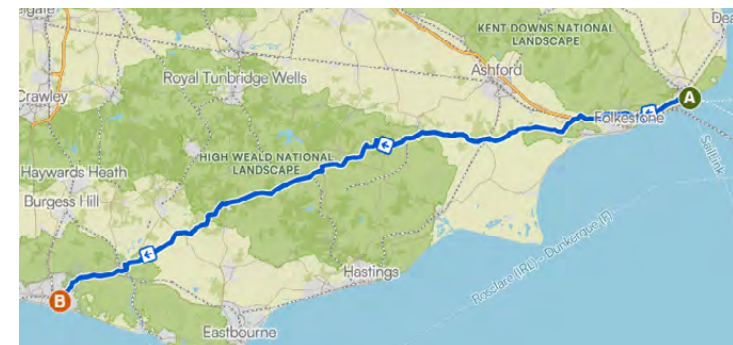


FRIDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER

Day 2 – Dover to Brighton

- 80 miles / 129km distance

[View the route](#)



- 4225ft / 1288m climbing

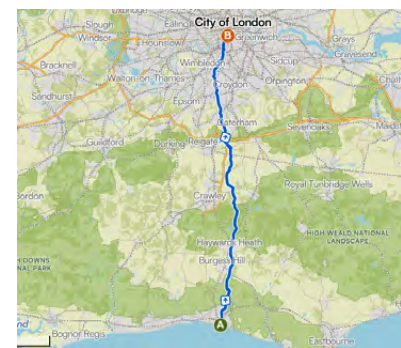


SATURDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER

Day 3 – Brighton to London Waterloo

- 62 miles / 100km distance

[View the route](#)



- 3050ft / 930m climbing



All distances are approximate and subject to change.

Event Safety:

Instructions given to you by the event organisers must be adhered to at all times. Railway Children will not take responsibility for any incident that occurs as a result of teams or individuals not heeding advice and instructions given.

As with any challenge we fully expect people to have very different abilities across the event, this is perfectly normal.

However, Ride the Route is a team event and is not run as an individual, against the clock challenge. We would encourage everyone taking part in this challenge to support each other to achieve everything that they can.

Weather

As you know, the weather in the UK can be highly unpredictable and at times erratic, so being prepared is the key! Please check the weather forecasts to ensure that you bring suitable clothing and equipment for your challenge. We recommend you come prepared for any weather, which means bringing waterproofs and warm layers even if rain isn't forecast.

As this challenge takes place across the country, it is worth checking out the [Met Office's weather forecast here](#). You can use the search function to find the different locations' forecasts.

We will monitor the weather in the lead up to your challenge and make adjustments to the itinerary as required to ensure your challenge can take place as safely as possible. If a significant change has to be made to your challenge itinerary due to the weather, we will inform you as soon as is reasonably possible.





WHAT TO BRING

Please note that this is a self-led event. It is your responsibility to ensure that you, and your equipment, are adequately prepared for the terrain and distances involved in the ride.

To give yourself the best chance of successfully completing it please make sure that you have consulted the kit list carefully. No spare kit will be provided on the challenge.

There are no excuses for coming unprepared. You will be exposed to the elements, riding on open – and often busy – roads across the country. Turning up without the correct kit not only puts you at risk but also places additional pressure on the support team and fellow participants.

Please pay close attention to the kit list provided. Any riders deemed to be inappropriately equipped for the ride may not be permitted to take part.

Please ensure you bring all items listed below. Everything on the kit list is included for a reason – your safety and wellbeing depend on it.

We recommend bringing a small day bag with any items you may need throughout the day. Whilst this can still be carried in the support vehicles, it will be more easily accessible than your main luggage.



Please ensure you bring a fully serviced and roadworthy bike suitable for the event. A helmet is mandatory and must be worn at all times while riding. We also recommend having your bike serviced shortly before the event to ensure everything is in good working order.





WHAT TO BRING



Helmet (mandatory)



Sunglasses/cycling glasses



Bib shots/padded shorts



Cycling socks



Cycling shoes



Over shoes



Front & rear lights (mandatory)



Small waterproof jacket



Arm/leg warmers



Base layer



Chamois cream



Additional clothing, shoes, toiletries, etc for post-cycling each day

All participants will be given 2 short sleeved jerseys as part of their event registration; this will be in the size provided at registration.



We recommend using a road bike for this event due to the distances involved. Gravel bikes can be suitable if fitted with road tyres; however, mountain bikes are not recommended. You should train on the bike you plan to use for the event to ensure you are comfortable with how it performs and confident in your ability to complete the ride.



Accommodation

All participants are responsible for booking and paying for their own accommodation, as this is not included in the event. Here is a list of hotels we have sourced in each event location for your convenience.

Please note that Railway Children does not take responsibility for the standards or quality of these hotels, and no additional event discounts are available.

Please ensure you have completed our [Travel Plans form](#) to let us know where you will be staying so that we can provide suitable support.

These hotels will serve as the start and finish points for each day. If you choose to stay elsewhere, you will be responsible for making your own way to and from these locations each day with your bike.

Railway Children has identified alternative hotels in these locations should the recommended options be fully booked, so please get in touch if this applies. Please book your accommodation as soon as possible as prices may increase with demand.



If required, you may be asked to wash your bike before taking it into the hotel.



DAY 0 - EBBSFLEET INTERNATIONAL Wednesday 2nd September

- Spring River by Marston's Inns, Ebbsfleet Valley, DA10 1AZ
– [View & book here](#)

We have secured a specialist rate of £75 per room for this hotel. Please use the code '**RIDETHEROUTE**' when booking.

DAY 1 - DOVER Thursday 3rd September

- Premier Inn Dover Central, Marine Court, CT16 1LW
– [View & book here](#)

DAY 2 - BRIGHTON Friday 4th September

- Premier Inn, Brighton City Centre (North Street), 144 North Street, BN1 1RE
– [View & book here](#)

Food and Drink

Please note that all participants are responsible for covering the cost of their own meals, as these are not included in the event. Each of the hotels listed above has an on-site restaurant, and we encourage everyone to dine together in the evenings as a team.

Lunch stops will be scheduled along the route and are likely to be at venues such as golf clubs or garden centres. However, if you prefer to bring your own lunch to enjoy during the stop, you are welcome to do so.

Snacks, energy gels, and water will be provided at all designated stops and will be available from the support vehicles. We will also carry additional water supplies for use in case of emergency.

Toilets

Participants will be able to utilise the bathroom facilities at the hotels and lunch stops. However, during the challenge facilities will be limited to the great outdoors! Please make sure to follow the countryside code and take all litter, including tissues and toilet paper, home with you.

Responsible tourism

We recognise our responsibility to the places we visit, and also to local people. We believe that we need to preserve and respect the locations in which our challenges take place, in order for future generations to have the same fantastic experience as you. We are passionate about the environment and our relationship with the local communities and as a participant on one of our challenges it is expected that you share our passion and follow the guidelines to the right:

- Be courteous to the local community
- Keep noise to a minimum especially near dwellings
- Keep to the planned route and do not stray onto private property
- Leave no trace of your visit
- Do not disturb wildlife or livestock
- Take all litter away with you including fruit peelings and dispose of it appropriately



REACHING YOUR FUNDRAISING TARGET

Through registering for this event, you pledged a minimum individual fundraising target of £350, with your fundraising page being automatically set up on the 'Enthuse' platform.

This is the easiest way to reach your fundraising target and all donations made through your fundraising page will come directly to the charity and will go towards your fundraising target. You can easily add offline donations to your page too.

This is a tough challenge and in order to succeed, you will have to dedicate a good deal of time to training and preparation, so tell people just how tough it is! In any communication tell them exactly what you are doing on the day and generally leave them in awe of the task you are undertaking. This may gain their sympathy or their admiration, or simply leave them thinking you must be mad, but it will help to gain their attention and raise funds!



If you reach your fundraising target before the event, you will receive a pair of exclusive Ride the Route socks!





Here are some tips to help you reach your fundraising target and beyond!

- **Tell anyone and everyone!** Social media is one of the best ways to tell people about your fundraiser. Share pictures of you throughout the challenge – the good bits and the harder bits! Don't forget all those WhatsApp groups you are part of too!
- **Tag @Railwaychildren** in your posts and remember to include a link to your online donations page.
- **Did you know that 20% of fundraising comes in after an event?** So, share how you did, what taking part meant to you and how it has affected how you feel. You'll be amazed at how many extra donations come in after the event - fundraising pages will be open for 4 weeks after the event.

IF YOU RAISE ANY MONEY OFFLINE, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH FOR OUR BANK DETAILS SO THAT YOU CAN SEND IT DIRECTLY TO US. WE CAN STILL ADD IT TO YOUR FUNDRAISING PAGE TO SHOW HOW WELL YOU ARE DOING WITH YOUR FUNDRAISING.

- **Don't forget to ask your donors to Gift Aid,** this adds 25p onto every £1 they give at no extra cost to you or your donor (gift aid does not count to your fundraising target, it's an added bonus!)
- **Does your company have a match funding scheme?** Many will match your personal fundraising pound for pound, or make an additional donation based on the amount you have fundraised – contact your HR department to see what your organisation can offer.
- If you are fundraising as a team, your individual fundraising page feeds into your team page, therefore you can use either to help boost your total.



THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The money you raise from taking part in this event can help children like Darcy, who ran away from home after arguments turned into fights and she felt as though she was part of the problem.

Or Anuj who is from a low-income family and unbeknownst to his family, aged 14 set off in search for work to try and help.

Or Kanoni who was only nine years old when she was found living on the street. As she grew up, her only means of survival became sex work.



£100

could pay for four hours of one-to-one support for a vulnerable child in the UK when they need it most.



£350

could pay for a family reintegration worker in India to spend a month tracing children's families, reuniting them where possible and working with the whole family to ensure the child is safe and that they can thrive together.



£500

could pay for an outreach worker in Tanzania to search the streets and bus stations for a month looking for and protecting children at risk.



For any fundraising support, or if you would like to order fundraising materials such as collection buckets and leaflets, please get in touch with our events team at events@railwaychildren.org.uk

CHANGE A CHILD'S FUTURE TODAY

Your support makes our work possible. It's the only way we can ensure all children are seen, heard and protected, so no child has to live on the streets anywhere in the world.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR RIDE THE ROUTE EVENT WHICH WILL HELP US CONTINUE TO REACH AND PROTECT VULNERABLE STREET CONNECTED CHILDREN FOUND ON THE TRANSPORT NETWORKS IN TANZANIA, INDIA AND THE UK



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Registered charity number 1058991

Wherever possible we gained consent of the children pictured in accordance with our child protection policy. Names have been changed and models used to protect identities. Your donations will transform the lives of children in Tanzania, India and the UK - wherever the need is greatest.

children RAILWAY
No child lost to the streets