



# London to Paris Cycle Challenge

26 - 28 September 2024

**Participant Registration Pack**





# About the Challenge

Get ready for the charity cycle event of your life! Switch the Play Foundation's new London to Paris Cycle Challenge is your bucket list opportunity to cycle over 400km from the Olympic Stadium in London to the Eiffel Tower in Paris over 3 days you will never forget. There will be some well-known sporting faces along the way and you, along with 40 other riders, will arrive into Paris within days of the Olympics and Paralympic Games concluding in the City.

The event will kick off with a motivational dinner at the Olympic Park on the evening before setting off early for 3 full days of cycling passing some iconic London landmarks before crossing the channel and cycling down through the beautiful French countryside. On arrival in Paris, after soaking up the atmosphere and sheer sense of achievement, riders will be treated to a well-earned celebratory dinner.

This is a fundraising challenge event not to be missed, and every pound raised by you will support athletes to achieve their full potential, through and beyond sport. Our aim, through this event, is to raise at least £30,000 to support Switch the Play Foundation beneficiaries, through our transformational wellbeing training and support services.

# Who can enter?

This event is tough but achievable. Anyone aged 18 or over who is physically fit enough to take on 3 consecutive days of cycling 100 miles, including some steep climbs, can enter.

Once you register, you will be sent a suggested training plan and nutrition advice to ensure you are ready to take on the challenge. We will also create an online community of participants so you can connect in advance and support each other with your training.

# Why take part?

Switch the Play Foundation is the UK's only charity dedicated to supporting all sportspeople to successfully transition into life beyond sport. Many find this transition really tough and, without being prepared, it can lead to poor mental health, financial difficulties and a loss of identity and direction. Switch the Play Foundation is on a mission to change that. We support athletes by providing a range of person-centred services, including:

- Switched On – our membership service giving athletes access to 121 mentor support, Career Pathway support and an online resource hub;
- Masterclasses – bespoke, tailored and interactive masterclasses that provoke thought on a range of topics to help with transition;
- TEAMmate – a free and confidential mental health support phone line only for athletes.

We are reliant on voluntary income to be able to deliver these vital services for athletes. By participating in the London to Paris Cycle Challenge, not only will you experience the challenge of a lifetime but, through your fundraising efforts, you will also be supporting 100s of athletes to reach their full potential through sport and beyond. [You can find out more about our work here.](#)



**“ I was lost. I didn't know who would help me or who would care but as soon as I got in touch with Switch the Play I felt supported.**

Donnie Macfadyen is a former Scotland International Rugby Union player who made over 100 appearances for Glasgow Warriors from 1999 to 2008. Following a series of back to back injuries along with emotional and psychological burnout, he retired from the sport aged 28. Some 14 years later, around Christmas 2022 after years of feeling lost, he reached out to Switch the Play Foundation for support.

Donnie shared that back then when he retired there was no structure in place for post career planning. He wasn't remotely prepared for the huge life change he was about to go through. "What I went through after retirement was a huge identity crisis because being an athlete wasn't just what I did, it was who I was. I was so mission focussed on rugby I had no idea who I was without it. It was an incredibly difficult thing to go through." For years after retiring he pursued a career as a personal trainer, which never felt right for him. He knew he needed to make a change but didn't have a clear idea of what to do next. It was at this point he got in touch with Switch the Play.

He had a Discovery Call with Switch the Play and offloaded what had been bubbling away for many years. "There was real power in speaking with somebody, with a shared experience, who understood the journey I'd been through, but also a realisation that I wasn't alone in going through this – it's not a weakness, it's a really common thing. I had felt alone for a really long time but all of sudden I felt that I had a team who were really invested in supporting me, backing me up – and that was huge. From the outset, Switch the Play had a massive positive impact on me. I got set up with a fantastic mentor and went through a very interesting journey with him. I had an idea of the skills I had but I needed to find a career that made good use of those skills."

Donnie went on to meet with other members of the Switch the Play team and through a combination of meetings, discussions and introductions he landed on the career that he is now pursuing in Close Protection, providing physical personal security as a bodyguard for people who need protection or might be at risk of harm. It's something he knew he would be good at, and knew he had the right skills and attributes for and Switch the Play set about opening the doors and making the introductions to get him on track.

**I'm in a much better place now. I feel like I've got purpose again - and that is 100% down to Switch the Play.**



**By participating in the London to Paris Cycle Challenge, you will be helping 100s of people like Donnie.**

# The Route & Schedule

## Pre-Event: Wednesday 25 September

The riders will gather mid-afternoon at the Olympic Park for a fuelling and motivational pre-event early evening dinner. You will hear more about Switch the Play Foundation to get you fired up for the ride – so when the going gets tough you will be reminded of why you signed up! At the dinner you will also receive an all-important safety briefing, outline of what to expect and Q&A with our expert organising team. It will then be early to bed to get well rested ahead of day one of the challenge.

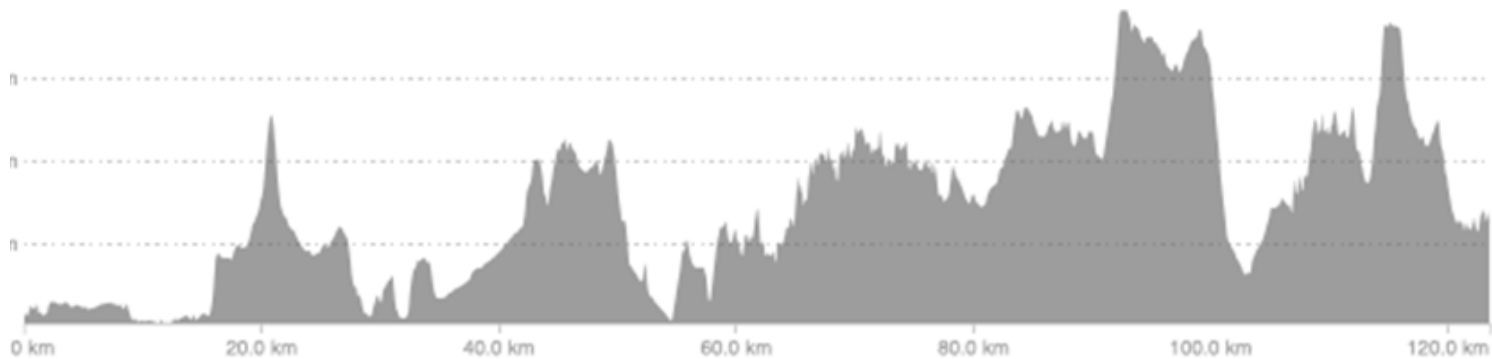
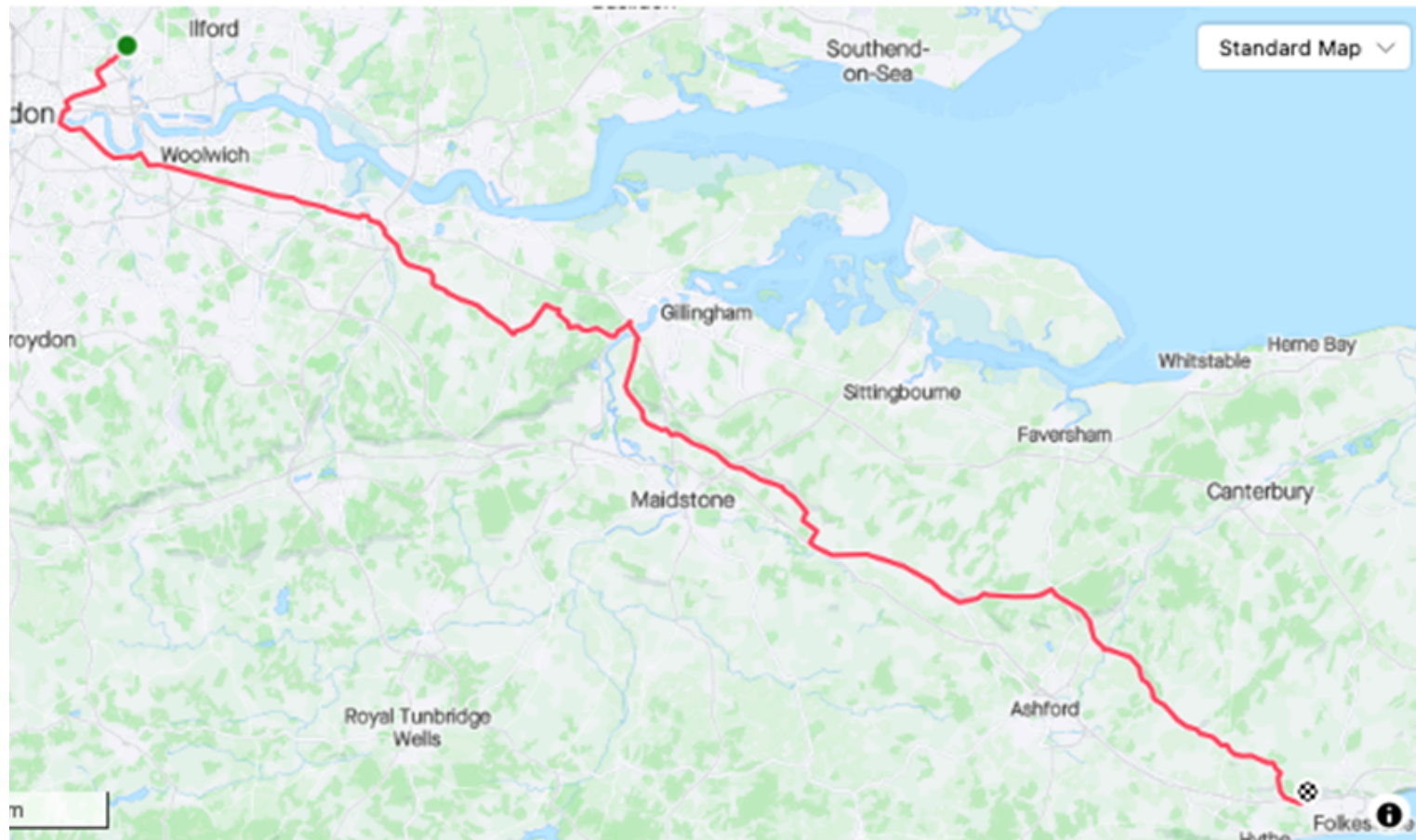
## Day One: Thursday 26 September

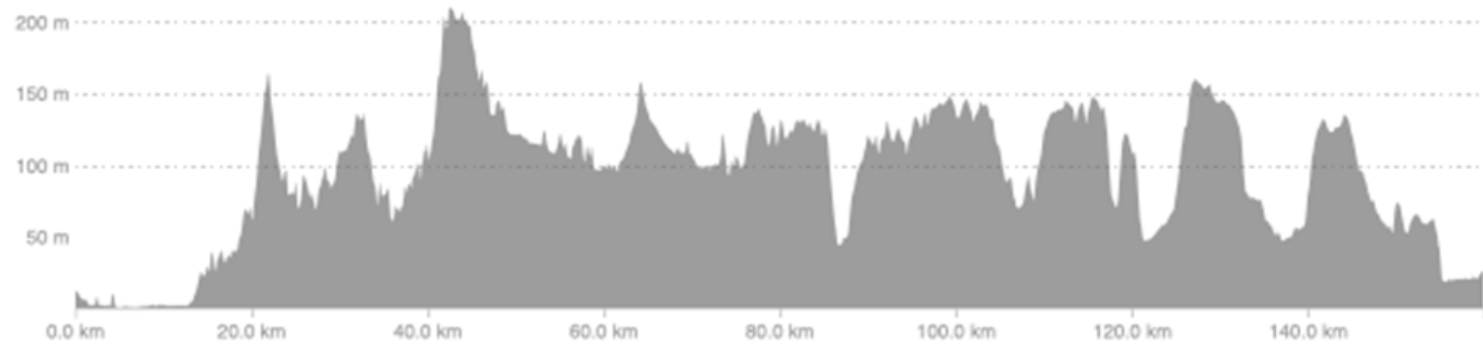
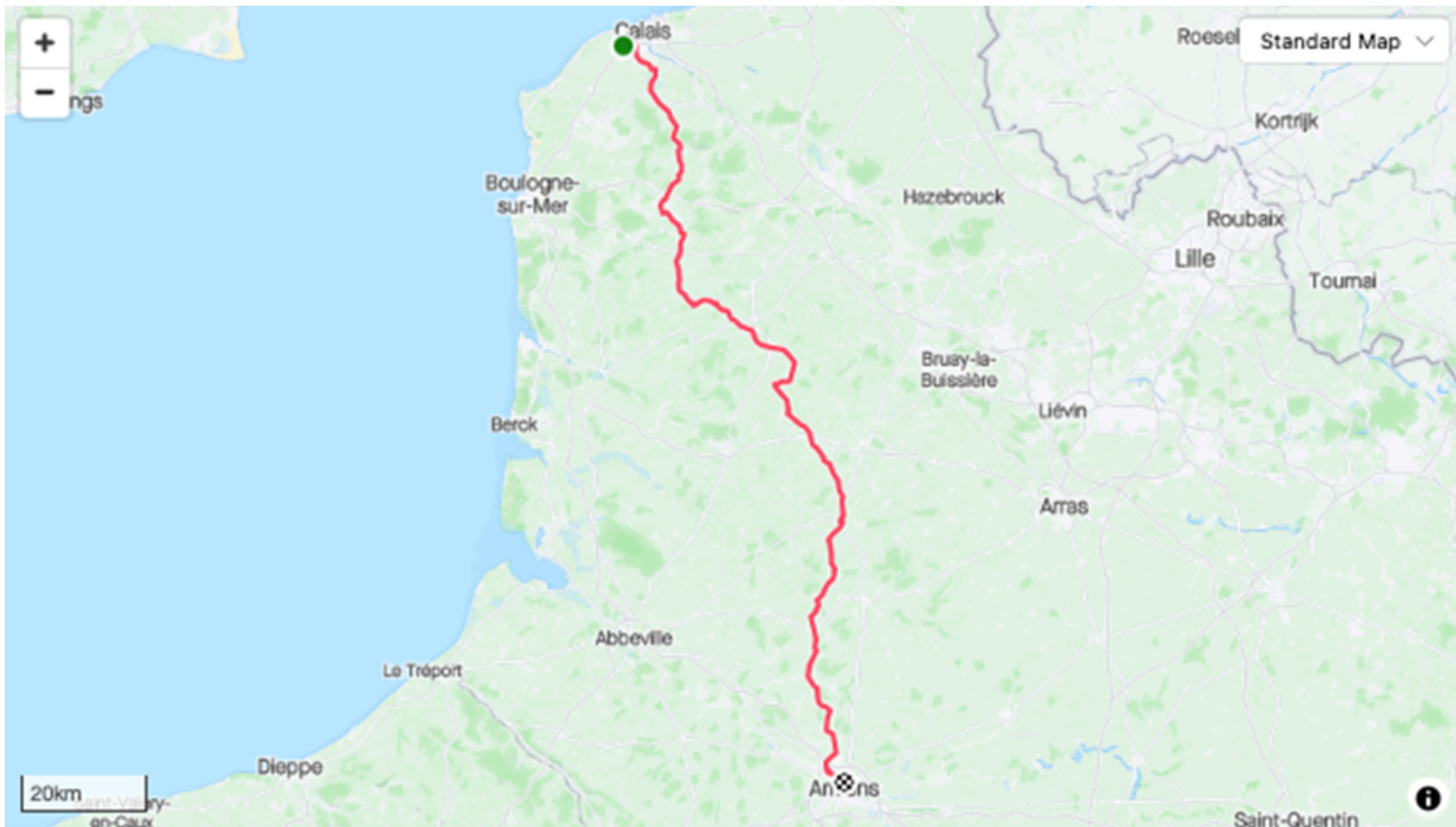
### London to Folkestone. 130km / 1398m

The event will start in style with a lap of the London 2012 Olympics Velodrome! Starting early morning to ensure we reach the Eurotunnel on time, we then leave the exciting surroundings of the London Stadium and Westfield centre and head towards central London.

Taking advantage of the new cycling-friendly infrastructure, we will speed past the traffic as we make our way towards the city. We will pass through the East London District of Wapping, before passing the Tower of London and crossing the Thames at Tower Bridge. The next notable place is Greenwich, home of the majestic Naval College and Maritime Museum. Before we know it, we'll be out of the Greater London area and passing through Bexleyheath and on to Dartford. From here the roads get quieter as we head over the river Medway through Rochester and down into Kent, the garden of England. Keeping Gillingham on our left, we soon reach Sittingbourne where we drop South onto some more rural roads. We will soon be seeing signs for Ashford as we pass through Wye and the last of the English countryside before dropping into Folkestone and on to the Eurotunnel.

Once we alight in Calais there will be short 7km peddle to the hotel, where we end Day One of the challenge.





## Day Two: Friday 27 September Calais to Amiens. 150km / 1616m

A very different start to Day Two versus Day One. Almost immediately upon leaving the hotel we will be out in rural France and if you like farmland you really are in for a treat! The time of year we are visiting will be after the main harvest but there will still be plenty of farming activity so mind the muddy corners and slow moving tractors.

Sticking to the quiet roads see us meander through numerous typically French villages, passing the odd church and a small café if you're lucky. It's remarkable just how quiet this part of France is. At close to the half-way point, we'll stop for lunch.

One particular place of interest is the church with a crooked spire – we won't ruin the surprise by telling you where it is but you'll know you are half way through the 3 day challenge when you see it. As you'll see for yourselves the countryside is beautiful and the terrain varied with long straights and some short sharp climbs. A short blast along the main road before we drop into the beautiful city of Amiens with its magnificent Gothic Cathedral to finish off day two.

### Day Three: Saturday 28 September

#### Amiens to Paris. 145km / 990m

After a gruelling day in the saddle on the road to Amiens, the final day is a little gentler.

We leave the hotel in Amiens and continue our way south along some of the greenest landscapes you will ever be lucky enough to experience.

Mid-way we pass through the grand city of Beauvais, the third most populated city in the Picardy region and famous for its Cathedral. It'll be worth a short stop here for a coffee and croissant before we continue our journey.

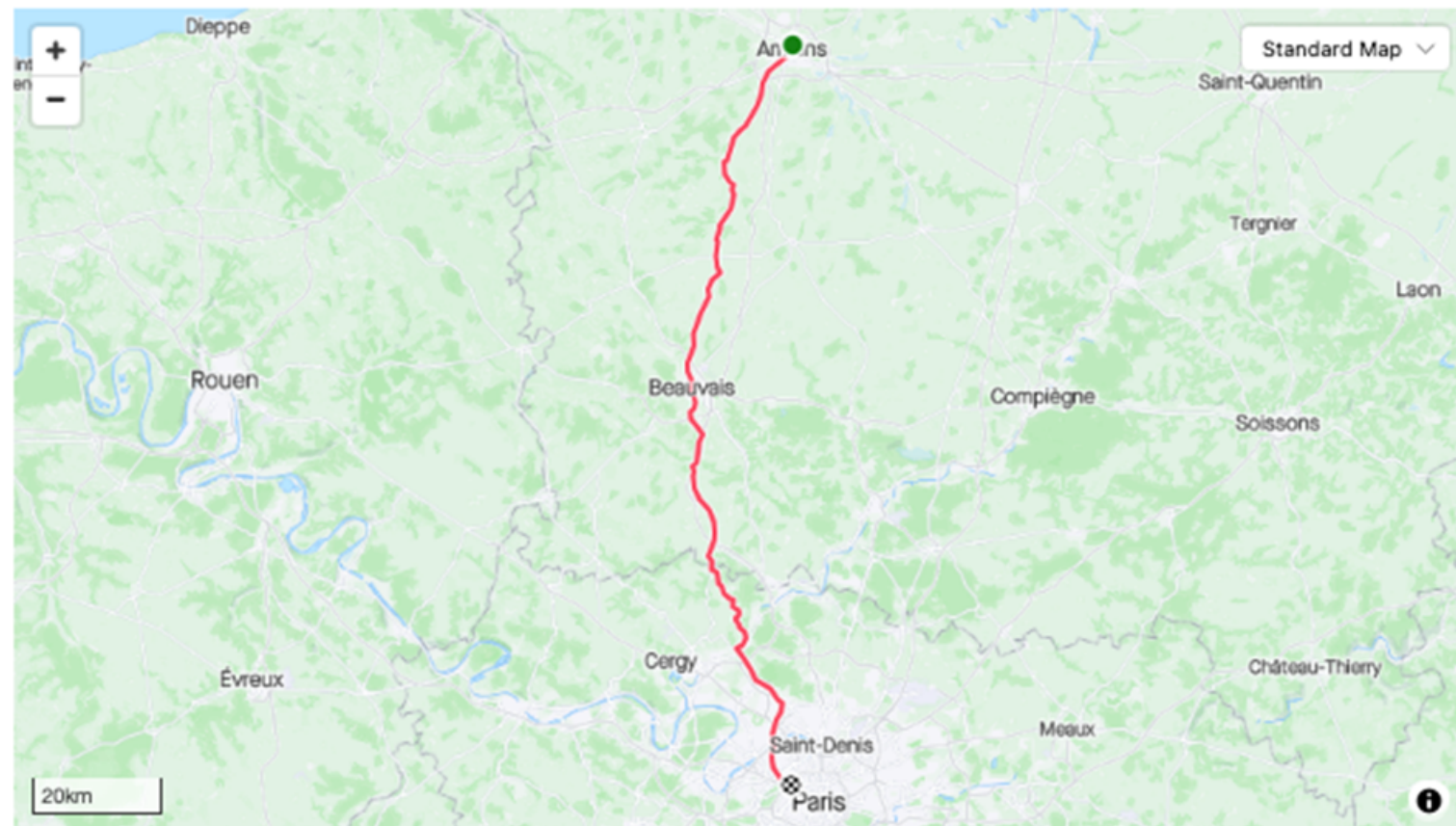
The scenery stays pretty much the same until we pass through Méry-sur-Oise whereafter the towns get closer and the roads get bigger and we soon see Paris on the road signs.

At around 20km to go we can really feel like we're approaching the big city and, much like London, we can make use of a number of dedicated bike lanes and bus lanes to keep us moving swiftly along the route.

The last few kilometres see us sample a few cobbles streets and roundabouts as we cross the Seine and finish, triumphantly, in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower. Here you can soak up the atmosphere and there will be plenty of opportunity to take photos and marvel at your incredible achievement!

#### Celebration and Thank You Event

Following a quick shower and change at the hotel, it's time to celebrate what you have achieved! We will head to a local restaurant for a relaxed private dinner and enjoy the moment. There will be celebratory Thank You speeches and a prize giving!



# Funding Options

As this is a fundraising event with limited places available each participant must commit to raising a minimum of £1,500 for Switch the Play Foundation upon registration.

We understand that fundraising can be challenging, so our team will support you along the way with fundraising advice, tips and resources to ensure you reach your target. Before registering, it is worth asking the organisation you work for if they offer a Match Funding scheme which you could take advantage of. Many organisations offer this to employees, meaning they will match every pound you raise as a company donation - this could help enormously with your fundraising efforts.

If you are keen to do the challenge but feel uncertain about the Fundraising element, please have a chat with our team. We can work with you to put a fundraising plan together that will ensure you reach your target.

Upon sign up you will receive a participant pack which includes plenty of fundraising ideas and support, along with advice for setting up your online fundraising page and access to a private online networking group for the event so you can share ideas and motivate one another.

There are 3 flexible funding options to choose from.



## **Option 1: Self-funding (no fundraising)**

£1,500 payable up front on registration. This includes your registration fee and no additional fundraising is required.

## **Option 2: Part Self-funding, Part-Fundraising**

£750 payable up front upon registration. Plus a commitment to raise £750 by end October 2024.

## **Option 3: Fundraising only**

Early bird discounted registration fee of £100 up to 30th April 2024 (£200 thereafter) payable up front to secure your place. Plus a commitment to raise a target of £1,300. This fundraising target is split into two deadlines:

- A minimum of £900 must be raised by 8th September 2024.
- The balance (minimum £400) to be raised by end October 2024.

## What's included?

To ensure that every penny of the money you raise for this challenge goes to helping the athletes we exist to support, Switch the Play Foundation will also secure sponsorship to cover the cost of the event. This means that the following is included:

- 4 nights' accommodation in twin rooms\*
- Eurotunnel to Calais
- Standard Eurostar from Paris to London
- Transit of bikes back to London
- All meals throughout the challenge
- Nutrition and training plans
- Medical support
- Expert cycle guides and support vehicles
- Finishers celebration event
- Event cycle shirt

\*NB costs are based on twin room accommodation with two participants sharing. Single rooms can be booked subject to availability at an extra cost of £250 for the 4 nights. Our team will discuss this with you upon registration.

## **What's not included?**

- Participant's kit – branded cycle shirts will be provided but an additional recommended kit list will be provided upon registration
- Bike
- GPS tracker – participants must have their own GPS tracking device
- Travel insurance – participants must arrange their own travel insurance

## **Getting back to the UK**

Finishing the event in Paris provides an ideal opportunity to make your trip into a long weekend and stay on in the capital a little longer before heading back if you wish to. We have included within the cost a standard option for getting you and your bike back to the UK the day after the event. However, should you wish to make your own arrangements, you will be responsible for organising this yourself. Upon registration our team will discuss your return to the UK with you.

## Ready to sign up?

If you are ready to take on the challenge please go to the [online Event Page](#), click on 'Register' and follow the steps. Here you will be asked to read through and accept the event Terms & Conditions, select your funding option and make your registration payment.

Once we receive your completed Registration form we will contact you to welcome you on board, talk through your registration and arrange payment.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## Not sure and have some questions before deciding?

Contact us:

Claire Heath, Head of Partnerships, Switch the Play Foundation

[claire.heath@switchtheplay.com](mailto:claire.heath@switchtheplay.com)

T: 07719 109548

# About the organisers



**Rob Mauchlen**  
Event Director

Rob has over 30 years sports event management experience and an impressive track record of delivering charity challenge events. He was part of the team which conceived the celebrity charity cycle event 'Dallaglio Cycle Slam', along with Lawrence Dallaglio in 2009 and has been the Event Director for all 6 events which have taken place since, supporting the cyclists across most of Europe.

We are delighted to have Rob on board to direct this event for Switch the Play Foundation.



**Stephen Mitchell**  
Switch the Play Foundation  
Trustee

Mitch has been with Switch the Play since 2014 and moved into a Trustee role when we converted to a charity in 2020. He has experience and networks across the sporting landscape having worked in and around talent pathways and player welfare for over 15 years.

Not only will Mitch be working with us on the event steering group, he will also be participating in the challenge!



**Rob Young MBE**  
Switch the Play Foundation  
CEO

Rob has experience across a range of roles in sport including Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games, work with National Governing Bodies of sport, professional sport, national and local government and further and higher education, making him extremely well connected across the sector. Rob became CEO of Switch the Play Foundation in 2021.

As well as connecting the people and organisations to make this event happen, he may be seen participating in part of the challenge itself!



**Claire Heath**  
Switch the Play Foundation  
Head of Partnerships

Claire has worked in the charity sector for over 20 years in a range of fundraising and project management roles. She previously led a team which organised several challenge events including a Great Wall of China trek, the UK Three Peaks Challenge and rowing across Loch Ness. Claire joined Switch the Play Foundation in September 2022.

As well as supporting Rob Mauchlen in the project management of this event, Claire will be supporting participants with their fundraising.



**Adam Daniel**  
Switch the Play Foundation  
Team Mate

Adam is a seasoned athlete, fitness entrepreneur, and recent addition to Switch the Play. With accolades in England Athletics, semi professional rugby and as a current GB Age Group Cyclist, competing in the 2023 World Age Group championships he merges sport and business effortlessly. Adam's coaching prowess extends to royalty, business leaders, and professional athletes worldwide. Not only will Adam be supporting us on the event steering group, he will also be riding with us as a ride lead, making sure everyone makes it to the end.



[www.switchtheplay.com](http://www.switchtheplay.com)