

## An increase of over 25% of bike commuters at the François Baclesse Comprehensive Cancer Centre since the start of the pandemic

Caen, 3 June 2021

**On the occasion of World Bicycle Day on 3 June 2021, the François Baclesse Comprehensive Cancer Centre took stock of its policy towards bicycle use. An encounter with two staff members who travel to work by bike.**

### A strong encouragement to use bikes.

In 2015, the François Baclesse Comprehensive Cancer Centre signed a mobility plan with the Caen la Mer Urban Community, aimed at encouraging its staff to use more environmentally friendly modes of transport to commute to and from their workplace.

In this mobility plan, the Centre agreed to implement action to:

1. Promote the use of public transport
2. Promote the use of bicycles
3. Tend towards more reasoned use of cars

On 1 January 2017, the François Baclesse Comprehensive Cancer Centre implemented a Cycle Kilometre indemnity package (renamed the Sustainable Mobility Package in 2020). This means that the employer can pay for all or part of transport costs for staff members who travel to work by bike or electrically assisted bike. The Centre can also reimburse 50% of electrically assisted cycle rental fees, within the framework of this transport package.

In order to offer safe parking for staff cycles in dedicated cycle shelters, the Centre also provides secure cycle locks on request.

Two covered cycle shelters are available for use by staff, together with 2 cycle parking zones.

Staff can also make use of staff showers and changing rooms.

In 2019, 55 François Baclesse Comprehensive Cancer Centre staff members cycled to work (5.49% of the total workforce). In 2020, the figure increased to 70 staff members convinced by this transport mode (6.88% of the total workforce). Hence an increase of 25%.

### An encounter with two staff members who travel to work by bike



Pierre-Yves Deslandes, a systems and network engineer at the François Baclesse Comprehensive Cancer Centre comes 1 to 2 times a week via the green way from Thury-Harcourt. His journey represents an hour

Dr Sabine Noal is a medical oncologist and head of the week hospital at the François Baclesse Comprehensive Cancer Centre. She comes to the Centre every day from the north of Caen, on a cargo bike.



and fifteen minutes for 35km, i.e. a 70km return trip each time. We wanted to learn more.

### **For how long have you been commuting by bike?**

**Pierre-Yves**, 'It's been a year, I'm part of the 25%.'

**Sabine**, 'I've been bike commuting for many years; I had stopped because I needed to take my children to school and the road wasn't safe enough for young cyclists. I took to my two-wheeler again almost a year ago.'

### **Why do you come to work by bike?**

**Sabine**, 'There are so many advantages: no traffic jams, no need to hunt for a parking space, a bit of daily exercise, a great way to decompress after a day's work, and a decrease in our carbon footprint.'

**Pierre-Yves**, 'For several reasons. By car or by bike, the travelling time is identical due to traffic jams. With a one-hour car journey, I didn't have much time left for sport. Lockdown prevented us from partaking in many sports activities and bike commuting is a great way to compensate.'

There's also an ecological motivation; I chose to live in the country to make the most of the natural environment, but I drove alone in my car, hence polluting every day. Since I've been using my bike, I reckon my ecological contribution to be in the region of 70 to 140km less pollution every week.'

### **So what triggered this change?**

**Sabine**, 'Lockdown and school closures! During lockdown, I could use my bike again, so we ordered a cargo bike, which means I can also safely transport my children.'

**Pierre-Yves**, 'I'd been considering it for 2 years, but what convinced me was, one day when I was in my car in a traffic jam at Fleury-sur-Orne, I saw one of my female colleagues on a cargo bike with a child, and she arrived at the Centre at the same time as I did, having dropped off her child in the meantime.'

The second encouraging factor was another colleague who had just changed his bike for a cycle touring model. He explained the advantages of this type of cycle and the fact that it takes less effort to cycle fast. It's important to have a good bike, to maintain motivation and to avoid fatigue. I went to a cycle store for advice, and they provided the cycle on loan, so I could test it.

The first morning, I cycled alongside another cyclist and I really didn't see the time go by.'

### **Do you feel better since you've been cycling?**

**Pierre-Yves**, 'Yes! It's great both for the mind and the body. Contrary to cars, when you arrive at work, you're not numbed by the journey, but alert and ready to take on a day's work.'

**Sabine**, 'Unquestionably! Over and above the physical exercise, the cycle journey offers a genuine transition between personal and professional life.'

### **What do you say to people who think that it is complicated from a logistic point of view (I can't go shopping, drop off my kids, etc.)?**

**Pierre-Yves**, 'It's a matter of organisation and you don't need to cycle every day. My personal journey time is an hour and a quarter, but most people have no more than a 30-minute round trip every day. WHO recommendations are a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity per day.'

**Sabine**, 'Lots of people get by without cars... But exchanging your car for a bike is also a way of deeply reconsidering the way you consume and your entire lifestyle. The cargo bike is the perfect solution for us: we use it for home/work/school journeys, but also for all the little day-to-day jaunts: shopping, drive-in shopping, sports activities, etc. It advantageously replaces a car, and we have 4 children!'

### **How do you cope with the Normandy rain?**

**Pierre-Yves**, ‘You’re a Norman or you’re not! Rain is a question of habit, and we won’t melt! More seriously, it’s safer to bring a change of clothing; it can prove useful in other circumstances than rain (spilt coffee!).’

**Sabine**, ‘Same answer, we’re not going to melt! A good poncho and waterproof trousers and you’re off. What’s more, at the hospital, we can change when we arrive, so as far as I’m concerned, it’s not an acceptable excuse.’

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**About the Centre François Baclesse**

**The Centre François Baclesse is one of 18 French cancer centres.** A private health institute of public interest (ESPIC) and member of Unicancer, activity at the François Baclesse Comprehensive Cancer Centre focuses entirely on cancer diagnosis and treatment. The centre also assures a mission of cancer research and education. The François Baclesse Comprehensive Cancer Centre cares for around 26,500 patients per year, among whom 7,200 new patients. It employs a staff of 1,084 professionals, including 144 physicians and researchers and hosts around 600 medical and paramedical students every year. The centre boasts a radiotherapy department which is among the 3 most comprehensive of its kind in France and, since July 2018, proposes proton therapy, together with the largest offer of support care options in France.

As a stakeholder in public hospital services, the François Baclesse Comprehensive Cancer Centre applies neither private sector fees nor fee enhancement, but exclusively standard social security fees. A public interest establishment, it may receive donations and legacies, totally exempt from taxation.

The centre was awarded level A certification (the highest level) by the HAS (French National Authority for Health) in October 2019 for a period of six years. It is also the first French centre to have obtained, in April 2020, European EUSOMA certification for its Institut Normand du Sein (INS - Normandy Breast Institute). This label is awarded by the European Society of Breast Cancer Specialists.

The centre is an accredited ‘Comprehensive Cancer Centre’ by the Organisation of European Cancer Institutes (OECI) since June 2020.

>> [www.baclesse.fr](http://www.baclesse.fr)    

**About Unicancer**

**Unicancer is the unique French hospital network 100% devoted to fighting cancer and is the only national hospital federation devoted to cancer care.** It reunites 18 Cancer Centres (CLCCs), private non-profit healthcare establishments, located on 20 hospital sites across France. CLCCs care for over 530,000 patients every year (short stay, home-based care or external procedures).

Unicancer is also the leading European academic promoter of clinical trials in oncology, with 100 ongoing clinical trials promoted, around 6,300 patients included, and 57,000 patients listed in the ESME database.

Acknowledged as the French leader in research, the Unicancer network boasts an international reputation via the production of a third of international-scale French publications in oncology (source: Thomson Reuters / bibliometric study). A total of around 800 clinical trials (inclusions or follow-up) were promoted in 2019 by the Unicancer network, over 15% of CLCC patients are included in clinical trials and over half of PHRCs (hospital clinical research programmes) allocated to CLCCs.

Unicancer’s 18 CLCCs and R&D management department are certified ISO:2015 for their clinical research.

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