



North East / North West

C2C

The UK's most popular challenge cycle route. The iconic route travels 137 miles between the Irish Sea and the North Sea, from Cumbria to Tyneside, passing through the northern Lake District before climbing the Pennines and descending to the railway paths of County Durham.

Whitehaven – Keswick – Penrith (53 miles)

Penrith – Alston – Rookhope (43 miles)

Rookhope – Winlaton Mill – Tynemouth (44 miles)

The Sea to Sea (C2C) can start at either Whitehaven or Workington, and has two possible endpoints on the North Sea coast in Sunderland or Tynemouth.

There are some sections of the Whitehaven to Sunderland route that are not part of the National Cycle Network.

Route sections from West to East (Whitehaven to Sunderland)

1. Whitehaven to Keswick

Starting at Whitehaven; an old seaport on the west coast of Cumbria. The first ten miles of the C2C follows a well made surfaced path.

Quiet lanes follow as the route passes through some of the countries most beautiful scenery.

Kirkland and Lamplugh reveal the proximity of the Lakes mountains and on the steep descent from Fangs Brow to Loweswater there is a good view of Mellbreaks ahead.

The Whinlatter Pass is the first major climb ending in a fine descent on forest roads to Bass Lake and Keswick.

2. Keswick to Langwathby

The next section takes the route on to Langwathby in the Eden Valley and has contrasting views and riding surfaces.

Alternate routes exist here, with the hardest one crossing Matteredale Common on the Old Coach Road to Greystoke, Blencow and the town of Penrith, reaching Langwathby on the Eden.

At this point a third of the ride is now complete, leaving behind the hills of the Lakes, with the Pennine crossing to come.

3. Langwathby to Allenheads

The most mountainous part of the route with four major climbs in 20 miles.

The first encountered and steepest is Hartside at 580 metres; this is the watershed between the Irish Sea and the North Sea.

It's not all downhill from here. After Hartside, the route passes near Alston, reaching Garrigill and the old lead mining areas at Nenthead and Allenheads, reaching the highest part of the C2C at 609 metres on Black Hill.

4. Allenheads to Consett

This section marks the end of the rough hilly terrain of the North Pennines and the start of the industrial landscape of the North East.

The traffic-free Waskerley Way has impressive vistas of sweeping moorland before leading to the impressive Hownsgill viaduct and then onto Consett.

5. Consett to Sunderland

For most of this section, the Consett and Sunderland railway path is flat and easy to follow.

There's a lot to see along the route with a varied mix of trailside sculptures, and possible visits to the Beamish Open Air Museum and the Washington Wildfowl Wetlands Centre.

The fine views across the River Wear continue as you enter the city of Sunderland and follow the water's edge to the route's official end at the Star Map sculpture along the seafront at Roker.

