Sport for Everyone – Call for View Phase 2

Response from Cycling UK

Cycling UK, the national cycling charity, inspires and helps people to cycle and keep cycling, whatever kind of cycling they do or would like to do. Over a century’s experience tells us that cycling is more than useful transport; it makes you feel good, gives you a sense of freedom and creates a better environment for everyone.

Cycling UK is pleased to respond to this call for views about how to increase participation in physical activity. We have been enabling people to get more active on two, three and four wheels since we established as the ‘Cyclists Touring Club’ in 1878. Now, with over 67000 members across the UK, we support thousands of people to get active every week through our member groups, affiliated clubs and cycling development projects. We also campaign to improve cycling infrastructure to enable anyone of any age or ability to cycle for everyday journeys.

We believe that the best way to get people more active is to build physical activity into life, by enabling everyone to carry out their everyday journeys via active travel – walking and cycling. Making our cities, towns and rural communities more accessible, through appropriate design and engineering, could enable anyone of any age to get more active on a daily basis and build physical activity into their lives. We run a range of cycling development programmes to support, encourage and enable more people to try cycling so they can experience the gift of cycling for themselves.

Participation

1. Can you provide examples where a community based approach has been successful in removing barriers to participation in sport and physical activity?

Community Cycle Clubs

As part of the ‘Big Bike Revival’, our Community Cycle Clubs programme works with community organisations to help them set up and develop sustainable cycling projects, clubs or programmes within their community. All of these Clubs remove barriers to participation in cycling – by providing whatever is needed, including: bikes, training, bespoke support and a culturally or socially appropriate environment. We worked with over 50 organisations to develop community clubs last year and expect to work with another 50 more over the next 6 months.

Links to case studies:

Rehana’s story: learning to ride a bike in your forties: [www.cyclinguk.org/case-study/rehana](http://www.cyclinguk.org/case-study/rehana)

Edinburgh ABC
Our All-aBility Cycling (ABC) Centre in Edinburgh has been enabling hundreds of people with significant barriers to cycling to get active since it opened its doors less than two years ago. Based at Bangholm Outdoor Centre, the ABC works with organisations and families to support anyone that needs help to get cycling, including adults and children with disabilities. Our part-time staff and volunteer team work with all participants to find the right bike and support to help them get moving on two, three or four wheels.

Links to case studies:

Edinburgh ABC helps Michael get cycling again: [www.cyclinguk.org/case-study/edinburgh-abc-helps-michael-get-cycling](http://www.cyclinguk.org/case-study/edinburgh-abc-helps-michael-get-cycling)

Belles on Bikes

Our network of women’s cycling groups across Scotland supports women of any age or ability to get cycling in a friendly and inclusive atmosphere. Led by volunteers, the Belles network doesn’t impose any specific training or commitment on leaders but instead supports women to develop the group to meet the needs of participants and leaders.

You can watch a short film we produced a few years ago about the impact of Belles on Bikes: [https://youtu.be/TgX3ay2y5Zo](https://youtu.be/TgX3ay2y5Zo)

Play on Pedals

Play on Pedals is a pre-school cycling programme that has engaged over 7000 children in Glasgow since 2014. Working across the city within early years settings, as well as in the community through ‘Hero Organisations’ the project aims to help every child in Glasgow to learn to ride a bike before they go to school.

You can see the evaluation report, including the outcomes of the project here: [http://playonpedals.scot/2017/01/31/play-on-pedals-report/](http://playonpedals.scot/2017/01/31/play-on-pedals-report/)

2. What were the key ingredients to that success?

Our Community Development approach is the key to the success of our programmes as it enables the organisations we work with to develop initiatives that meet the needs of the communities they work with. Our development officers work with organisations and individuals to develop bespoke programmes, support them through the process of identifying training needs and signpost to funding or other resources where possible. Everything we do is focused on overcoming the barriers to participation, enabling the inactive to become active.

We provide practical support, including insurance, training and networking opportunities, plus communications and media help which we know small organisations can find challenging. We are also providing support with evaluation, skilling organisations to be able to demonstrate their outcomes to their boards, funders and themselves.

Cycling UK promotes cycling as an accessible, everyday activity that can be built into life, not a ‘sport’ that you need to create special time, or expensive equipment, to participate in. We focus on utility cycling (to the shops, educations or other every day journeys) and leisure cycling with friends and family and campaign for appropriate infrastructure to enable this.

We work in partnership with other organisations and ensure that we concentrate on and develop our strengths, rather than compete with other agencies. This enables us to work effectively with partners to deliver programmes (e.g. Play on Pedals is a partnership with Cycling Scotland, Play
Scotland and Glasgow Bike Station), signpost people onto those that focus on other forms of cycling (e.g. Scottish Cycling for cycle sport) or who offer opportunities that our participants might benefit from (e.g. we encourage groups we work with to look at the suite of Cycling Scotland’s ‘Cycle Friendly’ awards).

3. Were there any approaches that were particularly successful in increasing participation among certain social groups, like women, ethnic minorities, certain age groups?

Our community development approach is at the core of our success with particular social groups – working alongside individuals and organisations enables us to dismantle many of the barriers that prevent people from getting cycling.

Our Belles on Bikes network is run for and by women to engage more women in cycling activities. Each Belles group is led by women, training is provided by female tutors and we encourage peer support through residential training weekends. Feedback suggests that women enjoy the female only space and opportunity to socialise with other women. As a parallel project, we’ve been trialling ‘Learn then Ride’ sessions for women across Scotland, again led by female tutors – by providing bikes, refreshments and a relaxed and friendly atmosphere we’ve enabled many women to get cycling for the first time or to gain confidence on cycle paths or the road.

We know from our experience with working with minority groups (e.g. women and young girls, those from minority ethnic backgrounds, people with disabilities) that as a ‘cycling organisation’ we need to work with community groups that already work with the individuals we want to reach out to. For example, our Edinburgh ABC works closely with Council day care centres, a wide range of disability organisations and the NHS to ensure our services are known to, and shaped by, the people we want to engage in the programme. Essentially it’s a form of co-production as we continually refine how the project delivers in order to meet the needs of the participants.

4. To what extent are these approaches unique to a particular area and set of circumstances, or replicable in other parts of the country?

A community development approach in cycling projects is replicable, if done in an authentic and meaningful way. We see some ‘community’ cycling projects that are too proscribed or have very defined outcomes to really function for the people that they are ‘designed’ to engage.

Our successful Belles on Bikes programme gives a consistency of quality to activities (i.e. logo, branding, training provision) but is adaptable enough that leaders can use their skills and knowledge to apply to local communities and geographic areas in a way that is meaningful to them. No prescribed requirements for leaders or participants mean that the model is fluid and will work effectively in communities across Scotland and attracts a wide range of women - not just those that define themselves as ‘sporty’ or ‘good’ at physical activity.

Several of our other programmes are already replicated (to some extent) in other areas of Scotland and the UK more widely by ourselves and other organisations. As a UK wide organisation we seek to share learning and ensure that programmes are delivered in association with local organisations to enable the most appropriate and effective delivery model.