



CYCLE TRAINING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS RESEARCH



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The views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and do not necessarily represent those of Transport Scotland or Scottish Ministers.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About this Research

Transport Scotland and its partners want to ensure that all school children in primary six or seven are offered cycle training on public roads. However, evidence suggests that only around one fifth of primary schools offer on-road cycle training. There is limited evidence about why schools are not delivering on-road cycle training.

This research involved developing eleven detailed case studies setting out the experience of planning, delivering and sustaining cycle training in primary schools across Scotland. It focused on exploring the barriers to delivering on-road cycle training in these schools, with a particular focus on how schools have overcome obstacles to introducing sustainable on-road cycle training programmes.

The research involved telephone interviews with those involved in planning and delivering cycle training programmes at eleven primary schools in Scotland. The schools were selected to include schools offering different types of cycle training, and a mix of characteristics such as geographical location and level of deprivation.

Cycle Training Programmes

At the time of this research, cycle training for primary six and seven pupils was delivered through the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme, which involves both classroom based and practical training. The practical training is normally delivered through parents, school staff and others who volunteer as trainers, with support and training from Road Safety Officers or Active Schools Co-ordinators¹.

Six of the schools offered this practical training in an on-road environment, two offered off-road training (in the playground), and three did not offer any cycle training at all. Two of the three case study schools without a cycle training programme were keen to have one, but the other felt that it would be a challenge to find time in the curriculum.

All of the schools offering cycle training did so with primary six and/ or primary seven children (in line with current RoSPA guidelines²). Generally, teachers, parents, Road Safety Officers and Active Schools Co-ordinators felt this was an appropriate stage to deliver on-road cycle training.

Planning and Delivering On-Road Cycle Training

Overall, decisions about the type and level of cycle training offered at the case study schools were made by teachers – generally head teachers and deputy head teachers

¹ The Scottish Cycle Training Scheme has since been rebranded as Bikeability Scotland, managed by Cycling Scotland.

² http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety/info/cyclist_schemes.pdf

– working with their Road Safety Officer or Active Schools Co-ordinator. Support and guidance from these road safety professionals was critical in establishing and maintaining on-road cycle programmes.

Almost all schools offering on-road cycle training were very content with their programmes. School staff felt that once programmes were set up, they were relatively easy to sustain. Successful on-road training programmes tended to have strong leadership from the head teacher, dedicated staff volunteers, and an active pool of parent volunteers.

Attitudes to On-Road Training

There was common agreement across teachers, support staff and parents that on-road training was superior to playground based training – offering a more realistic experience, faster learning and greater awareness of safety concerns. All of the case study schools, whether offering on-road training or not, could see the potential benefits of on-road training. Schools which had recently made the change to offering on-road cycle training all felt that on-road training was ‘far superior’ to the playground based approach. Parents were generally positive about on-road cycle training, feeling that children enjoyed the training and learned more effectively in an on-road environment.

Barriers to On-Road Training

The biggest concern for schools relating to on-road training was being able to ensure pupil safety. Identifying enough volunteers to deliver on-road training was the most significant and common barrier identified by teachers, support staff and parents. Volunteering to assist with on-road training is seen as more of a responsibility than assisting with playground based training, due to concerns over pupil safety. Teachers, support staff and parents all agree that generally more volunteers are required to deliver on-road than off-road training, and volunteers require more intensive training.

Resistance to change (amongst teachers and support staff) was a barrier in three schools, with some participants feeling that there was no reason to change what they saw as effective off-road cycle training programmes. There were also some barriers to introducing any type of cycle training. Two of the three schools not offering training indicated that some of their pupils would not own or be able to borrow a bike to take part in the training. Both were in areas of relatively high deprivation. Another school which did offer cycle training also felt that it was a challenge identifying suitable bicycles.

Schools with sustainable on-road cycle training programmes had often faced these challenges, but introduced strategies to address them. However, attracting adequate numbers of volunteers often remained the most significant ongoing challenge for sustaining on-road cycle programmes. Where schools were able to dedicate staff time to volunteering, this appeared to provide more sustainability – with a skilled team able to develop expertise and support parent volunteers as required. Ongoing support, training and guidance from Road Safety Officers and Active Schools Co-ordinators was also essential.

1. INTRODUCTION

About this Report

- 1.1 This report sets out findings from qualitative research, which investigated the barriers facing primary schools in delivering on-road cycle training and goes on to explore how some primary schools have overcome these barriers.
- 1.2 Transport Scotland commissioned ODS Consulting to undertake this work between September and December 2010. The research findings will provide evidence to inform future approaches to cycle training.

Research Aims and Objectives

- 1.3 Transport Scotland and its partners want to ensure that all school children in primary six or seven are offered cycle training on public roads (Scottish Government, 2010).
- 1.4 The Scottish approach to supporting safer road travel is underpinned by strong evidence, research and evaluation (Scottish Government, 2009). Transport Scotland therefore commissioned this research to explore the barriers to on-road cycle training, and investigate the success factors in providing an effective on-road cycle training programme. The specific research objectives were to:
 - explore the processes involved in setting up, managing and maintaining on-road cycle training in primary schools and any difficulties encountered;
 - investigate the barriers relating to funding, resources, curriculum, risk and stakeholder relationships/ support, and identify other relevant difficulties;
 - explore issues which affect the schools which carry out a mix of on-road and off-road cycle training;
 - investigate and contrast the barriers from the perspectives of primary schools, volunteer trainers, road safety officers, active schools co-ordinators and other relevant networks within each case study; and
 - explore ideas for overcoming these barriers – what can be done and whose responsibility is this?

Research Context

Promoting safe cycling in Scotland

- 1.5 Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2020 (Scottish Government, 2009) sets out the vision that no-one is killed on Scotland's roads. The Framework includes a commitment that the Scottish Government will encourage safe cycling in Scotland, both through education and training for cyclists, and raising awareness for other road users.
- 1.6 As part of this commitment, the Scottish Government produced a Cycling Action Plan (Scottish Government, 2010) with the overarching aim of 'more people cycling more often'. Recent figures show that around one per cent of all

journeys in Scotland are taken by bicycle (National Statistics and Scottish Government, 2009) and around two per cent of children cycle to school (Scottish Government, 2010). The Scottish Government aims for 10 per cent of all journeys to take place by bicycle by 2020.

1.7 The Cycling Action Plan for Scotland aims to encourage adults and children to cycle more often, through activities such as:

- investing in the strategic national cycle network – and linking with local cycling networks;
- working to make roads safe for all, including cyclists – through lower speed limits, good road design and good cycle infrastructure;
- promoting cycling in relation to health and regeneration; and
- investing in and co-ordinating cycle training activity.

1.8 Skills development for everyone is a critical aspect of the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland. The Action Plan specifically identifies the need for all primary six and seven pupils to have access to on-road cycle training, to ensure that they have the right skills and awareness to cycle safely and confidently. It aims to achieve:

‘An increase in pupils receiving on-road cycle training and an increase in the number of volunteers available to deliver the training.’

1.9 This report uses the terms ‘on-road’ cycle training and ‘off-road’ cycle training. The term ‘on-road’ cycle training is used to describe cycle training which is partially delivered in a real road environment. For primary six and seven pupils in Scotland, an ‘on-road’ training programme almost always comprises an element of practice in the playground initially, before moving to a real road environment. Research has shown that on-road training improves children’s practical skills and knowledge of road safety (Savill et al, 1996).

1.10 The term ‘off-road’ cycle training is used to describe cycle training which is entirely delivered in a place which is not a road. Usually this is the school playground.

Cycle Training in Scotland

1.11 At the time of undertaking this research, there were three cycle training programmes available for schools to deliver in Scotland. On 11 March 2011, these three levels were re-branded as Bikeability Scotland³. The three levels remain and have the same basic competencies, outcomes and associated resources as the levels previously available:

- Bikeability Scotland 1: Ready Steady Bike is usually delivered in a traffic free environment. Those completing Level 1 will be able to demonstrate the skills

³ <http://www.cyclingscotland.org/our-projects/bikeability-scotland-2/>

and understanding to be able to make a trip and undertake activities safely in a motor traffic free environment and as a pre-requisite to a road trip⁴.

- Bikeability Scotland 2: Scottish Cycle Training Scheme is delivered on quiet roads but with real traffic conditions. Those completing Level 2 will be able to demonstrate the skills and understanding to be able to make a trip safely to school, work or leisure on quiet roads⁵.
- Bikeability Scotland 3: Go By Cycle is delivered on busy roads incorporating real traffic conditions and advanced road features. Those completing Level 3 will be able demonstrate the skills and understanding to be able to make a trip safely to school, work or leisure on busy roads and using complex junctions and road features⁶.

1.12 This research focuses on Bikeability Scotland 2 - The Scottish Cycle Training Scheme, for primary six and seven pupils. Bikeability Scotland is co-ordinated by Cycling Scotland, through the Cycle Training Standards and Delivery Group.

Bikeability Scotland 2 - The Scottish Cycle Training Scheme

Aims and content

1.13 Bikeability Scotland 2 - The Scottish Cycle Training Scheme - aims to:

- promote an understanding of the rules of the road, particularly as these apply to cyclists;
- encourage a responsible attitude towards care and maintenance of bicycles;
- encourage consideration of the risks and responsibilities of cycling;
- enable cyclists to cope with common road and traffic situations involving decision-making; and
- promote an understanding of the role of cycling as a healthy and environmentally sustainable form of transport.

1.14 Bikeability Scotland 2 - The Scottish Cycle Training Scheme links to the experiences and outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence, in particular (although not exclusively) Health and Wellbeing:

- **Physical wellbeing**
 - I am learning to assess and manage risk, to protect myself and others, and to reduce the potential for harm when possible.
 - I know and I can demonstrate how to keep myself and others safe and how to respond in a range of emergency situations.
 - I know and can demonstrate how to travel safely.
- **Physical activity**
 - I can explain why I need to be active on a daily basis to maintain good health and try to achieve a good balance of sleep, rest and physical activity.

⁴ <http://www.cyclingscotland.org/our-projects/cycle-training/bikeability-scotland-2/level-1/>

⁵ <http://www.cyclingscotland.org/our-projects/cycle-training/bikeability-scotland-2/level-2/>

⁶ <http://www.cyclingscotland.org/our-projects/cycle-training/bikeability-scotland-2/level-3/>

- I am experiencing enjoyment and achievement on a daily basis by taking part in different kinds of energetic physical activities of my choosing, including sport and opportunities for outdoor learning, available at my place of learning and in the wider community.
- **Planning for choices and changes**
 - Opportunities to carry out different activities and roles in a variety of settings have enabled me to identify my achievements, skills and areas for development. This will help me prepare for the next stage in my life and learning.

1.15 The programme consists of a practical element and a classroom based element. The practical training involves learning to stop, start, overtake, turn left and turn right. The classroom sessions involve learning about cycle maintenance, understanding roads, the correct position for undertaking manoeuvres, and understanding traffic signs, road markings, the environment and assessing risks.

1.16 The training can be delivered in a real road environment, in the playground or in a combination of settings. Bikeability Scotland 2 - The Scottish Cycle Training Scheme does not specify a preferred setting for any of the practical lessons, instead leaving this responsibility to the local Road Safety Officers, Active Schools Co-ordinators, school and trainers. If the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme is delivered on-road, it meets the requirements of Level Two of the National Standards for Cycle Training.

Delivery

1.17 Bikeability Scotland 2 - The Scottish Cycle Training Scheme is delivered through joint working at a local level, between primary schools, Road Safety Officers⁷ and/ or Active Schools Co-ordinators⁸, and parents, school staff and others who volunteer as trainers. Generally, the Road Safety Officers or Active Schools Co-ordinators encourage, support and facilitate the development of cycle training programmes within primary schools. The classroom training tends to be delivered by classroom teachers, with the practical training delivered by volunteers – including staff and parents – with some support from Road Safety Officers or Active School Co-ordinators.

Uptake

1.18 There is limited evidence about uptake of the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme. In 2001, research found that around 20 per cent of eligible (primary six and seven) pupils in Scotland completed off-road cycle training, and 10 per cent completed on-road training (Scottish Executive, 2001). A study exploring local authority cycling policy in 2008 suggested that almost one-third of local authorities provided no on-road delivery (Cycling Scotland, 2008). This study suggested that on average, cycle skills development policy and activity across

⁷ There is a network of Road Safety Units located in local authorities or police forces across Scotland. Road Safety Officers within these units are responsible for local co-ordination and promotion of road safety education, training and publicity.

⁸ Active Schools Co-ordinators are linked to primary and secondary schools, and help to engage children in an active lifestyle. Not all schools have dedicated Active Schools Co-ordinators.

local authorities in Scotland did not improve significantly between 2005 and 2008.

- 1.19 Since 2005, Road Safety Scotland (now part of Transport Scotland) has gathered data from Road Safety Officers and Active Schools Co-ordinators about the level and type of cycle training offered in each local authority area. The information gathered includes the number of schools offering training, the location of this training, the number of pupils participating, the way in which pupils are assessed, and responsibility for delivering the training. Where training takes place in the playground, rather than on-road, some basic commentary and anecdotal evidence is gathered on why this is.
- 1.20 Information is available for 2009/10 for 28 local authority areas, containing a total of 1,832 primary schools. This showed that:
- almost all schools (98 per cent) were offered support with cycle training from their Road Safety Unit or Active Schools Co-ordinator;
 - two thirds of schools (66 per cent) undertook cycle training in 2009/10;
 - one fifth of schools (21 per cent) offered on-road cycle training; and
 - four fifths of schools (79 per cent) did not offer on-road cycle training.
- 1.21 The picture varied considerably across local authority areas. Some had no schools undertaking on-road training. In some cases this was a deliberate policy decision by the local authority, and in others it was due to preferences of individual schools. In contrast, other areas had almost all schools undertaking on-road training, and some a mix of both⁹.
- 1.22 Anecdotal evidence gathered by Road Safety Scotland suggests that there is general support for on-road training from the road safety community in Scotland. A small number of local authorities were piloting a shift to on-road delivery, with dedicated support for three or four schools each year.
- 1.23 However, over half of schools offering cycle training in Scotland did not offer any on-road element to the training in 2009/10, and almost one third offered no cycle training at all. In this context, Transport Scotland was keen to explore the barriers to introducing on-road cycle training for primary school pupils.

Research Method

- 1.24 The research involved detailed case studies of eleven primary schools in Scotland. It explored their approach to cycle training; their experiences of planning, delivering and sustaining effective training; and the barriers to introducing and maintaining on-road cycle training. It involved telephone interviews with those involved in planning and delivering cycle training

⁹ Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1998 places a duty on local authorities to prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety. It stipulates ... "and must take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents, including dissemination of information and advice relating to the use of roads, the giving of practical training to road users or any class or description of road user."

programmes – including Road Safety Officers, Active Schools Co-ordinators, head teachers, classroom teachers, support staff, volunteer trainers and, where possible, representatives from the parent council. More detail on the methodology is included in Chapter Two.

Report Structure

1.25 This report sets out the findings from this research. Chapter Two sets out the methods used in this study and Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six set out the key findings. The full case studies are included as Appendix One, and copies of the discussion guides used are included as Appendix Two.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

2.1 This research was qualitative and involved developing eleven detailed case studies setting out the experience of planning, delivering and sustaining cycle training in primary schools across Scotland. Our overall approach to this study involved:

- selecting local authority areas from which case study schools would be identified;
- obtaining permission from Directors of Education;
- telephone interviews with Road Safety Officers in eight local authority areas;
- selecting four local authority case study areas to proceed with;
- identifying two preferred schools in each case study area;
- obtaining permission from the head teacher;
- telephone interviews with head teachers and/or classroom teachers in each case study school;
- telephone interviews with volunteer trainers and parents (where possible) in each case study school;
- further detailed telephone interviews with road safety officers in each of the four chosen case study local authority areas;
- analysis; and
- reporting.

Rationale for Qualitative Research

2.2 Transport Scotland was clear that it wanted to obtain in depth information about the barriers to on-road cycle training in primary schools. A qualitative approach was adopted, to gather this in depth information. Qualitative research focuses on exploring perspectives, attitudes, behaviours and experiences.

2.3 This study adopted a case study approach, focusing on exploring the perspectives of different stakeholders in eleven schools across Scotland. A case study approach allows comparison of the views and experiences of different individuals at the same school - including head teachers, classroom teachers, support staff, parents, Road Safety Officers and Active Schools Co-ordinators. It also provides a detailed picture of experiences, allowing development of a rich story of the school's experience in relation to cycle training.

2.4 Case study research is therefore very useful in exploring complex questions or issues – such as the many different factors that influence the development of on-road cycle training. Case studies are time and resource intensive,

meaning that often a small number of case studies are undertaken at any one time.

- 2.5 Different schools across Scotland will experience different barriers to on-road cycle training, and this research was only able to explore a small number of experiences. Although the research was designed to include a range of schools with different experiences, the findings may not necessarily be transferable.

Selecting Local Authority Areas

- 2.6 In discussion with the Research Advisory Group¹⁰, case study schools in four local authority areas were selected. In identifying this mix, we considered:
- geography – including city, urban, small town and rural authority areas with a geographic spread across Scotland (using the Scottish Government Rural/ Urban Classification);
 - deprivation – the relative level of deprivation in each local authority based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation; and
 - cycle training – considering levels of cycle training within the local authority, type of training offered, and levels of cycling to school.
- 2.7 As the case studies have been produced on an anonymous basis, the eight potential local authority areas are not identified within this report.

Interviews with Road Safety Officers

- 2.8 There is a network of 22 Road Safety Units across Scotland, responsible for promoting awareness of road safety issues. A semi-structured telephone interview was held with one Road Safety Officer or Active Schools Co-ordinator in potential local authority areas, to explore:
- their involvement in introducing, planning, delivering and maintaining cycle training;
 - the local authority's general position on the level and type of cycle training offered at primary schools;
 - their views of on-road cycle training specifically and what the barriers to delivering on-road training could be; and
 - specific information about potential case study schools in their area – including exploring the type of cycle training offered, any innovative approaches, and potential interest in participating as a case study.
- 2.9 The knowledge of Road Safety Officers was used to inform the selection of the local authorities and schools to be included in this research.

¹⁰ The Research Advisory Group involved representatives from Transport Scotland

Identifying Case Study Schools

2.10 A long list of potential case study schools was identified across the four case study areas, using a range of information to inform this selection:

- Statistical information – the Scottish Government Rural/ Urban Classification and the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation were used to take into account location and deprivation.
- Existing information – such as considering the primary schools which had achieved Cycle Friendly status with Cycling Scotland.
- Information about the cycle training programme - RSOs generally had detailed knowledge of the cycle training programme offered by schools, and provided details on the type of cycle training offered, the history of cycle training, and the potential interest in participating as a case study.
- Interesting approaches – Schools which had taken particularly innovative approaches, overcome key barriers such as location or staff attitudes, or introduced new approaches to on-road training were prioritised.

2.11 We discussed the potential schools with the Research Advisory Group and reached joint agreement on the mix of eight schools, which offered the best range of characteristics, experiences and geographical spread, to ensure a useful range of schools.

2.12 A dedicated member of the research team contacted each head teacher to ask for permission to involve this school as a case study. In some areas, Road Safety Officers helped to encourage schools to become involved. In one area, the Director of Education contacted schools directly to explore interest in participation.

2.13 As a result, we identified eleven schools who were interested in participating as case studies. With the agreement of the Research Advisory Group, we included all eleven as case studies. The final mix of case study schools therefore varies slightly from the original matrix:

Type of training	Local authority type	Level of deprivation	Interesting aspects
On-road training as the norm (5 schools)	Rural	In 15% most deprived	Initially resistant to on-road training
	Rural	Not in 15% most deprived	Offering on-road training on busy 60mph road
	Small town	Not in 15% most deprived	Moved to on-road four years ago
	Small town	Not in 15% most deprived	Strong and stable on-road programme
	City	Not in 15% most deprived	On-road training in a city environment
Piloting on-road training (1 school)	Urban	Not in 15% most deprived	On-road training initiated by probationary teacher
Off-road training only (2 schools)	Urban	In 15% most deprived	Recently amalgamated school keen to promote training
	Rural	Not in 15% most deprived	Explored range of on-road options in recent years
No cycle training (3 schools)	City	Not in 15% most deprived	Some resistance to any cycle training from school
	City	In 15% most deprived	Head teacher keen to introduce training
	City	Not in 15% most deprived	Head teacher keen to introduce training

Undertaking Fieldwork

2.14 Once the head teacher confirmed that the school would participate as a case study school, we made arrangements to interview:

- the head teacher – if involved in planning, maintaining or delivering cycle training;
- the classroom teacher – or other support staff involved in co-ordinating or delivering cycle training;
- a volunteer trainer – either a staff member or parent volunteer¹¹;
- a member of the parent council – or other parent representative as appropriate; and
- the Road Safety Officer or Active Schools Co-ordinator – responsible for supporting the development of cycle training at that school.

2.15 The head teacher or another key member of staff took the lead in co-ordinating participation of teachers, support staff and parents from the school. All schools were offered either a telephone interview or face to face meeting, and all indicated a preference for telephone interviews. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

¹¹ The term 'volunteer' is used broadly here and incorporates both parents who volunteer to deliver cycle training and teachers or teaching assistants for whom 'volunteering' constitutes an element of their paid teaching duties.

2.16 Interviews explored the individual's involvement in planning, delivering or sustaining cycle training at the school. We explored views on the success of current cycle training programmes, attitudes to on-road training, and perceived barriers associated with on-road training. The discussion guides are included as Appendix Two.

2.17 The research undertaken at each school varied, depending on whether cycle training was being offered, and the range of individuals involved in planning and delivering cycle training. In some schools, roles overlapped. For example, a parent was often both a volunteer trainer and a member of the parent council. Often, the same staff member planned and delivered the practical element of the cycle training programme. Overall, the case studies involved interviews with:

- three Road Safety Officers and two Active Schools Co-ordinators;
- nine head teachers or deputy head teachers;
- eight staff volunteer trainers - largely classroom assistants or support staff; and
- seven parent volunteers or members of the Parent Council.

2.18 A note of the role of the individuals consulted at each school is included at the end of each case study.

Analysis and Reporting

2.19 Telephone interviews were recorded using hand written notes, and transferred to an electronic record complete with verbatim quotes on key points. We reviewed key themes, using manual thematic coding. This involves reviewing interview notes, identifying themes and sorting information according to these themes. It is then possible to review the volume of comments relating to each theme, and review similarities and differences in opinion. A discussion session also took place among the researchers to ensure that all the key themes emerging from the interviews were covered.

2.20 We produced eleven anonymised case studies, setting out the experiences and attitudes at each school (Appendix One). These case studies were sent to the schools for comment. The report focuses on the key findings from across the case studies.

3. ATTITUDES TO ON-ROAD CYCLE TRAINING

Introduction

3.1 This chapter focuses on attitudes to on-road cycle training. It explores the attitudes towards on-road training from the perspective of teachers, support staff, Road Safety Officers, Active Schools Co-ordinators and parents involved in active on-road cycle training programmes, as well as those at schools with off-road or no cycle training programme in place.

Schools Offering On-Road Training

3.2 All of the case study schools, whether offering on-road training or not, could see the potential benefits of on-road training. Participants at schools offering on-road training felt that it offered:

- **Faster learning** – Parents, teachers, support staff and Road Safety Officers pointed to improved technique and confidence, better awareness of danger, improved judging of speeds, and understanding the danger of both parked and moving cars. Parents indicated that their children had come on ‘leaps and bounds’ since taking part in on-road training.
- **A more realistic experience** – Learning on-road was seen as better preparing the pupils for cycling on-road outside of school hours, or cycling to school – which many did or were encouraged to do after cycle training.
- **A greater awareness of safety issues** – Children were more aware of the traffic and their own surroundings while on the road.
- **Encouraging on-road cycling** – Some schools felt that on-road training encouraged more children to cycle on the roads, reinforcing messages of fitness and health.

‘It prepares them to cope with the added pressures of road cycling. The use of bikes is important for the environment and general fitness, which are both important points to reinforce to the kids.’

(Head teacher)

‘The kids got to experience a real life situation. They seemed to appreciate the scenario more than being on the playground.’

(Volunteer trainer)

‘We have a track painted on the playground, but it just isn’t the same as getting them out on the road.’

(Deputy head teacher)

‘Realism is the key benefit of training on-road.’

(Classroom assistant)

- 3.3 Schools which had recently made the change to offering on-road cycle training were able to reflect on the difference in the quality of the training compared to off-road. All agreed that on-road training was 'far superior' to the playground based approach. One volunteer trainer suggested that, with the benefit of hindsight, having delivered only off-road training in the past was 'virtually worthless' and that there was 'no comparison' between on and off-road training.
- 3.4 Parents were generally positive about on-road cycle training, feeling that children enjoyed the training and learned appropriate skills more quickly in an on-road environment. One parent was pleased that the school was able to teach children the essentials of cycling on-road, as children require some on-road awareness to participate in the school's outings to local attractions using the cycle network.

'(On-road) puts kids in a realistic situation. It reminds them that they can't just go zig-zagging around on the road, as they can on the playground. They just can't get the sense of importance on the playground that they would on the road. There are other road users and it helps build their confidence in being around them.'

(Parent)

- 3.5 There were some concerns about on-road training. The key concern was from teachers and support staff at the schools, who had worries about how to ensure pupil safety. Related concerns included identifying a suitable location – which needs to be safe but realistic – and identifying enough volunteer trainers to supervise the children. However, even schools which were initially hesitant about on-road training could see the benefits.

'The kids took the training more seriously when they were on the road, so it is important for them to experience being on-road in a controlled environment.'

(Teacher)

Schools Offering Off-Road or No Training

- 3.6 All schools said that road safety was a priority for them, even those not currently offering any cycle training. All of the case study schools offering off-road or no cycle training agreed that on-road training would provide pupils with a much more realistic experience, which better prepares children for cycling on-road.
- 3.7 Some schools were experiencing particular barriers to introducing on-road training – such as lack of volunteers. These are explored in Chapter Five. Other schools had been so used to delivering their cycle training programme in the playground, they had never considered changing the training to include on-road practical sessions.

- 3.8 Two of the three schools which did not offer any cycle training were keen to do so and were able to see the benefits of this being on-road.

'Some of the children are already cycling on the local roads, so giving them a real training experience on the road would be very important.'

(Head teacher)

'As we try to improve health and increase awareness, kids should know how to be safe, and that includes the helmets, the high-visibility jackets. I see kids leaving the playground with no lights on, no hat and they scoot in and out between cars...I have real concerns.'

(Head teacher)

Attitudes to on-road training

At one school, which did not offer any cycle training, the head teacher could see the benefits of on-road training and was keen to introduce this. She was concerned that the school was promoting cycling more generally, without practical training in place. She felt that on-road training would be more effective than playground based training as children can see that 'it's real' and develop cycling skills in realistic situations.

The head teacher was particularly frustrated as the school is located in a quiet street, with adequate facilities both on-road and in the playground for the pupils to practice in. The head teacher would like to introduce a cycle training programme with training happening in the playground to begin with, until the children were confident enough to be let out onto the roads. This would alleviate any immediate safety concerns about taking the pupils on-road. However, the school has struggled to identify volunteers. Without someone to deliver the training, this school stated it would not be offering cycle training.

Find out more about this approach in Case Study 5.

Comparison of Stakeholder Views

- 3.9 Overall, parents had a very positive attitude towards on-road cycle training. Our discussions with members of parent councils at the case study schools identified a strong interest in cycling and recognition of the value of cycle training. All of the parents that we spoke with were supportive of on-road cycle training, provided there were enough volunteers and a suitable safe road environment could be identified.
- 3.10 Teachers and support staff at schools were also broadly positive about on-road training, believing that it offered more effective and appropriate learning. However, there were more concerns about how to ensure pupil safety, and how to identify adequate volunteer resources – both parents and staff – to enable safe training.

- 3.11 Volunteers were very positive about on-road cycle training and the benefits that it had for children, in relation to learning and enjoyment. However, some volunteers – particularly parent volunteers had concerns about the level of responsibility they had for children, the level of training that they received, and the ratio of adults to children.
- 3.12 Road Safety Officers and Active Schools Co-ordinators involved in this research had a very positive view of on-road training, believing that it led to more effective learning due to the real life environment. Many were working with schools in their local authority area to encourage a shift to on-road training.

Summary

- 3.13 The attitudes of parents, teachers, school support staff, Road Safety Officers and Active Schools Co-ordinators towards on-road cycle training were very positive.
- 3.14 On-road training was seen to offer a more realistic experience which:
- encourages faster learning
 - fosters a greater awareness of road safety
 - encourages children to cycle on-road safely in their free time
 - offers greater enjoyment for children.
- 3.15 Overall there was a feeling that on-road cycle training was much more effective than off-road training. Practicing in a realistic environment was seen as focusing children's minds and preparing children effectively for on-road cycling in their own time.
- 3.16 All stakeholders were positive about on-road training. Parents, Road Safety Officers and Active Schools Co-ordinators were particularly positive about on-road training.
- 3.17 Teachers and support staff were positive about the principle of on-road training, but often had more concerns about ensuring pupil safety and attracting volunteers.
- 3.18 Volunteers were very positive about on-road training and the benefits it had for children, but had some concerns about the level of responsibility they were taking on.

4. PLANNING AND DELIVERING ON-ROAD CYCLE TRAINING

Introduction

4.1 This chapter explores the on-road cycle training programmes offered by the case study schools. Six of the eleven schools involved in the research were offering on-road cycle training. In addition, two schools offered only off-road cycle training, and three were not providing any cycle training at all.

On-Road Training Programmes

4.2 Most of the schools delivering on-road cycle training did so with primary six pupils. Generally, participants felt that this was an appropriate time to deliver on-road cycle training. A minority of participants suggested that cycle training in the playground should begin earlier, meaning that pupils could undertake more on-road training by the time they reach primary six. Some schools did undertake off-road cycle training earlier (for example through the Bikeability Scotland 1- Ready Steady Bike scheme).

4.3 All six case study schools offering on-road training began this on-road training programme in the playground. Five schools held two or three lessons in the playground initially - to allow the children to build up a basic competence. Children were then on-road for up to six lessons. One school, which had only piloted on-road cycle training for one year, only held one on-road session at the very end of the cycle training programme.

4.4 Generally, training took place in the spring and summer (April to June), but one school ran its training from August to October. Most cycle training programmes lasted between six and eight weeks. One school was able to extend this to ten weeks of training if the children needed extra practice. Schools were offering the following:

Case study number	Number of practical sessions	Length of sessions	Length of course
1	Three per week	Varied	Eight weeks
3	Two per week	90 minutes each	Six weeks
6	One per week	60 minutes each	Eight to ten weeks
9	One per week	60 minutes each	Eight weeks
10	One per week	60 minutes each	Eight weeks
11	One per week	40 minutes each	Eight weeks

4.5 The schools all followed the Bikeability Scotland 2 - Scottish Cycle Training Scheme, involving practising stopping and starting, left and right hand turns, and overtaking. The schools offering on-road training were generally content that there was the right balance between on and off-road training in their cycling programme.

- 4.6 All of the schools undertaking cycle training held classroom based work to complement the practical training. In three of the case study schools, the classroom teacher had begun to use the new I-Cycle interactive resource for use on interactive whiteboards, which is linked to the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme¹². Feedback from staff indicated that the use of this resource gave the pupils a ‘realistic interactive experience’ that helped them engage with road safety issues.

Responsibility for Delivering On-Road Training

- 4.7 Responsibility for delivering on-road training varied significantly across the case study schools:

- In one school, the training was delivered entirely by parent volunteers. One parent took the lead, supported by four other parent volunteers.
- In two schools, a classroom assistant or learning assistant led the delivery of the training, supported by parent volunteers.
- In one school, the training was normally delivered by a learning assistant. However, due to long term illness, the Road Safety Officer (RSO) had to step in to deliver the training in 2010/11, supported by another learning assistant. This school did not have any parent volunteers.
- In one school, which was piloting on-road training, the on-road element of training was delivered by two RSOs with support from community wardens, two members of teaching staff, and parent volunteers.
- In one school the Active Schools Co-ordinator was involved in assisting the trainers who tended to be parent volunteers and on occasion, members of the teaching staff.

Involving community wardens

In one of the case study schools, RSOs organised for community wardens to attend the on-road session. The community wardens are employed by the local authority, and help to ensure safety, tackle anti-social behaviour and prevent crime. The RSOs felt that the presence of community wardens would be an effective way of reducing safety fears through increasing the number of volunteers present. It would also help community wardens to build relationships with young people who they might meet in their area at evenings or weekends.

The volunteers essentially lined the on-road route, and were present at junctions to ensure the safety of the pupils. The RSOs said that they had been ‘trying for years’ to get schools to think about on-road training and the idea to supply community wardens had been really useful to show schools that with additional volunteers, safety fears are reduced.

Find out more about this approach in Case Study 1

¹² I-Cycle was developed by Argyll and Bute Council’s Road Safety Team in partnership with Promethean. <http://www.promethenplanet.com>

4.8 A number of the case study schools which are committed to sustaining on-road cycle training have identified a key member of staff to act as the lead volunteer, with support from other parents or staff. This appears to have provided continuity in the delivery of on-road training, allowing the lead volunteer to develop expertise in the area. The responsibility of volunteering as a parent is also significantly reduced, as the lead volunteer can plan and co-ordinate the programme with limited support from others.

Setting Up On-Road Cycle Training

Reasons for introducing on-road cycle training

4.9 Of the six case study schools providing on-road training:

- one was persuaded to try on-road training by the RSO, despite initial reluctance from the head teacher;
- one piloted on-road training due to the enthusiasm of a probationary teacher at the same time as dedicated support was offered by the RSO;
- one had a head teacher who was a cycling enthusiast, who introduced on-road training with support from the RSO;
- two had offered on-road training for some time, and did not know how it came about due to staff changes; and
- one school had introduced cycle training for the first time in 2006 with help from the Active Schools Co-ordinator who implemented an on-road element from the start.

4.10 It is clear that the head teacher and RSO play a key role in introducing on-road cycle training in schools. Good relationships between the school and RSO appear to encourage schools to try out new approaches to cycle training. In one case, a change of staff resulted in an enthusiasm to change the existing off-road programme which had been delivered in the same way for a number of years. This was coupled with a high level of support from the RSO, and a commitment to working around the barriers that the school faced to delivering an on-road programme.

4.11 In three of the four local authority areas involved in this research, the RSOs were very keen to promote on-road cycle training and seized opportunities to encourage schools to shift towards this approach. In some cases, RSOs were identifying a small number of schools each year and encouraging and supporting them to move to on-road training. The remaining area was committed to promoting on-road cycle training, but found this challenging within the resources available.

Moving to on-road training

Two schools had moved to delivering on-road cycle training relatively recently. One had adopted a staged approach. In the 2010/11 school session it introduced one on-road practical session at the end of its cycle training programme. The other school adopted a flexible approach. It does two or three sessions in the playground, then three or four on-road. This flexibility allows trainers to keep children in the playground if they feel that they are not ready for an on-road environment.

For more about this approach see Case Studies 1 and 3.

Moving to on-road training

Another two schools who offer on-road training take a gradual approach to building up children's skills and confidence. Both initially practice in the playground. One then moves to a lay-by, followed by a 60mph main road. Another moves to a quiet road (among disused housing) followed by a busier road. This helps children to develop their cycling skills, and helps volunteers to understand the competences of children and gain confidence that they will be safe on the roads.

For more about this approach see Case Studies 6 and 10.

Parental involvement in planning on-road training

4.12 Parent councils were not involved in planning on-road cycle training at any of the six case study schools. Parent councils had only been involved in two schools – in both cases schools which were not offering any cycle training. At one, the school had been newly formed in 2010, by amalgamating two existing schools. It had not been able to offer its cycle training programme because of the disruption of the amalgamation. The parent council of the new school insisted that the cycle training be offered to both primary six and primary seven pupils the following year (2011) to ensure that no pupil missed out on training. At the other school, the parent council was keen to introduce cycle training, but had not been able to identify a volunteer.

4.13 In one school, staff volunteers delivering cycle training had decided not to proceed with on-road training due to safety fears, and had not involved the parent council in this decision at all (despite advice from the RSO to consult parents).

Maintaining On-Road Cycle Training

4.14 There were a number of factors which helped schools to maintain and sustain their approach to on-road training:

- **Head teacher leadership** – In schools where the head teacher was committed to sustaining cycle training, staff were able to invest time in maintaining on-road training. This included time spent recruiting volunteers, meeting with volunteers to plan sessions and attending training sessions.

- **Dedicated staff volunteers** – In three of the schools, staff were involved in delivering the cycle training programme as ‘volunteers’. This reduces reliance on parents, and means that cycle training is seen as part of one staff member’s job. In one case, the head teacher included cycle training delivery in the job description for a classroom assistant.
- **Parent volunteers** - Parent volunteers also helped considerably in sustaining on-road cycle training. In some cases, schools had identified either a ‘lead’ volunteer or a parent who was prepared to volunteer for a number of years in a row – perhaps because of having a number of children at the school. This appeared to help greatly in ensuring sustainability and continuity of the cycle programme.

4.15 Overall, where individuals (whether staff or parents) were interested in cycle training and believed that on-road training could be effective, they invested time and effort in making their programme work.

Head teacher commitment

One school had a very enthusiastic head teacher who was keen to be involved in planning on-road cycle training. This head teacher decided that the reliance on parent volunteers in delivering the training was too unpredictable – as it was difficult to identify enough volunteers each year. As a result, the head teacher made arrangements for cycle training to become part of the classroom assistant’s role. Staff also attended an on-road cycle training course, to ensure that they had the skills to deliver the programme.

For more about this approach see Case Study 6.

4.16 As well as providing leadership, head teachers also often perform an essential administrative role. The administration of the scheme is essential to ensure that time is built in for both classroom and practical training, and this is well co-ordinated.

‘I have to play the administrative role in making sure cycling training can and does happen.’

(Head teacher)

4.17 Generally, schools felt that once on-road cycle training programmes were set up there was limited additional work in maintaining and sustaining the programme. Those involved felt that they developed an effective approach to managing and delivering the training each year. The key challenge was sustaining volunteers (which is explored in more detail later in this chapter).

The RSO Role in Maintaining Cycle Training

4.18 The involvement of RSOs (or Active Schools Co-ordinators) appears to be critical in initiating, sustaining and maintaining on-road cycle training. In the case study schools, RSOs had been instrumental in getting the on-road programmes set up. However, as training programmes became more established, RSO involvement tended to decrease.

'RSOs were initially very heavily involved and were invaluable in training the schools training providers – but as the provision matured, there was less and less need for them (RSO) to be quite so involved and they eventually took on a more advisory role.'

(Head teacher)

4.19 Schools were generally happy with this approach. However, teachers at many schools emphasised that ongoing support from the RSO, even if it was minimal, was essential in sustaining their cycle training programme. In one of the eleven case study schools the RSO was essential for maintaining the on-road cycle training programme due to staff absence, and issues around staff skills and confidence to deliver on-road training. This RSO delivered the on-road cycle training programme in 2010/11, and in previous years visited the school once every three weeks to review the programme and provide support as required.

4.20 All case study schools felt that they had a good relationship with their RSO or Active Schools Co-ordinator, and this was reciprocated. As cycle training had been ongoing in several case study schools for many years, the RSOs were able to forge strong relationships with the staff.

'Most of the staff have remained the same over the years which has helped retain the good relationship.'

(Road Safety Officer)

4.21 The case study schools all felt that they could go to their RSO (or Active Schools Co-ordinator) for support and assistance if required. Recently, there have been changes in the support some Road Safety Units are able to offer schools with cycle training – whether on or off-road. Some Road Safety Units have become smaller or have new responsibilities, and have reprioritised their work which has resulted in a reduction in the time they spend on cycle training. Generally, RSOs have moved to a role of facilitation and support, rather than direct delivery.

4.22 In many case study schools, volunteer trainers have taken on the responsibility for undertaking final assessment of pupils involved in cycle training – which used to be done by the RSO. In most cases the volunteers were happy to conduct this, following training from the RSO on how to carry out the final test. However, some schools felt that the involvement of the RSO in the testing gave the test more of a status, and helped to make it 'important' for the pupils.

'The RSO used to have a big role, especially in examining the children at the end of the course, which made it all seem a bit more real to the children.'

(Head teacher)

'It seems to make it more important in the eyes of the kids – someone from outside the school and linked to road safety'

(Head teacher)

4.23 One head teacher had received complaints from parents that the volunteer trainers were not suitably qualified enough to carry out the assessment.

'I've heard disgruntled parents asking what right, qualifications or experience someone who is not an RSO has to fail a child.'
(Head teacher)

4.24 Although some Road Safety Units no longer offer support with the final assessment, all case study schools offering cycle training received help with the initial bicycle safety check at the start of the training. Many schools felt that this was a very important aspect of RSO involvement. Some volunteers suggested that they did not feel adequately trained to carry out safety checks.

Challenges to Setting Up and Maintaining On-Road Cycle Training

4.25 Generally, the schools offering on-road training were very content with their cycle training programmes, and had not experienced significant challenges in establishing their on-road programmes. However, some had experienced challenges to introducing and sustaining on-road cycle training. The key challenges experienced were related to ensuring pupil safety, including:

- maintaining a sufficient number of volunteers to allow a reasonable ratio of adults to children;
- ensuring that volunteers had the skills and confidence to deliver an on-road training programme;
- identifying a suitable location which offers a real life road environment without endangering the pupils.

4.26 These barriers are explored in more detail in Chapter Five, which focuses on barriers to on-road cycle training.

Stopping On-Road Cycle Training

4.27 Of the six schools which had introduced on-road cycle training, only one was considering stopping the training in the future. This school had piloted on-road training because of the enthusiasm of a new probationary teacher, with support from the RSO. However, the probationary teacher was only at the school for one year, and teachers were not sure whether the approach will continue. There were two key barriers:

- Attitudes – Off-road training has been delivered in the same way, by the same member of staff, for many years. The programme is seen (by staff) as successful, and there is some resistance to change.
- Resources – The pilot involved considerable support from RSOs, community wardens, teachers and parents. The school does not believe that this approach is sustainable.

Summary

- 4.28 Six of the eleven schools involved in this research were offering on-road cycle training. All of the schools offering on-road training held at least two or three lessons in the playground initially - to allow the children to build up a basic competence. Children were then on-road for up to six lessons. All schools offering cycle training followed the Bikeability Scotland 2 - Scottish Cycle Training Scheme. Most cycle training programmes lasted between six and eight weeks.
- 4.29 All of the schools offering cycle training did so with primary six and/ or primary seven children (in line with the RoSPA guidelines). Generally, participants felt this was an appropriate stage to deliver cycle training – both on and off-road.
- 4.30 Overall, decisions about the type and level of cycle training offered at schools are made by teachers – generally head teachers and deputy head teachers – working with their Road Safety Officer. Successful on-road training programmes generally have strong leadership from the head teacher, dedicated staff volunteers, and an active pool of parent volunteers.
- 4.31 Schools offering on-road cycle training were generally very content with their programme. School staff felt that once programmes were set up, they were generally relatively easy to sustain. The main challenges to setting up and maintaining on-road cycle programmes related to ensuring pupil safety in an on-road environment.
- 4.32 In one case, resistance to change from school staff involved in planning and delivering the training was a key barrier.

5. BARRIERS TO ON-ROAD CYCLE TRAINING

Introduction

5.1 Five of the case study schools were not delivering on-road training (and three did not deliver any training at all). This chapter explores barriers to introducing on-road cycle training. It also explores the challenges experienced by schools with on-road cycle training programmes, and how the schools managed to overcome these barriers.

Barriers to On-Road Training

Ensuring pupil safety

5.2 Most of the challenges experienced by schools with on-road cycle training related to ensuring pupil safety in an on-road environment. Schools offering on-road training felt that for pupils to be safe on the roads it was vital that there were enough volunteers in place to supervise the children, that the volunteers were skilled, and that the training took place in a realistic but safe location.

5.3 Pupil safety was also the biggest concern for schools not offering on-road training. All five schools without an on-road cycle training programme felt that they would require more volunteers to be able to deliver the training safely on-road, to ensure a reasonable ratio of adults to children. Two also raised concerns about their location and pupil safety.

Attracting volunteer trainers

5.4 Overall, participants felt that it required more volunteer resources to run an on-road training programme. Schools offering on-road training found that the biggest challenge was attracting enough volunteer trainers. Parents tended to be involved while their own children were of age to take part in the training, with the numbers fluctuating each year.

'My comfort in providing the training has grown over the years, but I can't become lax. As long as I've got helpers I'm comfortable. But if I don't have enough volunteers then I take the training back to the playground.'

(Staff volunteer trainer)

5.5 Four of the five schools not offering on-road training indicated that they would be prepared to consider it if they were able to attract more volunteers. Two of the three schools not offering any cycle training were keen to do so, but had struggled to identify volunteers to deliver the training. And the two schools delivering off-road training would be prepared to consider on-road training, but only with more volunteers.

5.6 In one school, existing volunteers involved in off-road training had considered the possibility of delivering cycle training on-road, but were not comfortable with

taking responsibility for pupil safety without more volunteers to support them. Another school echoed these views.

'I was keen to take the classes on-road to heighten the children's awareness. Trying to explain to children the dangers they face on the road is not easy when you have to get them to imagine. If they were on the road it would be much easier. The course would be more real, but I would need additional help from volunteers.'

(Volunteer trainer)

Volunteer skills and confidence

5.7 When schools began to deliver on-road training, some volunteers – both staff and parents – were concerned. Most were worried about being able to keep the children safe on the roads, and felt that it was a big responsibility.

'Sometimes I feel very alone, very responsible and very pressured.'

(Volunteer trainer)

'It was quite nerve wracking taking the children on to the main road the first time. It still is that first week, but the kids are well warned about the dangers they face and their responsibilities.'

(Volunteer trainer)

'It was a big responsibility, but it went absolutely fine. The kids got to experience a real life situation. They seemed to appreciate the scenario more than being on the playground.'

(Volunteer trainer)

5.8 However, generally volunteers felt that they had received strong support from RSOs through the transition to on-road training. This included training – which volunteers praised - and a presence by RSOs at some on-road sessions, to support volunteers. The training provided to volunteers varied. In some cases, volunteers received one to one support going over the on-road training programme and exploring what is involved for children. In other cases, RSOs organised joint training sessions, bringing volunteers together. Volunteers at two schools suggested that it would be useful to have more training sessions for volunteers, covering both on and off-road practical training.

Investing in on-road skills

One of the case study schools had invested in developing the skills of those delivering their on-road cycle training programme. Staff had attended a four day 'Cycle Trainer' course run by Cycling Scotland to prepare for delivering on-road training. This type of investment required the full support of the head teacher at each school, and this training took place at a school where the head teacher valued the cycle training programme and was keen to sustain and develop it.

For more about this approach see Case Study 6.

School location and logistics

5.9 There were varied views about whether schools located on busy roads could safely deliver on-road training. Two schools felt that they could not offer on-road training due to their location. Both schools were very concerned about road safety issues, and at one school there had been a pupil accident (non cycle related) on the road where the school is located. Another school was located in an area of relative deprivation, and was concerned about the safety of children if training took place in a nearby housing estate – which would be otherwise suitable for training.

5.10 Parents and teachers sometimes had different views. For example, while teachers at one school did not think that any on-road training could take place, parents suggested that there were suitable, quieter streets nearby that the school could use instead – provided children practiced in the playground initially.

Exploring on-road options

At one school, the head teacher was keen to identify a location where training could take place on-road. The school had worked with the RSO to identify a suitable location, but there was a logistical problem as to how to get the pupils there and back safely. The proposed location was too far from the school to cycle and despite exploring various options, the school has not been able to introduce on-road cycle training.

For more about this approach see Case Study 4.

5.11 Some of the schools offering on-road training had initial reservations about location, with concerns over safety. However, with support from the RSO these schools were able to introduce successful on-road programmes through:

- putting up signs alerting drivers to the training;
- asking children to wear fluorescent tabards;
- increasing the ratio of volunteers to children¹³;
- closely controlling the manoeuvres children made on the road; and
- gradually progressing from off-road, to quiet roads, to busier roads.

'A good example of a school making the most of the position they are in...and still being able to deliver on-road cycle training safely, with the use of appropriate signage and the use by adults and children alike of high visibility clothing.'

(Road Safety Officer)

¹³ For on-road training, RoSPA guidelines recommend "the maximum ratio of trainees to trainer should be 8:1, with a minimum of two tutors at all times".

Resistance to change

5.12 Two of the case study schools had been offering off-road cycle training following the same format of delivery for at least 15 years. Another school which had recently piloted on-road training had also offered off-road training for a long period of time. While some teachers and volunteers were interested in exploring other approaches, some felt content that their existing programmes were effective and there was no significant reason to change. Some participants were concerned that schools did not appear to be proactively addressing the barriers to on-road training, and seemed content to continue with off-road training.

Administration

5.13 One school felt that there would be considerable administrative barriers to taking pupils into an on-road environment. It felt that on-road cycle training would not be feasible due to the volume of paperwork required to take pupils out of the school – even for a walk. It believed that the ‘burden’ of paperwork would be restrictive. None of the other case study schools mentioned administration or paperwork as a barrier.

External support

5.14 The case studies highlighted that in some cases, Road Safety Officers used to provide more direct support in delivering cycle training programmes. However, some RSOs have moved to a support and facilitation role, and do not have the resources to deliver cycle training programmes. This may be linked to structural changes within local authorities and police forces. One school was concerned that the RSOs may stop conducting the bicycle checks and request that the volunteer trainers take on this role. Volunteers did not feel that they would be able to undertake this task, and were concerned about the safety of children on the road as a result.

Barriers to Cycle Training More Generally

5.15 Three schools were not delivering any cycle training at all. These schools identified barriers to providing any kind of cycle training – whether on or off-road.

Availability of suitable bicycles

5.16 Three schools indicated that some of their pupils would not own or be able to borrow a bike to take part in the training. Two of these schools were in areas of high deprivation, and another was in a central area where over half of pupils were entitled to free school meals. One school had worked to get round this issue by borrowing bikes from the local authority. It also found that sometimes children’s bikes do not pass the initial safety check, and parents do not help the child to make the necessary changes. Two did not provide any cycle training.

‘The children would all need to access roadworthy bikes and most are not from particularly wealthy backgrounds.’

(Head teacher)

5.17 One school was also concerned that it did not have the facilities in the playground to store bicycles securely, and that there would be a high risk of vandalism if bicycles were left in the playground. Another school in a more affluent area found that sometimes children don't have bicycles or helmets. To address this, it entered and won a competition to win extra equipment.

Layout of the school playground

5.18 One school - with a high proportion of children from challenging or disadvantaged backgrounds - felt that the layout of the playground would not be suitable for off-road cycle training as it is split by a large flight of stairs. The school had no road markings painted on the playground to support off-road training.

Fitting cycle training into the curriculum

5.19 One school stated that it currently had a 'very full curriculum' and felt that it would struggle to fit cycle training into the current timetable. However, all of the other case study schools felt that cycle training fitted well with the Health and Wellbeing experiences and outcomes within the Curriculum for Excellence. These schools either made the time for cycle training within the curriculum already, or did not see this as a potential barrier to introducing training. The schools offering off-road cycle training were generally investing roughly the same amount of time in practical and classroom based learning as the on-road schools.

5.20 Generally, responsibility for delivering on-road training fell to classroom assistants, learning assistants, school secretaries and/ or parent volunteers, supported by Road Safety Officers. Classroom teachers were generally not involved in delivering the practical element of the cycle training, although occasionally classroom teachers, deputy head teachers and head teachers provided back up support if required.

Overcoming Barriers to On-Road Cycle Training

5.21 The schools which had introduced and sustained on-road cycle training were generally very committed to the approach. Schools had overcome barriers to on-road training through using a range of mechanisms and techniques.

Reducing concerns about safety

5.22 Schools offering on-road training programmes appear to have become more confident about this approach where:

- there is an adequate pool of volunteers – including both school staff and parents - to establish a good ratio of adults to children;
- schools have positive relationships with their RSOs – who have been instrumental in encouraging schools to move to an on-road training programme; and/or
- schools take a phased approach to move from the playground, to a quiet road, onto a busier road – with flexibility to progress more slowly if required.

5.23 Overall, on-road cycle training seemed to be most sustainable where the programme was supported by the head teacher, staff and parents. The leadership and support of head teachers in promoting on-road cycling was essential.

Attracting volunteer trainers

5.24 Schools offering on-road cycle programmes had used a range of approaches to encourage volunteers.

- **Dedicated staff as volunteers** – Some schools identified key staff members – usually classroom assistants, learning assistants or other support staff such as the secretary – to take the role of ‘lead volunteer’. In small schools, staff could deliver the programme themselves. In larger schools, parent volunteers were also encouraged. Consistent staff involvement appears to lead to continuity of the programme, reduces responsibility placed on parent volunteers, and allows staff to build up an expertise.
- **Investing in training** – Volunteers – both staff and parents – can have concerns about responsibility for taking children on-road. RSO training is highly valued, and volunteers at some schools were keen for more regular training sessions. In one school, the head teacher encouraged staff to attend a detailed on-road training course, to build up skills and confidence of two staff members to deliver on-road training.
- **Intensive support from the RSO/ community wardens** – Two schools received support from either the RSO or others, such as community wardens, to deliver the on-road element of the training. In one case, this was due to staff illness with no other staff able to act as the lead volunteer. In another case, this was to initiate on-road training, allowing the school and pupils to experience the benefits of the on-road approach. Neither of these approaches appears sustainable in the long term, but it can help to encourage on-road training, or fill a gap where particular problems are experienced.

5.25 None of the schools had taken a particularly innovative approach to encouraging parent volunteers – all used letters to parents, and some had asked parent council members to volunteer. One school used issued a leaflet to parents, to encourage volunteers. All of the schools offering on-road training felt that it was often luck whether a parent was prepared to volunteer.

5.26 Some schools extended the invitation to participate as a volunteer beyond parents of the year groups participating in the cycle training. In some cases this has attracted volunteers who perform the role for a number of years, until their children leave the school. One school – currently offering no cycle training – mentioned that it may consider working jointly with community police officers and volunteers from community groups, such as the local church, with which the school had an existing relationship.

Establishing a core of volunteers

In one school a 'core team' had been established, involving two classroom assistants. This dedicated resource helped to ensure that the programme is sustainable and well managed. Staff can develop specialist skills, as they will be involved in on-road training over the longer term. Parents can become involved in the training without taking on too much responsibility for managing the training. There is a strong team of staff and parent volunteers who are committed to delivering the training on-road.

Find out more about this approach in Case Study 6.

School location and logistics

- 5.27 Schools offering on-road training programmes had taken a variety of approaches to identifying a safe location. Firstly, all of the case study schools offering 'on-road' training begin their training in the playground. All of the schools were flexible about when to move to the on-road element of training, and some built in an extra week or so to allow for additional off-road practice if required. Others took a phased approach, gradually moving from quiet to busy roads. This can help to build confidence of volunteers and children.
- 5.28 In busy locations, schools tended to use signs as well as asking children to wear fluorescent tabards so that they were easily visible. Some schools identified issues around equipment – particularly in deprived areas. At one school, pupils were asked to share bikes so that all pupils could participate.

Identifying a safe location

One school faced considerable barriers, being located on a 60mph main road. As some children already cycle to school along this road, the school was committed to training the children here. The children practice in the playground initially, and then practice in the lay-by of the road, which is near the school. Only once children have mastered the basics, they practice turning onto the main road. The school has volunteers in the lay-by and on the road, and places large signs on the road to alert drivers that the training is taking place.

Find out more about this approach in Case Study 10.

Links between classroom and practical activity

- 5.29 Several schools had recently introduced the I-Cycle resource as well as other classroom based activities to complement the practical training. Staff feedback indicated that making links between the two helped children to put their learning into practice and ultimately aided the success of the training.

'What has worked well in this school is that the teacher and the trainer work really well together. The trainer can worry about all the practical aspects and the teacher can do the theory. I was surprised at how well on-road has worked in a school that had such initial reservations about it.'

(Road Safety Officer)

Summary

- 5.30 Schools not offering on-road training were positive about the potential on-road cycle training could offer in terms of learning opportunities for children. The biggest concern for schools relating to on-road training was being able to ensure pupil safety.
- 5.31 All felt that a key component of delivering safe on-road training was having an adequate number of volunteer trainers, to ensure a reasonable ratio of adults to children. Schools both with and without on-road programmes had experienced difficulties attracting and sustaining parent volunteers. On-road programmes appear to have been most sustainable where staff volunteers formed the core, with parents providing a support role.
- 5.32 School location, and the logistics of getting children and bikes to a safe on-road site, was a challenge for some case study schools – particularly those located near busy roads. Two schools had concerns about the volume of traffic on nearby roads, and one had concerns about wider community safety issues.
- 5.33 Three schools exhibited some resistance to changing their off-road programme, or simply had not considered on-road training as an option.
- 5.34 In some cases, there were barriers to introducing cycle training more generally – with issues around playground layout and availability of suitable bicycles. These were particular issues in schools in areas of high deprivation.
- 5.35 Schools offering on-road training programmes appear to have become more confident about this approach where:
- there is an adequate pool of skilled volunteers – including both school staff and parents - to establish a good ratio of adults to children;
 - schools have positive relationships with their RSOs – who have been instrumental in encouraging schools to move to an on-road training programme; and/or
 - schools take a phased approach to move from the playground, to a quiet road, onto a busier road – with flexibility to progress more slowly if required.

6. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Key Findings

Attitudes to On-Road Training

- 6.1 There was common agreement across teachers, support staff and parents that on-road training was superior to playground based training – offering a more realistic experience and faster and more effective learning.
- 6.2 The biggest concern for schools relating to on-road training was being able to ensure pupil safety. Volunteering to assist with on-road training is seen as more of a responsibility than assisting with playground based training, due to concerns over pupil safety.

Planning and Delivering On-Road Cycle Training

- 6.3 This research identified broad support for on-road cycle training for primary six and primary seven pupils.
- 6.4 The commitment and enthusiasm of head teachers, teachers, support staff, parents, Active School Coordinators and Road Safety Officers is critical to initiating and sustaining on-road cycle training.
- 6.5 Parents and parent councils appear positive about and supportive of on-road cycle training. However, there is potential for parent councils to be significantly more involved in decisions about on-road cycle training planning and delivery.

Barriers to On-Road Training

- 6.6 Teachers, support staff and parents all agreed that more volunteers were required to deliver on-road training safely, compared with off-road training. Identifying enough volunteers to deliver on-road training was the most significant and common barrier identified by teachers, support staff and parents.

Overcoming this barrier

Where schools identify a staff member with lead responsibility, it can encourage parents to volunteer without taking on sole or lead responsibility for pupil safety. These volunteers also develop specialist skills in on-road training.

There is potential for further training for volunteers (both parents and staff) to reduce concerns about responsibilities related to taking children on-road. There is potential for schools to use more innovative approaches to attracting volunteers, including working with community groups and volunteer agencies.

- 6.7 Generally, volunteers felt that they had the skills to deliver on-road training, and were supported well by the RSO. However, some volunteers (both staff and parents) suggested that more training would be valuable.

Overcoming this barrier

Schools highlighted that they required RSO support with initial bicycle checks and general support and advice. There could be opportunities for training volunteers to undertake initial checks, with support to build up confidence. However, all schools emphasised the need for ongoing support and advice from RSOs.

- 6.8 In two schools, off-road cycle training had been delivered in the same format for over 15 years and there was some resistance to change which proved a significant barrier.
- 6.9 Some schools struggle to identify a suitable safe site, and a way of getting children and bicycles from the school to the site safely.

Overcoming this barrier

Schools overcame issues of location through:

- putting up signs alerting drivers to the training;
- asking children to wear fluorescent tabards;
- increasing the ratio of volunteers to children;
- closely controlling the manoeuvres children made on the road; and
- gradually progressing from off-road, to quiet roads, to busier roads.

- 6.10 Challenges with equipment and physical layout of the playground were the main challenges for schools unable to offer any cycle training at all.

Overcoming this barrier

Schools addressed challenges around bicycle availability and quality through:

- pupils sharing bicycles;
- applying for funding for equipment¹⁴;
- Road Safety Officers undertaking bicycle maintenance classes, to repair unsuitable equipment; and
- suggesting that equipment could be hired.

- 6.11 Schools in areas with relatively high levels of deprivation identified challenges to providing cycle training related to this. Issues identified included access to bicycles, lack of parental support to repair bicycles, and challenges providing on-road training in a neighbourhood with community safety issues.

Overcoming this barrier

In one school, pupils were asked to share bicycles to ensure that no-one missed out on cycle training. However, this was not a common approach.

¹⁴ For example, from organisations like Sustrans, Local Authorities, Cycling Scotland or lottery funding .

Conclusions

- 6.12 Prior to this research being undertaken, there was limited evidence about on-road cycle training for primary school pupils in Scotland. This research has provided rich information about the experience of considering, planning, delivering and sustaining on-road cycle training at 11 schools in Scotland.
- 6.13 This research has highlighted that there are barriers to on-road training in Scotland. The biggest barrier relates to attracting volunteers to deliver the training. On-road training is seen as requiring more volunteer resources than off-road training, to ensure a suitable ratio of adults to children. Volunteering as an on-road trainer is also seen as a significant responsibility.
- 6.14 The research also demonstrates that many schools have successfully overcome barriers to run sustainable on-road cycle training programmes. On-road cycle training has been most sustainable where teachers and support staff are supportive of cycle training; where parents are supportive and keen to volunteer; and where support is available from the Road Safety Officer or Active Schools Co-ordinator.
- 6.15 As the research focused on a small sample of 11 schools, it does not provide wider evidence about the extent and nature of on-road cycle training programmes across Scotland. However, it does demonstrate that a number of the case study schools have moved to on-road cycle training programmes in recent years, and that Road Safety Officers and Active Schools Co-ordinators have played a critical role in supporting and sustaining this shift.
- 6.16 Overall, this research highlights that there is broad common agreement among the parents, teachers, volunteers, Road Safety Officers and Active Schools Co-ordinators interviewed in this research, that on-road cycle training is considerably more effective and more enjoyable for children than off-road cycle training.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1	CASE STUDIES
APPENDIX 2	DISCUSSION GUIDES FOR:
2A	LOCAL AUTHORITY CYCLE TRAINING CONTACTS
2B	HEAD TEACHERS / CLASSROOM TEACHERS
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**APPENDIX ONE
CASE STUDIES**

CASE STUDY 1

Location	Accessible small town
Local authority type	Largely urban
Level of deprivation	Not in 15% most deprived areas
School roll	170
Year school built	1980
Type of cycle training	On-road (pilot)
Training delivered by	Staff, parents, community wardens, road safety officers

The School

This school is located in a small town, situated on a side street, close to the main road to a large town. It is committed to cycling and travel safety. It works to promote alternative forms of transport, including walking and cycling to school. For example, it took part in an International Walk to School Week and achieved the highest level of participation within the local authority. It also participates in a locally run Bike Safety Competition, where primary seven pupils from across the local authority area take part in a practical and theory test about road and cycle safety. The school encourages children to cycle to school only once they have undertaken their cycle training.

Cycle training is part of the primary six curriculum and has been for at least 20 years. Until recently cycle training was based solely in the playground, but in 2010 the school piloted on-road training for the first time. This case study explores its experience of delivering both off and on-road cycle training.

Developing and Planning Cycle Training

Until recently, the school had been delivering cycle training for a long time using the same format. The deputy head teacher looked after the administrative aspect of the training – such as sending out letters to parents to let them know that training was taking place. Parent volunteers delivered the training, with support from the classroom teacher and deputy head teacher as required. The classroom teacher co-ordinated the training, helping volunteers to plan the course for the term. As the area is a ‘close community’, the school found that many parents were keen to help out and deliver the cycle training. Overall, before 2010, the delivery of cycle training was seen as ‘tried and tested’, and seemed to work efficiently.

However, in 2010 the school had a probationary teacher who was at the school for one year, and was keen to run the cycle training. The Road Safety Officers (RSOs) used this as an opportunity to do things differently and worked with the school and the probationer to take two new approaches. Firstly, the school piloted the I-Cycle interactive resource within the classroom. Secondly, the school introduced one session of on-road cycle training.

The RSOs worked supportively with the probationary teacher to implement the new training, and had the support of the head teacher to ‘shake things up’. The Parent Council was not involved in discussions about a new approach to cycle training.

Delivering Cycle Training

Prior to 2010 the cycle training involved at least eight weeks of training, during the summer term. At the beginning, the children's bikes were tested for road worthiness. The children followed a programme of theory and practical learning. All practical training took place in the playground, where there are road markings. Pupils had three practical sessions per week. Usually parent volunteers assisted at two of the three sessions each week. The overall number of people working with the children varied depending on staff availability, but was generally one adult for between five and ten children.

In 2010, the school followed broadly the same approach. Most practical cycle training was delivered in the playground. The new I-Cycle interactive resource was used in the classroom to demonstrate different road safety manoeuvres, and then this was practised in the playground. The children's homework and class based sessions matched with the practical sessions throughout the cycle training period. The RSOs also worked with the probationary teacher to deliver one on-road practical session. This session took place towards the end of the training, just before testing. The RSOs organised for community wardens to attend the on-road session, which would not normally happen. The community wardens are employed by the local authority, and help to ensure safety, tackle anti-social behaviour and prevent crime. The RSOs felt that the presence of community wardens would be an effective way of reducing safety fears through increasing the number of volunteers present. It would also help community wardens to build relationships with young people who they might meet in their area at evenings or weekends.

Parents, two staff members and two RSOs also volunteered at the on-road session. The volunteers essentially lined the on-road route, and were present at junctions to ensure the safety of the pupils. The RSOs said that they had been 'trying for years' to get schools to think about on-road training and the idea to supply community wardens had been really useful to show schools that with additional resources, safety fears are reduced.

As with previous years, there was a practical assessment (in the playground) and a theory test at the end of the course. In the past, the RSOs came to the school to test the pupils at the end of the training period. However, the RSOs are now unable to do so, due to pressure on resources. The school felt that this was a shame, as the use of an external figure 'reinforced the gravity of the situation', and added 'an extra layer of authority'.

'It seems to make it more important in the eyes of the kids – someone from outside the school and linked to road safety.'
(School staff member)

Attitudes Towards On-Road Cycle Training

At the outset, the school had some reservations about on-road cycle training. Cycle training had been delivered for over 20 years in the same way. The arrival of a new probationary teacher with an interest in cycle training provided the opportunity to look at the school's approach in a fresh way. However, there were some concerns about changing the existing approach.

'We have a successful formula of playground based training.'
(School staff member)

Teachers at the school recognised the value of on-road training, but there were some concerns that the roads near the school were busy, and the school did not have the capacity to involve enough trainers to ensure that the children would be safe. However, volunteers, parents and staff all recognised the value of on-road cycle training.

'We have a track painted on the playground, but it just isn't the same as getting them out on the road. Getting them out into the road would make it easier to reinforce the lessons they are supposed to be learning.'
(School staff member)

Volunteers and parents were positive about the on-road training pilot.

'It was a big responsibility, but it went absolutely fine. The kids got to experience a real life situation. They seemed to appreciate the scenario more than being on the playground.'
(Volunteer)

Both the volunteer and member of the Parent Council interviewed felt that on-road training was very beneficial for pupils, and meant that training took place in a more realistic environment. The volunteer trainer saw immediate benefits from providing on-road training to the pupils and suggested that there had been 'quite a difference' between the pupils from the start to the end of their training. She thought their technique and their confidence had improved.

'(On-road) puts kids in a realistic situation. It reminds them that they can't just go zig-zagging around on the road, as they can on the playground. They just can't get the sense of importance on the playground that they would on the road. There are other road users and it helps build their confidence in being around them.'
(Parent)

Overall, the school was positive about the pilot of the interactive I-Cycle resource and on-road training. Participants felt that the programme was varied enough to keep the pupils interested. The school felt that the practical, classroom based and home work all complemented one another. But volunteers suggested that communication between volunteers and staff could be better – with more discussion with the classroom teacher about what the children have been doing during the classroom section of the training.

However, the school was unsure whether on-road training would continue in the future. The teacher responsible for delivering cycle training on a regular basis remained concerned that the school did not have the personnel to deliver a successful on-road programme, and that the surrounding roads were too busy.

Overcoming Barriers to On-Road Cycle Training

Generally, our interviews did not identify significant barriers to on-road training. Parents and volunteers in particular appeared very positive about the benefits of on-

road training and could see few barriers. However, we did identify a number of barriers to introducing and maintaining on-road cycle training at this school:

- **Traffic** – There were varied views about whether the location of the school suited on-road training. While some felt that it was a good location, with suitable roads for practicing, others were concerned that the street was relatively busy and that it was hard to identify a safe place to practice.

Most participants felt that the issue of location could be overcome relatively easily, as parents and RSOs did not appear concerned about on-road training in the vicinity of the school. One consultee suggested that plenty of volunteers and some signage to highlight that cycle training was taking place would overcome this barrier.

- **Resources** – Although in 2010 the school introduced one on-road session, the school was only prepared to undertake on-road training with a high volume of staff or volunteers present. Parents and volunteers also suggested that it was important to ensure that there were enough adults supervising. The school had concerns about how to sustain the level of resources required for effective on-road cycle training.

Participants did not suggest many opportunities for addressing this barrier. They did feel that parents were keen to volunteer, but that support from staff, RSOs or community wardens would be required to maintain on-road training. Some suggested that on-road training could be undertaken part time, with off-road training continued as well.

- **Satisfaction with the status quo** – Some teachers felt that the existing playground based cycle training was effective, and that there was no significant reason to change the approach. Some participants were concerned that the school did not appear to be proactively addressing the barriers to on-road training, and appeared content to continue with off-road training.
- **Skills** – All parties had some degree of concern about the shift from off to on-road. However, the volunteer interviewed was positive that through strong involvement of the RSOs at the first session, she now had the skills to deliver on-road training in the future. It was suggested that it would be useful to introduce annual training sessions for volunteers, covering both on and off-road practical training.

At the time of this case study there had not been a detailed discussion between the RSO and the head teacher about how to proceed next year, following the pilot of on-road training.

Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank the deputy head teacher, the volunteer trainer, the representative of the parent council and also the RSO for their involvement and cooperation in this case study.

CASE STUDY 2

Location	Small town
Local authority type	Largely urban
Level of deprivation	In 15% most deprived areas of Scotland
School roll	300
Year school built	2010
Type of cycle training	Off-road
Training delivered by	Staff (head teacher, teachers, classroom assistants), volunteer parents

The School

This school opened in February 2010, as an amalgamation of two existing schools. This case study explores the experience of cycle training both at this new school, and one of the previous schools – where the current head teacher previously taught.

Before amalgamation, road safety was a significant issue for one of the school's as it was located on a very busy main road. Cycle training was a formal, integral part of the school's curriculum as part of the health and wellbeing programme. The school regularly held road safety themed classes, such as poetry sessions. Children were encouraged to cycle to school once they had passed their cycling test.

The head teacher wants to strongly promote cycling at the new school. The school is an 'eco school' and promotes cycling as a lifestyle choice. It also participates in a cycle competition run by a local road safety organisation. One student from each school competes for a prize based on who is the best road safety student. This is a great encouragement to the children, as they are eager to win their school's nomination.

To date, all practical cycle training has taken place in the playground.

Developing and Planning Cycle Training

This school opened in February 2010. It brought two schools together, one of which was the head teacher's former school. Off-road cycle training had been provided to primary six pupils at that school for over 20 years.

Unfortunately, in the year that the school opened, it was not possible to undertake any cycle training. The head teacher was keen to promote cycle training, but it was simply not possible in the first year of operation. This meant that pupils in primary six during 2009/10 missed out. However, the school is committed to cycle training. Next year, it will offer off-road training to all primary six and primary seven pupils, to ensure that none of the pupils miss out. The Parent Council was very keen that all pupils receive cycle training and specifically requested that both primary six and seven children received training next year.

Generally, in the past, the head teacher has taken on the administrative responsibility of running the cycle training scheme. At her previous school, the head teacher had run cycle training for 24 years. She took responsibility for:

- ensuring that families are aware of the timescales and requirements for bicycles at school on the necessary days;
- making staffing arrangements;
- making practical arrangements, for example, bicycle storage on training days; and
- contingency planning.

The head teacher also worked jointly with the local Road Safety Officer (RSO) to deliver training. She described her relationship with the RSO as 'very good and also long-standing'. RSOs were very involved in getting cycle training up and running at the previous school, but as the cycle training programme matured there was less need for the RSOs to be quite so involved. The RSO eventually adopted more of an advisory role, which was seen as 'invaluable'. The RSO suggested that the success of the training at the school was partly due to this good relationship.

Next year, cycle training will begin at the new school. It is likely that the programme will continue to be managed and delivered in the same way as it was at the head teacher's previous school. However, as this is a newly established school, the RSO will write to the school in the New Year, welcoming them to the cycle training programme. The RSO will offer staff and volunteers a 'cycle planning' day, for new volunteers to learn what is involved. It is anticipated that the amalgamation of two schools could lead to some new staff getting involved in training for the first time.

Delivering Cycle Training

Over the past 24 years, cycle training has run in the same way. The plan is to offer a similar off-road training programme in 2011.

The training was originally delivered by volunteer trainers – a mix of staff and parents. The primary six classroom teacher generally took responsibility for co-ordinating the delivery of the practical and classroom based training. However, as staffing levels rose, the head teacher took the opportunity to include cycle training as a specific role within the classroom assistant job description. The classroom assistant was 'particularly willing' and was keen to take on responsibility for this role.

The classroom assistant now co-ordinates some aspects of the administration. Each year, she issues a standard letter to all pupils. Children bring their bikes in for checks, and two RSOs come to the school to do these checks. Each year, one or two children did not participate in the training. Often they couldn't because they didn't have a bike. The local authority has some old bikes, and in the past the school has borrowed some for children.

The practical training runs for six weeks. It runs at the same time as work in the classroom. The practical training focuses on starting and stopping safely, emergency stops, turning left and right, and overtaking. The children spend about

50 minutes in practical training each week. Around 13 children receive training at the one time – class numbers are usually around 26.

The children tend to enjoy the practical training. Generally, they find overtaking the most difficult manoeuvre. Sometimes children need extra practice, and the school is flexible about introducing an extra week of training to allow all children to feel confident.

At the end of the practical training programme, there is a final test. In the past, the RSO ran this test. However, due to financial and resource pressures the Council has been unable to commit the resources to run final tests in any primary schools in the area. The classroom assistant, who is a volunteer trainer, recently started managing the final test. There was no specific training for this, but she watched the RSOs doing it the previous year, and was given a checklist. She also attends 'very good and very helpful' refresher training each year.

Staff, parents and volunteers all agreed that the training undertaken in the past produced results. It developed skills in terms of cycling competence, and the children also looked forward to it and seem to enjoy the sessions. There were also benefits for the volunteers. The volunteer interviewed as part of this case study found the training 'quite enjoyable' and thought that it was 'a good skill to have'.

As cycle training has been running for a long time, the school now generally manages its cycle programme itself. However, teachers at the school were aware that they could contact the RSOs for extra help if necessary, and found them very helpful.

The school aims to run a similar cycle training programme from 2010/11 onwards. It has recently (October 2010) had a cycle track painted onto the school playground ready to use next year.

Attitudes Towards On-Road Cycle Training

Cycle training at this school has always been delivered in the playground. Very few schools within this local authority deliver on-road training. The RSOs have been working with schools since 2009 to promote and encourage on-road cycle training. However, because this is a new school – and the two existing schools were being amalgamated - it has not yet had support to enable on-road training.

The head teacher stated that the school had been offering cycle training for over 20 years and had not considered on-road training as a possibility. However, the head teacher did think that on-road training would be beneficial and was able to visualise the use of a cycle track in a nearby area as a potential location for pupils. Volunteers also agreed that they could see the potential benefits.

'There would be a definite benefit to the children in terms of preparing them for real cycling on the road.'

(School staff member)

The head teacher also felt that it would be a good for the community as a whole to see the pupils out and about in the local area.

Although the head teacher had not considered on-road training, some of the volunteers had. The volunteers had discussed the use of on-road training with the Road Safety Officers, but felt that it was 'quite a responsibility'. Because of the 'element of danger' the volunteers agreed not to progress with on-road training, unless more staff became involved. The volunteers did not discuss the potential of on-road training with parents. However, one volunteer suggested that the car park could be used for training, as a step towards on-road training. Discussion with a representative of the Parent Council highlighted that parents are supportive of cycle training. The parent interviewed was keen that this school offered on-road training, believing that this was an excellent chance for supervised practice in a real life situation.

'Cycling training is the only chance they will have for adult supervision of their cycling in a road based environment. It should be on-road.'

(Parent)

This parent suggested that it may be useful to have playground based cycle training for younger children – perhaps primary four – which would allow children to build the skills that they need for successful on-road training in primary six or seven.

'There are more bikes and cars on the road now, so it should start in P4 in the playground and then move on to the road in P6/7. Things should have moved on.'

(Parent)

At the time of this case study, the school planned to continue with off-road cycle training in the future. The RSO plans to work with the school in 2011 to pilot the use of interactive classroom teaching resources, linked to off-road training in the playground. However, the RSO is keen to introduce on-road training, and work with schools to implement this. The RSO will explore the potential to introduce a small element of on-road training, once the children have made sufficient progress in the playground.

Overcoming Barriers to On-Road Cycle Training

Overall, parents, volunteers and teachers at this school were broadly receptive to the idea of introducing on-road training in the future. However, there remain a number of barriers to effective on-road training:

- **Location** – The school is located between two busy main roads and this was the basis of the concern for taking the pupils out onto the road. The head teacher was very concerned about safety issues, as there is never a guarantee that the children will be safe. However, participants did highlight that there are suitable, quieter streets nearby that the school could use instead. One parent suggested that pupils should wear high visibility vests, which would allow traffic to see the children from a distance. She also suggested that if pupils received adequate training in the playground initially, this would reduce safety fears.

- **Volunteer and staff resources** – The volunteer trainers suggested that the biggest barrier to moving to on-road training would be the need for ‘a lot more staff’, to ensure pupil safety. Volunteers had considered the possibility of delivering cycle training on-road, but were not comfortable with taking responsibility for pupil safety without more staff involved. Interestingly, this discussion appears to have taken place without involvement of the head teacher. The head teacher indicated that she was confident that the RSO would provide additional resources and training if the school was to move to on-road training.

The school also raised some barriers to cycle training more generally:

- **Availability of suitable bicycles** – Although cycle training is popular and there has been a consistently high take up of the training among pupils, some pupils do not own a suitable bike. In some cases, children don’t own a bike at all. In others, the bikes don’t pass the initial safety check, and sometimes parents don’t help the child to make the necessary changes to allow them to use the bike safely. The school has worked to get round these barriers. In some situations, the school has been able to borrow a bike from the local authority, or make other provisions to supply a bike for the training.
- **Initial bicycle checks** – One volunteer trainer had concerns that due to financial pressures, the local authority might stop conducting the bicycle checks and that these would be left to the volunteers to carry out. The volunteers were concerned that they were not trained to carry out safety checks.

Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank the head teacher, the classroom assistant, the parent representative and also the RSO for their involvement and co-operation in this case study.

CASE STUDY 3

Location	Remote small town
Local authority type	Rural
Level of deprivation	In 15% most deprived areas of Scotland
School roll	167
Year school built	1800s
Type of cycle training	On-road
Training delivered by	Volunteer trainers (parents)

The school

This primary school is located in a housing estate in a busy rural town, and is fronted by a 'B' road connecting to the trunk road. Cycle training is a priority for the school and it is well established in the 'health and wellbeing' aspect of the curriculum. The school also promotes cycling in relation to health and sustainable travel, and encourages primary seven pupils to cycle to school. It was recently awarded a 'Green Flag' award and is recognised as an 'Eco-School'. It has also received a top award for health promotion.

Developing and Planning Cycle Training

Cycle training has been a staple part of the curriculum at this school for around 30 years. The head teacher indicated that cycle training had been delivered in the same format for at least 25 years. All cycle training took place in the playground. Over time, the practical element of the training had been delivered by a range of different individuals – including a retired police officer, the local authority Road Safety Officer, volunteer parents, and a classroom assistant.

Four years ago, the Road Safety Officer suggested to the head teacher that a move to on-road training would be beneficial. The RSO was working to encourage schools across the local authority to move to on-road and each year selected a number of schools to receive extra support. This school was selected as the RSO felt that their playground was not really fully suitable for practical training.

The head teacher was reluctant at first, with particular concerns over the safety of the pupils. However, the head teacher felt that the RSO 'presented a persuasive argument in favour of on-road training' and he decided that it was a better arrangement. The RSO then identified a suitable area in the town where they could take the training and conducted a risk assessment. The school described its relationship with the local RSO as a 'very, very good one.'

The head teacher's role is now one of overall management of the process – with the training delivered by volunteers, working with the Road Safety Officer. There is one lead volunteer who co-ordinates the practical training, and the classroom teacher delivers the classroom based learning. Both work very well together, and manage and deliver the programme – with support from a wider pool of volunteers. It was felt that the cycle training was so well established that that the head teacher's

involvement in the running of the provision is now limited, although he is still involved in supporting and encouraging the training. The head teacher's role also includes liaising with the RSO and the local authority about the training and other road safety issues.

Delivering Cycle Training

The school offers cycle training as part of the primary seven curriculum. For the last four years the training has been delivered on-road. This is coordinated by a class teacher and delivered by volunteers.

The volunteers tend to be parents whose children are undertaking the cycle training who have the time and inclination to help out. There is one 'lead' volunteer (a parent) and currently four additional parent volunteers. In 2010/11, there were 27 primary seven pupils, who all received cycle training.

The programme consists of six weeks of training, with both classroom based and practical training. The training is held in the autumn term, running from mid August to October. In the classroom, the pupils use the new I-Cycle interactive resource. Staff felt that this gave the children 'a realistic interactive experience' that engaged the pupils with road safety issues.

The children have two 90 minute practical training sessions per week. These take place firstly in the playground to establish basic manoeuvres and then move to on-road. Normally the pupils practice for two weeks off-road and then have four weeks of on-road training. However, this is flexible depending on the children and can be on an equal three week off-road, three week on-road basis. The decision when to move to on-road is made by the volunteer trainers.

RSOs are seen as a big help and very supportive, although they are less 'hands on' than before. In the past, RSOs visited about three times over the six week training programme. Now, the RSOs visits only once during the training to conduct the bicycle check. However, they are available for support and advice over the telephone.

RSOs used to run the final test, but no longer do so. This is now carried out by the volunteers. The RSOs provided training to the volunteers on how to undertake the assessment. This training included information about the assessment stage, as well as a recap on the basics of the cycle training. The volunteer trainer interviewed as part of this case study had attended this training session, and felt it to be very worthwhile.

Overall, the school feels that the cycle training programme is valuable and effective. The volunteer trainer interviewed can see a clear difference in cycling ability, with many going from not being able to ride a bicycle at all to being able to ride safely on the roads. The volunteer trainer feels that the on-road element of the training is vital. The move to on-road training has been very successful, with the children able to pick things up more easily than in an 'imaginary' playground setting.

Attitudes Towards On-Road Cycle Training

The school was initially hesitant about on-road cycle training. The key issue was that the head teacher had concerns about pupil safety. The volunteers also had initial concerns about taking the children onto the roads, and were worried about being able to guarantee their safety. However, despite these initial concerns, the school has now taken to on-road training in a very positive manner.

Having tried on-road training, the teachers, trainers and parents unanimously agreed that this was a far better way of teaching the children to cycle safely. The head teacher felt that, despite his initial reservations about on-road training, the new on-road programme was 'far superior' to the playground based approach. Volunteers agreed, suggesting that there is 'no comparison' between on and off-road training. One volunteer trainer felt that the children learned much more quickly, and that the training really 'had to be on-road' to be effective. She suggested that, with the benefit of hindsight, having delivered only off-road training in the past was 'virtually worthless'.

Although the Parent Council is not directly involved in the cycle training, a number of the volunteers are parents of children undertaking the training. The RSO praised the school for having 'a good bank of parents who actually care about the training'. Their involvement also allowed a good ratio of volunteers to children during the training and the school tries to maintain a ratio of one adult to eight children.

Overall, the school's response to on-road training was extremely positive. However, the school did have to overcome barriers to introduce effective on-road training. The key success factors are explored in more detail below.

Overcoming Barriers To On-Road Cycle Training

The school had to overcome a number of initial barriers to introduce an effective on-road training programme. The main barrier was concern from staff and volunteers about pupil safety. Key success factors were:

- **High number of volunteers** – The school has one lead volunteer, and four other volunteers, enabling a ratio of at least one adult for every eight children. Parents at the school are interested in cycle training, and dedicate their time to volunteering. This has reduced safety fears about on-road training.
- **Dedicated staff and volunteers** – Overall, staff and parents were open minded about trying a new approach, and dedicated to making it work. Staff and volunteers could see the potential benefits of on-road training, and invested time and energy to implement it. There was support and leadership from the head teacher, who – after initial reservations – fully supported the transition to on-road training.
- **Training format** – The format of the training involves at least two weeks of off-road practice in the playground initially, followed by on-road training. The volunteer trainers have found this format works well, and ensures that both volunteers and children are more confident about the on-road sessions.

- **Support from the RSO** – Although the head teacher had initial reservations about on-road training, he trusted the RSO and was open minded about trying a new approach. There was already a strong relationship between the school and the RSO, which appears to have helped. The volunteer trainer felt that if the RSO was not available for advice and support that the programme could eventually ‘grind to a halt.’
- **Links between classroom and practical activity** – The classroom teacher and volunteer trainer work well together to ensure that the theory work complements the practical training, and there are links between the two. The RSO felt that this was a key success factor at this school.

‘What has worked well in this school is that the teacher and the trainer work really well together. The trainer can worry about all the practical aspects and the teacher can do the theory. I was surprised at how well on-road has worked in a school that had such initial reservations about it.’

(Road Safety Officer)

Overall, the on-road cycle training programme now works very effectively. However, there remain a number of potential barriers to an ongoing on-road programme:

- **Reliance on volunteers** - The school relies on volunteer trainers to allow the cycle training to take place on-road. Currently the school tries to maintain at least a ‘one adult to eight children’ ratio when out on the roads. One volunteer stated that without sufficient volunteers, the training would have to take place in the playground.
- **Ongoing training** – One volunteer trainer suggested that at times it could be daunting taking responsibility for children on the road, and that some ‘extra training’ from the RSO would be beneficial.

‘Sometimes I feel very alone, very responsible and very pressured.’

(Volunteer)

‘My comfort in providing the training has grown over the years, but I can’t become lax. As long as I’ve got helpers I’m comfortable. But if I don’t have enough volunteers then I take the training back to the playground.’

(Volunteer)

Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank the head teacher, the volunteer trainer, the parent representative and also the RSO for their involvement and co-operation in this case study.

CASE STUDY 4

Location	Remote small town
Local authority type	Rural
Level of deprivation	Not in 15% most deprived areas
School roll	33
Year school built	1960s
Type of cycle training	Off-road
Training delivered by	Staff (School Secretary)

The School

This primary school is in a remote small town in a rural area. It has a small number of pupils, and the current school roll is 33. The classes are grouped together because of the small numbers of children. The primary one to four class has 17 children and the primary five to seven class has 16 children.

The school is located on a busy trunk road and in recent years a pupil was fatally injured outside the school, getting off a school bus. This accident has led to the school making road safety a priority. Cycle training is covered as part of Health and Wellbeing within the Curriculum for Excellence. Practical training is delivered in the playground. The school does not offer any wider cycling promotion due to the location of the school on the main road.

Developing and Planning Cycle Training

Cycle training has been delivered at this school for at least 15 years. It was delivered in the playground by a Road Safety Officer (RSO) who was a retired police officer. It worked successfully for several years in this format, until the Police Officer moved from the area and a successor could not be found. At this time, the school secretary took on the role of delivering the practical training programme, again in the playground. She has now been delivering the training for six years.

'I was coerced...in a good way. I gave it a try to help out and I ended up enjoying it a great deal and I've stayed ever since.'

(Volunteer)

The school secretary delivers the practical elements of the programme, with the classroom teacher:

- co-ordinating the classroom based road safety activities;
- timetabling the practical and classroom based cycle training into the Curriculum for Excellence – especially if the trainer thinks the pupils need more time, and
- performing the administrative roles associated with the training.

The head teacher also takes an active role in planning and managing the cycle training programme. The RSO works closely with the school and has a good relationship with the volunteer trainer. The main role of the RSO is to provide training on the practical and classroom based elements. The volunteer trainer has

received detailed training on delivering the practical training, which she felt was useful. The classroom teacher has received training on the new I-Cycle interactive resource for use within the classroom. The teacher valued this training and felt that it was a good opportunity to interact with other teachers in the area. The RSO is also available for telephone based support and advice.

The school and RSO believe that they have a good relationship. The RSO feels that the school is offering a reasonable level of cycle training in the playground. However, the RSO is keen to promote on-road cycle training and has been in discussion with the head teacher about the possibility of moving the training to on-road. However, the school has concerns about the location of the school on the main road, and availability of a suitable training site for pupils.

Delivering Cycle Training

The practical element of the cycle training all delivered off-road. It is delivered by the school secretary. The classroom based training is delivered by the class teacher. For the first time in 2010/11, the classroom training was delivered using I-Cycle, an interactive road safety resource. There are no other volunteers involved in delivering the training. However, parents are generally positive about cycle training, and in the history of cycle training all parents have always given their permission for their children to participate.

The training takes place every year with both primary six and primary seven pupils. This is due to the small numbers of pupils at the school. The training takes place over a six to eight week period in September and October.

The children receive 30 to 45 minutes worth of classroom based training per week. The practical training is held for one hour per week. However, the training is flexible and can be extended if necessary. The trainer was positive about the links between classroom based and practical training, feeling that this combination of theory and practical work helps the pupils get more out of their training.

At the end of the practical training, the pupils are assessed. In the past, the RSO carried out this test. The pupils took it very seriously. The head teacher felt that this was very reassuring, and that it ensures a consistent quality of cycle testing across the whole local authority area. However, the Road Safety Unit no longer has the resources to undertake testing across the local authority. Instead, the school secretary carries out the testing. She received training on how to carry out the assessment, and was happy to perform this role.

The school feels that the training that the children receive is effective. Children become more aware and safety conscious as a result of the training. The head teacher believed that the commitment and skills of the school secretary were what made the programme successful.

'Materials and resources are only as good as the person delivering the lessons and we are certainly lucky in having someone as effective as (the school secretary).'

(School staff member)

The school is not concerned that the training is delivered off-road rather than on-road. The RSO is, however, keen to promote on-road training, believing that the playground based training is being far less effective than on-road training. However, the RSO recognises that the school has a particular difficulty with the very busy road and logistical problems they face.

'I'm glad they are doing something rather than nothing, but the quality of the training in the playground is nowhere near as good as on the road.'

(Road Safety Officer)

Attitudes Towards On-Road Cycle Training

The head teacher and volunteer trainer recognise the potential value of on-road cycle training. The head teacher is also the head of another small local school which does offer on-road training. The head teacher is therefore aware of the benefits, but feels that the location of this school is a particular barrier to on-road training due to lack of a suitable practice site.

The volunteer trainer agreed that on-road training would make the pupils' experiences more realistic and would help to heighten their awareness. The trainer recalled the difficulties of trying to explain to the children the dangers they would face on the road while in the playground. The only concern of the trainer would be that extra resources would be necessary to take the children on-road.

'I was keen to take the classes on-road to heighten the children's awareness. Trying to explain to children the dangers they face on the road is not easy when you have to get them to imagine. If they were on the road it would be much easier. The course would be more real, but I would need additional help from volunteers.'

(Volunteer)

The RSO has worked with the school to identify a site in the local area where the pupils could do on-road training. There is a potentially suitable location, but it is quite a distance from the school. The location is too far to cycle. The school has discussed options for getting to the site. One option was that parents could drop their children at the site, with their bikes, first thing in the morning. However, the school could not find an effective way of getting the pupils and their bikes back to school after the practical training session.

'Even if we could find a good road to practise on, getting the children to it from the school would be most difficult. The children come from all over, so even asking the children to leave bikes in the village would be impractical.'

(School staff member)

Overcoming Barriers To On-Road Cycle Training

The school was open to the idea of on-road training and was aware of the potential benefits to the pupils. However there were considerable barriers to introducing on-road training.

- **Location** – The school is located on a main road. The RSO and head teacher have worked to identify a location where the training could take place on-road. However this still poses a logistical problem as to how to get the pupils there and back safely. The proposed location is too far from the school to cycle and despite exploring various options, it was felt it was too difficult to undertake.

The RSO suggested that the only realistic way the pupils would get on-road training, would be if a new housing development was built nearby, that had a T-junction that could be incorporated into the training.

- **Volunteers** – A secondary concern for the school was the need for more volunteers if the training was delivered on-road. Currently, the playground based training is delivered by the school secretary alone. More volunteers would be required if the training was delivered on-road. As parents are not currently asked to volunteer, it is not clear what the level of interest from parents would be.

Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank the head teacher, the volunteer trainer and the RSO for their involvement and co-operation in this case study.

CASE STUDY 5

Location	Small town
Local authority type	City
Level of deprivation	Not in 15% most deprived areas
School roll	350
Year school built	1977
Type of cycle training	None

The School

This school is situated on a quiet street, close to the main road which runs through the town and also has a large playground with a tarmac area. Despite this location, the school is not currently offering any cycle training.

The head teacher has been in post for two years and is keen to promote cycling activities. The school promotes cycling to school, and has installed bicycle racks in the playground. Large numbers of children choose to cycle to school. The Active Schools Co-ordinator also promotes cycling. For example the school recently set up a 'stunt bike' event with a track set up in the playground for the children to use.

Developing and Planning Cycle Training

In the past, this school did offer cycle training, in the playground as an after-school activity. It was delivered by the Police, and supported by parent volunteers. The Police then stopped delivering training. Unfortunately the local Road Safety Officer's workload did not allow a regular commitment to deliver the training. Parent volunteers fell away, and the practical cycle training has not continued. There has not been any training for at least two years. Classroom based cycle training has continued, with the head teacher seeing this as an important part of the curriculum.

Since coming into post, the head teacher has been proactively trying to reinstate the practical cycle training element. The first step is to seek a volunteer trainer to deliver cycle training. The school has advertised in the school newsletter and through word of mouth in the community. The advertisements have stressed that the volunteer does not have to have a connection with the school (not necessarily a parent), but someone who is willing to contribute their time. The head teacher has also raised the issue with the Parent Council who are keen for cycle training to go ahead – only none of the parents are willing to deliver it.

Feedback from parents suggests that people feel they will be 'lumbered with it for years' if they agree to take on the role of volunteer trainer. The head teacher thinks that this would be a good thing, as parents could be trained and up-skilled, but the feedback is that the parents are not prepared to take on the responsibility.

Although the head teacher would be happy to commit time to planning and developing the cycle training, she does not have time to deliver the training. She mentioned that this could potentially be a role for one of the deputy teaching staff, but has to date focused on identifying a parent volunteer.

The school described their relationship with the RSO as 'extremely positive' and the school was keen to promote all types of road safety. The RSO also offers other types of road safety education, such as 'crossing the road safely'.

Attitudes Towards On-Road Cycle Training

The head teacher could see the benefits of on-road training and was keen for on-road cycle training to become a regular feature of the curriculum. She was concerned that the school was promoting cycling more generally, without practical training in place. She felt that on-road training would be more effective than playground based training as children can see that 'it's real' and develop cycling skills in realistic situations.

'As we try to improve health and increase awareness, kids should know how to be safe, and that includes the helmets, the high-visibility jackets. I see kids leaving the playground with no lights on, no hat and they scoot in and out between cars...I have real concerns.'

(School staff member)

The head teacher was particularly frustrated as the school is located in a quiet street, with adequate facilities both on-road and in the playground for the pupils to practice in. The head teacher would like to introduce a cycle training programme with training happening in the playground to begin with, until the children were confident enough to be let out onto the roads. This would appease any immediate safety concerns about taking the pupils on-road. However, without someone to deliver the training, this school will not be offering cycle training.

Overcoming Barriers to On-Road Cycle Training

The key barrier in this school to delivering any type of training is having someone to deliver the training.

- **Support from the RSO** – The school has a good relationship with the RSO. It would like the RSO to be able to supervise the training, as happened in the past with support from Police Officers. However, in common with Road Safety Units across the country, the RSO is not able to commit to that arrangement, given the number of schools that the Road Safety Unit has to cover.
- **Volunteer trainers** – The school has used a range of different methods to attract a volunteer trainer to deliver the training. However, at a large school this is quite a responsibility for one parent to take on. The school has not been able to attract any parents interested in delivering the programme, despite the Parent Council being keen to introduce a practical skills programme.
- **Staff trainers** – The school has not yet explored whether staff members, such as classroom assistants, may be prepared to act as volunteers. The RSO suggested that this would be a good solution, with a classroom assistant taking the lead on delivering the training, with support from parent volunteers.

Parents may be more prepared to become involved if not having to take lead or sole responsibility for the programme. The RSO suggested that this would also help as the classroom assistant would be able to help with timetabling the practical sessions, and would know the pupils well. The head teacher was open to this idea, but had not yet discussed this with staff at the time of this case study.

These barriers have not yet been overcome and the school continues to seek parents to volunteer as trainers.

Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank the head teacher and the RSO for their involvement and co-operation in this case study.

CASE STUDY 6

Location	Accessible rural town
Local authority type	Mainly small towns
Level of deprivation	Not in 15% most deprived areas
School roll	200
Year school built	1996
Type of cycle training	On-road
Training delivered by	Staff (head teacher & classroom assistants) and parent volunteers

The School

This school is committed to cycling and travel safety, and does a number of cycling based activities. Primary two pupils participate in a programme called 'Ready Steady Bike' which teaches them the very basics about riding a bike, with an emphasis on fun. The school also has Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs) and takes part in National Cycle week. It also runs a programme of practical and classroom based cycle training for primary six pupils, with an on-road element. Cycle training fits into the Health and Wellbeing experiences and outcomes within the Curriculum for Excellence, along with topics such as healthy eating, lifestyle and the environment. Many primary seven pupils who have taken part in the training cycle to and from school.

Developing and Planning Cycle Training

Cycle training has been on-going at the school for at least 12 years. The provision has always been on-road, with practice sessions taking place in the playground before hand. The deputy head teacher has played an important part in sustaining and developing the cycling training. A cycling enthusiast himself, he has taken on the role of promoting cycle training at the school.

At the outset, cycle training was delivered by the Road Safety Officer (RSO) and parent volunteers. However, a decline in the number of parent volunteers which jeopardised the ability to provide the training, prompted the deputy head teacher to make the cycle training a 'more formal part of the curriculum'. He identified two classroom assistants to lead the cycle training programme and they, along with the parent volunteers, worked with the RSO to provide the training. This group has now been delivering the training for at least the last eight years.

To prepare the classroom assistants for delivering training, they – and the deputy head teacher - took part in a four day 'Cycle Trainer' course run by Cycling Scotland. The course is aimed at those training both children and adults in on-road cycling skills. It covers the basics of supporting people to learn to cycle, through to cycling on busier roads. It incorporates the Cycle Skills Trainer qualification and covers instructor training. The deputy head teacher felt that the staff needed to have the best possible training in order to deliver cycle training efficiently.

The RSO agreed that this training has been worthwhile, and felt that the cycle training at this school was 'very effective'. The RSO spent a considerable amount of

time with the classroom assistants at the beginning of the training, which they felt was a great support. The RSO also supplied the trainers with guidelines for what to include in the training, which they adapt to suit the needs of the children involved. Now that the cycle training programme is well established, the RSO is 'rarely' needed for support. However, the RSO does still visit the school during the training programme. The school feels that the support, advice and encouragement of the RSO is essential in maintaining and sustaining the programme.

'There are two classroom assistants who run it and do all the organisation. Both assistants have been involved for over ten years and are very organised.'
(Road Safety Officer)

Delivering Cycle Training

Cycle training takes place in primary six. It runs for eight to ten weeks, with practical training complemented by classroom based learning. Parents receive a letter one week in advance of the start of training. The RSO undertakes an initial bicycle check at the beginning of the training period, and is available for support if necessary.

The practical element of the training is delivered by two classroom assistants, supported by volunteer parents. The school has a good pool of volunteers. Each year, the school issues a flyer to recruit volunteers. This tends to attract parents of children taking part in the training. This usually allows a ratio of one adult to four children (sometimes as low as one to three).

Each lesson begins with a classroom based discussion on-road safety, which lasts 20 minutes. The pupils talk through the practical elements they will be doing that day and then practice for one hour either in the playground, a quiet road or a busy road - depending on how far through the training programme they are.

The practical training begins in the school playground. This training consists of basic manoeuvres such as stopping and moving off. The second part of the course is conducted on-road. The children practice on a quiet road near the school (among disused housing) and work up to using the main road just beside the school. This includes a T junction.

The training is predominantly delivered on-road. Just one or two weeks of practice are in the playground, followed by three or four weeks in the quiet roads behind the school, then four weeks on the busy main roads. At the end of the training programme the children sit a written exam and a practical exam. There is no pass or fail, just different levels of attainment – grades A-D.

The RSO praised the effectiveness this school's cycle training. The organisation of the volunteers and the enthusiasm of the deputy head teacher were seen to be the driving force behind the success of the training. The classroom assistants agreed that the training was successful, largely due to having an established team. This means that everyone has clear roles and responsibilities, and knows what they have to do. Those involved also felt that the school benefited from having quiet roads to practice on.

Attitudes Towards On-Road Cycle Training

The deputy head teacher and classroom assistants felt that on-road training was necessary to give pupils a realistic experience of cycling. It helps to give pupils a 'greater awareness of safety issues', including increased awareness of traffic and their own surroundings while on the road. It was felt the on-road training better prepared the pupils for cycling outside of school hours, while also reinforcing messages of fitness and health through encouraging children to cycle on the roads.

'It prepares them to cope with the added pressures of road cycling. The use of bikes is important for the environment and general fitness, which are both important points to reinforce to the kids.'

(School staff member)

One trainer (a classroom assistant) described providing on-road training as 'quite nerve wracking,' but necessary to give the pupils a more realistic experience.

'It was quite nerve wracking taking the children on to the main road the first time. It still is that first week, but the kids are well warned about the dangers they face and their responsibilities. It is a necessary evil to prepare them for what life is like on the roads.'

(Volunteer)

The representative of the Parent Council interviewed as part of this case study was happy that her child was taking part in on-road cycle training. She indicated that her child had 'really enjoyed' it, and that the pupils had come on 'leaps and bounds' since taking part in the on-road training. She was pleased that the school was able to teach children the essentials of cycling on-road. She felt that this was particularly useful as the school promotes cycle activities by having cycling outings to local attractions using the cycle network. These are mostly on cycle paths but some on-road awareness is required. The RSO agreed that the children benefited from on-road training.

'The benefits of on-road training are clear for children – in that it is the first time they are on the road on wheels and it introduces them to hazard perception, awareness and planning and more confidence. It also makes them safer.'

(Road Safety Officer)

Overall, staff, volunteers and parents were very pleased with the cycle training offered at this school. However, one consultee was concerned that the assessment involved a grade, rather than a pass or fail. She felt that it seemed like everyone passes the test. She was concerned that this made all children feel competent on the roads - like giving the pupils 'a driving licence' - and felt that some pupils should be encouraged to further develop their skills.

Overcoming Barriers To On-Road Cycle Training

This school has successfully been offering on-road training for several years. The key success factors are:

- **Deputy head teacher commitment** – The cycle training programme is strongly supported by the deputy head teacher. The value of on-road cycling is recognised, and the school invests time recruiting volunteers, delivering training, and maintaining the cycle training programme.
- **Core team** – The deputy head teacher has committed resources to delivering the cycle training, in the form of classroom assistant time. This helps to ensure that the programme is sustainable and well managed. It means that parents can become involved in the training without taking on too much responsibility for managing the training. There is a strong team of staff and parent volunteers who are committed to delivering the training on-road.
- **Investing in training** – The key volunteer trainers have participated in an in depth course focusing on on-road cycle training. This has helped to build the skills of those leading delivery of the on-road training. The school also has a positive relationship with the RSO, who provides training and support as required.
- **Phased delivery** – The school is able to adopt a phased approach moving from playground, to a quiet road, to a busy road. This helps to build the confidence of both children and volunteers, and can be adapted based on the needs of the children involved. Practice can continue in quieter areas if the number of volunteers decreases.

Although the programme is successful, there remain challenges, including:

- **Maintaining volunteers** - The biggest challenge the school faces is to maintain the number of parent volunteers. The school does have a high number of volunteers, but it can be difficult to encourage new people to become involved. Often, it is ‘the same faces’ each year. However, parents felt that the school couldn’t do any more to attract parents – apart from potentially raising the profile of cycle training amongst Parent Council members. The number of parent volunteers does fluctuate, and the school deals with lower volunteer numbers by adapting the on-road route to make it safer. However, if parent volunteer numbers fell significantly, the on-road element of the training could be jeopardised.

‘We just could not provide the training safely.’

(School staff member)

- **Equipment** - RSOs conduct a safety check at the beginning of the cycling training, to make sure that bicycles are safe to be used during the training. On occasion, bicycles are not up to standard, but these can normally easily be fixed by parents. Other times, pupils do not have bicycles or helmets. To address this barrier, the school entered a competition to win spare bicycles and helmets – which it won.

Overall, this on-road cycle training programme has been running effectively for a number of years and is likely to continue in the same way in the future.

Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank the head teacher, the volunteer trainer, the representative of the parent council, and also the RSO for their involvement and co-operation in this case study.

CASE STUDY 7

Location	Urban
Local authority type	City
Level of deprivation	Not in 15% most deprived
School roll	127
Year school built	Victorian
Type of cycle training	None

The School

This school is situated on a busy main road which has contributed to a number of accidents involving pupils. It is committed to promoting road safety. The school has Junior Road Safety Officers. However, the school does not offer any cycle training. The following is a short case study which sets out the barriers for this school to provide cycle training.

Barriers to Providing Cycle Training

There is no cycle training offered at this school. The head teacher indicated that cycle training has never taken place, and that there have been no discussions with Road Safety Officers or Active Schools Co-ordinators about introducing cycle training.

The key barriers to introducing any kind of cycle training were:

- **Access to bicycles** – The school felt that most pupils would have limited cycling opportunities outside of school. Most come to school from a nearby housing estate and the school felt that many would not own or be able to borrow a bike. The school was also concerned that many bikes would not meet safety standards.

‘The children would all need to access roadworthy bikes and most are not from particularly wealthy backgrounds.’

(School staff member)

- **Layout of school playground** – The school felt that the layout of the playground would not be suitable for off-road cycle training as it is split by a large flight of stairs. There are also currently no road markings painted on the playground to support off-road training.
- **Full timetable** – The school currently has a ‘very full curriculum’ and one teacher felt that this school would struggle to fit cycle training into the current timetable.
- **Volunteers** – The school stated that it currently struggles to get parents to volunteer to be involved in a number of aspects of the school, and felt that it was unlikely that parents would volunteer to deliver cycle training. However, the school felt that potentially the Active Schools Co-ordinator could help to support any cycle training activities.

Attitudes Towards On-Road Cycle Training

The school felt that there were also particular barriers to introducing on-road cycle training:

- **Location** – The school was unsure where on-road training could take place. One teacher suggested that a nearby housing estate could be used for the training. However, he suggested that:

‘I’m not sure I’d like want to be out working with the children in the local estate, as it might be difficult. In terms of geography, on-road training in the estate wouldn’t be problematic, but what would be an issue would be the people who would hang around during the day making it an unpleasant environment to undertake lessons in.’
(School staff member)

- **Organisation** – The school felt that on-road cycle training would not be feasible due to the volume of paperwork required when taking children out of the school. One teacher cited the amount of paperwork that is required to take pupils out for a walk and believed that the ‘burden’ of paperwork would make cycle training unfeasible.

However, the school could see the benefits for the pupils in offering cycle training in general, and on-road training in particular.

‘I see many of them cycling to school on the pavements and without helmets – the benefits for the school would be to have safer, more aware children.’
(School staff member)

‘Anything we can do that contributes to the kids’ safety would be excellent. Cycling is a life skill...in terms of health and wellbeing, it is a fantastic pursuit.’
(School staff member)

Despite recognising the benefits of on-road cycle training for the pupils, the school could not see past the associated perceived barriers.

‘I really don’t see the situation changing at the school unless we are forced to take on cycle training. I think the barriers are just too great.’
(School staff member)

Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank the assistant head teacher and member of support staff for their involvement and co-operation in this case study.

CASE STUDY 8

Location	Urban
Local authority type	City
Level of deprivation	In 15% most deprived areas of Scotland
School roll	205
Year school built	1975
Type of cycle training	None

The School

The school is situated within a quiet residential estate on the outskirts of a city. The school does not offer any cycle training. This case study explores the perceived barriers to offering cycle training.

Overcoming Barriers to Providing Cycle Training

There is no cycle training offered at this school. The deputy head teacher stated that there had never been a history of cycle training. However, she is keen to introduce cycle training at the school. She felt that the staff would be enthusiastic about offering cycling training and believed that the pupils would enjoy it. However, there were three key barriers to offering cycle training:

- **Resources** – The deputy head teacher suggested that not all the pupils would have their own bicycles and those who do would not likely be of a roadworthy standard. The school does not have any funds to buy bicycles for the pupils to use.

To address this barrier, the school is currently in early discussions with a benefactor who is interested in donating money to the school. It is hoped that this money could be used to purchase bikes for the pupils.

- **Facilities** – A further concern for the school was that they did not have facilities in the playground to be able to store bicycles securely. The school did not have any bike sheds or shelters and the risk of vandalism would be too high to leave the bicycles in the playground.
- **Volunteers** – The school felt that it would struggle to encourage parents to volunteer to deliver cycle training. However, the school has a good working relationship with the local Active Schools Co-ordinator and Community Police Officer. The school hopes that in the future both could deliver the training, working jointly with some members of staff from the school. The deputy head teacher was confident that there would be adequate staffing resources to support any cycle training. In addition, the school has good relations with a local church and may explore whether some members may be interested in helping out with the cycle training.

Attitudes Towards On-Road Cycle Training

The deputy head teacher was keen to introduce on-road cycle training to the school, and could see that there would be real benefits for children.

The Deputy Head had identified some potential roads near to the school where training could take place. However, she would need to undertake a detailed risk assessment before this is confirmed as a possibility. There is one very busy road which may be unsuitable, but children are already cycling on the local roads so training would be of real value.

‘Some of the children are already cycling on the local roads, so giving them a real training experience on the road would be very important.’

(School staff member)

The deputy head teacher also suggested that pupils may not learn the basics of safe cycling at home, meaning that the school had an important role to play.

‘A lot of kids in the area do not experience a great deal of parental control, therefore this would be an ideal opportunity to teach them independence in cycling on the road – something which I doubt many will receive at home.’

(School staff member)

Overall, the school was keen to introduce cycle training. It was open to the idea of on-road training, and could see real benefits of this approach. The key barrier for introducing on-road training was logistics of introducing any form of cycle training, rather than a lack of willingness on the part of the school to participate.

Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank the deputy head teacher for her involvement and co-operation in this case study.

CASE STUDY 9

Location	Small town
Local authority type	City
Level of deprivation	Not in 15% most deprived areas
School roll	116
Year school built	1983
Type of cycle training	On-road
Training delivered by	Staff (learning assistants), parent volunteers

The School

The school has been running on-road training for at least four years. Before this, the school ran playground based cycle training. Unfortunately the head teacher has changed three times in the past four years so the teacher who set up cycle training was not available.

The school is committed to promoting road safety. It has two Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs) in primary seven, and they hold walk or cycle to school weeks. The school also introduces pupils to the topic of road safety in primary two or three.

Developing and Planning Cycle Training

Cycle training has been ongoing in this school for some time. Two learning assistants at the school plan and deliver the training. The learning assistants write to the parents, explaining how much work is involved, and that it will take place in 'an area designated by the police'. The location of the on-road training has been risk assessed by the Community Police Officer. Parents are asked to complete permission slips and fill in a form with emergency contact details. To date, the school has not had any problems with parents agreeing. Parents can see that cycle training is 'taken seriously' by the school.

The next stage is to send out a sheet to tell parents about bike safety – and to remind them that the child needs a helmet. The learning assistants then check the bike, with help from the Community Police Officer. Most children at the school do have bikes and cycle around the village anyway. The main challenge is parents getting children's bikes to school if they live on the outskirts of the village.

The local Active Schools Co-ordinator and Community Police Officers provide support as needed. For example, in 2010 the Active Schools Co-ordinator provided boards to put up in the practice site to alert drivers that the training was taking place.

Delivering Cycle Training

The school provides a mix of off and on-road training. The training takes place in the summer term. The initial bike check takes place at the end of April, and just before Easter they let children know that the training will be starting the next term. The training runs for eight weeks from May.

Pupils receive eight hours of practical training, and four hours of classroom based learning. The practical training is delivered by two learning assistants and either one or two parent volunteers. The learning assistants have received training on the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme (SCTS) which was described as 'very good'.

The school attracts parent volunteers by sending letters to parents. It is generally parents of the primary six children who volunteer, often those with part time jobs. Parent volunteers do not provide the training, but help out in a 'supervisory role'. This means that they do not receive training.

The number of children taken out on cycle training varies, dependent on the size of the class and the number of volunteer helpers. There are never more than ten children, with a minimum of three helpers.

The pupils receive two hours of the practical training in the playground. In weeks one and two, the learning assistants work with the children in the playground to ensure that they can set off, balance and slow down. They also remind children of the theory that they learned in the classroom.

Weeks three to eight are delivered on-road. The training takes place in a cul-de-sac at the north of the village. The children walk to the site, and only go on their bikes when actually doing elements of the training. Once they have done their manoeuvre they get off their bike and walk back. The area is 'fairly quiet' but has enough going on that the children have to pay attention. The school puts up signs so that drivers know that the training is taking place.

On-road, the children practise turning left for two weeks, then overtaking parked cars, then turning right. Weeks seven and eight are reserved as 'backup lessons' – for example if one week is rained off, or if children need to do additional practice. Often children need additional practice with right hand turns.

There is no final test. The learning assistants have a checklist and note who can do each manoeuvre. They reinforce the training in the last two weeks. The children all receive a certificate and a badge at assembly, so they can see that they have achieved something. So far, everyone has been awarded a certificate, as they usually all get to a good stage.

Attitudes Towards On-Road Cycle Training

This school was positive about the experience that on-road training gives the children. The school believes that the training supports children to increase their awareness of the danger of cars, become being better at judging speeds, and recognise that people may get out of the car as a cyclist passes. The school staff all live locally, and they can see a real change in the way the children cycle around the village.

Overall, the school felt that on-road training meant that children learned more effectively through real life situations.

'There are real benefits of doing on-road training. If we purely did training in the playgrounds it wouldn't be a reality for the children. Children become more aware of speed, overtaking cars etc. If we described it in the playground it wouldn't mean so much.'

(School staff member)

Both parents and teachers agreed that cycle training in the playground would not give a realistic experience of cycling.

'The playground does not give the children a proper perception of the reality of cycling. It has to be more realistic than simply being on the playground. It's as lifelike as possible. However, it is difficult to instil in them a real sense of the dangers of cycling on-road, even on side streets. Realism is the key benefit of training on-road.'

(Parent)

Overcoming Barriers To On-Road Cycle Training

Teachers and parents did not see any significant barriers to providing on-road training at the school. The only challenges that they have come across so far are:

- **Transporting bikes** - Some parents find it difficult bring their children's bikes to school, as they live on the outskirts of the village. However, generally speaking, parents are supportive and they have never mentioned on-road training as a concern.
- **Attracting parent volunteers** - Over recent years, the school has managed to attract one parent each year. However, staff felt that it is 'the luck of the draw' whether they can attract parent volunteers or not.

Those consulted felt that the location of the school in a small village meant that delivering cycle training on-road was easier than in larger urban environments. Because it is a small village, people know when the training is taking place and so (theoretically) drive more safely. The school is also near suitable side-streets and cul-de-sacs which means that the location of the training is seen as safer. One parent suggested that if the training were to take place on a large main road then she would have safety fears.

The school identified some of the lessons it had learned from providing on-road training:

- Always make sure you know the children you are taking out and think carefully about who is in each group.
- Don't take too many children.
- Wear fluorescent tabards.
- Make sure you are familiar with your surroundings.

Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank the learning assistant and the representative of the parent council for their involvement and co-operation in this case study.

CASE STUDY 10

Location	Remote rural
Local authority type	Rural
Level of deprivation	Not in 15% most deprived areas
School roll	29
Year school built	1983
Type of cycle training	On-road
Training delivered by	Staff (classroom assistant), RSO

The School

The school is in a rural location. It is just off the main road which links two large towns in the region, which has a 60mph speed limit. Despite this location, the school is currently providing on-road cycle training.

The school promotes cycle and road safety through the Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO) programme. Normally primary six or seven pupils volunteer as JRSOs, and promote cycle and road safety within the school. Pupils at this school are active in this role, attending a conference of other JRSOs from other schools in the region at the local cinema and presenting on what they have done in that year. The school is also participating in a new pedestrian safety training course in 2011/12, delivered by the Road Safety Officer.

Developing and Planning Cycle Training

Cycle training in general has been running at the school since at least 1995. On-road training has been provided for at least the last seven years. Unfortunately, due to staff changes, none of those involved in establishing the on-road programme could be consulted as part of this case study. The evolution of the current programme of on-road training is therefore not known.

Normally, the practical element of the training is co-ordinated by a classroom assistant. The Road Safety Officer (RSO) would attend every three weeks to assist and provide support as needed. However, due to health problems, in 2010/11 the training was delivered by the RSO with support from another classroom assistant. The Road Safety Officer has been in attendance every week of this year's programme, to deliver the training. There are no parent volunteers at the school at present.

Delivering Cycle Training

The cycling training programme is delivered over eight weeks. There is one hour's practical training per week, complemented by classroom based activity and homework. This includes a DVD to watch in the classroom, road sign flashcards and other classroom based activities, and pamphlets to read at home.

The practical training programme starts with a helmet and bike safety check in the playground. This is followed by two weeks of training on basic exercises and balance on the playground, where the trainers establish the pupils' competencies.

The pupils then start on very basic manoeuvres and balancing activities, such as riding slowly, and making turns and overtaking imaginary parked cars.

As and when the children become proficient, the training is moved out on to the lay-by outside the school, where the children then practise in a more realistic environment. Again, when deemed ready the children are moved on to the 60mph main road and begin to practise manoeuvres there. The school uses very large 'children practising' signs which are on display for approaching cars.

At the end of the sessions there is a practical examination and a theory test. For the practical, the children are awarded an A, B or C. Although a 'C' grade is essentially a fail, everyone gets a certificate. The Road Safety Officer conducts the assessment.

Attitudes Towards On-Road Cycle Training

Overall, the classroom assistant believes that it is important that the children are allowed the chance to practise on the main road, particularly as some cycle to school along this road. Over the course of the training she sees a significant difference and improvement in the children's confidence and stability.

'The on-road nature of the training focuses the children's mind.'

(Volunteer)

The Road Safety Officer believes that on-road training results in clear improvements in children's cycling:

'The benefits of on-road training are clear for children – in that it is the first time they are on the road on wheels and it gives them great hazard perception, awareness and planning and more confidence. It also makes them safer.'

(Road Safety Officer)

Overcoming Barriers to On-Road Cycle Training

The school has managed to overcome significant barriers to on-road cycle training:

- **Location** - The school's position on the main trunk road between two large towns could well prove to be a barrier for other schools in this type of location. Both the Road Safety Officer and the classroom assistant noted that when training on-road they have had to flag down cars which were approaching within the speed limit (60mph) to request that they slow down due to the children on the road ahead. The Road Safety Officer suggests that this school is making the best of their situation.

'A good example of a school making the most of the position they are in...and still being able to deliver on-road cycle training safely, with the use of appropriate signage and the use by adults and children alike of high visibility clothing.'

(Road Safety Officer)

- **Staffing** – The classroom assistant agreed that staffing cutbacks might present a considerable difficulty in provision of cycle training. However, even with the loss of one of the two trainers, the school has been able to continue to provide on-road training, albeit with the assistance of the Road Safety Officer.

The school manages to make on-road cycling work due to:

- **A phased approach** – Children participate in playground based activities until the trainers are confident that the children will be safe in an on-road situation.
- **A high staff to pupil ratio** – This is a very small school, allowing a high ratio of staff to pupils when on the roads.
- **Strong support from the RSO** – The RSO provides regular support each year, and recently due to an issue with staffing the cycle training programme has committed to delivering the whole programme at this school. Without this support, the programme may not have gone ahead this year.
- **Clear signage** – Large signs alert drivers to the cycle training, and staff are able to alert cars to children training on the road ahead if required.

Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank the classroom assistant and the RSO for their involvement and co-operation in this case study.

CASE STUDY 11

Location	Urban
Local authority type	City
Level of deprivation	Not in 15% most deprived areas
School roll	334
Year school built	2006
Type of cycle training	On-road
Training delivered by	Staff (Teaching staff), volunteer parents, Active Schools Co-ordinator

The School

The school was set up in 2006, through an amalgamation of two existing schools. It has been running cycle training since it was set up. Prior to this, neither of the amalgamated schools provided any kind of cycle training at all.

The school is committed to promoting cycling in general. This is part of wider promotion of health and the environment. The school has held a number of cycle events at the school, including:

- 'Bike breakfast,' where parents could cycle to school with their children to show them a safe route and enjoy a meal together at the school;
- 'Dr Bike' Session at the Spring Fair, where a local cycle group gave cycle safety checks;
- cycle awareness sessions for primary six pupils, delivered by the Active Schools Co-ordinator and the i-bike Co-ordinator; and
- road safety displays and competitions run by the Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs).

The Active Schools Co-ordinator takes an active role in promoting cycling at the school. This has included helping primary seven children to map the best cycle route from the children's homes to the local high school. This is then followed up by a group cycle to the high school on the routes mapped out. The school has also recently invested in bicycle racks to encourage pupils to cycle to school, once they have completed their cycle training.

Developing and Planning Cycle Training

Cycle training has been ongoing in this school since 2006. The head teacher introduced the cycle training programme and assists with organising the programme. The training is delivered mainly by volunteer parents, with the assistance of the Active Schools Co-ordinator (whenever available) and on occasion members of the teaching staff.

The head teacher sends out letters to the parents of those children due to receive cycle training in order to inform them of the cycle training programme, and recruit volunteer trainers. If volunteers are not forthcoming, a wider appeal is sent out to other parents in the school.

The letter usually includes a date for a parent training session which volunteers can attend. The training is delivered by the Active Schools Co-ordinator. The volunteers are given one session of training before they start, which involves a video and chat with the Active Schools Co-ordinator.

The location of the on-road training has been risk assessed by the Police. Parents are asked to complete permission slips and have the opportunity to keep their children out of the programme if they have concerns. However, the school has never had any parents refusing to allow their child to take part.

Delivering Cycle Training

The school starts cycle training in primary three. The Ready Steady Bike programme introduces children to cycling and prepares them for the next stage of training in primary six. This helps to build confidence in cycling.

In primary six, pupils begin the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme. The school provides a mix of off and on-road training. The training runs for eight weeks, and takes place at different times of the year each year. Most recently, training has taken place in the autumn term.

The Active Schools Co-ordinator undertakes an initial bike safety check. Pupils then undertake six weeks of playground based sessions and two weeks of on-road sessions, lasting around 40 minutes each. The first 10 minutes are preparation time and are spent going over the details of the day's session. The children are then broken up in to three groups of six to eight children, with each group being the responsibility of one trainer.

The Active Schools Co-ordinator then takes the very first session, supported by volunteers. After this, the volunteers run the sessions on their own, following the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme. This provides a broad outline of what each session is expected to cover, but the detail of how this is delivered is left to the trainer to decide.

The on-road training takes place in the last two weeks of the programme. The children wear high visibility clothing and the volunteers set out warning cones and signs, to indicate to motorists that training is taking place. In the past, the school had problems with parents who were driving too fast around the school near the end of the school day, while the children were still out on the road. Now the school notifies all parents to be extra vigilant during cycle training times.

There is an ongoing assessment instead of a final test. This includes five manoeuvres that the children need to be able to complete. Each manoeuvre is graded A, B, or C with A being very good and C meaning that they should be given further training before being allowed to cycle independently. An average is then taken across all five areas.

The volunteer trainers are responsible for grading the children. However, one volunteer trainer felt that this aspect of the cycle training was beyond her expertise and experience. The volunteer felt that she was left with 'altogether too much

responsibility and not enough support'. This was due to a perceived lack of support from the Active Schools Co-ordinator, and the school teaching staff. The volunteer was unhappy that she had to deal with discipline issues during the sessions, feeling that this was a role for teaching staff. As a result of these challenges, this volunteer gave up her position.

Attitudes Towards On-Road Cycle Training

Overall, teachers at the school were very positive about on-road training as it meant that children learned about road safety in a more realistic setting.

'The kids took the training more seriously when they were on the road, so it is important for them to experience being on-road in a controlled environment.'

(School staff member)

The volunteer trainer thought that the overall cycling programme was very good and that the process of breaking down cycling into manageable 'bite-sized chunks' each week was positive. She saw improvement in many of the children over the eight weeks, and believed that the key to the programme was offering the realistic scenario of riding bikes on-road. Children often found it difficult to visualise the on-road environment from the playground.

'The children take things very much more seriously on-road – it applies all that they have learned to a real life setting.'

(Volunteer)

However, the volunteer trainer felt that there should be more adults with each group of children, particularly when they were going on-road. This would have made her feel more comfortable delivering the training.

Overcoming Barriers To On-Road Cycle Training

Teachers and parents did not see any significant barriers to providing on-road training at the school. The key challenges have been:

- **Ensuring that all children had bikes** – Some children did not have their own bike; but the school was either able to provide a second-hand bike, or ask the children to share with those who did not have one. No pupil has missed out on training because they do not own a bicycle. However, there can be challenges if parents do not help their children to make their bike road worthy, after the initial safety check. To address this barrier, the Active Schools Co-ordinator undertook a bike maintenance course so that she can fix the bikes herself.
- **Attracting parent volunteers** – The school struggles to find enough volunteers. Last year the school was only able to attract one volunteer parent, which meant that the Active Schools Co-ordinator had to take a role in delivering the whole programme. This is not seen as a sustainable approach.

'I arranged to have an information evening at the school where parents could come along to find out more about what being a volunteer trainer means and what they would have to do – I was disappointed with the turn out, so I have had to reschedule another session in March.'

(Active Schools Co-ordinator)

- **Using staff volunteers** – The school has a large number of primary six pupils, meaning that the practical cycle training takes place with one group of pupils, while the classroom teachers run the theoretical training. This means that teachers are not available to help with supervision, and there is a relatively high ratio of pupils to adults. The school is sometimes able to identify a learning assistant or other staff to assist, but this is not always possible.

Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank the head teacher, the Active Schools Coordinator, the volunteer trainer and the representative of the parent council for their involvement and co-operation in this case study.

**APPENDIX TWO
DISCUSSION GUIDES**

APPENDIX 2A

Local authority cycling training contacts: Discussion guide

Context

Explanation of the research and purpose of this interview

1. Can you tell me about your involvement in introducing, planning, delivering and maintaining cycle training for primary school pupils in your area?
2. What is the local authority's general position on the level or type of cycle training to be offered in schools across its area?

Schools

3. Would you be able to tell me/ send me information on:
 - Which schools are offering on-road training?
 - Which schools are offering a mix of on and off-road training?
 - Which schools are offering only off-road training?
 - Which schools are not offering any training?
4. Are any schools taking a particularly innovative or different approach to cycling training?
5. Are there any schools which you think would be particularly interested in being a case study? *This would involve talking to teachers, parents and volunteer trainers.*
6. Are there any schools that you think we should definitely not involve as case studies? *For example because of other commitments.*

General Views on Barriers

(Detailed views will be picked up once the schools have been selected)

7. What do you think are the main barriers to successful on-road cycling training in your area?
8. What makes on-road cycling training work? What are the success factors?
9. Do you have any views on the difference that on-road cycling training in primary school make to young people's lives?
10. Any other comments?

APPENDIX 2B

Head teacher/classroom teacher: Discussion guide

Links and History

1. Can you tell me about the history of cycling promotion and training at your school?
2. How much of a priority would you say cycling training has within your curriculum?
3. Please talk me through your role in:
 - introducing;
 - planning;
 - managing; and
 - sustaining cycle training in this school.
4. Can you describe your school's relationship with the Road Safety Officer/ Active Schools Co-ordinator?

Detail of Cycling Training

5. Can you confirm the level and type of cycling training that takes place currently at your school?
6. Can you tell me a bit about how cycling training is delivered at your school?
7. What has influenced the level, type and delivery of cycling training at your school?
8. Does your school undertake wider cycling promotion activities at all?

Success of Cycling Training – Generally

9. What do you think about the effectiveness of the cycling training offered at your school?
10. What has worked particularly well, and why?
11. Have there been barriers to effective cycling training? What are these?
12. What level of influence do the parents have over the delivery of cycle training?

On-Road Cycling Training

(Adapted depending on the type of cycling training currently offered by the school)

13. What, in your view, are the *(potential)* benefits of **on-road** cycling training?
 - for children,
 - schools and

- other stakeholders?
- 14a. What, in your view, are the (*potential*) barriers to **on-road** cycling training at your school?
 - 14b. In what sense are these barriers at your school?
 15. What, if anything, has been done to (*try to*) discuss, explore and overcome these at your school?
 16. What would make it easier for you to deliver **on-road** cycling training at your school?
 17. Do you (*or did you*) know where to go for support and help to make **on-road** cycling training effective?
 18. What lessons have you learned, if any, about making **on-road** cycling training effective?
 19. Any other comments?

Thank and Close

APPENDIX 2C

Volunteer trainer: Discussion guide

Your Role

1. How long have you been a volunteer? How did this come about? What made you want to volunteer?
2. Talk me through your role in planning and delivering the cycle training....What do you do?
3. What do you think about the effectiveness of the cycling training offered at this school?
4. What has worked particularly well, and why? (*probe anything that has gone particularly well? Or that you have been surprised about?*)
5. Have there been barriers to effective cycling training? What are these?

Support

6. Did you get any training when you started? Can you tell me about this?
7. What other support is available to you as a volunteer? (*Would you like more/less/different types?*)

On-Road Training

8. Are you involved in providing any on-road cycling training?
9. How do/ *would you* feel about this, as compared to delivering off-road training?
10. Do you feel that you have the skills and knowledge to provide both on-road and off-road training?
11. What, in your view, are the (*potential*) benefits of **on-road** cycling training:
 - for children,
 - schools and
 - other stakeholders?
12. What, in your view, are the (*potential*) barriers to on-road cycling training?
13. Has anything been done to (*try to*) discuss, explore and overcome these within this school?
14. What do you think would make it easier for the school to consider off-road cycling training?

Improving the Experience and Encouraging Others

15. What do you personally get out of volunteering? And do you think children benefit from the volunteer approach?
16. Is there anything else that could enhance your experience, or encourage other volunteers to get involved?
17. What advice would you give to others thinking about getting involved as volunteers?

Thank and Close

APPENDIX 2D

Parent council: Discussion guide

Awareness of Cycling Training

1. When did you first hear that your child would be taking part in cycling training? What was your initial reaction? – Why?
2. Please talk me through your understanding of the cycle training at the school
3. What are your views on the way cycle training is delivered at school? Are you happy with the type of training (on-road or off-road) – why?
4. Do you have any views on how well the cycling training is planned and delivered?
5. How much of a priority would you say cycling training has within the curriculum? And how satisfied are you with this level? Should your child be getting more/better/ training? Why?

Parent's Views on On-Road Training

6. What are your views on **on-road** cycling training being offered to children through the cycling training scheme?
7. What are the (*potential*) benefits of **on-road** cycling training?
8. Do you think that there are barriers to on-road cycling training?
9. Has anything been done to (*try to*) discuss, explore and overcome these within this school?
10. Are there certain things that would need to be in place to make you feel confident about your child participating in off-road cycling training?
11. Do any of you volunteer as a cycling trainer? Did you know about this option? Would participating as a volunteer change your views on on-road cycle training?

Children's Views on Cycling Training

12. Does your child enjoy their cycling training?
13. What do you think they are getting out of the cycle training?
14. Any other comments?

Thank and Close

APPENDIX 2E

Road Safety Officer/Active Schools Coordinator: Discussion guide

Introduction

Interviewer to give a brief introduction to the research. Remind RSOs/Active Schools Coordinators that the case studies will be produced on an anonymous basis.

Links and History

1. Can you describe your relationship in general with the staff at the primary school? *(probe how receptive they are in relation to cycling training and other types of road safety education? How much of a priority is given to cycle training/road safety education in general?)*
2. Can you tell me about the history of cycling training at this school? *(probe how long has it been ongoing, has it changed in any way, and what influenced this?)*
3. Please talk me through your role in:
 - introducing;
 - planning;
 - managing; and
 - sustaining cycle training in this school.

Detail of Cycling Training

4. Can you confirm the level and type of cycling training that takes place currently at this school? *(probe on-road, off-road)*
5. Can you tell me a bit about how cycling training is delivered at this school? *(probe when, duration of training, how frequently, how it is delivered, by whom?)*
6. Does the school undertake wider cycling promotion activities at all?

Success of Cycling Training – Generally

7. What do you think about the effectiveness of the cycling training offered at this school?
8. In this school, what has worked particularly well, and why? *(probe anything that has gone particularly well? Or that you have been surprised about?)*
9. In this school, what have been the barriers to effective cycling training?

On-Road Cycling Training

(Adapted depending on the type of cycling training currently offered by the school)

10. What, in your view, are the *(potential)* benefits of **on-road** cycling training?
 - for children,
 - schools and
 - other stakeholders?

- 11a. What, in your view, are the *(potential)* barriers to **on-road** cycling training at this school? *(interviewer do not ask initially, but probe if necessary on...)*
 - resources
 - time pressures
 - volunteer training
 - safety fears
 - personality clashes between RSO/school/local authority?

- 11b. In what sense are these barriers at this school? *(probe to explain the barriers)*

12. What, if anything, has been done to *(try to)* discuss, explore and overcome these within this school? *(probe did the school seek any support from the RSO or elsewhere)*

13. What lessons have you learned, if any, about making on-road training effective?

14. Any other comments?

Thank and Close

APPENDIX 3

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