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Evaluation of Transport Scotland's Walking and Cycling Schools Programme

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Executive Summary

Background

Transport Scotland's Walking and Cycling Schools Programme comprises a range of behaviour change and infrastructure initiatives, delivered in primary and secondary schools across Scotland by a number of Active Travel Delivery Partners. Funded directly by Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government, the programme has the overall aim of promoting and encouraging take up of all sustainable and active travel means among children for everyday shorter journeys, as an alternative to car use.

An independent evaluation was commissioned to explore the overall effectiveness of the programme, its impact, reach and delivery. It also explored the level of engagement and co-ordination between schools, local authorities and active travel delivery partners in delivering the programme and understanding what works.

This report presents the findings from the evaluation and sets out recommendations for where improvements in the service offer to schools, and delivery of the programme may be made.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach which combined primary data collection with schools, local authorities and other stakeholders to explore awareness, understanding, participation and perceived impacts of the programme.

A total of 352 schools from 25 different local authority areas across Scotland took part in an online survey to explore awareness and participation in the programme, as well as to establish barriers to participation and perceived impacts of participation (among other things). The large majority of responses came from primary schools (86%), with the remainder from secondary schools, reflecting the fact that the majority of initiatives included in the programme are targeted at primary schools. Follow-up in depth interviews were also carried out with 16 schools (12 primary schools, 3 secondary schools, and 1 Special Education Needs (SEN) school covering both primary and secondary stages). Interviews explored participation experiences in more detail, as well as gathering feedback on how the programme was delivered and co-ordinated and suggestions for how the programme could be improved in the future. Across the survey and interviews, there was a good mix in the urban/rural location of schools, and in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation zone location of schools.

A total of 25 local authority staff also completed an online survey giving feedback on participation in the various programme initiatives, understanding of their aims and content, the impact of COVID-19 and desired support going forward, identification of barriers and facilitators to delivery, and issues related to local planning and co-ordination.

Each of the main delivery partners also took part in an interview following the surveys to discuss experience and perceptions of the programme, with a focus on current delivery mechanisms, perceived strengths and weaknesses of the current programme and potential areas for developing or improving the programme going forward.

Main findings

Awareness

There was reasonably good awareness of most initiatives among primary schools, with slightly less familiarity of initiatives among the secondary schools that took part. While some of this is accounted for by the fact that many of the initiatives are targeted at primary level, there was evidence that even some of the secondary level initiatives were not well known or understood. Awareness of grants and funding-oriented initiatives were less well understood than activity-based initiatives overall.

For most initiatives, knowledge and awareness of the offer came either directly from delivery partners or local authority education departments. Continued, regular direct contact to schools via email, from either of these two sources, was encouraged.

Delivery partners reported that they each had their own networks who they are able to communicate with regularly and directly, and individual communication channels and plans seemed to work well. In interviews, delivery partners stressed that the most effective means of reaching schools was “people on the ground”. Several schools also highly valued face-to-face contact and support where this was provided.

Despite reasonably good levels of awareness, there was evidence that a centralised, online hub or website for the programme as a whole would be welcomed. This should signpost schools, local authorities and parents/carers to more information about each of the initiatives within the programme and provide clear points of contact for further information. A shared partnership resource such as this may also help to clarify how different strands of the programme align.

Indeed, there was some evidence among all stakeholders that the parameters of the programme were not currently well defined, with confusion regarding which initiatives fall within scope of the existing programme, and those that are complementary to it,

but which are not integral components of the programme. More clearly setting out the scope of the programme would allow more accurate measurement of impact and effectiveness of the programme in the future.

Participation and Perceived Impacts

Participation in the programme was seen to be variable around the country with some initiatives also attracting much higher rates of participation compared to others (especially those with established longevity, those which were time limited and those which had external staff support attached to delivery). Again, there was more reported participation in walking and cycling activity-based initiatives and surveys compared to uptake of funding and grant based initiatives. The initiatives that appeared to work particularly well were activities that required minimal staff time for planning and implementation and were easy to deliver with immediately visible impacts.

For those currently engaged, relevance, pupil enjoyment and impacts of the initiatives were all considered to be good. Younger children may be more motivated than older children to take part in such initiatives, and there may be scope for working more closely with secondary schools to maximise reach. Much positive feedback on individual initiatives was received and schools seemed keen to continue to offer active travel opportunities going forward, with those already engaged intending to remain so.

Participating schools also identified positive impacts of participation on health and wellbeing and recognised the value of embedding active travel behaviours from a young age (with wider contributions to the sustainability agenda). Local authorities also report strong uptake of initiatives and perceived positive benefits to schools/pupils. Among the research sample, most respondents indicated that the initiatives were beneficial for all children of different ages and stages, in different ways, if implemented as planned.

Barriers to Participation

Lack of school staff time and availability was cited by several respondents as a key barrier to participation. Capacity to source information and to deliver the initiatives emerged as a key challenge and may point towards the need for more local co-ordinators attached directly to the programme to enable greater participation among schools. This needs to be complemented by more support from school management teams and local education authorities, it was felt, to drive forward the active travel agenda. This in turn may boost staff confidence to take part in and deliver active travel initiatives in schools, which at present was seen as another barrier to participation.

Other key barriers cited by schools and local authorities included:

- Funding and access to equipment - the cost of bikes and other equipment was seen as prohibitive to some schools considering taking part in cycling based activities and more guidance and resource for families to support them with the costs of active travel was encouraged (especially for schools based in areas of high deprivation)
- Infrastructure - several schools identified the need for practical/infrastructure changes to encourage uptake and facilitate involvement, including safer routes to school, e.g. improved roads, pathways and street lighting (especially in rural areas), more cycle lanes/paths in and around schools, and safe storage facilities for bikes/scooters
- Geographical location - a significant barrier cited mainly by schools in rural areas was the distance from pupil's homes to school and lack of safe pathways and roads making it challenging/inappropriate to encourage active travel to/from school
- Parental engagement - across the evaluation strands, parental and carer attitudes and enthusiasm were presented as one of the biggest barriers to encouraging active travel among children, with views that lessons learned at school, unless replicated and reinforced in the home environment, would not become embedded
- Competition with other initiatives - stakeholders stressed that schools are inundated with opportunities to engage in active travel and wider health, wellbeing and social development opportunities, and this presents competition for the programme initiatives
- Time to plan - schools stressed that they need time, both to study the programme, individual initiatives and their content, and to plan for integrating them into the school calendar. A clearly planned calendar of events/opportunities was encouraged which could be shared with schools well in advance of the start of each academic year to maximise awareness and engagement

The programme as a whole could also be linked more explicitly to the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) it was felt, especially at secondary stage to encourage teachers to prioritise active travel as an area of work in an already busy curriculum.

Coverage and Reach

Most schools who took part in the evaluation felt that there were no gaps by age/stage, and felt there was good coverage and something for everyone to get involved in. A few schools and delivery partners did suggest there was perhaps a gap for younger pupils, particularly in relation to cycling initiatives. Gaps were also identified at the other end of the age spectrum, with the oldest secondary age pupils perhaps being

less likely to be exposed to age-appropriate active travel opportunities (partly linked to the focus on examinations and educational attainment at that stage).

While the evaluation evidence does not necessarily support a different approach to active travel being required for rural schools, it does suggest that rural schools could be encouraged, working closely with partners, to be more proactive in exploring ways of adapting existing initiatives to meet local circumstances. This may involve flexibility from partners in adjusting traditional delivery models to meet local needs. A focus on educating teachers and parents around real and perceived risks, and how to take mitigating measures may also be required to maximise uptake of existing initiatives in rural schools.

It was also clear from the research that there is currently insufficient funding or capacity to allow all initiatives to be offered in all schools, and that a degree of sampling or targeting specific schools is required. What is less clear, however, is how schools are currently being selected and if this is being done strategically or is being driven largely by proactive interest from individuals within schools and local authorities. More focused work with rural school, schools in areas with high levels of deprivation, Special Educational Needs (SEN) schools and secondary schools in general could perhaps be achieved if a more collective approach was adopted to engagement. Indeed, partners identified there is scope for working more strategically to identify what initiatives are best for which schools. At the moment, delivery is demand led with schools being largely self-selected. While the suite of initiatives is diverse enough to support all schools, they could perhaps be better targeted to meet individual schools' needs.

Delivery, Co-ordination and Future Opportunities

There was little in the research to suggest that the substantive service offer to schools needs to change, with the main evaluation recommendations instead focussing on improved co-ordination, promotion and enhancing capacity to deliver. Active travel delivery partners were all in agreement that the current model of delivery for the programme works well, with each partner bringing unique skills, experience and resources which work in a complementary way. Partners also work collaboratively on cross-promotion of each other's work with only very small signs that some schools/local authorities sometimes choose between initiatives within the programme instead of viewing them as complementary to one another.

Delivery partners expressed that the current model provides good levels of flexibility for schools' needs at a local level and supports numerous priority areas e.g. physical and mental health and wellbeing, climate change, road safety education as well as modal shift. Schools also reflected positively on the diverse offer. Most partners also agreed that there was a good balance between cycling and walking initiatives in the

Transport Scotland programme at present. The way that the different initiatives complement each other help to tackle the various barriers experienced by schools was seen as a strength, and it was felt there were opportunities for each initiative to adapt to work alongside one another. Schools and delivery partners also reported that the various initiatives had adapted quickly and efficiently to meet the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The relationship between delivery partners and local authorities emerged across the evaluation as the main area where co-ordination improvements could be made, with significant variation in strength of relationships noted around the country. A key priority among delivery partners was the desire to improve communication and support from local authorities and to achieve more consistency of approach to ensure more equitable opportunities to take part around the country.

Clearer direction is also needed, it seems, on the various funding streams available to support active travel delivery in schools, as well as clearer information on the application mechanisms and where responsibility sits for making such applications. Several schools noted that they would like to make infrastructure changes, but were unsure of the supports to facilitate this, with an apparent lack of awareness of grants and funding available in general.

Finally, despite co-ordinated efforts from delivery partners at the local level, engagement with the programme at the national level by Education Scotland was also seen as missing. Wider shared ownership of responsibility for children's active travel engagement should be encouraged, it was felt, and this should include getting education partners to be more proactive in promoting and supporting the agenda.

Conclusion

The evaluation suggests that the initiatives included in the current programme are much needed and well received by schools. The programme appears to be successful in achieving a broad reach, albeit primary schools engage better than secondary level, and some geographical variation exists. There was qualitative evidence that the programme does contribute (although not exclusively) to positively influencing pupils' active travel attitudes and behaviours. Where schools are already active travel aware and engaged, it enhances pupils' experiences, and where schools are otherwise lacking in active travel opportunities, it plugs an essential gap. A number of potential barriers to future participation were raised, but many of these could be overcome through more personalised engagement with teachers, parents and carers to persuade them of the benefits of active travel and to develop flexible solutions to perceived physical or practical barriers. Exploring ways of reducing time and capacity required by schools to access and act upon the information that is already available for the programme seems key, as well as boosting capacity where

required. Subject to more funding and staff resources being made available, a more strategic approach to engaging hard to reach schools could also be employed to consolidate the good work already being achieved.

Introduction

Background

Transport Scotland's Walking and Cycling Schools Programme (the 'programme') comprises a range of behaviour change and infrastructure initiatives, delivered in primary and secondary schools across Scotland by a number of Active Travel Delivery Partners (the 'delivery partners'). At present, this includes Bikeability (school cycle training); Cycle Friendly Schools Award (award scheme for schools who promote cycling); Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools Development Grant Fund (supports secondary schools); I Bike (promotes cycling, scooting and walking); Education and Young People Team Activities; Cycle and Scooter Parking Fund; Hands Up Scotland Survey (annual survey of how children travel to school); Places for Everyone (focuses on improving active travel infrastructure around schools); WOW and Walk to School Week (WOW is a pupil-led initiative to encourage walking, cycling and scooting via interactive tracking, offering rewards to schools); and the Daily Mile. Further details of these initiatives are outlined in the Table 1 below.

Initiative	Delivery Partner	Description
Bikeability	Cycling Scotland	A national cycle training programme for school children, designed to give pupils the skills and confidence they need to cycle safely on the roads.
Cycle Friendly Schools Awards	Cycling Scotland	Provides funding for bike maintenance, equipment and training to promote cycling among primary and secondary pupils. Awards are given where schools meet certain standards.
Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools Development Grant Fund	Cycling Scotland	Supports secondary schools to lead improvement of facilities/increase opportunities for pupils to travel to school by bike.
I Bike	Sustrans	Works with schools to promote cycling, scooting and walking by delivering a programme of activities through an embedded I Bike officer at the local authority alongside teacher champions, a pupil Bike Crew and support from volunteers.
Education and Young People (EYP) Team Activities	Sustrans	Engages pupils, parents and teachers on making the journey to school as active as possible and provides funding for cycle and scooter storage.

Initiative	Delivery Partner	Description
Cycle and Scooter Parking Fund (part of EYP)	Sustrans	Focuses on improving infrastructure through funding installation of cycle/scooter parking facilities in schools (including cycle stands, shelters, lockers, secure storage, etc.)
Hands Up Scotland Survey (HUSS)	Sustrans	An annual in-school survey to gauge how pupils normally travel to school.
Places for Everyone (Safer Routes to School)	Sustrans	Focuses on improving active travel infrastructure around schools. Schools can apply for funding to help create safe, traffic-free routes which encourage children and their parents/carers to travel to school on foot, by bike or scooter.
WOW (year-round walk to school challenge) and Walk to School Week	Living Streets	WOW is a pupil-led initiative designed to encourage walking, cycling and scooting through use of an interactive online tracker to record activity and receive rewards. Walk to School Week supports this as a five-day walking challenge aimed at primary schools to raise awareness of the benefits of walking.
Daily Mile	Active Scotland/ Scottish Government	Children jog, run, walk or wheel for a mile a day at school, at least three times a week, with the aim of improving health and wellbeing.

Table 1: Overview of Initiatives

Funded directly by Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government, the programme has the overall aim of promoting and encouraging take up of sustainable and active travel means among children for everyday shorter journeys as an alternative to car use. By influencing the travel choices of school children, it is hoped that good habits will continue into later life, and that this may influence their parents and carers travel choices too.

The programme supports the [Long-Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland 2030](#), the [National Walking Strategy](#), and the [Cycling Action Plan for Scotland](#). It also supports the national strategic framework for walking and cycling.

Evaluation aims

The aim of the research was to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the programme, focussing specifically on:

- the overall impact of the programme as a whole in delivering the outcome of more children walking and/or cycling to school (behaviour change for school pupils)

- the reach of each of the programme/initiatives and how visible/accessible these are to schools generally
- whether delivery of the programme by a range of suppliers is the most helpful and cost-effective way to achieve the outcome of the overall programme
- understanding the impact the initiatives have on individual schools, including capacity to deliver them effectively
- the level of engagement and co-ordination between schools, local authorities and active travel delivery partners in delivering the programme
- understanding what works well and providing recommendations for where improvements in the service offer to schools, and delivery of the programme may be made, including consideration of alternative programme delivery approaches.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach which combined examination of existing data collected by delivery partners around impact as well as primary data collection with schools, local authorities and other stakeholders to explore awareness, understanding, participation and perceived impacts of the programme.

Familiarisation and secondary data analysis

Delivery partners provided a range of background documents and data regarding their initiatives to allow the researchers to become familiar with the various offers and their impact over time. Data and documents were reviewed at the start and end of the projects to help inform interpretation of the primary data collected, and were also used to inform development of the survey tools and interviews schedules used in the evaluation. All but one of the delivery partners also took part in an early familiarisation interview, as did two other affiliated active travel delivery partners who were able to provide comment on the programme in the context of the wider active travel landscape in Scotland.

Survey of schools

An online survey was designed and made available for completion between November and December 2020, targeted at all primary and secondary schools across Scotland. The survey sought feedback on awareness and understanding of the programme and initiatives within it, participation in the initiatives as well as reasons for non-participation, perceived impacts of taking part and barriers to engagement. Suggestions for improvements linked to raising the profile of the programme and co-ordinating communication between schools, delivery partners and others were also sought.

Schools were asked that the survey be completed by whoever had overall responsibility for overseeing active travel education in their school and that only one response be submitted on behalf of the whole school. It was also requested that respondents answer the questions according to their school's activities before the COVID-19 pandemic, recognising that restrictions will have changed the way that schools have been able to engage with active travel initiatives since March 2020.

A total of 352 valid responses were received. The large majority came from primary schools (86%), with the remainder from secondary schools. This was not unexpected, since the majority of initiatives included in the programme are targeted at primary schools.

The survey was anonymous, although respondents were invited to provide their school's name and contact details if they were willing to take part in a follow-up case study interview. A total of 90 teachers/learning professionals provided school details and it was possible from these data to group schools by their Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) classification. Among this sub-sample, there was a reasonable spread in schools located in different SIMD quintiles, with only slightly fewer schools in the least deprived areas being represented. The sub-sample was split as follows: Quintile 1 (most deprived) (21%), Quintile 2 (28%), Quintile 3 (25%), Quintile 4 (13%) and Quintile 5 (least deprived) (13%). Rural schools were also less well represented overall, accounting for 23% of the sub-sample. The sub-sample was split as follows: Remote Rural (11%), Accessible Rural (12%), Accessible Small Towns (12%), Large Urban Areas (25%) and Other Urban Areas (40%). Responses were received from schools in all local authority areas that opted into the research. A total of seven local authorities did not take part (with reasons for non-participation not given).

Survey of local authorities

A parallel survey for local authorities was designed and made available for completion between November and December 2020. Electronic copies of the survey were sent by email directly to all 32 Scottish local authorities. This was accompanied by a link to an identical online version of the survey allowing respondents to choose their preferred means of taking part.

Invitations were typically sent to Road Safety Officers and other named contacts who liaise with the various delivery partners for each of the programme initiatives. Instructions issued with the survey requested that it should be completed by whoever had overall responsibility for overseeing active travel education in the local authority, and that only one survey should be submitted on behalf of the authority. Respondents were again asked to answer the questions based on activities before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Questions sought feedback on participation in the various programme initiatives, understanding of their aims and content, the impact of COVID-19 and desired support going forward, identification of barriers and facilitators to delivery, and issues related to local planning and co-ordination.

In total, 25 local authorities provided a response. Of these, 18 responded to the online survey and 5 provided an emailed response. Two further local authorities provided both an online and emailed response which were collated into a single composite response for each authority prior to analysis. The local authorities that participated provided good geographic coverage across Scotland, and included a mix of urban, rural and island authorities.

School interviews

As part of the online survey, schools were invited to self-nominate to take part in an in-depth interview to explore their participation in the initiatives and experiences of the programme in more detail. A total of 90 teachers/learning professionals opted in and provided their contact details for follow-up interviews (73 primary/nursery providers and 17 secondary providers) and a total of 30 were invited to take part. The sample was based on schools' reported engagement with the programme as well as geographical location to try and capture feedback linked to each of the initiatives separately. This resulted in a total of 16 in depth interviews being carried out (12 primary schools, 3 secondary schools, and 1 Special Education Needs (SEN) school covering both primary and secondary stages). Again, schools came from a broad range of SIMD areas, and there was a good mix of schools from large urban areas, smaller accessible areas and rural schools. Respondents included a range of headteachers, deputy headteachers, principal teachers, class teachers, and others.

Delivery partner interviews

Each of the main delivery partners took part in an interview following the surveys to discuss experience and perceptions of the programme, with a focus on current delivery mechanisms, perceived strengths and weaknesses of the current programme and potential areas for developing or improving the programme going forward. A bespoke topic guide was developed and all interviews were carried out online or by telephone. Feedback was considered alongside feedback from schools and integrated into the analysis presented below.

Report presentation and research caveats

Data from across the different research strands were merged and analysed collectively to present findings as they relate to the main research questions, rather than for the different research stages employed. More detailed analysis of findings

from each stage of the work (e.g. the school and local authority surveys) were provided separately to Transport Scotland and support the broader findings presented here. Recommendations based on the findings from the work are presented throughout the report, as appropriate, and a summary of all recommendations can also be found in Appendix A.

The research was carried out over a period of significant disruption to schools, delivery partners and local authorities (the main stakeholders who took part) as a result of COVID-19 and so this will have impacted on findings. In particular, it affected participation in surveys (due to lack of time to take part, staff not being at work due to lockdown, etc.) but also will have affected views and feedback about initiatives. For example, schools and partners were still learning 'on the go' about how to react, what would work, etc. Interviews with schools also took part during a period of national lockdown, with many schools open only on a reduced basis with teacher availability limited.

Indeed, the overall response rate for the school survey was just under 20%, or one in five schools who were invited to take part. This does not take into account that many emails may have been undelivered or blocked by mail servers or not forwarded by office staff to relevant learning professionals. Indeed, follow-up telephone calls to a sample of schools suggested that this may have been the case in a number of establishments. While this indicative response rate is lower than hoped for, follow-up telephone calls to a sample of non-responding schools again suggesting that many lacked capacity to find time to take part in the survey due to additional demands already being placed on teachers as a result of COVID-19. Despite this, the number of responses does still provide a sufficiently robust sample for analysis at the aggregate level. Given the relatively small number of secondary schools who took part, however, any disaggregate analysis based on school stage is less reliable and the following findings should be interpreted as indicative only, rather than being representative of the total in-scope population.

Similarly, while percentages are used to present findings consistently within the report, it is important to note that, in some cases, these relate to low numbers of respondents. For example, uptake of some initiatives was very low (<20 schools) and so some disaggregate percentages linked to questions about these initiatives represent views of just one or two individual schools. Similarly, views from local authorities came from a total sample of only 25 and so disaggregate analysis of findings from the local authority sample also refer to very small numbers of individual respondents.

It is also important to note that seven local authority areas opted not to take part in the school or local authority surveys and so the survey findings cannot be interpreted as being applicable Scotland wide. These were not the same seven in each case and, across all research strands, only two local authorities were not represented at

all (these being East Renfrewshire and Highland). Similarly, although the quality of responses that were submitted was high, with most schools and local authorities answering all questions and providing detailed qualitative comments, they should not be interpreted as being entirely representative. Rather, the findings simply reflect the views and experience of those that self-selected to take part.

Finally, the fact that some local authority areas had a higher proportion of schools that took part than others also means that there will be some inherent geographical bias in the results. That being said, a good spread of urban and rural schools of different sizes and based within different SIMD zones was achieved and there was clear evidence of different views/experiences based on geography across the sample. The remainder of this reports presents the findings from the work.

Awareness, Understanding and Information Needs

The main means of gauging awareness, understanding and reach of the programme was via the school and local authority surveys and interviews with schools. Active travel delivery partners were also asked to evidence reach of the initiatives that they ran, and to comment on activities and engagement undertaken to raise awareness.

Awareness and understanding among schools

The most widely recognised initiatives among primary schools were the Daily Mile, Bikeability, the Hands Up Scotland Survey (HUSS) and Walk to School Week, each recognised by over 90% of the schools that took part. Levels of awareness for these same initiatives was slightly lower among secondary schools, with between 60% - 77% of schools recognising each. Initiatives were generally more recognised by primary schools than secondary schools, with the exceptions being Cycling Friendly Schools and Places for Everyone. The Cycle and Scooter Parking Fund, and Education and Young People Team Activities were the least widely recognised initiatives. Table 2 below provides number and percentage of schools aware of these initiatives.

Initiative	Primary		Secondary	
	Number	%	Number	%
Daily Mile	289	97%	39	74%
Bikeability	285	95%	37	70%
Hands Up Scotland Survey (HUSS)	272	91%	41	77%
Walk to School Week	272	91%	32	60%
Cycling Friendly Schools	92	31%	27	51%
WOW - the year round walk to school challenge	98	33%	3	6%
Secondary Schools Development Grant Fund	-	-	14	26%
I Bike	71	24%	10	19%
Places for Everyone (Safer Routes to School)	63	21%	17	32%
Cycle and Scooter Parking Fund	41	14%	5	9%
Education and Young People (EYP) Team Activities	5	2%	-	-

Table 2: Awareness of programme initiatives among schools

There was less awareness of Cycling Friendly Schools, WOW, the Secondary Schools Development Grant Fund and I Bike. Some of this can be accounted for by the fact that some of these initiatives are stage specific (i.e. WOW does not target secondary schools, and the Development Grant Fund targets only secondary schools), and some of it may also be accounted for by the specific limits on numbers that can be involved in such things as Cycling Friendly Schools. The variation within school levels does, however, still suggest that some initiatives had a greater profile than others among their respective target audiences.

The main funding initiatives included in the programme (i.e. Places for Everyone and the Cycle and Scooter Parking Fund) were also less well known overall. Again, part of this may be because they are largely advertised to schools via local authorities rather than directly.

Across both primary and secondary level, very few schools had heard of Education and Young People (EYP) Team Activities. Interviews with delivery partners suggests that this may be because EYP Team Activities cover a wide range of initiatives including the Cycle and Scooter Parking Fund, HUSS, Big Pedal, the Active Business Challenge (in secondary schools), the Big Street Survey, School Travel Plan promotion and co-ordination of the school travel professionals' network. The EYP team is not a discrete 'offer' or initiative in its own right and would not have been marketed to schools or local authorities as such. Participation and awareness of HUSS was significant, for example, and several schools noted participation in the Big Pedal via the survey and interviews, both of which are funded and managed via the EYP team and yet this would be unknown to those taking part.

Schools were also asked how well they felt they understood the aims of each of the walking and cycling initiatives. In the main, primary and secondary schools again had a strong understanding of the aims of the national initiatives such as Bikeability, Walk to School Week, HUSS and the Daily Mile but primary schools in particular were less sure of the aims of the various funds and grants in place to support active travel as well as rewards-based activities.

Schools were also asked how well they felt they understood the content of each of the initiatives (i.e. what was involved for pupils and schools). Initiatives with the greatest longevity (e.g. Bikeability with its roots in Cycling Proficiency) were better understood among both primary and secondary schools, as well as the national time limited or annual diarised events such as HUSS and Walk to School Week. The Daily Mile was again well understood while grants and awards-based initiatives were less well understood in terms of content, especially at primary level. Although there was better understanding among secondary schools of Cycling Friendly Schools and the Development Grant Fund, a large proportion were still unsure of exactly what these entailed, as well as EYP Team activities (the reasons for which are likely to be as above).

Awareness and understanding among local authorities

Local authorities were also asked how well they felt they understood the aims of the various initiatives. The findings suggest that local authority staff felt they had a good level of understanding of the aims of HUSS, Bikeability, Cycle and Scooter Parking Fund, Cycling Friendly Schools and Walk to School Week, with almost all participating local authorities indicating they understood each of these initiatives. There was also reasonably strong understanding of the Daily Mile but less awareness of I Bike overall (most likely reflecting that this initiative is currently only offered in a sample of authorities across the country).

As with schools, over half of the participating local authorities felt they had little to no understanding of the aims of Education and Young People (EYP) team activities (most likely due to the issue of labelling highlighted above), while many again had little or no understanding of the aims of the Development Grant Fund.

Local authority respondents were also asked how well they felt they understood the content of each of the initiatives. Again, respondents felt they had good understanding of the content of HUSS, Bikeability, the Cycle and Scooter Parking Fund and Walk to School Week but little to no understanding of the content of Education and Young People (EYP) Team Activities, and poorer understanding of the content of I Bike and the Secondary Schools Development Grant Fund.

While staff who took part in interviews said that schools had a relatively good awareness of the different initiatives available to them, and reported that they felt up-to-date and well informed, a few respondents, across both primary and secondary schools, suggested that it can be a confusing landscape at times, with lots of separate information being sent to schools. They noted there were many different partners all delivering different things and it can be hard to keep track of this. One particular area of confusion noted in the evaluation included schools confusing I Bike and Bikeability, as well as confusing both of these with other more local initiatives such as I Cycle. For delivery partners, this type of confusion was seen as largely unproblematic as long as schools understood that such initiatives could work in tandem, rather than being in direct competition. Indeed, delivery partners reported that they sometimes received enquiries from schools regarding initiatives other than their own, but this was not seen as a significant issue and was not onerous.

Perhaps more importantly, across interviews with schools and delivery partners, it became clear that the programme itself has no clear identity. The 'walking and cycling schools programme' is not a name directly communicated to schools or local authorities and there was clear confusion among all respondents about this umbrella term. The programme instead refers to the collection of a number of distinct and

separate initiatives that each contribute to Transport Scotland's active travel aims, and/or which receive funding from Transport Scotland to help achieve this.

The Daily Mile, in particular, was not something that the delivery partner recognised as being part of any programme, but rather saw it as an activity that was aligned with Transport Scotland's policy objectives more broadly. It, for example, has a very specific commitment for Scotland to become the first Daily Mile nation in the world and, while this may contribute to Transport Scotland's objectives of more active travel, the Daily Mile itself is not funded, delivered or promoted by them.

This issue was compounded by changes over the years to the various initiatives and partners funded by Transport Scotland, and the withdrawal of funding from some or changes to the funding streams of others. This meant that even as recently as two years ago some initiatives (such as Play on Pedals) were included in the programme but now were not. Local and regional projects which receive funding indirectly through the programme are also not currently clearly recognised as part of it (for example, Forth Environment Link play an important role in supporting school bike share, access to bikes and embedded active travel hubs, among other things). Crucially, some of the activities funded via Smarter Choices, Smart Places (SCSP) are also not officially recognised as part of the programme (e.g. Beat the Street) whereas others are (e.g. WOW). Indeed, SCSP funding is used in very different ways around the country to support community-based initiatives that work with schools to promote walking and cycling and to fund different local authority activities which may collectively contribute to the impact that Transport Scotland funding is having, but which would not be recognised as such within current programme parameters.

Recommendation 1

The 'programme' needs to be more clearly defined with clear parameters around which initiatives are and are not included within it. This should be led by Transport Scotland and needs to be schools-focussed, setting out clearly how the programme aligns with and is complemented by other active travel initiatives, but how it is also separate from them. Adopting a Programme Management approach with a defined vision, scope and benefits would also give a framework for investment decisions and provide a clarity of purpose for partners. More clearly setting out the scope of the programme, including how regional and locally-led activities fit alongside and complement the wider/national initiatives, will also allow measurement of impact and value linked directly to the programme to be better understood in any future monitoring or evaluation exercise.

Schools were asked what else, if anything, would make Transport Scotland's Walking and Cycling Programme **easier to understand**. Many simply requested more information about the initiatives (especially those that they currently did not take part in), information in an accessible format and information sent to schools on a more regular basis, e.g. a list of initiatives made available to all schools each school year (for both initiatives that they were already engaged in and those that they were not). Annual provision of information (as a minimum) was mentioned several times.

The main other suggestions were:

- a one stop site with information on all such related initiatives/a pack of resources all in the one place
- a summary leaflet outlining what to do to take part
- more online resources to support the programme/initiatives
- training for staff on what is available and what they can do, including examples of successful implementation/involvement
- support videos for teachers and children
- discussion/guidance to help schools decide which initiative would benefit the school and young people the most, depending on age and stage
- additional support with delivery of the programme (practical support)
- incentives/rewards for schools and pupils to encourage them to take part
- something parents could manage and support.

Sources of information and key contacts

For each element of the programme that schools had taken part in, survey respondents were asked to specify how they had found out about the initiative and how to take part. Awareness of most initiatives stemmed mainly from local authority education departments, as well as from delivery partners directly.

The main exception to this was the Daily Mile, for which most schools reported word of mouth as the main source of awareness, alongside online and written information. Several schools also listed 'other' sources of information linked to the Daily Mile including local and national media, social media and links to the school that originally pioneered the initiative.

A number of 'other' sources were also mentioned for Bikeability, including:

- staff having previous experience/knowledge from working in other schools
- the initiative being historically embedded in the school/tradition (with uncertainty regarding the original source of awareness)
- natural transition from Cycling Proficiency

- local cycling hubs/active travel organisations who supported delivery
- staff knowing Bikeability trainers
- local parent volunteers/champions for the scheme making schools aware

During interviews, teachers reported that staff would often know who to speak with **within** their own school for information about the different initiatives that were available. There tended to be a key contact, either a champion or member of the management team who would lead on active travel initiatives (although it was recognised that not all schools would be the same). What was less clear, however was who to contact **outside** of the school for more information. In general, staff noted that there were lots of initiatives, programmes and supports available to schools and indicated that it can be hard to keep on top of all the different information. As such, it was felt there was a risk that schools were missing information regarding other initiatives that they were not currently taking part in.

Secondary schools typically did not feel there was good awareness of who the delivery partners were for each of the different initiatives that they took part in. Again, it was suggested that key staff/champions or those with particular interests in active travel may have a good awareness of this, but awareness among the wider staff pool would be more limited. However, it was also suggested that this level of detail was perhaps not important for all teachers, and also that having an individual named contact (irrespective of whether they were known to be affiliated with a specific delivery partner or not) was key to schools taking part. Indeed, delivery partners concurred that it was probably less important for individual teachers to know who managed each initiative, and more important that there was a trusted named contact on the ground who understood the aims of the initiatives and how to take part:

"I think the message is probably more important than actually who the delivery partners are." (Delivery Partner)

Delivery partners reported that they each had their own network of schools or list of currently engaging schools who they are able to communicate with regularly and directly, and individual communication channels and plans seemed to work well. In interviews delivery partners stressed that the most effective means of reaching schools was "people on the ground". While this was resource intensive and was perceived as not necessarily being the most cost-effective approach, this way of messaging tended to translate into greater engagement in initiatives (especially for Bikeability and WOW).

Most activity-based initiatives had local co-ordinators who worked with schools rather than attempting to lead things from a national base, which was something to be continued, it was felt, as individuals with a local presence had better awareness of local circumstances and need:

“Schools really benefit from someone being on the ground to hold their hand and walk them through things.” (Delivery Partner)

Several schools also highly valued face-to-face contact (when this can be provided). It was felt this was highly supportive as schools could discuss their needs and any challenges and jointly produce a plan. It was also felt to be more conducive to ensuring space is booked in diaries/time blocked off in the curriculum/school calendar for initiatives to take place. It was also suggested that, where face-to-face support can be provided in delivering the initiative itself, this can be highly beneficial for the pupils, and particularly those who have disengaged with their school career more generally - anecdotally, it was felt that having a fresh face, non-teacher, and expert in their field can help to engage the pupils.

While delivery partners reported that existing communication channels appeared to work well, the main challenges identified were:

- that the source of information can heavily influence how schools perceive the initiatives, especially their purpose. For example, if they view things as road safety related (with messaging received from Road Safety Officers) their approach may be different than if they perceive initiatives as health and wellbeing related (with messaging from Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinators). This can skew the perceived relevance of initiatives as well as the way that schools deliver on the ground
- initiatives such as the Cycle and Scooter Parking Fund and Cycling Friendly Schools Awards rely heavily on teachers proactively identifying their own needs (which can be biased) and making contact with partners or local authorities. In schools where there is no ‘champion’ or desire to address gaps in active travel provision, making and maintaining contact can be hard
- reaching schools who do not sign up or do not engage in general remains a challenge. In very broad terms, it was estimated by one partner that approximately only 1 in 5 schools respond to cold calls to engage in activities (similar to the survey that was run as part of this evaluation)

When asked ‘what works’ partners highlighted that initiatives with clear and visible brands were those most easily ‘sold’ to schools such as Bikeability, the Daily Mile and WOW. Using one initiative to gain a foothold in a school and to encourage them to graduate or expand their involvement was also something that worked well, e.g. Walk to School Week can be a good way to introduce schools to WOW (although it was recognised that a more strategic approach to this type of expansion could be adopted). Initiatives with dedicated ‘officers’ (such as I Bike and Bikeability) were also considered to be very good in terms of achieving strong levels of awareness and buy-in from schools.

Additional information needs

Schools and local authorities were asked if there was any additional information that they would find useful in relation to each of the initiatives, and the most common requests included:

- general information about the content/aims of all initiatives and how to take part
- how to access the initiatives/who to contact/clear signposting on how to take part
- which initiatives require teacher support and which can be delivered independently by outside partners
- more about what initiatives are available for secondary schools
- more about how the initiatives are linked to the road safety agenda/road safety awareness
- costs associated with taking part in the initiatives
- how to get assistance with applications for funding

“Would like to know what funding we can apply for to support walking and cycling initiatives; 'how to' guides regarding filling out applications, information on successful applications and a way of delivering the initiatives across all school levels...” (Teacher)

Respondents were particularly keen to learn more about the Cycling and Scooter Parking Fund and how they could access funding to improve cycle shelters and bike storage around the school in general:

“Funding for more bike storage would enable us to take part in these initiatives more easily.” (Teacher)

Specific to rural and SEN schools were comments that it would be useful to find out which initiatives were most suitable for children who rely on car and bus to be transported to schools (i.e. children for whom active travel to school was not possible) to encourage active travel once at school:

“We are a small rural school. It is not really safe for most children to walk or cycle to school as there are no pavements in parts of the journey. Parents transport bikes to school once a week and we do let them cycle in the playground supervised at lunch time. Anything that would be suitable for us would be considered.” (Teacher)

Some schools and local authorities requested a “one stop shop” or go to source with details of all initiatives to allow schools to assess which is most appropriate for their setting and individual school aims:

“It would be good if there was a central database that education staff could access to show and link to all of the different initiatives which are available as I have heard of very few of them although I think some of them could have been useful and appropriate for my school.” (Teacher)

“More details on the types of support and initiatives available so that we might make an informed decision about the ones that are a best for our school, location and pupils.” (Teacher)

More general comments included that there was a lack of publicity for some of the initiatives and that up-to-date information and consistent, annual awareness raising was key to increased participation in activities such as those included in the programme. Several survey respondents indicated that, with more information, they may be interested in taking part and/or promoting the programme further within their school.

Overall, delivery partners agreed that schools are bombarded with different opportunities and “cutting through the noise” remains a challenge. Partners already have a wealth of resources available to schools, including printed and online materials that cover a broad range of themes, including the benefits of active travel. The issue does not appear to be a lack of available information or resources, rather it is getting information into schools and getting staff to take notice which remains the challenge.

Recommendation 2

To carry out a mapping exercise that establishes current communication mechanisms, content and recipients for all initiatives within the programme, and identifies the models of delivery that work well in engaging schools. The local points of contact used by different delivery partners should be systematically and regularly shared within the programme alongside details of local champions working with each school to identify any overlaps, gaps or constraints in local capacity and commitment and where existing engagements could be either streamlined or scaled up. The exercise should also explore opportunities for further cross-promotion and cross-messaging

where relevant, to complement where this activity already exists.

Suggestions for increasing awareness

As part of the survey, schools were asked for their views on what would be the **best way** to make schools aware of the programme initiatives and how they can take part in the future. The majority (67%) suggested information emails sent directly to the school would be most effective. Few supported any other means of communication except, perhaps, contact via local authority education departments/other local authority contacts (as schools may be more likely to consider taking part if initiatives were approved/endorsed by, or encouraged at the council level or by someone already known to teachers).

Schools were also asked **who** they would prefer to be contacted by with information about the different initiatives and how to take part in the future. Again, schools mainly suggested local authority education departments with one in five suggesting contact directly from delivery partners. Only one in ten indicated that a single point of contact for the programme would be preferred and all other options attracted less support.

Schools expressed that the source was not as important as the quality of the information being sent and who the information was sent to, i.e. that it must be sent directly to the school and to the most appropriate contact within the school (i.e. the person who is most likely to act on the information received). Interviewees also stressed that while email was the best way to communicate with schools, due to the volume of emails received, any communication had to be clear, concise, and relevant.

During school interviews, there was again some discussion of the need to provide clear and accessible information about the range of initiatives available, including:

- providing **one** point of contact who could outline everything available and refer schools to the appropriate partners and/or discuss a school's needs/interests and direct them to appropriate initiatives
- providing a single website/central resource which introduces and outlines all the available initiatives, what can be delivered, and signposts to relevant contacts and further information (one schools also suggested this could be a leaflet focused on what's available in each local authority)
- being able to sign-up for alerts about each initiative

Local authorities were also asked **how** they would like information about the different initiatives to be shared with them, with almost all suggesting that email would be preferable. Unlike schools, responses related to **who** authorities would prefer to be

able to contact for information about the different initiatives and how schools can take part suggest a preference for having one central organisation or contact:

“One central point at least to start with - having less contacts about initiatives the better, makes it easier to know who to contact - or at least one organisation could have knowledge of all initiatives and signpost as appropriate and provide references of other authorities who have perhaps already taken part in said initiative.” (Local Authority)

A few said they would prefer to be able to contact the various lead officers across the partner organisations for each of the different initiatives, while others felt the current system of information sharing was appropriate.

From schools, local authorities and delivery partners, there were recognised benefits in having a centralised active travel partnership online hub or website that schools could be made aware of which sets out all of the different programme elements, opportunities and details of how to take part and gives clear points of contact for each partner/initiative. Among delivery partners, there was a strong push to develop a shared partnership resource in response to this.

One delivery partner suggested that it may be useful, as part of this online resource, to reference case study schools where active travel engagement is working well, to illustrate to other schools what could be achieved:

“I think schools really respond well to seeing it work in other schools, and see the benefits and hear the teacher raving about it, it can really help. It might also help local authorities better visualise what involvement can mean for their schools and their local area.” (Delivery Partner)

Recommendation 3

Development of a regularly monitored and updated online hub or website for the programme as a whole that signposts schools, local authorities and parents/carers to more information about each of the initiatives within the programme and provides clear points of contact for further information, as well as links to other relevant resources. All packaging and messaging should be schools-focussed and opportunities to link to established online information resources, such as the [national digital learning platform for Scotland GLOW](#), should be explored. A shared partnership resource such as this, managed by a single body, would help to clarify how different strands of the programme

align. It would also create greater awareness and brand recognition for those initiatives included in the programme, making them stand out from (and potentially more visible and appealing than) alternative initiatives competing for engagement from schools.

Need for increased awareness?

While schools were helpful in providing suggestions for how awareness of the initiatives can be raised, it is worth noting that 'business development' was not viewed as a main priority for delivery partners, all of whom were already working at capacity to deliver. For example, the Places for Everyone fund and the Cycle and Scooter Parking Fund are regularly over-subscribed with waiting lists and no room for new applications.

While partners would be pleased to engage in more awareness raising to engage even more schools and local authorities, delivery would require additional funding from Transport Scotland. Any push for future awareness raising activities would need to be proportionate to funding and capacity to deliver, it was stressed.

Participation and Barriers to Participation

Uptake of initiatives

Current uptake of the initiatives was explored through the online survey of schools.

All schools who took part in the evaluation survey indicated that they had taken part in at least one activity, and the initiatives with the greatest participation levels among the schools that responded were again HUSS – 90%, the Daily Mile – 85%, Bikeability – 79% and Walk to School Week – 73%. All other initiatives had participation levels that ranged from 1% to 24%. This is outlined in Table 3 below.

Initiative	Yes	No	Don't know
Hands Up Scotland Survey (HUSS)	90%	7%	3%
Daily Mile	85%	12%	3%
Bikeability	79%	14%	7%
Walk to School Week	73%	16%	11%
WOW - the year round walk to school challenge	24%	59%	17%
Places for Everyone (Safer Routes to School)	20%	53%	27%

Initiative	Yes	No	Don't know
Cycling Friendly Schools	20%	57%	23%
Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools Development Grant Fund	15%	45%	40%
I Bike	16%	63%	21%
Cycle and Scooter Parking Fund	12%	62%	26%
Education and Young People (EYP) Team Activities	1%	73%	26%

Table 3: Participation in initiatives among school sample

Local authority respondents were also asked which, if any, initiatives were offered in one or more schools within their authority area and results were consistent with the school findings, i.e. the programmes offered most often included the Hands Up Scotland Survey (HUSS), Bikeability and Walk to School Week. All participating local authorities noted that more than one initiative was offered by schools in their area and this ranged from four to ten per area.

Similar to the findings around awareness, the initiative with the lowest reported level of participation was Education and Young People (EYP) Team Activities. A large proportion of schools also reported that their school had never taken part in I Bike or accessed the Cycle and Scooter Parking Fund. This was interesting since most (20 authorities) reported offering Cycle and Scooter Parking Funding and taking part in Cycling Friendly Schools, suggesting either that participating schools were not included in the sample or that participation in this initiative was not recognised as such.

It is important to note that many schools listed initiatives/activities that are part of the programme but used slightly different names, perhaps indicating some misunderstanding of what is/is not included in the programme. For example, several respondents said that they took part in the 'Hands Up' survey (indicating that they perhaps misunderstood the reference to HUSS) and a small number of schools simply noted that they 'worked with Sustrans' (giving positive feedback on their collaborative approach). It is also worth noting that around a quarter of schools reported that they were unsure or did not know if they had ever taken part in a number of the different (mainly funding) initiatives listed and qualitative comments suggest that some were unsure if or how the activities that they did take part in were linked to the broader programme.

Motivations for taking part

In interviews, schools reported that the driving force for participation was typically to support/improve pupil levels of physical activity, fitness, and general wellbeing

(rather than the focus being on active travel to/from school). A number of schools also reported, however, that the interests, enthusiasm and contacts of particular teachers and/or management team played a crucial role in decisions to take part. Often this was linked to teachers with a personal interest, e.g. those with an interest in cycling pursuing cycling initiatives within the school. While this is not problematic, it may point towards an inherent barrier to participation that may be difficult for delivery partners to overcome unless a more strategic approach to recruitment/engagement is adopted that removes reliance on the motivations of individual staff.

In most instances where schools were interviewed, the schools had taken part in the various initiatives for several years and had conducted these continuously with no breaks. Where schools had taken breaks, this had almost always occurred because of staff turnover, either within schools or within partner organisations with a resulting loss of communication, guidance and confidence to deliver.

Reasons for non-participation

Schools were asked, in relation to the initiatives that they had never taken part in, what the main reasons for non-participation had been.

Across all initiatives, the main reason given for non-participation was a lack of awareness i.e. schools having not heard of the initiatives – 79%. Less frequently mentioned, but still noted by over a third (36%) of respondents, were lack of staff resources to support the initiatives in schools, and by over a quarter of respondents (28%), lack of time in the curriculum to take part.

Lack of funding and lack of dedicated active travel co-ordinator in school were mentioned by 20% and 17% of respondents respectively. Did not know who to contact or how to take part was mentioned by 15% of respondents.

Encouragingly, very few schools noted that they felt initiatives lacked appeal to pupils (5%) or failed to meet their needs (9%), and few said that parent/carers would not support children from taking part (6%). This is outlined in Table 4 below.

Reason	Number	%
Had not heard of the initiative(s)	278	79%
Lack of staff resources to support the initiative(s) in school	127	36%
Lack of time in curriculum to take part	97	28%
Lack of funding to engage in the initiative(s)	69	20%
Lack of dedicated active travel co-ordinator in school	60	17%

Reason	Number	%
Did not know who to contact or how to take part	60	17%
Not available/appropriate to the age/stage of pupils	52	15%
Did not understand the initiative(s) or what was involved	35	10%
Did not feel that it/they would meet our pupils needs	30	9%
Did not feel parents/carers would support it/them	22	6%
Did not feel pupils would enjoy it/would engage	17	5%

Table 4: Reasons for Non-Participation

Respondents were invited to note any other reasons that may have prevented them from taking part. The main 'other' reasons given were linked to the geographical location of schools. Some schools commented that their pupils mainly all walked to school already (given the location of the school in the community) and so further active travel education was not necessary or appropriate:

"We have a high level of pupils walking to school already so a lot of the walking to school initiatives are not relevant to us." (Teacher)

In contrast, others said that most pupils were bussed to school due to distance, making active travel alternatives unviable. This was especially true for rural schools where it was felt that distance, as well as a lack of safe pavements and roads meant it would not be safe to encourage active travel among pupils (especially of primary age):

"Rural position makes it dangerous for young people to walk/cycle on roads between villages. Lack of safe dedicated paths." (Teacher)

The fact that most pupils require to be dropped off by car or be transported via school buses to such schools from dispersed outlying areas meant that time spent on active travel education was not seen as a priority. This was contrasted, however, by a small number of other rural schools that commented that they were more likely to engage in active travel (although not necessarily initiatives in the programme) due to the ease of access to open spaces:

"We are a very small enthusiastic rural school with so much outdoor space on our door step which leads well to active travel and to outdoor learning." (Teacher)

Lack of staff time and staff availability were also cited by several respondents as a barrier, including:

- challenges finding cover to allow staff to attend training in such things as Bikeability
- considerations of balancing the amount of time to set up/staff hours involved to organise against benefits to the children
- regular changes in staff/transition between schools and roles, meaning that initiatives lose momentum as staff/roles change
- competing demands on staff time per se

Lack of safe storage for bikes was also mentioned as a reason for not encouraging or participating in cycle-based activities to/from or at school, as well as affordability of bikes, scooters, etc., for families living in areas with high levels of deprivation.

Barriers to future participation

All schools who took part in the survey (including those who currently participated in initiatives and those that did not) were also asked what, if anything, may prevent them from taking part in Transport Scotland's Walking and Cycling Schools Programme in the future. Similarly, local authorities were asked what, if anything might prevent future school participation. For both schools and local authorities, lack of staff resources to support the initiatives was mentioned most, by 51% and 75% respectively. Lack of funding to engage in the initiatives (43%); lack of storage facilities for equipment, including storage for fleet/school bikes (41%) and lack of time in curriculum to take part (37%) were the next most common responses from schools. Lack of time in the curriculum to take part (71%); lack of parent/carers support (67%) and lack of funding to engage in the initiatives (54%) were the next most common responses given by local authorities. Full details of responses given are set out in table 5 below.

Barriers	Schools %	Local authorities %
Lack of staff resources to support the initiatives in school	51%	75%
Lack of funding to engage in the initiatives	43%	54%
Lack of storage facilities for equipment, including storage for fleet/school bikes	41%	46%
Lack of time in curriculum to take part	37%	71%
Lack of awareness of the initiatives	34%	50%
Lack of parent/carers support	31%	67%
Not knowing who to contact or how to take part	23%	38%
Lack of adequate cycle parking at school	20%	17%

Barriers	Schools %	Local authorities %
Not understanding the programme or the different initiatives within it	20%	42%
Lack of up-to-date school travel plan	12%	25%
Initiatives failing to meet our pupils needs	7%	25%
Lack of pupil enjoyment/engagement	7%	25%

Table 5: Barriers to Future Participation. Note: Multiple responses were possible at this question.

There were some minor differences in opinion regarding the main barriers between these two stakeholder groups, but overall agreement that there were likely to be barriers imposed by lack of staff resources to support the initiatives in school, lack of time in the curriculum to take part, lack of funding to take part and lack of storage facilities for equipment, including storage for fleet/school bikes.

Funding and access to equipment

The costs of bikes and other equipment as a potential barrier to participation was raised several times in interviews and survey responses. Information on how to support families with the cost of supporting cycling, and/or information about any support or discounts which might be available to facilitate schools purchasing bikes and scooters to keep on site was welcomed:

“Many of our pupils do not have access to bikes. Is there a source of funding which would help us to buy bikes for school use? Storage of these would be an issue, so any further info on how other schools do this would be helpful.” (Teacher)

Funding to purchase bikes for pupils was seen as particularly important among schools in areas of high social deprivation:

“...very few of our children own a bike due to cost. The majority of our children walk. There are more competing pressures on parents to provide for their children, a bike is not a priority for our families.” (Teacher)

This need was not met by good awareness of the various funding opportunities available to help schools in this way, and suggests that more could be done to match existing resources to need.

Infrastructure

Several comments were also made in surveys and interviews with all stakeholders regarding the need for practical/infrastructure changes to encourage uptake and facilitate involvement, including:

- safer routes to school, e.g. improved roads, pathways and street lighting
- more cycle lanes/paths in and around schools
- additional safe cycle/scooter storage
- funds to purchase bikes for children/families living in poverty and or bikes for schools to keep on site
- funds to purchase personal safety equipment (e.g. helmets and high visibility vests)
- access to bike technicians to help schools maintain their fleet
- help reducing congestion/tackling parking issues in and around school

Lack of safe storage facilities was raised repeatedly by schools, as well as lack of space in the school playground to facilitate initiatives (although this was to a lesser degree). Other structural challenges included the location of the school (such as being on/near a busy road, narrow streets, parking problems around the school, lots of pupils using school transport or being dropped-off by car), the size of the playground, and a lack of bike/scooter racks. Importantly, most infrastructure challenges were linked to cycling, instead of walking.

Geographical location

As above, another significant barrier cited mainly by schools in rural areas was the distance from pupil's homes to school and lack of safe pathways and roads making it challenging/inappropriate to encourage active travel to/from school:

"We are a very small rural school and many of our children live a long way from the school. This makes walking and cycling to school more challenging." (Teacher)

Schools in rural areas suggested that cycle paths, improved pavements and street lighting may facilitate uptake in some areas and other non-rural schools also suggested that improved road safety in and around schools may boost uptake (with the safety of roads being the main factor). Exploring ways to facilitate physical activity, including walking and cycling once at school was also suggested for pupils who require to be transported to/from places of education by school bus:

"I feel rural schools do not benefit from the initiatives as safety has to be the priority for the children and we cannot guarantee this if we ask them to walk or cycle to school." (Teacher)

Several urban schools also stressed that the location of their school made it dangerous for young people to walk, scoot or cycle to school and so did not encourage active travel and/or expressed that the majority of pupils necessarily travelled by car or bus due to the distance from home to school. There were also concerns among some staff about pupil safety and worries of litigation/being challenged if children were involved in accidents as a result of participating in active travel to/from school based on school advice.

Local authorities also cited resistance to children walking/cycling to school based on parental and teacher concerns around the perceived risks and dangers of travel on or near roads. Delivery partners, however, reported that in many cases this can be a 'perceived risk' rather than an 'actual risk' and suggested that some schools may reject opportunities too soon on the basis that they feel unsafe to encourage active travel instead of exploring ways of changing infrastructure.

While the evaluation evidence does not necessarily support a different approach to active travel being required for rural schools, it does suggest that rural schools could be encouraged, working closely with partners, to be more proactive in exploring ways of adapting existing initiatives to meet local circumstances. This may involve flexibility from partners in adjusting traditional delivery models to meet local needs. A focus on educating teachers and parents around real and perceived risks, and how to take mitigating measures may also be required to maximise uptake of existing initiatives in rural schools.

Parental engagement

Across the evaluation strands, parental and carer attitudes and enthusiasm were presented as one of the biggest barriers to encouraging active travel among children, with views that lessons learned at school, unless replicated and reinforced in the home environment, would not become embedded:

"Much of active travel depends on the co-operation of parents. Too many parents believe that driving or bus to school is inherently safer. Understanding of the beneficial effects of active travel are poorly understood especially by those for whom the benefits would be greatest...Pupils and young people are not necessarily the problem, adults, including parents, councils/councillors, teachers and road transport workers are the ones not 'getting it right'." (Teacher)

School staff suggested that materials directed specially at children and families, as well as parent councils would be valuable, rather than materials directed only at learning professionals. Having external partners come into schools to deliver the programme and/or raise awareness of the programme was something that was also seen as engaging pupils' and parents' attention more.

While all of the initiatives have an element of parental engagement already built in, this is something that delivery partners have not necessarily prioritised until recently, but was nonetheless seen as something that could be an area of discrete focus going forward:

"...I think there's probably just a lot out there that all are trying to do very similar things, and so it can be a bit of a confused landscape. So, I think they [parents and carers] do have a good awareness, there's just a lot of different initiatives around physical activity that are available and it's just about trying to make it that bit clearer for people I think." (Delivery Partner)

Recommendation 4

Focussed national research may be required to explore what prevents parents, carers and wider school communities from supporting and engaging with active travel opportunities that are currently available for children. The findings from such research should be used to inform an appropriate response and strategy for engaging whole school communities, ensuring that this highlights the individual, social and climate change benefits of active travel participation.

Competition with other initiatives

Schools were asked as part of the survey and during interviews which other active travel initiatives (if any) the school took part in. Just under a third of surveyed schools provided details of 'other' initiatives, as well as all who took part in interviews, and details of all of the other active travel initiatives that schools reported are included in Appendix B.

Schools reported that the Transport Scotland initiatives worked well together, as well as with other active travel and road safety initiatives. It was felt that, while each initiative had a distinctive brand, purpose, target age group, etc. they could be implemented in tandem and helped to deliver an overall message, improve health and wellbeing, and develop a more active school ethos.

That being said, however, both schools and active travel delivery partners recognised that schools are inundated with opportunities to engage in outside initiatives (not only active travel but also those linked to wider health, wellbeing and social development). There was, therefore, massive competition for initiatives trying to work with schools and this competition may provide a barrier to participation:

“There are a lot of competing initiatives being directed at schools and we do not have the time or resources to complete them all. We have to prioritise.” (Teacher)

“Schools can be overwhelmed with the number of different initiatives on offer, not just active travel but other areas too, like the arts. And we are not offering something that is passive - they actually need to get involved and put a date in the diary, potentially get involved in training, set aside time in classroom days, engage parents. We are asking something of the schools, because we want it to be embedded, not just be receiving, but to actually get involved.” (Delivery Partner)

One delivery partner suggested that perhaps one of the disadvantages of the current programme model (with different delivery partners offering different initiatives) is that it perhaps inadvertently encourages local authorities to make choices between initiatives, for example, between Bikeability and I Bike. This often results from local authorities not understanding that they are complementary rather than competing initiatives, and more could be done to raise awareness of the value of having more than one initiative running in parallel.

Time to plan

Across the survey and interviews, numerous comments were made that schools and teachers needed time, both to study the programme/initiatives and their content, and to plan for integrating them into the school calendar:

“Time to plan. Teachers are working extremely long hours and we are continually asking them to do more.” (Teacher)

Several schools suggested that Transport Scotland should provide an annual calendar which outlines all the available initiatives and when they are available/open (e.g. funding opportunities), when events run, and deadlines for applying to take part, etc. in order to support planning. Early communications were encouraged, before the end of the school year, to allow planning for the following year. Comments were made to suggest that initiatives provided annually and at a designated time in the school calendar were welcomed:

“...an annual calendar of regular activities - known in advance which can be planned into the schools diary/calendar.” (Teacher)

One delivery partner also highlighted the misalignment of the academic year and financial year for grants as something which potentially negatively impacts delivery. Where annualised funding for projects exists, this can be problematic since planning for school projects which are delivered mid-August to mid-June often needs to begin well in advance of the summer months. If funding decisions are not made until late spring, uncertainty can exist around what it is/is not possible to offer to schools in the forthcoming session.

Recommendation 5

A clear program of events with key dates associated to each of the initiatives should be produced which sets out for schools such things as deadlines for submitting funding applications, dates when staff are available for delivery in schools, and dates for national events, to allow schools to plan active travel initiatives into the academic year. Such a resource needs to be given to schools well ahead of the beginning of each academic year to allow forward planning. Development and dissemination of such a resource should be carried out collaboratively by Transport Scotland, Education Scotland and active travel delivery partners.

School management team influence

Delivery partners reported that it takes time to get local management teams within schools and to build the type of strong working relationships that are required for effective delivery:

“Every school and every local authority is so different, and you have to spend a lot of time and employ different ways of working with each.” (Delivery Partner)

The fact that active travel initiatives such as cycle training is not mandatory will always be a barrier, they suggested. Partners need headteachers and other management team members to be interested and want to get involved and so individual choices, interests and preferences of school management teams will always be a driving factor for participation:

"Unless you are a school that actively wants to get involved in active travel and active travel promotion, they don't look for the information and opportunities that are out there." (Delivery Partner)

While all initiatives are offered on an 'opt in', non-mandatory basis, and rely on teacher interest to some extent, management team support is particularly crucial for things like the Cycling Friendly Schools Award, which requires staff time for assessment, reassessment and change.

It was suggested by delivery partners and school staff alike that pro-active support would be helpful from school management to drive forward the active travel agenda, for them to allocate time and resources for this, and support staff to get the skills or undertake any required training. Having suitably enthusiastic and motivated teachers in the right subjects and/or support staff who have access to a class or are able to identify suitable pupils to take part and co-ordinate the initiative was key. At present, this was seen as a particular barrier among secondary schools who took part.

Staff capacity, enthusiasm and confidence

On a related note, a key weak point of the existing delivery model and something that may provide a barrier going forward is that active participation in programmes is often reliant on key internal teaching and support staff, active travel champions or other invested individuals including parents or members of the local community:

"If there is a person in a school who wants to make things happen, then they will happen. And that could be the headteacher, a teacher or someone from the Parent and Teacher Association, but it needs that one person to make things happen." (Delivery Partner)

Schools and delivery partners expressed that it was often difficult to ask teachers to take on more. Classroom assistants were often good sources of support for managing and co-ordinating active travel initiatives as they tended to have more flexibility in their working day. However, staffing levels often meant such staff were also often unavailable:

"It's probably resource and time to be honest. [School] staff feeling that they've got the chance to do it." (Delivery Partner)

High turnover of staff in schools can also lead to breakdown in understanding of current active travel offers, it was felt.

Generally, respondents appreciated the input from those initiatives which provided an accompanying staff resource (e.g. Bikeability and I Bike), and felt this helped

them to take part. Overall, time from outside partners, rather than occupying teacher time was seen to be one of the main things most likely to make sure schools engage:

“Dedicated trained staff and volunteers that do not impact on core staffing of schools.” (Teacher)

“More support in setting up initiatives. More than training - we are inundated with initiatives [across] all curricular areas, and without help to set up, it is physically impossible to participate in all of them. As this should be a priority, some additional help would help us to get it up and running.” (Teacher)

Recommendation 6

Capacity and lack of time among teaching staff present clear barriers to schools taking part, and while a dedicated online resource which provides easy access to information about the initiatives may make it more efficient for schools to find out what is available and how to take part, lack of school staff time and capacity to deliver may remain a barrier. Funding for more local delivery staff attached directly to the programme should be considered, especially for activity-based initiatives, as this may enable more schools to participate. This would also counter challenges linked to staff movement within and between schools and assist with consistency of communication and approach.

Only a small proportion of survey respondents said that there were no barriers that would prevent them taking part in the future and/or said that they already promoted active travel to a sufficient degree, meaning that increased engagement was not necessary.

Perceived Impacts, Strengths, Weaknesses & Reach

Perceived impacts

One area of focus for the evaluation was to explore the overall impact of the programme as a whole in delivering the outcome of more children walking and/or cycling to school (i.e. behaviour change for school pupils).

All stakeholder groups agreed that measuring impacts of the programme and the various initiatives within it was seriously confounded by not being able to establish causation. That is, it was not possible to evidence a causal relationship between taking part in the programme initiatives and an increase in walking, scooting and cycling among pupils both short and long term. This was largely because schools also took part in a number of other initiatives not included the programme, as well as some schools being active travel champions more generally, and it was not possible to control for such outside influence.

While all partners already collect their own impact or performance data, it was also stressed that many of the impacts from pupils taking part were not readily measurable, and were perhaps best evidenced by observation on the ground, for example, pupil enjoyment, learning of new skills, etc. Local co-ordinators often provided delivery partners with anecdotal evidence of impacts observed in schools, although these were not easily reflected in official impact data.

Indeed, delivery partners and teachers were also keen to highlight that different measures of impact exist and that counting journeys made by active means was only one measure of impact. The immediate benefits of wellbeing and happiness are not necessarily captured in the existing programme aims but should not be undervalued. Walking and cycling for enjoyment rather than just for journeys is essential, it was felt, and the programme provides opportunities for positive walking and cycling experiences, the memories of which may last a lifetime but will never be captured using traditional impact measurement tools.

Impact would also depend largely on local capacity, it was stressed, and success in a small number of hard to reach or 'in need' schools was not necessarily less impactful than engagement of large numbers of schools who engaged on a limited or very surface level. Partners explained that it was difficult to generalise too broadly that engagement and impact was linked to geography or school size and that there were not necessarily any clear patterns in their own impact data. Good examples of rural schools and urban schools can be found, as well as examples of schools in high and low SIMD areas engaging:

“Engagement and impact doesn’t directly correlate with any of these things. The main consistency is commitment and capacity of local staff - school staff, local authority staff and people on the ground to deliver initiatives.” (Delivery Partner)

Recognising that a direct correlation between participation and increased walking and cycling is difficult to evidence, and that different impact measures must be considered, all schools and delivery partners were nonetheless able to provide qualitative feedback on the perceived impacts of the programme.

As part of the survey, schools were asked to what extent they considered that taking part in the initiatives (as a whole) impacted on pupils in a variety of ways. The main impact reported is on the health and wellbeing of pupils with 65% of respondents saying they felt taking part in the initiatives had a high or very high impact. 53% felt taking part had had a high or very high impact on thinking more positively about active travel, while 48% said the same regarding participation in active travel. Less (37%) felt taking part in the initiatives had a high or very high impact on educational attainment . Table 6 outlines these findings more fully.

Impacts	Not at all	Low impact	Medium impact	High impact	Very high impact	Don't know
Participation in active travel	-	8%	42%	37%	11%	2%
Thinking more positively about active travel	-	7%	38%	40%	13%	2%
Health and wellbeing of pupils	-	3%	31%	42%	23%	1%
Pupils' educational attainment	2%	11%	44%	29%	8%	6%

Table 6: Perceived Impacts of Participation

While the initiatives were seen as being moderately impactful in most cases, they were considered to be most directly impactful on health and wellbeing and least impactful on educational attainment. While not explored specifically as part of the current evaluation, it is noted that positive impacts on health and wellbeing may be linked to corresponding positive impacts on educational attainment.

There was also clear recognition that the programme was impactful on making pupils think more positively about active travel (especially at primary level) and encouraging participation in active travel. This was supported by qualitative comments recognising that these impacts may be both short and long term, and that the programme was also beneficial to the sustainability agenda.

Impact on specific groups

Schools were also asked if there were any groups of pupils for whom they thought participation in walking and cycling initiatives was particularly beneficial. Exactly half of schools (50%) said 'yes' compared to 15% who said 'no'. The remainder indicated that they were unsure.

Most respondents indicated that the initiatives were beneficial for all children of different ages and stages, in different ways, if implemented as planned. However, groups that were cited as potentially benefitting more than others included:

- younger children, (i.e. primary age instead of secondary age) as they were more likely to engage and enjoy the activities and to value time outside (with less pressure/stereotyping about active travel not being 'cool' which may be evident among older children)
- children from families where there was no cycle/scooter provision at home/those less likely to live in a household that owns a bike
- children living in families who do not encourage physical activity at home/those from families who rely too heavily on cars/drive children everywhere
- inactive children and children with physical health concerns, including obesity (as well as children who do not like to participate in traditional sports/group sport activities)
- children living with mental health challenges, including children with short attention spans, or who struggle to regulate their emotions/behaviours
- children who lack confidence in their own abilities/require help to develop resilience and independence. Bikeability was cited as being particularly useful for teaching responsible/safe road use behaviours among older primary aged children
- children who need/benefit from smaller group interaction with an adult
- low attaining pupils and children who would benefit from achieving success in an alternative area of the curriculum
- those who live closest to schools and so can make the most of the initiatives (as opposed to those who live too far from school to walk or cycle)
- those who travel to/from school by bus and who are unlikely to walk around the school or home environment

"Children who are sedentary at home and whose parents are reluctant to engage in physical exercise. An initiative where they are participating with their peers would give them a sense of achievement and would ensure inclusion." (Teacher)

"Everyone benefits from active travel but in particular pupils that need extra support in school. Promoting better mental and wellbeing and gives them a more settled and positive start to the day." (Teacher)

"Those pupils who find other areas of school life challenging - walking and cycling initiatives encourage participation and success within school, without the curriculum challenge." (Teacher)

None of the school or local authority respondents indicated that there were any differences in perceived benefits for boys versus girls, and none mentioned any different impacts linked to race, religion or for those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Communities. Whilst encouraging, it is important to note that this does not necessarily mean that such differences do not exist, but rather that they were not present or identified in the schools who took part in this research.

A small number of schools specifically mentioned that the programme was beneficial in supporting pupils with additional support needs (especially ADHD/ADD diagnosed pupils as a means of physical exercise and release from the classroom):

"Walking is particularly beneficial for pupils with additional support needs as the physical activity and fresh air creates a feeling of calm and a readiness to learn." (Teacher)

This was not a unanimous view, however, and several schools and some delivery partners noted that there was currently poor provision specifically for Special Educational Needs (SEN) schools. This was a potential area for further enquiry and research to identify need and explore ways that existing initiatives could be adapted or new initiatives considered, it was felt.

Pupils living in urban/built up areas with limited access to gardens and safe outside spaces at or near to their homes were seen to benefit in particular and this was a common feature of responses from urban based schools. Urban schools (in SIMD quintiles 1 and 2) were also those most likely to mention poverty and lack of access to bikes at homes for some of their children and so stressed that the programme in schools (where bikes were provided) helped to make cycling accessible to the most deprived children.

While primary school children were seen to benefit most (in terms of embedding safe and active travel behaviours from a young age), it was also noted that secondary school children would potentially benefit most under current circumstances, given a perceived lack of willingness to 'go outside' following lockdown restrictions. Older primary pupils were also seen to potentially benefit most at transition to high school stage, i.e. helping them to prepare for more independent travel:

"Walking and cycling initiatives are beneficial for pupils of all ages. For younger pupils it helps to foster basic skills and an interest in walking and cycling. In older pupils, it gives them the freedom to use their skills to travel safely now and in the future." (Teacher)

Based on qualitative feedback, overall, it was felt that the active travel initiatives provided health and wellbeing benefits, as well as improved pupils' confidence and fitness levels.

Perceived strengths and weaknesses of the initiatives

Among schools, the initiatives were typically considered to be easy to participate in, and easy to use. The main strengths and weaknesses that were cited for each among the various stakeholders who took part in the research included:

Initiative	Strengths	Weaknesses
Bikeability	<p>Engages pupils well</p> <p>Is a known and trusted resource in schools</p> <p>Benefits from the legacy of cycling proficiency messaging as a core skill for pupils to learn</p> <p>Accessible to wide age range</p> <p>Can be easily adapted to meet individual school size, needs and infrastructure</p>	<p>Relies heavily on local co-ordinators and volunteers to assist with delivery</p> <p>Staff turnover in school can lead to breaks in engagement while new staff are trained</p> <p>Availability of bikes in poorer areas can hinder uptake</p> <p>Unsafe roads near schools can present a barrier among schools who have safety concerns</p> <p>Difficult to establish strong presence in secondary schools</p>
I Bike	<p>Perceived as particularly beneficial for building pupil confidence, improving concentration, and providing lifelong skills</p>	<p>Training element well received, but sometimes more muted response/uptake of events</p>

Initiative	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<p>Easy to participate in/accessible</p> <p>Can be tailored to the school environment</p> <p>Being staffed by an I Bike officer facilitates participation and gives school staff confidence</p> <p>Provides varied fun activities, with lots of different ways to take part</p>	<p>Can be difficult for schools to maintain momentum over time</p> <p>Lack of coverage in some areas</p>
Daily Mile	<p>A wide range of benefits reported, including improved health and fitness, improved stamina, improved concentration levels, increased resilience and wider mental health benefits</p> <p>Schools/pupils can set their own level for participation</p> <p>No equipment is needed, no training and qualifications are required and it is a free resource</p> <p>Competitive element is a strength</p>	<p>Regular communications needed to maintain momentum/enthusiasm among teachers</p> <p>Could be more clearly linked to other active travel targets rather than just physical education/health and wellbeing</p> <p>Difficult to fit into the school day at secondary school level</p> <p>Primarily a health and wellbeing initiative, rather than active travel per se</p> <p>Could be used by some schools to tick the 'active travel' box and result in disengagement from other active travel offers</p>
HUSS	<p>A reliable, robust and trusted gauge of how pupils are travelling to school</p> <p>Useful for initiating discussions around travel patterns within schools, as well as at local authority and national level</p> <p>Complements data collected longitudinally i.e. WOW</p>	<p>Potential for more innovative data collection mechanisms to keep schools engaged</p> <p>Reliant on pupil honesty</p> <p>Could be more clearly linked to CfE to help staff find time to fit within existing curriculum/activities</p>
WOW	<p>Easy to use</p> <p>Physical resources (badges) work well at primary level</p> <p>Clear messaging and brand</p>	<p>Remembering to complete travel tracker regularly can be a challenge to teachers</p> <p>Costs of travel tracker subscription and badges can be prohibitive for some schools where central support is not available within the local</p>

Initiative	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<p>Trusted as a well-established resource</p> <p>Complements snapshot data i.e. HUSS</p>	<p>authority (as schools do not have dedicated funds to sign up if not supported by the local authority)</p>
Walk to School Week	<p>Effective at raising the profile and promoting the health and wellbeing benefits of walking</p> <p>Can make pupils more eco-aware</p> <p>Easy to take part in</p> <p>The competitive element was enjoyed by schools and pupils alike</p> <p>Whole school and/or whole year groups can take part (i.e. strong inclusivity)</p> <p>Can be used regardless of where a school is on their active travel journey</p> <p>Self-explanatory/easy to engage with</p>	<p>More information needed for parents/carers to encourage even greater participation and to complement messaging being given to pupils in school</p> <p>Scope for even greater participation across the country given relative lack of resource or time commitment</p>
Places for Everyone (Safer Routes to School)	<p>Wider reach than schools alone, and so useful for those at transition points, e.g. leaving school, as well as wider communities</p> <p>Links active travel and road safety policy areas well</p>	<p>Messaging about how to get involved could be stronger</p> <p>Considerable variation in access/use based on geography</p>
Cycle Friendly Schools Awards	<p>Financial support to buy bikes etc. invaluable</p> <p>Mentor support perceived as really useful by schools</p> <p>Regular meetings with staff help to ensure the initiative remains a priority for schools</p> <p>Awards act as good incentive to schools</p> <p>Nationally accredited</p>	<p>Some schools may be put off by the idea of an 'assessment' as part of the Awards programme - semantics may need to be addressed</p> <p>Dedicated communication drive that focusses only on the award may be required (i.e. at time when the funding is not open and accessible to schools). This would reach schools who don't have a need or ambition for funding but may benefit from the award</p>
Secondary Schools Development Grant Fund	<p>Fulfills funding requirements for which there is otherwise a gap</p>	<p>Reliant on local authorities to share information about the Development Grant Fund</p> <p>Fund could be open on a rolling basis (instead of just expressions of</p>

Initiative	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<p>Encourages schools to take a lead/be proactive and self-reflective and is enabling</p> <p>Open to all secondary schools (inclusive)</p> <p>Allows expressions of interest to be noted on a rolling basis</p>	<p>interest) to allow schools to apply and be granted the funds when they need it most, and when interest/engagement levels are present</p> <p>Lack of clarity around how often schools can apply</p> <p>Possibly too much emphasis on the funding rather than on the award</p>
Cycle and Scooter Parking Fund	<p>Much welcomed by schools who do take part</p> <p>Seen as particularly beneficial for schools in urban areas</p>	<p>Lack of clarity around how often schools can apply</p> <p>Scope to increase awareness</p>

Table 7: Strengths and Weaknesses of the Initiatives.

Note: As very few schools and local authorities were aware of EYP Team activities as a discrete area of work, feedback was not given. Feedback linked to HUSS and the Cycle and Scooter Parking Fund should be considered as a proxy for EYP Team Activities.

Suggestions for improvements

More general suggestions for improvements to the programme made by schools and local authorities included:

- provision of more of a link to qualifications for cycling initiatives in secondary schools, e.g. assistant leadership roles/awards, bike maintenance, link to SQA, link to Prince's Trust
- provision of clearer links to the curriculum, such as ideas of what to do in Health Week, links to mental wellbeing, health and wellbeing, sustainability, Global Citizenship, etc.
- clearer messaging of why it is important to take part, stressing any wider achievement aspects for pupils in addition to enjoyment
- competitions and prizes within schools as this helps with engagement levels
- support on how to engage parents more, e.g. family days, family walks/cycles, etc. It was noted that this was particularly difficult for secondary schools
- funding for electronic communications/tablets to all pupils would make the logging of active travel easier. This was felt to provide more direct participation for pupils, particularly for HUSS
- more staff resources, both within schools and local authorities to support programme delivery
- greater access to funding and quicker response times to grant applications
- raising the profile of the various programmes and the importance of them within local authorities
- greater direct education department support/endorsement of the programme
- making it a higher priority or mandatory requirement within the school curriculum/making it easier to fit into the curriculum so the messages can be learnt within a classroom
- simplification of the programme, for example, initiatives being promoted in one place with clear instructions on how to take part, an indication of the staff resource and time required, and perhaps suggestions for how to access extra staff resources to facilitate implementation

Reach, coverage and gaps in provision

Most schools who took part in interviews felt that there were no gaps by age/stage, and felt there was good coverage and something for everyone to get involved in. When considering the specific age/stage groups who take part in each of the initiatives, schools reported during interview that they typically followed the initiative parameters. For example, walking initiatives (such as the Daily Mile) and the journey to school monitoring type activities (e.g. HUSS, WOW, Walk to School Week) tended to be whole school initiatives. Cycling initiatives (I Bike and Bikeability) tended to be

run with more senior age groups in primary schools, although a few did note they used Play on Pedals for nursery and younger pupils, and that the Big Pedal was used as a whole school initiative. Conversely, it was suggested that cycling initiatives tended to focus on the younger cohort in secondary schools (i.e. S1 to S4) as the older pupils either had more of an academic focus or were “too cool” to participate.

A few schools and delivery partners did suggest there was perhaps a gap for younger pupils, particularly in relation to cycling initiatives. It was suggested that more could be done to identify those pupils who do not have access to a bike at home/cannot ride a bike and provide an initiative which supports them to learn, so that they are able to ride a bike before beginning the Bikeability programme for example. One also suggested that there was a gap in cycling initiatives for middle stage primary pupils. The infants had access to Play on Pedals and P5-7 had access to Bikeability, but there was a gap for those in P4. They suggested either a cycling initiative or scooter skills sessions would be welcomed.

Other comments were made that there was less available for younger pupils generally - they felt most initiatives at this age focused more on road safety rather than promoting active travel. It was felt that more could be done to encourage active travel in this age group, and provide rewards. Other schools were less likely to welcome such initiatives, however, as they noted that younger pupils were not encouraged to cycle to school due to their location along a busy road and a lack of safe alternative routes.

Gaps were also identified at the other end of the age spectrum, with the oldest secondary age pupils perhaps being less likely to be exposed to different active travel opportunities (partly linked to the focus on examinations and educational attainment at that stage). Secondary schools in general, where pupils are no longer as dependent on parents to get to school and are able to more freely make their own active travel decisions were seen by delivery partners to be a hard group to reach, and one partner questioned if there was scope to do more transition work from primary to secondary stage as well as from senior school to further and higher education.

On the whole, partners reported that they were already good at sharing what is going on and sharing data about what has worked and not worked, but a more strategic overview of how and where resources have been deployed to schools around the country may be helpful to allow partners to achieve collective view of areas where engagement is particularly poor and schools are untapped. At present, delivery partners perhaps work in silos to some extent in trying to maximise engagement and reach and to achieve a good breadth of school engagement, however, there may be areas that are under-served in comparison to others once all initiatives are taken into account. While choice should always rest with schools, local authorities could play a

more active role directing schools to the most appropriate initiatives based on catchment and infrastructure features of the school, it was felt.

Similarly, partners could work more closely together to identify schools most in need and pool resources to develop specific engagement strategies for poorer schools to help get them on board. Partners stressed that it was not a realistic aspiration to be able to work with all schools in all areas due to lack of funding and staff capacity, but there was recognition that a more strategic approach to working with a diverse range of schools could be achieved.

Recommendation 7

Delivery partners should work together with Transport Scotland to develop a more strategic approach to how schools are reached to ensure more equitable and responsive coverage. If done in tandem with mapping of existing engagement around the country (see Recommendation 2), this should help the programme to be more inclusive and it is recommended that poverty and rurality are both included as key variables in any sampling approach developed. Development of a school engagement strategy would help to reduce bias introduced by teacher interest and local authority variation in capacity to promote initiatives among schools. A rotational approach could be considered to widen inclusion of more schools, i.e. moving funding and staff between different areas each year, funding permitting.

Delivery, Co-ordination and Future Opportunities

Views of the current delivery model

Active travel delivery partners were all in agreement that the current model of delivery for the programme worked well, with each partner bringing unique skills, experience and resources which worked in a complementary way. Delivery partners expressed that the current model provides good levels of flexibility for schools' needs at a local level and supports numerous priority areas e.g. physical and mental health and wellbeing, climate change, road safety education as well as modal shift. This was echoed by schools who reflected positively on the diverse offer, which as one teacher perceived "gives each mode it's time to shine".

Most partners also agreed that there was a good balance between cycling and walking initiatives in the Transport Scotland programme at present. The way that the different initiatives complement each other help to tackle the various barriers experienced by schools was seen as a strength (e.g. those with poor access to bikes can still benefit from WOW, Walk to School Week and the Daily Mile, etc.) The multiplicity of initiatives also provides opportunities for schools with varying levels of resources/time to commit to an active travel project/programme to take part to some degree.

The benefit of having multiple organisations contributing to a common cause also allows partners to pool resources and provides good flexibility/adaptability in responding to the evolving needs of schools:

*"Having a variety of actors in the sector brings a lot of diversity in the way that they reach schools, which can only be a good thing."
(Delivery Partner)*

While the prospect of a single point of co-ordination for the programme was floated, this did not receive any support among delivery partners. This would, it was felt, lead to a dilution of quality, knowledge and expertise with potential for some of the smaller initiatives to get lost if the programme was managed by a single partner, for example. Delivery partners also agreed that there was no scope to cut current staff capacity and there was a consensus of the need to increase capacity if anything, especially if there was to be a renewed focus on such things as targeting specific schools, widening engagement and raising awareness.

While the current delivery model was described as strong anecdotally, with many added value elements built in, partners and schools agreed that they did not feel

sufficiently well equipped (in the absence of school reach and financial data) to comment on whether the current delivery model was the most 'cost-effective' means of delivering the programme. While not in scope here, a separate costing exercise, which explores how many schools are being reached by the current initiatives and the investment in each would provide a better understanding of the actual costs associated with current delivery and allow the benefits (and disbenefits) associated with alternative models to be explored (including both behaviour change benefits, climate change benefits and educational benefits). The relative investment in walking and cycling initiatives separately could also be explored to gauge the relative value for money that each provides within the programme. Such research would also help to inform the appropriateness and prioritisation of recommendations resulting from the current evaluation.

Recommendation 8

Specific research to explore the costs associated with the current model of delivery should be undertaken, to understand if it represents the most cost-effective way of delivering active travel initiatives to schools. This should consider input not only from delivery partners but also from volunteers/third parties who support the delivery and consider the costs of replacing this support in a situation such as that presented by COVID-19. The costing exercise should also explore sustainability of future funding and the potential benefits of longer-term funding models to assist partners with delivery planning, recognising the different challenges faced by projects that are funded over prolonged periods of time compared to those that are funded over shorter set time frames.

Partnership working

As above, all delivery partners reported that close working relationships exist between those delivering different elements of the programme. Delivery partners helped to promote each other's initiatives to the benefit of the programme overall:

"One of the main benefits of being part of a wider programme is that it expands the number of trusted voices in the school setting and helps to magnify reach and growth." (Delivery Partner)

Similarly, some partners share resources to help with delivery on the ground. For example, many I Bike officers are trained to deliver Bikeability and many are also trained to deliver Bikeability training to teachers/volunteers, to allow schools to develop their own delivery capacity. For the WOW project, I Bike officers have been

able to allocate budget to schools to create activities to help them meet their active travel goals, which has complemented the WOW active travel measurement function:

“Even though all the different partners delivery very different things, we are all part of the same system and we all have a role to play, and we quite often couldn’t offer the things that we do unless we were supported by the others. We very much work in tandem that way.” (Delivery Partner)

Feedback from interviews with teachers suggested that schools felt there was good communication, and they noted receiving regular emails and contact with those partners responsible for overseeing projects, whilst not feeling bombarded. Schools were typically very complimentary of the partners they worked with (both national contacts and local co-ordinator networks), noting that they felt well informed and supported, that they were supplied with good resources, and that they were accessible to the whole school.

Several did, however, note this was related only to those initiatives that they already take part in and didn’t recall receiving any information/communication about other initiatives (suggesting more widespread promotion may be needed, as above). Again, partnerships were seen to be fragile to staff movement, either in-school or within the partner organisation (or both) which could easily lead to communication channels being lost or disrupted. As above, this suggests there is a need for more robust, longer-term and flexible/inclusive communication patterns and management of the initiatives rather than relying solely on relationships between individuals.

Local authorities were also asked what, if anything, could be done to simplify the way that Transport Scotland’s Walking and Cycling Programme is currently co-ordinated and delivered. The main suggestion was having just one point of contact, having information coming from one source/contact, and/or having a one-stop site to get information:

“It’s all over the place at the minute. Sustrans do some, Cycling Scotland do some, as well as Living Streets - too many different organisations and people. They change nearly every year so it’s hard to keep track of who to contact for what.” (Local Authority)

Indeed, the relationship between delivery partners and local authorities emerged across the evaluation as the main area where improvements could be made, with significant variation in strength of relationships noted around the country.

Recommendation 9

A single independent and objective point of contact for the programme as a whole within Transport Scotland (rather than a single co-ordinator) may be required who can signpost schools and local authorities to the various different delivery partners, as required. This should complement any centralised web-based hub or resource that might be developed to meet the needs of those who prefer a named point of contact rather than having to access online resources to find out relevant information.

Local authority influence

None of the initiatives currently has coverage in all local authorities across the country and, while several have near full coverage, provision and engagement is variable.

Data from across the evaluation strands suggests that local authorities are essential partners in the effective delivery of the programme and individual elements within it. Local authorities act as gatekeepers in many ways (providing signposting to schools for funding opportunities, as well as directly funding engagement with some initiatives) and so a lack of engagement and buy-in from local authority education or transport teams presents a huge barrier to uptake:

"It absolutely needs people in the local authority to direct schools to what they could be doing." (Delivery Partner)

Cuts to local authority capacity, and in particular the steady erosion of the Road Safety Officer network, School Travel Planning Officers network, and more recent threat to Outdoor Education teams, presents major risks to the success of partnership programmes, it was felt:

"...it works best when we have planned it out with education colleagues from a policy perspective and from Education Scotland's perspective in making sure that we're communicating at the right time...What hasn't worked quite so well perhaps, and again is an area for growth is around the local authorities, and how we use them to communicate to schools directly at a local level rather than us continually doing [it] at a national perspective." (Delivery Partner)

At present, each local authority has their own school active travel and road safety approach. Perceptions were shared among some delivery partners that some local authorities run with "what they know" instead of "what works best" for their individual

schools, and some of this may be driven by a lack of awareness in some areas about what is available to schools. Discretion of local authorities in how they use Smarter Choices, Smarter Places funding was also seen as contributing to variability of coverage.

Indeed, the way in which active travel education needs for pupils are identified and prioritised was explored with local authority respondents, with various methods and models being reported suggesting a lack of consistency and scope for greater systematicity in the prioritisation process.

While several authorities reported that they used HUSS data to identify need, none of the local authorities who responded explicitly said that they used evaluation data or reports on impact of the wider programme initiatives to inform their decisions (although some may use this data unofficially to inform their thinking). Several noted they utilise School Travel Plans and input from Travel Plan Co-ordinators and Road Safety Officers, while others relied on headteachers or individual schools to identify needs and engage in programmes. Two local authorities noted that they prioritised particular geographic areas, with one seeking to prioritise different areas each year, while the other was focused on wider community infrastructure improvements. Individual authorities also noted that they liaise with partner organisations, such as Sustrans, to identify priority areas, or identify need and priorities via delivery of the Smarter Choices Smarter Places programme.

A few noted that they develop and utilise other local strategies and plans, including transport, travel and active travel plans, green travel plans/climate change strategies, development plans, road safety strategies, etc. One also noted they have regular Traffic Co-ordination Group Meetings which includes representatives from Education and Lifelong Learning, Police Scotland, Planning, Transport and Roads Officers. Such feedback perhaps suggests that there may be scope to share evaluation data from the initiatives more widely with local authorities and associated networks to help inform their thinking, and/or that local authorities could be encouraged to more proactively seek out and use this data. Again, however, identifying who to share this information with may be a challenge. Indeed, a range of different local authority departments/roles were also noted as having input or responsibility for various aspects of road safety and active travel support, including Travel Plan Co-ordinators, Active Schools Co-ordinators, Active Travel Co-ordinators, Road Safety teams, Traffic and Transportation Sections, Transport and Roads, and Health and Wellbeing teams.

Local authorities were also asked how decisions were made about which active travel education initiatives are promoted and used in schools in their area, with considerable differences in responses. Several suggested that Road Safety Officers or Road Safety teams were generally responsible for such decisions. Others noted that other teams/departments were responsible or had input to these decisions,

including Sustainable and Active Travel teams, Travel Plan Co-ordinators, and Active Travel Co-ordinators. Several also indicated that information was disseminated to schools (either by local authority staff or delivery partners, or both) and it was then up to headteachers to make the decision, either opting in or out of offered initiatives.

Factors which were noted to inform decisions included:

- capacity issues for both local authority and school staff to deliver programmes and provide the necessary support
- the need for and availability of funding
- piloting and experience of existing programmes:

“Projects that do not cost money or a great deal of funding, such as Walk to School Week, Bike Week, etc... will be offered to all schools... Projects that require funding, such as WOW, are funded due to piloting these projects on a smaller scale, seeing the impact and [then] offering to other schools.” (Local Authority)

- how the programme(s) fits into the overall school development plans
- emphasis/priorities of schools who undertake a school travel plan
- parental/pupil feedback
- reference to the local Active Travel Strategy
- awareness of the different programmes:

“It tends to come down to which ones we are aware of. More needs to be done for us to know where to find information on the initiatives, when they start/end, and which ones are suitable.” (Local Authority)

In interviews, several schools also noted that local authorities could be more proactive in promoting the initiatives. In addition to having more presence in leadership meetings, local education teams could be encouraged to ask all schools to nominate an active travel representative who would be the main named point of contact for the school to receive communication from partners, it was suggested. Similarly, having a named point of contact for schools to communicate with within the local authority was key. Indeed, delivery partners reported that, if school headteachers have a known contact in the local authority this seems to generate more traction for schools getting involved.

Overall, where local authorities are engaged, the relationship between partners, local authorities and schools works well, it seems, with local authorities acting as a conduit through which information can be shared with schools from a reliable and known source. However, where local authorities are not engaged, it can be more

challenging for partners to contact schools directly and/or for them to be heard among the “noise” of different opportunities that schools are bombarded with.

Recommendation 10

A key priority among delivery partners is the desire to improve communication and support from local authorities. This could be taken forward as a discrete piece of work, led by Transport Scotland in collaboration with Education Scotland to ensure high level direction and consistency in approach in messaging to get local authorities on board. Consideration should be given to the possibility of a dedicated Active Travel Co-ordinator or a Scottish Government funded Active Travel Support Assistant embedded within each authority (with funding and engagement decision making powers), as well as a nominated member of school staff for active travel, and access to dedicated delivery staff at the local level (see Recommendation 6).

National direction

Local authorities were also asked what, if anything, could be done to improve co-ordination between Transport Scotland, delivery partners and local authorities in relation to active travel education.

In the main, local authorities requested more communication from Transport Scotland and the various delivery partners regarding the available initiatives, including having named contacts and more direct contact/meetings with local authority staff to promote initiatives and disseminate information. A simple overview of all the active travel education initiatives was also encouraged (similar to requests made by schools), including explanation of what they are, when they take place, how they fit together, if they are a school project or capital development, who the lead contacts are, and outlining any funding available/funding requirements and where to find further information.

Delivery partners indicated that they felt well supported by Transport Scotland on the whole. However, it was felt there was scope for more strategic direction and steer specifically in relation to priorities for the programme and what is required of partners in reaching and working with the most deprived schools. Regular meetings between Transport Scotland and the active travel delivery partners are already in place and were seen as being essential in ensuring knowledge transfer and learning about new developments within the programme. More time could be spent at these meetings by Transport Scotland in directing focus for the programme as a whole, and priority setting. While the multiplicity of initiatives included in the programme was seen as a

strength, it was suggested that a hierarchy of priorities should be more directly discussed, particularly as some programmes are available to all schools while others require contributory investment.

Despite individual and co-ordinated efforts from delivery partners at the local level, engagement with the programme at the national level by Education Scotland was also seen as missing. Thoughts were expressed that this may be due to perceptions that active travel is not an education function and that schools do not have responsibility for the journey to/from school or active travel outside of school, instead viewing their responsibilities as being restricted to time spent at or within school (although this was not evident in any of the feedback from schools themselves).

National direction from Education Scotland to encourage schools to reinstate or give more weight to school travel plans was urged since, without this, schools may continue to operate autonomously to determine their own priorities, to the exclusion of active travel (especially at secondary level). A role for Education Scotland also exists in encouraging better alignment between the eco-schools and active travel agendas. Similarly, education departments could encourage all schools to include active travel in local school improvement plans to ensure that it is on the radar of individual school management teams. Overall, the programme would also benefit from greater endorsement from local authority Education Departments, it seems, which in turn should ensure that enough staff capacity is channelled into active travel programmes.

Recommendation 11

A formal approach to Education Scotland should be made to strongly encourage attendance at the regular meetings currently held between Transport Scotland and the active travel delivery partners. Representatives from the main affiliated organisations who are not directly involved in the programme but who are identified collaboratively by core partners as being key to delivery success should also be encouraged to attend to maximise sharing of information about current developments and opportunities for schools. Wider shared ownership of responsibility for children's active travel engagement should be encouraged.

Redefining the programme objectives

Delivery partners had a strong shared understanding of the high-level outcomes of the programme to achieve more walking, cycling and scootering for local journeys,

including the school run. They were confident that each of the individual initiatives had indicators and outcomes that were well aligned to this goal.

What may be missing from the current outcomes, however, was recognition that bus use can be a part of the active travel spectrum, especially in rural or remote areas and at secondary school level. For example, one partner noted that active journeys may include a combination of walking or cycling to/from a bus stop as a means of reaching school. In such cases, the programme should not be attempting to move bus users to another transport mode, it was suggested, but instead bus use should be embraced as part of the wider active travel offer (with the associated sustainability and climate change benefits of bus use also being acknowledged).

Similarly, the current absence of an outcome for the programme linked to climate change was noted by one delivery partner. Given the centrality of climate change to current Scottish Government and Transport Scotland policy, linking the climate change agenda more explicitly to the programme (including specific outcomes against which performance can be measured) was seen as key going forward.

Delivery partners also indicated that there may be scope to widen the goals of the programme, in particular in relation to:

- learning for fun
- learning for confidence
- learning for sustainability

Widening the focus of the programme to target active travel for fun was seen as particularly important since, while the recreational element is very important to some schools, this was not true of all (this was also evidenced in the survey and interview feedback). Many focused solely on the journey to/from school (and others on road safety) to the detriment of the development of a love of walking and cycling which could contribute to long-term, sustainable behaviour change:

“I think we have to promote cycling outside of the school run as much as we promote it as part of the school run.” (Delivery Partner)

Different delivery partners and some schools stressed that they viewed cycling in particular as an essential “life skill” and that every child should have the opportunity to learn to ride a bike. Viewing the value of cycling initiatives only in terms of their contribution to modal shift for journeys to/from school, therefore may be too restrictive.

Similarly, widening the focus beyond active travel alone may allow for some of the wider successes that are being achieved in schools, communities and local authorities more generally (and which are funded through such things as Smarter

Choice, Smarter Places) to be captured and reflected in the programme's success. Redefining the aims of the programme to encapsulate benefits beyond modal shift, as well as to reflect activities that are not traditionally active travel focused (such as road safety, health and wellbeing, sustainability and global citizenship) would allow these to be valid measures of success against which the programme is assessed. In contrast, one partner suggested that attempting to deliver on multiple different outcomes may make monitoring, evaluation and future investment decisions more challenging and indicated that there needed to be more clarity and simplicity around what the programme aims to achieve.

Achieving wider alignment of the programme

Schools were asked to what extent they felt that the walking and cycling initiatives offered by Transport Scotland were aligned with the **Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)**, Scotland's national curriculum for children aged 3 to 18. Respondents from both primary and secondary schools indicated moderate to high alignment in most cases although a reasonable proportion (nearly one in five primary schools and a third of secondary schools) indicated that they were not sure.

Schools viewed that the programme aligns well with and actively promotes and supports the health and wellbeing aspects of the curriculum and that initiatives were especially useful for supporting learning around sustainability. It was suggested that initiatives could be adapted/tailored to meet specific components of the CfE, and that the programme as a whole could take into account progression and challenge as pupils progress through their levels and learning (approaching the child "as a whole"). The initiatives were also useful for developing confidence, independence and wider life skills:

"Health and wellbeing is central to Curriculum for Excellence and is a responsibility for all to deliver. Walking and cycling initiatives are good for developing good mental health and for giving children life skills, helping them to risk assess to keep themselves safe, allowing for greater independence." (Teacher)

Some respondents also stressed the fundamental nature of targeting health and wellbeing in order to positively affect academic attainment:

"Curriculum for excellence has an outdoor focus and a focus on health and wellbeing. If you do not address a health and wellbeing issue the child will not perform to their ability in other curricular areas." (Teacher)

Where respondents were unsure or provided less favourable feedback in terms of how well the initiatives were aligned with the CfE this was mainly due to:

- initiatives being too challenging for schools to get involved with (due to staffing, etc.) meaning that pupils did not benefit at all
- the curriculum already being too crowded with little potential to fit in these initiatives, especially in secondary schools, where many pupils walk (at least part way) to school and so do not consider active travel education a priority
- initiatives being too marginal/limited to impact notably on learning (i.e. offered only once a year/as one-off events)
- pupils already having a sound grasp of the benefits of walking and cycling in general/not needing formal education in this regard

A number of respondents also stated that they did not know enough about the initiatives or the programme as a whole in order to be able to accurately assess its alignment with the CfE, with others suggesting that all initiatives must be explicitly linked to the CfE in order to maximise uptake:

“To justify time spent on these initiatives there needs to be direct alignment with the curriculum across all levels otherwise it is using up time that teachers do not have spare. Learning intentions of the initiatives need to be clear and aligned with the progression pathways that the school has for each year.” (Teacher)

One of the main barriers to participation cited by secondary schools was fitting the initiatives into the school day, and this was seen as something that would not change unless initiatives could be more clearly linked with the curriculum.

Recommendation 12: All support materials and resources linked to the initiatives should clearly signpost how they interact with the Curriculum for Excellence and to specific learning outcomes. This should be communicated to schools in an accessible way using appropriate language for the education setting to allow them to better understand how the programme aligns with wider educational aspirations and how they can be integrated with or support other lessons. A priority is to do this at secondary level to maximise engagement with the programme for that stage. Doing this may also help to set the programme apart from some of the numerous other external programmes and initiatives that schools are invited to engage with, and help to lessen the impact of competition as a barrier to participation.

Similarly, schools were asked to what extent they felt that the walking and cycling initiatives offered by Transport Scotland were aligned with Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), the Scottish Government's approach to supporting children and young people. Again, most respondents at both primary and secondary level

indicated moderate to high alignment but a notable proportion at both levels were unsure.

Comments to support positive ratings included that initiatives supported the GIRFEC principle of understanding the wellbeing of a child in their current situation and of 'being active and healthy'. Most initiatives provided opportunities for every child to take part/did not discriminate and were child-focused/could be tailored to meet individual children's needs. The initiatives helped with mental health/wellbeing and helped children access resources they might not otherwise be able to. It was also felt that they fitted well with many of the eight SHANNARI indicators central to GIRFEC, i.e. of children being safe, healthy, nurtured, responsible and included.

Other comments provided by schools mainly focussed on lack of affordability for some pupils/families to buy bikes/scooters or other equipment that would support participation (e.g. helmets, lights, etc.) Indeed, lack of resources in school was again cited as a barrier to 'getting it right' for all children with views that it is often the most in need children who have the smallest opportunity to take part:

"If provision was provided directly at school and with bicycles (for those without) brought directly to the school then this would guarantee participation." (Teacher)

The main other comments again focussed on the unique needs of rural and remote schools where distance from school to home and lack of safe cycle/pedestrian travel routes prevented participation for those living in particularly isolated home locations. This may be a particular problem for schools with a mixed catchment i.e. some who lived close and others who lived far away:

"Not every child is able to walk to school and therefore can feel alienated or disappointed during such events." (Teacher)

Again, a small number of respondents indicated that they did not feel they knew enough about the programme or individual initiatives to be able to accurately assess alignment with GIRFEC. A small number also stressed that breakdown of links to GIRFEC could be clearer in communications around the programme and individual initiatives.

Simplification of funding opportunities and applications

Findings from the local authority survey suggest that the way that active travel is funded across the county varies quite notably. Many reported that they used the Smarter Choices Smarter Places Fund, with the same number citing the Scottish

Government's Cycling Walking Safer Streets (CWSS) funding. The same number again cited use of their own local authority department budget(s) with one citing that they had an 'active schools budget'.

Smaller numbers reported using funding from delivery partners directly including Cycling Scotland, Sustrans and an affiliated partner (Paths for All), or using funding that came directly from Transport Scotland.

Other funding sources included specific local authority grants, individual schools utilising Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) monies, school funds and Parent Teacher Association/Parent Council funds, air quality funds, or other grants or non-specified grants or external funding. Across the board, there was significant variation and also evidence that local authorities changed their own practices year on year, partly due to a lack of understanding around what monies would be available and how different funding streams worked:

"It would be useful to have a webinar some time just to outline what initiatives are available, how they are funded, what we need to do to access funding and what the timescales are. I think there are often so many different schemes, so many different funding sources, so many different funding structures (some are 100% funded, some need match, some matches are ineligible, etc.) and also to know which funding sources and projects may complement each other."
(Local Authority)

In addition, there were also mixed messages from local authorities regarding the funding structures they would like to see in place. For example, some authorities suggested provision of direct ring-fenced funding to local authorities (rather than funding applications), while others suggested delivering resources direct to schools rather than the local authority as it was felt this would assist in reducing local authority staff time and cost of delivering to individual schools:

"All funding avenues and programmes should be linked together and promoted as one big package, with schools/authorities having the option to -see what works best for them. Different information streams from different organisations are not effective and often get lost within the inbox and not responded to." (Local Authority)

Delivery partners also reported a range of different funding sources/mechanisms were used by different local authorities and schools to access their initiatives. For example, Smarter Choices, Smarter Places administered by Paths for All was also cited as being used by some local authorities to fund I Bike, while others use the annual funding stream to employ I Bike officers locally. Others, however, use match funding from Transport Scotland and their own budgets to achieve this. A key

challenge highlighted by delivery partners which had worsened in recent years was the pressure on local authority funding, with no revenue funding available and authorities unable to match Transport Scotland inputs. Year on year funding was also highlighted as something that may make planning for engagement with initiatives difficult for some local authorities.

When coupled with schools' lack of awareness around the funding opportunities that exist, the data suggests an overall lack of clarity or consistency in the ways that funding is advertised, and how it is administered to schools, as well as confusion around how funding is accessed and who has responsibility for leading applications (e.g. local authorities or schools directly).

Recommendation 13: Clearer direction is needed on the various funding streams available to support active travel delivery in schools, as well as clearer information on the application mechanisms and where responsibility sits for making such applications. This information should be collated in one place and shared with local authorities and schools alike, with up-to-date information provided on a regular basis. This should help remove existing confusion regarding the funding landscape.

Meeting the challenges of COVID-19

Impact on active travel education

The COVID-19 pandemic led to the suspension of the great majority of external visitors going into schools to deliver activities, including co-ordinators delivering elements of the walking and cycling schools programme. This led to some schools postponing, cancelling or adapting their participation in active travel initiatives to meet the restrictions and blended learning environment. It was also noted that training for staff had been cancelled/delayed in many cases.

Encouragingly, several local authorities indicated that some initiatives had been implemented despite the restrictions, including Walk to School Week activities and WOW, Bikeability and I Bike. Funding opportunities had also remained open.

Around two thirds of schools also indicated that they had/intended to deliver some form of active travel education despite COVID-19 restrictions. The most frequently cited was Bikeability (mainly anticipated in the Spring and Summer term of 2021). This was possible in cases where school staff were trained and external visitors were not required to come into the school premises, although a few noted that this had been delivered by Cycling Scotland within schools during periods of home-schooling (i.e. with those pupils attending the school hubs). Other initiatives that schools noted they had continued or hoped to continue with included I Bike, the Daily Mile, Walk to School Week, WOW and HUSS.

There was some evidence, however, that some schools had not committed to implementing any new initiatives during the pandemic restrictions:

“At the moment the ongoing situation regarding COVID-19 is taking up an enormous amount of time and thinking so we are struggling to take on any new initiatives.” (Teacher)

Some had also implemented restrictions which would limit pupils' active travel options, such as banning or restricting the number of bikes and scooters in school to ensure no cross-contamination or breaking of class bubbles at the bike-sheds. Others, however, had not implemented such measures and felt that active travel had not been impacted as pupils were using bikes and scooters to get to/from school.

A small number of schools also noted that, while options to take part might have been constrained due to COVID-19, there was a renewed focus on activities that could be achieved, recognising the importance for children's physical and mental wellbeing following lockdown periods:

“Any chance to get pupils outside should be important at the current time.” (Teacher)

Only a few schools suggested that they would bypass active travel education entirely in 2020/2021 to focus on other areas of the curriculum/other priorities.

Several schools hoped the impacts would be short-term only, and that the vaccine would allow schools to return to a pre-COVID situation relatively soon. Some also stressed that they were planning catch-up lessons. They noted that some activities may have been delayed, but that affected pupils would undertake these either before summer or into next year instead and so no one would miss out.

However, it was felt that, should restrictions exist over the long-term then more robust and permanent adaptations would be needed for some of the initiatives to allow them to continue, and greater planning may be needed by schools and delivery partners to arrange provision. It was felt that initiatives may need to build in greater flexibility for delivery going forwards.

Adaptations made or required

Adaptations had been made to several initiatives, either to the content/delivery of the initiative itself or to its management in order to ensure the necessary restrictions could be met.

For Bikeability and I Bike, coverage had been reduced, with co-ordinators delivering to a reduced number of schools. Schools also noted that local adaptations had been

required in some instances, including training taking place within school grounds only and/or involving reduced group sizes. Despite this, these initiatives were seen as welcome at the current time and were considered to have worked well where they had been implemented.

During lockdown/home-schooling periods both the delivery partner and schools who took part noted that they had encouraged pupils to continue to do the Daily Mile from home.

WOW travel tracker data continued to be collected using a combination of online classroom activities and data uploaded by pupils and their parents/carers from home during lockdown to ensure that there were no gaps in participation.

Although much of the 'hands on' work that partners delivered directly had ceased, this was replaced in most cases by more online delivery. While historically, websites for initiatives had perhaps been used to share information about the initiatives, these were now being used to provide schools with delivery materials to allow them to engage in active travel directly:

"It has given us more time to create resources, rather than being in school." (Delivery Partner)

I Bike in particular redesigned how they delivered their offer due to officers not being able to work within schools. This was welcomed by schools, with interview respondents indicating that these online lessons had been useful for home-schooling and continuing with the initiative during the restrictions. One school suggested the I Bike approach could provide a model for other initiatives.

It was also noted that several initiatives had shared materials or suggestions on ways to continue with their specific initiative or to encourage active travel more generally during the restrictions, while some schools had developed these themselves. This included virtual walks, cycles, and challenges - sometimes with a goal of reaching a target distance (collectively or individually), or to facilitate a scavenger hunt or nature trail type activity. It was also noted that videos, online assemblies and virtual meets/meetings had been used, both to allow schools to communicate with their pupils and with the delivery partner or local authority.

If restrictions continued in the future, schools and local authorities were asked what information and support they would find useful to continue active travel education. There was particular interest in online information and resource packs for use in school, as well as active travel videos/webinars for pupils to watch at school (although it was noted these could also be used as a contingency for blended learning). Schools were also interested in cycling activities being offered outside during the school day, run by delivery partners:

“Any support that can be offered to pupils to connect with online if they are at home to encourage an active lifestyle would be beneficial.” (Teacher)

Other suggestions for support during and post-COVID-19 included:

- access to additional external trainers, coaches, and specialist activity leaders to work with groups of children on outdoor activities
- more visible competitions, challenges and rewards systems in place to reward active travel during blended learning/lockdown, including localised (possibly cluster level) competitions and those targeted at families
- the provision of lesson plans and readymade resources that teachers (or parents supporting home schooling) could use, including paper-based materials for children with limited or no internet access
- the development of an online, interactive app, which looks like a game, for pupils to log information such as travel modes, distance, steps, etc.:

“Perhaps a set of lesson plans to incorporate outdoor learning into the curriculum during a lock down/blended learning when lessons take place at home - perhaps having lesson plans available for schools that tied in walking/cycling into the outdoor learning, then into maths/English would be helpful for schools and encourage people to get out and about.” (Local Authority)

Financial support was also mentioned by schools in the context of COVID-19. This was seen as essential to help them and individual families to purchase bikes/scooters and personal safety equipment such as helmets, high-vis vests, etc., as well as to pay for more cycle storage/parking/shelters. These were considered necessary to support children to participate in active travel, and particularly cycling activities, and to avoid cross-contamination both of class bubbles and equipment as the sharing of resources was currently difficult/impossible:

“Exercise is very important for the mental and physical wellbeing of pupils and staff, the Government should consider a similar approach with resources as has been done with digital technologies, particularly if blended/home learning is implemented.” (Teacher)

“...a grant to provide children with helmets. We only have a limited number at school and can't share because of COVID-19. Therefore, there are many pupils who can't participate in initiatives because they don't own the safety equipment required to participate.” (Teacher)

None of the schools that took part indicated that COVID-19 restrictions had impacted on any particular groups of children more than others in relation to active travel. The exception (mentioned by just two teachers) was those for whom parental/carer prioritisation of active travel was low. This may have resulted in some children being less active overall during periods of home-schooling than they might have been if attending school in person, it was felt:

"Particularly after lockdown, I do worry about some of my children who are very sedentary and what the future implications are for that. And I think really quite severe messages need to be put out there [to parents and carers] by the Scottish Government about the future implications of children's physical and mental wellbeing if they're not taking care of their physical health." (Teacher)

COVID-19 as an opportunity to learn?

Several interview respondents noted that families had adapted their routes, routines and activities, that many had been walking and cycling more during lockdown, and there was a perception for some that more people were now walking to school. Some suggested that there was now greater recognition among parents of the benefits and importance of active travel. These changes were seen as an opportunity to reduce barriers to active travel. There was hope that increased prevalence of active travel could be continued, and was felt to provide an opportunity to encourage/prolong this behaviour and to provide a longer-term change in people's mind-set. It was suggested there was an opportunity to promote active travel as a safer alternative due to COVID-19 compared to car sharing and public transport:

"We've seen people much more take up walking and cycling over the course of the pandemic so far and so I think there has been a positive impact (if we can call it that) of the pandemic to really get people thinking about how they travel around every day and how they'll continue." (Delivery Partner)

It was also felt that the outside nature of the active travel initiatives helps to ensure it can still go ahead and provide teachers with resources which encourage outdoor learning. Further, it was noted that being outside, engaging in nature, and being active was good for people's mental health, and as such, active travel initiatives could contribute to pupils' recovery from the pandemic and isolation - which were noted as increasing problems for young people as a result of the pandemic.

However, it was also suggested that private car use had increased. A few schools noted that parents were frightened to allow their children to return to public/school

transport as a result of COVID-19, and so many were driving to/from school, which had created/exacerbated parking problems.

In order to sustain the positive behaviour changes, and to encourage concerned parents out of their cars, it was suggested that investment was needed in the roads, paths and safe routes for cyclists to support active travel. Indeed, several schools said that more permanent support was needed from the local authority beyond any disruption caused by COVID-19:

*“For councils to take the lead and provide Park and Stride areas, walking feet (paths to schools), bike lanes and everything else which we need in order to be able to actually get children to travel actively.”
(Teacher)*

Finally, a few schools were worried that they may lose the momentum of active travel initiatives due to these having been stopped/paused for some time. Therefore, it was considered vital that flexibility should be retained in delivery, and for there to be revenue funding to support additional staff capacity to support delivery. It was also felt that delivery of active travel initiatives needed to be prioritised and protected by making the case for them to be firmly embedded in the curriculum, or at least curriculum time.

Meeting the Fairer Scotland Duty

The Fairer Scotland Duty, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force in April 2018. It places a legal responsibility on particular public bodies in Scotland to actively consider ('pay due regard' to) how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions.

Across the research, cycling initiatives were seen as particularly relevant in respect of the Fairer Scotland Duty. It was noted by several schools that these risked excluding pupils from poorer households as they would be less likely to own their own bike or to have been taught how to ride a bike at home. It was felt that lower proportions of such pupils would have access to a bike for the specific training, to allow them to participate in cycle events, or to reinforce their learning with practice at home:

“Cycling initiatives would benefit pupils from less affluent backgrounds. However, they often do not have access to bikes and safety equipment. This was an issue the last time we tried to run Bikeability.” (Teacher)

Other schools noted that the funding provided via Cycling Friendly Schools to purchase bikes, and the support provided by initiatives, such as I Bike and Bikeability was invaluable in ensuring the initiatives were inclusive. They highlighted that bikes and safety equipment (such as helmets) could often be provided/loaned to schools by the delivery partners to ensure that all pupils were able to participate in training and events. This included the provision of specialised/adapted bikes for pupils who have disabilities or additional support needs, as well as the provision of one-to-one sessions with non-riders in advance of the Level 1 Bikeability training:

“Some children can't ride a bike and also don't have access to one. Bringing in Bikeability to school and having spare bikes to give to children has been a great morale boost.” (Teacher)

Further, several schools felt that the lack of access to bikes at home meant that the initiatives offered by schools was the only opportunity many of these pupils had to learn to ride a bike - thus providing them with opportunities they would not have otherwise had:

“Some children are not given the opportunity to learn to ride a bike at home and I have seen the benefits when those children are given such opportunities.” (Teacher)

Several schools responding to the survey indicated that active travel initiatives often benefited low attaining pupils, not because it directly helped to improve their level of attainment, but because it gave them a chance to 'excel' in a non-academic skill area. One secondary school who participated in an interview suggested that the cycling initiatives in particular, and the fact that these were often delivered by external partners (rather than teachers), were beneficial in engaging those with lower attainment levels or who were largely disengaged from school. This suggests wider benefits for the outcomes of such pupils:

“Often low attaining pupils achieve well with walking and cycling initiatives and feel a sense of success.” (Teacher)

More generally, schools suggested that engaging in active travel initiatives helped to encourage physical activity in pupils that may not have access to outside space at home and/or who do not participate in sports or activity clubs (often issues for those in lower income households). It was also felt that active travel initiatives boosted fitness levels and concentration within the classroom following such activities. As such, these initiatives could potentially lead to improvements in health and educational outcomes. Indeed, one primary school who took part in an interview said they participated in active travel initiatives because they were in an area of high deprivation. They felt this limited the amount of time pupils spent outside playing/exercising, and noted that many pupils did not have their own bikes at home.

Further, they felt pupils had less road safety awareness/skills and lower fitness levels:

"We encourage all pupils to participate in physical activity, however, for those that are not in sports clubs, this is an excellent way of increasing their physical activity." (Teacher)

"Children living in deprivation who don't always have access to a safe outside space to play [benefit from Active Travel initiatives]." (Teacher)

"...the physical activity and fresh air creates a feeling of calm and a readiness to learn." (Teacher)

Fairer Scotland Duty and the COVID-19 Impact

While equipment could generally be shared, the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions meant that many schools felt this was not currently possible. This had limited schools' ability to participate in cycle and scooter-based initiatives. In order to allow initiatives to continue it was felt that financial support was necessary to help schools and/or individual families to purchase bikes/scooters and personal safety equipment such as helmets, high-vis vests, etc., as well as to pay for more cycle storage facilities to ensure class bubbles were not breached:

"Exercise is very important for the mental and physical wellbeing of pupils and staff, the Government should consider a similar approach with resources as has been done with digital technologies, particularly if blended/home learning is implemented." (Teacher)

"...a grant to provide children with helmets. We only have a limited number at school and can't share because of COVID-19. Therefore, there are many pupils who can't participate in initiatives because they don't own the safety equipment required to participate." (Teacher)

Several schools who responded to the survey also indicated they would welcome more information about funding for cycle/scooter parking facilities, bikes and cycle equipment more generally (and not just to adapt to COVID-19).

Discussion

The evaluation was successful in engaging a number of schools and all delivery partners to explore the current operation, effectiveness and perceived impact of the programme, and to explore areas for further improvements to ensure that the programme reaches its full potential.

Addressing the evaluation questions

Data from across the different research strands suggests the following key findings in relation to the specific evaluation questions:

Question 1: Overall impact of the programme as a whole in delivering the outcome of more children walking and/or cycling to school (behaviour change for school pupils)

For those currently engaged, relevance, pupil enjoyment and impacts of the initiatives were all considered to be good. Younger children may be more motivated than older children to take part in such initiatives, and there may be scope for working more closely with secondary schools to maximise reach. Much positive feedback on individual initiatives was received and schools seemed keen to continue to offer active travel opportunities going forward, with those already engaged intending to remain so.

Schools seem to recognise particular impacts on health and wellbeing and the value of embedding active travel behaviours from a young age (with wider contributions to the sustainability agenda). Local authorities also report strong uptake of initiatives and perceived positive benefits to schools/pupils.

While stakeholders reported direct positive impacts of the programme, however, some of the impacts that are 'seen' on the ground may not be captured in traditional impact measures. Things such as physical and emotional confidence, the creation of fun and memorable experiences, and development of life skills are all added-value benefits which result from the programme and which teachers suggested should be celebrated more widely - this may also assist with getting more parents and carers on board.

While delivery partners collect routine data which evidences a range of impacts against Transport Scotland's aims and wider policy objectives, there was evidence that existing impact data is perhaps not currently being used to maximum effect, especially by local authorities to inform their decision making around which initiatives they support and promote within schools.

Feedback suggests that there is also a lack of clarity around which initiatives are part of the programme and which are not. Continuing to present the wide range of training and behaviour change initiatives as one programme could potentially risk underplaying the value of complementary individual initiatives, and so consideration of the programme identity and scope should be given as a priority.

Question 2: Reach of each of the programme initiatives and how visible/accessible these are to schools generally: (1) is there equal distribution of help and support across local authorities, different demographics, by socio-economic characteristics, and rural/urban location and (2) are schools clear what is on offer and how to access?

The evaluation suggests that there is considerable variation around the country in terms of awareness of different aspects of the programme, participation, and support from local authorities to schools. The importance of dedicated staff with time and capacity to source information, to promote and co-ordinate delivery of the programme locally was highlighted as key to success, and the role of senior teachers in generating enthusiasm was also stressed. Improving communication channels between some local authorities and delivery partners also seems key to continued success of the programme, and to achieving wider reach.

Some initiatives appear to be offered more widely than others with significantly more awareness of some initiatives compared to others. Bikeability, Daily Mile and Walk to School Week are perhaps the most recognised initiatives, alongside HUSS. Activities that require external visitors to schools are perhaps more popular and visible, and may be more popular among teachers who lack the confidence to deliver activities themselves.

Controlled duration activities appear to have strong uptake rather than dispersed/open-ended activities and seem impactful insofar as all schools/children can get involved. Cost neutral/minimal activities were also particularly welcomed by schools as a means of including all children, including those from families where poverty prohibits cycle/scooter ownership. Financial aid given directly to schools to support families living in poverty seems key to achieving equality of opportunity, especially for cycling activities which require access to safe equipment.

Some of the rural schools who took part in the current evaluation perceived the programme to be of less relevance due to distance from home to school and perceived lack of safe routes. More tailored or adapted solutions for rural and remote areas may therefore be needed to be more inclusive of pupils living in those areas.

The programme as a whole could also be linked more explicitly to the CfE, especially at secondary stage to encourage teachers to prioritise active travel as an area of work in an already busy curriculum.

The data suggests that behaviour change initiatives are more familiar to schools than infrastructure initiatives and those that provide funding for change. This is coupled with evidence that schools would like to know more about funding opportunities and how schools can be made safer/accommodate equipment to allow pupils to get more involved (especially in cycling initiatives). Several schools noted that they would like to make infrastructure changes, but were unsure of the supports to facilitate this, with an apparent lack of awareness of grants and funding available in general.

Question 3: Is the delivery by a range of suppliers the most helpful and cost-effective way to achieve the outcome of the overall programme?

Stakeholders who took part in the evaluation recognised that there were many added value benefits of the current delivery model, including cross-promotion, collaborative working, and diversity of skills, experience and knowledge from which schools can benefit. There was, however, some evidence that streamlining and providing a central point of contact would be welcomed to improve accessibility, especially by local authorities.

There was also an identified appetite among schools for centralised information on all initiatives, how they link together, funding opportunities available and how to access them. A shared partnership resource may be more cost-effective than separate promotional activities, but more research may first be required to understand the nature, reach and cost-effectiveness of current and alternative delivery models.

It was also clear from the research that there is currently insufficient funding or capacity to allow all initiatives to be offered in all schools, and that a degree of sampling or targeting specific schools is required. What is less clear, however, is how schools are currently being selected and if this is being done strategically or is being driven largely by proactive interest from individuals within schools and local authorities. More focused work with rural school, schools in areas of high deprivation, SEN schools and secondary schools in general could perhaps be achieved if a more collective approach was adopted to engagement. Indeed, there is scope for working more strategically to identify what initiatives are best for which schools. At the moment, delivery is demand led with schools being largely self-selected. While the suite of initiatives is diverse enough to support all schools, they could perhaps be better targeted to meet individual schools' needs.

Question 4: Impact the initiatives have on schools, including capacity to deliver them effectively

Staff availability is a key barrier that appears to be preventing some schools from engaging, alongside interest/commitment and support from school management teams. Competing priorities and alternative initiatives can muddy the landscape and this underlines the need for the programme to be clear in its identity, with consistent and targeted communications and clear messaging around how the different active travel initiatives can be impactful, both socially and individually.

A key challenge for schools is trying to accommodate initiatives alongside other areas of the curriculum and problems knowing which initiatives are best suited to different ages/stages of pupils. The evidence indicates that schools often struggle to allocate time in the curriculum for active travel initiatives, especially at secondary school level. Consequently, schools are most likely to engage in time limited activities, those that are clearly embedded in the academic calendar or those with an external staffing resource or a local co-ordinator in place to support them. This may point towards more funding being required to help with local co-ordination and delivery if more schools are to come on board, as partners are already operating at capacity, it seems.

Other barriers include those linked to poor infrastructure, lack of equipment and lack of parental engagement.

Question 5: Level of engagement and co-ordination between schools, Local Authorities and Active Travel Delivery Partners in delivering the programme

Partners already work well with each other and with Transport Scotland to keep communication channels open and have good understanding of each other's initiatives and opportunities to complement and cross-promote one another's work. The main breakdown in co-ordination appears to be between local authorities and schools, and more direction and involvement at the national level from Education Scotland could be encouraged. Local authorities are clearly important gatekeepers to raising awareness of the initiatives and consolidating the efforts of partners. Until and unless there is consistent local authority support to back up partners, some schools will inevitably continue to miss out.

Question 6: What works well, including recommendations for where improvements in the service offer to schools, and delivery of the programme can be made, including consideration of alternative programme delivery approaches (having cognisance of the Fairer Scotland Duty and equality impact assessment)

There was little in the research to suggest that the substantive service offer to schools needs to change, with the main evaluation recommendations instead focussing on improved co-ordination, promotion and enhancing capacity to deliver.

At the individual level, things that appear to work particularly well are activities that require minimal staff time for planning and implementation and are easy to deliver with immediately visible impacts.

The programme appears to be particularly beneficial for children/families with limited access to active travel opportunities at home. Schools also reported that initiatives that encouraged active time outdoors were effective at tackling poor mental and physical health among some pupils (e.g. tackling obesity and helping to regulate social and emotional behaviour). The programme was also seen as helpful for pupils who are low attaining in other areas of curriculum, helping to create a sense of success and achievement where pupils achieve active travel goals.

Perhaps the main area of focus for improved equality of opportunity is the need for greater exploration, development/adaptation, and promotion of initiatives to allow SEN schools/pupils to more fully participate in the programme. It was felt there was a lack of information about the various initiatives available and if/how these could be adapted to facilitate participation.

Gaps in the data

While a significant volume of feedback was generated as part of the evaluation, gaps in the evidence that was gathered should not be overlooked.

In particular, there was limited engagement and feedback from secondary schools compared to primary. This means that levels of engagement and participation reported here for the secondary level may be misleading, although feedback from local authorities and delivery partners suggests that this stage are typically less involved in externally led active travel initiatives in general. Supplementary research that samples secondary schools who have previously engaged with various initiatives may be helpful in better understanding the needs of pupils at this stage.

The current evaluation also did not gather any direct feedback from pupils. Although teachers were asked to provide anecdotal feedback regarding pupil responses to the various initiatives, and give feedback vicariously on their behalf, it is recognised that this is no substitute for feedback garnered directly from pupils themselves. In particular, any ongoing monitoring or evaluation of the programme could build in means of capturing qualitative evidence of impacts/benefits to pupils as reported directly by them to balance the existing hard measures such as WOW and HUSS data. This would provide a better indicator of the true impacts for individuals who take part.

A small number of SEN schools chose to engage with the work either through the survey or interviews, and provided valuable feedback. The sample was, however, limited in size and there may be scope for more targeted and intensive research with a wider sample of SEN schools in order to gain a better insight into their needs and how existing initiatives can be adapted to respond to individual children in line with Getting it Right for Every Child.

Finally, the findings presented in this report reflect the views of the schools, local authorities and other stakeholders who chose to take part and engage with the work - they will not necessarily be representative of the wider school/local authority experience. In particular, the views of the 352 schools that took part in the survey are likely to reflect the views of schools that are more engaged with the programme per se. For example, while uptake of WOW was 24% in the current research sample, actual uptake nationally is around 5-10% of schools. This points towards an inherent bias in the research findings which cannot be overlooked. There are also significant gaps from schools who did not take part in any of the initiatives and who did not provide feedback on why they choose not to take part. Although non-participating schools were invited to give input to the evaluation, both through the survey and through interviews, their feedback was largely absent. Again, more targeted research may be required to better understand the needs of those who currently do not engage in the active travel offer, taking on board the views, attitudes and circumstances of a wider number of whole school communities. This will ensure that a more holistic approach to understanding barriers and addressing need can be adopted. Similarly, local authorities whose views are not represented here should be contacted separately in any future work linked to actioning the findings of this evaluation, to ensure that the wider views, experiences and needs of the full range of partners is understood.

Conclusions

The evaluation suggests that the initiatives included in the current programme are much needed and well received by schools. The programme appears to be successful in achieving a broad reach, albeit primary schools engage better than

secondary level, and some geographical variation exists. There was qualitative evidence that the programme does contribute (although not exclusively) to positively influencing pupils' active travel attitudes and behaviours. Where schools are already active travel aware and engaged, it enhances pupils' experiences, and where schools are otherwise lacking in active travel opportunities, it plugs an essential gap. A number of potential barriers to future participation were raised, but many of these could be overcome through more personalised engagement with teachers, parents and carers to persuade them of the benefits of active travel and to develop flexible solutions to perceived physical or practical barriers. Exploring ways of reducing time and capacity required by schools to access and act upon the information that is already available for the programme seems key, as well as boosting capacity where required. Subject to more funding and staff resources being made available, a more strategic approach to engaging hard to reach schools could also be employed to consolidate the good work already being achieved.

Appendix A - Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The 'programme' needs to be more clearly defined with clear parameters around which initiatives are and are not included within it. This should be led by Transport Scotland and needs to be schools-focussed, setting out clearly how the programme aligns with and is complemented by other active travel initiatives, but how it is also separate from them. Adopting a Programme Management approach with a defined vision, scope and benefits would also give a framework for investment decisions and provide a clarity of purpose for partners. More clearly setting out the scope of the programme, including how regional and locally-led activities fit alongside and complement the wider/national initiatives, will also allow measurement of impact and value linked directly to the programme to be better understood in any future monitoring or evaluation exercise.

Recommendation 2

To carry out a mapping exercise that establishes current communication mechanisms, content and recipients for all initiatives within the programme, and identifies the models of delivery that work well in engaging schools. The local points of contact used by different delivery partners should be systematically and regularly shared within the programme alongside details of local champions working with each school to identify any overlaps, gaps or constraints in local capacity and commitment and where existing engagements could be either streamlined or scaled up. The exercise should also explore opportunities for further cross-promotion and cross-messaging where relevant, to complement where this activity already exists.

Recommendation 3

Development of a regularly monitored and updated online hub or website for the programme as a whole that signposts schools, local authorities and parents/carers to more information about each of the initiatives within the programme and provides clear points of contact for further information, as well as links to other relevant resources. All packaging and messaging should be schools-focussed and opportunities to link to established online information resources, such as GLOW, should be explored. A shared partnership resource such as this, managed by a single body, would help to clarify how different strands of the programme align. It would also create greater awareness and brand recognition for those initiatives included in the programme, making them stand out from (and potentially more visible and appealing than) alternative initiatives competing for engagement from schools.

Recommendation 4

Focussed national research may be required to explore what prevents parents, carers and wider school communities from supporting and engaging with active travel opportunities that are currently available for children. The findings from such research should be used to inform an appropriate response and strategy for engaging whole school communities, ensuring that this highlights the individual, social and climate change benefits of active travel participation.

Recommendation 5

A clear program of events with key dates associated to each of the initiatives should be produced which sets out for schools such things as deadlines for submitting funding applications, dates when staff are available for delivery in schools, and dates for national events, to allow schools to plan active travel initiatives into the academic year. Such a resource needs to be given to schools well ahead of the beginning of each academic year to allow forward planning. Development and dissemination of such a resource should be carried out collaboratively by Transport Scotland, Education Scotland and active travel delivery partners.

Recommendation 6

Capacity and lack of time among teaching staff present clear barriers to schools taking part, and while a dedicated online resource which provides easy access to information about the initiatives may make it more efficient for schools to find out what is available and how to take part, lack of school staff time and capacity to deliver may remain a barrier. Funding for more local delivery staff attached directly to the programme should be considered, especially for activity-based initiatives, as this may enable more schools to participate. This would also counter challenges linked to staff movement within and between schools and assist with consistency of communication and approach.

Recommendation 7

Delivery partners should work together with Transport Scotland to develop a more strategic approach to how schools are reached to ensure more equitable and responsive coverage. If done in tandem with mapping of existing engagement around the country (see Recommendation 2), this should help the programme to be more inclusive and it is recommended that poverty and rurality are both included as key variables in any sampling approach developed. Development of a school engagement strategy would help to reduce bias introduced by teacher interest and local authority variation in capacity to promote initiatives among schools. A rotational

approach could be considered to widen inclusion of more schools, i.e. moving funding and staff between different areas each year, funding permitting.

Recommendation 8

Specific research to explore the costs associated with the current model of delivery should be undertaken, to understand if it represents the most cost-effective way of delivering active travel initiatives to schools. This should consider input not only from delivery partners but also from volunteers/third parties who support the delivery and consider the costs of replacing this support in a situation such as that presented by COVID-19. The costing exercise should also explore sustainability of future funding and the potential benefits of longer-term funding models to assist partners with delivery planning, recognising the different challenges faced by projects that are funded over prolonged periods of time compared to those that are funded over shorter set time frames.

Recommendation 9

A single independent and objective point of contact for the programme as a whole within Transport Scotland (rather than a single co-ordinator) may be required who can signpost schools and local authorities to the various different delivery partners, as required. This should complement any centralised web-based hub or resource that might be developed to meet the needs of those who prefer a named point of contact rather than having to access online resources to find out relevant information.

Recommendation 10

A key priority among delivery partners is the desire to improve communication and support from local authorities. This could be taken forward as a discrete piece of work, led by Transport Scotland in collaboration with Education Scotland to ensure high level direction and consistency in approach in messaging to get local authorities on board. Consideration should be given to the possibility of a dedicated Active Travel Co-ordinator or a Scottish Government funded Active Travel Support Assistant embedded within each authority (with funding and engagement decision making powers), as well as a nominated member of school staff for active travel, and access to dedicated delivery staff at the local level (see Recommendation 6).

Recommendation 11

A formal approach to Education Scotland should be made to strongly encourage attendance at the regular meetings currently held between Transport Scotland and

the active travel delivery partners. Representatives from the main affiliated organisations who are not directly involved in the programme but who are identified collaboratively by core partners as being key to delivery success should also be encouraged to attend to maximise sharing of information about current developments and opportunities for schools. Wider shared ownership of responsibility for children's active travel engagement should be encouraged.

Recommendation 12

All support materials and resources linked to the initiatives should clearly signpost how they interact with the Curriculum for Excellence and to specific learning outcomes. This should be communicated to schools in an accessible way using appropriate language for the education setting to allow them to better understand how the programme aligns with wider educational aspirations and how they can be integrated with or support other lessons. A priority is to do this at secondary level to maximise engagement with the programme for that stage. Doing this may also help to set the programme apart from some of the numerous other external programmes and initiatives that schools are invited to engage with, and help to lessen the impact of competition as a barrier to participation.

Recommendation 13

Clearer direction is needed on the various funding streams available to support active travel delivery in schools, as well as clearer information on the application mechanisms and where responsibility sits for making such applications. This information should be collated in one place and shared with local authorities and schools alike, with up-to-date information provided on a regular basis. This should help remove existing confusion regarding the funding landscape.

Appendix B - Participation in Other Initiatives

Cycling Based Initiatives

- Big Pedal
- Bike to School Week/Bike Week
- Bike Breakfasts
- Big Bike Ride
- Dr Bike and other bike maintenance groups
- Cycling Bus
- Play on Pedals and Balanceability
- Recyke-a-bike
- Bike Marking Mornings by Police Scotland
- I Cycle
- Cycling day (secondary school)
- Getabout Bike Roadshows;
- After school bike/cycle club (including Mountain Bike clubs)
- Stunt cyclist displays
- Surveys to identify routes pupils use to cycle to school
- Staff trained at the Edinburgh bicycle cooperative (as well as more general cycle clubs and bike maintenance classes);
- Purchase of balance bikes and small bikes for pupils to use at playtime and lunchtimes to ensure that they are all able to ride a bike/diversify the curriculum;
- School assemblies including 'Be Headsmart when cycling',
- Freewheelin' North - enables pupils with complex needs to participate in cycle training;
- Sustrans funding for scooters, helmets and storage

Walking Based Initiatives

- Walking Bus
- Park and Stride
- Smile Mile
- Cross-country club
- Pedometer challenge
- Five-minute walking zone maps
- Walk and talk programme

Combined Walking and Cycling Initiatives:

- Local community-based walking and cycling activities and events including sponsored cycle rides/runs/outings/bikeathons, and outdoor learning/charity walks/step count challenges

- Local authority's own bike hire scheme and walking challenges
- Virtual challenges, such as West Highland Way cycle, Legit to Lapland, etc.
- Themed fun-days, e.g. Hi-Viz dress up day, Big Pedal Superheroes Day, Wheely Wednesday, Walk on Wednesday, Active Girls Friday
- Development of maps for safe routes to school, 'Journeying' in the local area
- Bike/Scoot or Walk to School Days and Beat the Street
- Walking and cycling campaigns linked to Air Quality outcomes
- Work with Stride who funded lockers

General Active/Sustainable Travel or Road Safety Promotion:

- Provision of hi-visibility jackets, slap-bands and reflective monsters for children to hang on bags and coats, etc.
- Development of Active Travel Plans/School Travel Plans
- In school transport action groups and road safety groups, including Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs), use of Go Safe with Ziggy (early years resource), Road Safety Week, Road Safety Magic Shows and local authority based Annual Road Safety Calendar Competition
- The provision of safe and active travel through a Road Safety Twitter account
- Parking Pledge, Park Smart/Smart Parking, Car Free Zones and banning parental/carers parking in and around schools (as well as regular letters/correspondence home to parents/carers to encourage active travel including through newsletters, social media, parent council events)
- Health and Eco Weeks (e.g. sports week) and informal/general active travel education built into wider Health and Wellbeing curricular activities (for example, using school owned bikes for PE/teachers taking pupils for bike rides or taking part in Fit 15)
- Competitions, including Travel Green Poems and Be safe Be seen pumpkins and Bike Bonanza competition encouraging staff to start or continue to cycle
- Travelling Green, Eco School – Travel Group
- Other annual or one-off promotions (e.g. Be Bright Be Seen, School Streets)
- A new Sustainable Travel: Active, Responsible, Safe (STARS) programme was under development (similar to Transport for London's STARS)
- TravelSmart Individualised Travel Marketing (ITM) Development



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