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Evaluation of Free Bikes Pilots for School Age Children Who Cannot Afford Them

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Contents

Executive Summary

This report sets out findings from an evaluation of the Free Bikes Pilots for school age children who cannot afford them (the Free Bikes for Children Pilot Scheme).

The scheme involved nine pilots which were introduced to try out a range of ways to offer free bikes for school age children who could not afford one. The pilots varied in size and scale, worked with different partners, and used different methods of providing a free bike for young people – including fleets, loans, libraries, subscriptions, ownership and mixed approaches. It was not envisaged that there would be one preferred option, rather a range of possible options for development.

Projects were designed to test different approaches, learn and adapt along the way. Many of the themes and challenges identified here were areas of learning and discussion within the pilot scheme, due to regular reflection, risk registers and discussion around progress with each project.

This evaluation focused strongly on the processes and mechanisms of providing free bikes for children, and also involved a little exploration of the impact having a bike made to families. The evaluation covers the work of the pilots from autumn 2021 to August 2022.

Targeting

Each pilot set their own target group, within the parameters of a pilot for children who cannot afford a bike, using different approaches to identifying potential participants. Learning from this included:

Pilots would have welcomed some collective criteria on how to identify young people who cannot afford a bike.

Young people and parents indicated that they felt happy, lucky and excited to be involved and expressed no concerns about being identified as eligible for the opportunity.

Schools played a key role in targeting children, young people and families in most of the pilots, bringing in depth knowledge of family needs and expertise in understanding disadvantage and inequality within the school. Community organisations were also often well placed to do this.

When working with schools and community organisations it is important to minimise the time involved in administration, provide simple information for families in a range of formats and languages, ensure consent processes are simple and short, and avoid too much additional work during busy periods.

The main barrier to uptake related to storage, particularly if it was a condition of the pilots that bikes were stored indoors. In rural areas, there could be barriers around lack of safe routes to cycle.

Procurement and distribution

The pilot projects used new bikes, recycled bikes through local cycle shops and third sector organisations, and through refurbishing unused or abandoned bikes through the project. Learning from procurement and distribution included:

- Providing high quality bikes, whether new or recycled, was felt to encourage sustained use and reduce maintenance costs.
- Projects focusing on recycled and refurbished bikes found that it could be challenging to match supply and demand, as they were dependent on what was supplied or donated. Some had to blend recycled bikes with other approaches. Participants welcomed recycled bikes in principle, but they needed to be high quality and didn't always match the needs of children.
- While some projects accessed reduced cost bikes through manufacturers that required assembly, this required skilled staff, and there were staff costs and logistical issues (including space) associated with this.
- Distribution of bikes required careful thought, as projects worked with families who were often in transport poverty or didn't have access to transport.
- Young people liked being able to choose the colour, style and design of their bike where possible, but where this wasn't offered most were happy to be getting any bike. Participants valued the wider equipment such as helmets, locks, rain covers and lights.

Storage and maintenance

The pilot projects used different approaches to supporting safe storage, and ongoing maintenance for the bikes. Learning included:

- Access to a safe and secure place to store a bike was an issue for many families, particularly for those living in flats or shared accommodation.
- The pilots found that bikes would need serviced between every 12 weeks and every year to two years. Recycled or refurbished bikes tended to be checked more regularly. Families felt that it was very important that the project included help with maintaining the bike.

- There were some logistical challenges around maintenance, with it being difficult for families to transport bikes needing repairs when they were damaged. A few young people had free bikes that they couldn't use as they needed repaired or maintained and didn't know how to get help with this.
- Maintenance and repairs could play an important role in supporting young people to use bikes that they already have, and reduce the need for new bikes.
- Most projects aimed to use bikes again, as participants returned them. Projects were still learning about how many times a bike could be recycled, the cost of doing so and the life cycle of a bike. The process of taking bikes back, refurbishing and re-issuing them would require resources and infrastructure.

Adaptive bikes

Most projects planned to deliver some adaptive bikes within their pilot. At the time of this evaluation, five projects had either ordered or distributed adaptive bikes. Sourcing bikes could be challenging, and took longer than for standard bikes. Most were using a fleet or library model for adaptive bikes. Projects found that it was important to think about storage – with adaptive bikes being expensive and usually larger than standard bikes – and maintenance, which may require specialist skills.

Early evidence from a small number of families highlighted the difference that having access to an adaptive bike can make for pupils with additional support needs. Families found that the bikes brought joy, stimulated language and learning, and expanded the range of activities the family could do together.

Impact

Feedback from parents and carers showed that since having access to a bike through the pilots:

- 80% felt their child's cycling skills were a lot better
- 75% felt their child was much more active
- 66% felt their child's physical health was a lot better
- 58% felt their child's mental health was a lot better.

Young people also said they were more active, went outdoors more often, went out in all weathers, spent less time in the house, got out into different environments and new places, felt happier, saw their friends more often, and felt more included. Families also talked of spending more time together, out cycling and walking.

Many schools reported seeing more children now cycling to school, and an increase in bike use more generally in the local community. Some schools found that the pilots were building a more positive culture around cycling to school.

Many families said that without the pilots their children would not have bikes, or would have bikes which were unsafe, expensive to repair, too small or not working properly.

Learning about costs and scalability

Initial exploration by Transport Scotland suggests that the number of children requiring a free bike could range from 80,000 to 160,000. Analysis of pilot project costs suggests that the cost of providing a standard free bike could be in the range of £675 to £768 including the bike, a safety package, storage, maintenance,

awareness raising and bike distribution. The cost of providing adaptive bikes ranged from £812 to £2,980. This does not include any costs for wider support to encourage use of the bike, including cycle skills training and maintenance training.

Recommendations

The following issues should be further explored and built into future provision of free bikes for school age children who cannot afford them:

Clear eligibility criteria

Based on recognised methods for targeting support for school age children, including the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, entitlement to Free School Meals and entitlement to school clothing grants.

Age, stage and approach

Further consideration should be given to the age and stage at which young people are offered a free bike. In considering access to free bikes throughout young people's school lives it is likely that a range of different options could meet needs. Having library, fleet or loan approaches in primary and lower secondary could help address issues around children growing out of their bikes.

Ethos of re-use

Any approach to providing bikes for school age children should embed and embrace an ethos of re-use. This could include returning bikes when they are grown out of and no longer needed, to meet the needs of other participants; and upcycling and refurbishing bikes to keep them in use and support affordable access to bikes.

Re-use of existing bikes

There is scope to consider how best to support maintenance of existing bikes to enable use for their owners or younger family members, to get people using the bikes they already have.

Role of schools

Schools played a key role in identifying, targeting and supporting children within the pilots. Future approaches should continue to involve schools as key partners.

Investment in storage and maintenance

Investing in storage options at home, in the community and in schools would help to widen access to the free bikes approach. The pilots also demonstrate the importance

of a proactive approach to supporting bike maintenance, which is accessible to people who can't transport faulty bikes for repair.

Adaptive bikes

The pilots demonstrate the value of a library or loan approach to meeting needs, which could widen access and reduce barriers around storage and maintenance which are considerably more challenging for larger and more expensive adaptive bikes.

Cost of living

Finally, it is important to consider the resources required for the scheme during a time of a cost of living crisis. It will be important to explore the value of this approach, compared with other types of support for families and school age children.

Introduction

About this report

This report sets out findings from an evaluation of the Free Bikes Pilots for school age children who cannot afford them (the Free Bikes for Children Pilot Scheme). This report was produced in autumn 2022.

The report covers:

- Chapter Two: The pilot projects
- Chapter Three: Targeting children and young people
- Chapter Four: Procurement and distribution
- Chapter Five: Storage and maintenance
- Chapter Six: Adaptive bikes
- Chapter Seven: Impact
- Chapter Eight: Costs, value and scalability
- Chapter Nine: Conclusions.

The Free Bikes for Children pledge

The SNP manifesto for the Scottish election in 2021 contained a commitment to start to deliver free bikes to children who cannot afford them. This commitment sat within the wider aim of tackling the climate crisis and bringing about a revolution in transport, through providing a mechanism that allows young people to travel independently. The pledge also connects strongly with wider policy priorities around increasing active travel and reducing car travel, increasing health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities.

When the SNP government was elected, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon re-iterated this commitment in May 2021, through the Priorities of Government statement. The pledge was to establish pilot projects within the first 100 days of government, and commit to rolling the scheme out fully within 12 months.

As a result, the Free Bikes for Children Pilot Scheme was introduced to try out a range of ways to offer free bikes for school age children who could not afford one. Six pilot projects were introduced within the first 100 days, with a further four pilot projects introduced in autumn/ winter 2021. One pilot project withdrew from the pilot in early 2022, for wider reasons not related to the pilot.

The Free Bikes for Children pledge links with and supports a wider range of work that the Scottish Government is undertaking to ensure that cycling is available and accessible to all – including changing behaviours, enhancing infrastructure and

providing access to active travel options. Scottish Government, working with its partners, has supported a wide range of activity to improve access to bikes - including funding for employers, community groups and schools to support access to equipment, parking or showers to encourage cycling; bike share programmes; support for e-bike projects; and support for projects to create more opportunities for people to walk or cycle.

Evaluation aims

This evaluation focused strongly on the process and mechanisms of providing free bikes for children. The evaluation explored:

- **Viability** - The positives and negatives of each approach, the impact of each pilot, the challenges and the opportunities offered. It explored how each pilot project could contribute to reducing inequalities and provide fairer and easier access to bikes for children.

- **Scalability, cost and value** - The feasibility of scaling successful approaches to a national level, including unit cost to deliver associated with the value of different elements of the pilots.

Evaluation method

The evaluation of the Free Bikes for Children Pilot Scheme involved six stages.

Stage 1: Building relationships and understanding

The evaluation method involved in depth work with each of the pilot projects to enable open and honest reflection from pilots around what worked well and what was challenging. It also involved building on feedback and evaluation work already being undertaken by each pilot project, and adapting the evaluation method to each pilot project as appropriate.

At an early stage, time was spent building relationships and supporting pilot projects to understand the approach to evaluation within the Free Bikes for Children Pilot Scheme. It was made clear that the evaluation would:

identify successful approaches and what works – without directly comparing the performance of projects individually

sensitively present challenges and barriers in the form of learning – alongside actions taken to address challenges, and outcomes of this

share findings and learning themes openly while retaining individual participant anonymity

focus on the overall aim of identifying the range of approaches that work well for achieving positive outcomes for children, young people and families.

A collective session was held with project leads and partners in September 2021 to introduce the evaluation, and a recorded presentation provided for projects unable to attend or funded after this date. Individual sessions were then held with each pilot scheme during October 2021 to January 2022, to discuss the approach to evaluation in more detail. An individual plan was made for each pilot scheme, tailored to their activities, timescales and target group (Ten projects were involved at this interim stage.).

Stage 2: Desktop review

The pilot schemes attended monthly check-in meetings with Transport Scotland leads, as well as providing monthly reports, budget updates and presentations to the Free Bikes for Children Pilot Scheme Board. This information was reviewed to identify key learning points, successes and challenges, to understand progress in project set up and delivery and to inform fieldwork with the project leads and partners.

Stage 3: Fieldwork with project leads

Early individual interviews were held with project leads for ten of the pilot schemes, followed up with final interviews with nine of the pilots. Interviews followed a semi-structured discussion guide (see Appendix One) and explored:

- project set up
- identifying children and young people
- working with partners
- procuring and distributing equipment
- meeting a range of needs
- supporting safe and sustainable use
- bike maintenance
- costs and resources
- impact
- learning and support.

Stage 4: Fieldwork with partners

Individual interviews were held with 32 project partners, from across the ten pilot schemes. Partners included school staff and teachers, community groups, bike manufacturers, bike shops, cycling clubs, youth organisations and others. Interviews explored similar issues to project leads, but focused in on the elements that the partner had been particularly involved in.

Stage 5: Fieldwork with families

Discussions were held with 36 young people and 17 parents from across nine pilots. Interviews explored:

- how young people and families felt about the opportunity
- how young people and families accessed the scheme
- views on equipment offered through the scheme
- views on safety, storage, maintenance and sustainability
- impact of the bike and associated support, including impact on activity levels, cycling skills, health and active travel.

Pilot projects also issued surveys to young people and parents/ carers to gather a wider range of views. A total of 64 survey responses were received from young people and 42 from parents/ carers. Most young people (74%) responding to the survey lived in the 30% most deprived parts of Scotland (based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) and almost all lived in the 50% most deprived areas. Surveys were tailored to each project, dependent on wider evaluation plans.

Stage 6: Analysis and reporting

An interim report highlighting early learning was produced in spring 2022. An online learning event was held for pilot projects in May 2022.

This final report builds on quantitative and qualitative evidence. A framework was developed for understanding the cost of providing free bikes to children and the value of different approaches, based on learning from the pilots. Qualitative evidence was analysed using a process of manual thematic coding, to identify patterns and key themes. Content relating to each pilot project was sent to the project lead for approval.

1. The pilot projects

Introduction

This chapter sets out the profile of the nine Free Bikes for Children pilot projects. It explores their broad approach and experiences of project set up.

Projects were designed to test different approaches, learn and adapt along the way.

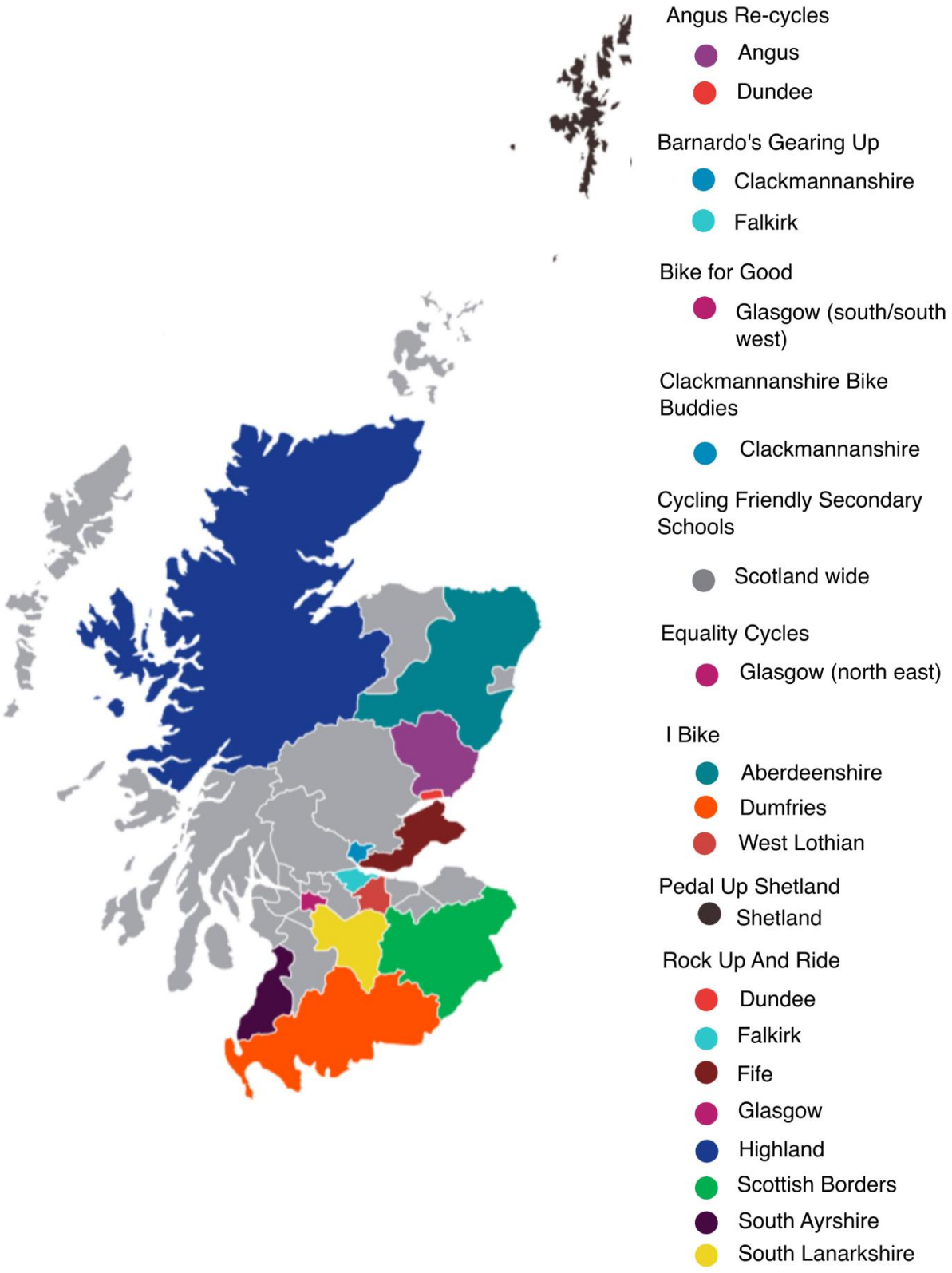
Projects will not necessarily have followed their exact plans set out in their project proposal, as they tested their ideas. Projects talked openly to us about the challenges they experienced and how they addressed these, and it is important to note that these challenges were also anticipated, recognised and planned for in robust, regular risk registers for each project which were discussed on a monthly basis.

The pilots

The Free Bikes for Children Pilot Scheme aimed to test a range of methods of delivering free bikes to school age children who cannot afford them. It is not envisaged that there will be one preferred option, but rather a range of possible options for development. There is a strong focus on learning through the process, with regular monthly meetings with Transport Scotland, and opportunities for each project to reflect on learning and share this with the Project Board.

In June 2021, ten pilot proposals were submitted and considered by Transport Scotland. Eight of these proposals were taken forward. Six were launched in August 2021 and two shortly afterwards in September 2021. Two further proposals were developed and approved in autumn/winter 2021, taking the total funded projects to ten. One pilot organisation withdrew in spring 2022 for reasons not related to the pilot project.

The nine pilot projects were originally intended to run for between six and twelve months, completing their funded activity by August 2022. In summer 2022 further funding was provided to enable the continuation of some activity in each of the nine projects.


Angus Re-cycles
Angus
Dundee
Barnardo's Gearing Up
Clackmannanshire
Falkirk
Bike for Good
Glasgow (south/south west)
Clackmannanshire Bike Buddies
Clackmannanshire
Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools
Scotland wide
Equality Cycles
Glasgow (north east)
I Bike
Aberdeenshire
Dumfries
West Lothian
Pedal Up Shetland
Shetland
Rock Up And Ride
Dundee
Falkirk
Fife
Glasgow
Highland
Scottish Borders
South Ayrshire
South Lanarkshire

Project approaches

Each of the pilot projects took a different approach to delivering free bikes. They varied in size and scale, worked with different partners and used different methods of providing a free bike for young people. Some projects included a range of approaches, to provide an opportunity to test different methods. A summary of each project and their approach to August 2022 is provided below:

Angus Re-Cycles - A hub approach, refurbishing 500 bikes for young people with deprivation or care experience in Angus and Dundee.

Barnardo's Gearing Up - Bikes and cycle training for 30 young people with life challenges in Forth Valley (working with Barnardo's).

Bike for Good - A free bike subscription service for around 230 children entitled to free school meals in three schools in south Glasgow.

Clackmannanshire Bike Buddies - Focusing on one school cluster in Clackmannanshire, providing almost 200 bikes for young people to own using a universal opt-out model.

Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools - A grant programme funding 37 secondary schools across Scotland to purchase more than 500 bikes for pupils, for bike fleets, libraries, loans or ownership.

Equality Cycles - Cycling hubs in deprived areas in north east Glasgow, offering 300 bikes for ownership to people entitled to free school meals.

I Bike - Fleet and loan bikes (around 290) at 3 primary and 4 secondary schools in 3 local authority areas.

Pedal Up Shetland - Bikes issued to 50 children without bikes at time of Bikeability Scotland training on a library basis, to return when not needed. Bikeability Scotland cycle training is the national cycle training programme for school children, usually delivered in schools between P5 and S2

Rock Up and Ride - Four week fun and free opportunities at 8 sites in Scotland, with up to 800 bikes available, issued to children who complete the blocks on an ownership basis.

For many of the projects, the idea for the pilots had emerged from existing work and understanding of need. Most lead partners already worked with young people in communities and/ or in the cycling sector and felt well placed to deliver a free bikes pilot. Where possible, the partners used existing contacts, relationships and project infrastructure to develop the projects and built on learning from existing approaches.

Example: Bike Buddies

The lead partner within Clackmannanshire Bike Buddies, Forth Environment Link, already had a travel hub set up in a school cluster and built on this for the pilot project. Building on and working alongside the hub helps to add value to the approach, connecting with the work of Active Clacks, fitting with circular economy and wellbeing economy priorities, and promoting the use of cycle networks. Connecting with the hub means that the project can explore continued use of the bikes from primary into secondary schools.

Example: Bike for Good

Bike for Good is piloting a bike subscription service for children and young people. It already ran a bike subscription service for adults, and had systems in place for managing this.

Example: Angus Re-Cycles

Angus Re-Cycles is refurbishing bikes for its pilots, and already had a service level agreement in place with Angus Council for recycling bikes. The infrastructure and model to deliver the project were already in place.

Example: I Bike

The lead partner within I Bike, Sustrans, already had the I Bike project established to encourage active travel within education. They were able to get set up quickly because they already had an existing schools programme in place, staff who knew the schools well, existing partners and connections. The programme complements the delivery of the Bikeability national cycle training programme in schools, putting fleets of bikes into schools to help deliver the Bikeability sessions.

Example: Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools

Cycling Scotland had an existing programme distributing grants to fund cycling based activity in schools. They had previously received requests from schools for bikes for children who could not afford them. The existing fund could fund bikes for a school bike fleet, but not for individual use. The pilot therefore was designed to meet this need.

Example: Rock up and Ride

The Rock Up and Ride pilot is based at eight sites across Scotland that had already benefitted from Cycle Facilities funding, providing an infrastructure for delivering cycle skills training. The cycle clubs were already established, and through the pilot the project aimed to get the clubs working with young people who would not normally get involved in club cycling.

2. Bike provision

The pilot projects used different methods for providing a young person with a bike. Broadly, the approaches included:

- bike fleets
- bike libraries, loans or free subscription services
- ownership – with a condition the bike is returned when no longer needed
- ownership – for the young person to keep
- mixed – trying a range of approaches.

Project	Fleet	Loan	Ownership - return	Ownership - keep
Angus Re-Cycles	No	No	Yes	No
Barnardo's Gearing Up	No	No	No	Yes
Bike for Good	No	Yes	No	No
Clackmannanshire Bike Buddies	No	No	No	Yes
Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Equality Cycles	No	No	Yes	Yes
I Bike	Yes	Yes	exploration	exploration
Pedal Up Shetland	No	No	Yes	No
Rock Up and Ride	Yes	No	No	Yes

Table 1: Pilot project approaches

Some of the projects offering ownership options also had the opportunity or requirement for young people to return the bike if they grew out of it or it was no longer needed. The Rock Up and Ride project largely involved ownership options, but also included a pilot adaptive bike library at one location.

Discussion with project leads highlighted advantages of each approach. Projects using an ownership model felt it supported young people to develop responsibility and to feel trusted. Those using a loan model felt it encouraged ongoing engagement and longer term relationships with the children and young people. A few projects indicated that they selected an ownership approach as it was simpler and their organisation was not set up to manage a lending system.

Projects welcomed the focus on learning.

> *"It feels very positive. The process to date has felt very positive, solutions based and flexible. What is so refreshing is that there is no*

right, or wrong answer and the wrong answers will result in the right outcome." Project lead

Range of wider support

In addition to providing bikes, bike equipment and maintenance services, the projects also aimed to undertake a wide range of additional activities. All of the projects aimed to ensure that young people accessing bikes had cycle training and safety advice, so that they were able to use their bike safely.

Project	Link to Bikeability	Wider cycle training	Fun cycle sessions/ led rides	Maintenance skills
Angus Re-Cycles	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Barnardo's Gearing Up	No	6 weeks	Yes	Yes
Bike for Good	Yes	Yes	No	No
Clackmannanshire Bike Buddies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Equality Cycles	Yes	Travel Hub	Yes	Yes
I Bike	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Pedal Up Shetland	Yes	No	No	No
Rock Up and Ride	No	4 weeks	Yes	No

Table 2: Wider support activities

Some projects offered maintenance skills development classes for children and young people, and some offered fun cycle sessions like led cycles and group cycle opportunities. One of the projects (Rock Up and Ride) involved creating a safe cycle space for young people to develop their skills. A few projects also incorporated cycle leader training (for adults and teenagers) into the project.

Partners

Each pilot has a lead organisation, and works in partnership with a wide range of organisations including cycling organisations, schools, community groups, bike providers and other third and public sector organisations.

Project	Lead Organisation	Partners
Angus Re-Cycles	Angus Cycle Hub	Angus Council, Dundee City Council, Urban Foresight and third sector partners
Barnardo's Gearing Up	Forth Environment Link	Barnardo's, Recyke-a-Bike
Bike for Good	Bike for Good	Active Schools, targeted schools, Motion Forward Ltd
Clackmannanshire Bike Buddies	Forth Environment Link	Clackmannanshire Council, Active Clacks, Recyke-a-Bike and community groups
Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools	Cycling Scotland	Adventure Aberdeen, CamGlen Bike Town, Velocity, Bike for Good, community groups
Equality Cycles	St Paul's Youth Forum	Royston Regeneration Strategy Group, Glasgow City Council, schools, Active Schools, Police Scotland, Rosemount Development Trust,
I Bike	Sustrans	Cycling Scotland, West Lothian Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Nestrans, Active Schools, Learning for Sustainability School Network
Pedal Up Shetland	Shetland Islands Council	Anchor Project, Ability Shetland, Shetland Bike Project, ZetTrans
Rock Up and Ride	Scottish Cycling	Local cycling clubs, local authorities, Active Schools, local schools, community groups, Frog Bikes

Table 3: Partnership working

Partnership was important factor for most of the pilots. Broadly, project leads and partners spoke positively about their experiences of working in partnership in the project.

"It's been good. We've been pretty open and honest with each other and we're able to share and learn. They've been pretty open, honest and receptive." Project partner

Working with partners has also helped to share and build skills within organisations. For example, one partner felt that the pilot had provided a positive experience for club coaches, who were delivering the activity. It gave them a chance to work with a different demographic, which they found quite fulfilling. It also helped them build confidence working with a different audience.

To help manage partnerships, some projects developed service level agreements. Although developing the agreements took time, the project leads felt that it would lead to more effective delivery, as roles and responsibilities would be clearly set out.

A few project leads noted that agreements, responsibilities and finances needed to be carefully negotiated between the key delivery partners as the application process had been quick and there had not been time to discuss this in detail prior to submitting the application. Others noted that they did not have formal agreements or contracts. However, most projects had an understanding with partners about their needs, and maintained regular written communication.

> **Example: Rock Up and Ride**
>
> Scottish Cycling's Rock Up and Ride pilot project involves delivering bikes through eight existing cycling facilities and cycling communities across Scotland – including cycling clubs, schools and community groups. In particular, the project involves close partnership working with existing or newly created cycling clubs at each location. There are partnership agreements in place with each club.

Funding

The funding awarded to the pilot projects from August 2021 to August 2022 varied from just over £50,000 to £934,000. This range reflected the large variety in projects in terms of volume, approaches, target groups, number of sites and wider activities. Following the application and funding award stage, additional funding was provided across the projects to ensure access to adaptive bikes following the withdrawal of the tenth pilot which focused on adaptive bike provision.

Project	Capital funding Aug 21 to Aug 22	Resource funding Aug 21 to Aug 22	Total Aug 21 to Aug 22
Angus Re-Cycles	£159,218	£331,088	£490,306
Barnardo's Gearing Up	£40,800	£19,336	£60,136
Bike for Good	£128,304	£161,789	£290,093
Clackmannanshire Bike Buddies	£169,000	£43,128	£212,178
Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools	£150,000	£118,000	£268,000
Equality Cycles	£255,910	£90,969	£346,879
I Bike	£261,837	£22,500	£284,337
Pedal Up Shetland	£46,400	£13,500	£59,900
Rock Up and Ride	£464,000	£133,040	£597,040
Total	**£1,675,469**	**£933,350**	**£2,608,869**

Table 4: Project funding

In addition, and not included in the above costs, Transport Scotland responded to the interim evaluation through providing a sum of £200,000 for pilots to buy storage such as bike covers or cycle tents to support participants to store bikes outdoors.

Continuity funding was then awarded in July 2022 to enable each of the pilots to continue their activities through to March 2023.

3. Targeting children and young people

Introduction

This chapter explores the pilot project approaches to identifying children and young people who cannot afford a bike, and ensuring delivery focuses on this group.

Target groups

Eligibility

The pilot projects each set their own target group, within the parameters of a pilot for children who cannot afford a bike. Pilots developed different ways of identifying and targeting children and young people who could not afford a bike. This included focusing on:

- areas of high deprivation based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)
- children eligible for free school meals or universal credit
- children who may have difficulties affording a bike due to life challenges, experience of care, rural deprivation or additional support needs
- children identified as needing a bike for Bikeability training
- focusing on children identified as in need of support through partner organisations, including charitable, third sector and community organisations.

Project	SIMD	FSM	Low income	Care experience	Other
Angus Re-Cycles	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Rural deprivation
Barnardo's Gearing Up	No	No	No	No	Life challenges*
Bike for Good	No	Yes	Yes	No	School clothing grant
Clackmannanshire Bike Buddies	Yes	No	No	No	Whole school approach in area with high SIMD
Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools	Yes	No	No	No	No
Equality Cycles	Yes	No	No	No	No
I Bike	Yes	Yes	No	No	Schools in SIMD areas
Pedal Up Shetland	No	No	No	No	No bike at Bikeability stage
Rock Up and Ride	No	Yes	No	No	School clothing grant

Table 5: Project targeting
*The project is targeted at people experiencing life challenges, identified by Barnardo's. Most are in areas of deprivation, experience low income and some have experience of care.

Projects using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation to target participants used different approaches. Some projects targeted schools in high SIMD areas, and schools could then have discretion on which pupils had access to bikes. One project targeted a cluster of schools in deprived areas and used an opt-out model for all p7 pupils in the target cluster. Some projects targeted young people in SIMD deciles 1 and 2 (the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland) while some targeted a wider range up to deciles 1 to 5 (the 50% most deprived areas in Scotland).

A few projects placed additional requirements on access, for example a parent confirming that the child had no bike or confirmation of having an indoor space to store a bike. Some projects required participants to have a basic level of cycling skills through Bikeability or wider cycling skills programmes run through the pilot, before they were able to take the bike away to use themselves.

Age and gender

The age range targeted varied between projects.

Project	Nursery	Primary	Secondary	Older	Notes
Angus Re-Cycles	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	3-17
Barnardo's Gearing Up	No	No	Yes	Yes	10-22
Bike for Good	No	Yes	Yes	No	P6-S2
Clackmannanshire Bike Buddies	No	Yes	No	No	P7
Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools	No	No	Yes	No	S1-S6/ 11-17
Equality Cycles	No	Yes	Yes	No	8-18
I Bike	No	Yes	Yes	No	*P5*+
Pedal Up Shetland	No	Yes	No	No	P5-7
Rock Up and Ride	No	Yes	Yes	No	7-14

Table 6: Pilot target age range

Some projects selected the age range to fit with wider activities, including school-based Bikeability training or transition from primary to secondary school. In a few cases, the age range was designed to match bike sizes, for example focusing on upper primary age children to ensure that bikes can last longer as they grow up. In some cases projects were working out how to balance the need for a bike at P5 stage for Bikeability, and the good links with this programme, with the likelihood that children may quickly grow out of a bike offered at that stage.

Monitoring information on the gender of participants was available from five projects at the time of this evaluation. This highlighted that of the 1,370 participants from five projects for whom information was available, 55% were male, 44% were female and 1% identified as other. For comparison, 51% of students in Scotland's schools in 2021 were male, and 49% female (Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland 2021, December 2021).

Flexible targeting

As well as set criteria, most projects also took a holistic approach, and were keen that young people in need did not miss out because they did not qualify for free school meals, or live in a particular locality. For example, some projects accepted referrals from school staff or community partners who identified young people based on their professional knowledge of young people and their families.

Some project leads and partners commented on the challenge of finding a balance between efficiently identifying and reaching the target group, and not wishing to stigmatise people through the offer.

"I didn't want people to feel like it was a charity bike, so we framed it as an active travel opportunity." Project partner

Example: Learning about communities

In one small, rural community initially no families took up the offer of a free bike, despite a teacher identifying and communicating directly with eligible families. Partners reported that this was not an unusual response, as people in the community did not want to be seen as being in need, and did not want to accept 'hand outs'. Another project operating in an urban area indicated that some parents may not wish others to know that their child is in receipt of free school meals, and that this may be a barrier to participation.

While almost all involved in the pilots were comfortable with targeting, a small number raised concerns that targeting could exclude certain children and young people. A small number were concerned that a targeting approach based solely on eligibility for free school meals would result in an incomplete understanding of need and could miss young people who cannot afford a bike, particularly in light of the cost of living crisis during 2022.

Example: Bike Buddies opt out model

In the Clackmannanshire Bike Buddies project, an opt out model was used with the free bike opportunity made available to all p7 pupils in the cluster. The five primary schools involved were all in high areas of deprivation, based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation – with many falling into the 10% most deprived areas in Scotland.

Most pupils took up the offer, either for a bike, accessories or maintenance. This approach was felt to have worked well and avoided potential stigma attached to a free bike. Project evaluation showed that only two eligible pupils opted out across the six participating primary schools.

"The dignity element is important, if children are to adopt, engage and feel comfortable being part of the pilot."

There were mixed views from those involved in the project about the value of an opt out approach. Some felt that the opt out model was very important, worked very well and was positively received by partners as delivery was succinct and no child was excluded. But some partners noted that the opt out model provided fewer opportunities for engagement. Families did not need to proactively opt in, which meant at the early stages only those who were opting out needed to communicate. This made it challenging to gather information at a later stage for example about bike size, preferences and needs.

An evaluation of the pilot suggested that a bike library system should be explored to ensure that once children grew out of the bikes, they could swap their bike for a larger model, or hand it back into the scheme for future participants.

Collective criteria

A few project leads and partners commented that it would have been helpful to have collectively agreed eligibility criteria across the pilot projects at the outset. It was felt that this could have helped projects to get started more quickly, and ensure that the offer was consistent. A few indicated that collective agreement on eligibility remained important for current and future planning.

Approaches to reaching the target group

Projects used a wide range of approaches to reaching target children, young people and families. This included:

- asking schools to take the lead on identifying children in need of a free bike
- issuing information to targeted families through schools
- working closely with partners connected to schools such as Active Schools
- identifying eligible young people through partners working closely with the target group including community and third sector organisations.

Projects often used a mix of approaches, working with schools, Active Schools and wider community organisations.

Example: I Bike

The I Bike free bikes pilot focuses on setting up fleet bikes and loan bikes within schools based in areas of high deprivation based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Each school is offered 30 fleet bikes and 20 loan bikes. Schools take responsibility for targeting pupils from P5 upwards – as this is when they start Bikeability training. Priority is given to pupils who would not normally have access to a bike and who are eligible

for free school meals. The schools manage this process themselves, as they know their pupils well. It also means that individual details for pupils don't need to be passed between organisations. This approach has been successful, enabling bikes to get out on loan to pupils within a relatively short period of time.

Over summer 2022, long term loans for the bikes were put in place, and the schools are assessing options for gifting bicycles to pupils. At the end of the summer term, six bikes had been gifted**.**

Example: Barnardo's Gearing Up

The Gearing Up project includes Barnardo's as a key partner. Barnardo's identifies the young people eligible for a free bike. All are working with Barnardo's for a wide range of reasons due to life challenges. Most are referred through social work and all are involved in the justice system. Staff work with the young people on a one to one basis and recruit young people who may benefit from participating.

Example: Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools

The Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools pilot involves grants to secondary schools. Schools lead on the identification of eligible young people, and this flexibility was felt by schools and project leads to be a strength of the approach. Schools have the flexibility to choose what works best for them in terms of identifying eligible children, and could build on pre-existing cycle projects and the expertise of staff already delivering cycling projects in schools, including teachers, heads of departments and Active Schools coordinators.

Overall, projects indicated that it was important to build skills, rapport and commitment before handing over the bike. Some found that they needed to invest time in building relationships with young people and families. This could involve working closely with partners who have good relationships with families and communities, or taking time to develop relationships gently over time.

"Not only do we provide them with a bike, but we also teach them how to fall in love with cycling." Project lead

Example: Bike Buddies

One school felt that the day the children received their bikes worked very well. It is a full day for pupils. In the morning they get measured for a bike and get to choose a bike they like. In the afternoon there is a led ride

> to the secondary school so that they know how to make this journey. The school is in a relatively rural area and the led ride is important so that children understand it is possible to ride to the secondary school. All of the pupils had completed their Bikeability training and were in p7.

Working with schools to identify families

Most of the projects were working with local authorities and schools to promote the project and generate referrals, providing knowledge about levels of need and disadvantage.

Projects working with schools generally found this approach worked well. Families could be targeted effectively, and the knowledge of teachers and wider support staff could be built in to ensure families were not overlooked due to strict criteria.

"The schools have been very proactive, they are on board and really promoting it." Project lead

Teachers involved in the evaluation were positive that there was flexibility in the criteria they could use to identify children, and felt that this flexibility helped the programme to have a bigger impact and reach those most in need.

Administering the bike distribution through schools also helped to reduce the need for personal information to be shared between partners.

The timing of the launch of the pilots coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic and the emergence of the Omicron variant, which put some additional pressures on schools and impacted capacity to some extent. However, schools noted that they had been in close contact with families during the pandemic and some felt they were more aware of which families needed help and were most in need as a result. Schools also highlighted that eligibility criteria were similar to those used in school to determine other priorities – including SIMD level, entitlement to Free School Meals or Free Clothing Allowance – and they were comfortable using these.

Many of the teachers involved in this evaluation indicated that they were passionate about cycling, or a member of their senior management team was, meaning that they felt it was valuable to put time in to ensure pupils could access the opportunity. For some schools, the pilot projects filled a clear need for pupils.

"There was a clear gap I saw… a real need that I saw in school… it was perfect timing." Teacher, primary school

Schools often invested significant time in identifying and contacting families. Schools used their data – including identifying pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils living in deprived areas, pupils with care experience and pupils who have English as a second language – as well as involving staff in nurture groups, pastoral support or guidance roles, due to their detailed knowledge of the families involved.

Most schools felt that the referral process worked well, and did not take up much time. Some schools put in more staff time to reduce the administrative burden on parents, for example filling in forms or gathering information by phone rather than in writing.

"We wanted to make it as easy as possible for parents." Teacher, primary school

Some schools highlighted that they had dedicated resources – such as early help or nurture teams – who support families and have the links and capacity to call families to explore uptake, which helped a lot. However, a few schools found the approach to be resource intensive. For example in one school, the process of gathering names and passing them on to the project was felt to be a little clunky, resulting in additional work for the school, lower participation from parents and limited information on the needs and preferences of the child for the project. Another school also found the time involved challenging, in terms of offering options, gathering forms and parental permissions.

While most school staff were happy with identifying eligible families, one teacher was not confident with the responsibility of determining who should quality for the free bikes.

Project leads working jointly with schools were conscious of the pressures on schools and the way that changing capacity of school staff could affect delivery. Some felt dependent on schools and local authorities to share information about the free bike opportunity with eligible families. This responsibility often fell on one or two key individuals within the school. Project leads also highlighted that it took time to develop these partnerships. Some felt that with more time, future targeting through schools could be more precise to focus in on the pupils who were most in need of a free bike.

Teachers highlighted that it was important to:

- ensure the administration required by parents was minimal
- have clear criteria but with flexibility
- have good communication and relationships – some had existing relationships with project partners
- know about the requirements in advance, so they could plan it in

- have simple, short written information about the opportunity available in a range of formats and languages
- allow time and not promise bikes for certain dates (like Christmas)
- avoid too much additional work during busy transition periods such as p7.

Example: Rock Up and Ride

Rock Up and Ride targets young people through working closely with Active Schools. There is a broad criteria for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and/ or eligible for the uniform grant. This criteria was developed in discussion with schools, youth workers and local third sector organisations. The project works closely with schools to ensure that young people who don't meet that criteria but can still be deemed to be in need of a free bike don't miss out.

Example: Angus Cycle Hub

Angus Cycle Hub worked closely with schools to target eligible families. For example, it ran 'crazy bike' sessions in schools, with primary 2 and 3 children. In one school Angus Cycle Hub took 20 different adapted bikes for the children to use and more than 60 children used the 'crazy bike' fleet. The project then made the offer of bikes for children that need them, through teachers. This led to 25 children accepting the offer of a free bike. Due to the success of the partnership with the school, further sessions will also be held with older age groups.

Example: Equality Cycles

Equality Cycles works closely with schools. All of their work is in an area of high deprivation, and access to the bikes is further targeted. Schools send out letters to pupils eligible for free school meals, and families get in touch with the school to opt in. These contact details are then passed to the project, which gets in touch to arrange the free bike. Schools also have some flexibility to ensure the children most in need of the opportunity are not missed out.

Schools supported the project significantly and this approach was felt to have worked well. For example, one primary school sent out an initial email and then spoke to families for whom English is their second language, to encourage participation. A teacher who works in enhanced nurture provision with a small cohort of children with additional learning needs also spoke to parents proactively, to encourage participation. The school knew the demography of families and knew who would fit the criteria for the pilot. The existing relationships between local schools and

> St Pauls Community Forum which led the project helped significantly, as the organisation is known and trusted.

Working with community organisations

Some projects worked closely with community-based organisations, including community groups, sports clubs and housing associations. This worked well in small localities, where community work was well developed and active. Staff in community partner organisations understood the needs of the target group and passed on information. Some projects reported developing strong links, sharing skills and learning and building on the expertise of different partners.

In particular, community partners mentioned that they had built strong linkages with families in need of support during the Covid-19 pandemic, which helped them to understand the needs of families and build trust through providing practical support. As these organisations had strong relationships with families, they were well placed to encourage take up of the bikes and support the relationship between the project and the bike recipient.

"Working with them helps us guarantee that the bikes will be getting to the right people." Project lead

In some cases, sports groups were involved in targeting participants. One sports club highlighted that it wanted to have very clear criteria, as it didn't feel it was appropriate to ask young people lots of questions. This club set a clear criteria of young people being eligible for the uniform allowance, but with some flexibility, judgement and discretion.

A few community organisations felt that the administration of the pilot was quite resource intensive and while valuable to be involved in it did create an additional workload. One community organisation involved in one pilot found that the administration involved in referring individuals to the project was very challenging. Two partners involved in one project said that their participation damaged their relationship with the young people they worked with, reducing trust as bikes were not delivered on time or to the quality expected. In one project two partners reported that some young people who thought they were getting a bike didn't receive one.

"It was really resource intensive on top of my usual work." Partner

Example: Equality Cycles

The Equality Cycles project involves joint work between St Paul's Youth Forum – a youth focused programme based in the North East of Glasgow – and schools in the local area. Together the organisations have strong connections and links with local communities.

Example: Pedal Up Shetland

The Pedal Up Shetland project worked closely with the Anchor Project and Ability Shetland to target participants, as well as identifying young people who need a bike at Bikeability stages through schools. The Anchor Project is a community organisation working with vulnerable families. It spoke to families directly and identified 12 families to take part. Ability Shetland also identified a need for adapted bikes.

Barriers to uptake

Schools and community organisations found that the main barrier to uptake related to storage. Some projects required that the bike was stored indoors as a condition of loan or ownership, and some families did not have the space.

Some schools and community organisations found that the administration around the scheme – information, consent, referrals and surveys to explore options – could be a barrier for parents. Some addressed this by contacting parents by phone and undertaking much of the administration within the school or community organisation. Speaking to parents directly helped to encourage uptake, and also provided an opportunity to connect families in with wider offers of support if available locally.

One project found that a few families in rural locations didn't want their children to have bikes as there were no safe routes to cycle (with fast roads and few pavements) and no safe passage to school.

In some cases, projects had to take time to think about how to raise awareness of the opportunity in a way that would connect with their core audience. One project partner ran a successful social media campaign, and another translated information into different languages to ensure all were aware of the opportunity.

In one project, a few partners reported that the matching of children to bikes and lack of exploration of needs and choices was a barrier, as some children returned the bikes as unsuitable.

Example: A social media campaign

One partner, a sports club, initially found it difficult to reach the target group in a way that felt friendly and appropriate. As a community club, staff and volunteers were not used to gathering detailed information about participants' socioeconomic status. The partner ran a social media campaign targeting families in receipt of the uniform allowance which it found was highly effective. The club now has a waiting list of over 100 young people, who are eligible, and who will receive a bike.

Example: Barriers to uptake

One school funded through cycling Friendly Secondary Schools offered a loan bike to all 550 pupils, as the school is in an area of high deprivation. There were six applications. Feedback from families shows that storage and security are issues for many families. Each loan bike now comes with a good bike lock and police security stickers to help alleviate security concerns. The school is also exploring safe cycle storage and safe cycle routes to encourage pupils to cycle to school in the future.

Consents

Each project had clear consent processes in place to ensure that parents and carers were happy with the young person receiving a bike.

Some partners indicated that the consent process worked well, particularly when consent forms were short (1 page) and information could be shared between partners to avoid asking for information more than once. However, some found that consent forms could be a barrier to participation, as they were not particularly user friendly, used complicated language and were overly long (more than 10 pages). Online forms were also a barrier for some families.

Some partners worked with pilots to ensure that consent forms were as simple as possible, or families had support to complete them. In many cases schools worked to reduce the information required from families, taking on the paperwork on their behalf. One project indicated that it took a long time to agree a suitable consent form with the local authority legal department due to concerns about liability issues, particularly with recycled bikes.

To ensure the ownership approach is clear, a few projects working with schools developed a protocol for the transfer of assets (i.e. the bike) to young people. This

varied from a formal arrangement, such as that used by schools when transferring iPads or laptops, to a more informal agreement requiring the young person and parent/carer to sign a form stating that they understood their responsibilities.

Example: Rock Up and Ride

The Rock Up and Ride project transfers of ownership form states that you can't immediately sell the bike, but if a child has outgrown it they can sell it and put it towards buying a bigger bike.

Example: Loan contract

One school which received funding through Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools indicated that bikes would be loaned to young people. A contract will be in place to state that young people need to look after the bike and keep it well maintained. The contract also says that people can swap their bike for a bigger size or donate it back when they stop using it. Another school which was funded through Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools aims to pilot a loan of 10 bikes in summer 2022, with youth workers and police officers who work with the school doing check-ins over the summer to explore how it is working. The school hopes to introduce a termly loan model based on this learning.

Example: Equality Cycles

Young people are asked to sign a form to say that they understand the risks of cycling and will attend a three month check up. This check is to see that they still have the bike, are still using it and to check on its condition.

Participant experiences of targeting

The survey of young people involved in the pilots, and discussions with a small sample of young people and children as part of this evaluation highlighted that participants felt happy, lucky, excited and grateful to be involved in the pilots, and have the opportunity to access a bike for free.

"The best thing is that I get to keep the bike forever." Young person

Through the survey and discussions, parents and carers were also positive about the opportunity, and felt that it was an excellent offer for children and young people.

"Great opportunity for kids to have safe equipment when these things are so expensive." Parent

A few parents mentioned that they felt it seems too good to be true, and were a little unsure at first.

"I thought it was absolutely amazing. I couldn't believe it was a thing. I felt a bit overwhelmed by it. Usually with these things there would be a small fee or something to give back, so it's an amazing thing to be going on." Parent

Most parents and carers found out about the opportunity through the school, but a few had heard through social work and wider support workers, community groups, press

Most found the process to be simple. All parents and carers responding to the survey found the process to be excellent (63%) or good (37%).

"Absolutely fantastic service and great people to speak to." Parent

A few indicated that they had support from a support worker or from the school, which helped. A few liked that they could apply in different ways – on a website or over the phone. Parents and carers found the consent process straightforward and easy.

4. Procurement and distribution

Introduction

This chapter explores approaches to procuring bikes for children and young people and distributing them to families.

Approaches to procurement

An important early step for many projects was procuring bikes for children and young people. The projects range in size and approach, and the number of bikes issued by August 2022 ranged from 8 to 1,000.

Project	Planned volume of bikes at proposal stage	Volume issued at August 2022
Angus Re-Cycles	500	1,000
Barnardo's Gearing Up	30	21
Bike for Good	239	189
Clackmannanshire Bike Buddies	160	194
Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools	400	276*
Equality Cycles	300	325**
I Bike	292	303***
Pedal Up Shetland	50	8
Rock Up and Ride	800	462

Table 7: Volume of bikes

*Mid-September 2022: 276 bikes acquired by 24 secondary schools. 14 schools in process of purchasing/ submitting reports on acquired numbers.

**Includes 21 bikes loaned short term to wider young people and family members.

***142 bikes went out on individual loan, the reset were used to run cycling sessions within schools.

Eight projects procured bikes directly. One project, the Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools grant programme, did not procure bikes directly as schools were provided with grants to purchase the bikes they needed. This project provided pre-application support to schools to help identify bike suppliers, distributors and refurbishing organisations, and provided guide prices and specifications. Schools made varied applications in terms of the quality of equipment requested – often depending on the

knowledge held within the school - and have received advice regarding the specification and quality of equipment to ensure it meets the needs of young people.

The projects used different types of bikes including:

- new bikes – from local suppliers, national suppliers, bike manufacturers and international suppliers;
- recycled bikes – refurbished at existing local third sector organisations and cycle shops; or
- unused or abandoned bikes – to be refurbished within the project itself.

Project	Refurbished – in project	Refurbished – locally sourced	New	Notes
Angus Re-Cycles	Yes	No	No	*No note*
Barnardo's Gearing Up	No	Yes	No	*21 refurbished, 1 repair of own bike*
Bike for Good	No	No	Yes	*No note*
Clackmannanshire Bike Buddies	No	Yes	Yes	*127 refurbished, 67 new, 1 repair of own bike*
Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools	No	Yes	Yes	*Schools decide approach*
Equality Cycles	No	Yes	Yes	*304 new bikes, 21 refurbished*
I Bike	No	No	Yes	*No note*
Pedal Up Shetland	No	Yes	Yes	*3 new, 5 refurbished*
Rock Up and Ride	No	Yes	Yes	*455 new bikes, 7 refurbished*

Table 8: Type of bike

Across the projects, whether bikes were new or recycled, all of the projects were conscious of quality and safety, opting for higher quality bikes that would last and withstand regular use. Partners commented that the quality of the bikes was important, and they valued that projects had selected good quality bikes. They felt this would encourage sustained use and combat any stigma associated with receiving a free bike.

"Because these bikes are high quality, I feel that the children won't stand out in the wrong way." Project partner

"The bikes they've chosen are good bikes." Project partner

"Buying cheaper bikes is a false economy, as you end up investing more to maintain them." Project lead

A few projects noted that there were differing needs for localities in rural and urban areas. In rural areas, bikes were less likely to be used for commuting to and from school (due to the distance), but would be valuable in helping young people travel independently to socialise. Projects also noted that in rural areas it was important for young people to have bikes that allowed them to make full use of the terrain, such as mountain bikes. One project found that it was challenging to get bikes delivered to an island location, due to practical issues around the supply chain.

Procuring new bikes

Projects offering new bikes liaised with both manufacturers and retailers. Some project leads found that liaising with manufacturers directly worked well, allowing them to negotiate price, model and delivery. Having a dedicated liaison within the manufacturer also helped build these relationships.

Some projects found that purchasing some bikes from the manufacturer that required assembly could be substantially cheaper than purchasing ready built. However, this resulted in increased staff time to assemble the bikes once the parts were delivered. Some projects also found it challenging to identify space in which to build a high volume of bikes. A few projects felt that these logistical challenges would need to be explored if scaling the project up. Where bikes were purchased in parts, bikes were assembled by qualified staff, sometimes working alongside others such as volunteers or school pupils undertaking bike maintenance courses.

Partners indicated that ordering at scale and leaving a longer lead in time would further reduce the cost of buying bikes to build within pilot projects. One supplier suggested that a central hub for building bikes using qualified mechanics may be an efficient option.

"There's a much higher added discount if a customer builds their own bikes." Partner

"It takes 2 years to build a bike, so with that much notice we can custom build bikes and it brings down costs. So the more advance planning you do, the better in terms of value for money." Partner

However, an evaluation of two of the projects recommended that in the future the project used pre-built bikes to save the staff time spent assembling them.

Example: Rock Up and Ride

Rock Up and Ride procured bikes and built them within the project. It cost approximately £39 per bike to build, including labour, storage and logistics.

Example: Equality Cycles

Equality Cycles purchased bikes in parts from Raleigh at a discount. Raleigh was aware that the project had good, qualified mechanics which meant they could apply a higher discount as they could build their own bikes.

Most projects sourcing new bikes and accessories found that there was likely to be some time (ranging from weeks to months) from order to delivery. This was due to the significant increase in demand for bikes since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, along with challenges in the global supply chain. Some also found it challenging as they needed to order bikes in advance of delivery and often did not know what sizes would be required. Projects also had to consider how to balance giving young people choice in the brand, type and colour of bikes with the need to procure effectively and efficiently.

"The timescales are tricky, and it's hard for me to predict what size and how many of each thing we need." Project lead

Most projects offering new bikes sourced them from a range of suppliers, and directly from manufacturers, according to availability and delivery schedules. This provided projects with a good range of options to offer young people. Working with a mix of national and local suppliers worked well. National suppliers were able to fulfil large orders at competitive prices but could be less flexible. Local suppliers (of new and recycled bikes) were better placed to respond quickly and with smaller orders, or for accessories.

One project found just one supplier that could provide the bikes in a reasonable time frame, and another chose to source all the bikes from one manufacturer after speaking with several. For this project, there was only one manufacturer that could supply the quality and quantity of required bikes within the required time frame. The manufacturer felt able to work with this project easily, as the project lead was able to provide clear information on the type, style, number and size of bikes required. The manufacturer was happy to negotiate a competitive price for the bikes, as they felt the free bikes pilot aligned with the company's ethos.

Discussion with a small number of bike shops highlighted some concern that the pilots engaging directly with suppliers would bypass the bike shops, which could potentially significantly impact on their business. Bike shops were pleased to be

involved in the pilots, but aware of the potential impact of the approach on their bike sales – with children's bikes representing a big part of their business.

Example: Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools

Within the Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools pilot, schools decide the types and makes of bike that meet the needs of their pupils. Each school led on the procurement of bikes for their school, and schools have been able to use local bike shops and social enterprises as well as larger suppliers as back up. This has meant that there have been no real supply chain issues at local level.

Example: Equality Cycles

All of the bikes are new, sourced from Raleigh, Halfords and Cougar. In negotiation the project managed to achieve a significant reduction from one supplier.

Procuring recycled bikes

Recycled bikes were sourced in different ways. One project – Angus Cycle Hub – refurbished bikes within the project. All bikes were originally intended for landfill sites, and were re-purposed and put through a pre-delivery inspection. Through this approach, it has learned:

The value of having an agreement with the local authority – Angus Cycle Hub has an agreement with Angus to collect all disused bikes. It does not have the same agreement in Dundee.

Matching supply and demand is challenging – The approach is dependent on the bikes coming through the recycling centres, which has created some supply challenges for the most popular sizes and types of bike.

Another two projects worked closely with a local social enterprise which recycled bikes. Projects found that working with suppliers of recycled bikes could have wider benefits as they were often already well embedded into the community or could offer additional resources, such as bike maintenance. However, at times – in some projects – using recycled bikes limited young people's choices as the stock of recycled bikes depended on what had been collected or donated. These projects also found that it was challenging to access enough recycled bikes to meet demand through this route. These projects identified other ways of accessing refurbished bikes for example through purchasing ex-hire bikes from local hospitality and leisure venues, supplemented with new bikes when needed.

"We realised early on that we had a supply chain issue, we couldn't get enough recycled bikes when we needed them." Project lead

An evaluation of two of the projects found that using new bikes sped up the procurement process and reduced the time mechanics spent repairing and servicing bikes.

In a few cases, partners indicated a preference for recycled bikes as they were sustainable and environmentally friendly.

"Because they bikes have been recycled its an easier sell to parents." Teacher, primary school

However there were some issues with the quality and style of some of the recycled bikes, in some projects. In one project, the project leads and bike supplier carefully selected high quality recycled bikes for young people. The young people did not like the bikes as they had strong ideas about the brand and style they preferred. The

project and partners emphasised that the bikes were high quality refurbished bikes, with quality parts, but were not brand names. The same bikes were valued and accepted by younger children at a different project.

> **Example: Gearing Up**
>
> The Gearing Up project found that young people sought high quality mountain bikes. It identified a bike centre that was selling off its end of season bikes, and purchased 27 high specification mountain bikes from them, and another 8 from another bike centre. These bikes were ex demonstration or rental fleet, and were received positively by the young people.

In another project, partners reported some issues with the quality of recycled bikes provided, reporting rusty chains, broken brakes, broken seat posts and other maintenance issues. Many of these bikes were returned as the young people did not want to accept them. Partners felt that this created some issues, as families felt that they did not want to complain too much about something which was free.

Wider equipment

Most projects offered young people a bike, along with a helmet, lock and lights, and showed them how to use the accessories. Some projects also offered additional accessories such as pads, gloves, a waterproof jacket, mud guards, rain covers or bike maintenance equipment. One project worked with a partner that provided a welcome pack, including a bike maintenance booklet – highlighting how to keep the bike in good condition, do basic checks and maintenance and protect from theft – a personal cycling chart and local map with active travel routes.

While some projects found that by going directly to suppliers they could get a better price for equipment like helmets, locks and bells, others found that local businesses offered flexibility and could respond to smaller orders.

Approaches to distribution

Pilot projects distributed bikes to children and young people in a range of ways:

- distribution through schools – often connected to the Bikeability stage
- distribution through cycle clubs
- young people coming to a hub or centre to collect their new bike
- home delivery of bikes at a time that suits the family
- attending a local bike shop to choose their bike
- delivery of the bike through partners with strong connections to families and young people.

Projects worked with families who often didn't have access to transport and were felt to be in transport poverty. In some cases, projects found that families could come to their base to pick up the bike. For example, Bike for Good which worked with a school cluster and had a local base in that area found that this approach worked well. This arrangement required Bike for Good to purchase containers to store the bikes once they were built and awaiting collection. This created a slight logistical issue as the bikes were in a different location from their shop.

However, most projects made arrangements for delivery or distribution in the community in other ways. For example:

Equality Cycles distributed the bikes at school, or delivered bikes to families at home if required.

Rock Up and Ride distributed bikes after four cycle training sessions, to ensure young people had developed cycling skills and demonstrated commitment. Bikes

were handed out on the day of the final session, either on location or transported back to the school for distribution.

Angus Cycle Hub delivered bikes to families at home, and explored options for future distribution through bulk delivery to partners.

I Bike distributed bikes through a presence in the schools one day a week, with a shipping container at each school to store bikes and equipment. To enable pupils to bring bikes to and from school some have had to be transported in a minibus as catchment areas are large for rural or denominational schools.

Gearing Up purchased a stock of bikes and a selection were taken to the first meeting with participants, so they could choose the right bike for them (based on model, size and colour). Young people took part in a six week programme involving essential cycle skills, maintenance skills, route planning and cycle trips. Bikes and young people required transportation to each session. The bikes were then delivered to their home address at the end of the programme, with their permission.

Bike Buddies set up pop up shops in schools with a selection of bikes, so that children could choose their bikes and take part in a programme of cycle training and cycle maintenance at school using their bike.

"It's not just about giving out bikes, we wanted to teach kids how to use the bikes." Project lead

Projects found that having the flexibility to deliver the bikes to young people at suitable locations helped to reduce the barriers to access and build relationships with families. Projects delivering bikes to families at home found that this wasn't particularly efficient or environmentally friendly.

A few projects found that they had to organise additional storage to assist with bike assembly and distribution, often in the form of shipping containers. One project has a warehouse which it has found works well as a storage space for bikes awaiting distribution or maintenance, and a separate office space. The warehouse does not have heating, and the project would ideally like a single space that can hold bikes and where staff can work.

Example: Equality Cycles

Equality Cycles delivered the bikes through working closely with schools. A lot of work was undertaken to size children for bikes through the schools. Once the school had identified the children who were going to receive a bike, someone from Equality Cycles came to the school to size

the children for the bikes. Equality Cycles contacted parents once the bikes were ready to be picked up, delivered bikes to families if they couldn't pick them up or brought bikes to the school. The project was aware that many of the families they work with are in transport poverty and would not be able to come to a base to pick up the bikes.

"Everything has been seamless, from fitting the bikes to getting them delivered to the children." Teacher, primary school

The pupils receiving the bikes link in with P5 Bikeability training at school, and Equality Cycles attends to support bike repair and bike maintenance skills. In addition, St. Pauls Youth Trust runs weekly Dr Bike sessions in the local community and drop-in Dr Bike sessions at the school throughout the year.

Participant experiences of accessing bikes

Overall, the parents, carers and young people involved in this evaluation felt that the quality of the bike they received was high. This applied to people receiving recycled bikes and new bikes.

Q: How happy are you with the bike?	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
Children and young people (n=47)	62%	30%	4%	2%	2%
Parents and carers (n=41)	78%	17%	5%	-n/a	-n/a

Table 9: Participant experiences of accessing bikes

"It was excellent. Not just the bike but the helmet and lock, everything was really good quality." Parent

"I was amazed at the quality". Young person

Children and young people rating their bike good or very good talked about the bike being in great condition, being easy to ride, being comfortable to use and being the right size. Children and young people rating their bike average, poor or very poor were small in number, and gave different reasons including the bike being a bit small or the handlebars twisting round.

There were few variations in views based on project approach. Views on quality of recycled bikes rated very similarly to new bikes. All of the children and young people using a bike subscription service felt their bike and equipment were excellent quality.

Many parents and carers mentioned that their child already had a bike but it was old, expensive to repair, rusty, second hand or otherwise low in quality. The pilots were an opportunity to access a high quality, reliable, safe and usable bike. A few participants mentioned feeling much happier riding their bikes over longer distances, as they weren't worried about it breaking. A few also highly valued the lock provided with the bike, and liked that the bike was secure and could not be stolen. A few mentioned that they liked that the bikes were light, and so could be carried indoors for storage.

A few participants particularly liked that their bike was recycled. Others were very happy that their bike and associated equipment were brand new.

"They are taking waste and making use of it. It's inspiring." Young person

The parents, carers and young people involved in this evaluation were positive about the way in which they received their bike – whether delivered to their home, distributed at school or in a community setting, or picking it up from a community location.

"…the approach and how they were brought to us and stuff was easy." Parent

"Both the bikes were delivered. I was given the day and time, so made sure I was home. They brought the bikes in a van and then brought them over to the house and gave me the receipts and stuff." Parent

"It was easy, I just filled in a form and send measurements, leg length, that kind of thing, and then a couple of weeks later got a phone call saying they were ready to pick up." Parent

At one project, parents indicated that they particularly liked the approach of holding sessions to build cycle skills and then provide the bikes to children to take home.

Overall, most young people were happy with the help they got to choose the best bike for them.

Q: How do you feel about the help you got to choose the best bike for you?	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
Children and young people (n=63)	67%	24%	6%	2%	2%
Parents and carers (n=41)	54%	34%	10%	2%	n/a

Table 10: Participant experiences of choosing the right bike

Young people indicated that they were happy with how they were matched with their bike. Young people commented that they liked that their bike was fitted and that they knew it was the right size for them. Young people liked being able to choose the colour of their bike, and where possible the style and design of their bike. A few young people mentioned that it would be useful for participants to have different colours of bikes, so that if they all take them to school they can tell whose bike is whose.

A few had been able to talk about the type of bike they needed, and make sure that it was a really good fit for their needs. Many of these young people indicated that they used their bike every day. However, young people who did not get a choice of bike were also generally very happy with the bike they received, feeling it was a good size and good quality. Many said that they were pleased to be getting any bike. A few

parents mentioned that their child did not get a choice of bike, or the chance to talk about their needs, but that they knew they could swap it if they had any issues.

"Bikes are good but maybe be nice to chose them." Young person

Most parents responding to the survey said that it was very important to them that bikes are provided to meet different needs (58%),

Participants valued being provided with equipment such as helmets, locks, rain covers and lights. Children and young people mentioned the helmets being comfortable, and enjoyed having a new helmet, light and lock. Almost all parents responding to the survey (98%) said that it was very important to them that the project provided safety equipment like helmets.

Q: How happy are you with the other equipment (like helmets, locks, lights or rain covers)	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
Children and young people (n=45)	71%	18%	9%	-	2%
Parents and carers (n=41)	78%	17%	5%	-	-

Table 11: Participant experiences of safety and other equipment provided

A few young people, of all ages, mentioned that they didn't wear their helmet. This was for a range of reasons, including the helmet being uncomfortable or itchy, and feeling that they are a good cyclist so won't fall off. One girl said she didn't cycle to school because her parents made her wear her helmet and it was uncomfortable with her school hairstyle. A few young people said that they just wear their helmet sometimes and a few said they would only wear their helmet if a teacher told them to.

A small number of young people mentioned that it would be useful to have a set of mudguards for their bike, as they rode in all weathers and their clothes could get muddy.

5. Storage and maintenance

Introduction

This chapter explores approaches to storage and maintenance of the bikes within the pilot projects.

Individual storage

Each project providing a bike to take home also provided a lock for the bike and made sure that children and families understood how to use them. In some cases projects ensured that younger children received locks with codes (with a saved database recording these) rather than keys which could be lost. Others supplied locks with keys and kept a set of copy keys.

Some projects indicated that storage emerged as a key barrier in early research and exploration to inform their approach. Some found that access to a safe and secure place to store a bike was an issue for many families – particularly families who live in flats or have shared gardens with no secure storage space, or young people living in temporary or shared accommodation.

Project leads providing bikes for young people to take home acknowledged the challenge that some people will have around safe storage, particularly in flats. One project which asks that bikes are stored indoors overnight found that a few young people were saying that they have to keep their bike in the bedroom, so is exploring other options. Some partners reported young people carrying heavy bikes up many flights of stairs to keep them in flats.

Some partners were concerned that storage options were not sustainable. For example, one partner indicated that families were storing bikes on flat landings, creating a fire risk. Another partner felt that although the families received a good quality lock, this wasn't enough to ensure the security of the bike due to the likelihood of theft in the areas concerned. Partners were keen to see more community and school based bike storage options for young people.

The interim evaluation of the pilots found that rain covers for bikes, along with locks, enabled some families to store bikes outdoors. As a result the Scottish Government provided funding for rain covers or storage tents for all bikes issued through the pilots, which project leads hoped might resolve some storage concerns and maintain the condition of bikes stored outdoors. However, some of the projects indicated that they chose not to take up the offer, giving varied reasons including that they had not

had demand from participants for rain covers, or that they believed that bike covers increase oxidisation of components.

One project indicated that 5 in 180 bikes had been stolen, and another found that one of the 21 issued had been stolen. These bikes had been replaced. Other projects indicated that they were not aware of any bikes being stolen so far. Most projects said that if a bike was stolen, they would aim to replace it.

A few projects indicated that they continued to explore wider storage options, such as community bike lock up or storage areas. One project indicated that 3 families (1.5% of bikes issued) had notified the project that they need to return their bike as they are struggling to store them at home.

> **Example: Bike for Good**
>
> Bike for Good briefs children and families about keeping their bikes safe and advises them to store them indoors if they can. Each bike is registered on the police database and has ID stickers fused to the frame. At the time of this evaluation, five of the 180 bikes distributed had been stolen and these had all been replaced. Bike for Good also maintains a secure database of the padlock codes and spare locks, in the event that young people forgot their code and could not access their bike.

Communal storage

Some of the pilot projects required bikes to be stored in schools, in clubs or at community hubs. In most cases bikes were stored in shipping containers. Shipping containers were felt to be a safe and cost effective storage solution.

> **Example: Rock Up and Ride**
>
> At Rock Up and Ride, each of the eight sites has been offered a shipping container for bike storage during the introductory four week sessions offered to children and young people. The shipping container could also potentially be used by young people to store their bikes, if needed.

However, some schools highlighted that storage was an issue and was very variable between schools.

"We need more bike storage now. When we first got the bike shed it was empty for so long but now it's bursting at the seams." Teacher

A few schools highlighted that storage could be complex as it was expensive, and there could be a safety risk with children climbing onto storage containers or covered bike racks and then falling off or through. One school which had purchased adaptive bikes was keeping them at the back of a classroom as they were very large and expensive bits of equipment. A few schools also indicated that if pupils were being encouraged to store bikes safely then the schools needed to support this and lead by example.

Participant experiences of storage

Participants were asked to rate the help they received from the project in relation to storing their bike (where relevant).

Q: How do you feel about the help you got to store your bike	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
Children and young people (n=63)	46%	37%	17%	-	-
Parents and carers (n=41)	37%	44%	15%	2%	2%

Table 12: Participant experiences of help with bike storage

A third of parents responding to the survey said that it was very important to them that the project included help with storing the bike. A third said it was slightly important and the remainder said it wasn't at all important (15%) or wasn't applicable (17%).

Participants stored their bikes in different locations, including:

- the garden – particularly if not many people pass the house
- a shed – a few were considering getting a shed for the bike
- in the house – in the hallway, living room, kitchen or bedroom
- in a communal area - the close or close cellar.

"They're in their bedrooms. We live in a flat. It's ground floor but I prefer them inside than outside. There's space just by their beds." Parent

One participant reported that they were able to keep their bike in a communal neighbourhood storage area, where everyone keeps their bikes, scooters and flickers.

Participants living in flats often carried their bikes up flights of stairs to make sure that they were safe. Participants didn't mind doing this, particularly if bikes were light, but a few mentioned having bruises from carrying it up and down every day.

"We're on the 4th floor, but it's fine. The bike isn't heavy." Young person

Some brought their bikes indoors when the weather was bad. Some had received rain covers, so were able to keep the bike outdoors in bad weather, if they had a secure space in their garden. One said that their rain cover had blown away. Some said they wouldn't keep their bike outside even with a lock and a rain cover, as they felt it might get stolen. A few participants mentioned that they felt people had started coming round the garden or outdoor area since they got the bike, so they moved it indoors.

One young person mentioned that their bike was stolen when it was locked at the bottom of the stairs. It was replaced by the project and the child now brings it indoors. The family found the process of the bike being replaced simple.

Maintenance

Each of the pilot projects has built in approaches to maintaining the bikes to ensure ongoing and safe use.

Project	Approach	Undertaken by
Angus Re-Cycles	One month safety check Repairs as needed	Angus Re-Cycles and Dr Bikes sessions
Barnardo's Gearing Up	Service every eight weeks Repairs as needed	Forth Environment Link
Bike for Good	One bike service per year Repairs as needed	Motion Forward
Clackmannanshire Bike Buddies	Service every eight weeks Repairs as needed	Forth Environment Link
Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools	Grant programme - schools lead on maintenance, maintenance kits provided	School staff and local partners
Equality Cycles	3 monthly maintenance Repairs as needed	Active travel hubs and Dr Bikes sessions
I Bike	Light servicing, regular service, repairs as needed	Sustrans staff with support from local bike suppliers
Pedal Up Shetland	6 monthly maintenance and repairs as needed	Community Bike Project
Rock Up and Ride	One service to the value of £50	Local partners offer school sessions/ local bike shops

Table 13: Project approaches to maintenance

The frequency of checks varied, with servicing ranging from every eight weeks to once a year. The two projects offering eight weekly services indicated that having tried this approach they would shift to 12 week services for recycled or refurbished bikes in the future, and 2 yearly services for new bikes.

The projects undertaking maintenance themselves or through subsidiaries employed qualified mechanics to undertake this activity.

Many projects undertook maintenance through school based sessions, which was felt to work well.

"Doing maintenance at schools gives staff the opportunity to talk though what they are doing with the children and helps them to develop their maintenance skills." Project lead

A few projects highlighted that it could be difficult for families to bring bikes to school or other places for a check, as they live too far from the school, don't have a safe route and/ or the parents don't have access to transport (with or without bike carriage). These challenges are exacerbated if the bike can't be ridden because it needs a repair. In addition, a few partners said that it had been hard to encourage families to take up free proactive and preventative bike maintenance, to ensure long term use and sustainability of the bikes, rather than just reactive maintenance when they are damaged. One partner was concerned that if families had to contribute anything to maintenance this may not be prioritised, and may lead to more wastage and bikes not being used.

A few projects indicated that maintenance resources had been higher than expected, and that maintenance was quite logistically complex, so they would include more staff time for maintenance in the future.

A few projects stressed the importance of being flexible and understanding that some young people like to do things like cycle tough terrain and skid on their back tyres, so tyres may need replaced more frequently than expected. And a few projects indicated that the maintenance support was also useful for children and young people who already had their own bike, but it wasn't being used or wasn't up to an acceptable standard.

Example: Angus Cycle Hub

Angus Cycle Hub has a pop-up gazebo that they use to offer Dr Bikes sessions throughout Angus and Dundee. Young people are encouraged to take their bikes along to get checked. Young people can also contact Angus Cycle Hub for a repair. Angus Cycle Hub employs four mechanics who are trained to Velotech Silver or Gold standard as a minimum.

Example: Bike Buddies and Gearing Up

All bikes issued through Bike Buddies and Gearing Up get an eight week service carried out by Forth Environment Link's qualified mechanics, who are Gold Velotech and Cytech accredited. Forth Environment Link also offers pop-up maintenance workshops and support at the schools

involved in Bike Buddies. Gearing Up participants also took part in bike maintenance sessions.

Example: Equality Cycles

The Equality Cycles project connects with three active travel hubs in the local area to enable children to get their bikes fixed there, or get wider support to fix their bike. Families are reminded to come in regularly to get the bikes checked. Active travel hub staff are Cytech and Velotech trained from Silver award upwards. There are also Dr Bikes sessions offered through the schools.

Example: Rock Up and Ride

Rock Up and Ride works in partnership with local organisations such as Motion Forward (through Bike for Good) that provide maintenance solutions, who go into schools and run maintenance sessions. Young people get a free service up to the value of £50, as part of the Scottish Government's Cycle Repair Scheme, and could take their bike either to a local bike shop or to school.

Example: Pedal Up Shetland

Pedal Up Shetland will work with schools to encourage children to bring their bikes to school for six monthly maintenance checks undertaken by the Community Bike Project, which has trained mechanics.

Example: I Bike

I Bike involved qualified Sustrans staff, trained to at least Velotech Silver level, ensuring that all bikes at schools meet the recognised industry standards. Bikes requiring significant maintenance work are sent to local bike shops. Bikes which are on loan come in for a service every one to two months, depending on the duration of the loan. A few schools involved in this evaluation indicated that responsibility for maintaining the fleet will pass to the school, and that teachers were undertaking maintenance courses and would be happy to take responsibility for this.

Example: Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools

Schools lead on maintenance within the Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools project, and have access to support, training and maintenance through the Cycling Friendly network of delivery partners and community organisations. Some schools have applied for funding for maintenance equipment, and some schools have capacity internally to do minor maintenance. The staff involved may or may not hold formal maintenance qualifications. Some schools also get maintenance support **through** other

local organisations, including Sustrans, Bike for Good or their local bike shops.

Example: Bike for Good

Bike for Good offers all children free repairs through the pilot. Families receive an email or text asking them to bring their bike in for a maintenance check, or can contact Bike for Good whenever a bike has an issue. Maintenance is undertaken by Motion Forward, a fleet maintenance company and subsidiary of Bike for Good. All mechanics are fully trained and have at least two years' experience or Cytech 2 accreditation. The mechanics are responsible for checking that all bikes meet the relevant ISO standards, and Bike for Good is Revolve accredited. Bike for Good also has £15 million liability insurance cover.

An evaluation of two projects found that some young people may have access to a bike which could be repaired into good working order, in a size that fits them. The evaluation suggested that running bike maintenance sessions to young people to help them to get their existing bikes repaired may be a useful addition to the project, and reduce the need for new bikes.

Participant experiences of maintenance

Participants were asked to rate the help they received from the project in relation to learning how to look after their bike. Most felt that the help was excellent or good.

Q: How do you feel about the help you got to look after your bike	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
Children and young people (n=62)	68%	26%	6%	n/a	-n/a
Parents and carers	55%	40%	3%	3%	-n/a

Table 14: Participant experiences of bike maintenance

Most parents responding to the survey said that it was very important to them that the project included help with maintaining the bike (71%).

Participants had different experiences of maintaining their bikes. At one project, participants talked about learning how to maintain their bikes, and felt confident checking their bikes for safety before using them and repairing punctures. These participants found accessing maintenance support easy and simple, for example for tyre replacements or gear realignment. A few suggested it would be useful to have a cycle repair multi-tool so that they could maintain their bike.

"They did a full service, realigned the breaks and I promised not to be so reckless." Young person

At another project, parents and carers liked that they were shown how to service the bike and make sure it fits properly and is safe. This helped parents to feel more confident encouraging use of the bike, and parents understood where to get more help if the bike needed repaired.

At two other projects, parents and carers highlighted that they liked how maintenance was clearly built into their agreement and was very easy to access.

"It's good because it gets fixed if it's broken. The bike got a burst tyre and they came to our house to fix it. We just reported it and then they called to make an appointment for two days later. It was really easy!" Parent

Four young people from two projects said that they couldn't use their bikes at the time of the evaluation. Two participants at one project said that they had problems with their bike. These were not related to quality – one had a flat tire and the other had a problem with the chain after a stick got stuck in it. Both had been broken and unusable for a couple of months. Participants were aware that there were bike maintenance sessions at school, but hadn't been able to bring their bikes in.

Two participants at another project also had bikes that couldn't be used due to the chain coming off and the handle bars and seat needing fixed. These participants did not know how to get help with maintaining their bike. A few parents also indicated that they were not aware of support with maintaining the bikes

"One of the bikes the chain came off but mum can't fix it and we didn't know we could get it fixed" Young person

"The bike I have currently needs the handle bars and seat fixed. Unsure what has happened but currently unable to ride the bike." Young person

An evaluation of one project highlighted that participants needed access to equipment to be able to maintain their bikes, and needed time to practice skills such as repairing a puncture so they could look after their own bike.

Sustainability and bike use

The pilots had a range of different approaches in place to ensure that bikes could be used in a sustainable manner, and children and young people could have access to a bike that met their needs over time.

Two projects – Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools and I Bike – focus on developing fleets of bikes within schools, which could be used while at school, on loan or short term ownership models. I Bike offered a wide range of training sessions, with I Bike officers running 104 training sessions and the bikes being used for 412 training sessions – including Bikeability, learn to ride, skills sessions and led rides.

One project – Bike for Good - uses a bike subscription model. Families can get in touch if they want to upsize a bike and can request this as needed. At the time of this evaluation young people had had their bikes for less than a year, often a few months, and there had not yet been requests to upsize bikes. Bike for Good offered outdoor and indoor lessons, Bikeability Level 1 and Level 2 training and led rides to support bike use and support participants by answering any questions.

Three projects – Angus Re-Cycles, Equality Cycles and Pedal Up Shetland – offer bikes to young people as their own, but with the intention that they are returned when they grow out of them or no longer need them. Angus Cycle Hub plans to refurbish and re-use the returned bikes. Equality Cycles uses a flexible approach, with young people owning the bikes and with the option of either returning the bike and exchanging it for a bigger bike, or handing it down to younger siblings. At Pedal Up Shetland the plan is that the young person keeps their bike, but if they outgrow it they can return it and get a bigger one.

Three projects – Gearing Up, Bike Buddies and Rock Up and Ride – offer bikes to young people to keep. Gearing Up and Bike Buddies offer adult sized bikes to young people in older age groups, and the bikes should be possible to use through to adulthood. Rock Up and Ride offers the young people the bikes to keep, after a series of four sessions to build cycling skills. Young people can sell them and buy a bigger bike if they grow out of them.

“It was important that the children got appropriate cycle training as well as kit as part of the offer.” Teacher, quoted in project final evaluation form

Projects planning to re-use bikes within the project for multiple children said that the amount of times a bike could be recycled and the cost of doing so would depend very much on each bike and how they are used and stored. One project found that bikes were getting quite well used - ‘battered and bruised’ – and that they could take quite a bit of resource in terms of repair and refurbishment. Another project suggested that they expected the life cycle of a bike to be around 7 years, but that this would depend very much on maintenance. Projects also highlighted that the process of taking bikes back, refurbishing them and re-issuing them required resources, logistics and infrastructure.

Participant experiences of sustainability

Participants were positive about the support they got to use their bike. Around three quarters of children and young people said that the help they got to take part in cycling activities, learn to ride the bike and plan their routes was good or excellent. Parents also indicated that it was very important to them that their child received support with learning how to ride a bike safely, plan their route and link to cycling events and clubs. A few parents said that their child needed more support riding their bike, and that it was important to include enough support for young people who may take more time to learn new skills.

Q: How important was it to you that the project provided:	Very	Slightly	Not at all	Not applicable
Help with safely using the bike	86%	5%	5%	5%
Help planning safe routes	63%	12%	10%	15%
Links to cycling clubs and events	37%	29%	17%	17%

Table 15: Participant experiences of sustainability

Parents and carers also indicated that it was important that the project provided the opportunity to swap the bike for a bigger one, a bike that would last a long time, and a replacement if the bike is stolen.

Q: How important was it to you that the project provided:	Very	Slightly	Not at all	Not applicable
Replacement if bike is stolen	56%	20%	3%	22%
The opportunity to swap the bike	78%	10%	n/a	12%
A bike that will last your child a long time	63%	27%	n/a	10%

Table 16: Participant views of the importance of opportunities to swap bike

In discussion with parents, carers and young people there were varied views on how long the bike would last them. Those in the older age groups (upper secondary) often found they could use an adult bike and this would last them for a long time, as long as they looked after it.

“I think it will last a long time. It looks brand new. I think it will last a long time if it’s well looked after. And especially if they come to fix the bike.” Parent

Many participants were aged 10-12 and often parents felt that the bike would only last them a year, 18 months or 2 years, because of how quickly their child was growing. Many participants were unsure what their options were when they outgrew the bike. Some said that they would go back to the project, to see if they could

exchange the bike for a larger size. Some said that they would pass the bike on to younger siblings.

6. Adaptive bikes

Introduction

This chapter explores provision within the pilot projects for children and young people who require an adaptive bike or a bike that specifically meets their individual needs. We use the term 'adaptive bikes' throughout this chapter to refer to bikes which are designed or modified to fit the needs of an individual.

Provision of adaptive bikes

Most projects delivered some adaptive bikes within their pilot. The pilot which exited the programme in early 2022, due to wider reasons beyond the pilot, focused entirely on refurbishing abandoned adaptive bikes and developing a hub where young people can come to use the bikes in a safe environment. When the project exited the programme in early 2022, the funding was distributed between some of the other projects to ensure inclusion of adaptive bikes.

Project	Volume of adaptive bikes		Budget	
	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual
Bike for Good	12	9	£9,720	£14,679
Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools	Not specified	27	£10,000	£80,453
Equality Cycles	Not specified	0	£20,000	0
I Bike	4	0	£16,000	0
Pedal Up Shetland	3	6	£7,200	£6,660
Rock Up and Ride	At least 4	9	£20,000	£8,180
Angus Re-Cycles	n/a	1	n/a	£40*

Table 17: Proposed number of adaptive bikes and budgets

*This is the capital cost of the bike parts, and does not include time spent re-furbishing the bike. Note: The cost of adaptive bikes varied greatly, depending on the type of bike purchased. Barnardo's Gearing Up and Bike Buddies did not include provision of adaptive bikes.

Five projects had either ordered or distributed adaptive bikes at the time of this evaluation. Three of the pilot projects – Rock Up and Ride, Pedal Up Shetland and Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools – were using a fleet or library model for the adaptive bikes.

I Bike included a provision for adaptive bikes and offered these throughout the year, but at the time of the evaluation had not yet had any requests for these. Equality Cycles had set aside funding for adaptive bikes but had not yet been able to progress this at the time of the evaluation. This delay was partly due to one of the pilot projects withdrawing, which focused on adaptive bikes and Equality Cycles planned to work in partnership with.

Two projects indicated that they were able to make minor adaptations to standard bikes to accommodate some needs – such as removing the pedals to turn a standard bike into a balance bike. Two partners involved in this evaluation were disappointed that a project did not have capacity to explore adaptive bikes, and did not ask about bespoke needs as part of its application process. A few project leads suggested that approaches to providing adaptive bikes may be best nationally coordinated, and administered through a centralised loan scheme.

Example: Pedal Up Shetland

Pedal Up Shetland worked with Ability Shetland to develop a system for loaning adaptive bikes. Ability Shetland will manage the loan system and will run a booking system on their website for this, with bikes stored in existing storage facilities at an adjacent sports centre. The project found it challenging to source adaptive bikes and ordered three hand bikes and three adapted trikes which had not yet arrived at the time of this evaluation due to long lead in times for manufacture and delivery of adaptive bikes.

Example: Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools

Schools were able to identify children who were in need of adaptive or bespoke bikes. As a result, 27 adaptive cycles were funded across 11 projects including handcycles, side-by-side bikes and tricycles. The average cost was £2,980 per cycle. Bikes were sourced by the schools, and allocated on the school sites.

One school involved in this evaluation had ordered and received four adaptive bikes through the Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools pilot, as well as funding for a Gold Velotech certificate for the teacher. The school felt this was particularly important as maintaining the adapted bikes is very different and is vital, particularly when the young people have additional needs. The bikes are stored in a classroom as they are very large. The teacher reported that the young people are very happy with the bikes and excited to use them.

Another school was successful in receiving funding for two bikes accessible for young people who are in wheelchairs. The bikes are used in school and out in the community. The wheelchair can come off the front, which means that young people can go out in the community on the bike and then go in to go for an ice cream or a coffee on outings. It also means they can lend the bikes to families during holidays as the bikes can be more easily stored.

"By getting out and about more, the children have the chance to engage more with local people. They are having fun and the bike looks cool, which is a great talking point." Teacher

The cycling opportunities are helping to build communication skills – working on words like "ready, steady, go", "faster, slower and stop", and building stamina and fitness. The bikes are also helping to empower young people, and give them control over their lives.

Example: Rock Up and Ride

Rock Up and Ride worked with local clubs, schools and Active Schools to make clear that they can meet a range of needs. The project sourced two adaptive bikes for children with additional support needs. One was a new trike at a cost of £1,248, with a back rest and platform pedals. The second bike involved modifying a Frog bike by fitting Mission Cycles mobility wheels at a cost of £155 for the wheels, plus the cost of the bike.

Rock Up and Ride is also setting up an adaptive bikes library in Dundee in partnership with Dundee Dragons, which is due to open in August 2022. Young people will be able to book a session on an adaptive bike on a club led ride and return it when they are finished. At the time of this evaluation, Rock Up and Ride had provided 7 refurbished adaptive bikes to the Dundee Dragons, to develop the bike library.

Example: Bike for Good

Bike for Good worked with a family at a school for pupils with additional support needs but following exploration of needs and understanding of costs involved (£7,000 for a wheelchair bike) and timescales (8 weeks) the family decided not to go ahead. Bike for Good has ordered 9 adaptive bikes at a cost of £1,600 each through Theraplay. At the time of this evaluation the bikes were still being manufactured and had not been issued.

Learning about adaptive bikes

Projects learned that sourcing bikes could be challenging, and took longer than for standard bikes. A few projects opted to obtain refurbished adaptive bikes, as they found it challenging to source new adaptive bikes.

"The lead-in time for getting adaptive bikes is much longer, as the manufacturing process is more complex, but is very important to provide access to these bikes." Project lead

Project leads and partners found it challenging to predict how many young people would need an adaptive bike, and the type of bike required. The cost of new adaptive bikes is high and without knowing how many young people would need an adaptive bike, projects found it hard to forecast budgets.

A few project leads and partners commented that there are banks of unused adaptive bikes across Scotland, which are likely to be falling into disrepair. They felt there was scope to work with the people storing these bikes to repair them and bring them back into use, but it could be hard to access them.

"There are fleets of them sitting in shipping containers, but they're hard to access and people don't want to give them up because they're so expensive." Project partner

Projects also found that it was important to think about storage. Adaptive bikes are usually larger than standard bikes, and require more space for storage. One project indicated that adaptive bikes could be equivalent to around three to four standard bikes in size and storage requirements. Project leads were conscious that a family may not have sufficient and secure storage to keep it. Distribution of larger adaptive bikes also required careful consideration. One partner suggested that the solution may be for projects to store the bikes on site for people to use, rather than expecting families to store, and insure, the bikes at home.

Projects found that regular maintenance for adaptive bikes was particularly important. A few partners (community bike projects and schools) indicated that specialist skills would be required to maintain adapted bikes.

Lastly, a few project leads highlighted that it was important to think about how young people would use adaptive bikes, which cannot always be used on the road, and the best way to provide bikes and safe cycling opportunities.

Participant experiences

The evaluation involved speaking with a small number of parents whose children had the opportunity to use an adaptive bike through one of the pilots. Researchers also visited the school involved and observed bike sessions with pupils with additional support needs. These pupils were not able to communicate verbally, but demonstrated their enthusiasm for the opportunity through their clear enjoyment of the bike sessions. The pupils were able to use adaptive bikes while at school, during supported and supervised bike sessions.

Example: Adaptive bikes in school

The evaluation involved discussions with two families of young people who were able to use adaptive bikes at school. The school received funding for adaptive bikes through the Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools pilot. Initially, parents were asked if their child was interested, and had to sign off on certain health and safety aspects like lifting and handling. Parents also visited the school during bike sessions, to see how the staff worked with the young people during the bike sessions. Parents also had the chance to sit in and ride the bikes, and make sure they were happy with the level of safety. Initially, the staff rode with the young people in the bike within the school corridors, and then in the playground.

Parents reflected positively on the experience. One boy now uses the bike several times a week, at school and in the local area – with support and supervision. His family are pleased that he has the opportunity. He had previously used a tricycle with his family, as it is good for him to keep his hips and legs moving, but he had outgrown it. His family felt that the opportunity made a big difference to his health, wellbeing and happiness.

"It's an avenue for happiness. It makes him feel a bit chuffed with himself, he's up high so he feels like he's king of the castle. It's emotional therapy for him. He's going out and about and hearing things, seeing things. It's bringing on his language and stimulating him in new ways." Parent

"It's super to see. It just brings happiness, joy. It brings glee! That's definitely the word I would use, glee." Parent

Another family felt that the opportunity helped their son to see what was possible, and had helped the family to expand the types of things they can do together.

"I thought it was brilliant. My son can't use a standard bike, so it gives him the chance to get out and know what it feels like to be on a bike. And that's amazing." Parent

This family said that if there was a possibility of being able to use the bike occasionally at the weekend this would be very highly valued, to be able to go on family trips and do things as a family.

"As a family it's had an impact. It makes us realise that there are things available for him to experience. We're so used to thinking about all the things we can't do, and this has helped us to see that there are things we can do." Parent

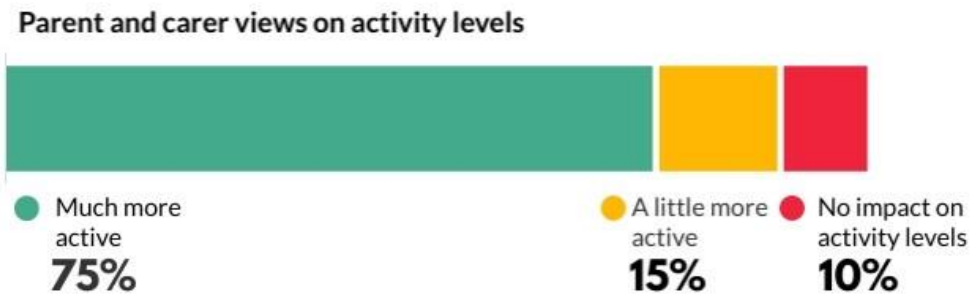
7. Impact

Introduction

This chapter sets out the impact of having a bike on young people and families. It is based on discussions with 35 young people and 16 parents from across nine pilots, as well as the reflections of project leads and partners.

Increased activity levels

Most parents responding to the survey felt that their child was a lot more active because of taking part in the Free Bikes pilot.



Graph above shows parent and carer views on activity levels. 75% think their child is much more active, 15% a little more active, 10% think there has been no impact on activity levels.

Many of the young people involved in this evaluation said that they were more active because they had a bike.

"It encourages you to be fitter, and go out more. It is a real privilege to have it, so you want to go out on it more." Young person

"It has influenced me to cycle more. Otherwise I would probably be lazing around inside." Young person

"Big time. I used to sit in the house every day. Now I'm never in. I only walked the dog once a day. Now I do that on the bike too. I must be fitter." Young person

"If I get bored in the house, and don't have anything to do, I can go on my bike round the area." Young person

A few said that if they didn't have a bike they would spend more time in bed, on their phone or on their computer.

"It gives you stuff to do – gives you opportunities you wouldn't have if you didn't have one. . . you get to be a lot more active." Young person

Parents and carers agreed that their children were more active. This was particularly valued for parents who had health or wider issues, and were not always able to get out and about with their children.

"Definitely increased my daughter's activity levels. Because of our circumstances and I don't get much help, some days I just wasn't wanting to do anything, so for my daughter it's given her that option to get out and about." Parent

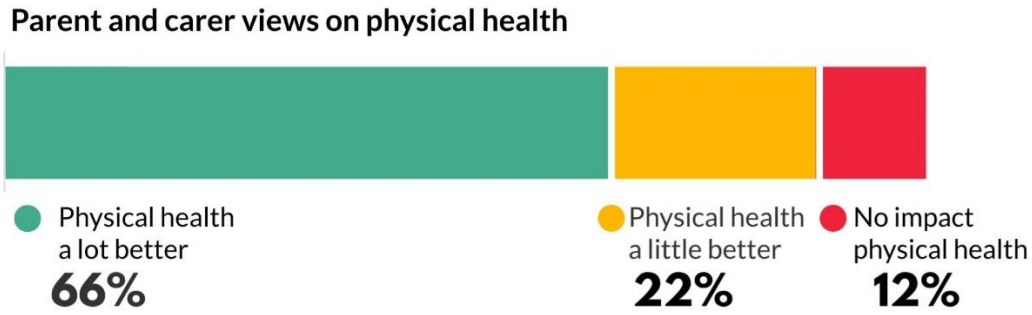
"He's definitely more active. He's certainly doing more now and not spending as much time on his computer…" Parent

"It pulls him away from his electronic devices. His friends used to call for him, but he'd come back after half an hour saying he was bored. Now he's going out until it's dark and asking to go out later, even on a school night." Parent

"It gets used every day more than once." Parent

Improved health and wellbeing

Young people and parents felt that in addition to increasing activity levels, their health and wellbeing was improving through having a bike. Parents and carers responding to the survey felt that the pilots had a significant impact on physical health.



Graph above shows parent and carer views on physical health. 66% feel their child's physical health is a lot better, 22% feel it is a little better, 12% feel no impact on physical health.

In particular, young people said that they spent more time outdoors and went outside in all weathers.

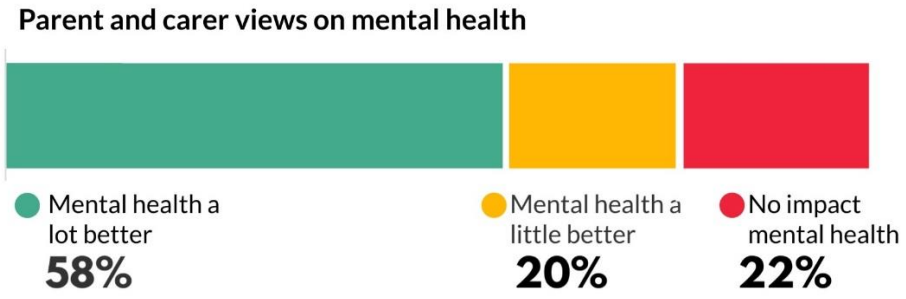
“The bike is really good. It got me outside.” Young person

“It’s good cos you get healthier!” Young person

Some young people with mountain bikes said that they were able to get outdoors into different environments like mountain trails. A few parents noted that the pandemic had kept children indoors more than usual, and the bike encouraged them back outdoors. A few felt that their children were able to sleep better, because of spending more time outside, and less time on devices.

“She’s sleeping better and finding it easier to sleep. And I think she has less interest in the devices.” Parent

Most parents and carers responding to the survey also felt that the pilots had an impact on the mental health of young people. A few who said there had been no impact on mental health indicated that their mental health was already good.



Graph above shows parent and carer views on impact on their child's mental health. 58% feel mental health a lot better, 20% a little better, 22% no impact on mental health.

A few young people, particularly in the older age groups, said that getting out and about really helped their mental health.

“Without (this project) I’d be sitting in quite mentally fragile.” Young person

“[I like] having a bike to get to school and use to take me to where I want to go. it makes me happy.” Young person, quoted in project final evaluation template

Project leads and partners also felt that having a bike helped to increase the resilience of young people, through getting back on and trying again, and build responsibility through taking care of their bike and its security and maintenance.

One young person had injured themselves falling off their bike, so felt their health had declined – but felt confident it would improve after receiving care from the hospital.

Example: Impact on confidence

"My daughter is a very quiet girl and doesn't speak to people. She runs away if people are around. She doesn't go out with friends but she's always out in the garden now. We have a big communal back garden and she's always out there now. Before she didn't ever leave the house, she only has three friends, but she doesn't even really speak to them. But she's confident when she's on her bike. She never went out before so now the bike is something that makes her go out. And that makes me very happy. She's really a very quiet person but on her bike, she's someone else.

She goes out every day in the garden. She goes round the block maybe twice a week. She used to be scared of cycling but now she's on it all the time.

She's a quiet girl and doesn't play with anyone but she's confident riding her bike. You can see it on her face. She still doesn't play but she doesn't need anyone else when she's on her bike.

Her dad and brother have bikes and so she can go out with them now, which she wouldn't have done before.

Just seeing my daughter on her bike and happy. It makes me happy as well… It's changed my daughter. She is a different person when she's on her bike. She used to come straight back inside if anyone ever came into the garden when she was there, but now she'll keep riding her bike. She is so much more confident and that makes me so happy."

Relationships

The young people involved in this evaluation used their bikes a lot for meeting with friends. This was the most frequently mentioned use of the bike for young people.

The young people used their bikes for cycling and playing with friends and going to the park. Many said that they used their bikes every day to meet up with friends.

Young people said that they saw their friends more, felt more included and could do the same activities as their friends because they had a bike now. Some young people, particularly those with challenges in their lives, said that the bike helped them to get out of the house, meet other people and become less isolated.

"I finally get to go out when my friends do." Young person

"It has made me feel a lot happier!" Young person

Parents and carers also highlighted the impact the bike had on friendships and feeling included.

"He's definitely getting out and about more with friends. And he's made a lot more new friends now too. It's built up his confidence a lot, he's a sensitive kid and he's been through a lot over the last few years, so it's definitely helping with his wellbeing." Parent

"All her friends had bikes, so she felt a bit left out. When we first got it, she couldn't wait to get up in the morning to go out on it!" Parent

Young people, parents and carers also talked about the impact of the free bike on the family. Where parents had bikes, or access to bikes, families talked of spending more time together because of being able to go out together.

"We are healthier as a family; we get out and about more." Parent

"I would say the best thing is just me and my daughter going out on bike rides… It's just changed our family lifestyle… It's just had a massive positive impact on our family." Parent

"I am happy because I got a bike. My Mum and brother would go out before, and I'd just be left. I finally got to go on bike rides with them." Young person

However, not all parents had access to bikes. A few families said that the parents would walk, while the children went on the bikes.

"We spend more time together as a family, we can go on long walks, the children take the bikes, and we can go further." Parent

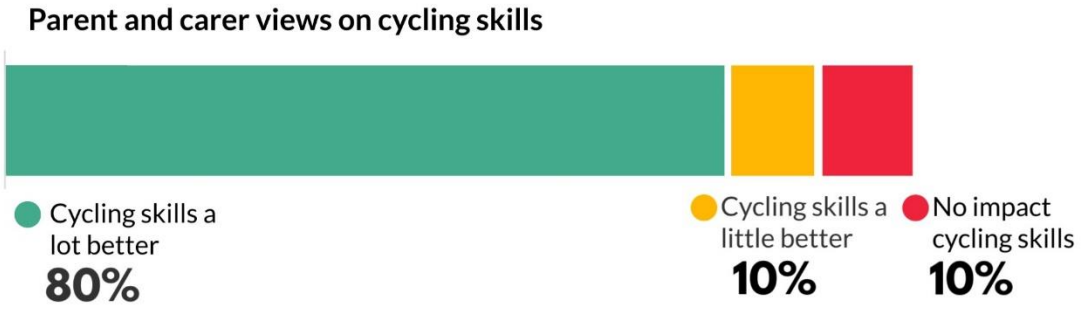
A few families with more than one child had received multiple bikes through the scheme. Sometimes parents borrowed one child's bike, to go out cycling with their other children.

Project leads and partners also highlighted the role the bikes could play in supporting young people to feel equal with their peers and reducing inequalities.

"Families can go off and have picnics now. They can create memories." Partner

Skills and learning

Parents and carers responding to the survey felt that the pilots had a significant impact on cycling skills.



Graph above shows parent and carer views on child's cycling skills. 80% feel a lot better, 10% a little better, 10% no impact.

Through taking part in the pilots, some young people talked about their increased cycling skills. Some had learned how to cycle, how to ride without stabilisers, how to use breaks and gears, and how to ride safely on the roads. A few talked about how they had developed their bike maintenance skills.

"I couldn't ride a bike, but I can now!" Young person

"I feel more confident. I didn't really know how to pedal before." Young person

"I am more road safe aware. I recognise it's a good bike and I don't want to wreck it. I have better control." Young person

Schools gave examples of pupils who had never had a bike or been on a bike taking up the offer of a free bike, completing Bikeability or other cycle skills training, and then going on to confidently use their bikes with their friends and on their way to and from school. A few parents said that this increased confidence meant that their children were more confident trying new things generally.

In a few projects, young people have developed skills as leaders. For example, one participant enjoyed the programme so much that he is now being trained as a cycle lead and will held with project delivery in the future.

A few young people at one school indicated that they were using their bike to gain awards like Duke of Edinburgh.

"I highly doubt I'd be able to do Duke of Edinburgh without the bike." Young person

For a small number of young people in the older age group, the bike acted as an important tool in diverting them from anti-social, risk taking or criminal behaviour. A few said that they made better choices because of having a bike.

"Without (this project) I'd be riding a damaged bike and probably causing trouble… Drugs, stealing cars, causing trouble." Young person

"I'd be partying, making silly decisions." Young person

A few schools reported that attendance increased as young people didn't want to miss cycling sessions. The pilots also enabled some schools to engage with pupils who wouldn't normally attend school, or wouldn't normally engage in the PE curriculum. For example, one school used the bikes as a wellbeing activity with groups of S5 and S6 boys who had been disengaged with school or had attendance issues – and were allowed to use the bikes if they came to school.

"It has really improved overall participation rates in PE." Teacher

Active travel

The main way that young people said they used their bikes was to meet up with friends. Some said they wouldn't have been able to do this without their bike, while others said it saved time on the bus or getting a lift from parents.

"I feel like I just get to go out more and go to different places, that I wouldn't be able to walk to." Young person

"If it wasn't for this, he'd probably be on his computer waiting on me giving him lifts. And he's meeting friends at other end of town now, so it's extended his social group. He was using his free bus pass before so wasn't getting any exercise but now he's choosing to go on his bike rather than the bus." Parent

A few parents emphasised that their children using the bike to visit relatives, to go to the shops or to go to school saved them money.

"The oldest is going to meet his friends, going to his grans, going to school. He goes everyday to school on it. He used his old bike before but we hadn't repaired it the last time it got broken. It means that he doesn't rely on me to give him lifts. It saves on petrol money! If I ask him to go get something from the shops, he'll take his bike." Parent

Many schools reported seeing more children now cycle to school, and an increase in bike use more generally in the local community. A few schools said that they knew of pupils who were previously driven to school now cycling to school. A few said that as pupils came in on their new bikes, other children are now coming to school by bike on their own bikes. Some schools found that the pilots were building a more positive culture around cycling to school.

"So many pupils now cycle to school that wouldn't previously done so. It is seen as 'cool' to have a loan bike." Teacher, quoted in project final evaluation template

Example: Culture change

In one school, teachers have been particularly enthusiastic about the opportunity and have used it across the curriculum. For example, teachers have taken classes on educational excursions with the whole class travelling by bike rather than bus. Teachers reported that pupils were using the bikes well, to travel to school and recreationally.

"They're happier. They're proud of themselves…I can see a difference already." Project partner

However, although a few young people involved in this evaluation said that they used their bike to go to school, many did not. Some said they lived close by or usually walked with family, so wouldn't cycle. Some said that they couldn't cycle to school as there isn't a good place to store the bike, storage space is crowded and they were worried about their bike getting damaged. A few said they might be more likely to take their bike if it was dry, as they were more worried about storage if it was raining and the bike might get wet.

A few parents and young people living in rural areas mentioned that it was a long way to cycle to school, and the roads were fast, so they didn't like to use the bike for cycling to school as they did not feel it was safe.

A few teachers felt that it would be good to better link wider cycling programmes to school activity, so that they could reinforce messages and integrate them into the curriculum.

For young people in the older age group, participants reported using their bike to go to work, to job interviews, shopping and to appointments. For some of the young people involved, their bike has provided a mode of transport and ability to get places under their own steam which helped to widen opportunities, save money and feel equal to their peers. A few said that the bike meant that they could go to work, where otherwise they would have had to rely on a lift, take the bus or may not have been able to get there.

"If I didn't have a bike I don't think I would have got this job." Young person

"I use it for everything. I use it every hour every day. I'm always out." Young person

Without the pilots

As part of the evaluation, families were asked what would have happened without the Free Bikes pilots. Many said that their children would not have bikes, or would have had bikes which were unsafe, expensive to repair and not working properly. A few parents mentioned that their children had to use bikes that were too small for them, and they were unable to afford to upgrade these.

"My son had bike, but it was second hand and not very good. We're not in position financially to get one so this was a really good opportunity for him to get a good bike." Parent

A few young people said that they already had bikes, and the pilots meant that they had a newer and better bike which was fit for purpose.

"Without the project . . .we would have a bike that wasn't as good." Young person

Parents and carers felt that the pilots enabled young people to have the same opportunities as their friends.

"If the scheme wasn't a thing, then, apart from help from friends and family, she'd have been disappointed that her friends all have bikes, and she'd still be feeling a bit left out." Parent

"Neither of them would have had bikes for while. It's given them the opportunity to be the same as their friends." Parent

A few parents mentioned that they had tried to buy a bike previously, but couldn't afford it. A few said that without the pilots, their child would never have had a bike.

"My daughter would have never got a new bike." Parent

“I was able to get bikes for my children that I wouldn't have been able to afford myself.” Parent

8. Costs and scalability

Introduction

This chapter explores early learning from the pilots about costs and scalability in providing free bikes for school age children who cannot afford them.

Direct cost of a standard bike

Across the pilots, the direct cost of providing a new standard bike ranged from £230 to £400. The figure at the upper end was for Pedal Up Shetland, which operates in a very remote area and experienced increased costs as a result. The other projects ranged from £230 to £362 for a new bike. The average (median) cost across all projects using new standard bikes was **£354**.

The cost of providing a new bike does not include time some pilots spent on assembling bikes. Some projects reduced capital outlay by purchasing bikes directly from the manufacturer which needed to be assembled. This will have had an impact on the cost involved in providing a new bike.

> **Example: Rock Up and Ride**
>
> Rock Up and Ride purchased bikes direct from the manufacturer, and asked that these were delivered 95% assembled to reduce staff or club coach time in assembling them. There remains a staff or club coach time input to finish the bikes, and the delivery of bikes assembled resulted in higher delivery costs and high levels of cardboard waste which required to be recycled appropriately, again using staff time.

For projects procuring refurbished and reconditioned bikes, the costs ranged from £60 to £457. The high end of the range was for Gearing Up project which worked with young people aged 16 to 24, who wished for high quality mountain bikes which were procured as ex-rentals from bike hire shops. The average (median) cost for procuring a recycled bike was **£256**. Projects emphasised that recycled bike values varied greatly, and should be seen as a range rather than a flat fee.

Angus Cycle Hub's pilot involved refurbishing bikes which were destined for landfill, within the project. Identifying and accessing these bikes cost an average of £40. However to refurbish the bikes required both space and staff time. The costs of the warehouse set up (£10,000) and staff time for maintenance (estimated at 90% of maintenance staff time - £210,600) is therefore included in the costs of producing a

refurbished bike. The total cost of producing 1,000 bikes is estimated at £260,600. This would take the average cost of producing a safe and usable refurbished bike at approximately **£261**.

> **Key finding:** The average (median) cost of providing a bike ranged from £261 (refurbished in house) to £354 (new bike).

Direct cost of an adaptive bike

The cost of new adaptive bikes ranged from £1,018 to £2,980. The cost of refurbished adaptive bikes at one project was £812.

In addition, one project accessed an adaptive bike that was destined for landfill, and refurbished it in-house. The direct cost of the bike being delivered was approximately £40, but the amount of time and resources it took to refurbish the bike is not currently known.

> **Key finding:** The cost of providing an adaptive bike ranged from £812 to £2,980.

Direct cost of bike safety package

Along with the bike, all projects provided some safety equipment.

Equipment	Range from project costs	Average (Median)
Helmets	£12.50 to £29 Highest cost in Shetland where costs tend to be higher	£21
Lights	£6.50 to £20	£15
Locks	£6 to £41 Varied dependent on lock type	£15
Gloves	£8 - £10 Provided in projects with a focus on mountain biking	£9
Rain cover	£12 One project had provided	£12

A few projects provided additional equipment, including high viz vests (£6), other clothing (up to £37), mudguards (£23), knee/elbow pads (£40), cycle maintenance kits (£16) and oil (£5). The Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools project provided schools with funding for the equipment they requested – including helmets, locks and lights for the bikes. Together, these requests averaged at £40 per unit.

> **Key finding:** The average (median) cost of a basic safety package including helmets, light, locks, gloves and rain cover for outdoor storage was £72.

Cost of bike maintenance

At the time of this evaluation, the pilots remained in a relatively early phase in terms of understanding the cost of maintenance requirements over the longer term. Bikes had been distributed throughout the pilot year, and some had not yet required any maintenance. The evaluator worked with a few of the projects to separate out costs for maintenance, exploring what proportion of time staff spent on different tasks – but the projects indicated that this would require further exploration longer term.

The cost of maintenance per bike ranged very significantly from £12 per bike through to £928 per bike.

On project estimated maintenance at £12 per bike to date. It used a recycling model, with bikes returned when outgrown, at which point a full service was undertaken. This meant that some ongoing maintenance costs were included in the cost of providing another young person with a bike.

One project had maintenance costs of £20 per bike and this involved a simple check that the bike was fit for use before distribution.

One project with maintenance costs at £31 per bike connects with existing active travel hubs in the local area to enable children to get their bikes fixed.

One project with maintenance at £33 per bike offered a proactive repairs and maintenance approach, with maintenance undertaken by a close partner organisation.

One project with maintenance at £50 per bike linked with the Scottish Government Cycle Repair Scheme, providing a voucher for maintenance.

One project with maintenance at £57 per bike provided grants to schools to undertake maintenance, including equipment and skills development.

One projects had estimated costs of approximately £200 per bike based on estimates of how much time staff spent repairing and maintaining bikes, within their wider work.

Two projects had higher maintenance costs - at £367 and £928 per bike. This included very regular servicing and repairs throughout the course of the pilot. These projects indicated that in the future, they may reduce the frequency of services from the level included in the pilot.

It was clear from the pilots that bikes do need to be maintained in order for children to be able to use them on an ongoing basis, and there will be some costs associated with this. However, further work is required to understand reasonable estimates for ongoing maintenance costs. As families have their bikes for longer than one year, maintenance costs are likely to increase as issues with bikes arise.

> **Key finding:** The cost of bike maintenance ranged from £12 to £928 per bike. Further work is needed to understand ongoing maintenance costs.

Cost of bike storage

Each of the projects also had costs for bike storage. Some projects had costs for storing bikes pre-distribution, to enable bike building, matching with young people and distribution to families.

Other projects had costs for bikes to be stored on school grounds or in community hubs, for ongoing use.

Across all the projects, storage costs accounted for £163,116, for 2,600 bikes distributed by August 2022.

> **Key finding:** The average cost of storage per bike across all the pilots was £62. In most cases this was a one off cost per bike (purchasing storage containers).

Cost of identifying families and delivering equipment

Pilots also incurred costs in terms of staff time identifying and targeting eligible families, raising awareness of the opportunity, and transport costs associated with delivery of the bikes and wider equipment. The cost per bike ranged between £128 and £346.

Two projects – Pedal Up Shetland and Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools – did not incur any costs in identifying families and delivering equipment. For the Cycling Friendly Secondary Schools project this was led by schools themselves. For the Pedal Up Shetland project a small number of bikes had been distributed at the time of the evaluation, and costs absorbed locally.

The average cost per bike for targeting and distribution for the pilots was £159 for the 2,600 bikes across all pilots, and £180 per bike for the 2,299 bikes across the 7 pilots with targeting and distribution costs.

> **Key finding:** The average cost per bike for targeting families, raising awareness and distributing bikes was £160 - £180.

Scaling up the approach

Initial exploration by Transport Scotland suggests that the number of children requiring a free bike could range from 80,000 to 160,000.

Analysis of pilot project costs suggests that the cost of providing a standard free bike could be in the range of:

- £261 to £354 on average for a bike
- £72 for a safety package including helmet, lock, lights, bell, gloves and rain cover
- £160 - £180 per bike for identification of families and distribution of the bike (excluding any wider support around cycle training or maintenance skills)
- £62 per bike for storage (in school, community or pre-distribution).

This is a total of approximately £655 to £768 per bike.

Importantly, this does not include any costs for essential maintenance, or for wider support to encourage use of the bike, including cycle skills training, maintenance training and maintenance support – which families found to be essential. It also does not include staff resources within Scottish Government and Transport Scotland for managing the pilot projects.

Providing a bike to each individual child who cannot afford a bike could therefore incur an initial investment of between £54 million and £120 million, with 80,000 to 160,000 bikes provided.

It should be noted that:

- There may be some economies of scale, as the most efficient approaches to providing bikes are adopted.
- One bike will not last a child their entire school life. Children may require three bikes (lower primary, upper primary, secondary) to have access to a bike at all stages.
- A phased approach could be used, providing young people with a bike at a certain stage of their school life, rather than throughout their school life.
- Some approaches allow for fleets and libraries, which allow for more than one child to use the same bike. For bike fleets and libraries, the ratio within the pilots was approximately one bike for every three to four children.
- Under some pilot schemes, bikes could be returned and refurbished for another user, which could also reduce costs. Further work would need done to explore the life of a bike, how many times it could be refurbished and the costs of this.
- The cost of providing adaptive bikes ranged from £812 to £2,980, with higher associated maintenance and storage costs than for standard bikes. More than a quarter of children in Scotland have additional support needs. It is hard to estimate how many would need an adaptive bike, but Scotland's pupil census in 2021 found that more than 8,400 pupils have a physical or motor impairment and more than 15,700 have a physical health problem.

9. Conclusions

Introduction

This evaluation explored the process and mechanisms of providing free bikes for school age children who cannot afford them, through an evaluation of nine pilot projects.

The pilot projects were set up to test ways of delivering free bikes to school age children, to promote and support active travel and reduce inequalities. Each project took a different approach to delivering free bikes – including through community hubs, school clusters and community organisations, through bike fleets, libraries, free subscriptions, loans and ownership.

This chapter explores the learning from the pilot approaches, from August 2021 to August 2022.

It should be recognised that the pilots were set up with the purpose of learning and trying new approaches. Projects tested ideas and approaches, learned and adapted along the way. Many of the themes and challenges identified here were areas of learning and discussion within the pilot scheme, due to regular reflection, risk registers and discussion around progress with each project.

Learning about targeting participants

Each pilot set their own target group, within the parameters of a pilot for children who cannot afford a bike, using different approaches to identifying potential participants. Key areas of learning from this include:

- Pilots would have welcomed some collective criteria on how to identify young people who cannot afford a bike. This would be important if the scheme rolls out across Scotland. However, having some flexibility to target disadvantaged and vulnerable families based on professional knowledge was also valued, to ensure that young people do not miss out.
- Young people and parents indicated that they felt happy, lucky and excited to be involved, and expressed no concerns about being identified as eligible for the opportunity.
- Schools played a critical role in targeting children, young people and families in most of the pilots. Schools brought in depth knowledge of family needs, and expertise in understanding disadvantage and inequality within the school. Community organisations were also often well placed to encourage take up of bikes. Both could speak directly with parents, which helped to encourage uptake and reduce barriers to participation around administration.

- Many of the schools involved had teachers who were passionate about cycling, suggesting additional work may need to be done if engaging with schools which did not have teachers with such a passion or personal interest in cycling.
- When working with schools and community organisations it is important to minimise the time involved in administration, provide simple information for families in a range of formats and languages, ensure consent processes are simple and short, and avoid too much additional work during busy transition periods such as p7. It is also vital to ensure that commitments made can be kept, to ensure schools and communities see the pilot as building on, rather than adversely affecting, their relationship with families.
- The main barrier to uptake related to storage, particularly if it was a condition of the pilots that bikes were stored indoors. In rural areas, there could be barriers around lack of safe routes to cycle.
- It is important to think about the age at which young people are offered a free bike. While targeting primary pupils offered the opportunity to link with Bikeability and build a positive cycling ethos early in life, participants expected to grow through their bikes more quickly (within a year to two years). A library, fleet or loan approach connected to primary schools could help to address this issue.
- Having a library, fleet or loan approach in place rather than full ownership may help to increase the capacity of schools to meet participant needs over time, and reduce the need for strict targeting and cut offs. It could open up the opportunity of opt-in, universal approaches to access to a bike at school.

Learning about procurement and distribution

The pilot projects used new bikes, recycled bikes through local cycle shops and third sector organisations, and through refurbishing unused or abandoned bikes through the project. Learning from procurement and distribution included:

- Providing high quality bikes, whether new or recycled, was felt to encourage sustained use and reduce maintenance costs. Overall, the parents, carers and young people felt that the quality of the bike they received was high, both for recycled bikes and new bikes. The evaluation found that many families would not complain about something that was free, so ensuring high quality from the outset is important.
- Projects offering new bikes liaised with both manufacturers and retailers. While bike shops were pleased to be involved in some of the pilots, they were aware of the potential impact of the approach on their bike sales if projects engaged directly with manufacturers, with children's bikes representing a big part of their business.
- While some projects accessed reduced cost bikes through manufacturers that required assembly, this required skilled staff, and there were staff costs and logistical issues (including space) associated with this.
- Projects focusing on recycled and refurbished bikes found that it could be challenging to match supply and demand, as they were dependent on what

was supplied or donated. Some had to blend recycled bikes with other approaches.
- Distribution of bikes required careful thought, as projects worked with families who were often in transport poverty or didn't have access to transport. Projects found that having the flexibility to deliver bikes to young people at suitable community locations helped to reduce the barriers to access and build relationships. While some delivered bikes to people's homes they were concerned this wasn't particularly efficient or environmentally friendly.
- Young people liked being able to choose the colour, style and design of their bike where possible, but where this wasn't offered most were happy to be getting any bike. Participants valued the wider equipment such as helmets, locks, rain covers and lights. Almost all parents said it was very important to them that the project provided safety equipment like helmets. However, a few young people, of all ages, said that they didn't wear their helmet.

Learning about storage and maintenance

Some projects identified storage as a key barrier in early development around their pilot. Access to a safe and secure place to store a bike was an issue for many families, particularly for those living in flats or shared accommodation. Many preferred to keep the bikes inside as they were concerned about security.

- Evidence from two of the projects found that 3% of the bikes they provided had been stolen (and replaced). Others were not aware of any bikes being stolen.
- Some projects required bikes to be stored in schools or in the community, and shipping containers were felt to be safe and cost effective. Some schools highlighted that storage of bikes was an issue, with more children cycling to school.
- The pilots found that bikes would need serviced between every 12 weeks and every year to two years. Recycled or refurbished bikes tended to be checked more regularly. Families felt that it was very important that the project included help with maintaining the bike.
- There were some logistical challenges around maintenance, with it being difficult for families to transport bikes needing repairs when they were damaged. A few young people had free bikes that they couldn't use as they needed repaired or maintained and didn't know how to get help with this.
- A few projects felt that maintenance resources had been higher than expected, and in the future, they would include more staff time for maintenance.
- Maintenance and repairs could play an important role in supporting young people to use bikes that they already have, and reduce the need for new bikes.
- Most projects aimed to use bikes again, as participants returned them. Projects were still learning about how many times a bike could be recycled, the cost of doing so and the life cycle of a bike. The process of taking bikes

back, refurbishing and re-issuing them would require resources and infrastructure.
- Families felt it was very important that they received support with safely using the bike, and a bike that would last or could be swapped, and replaced if stolen. While those in the older age group (upper secondary) often felt that they could use an adult sized bike which would last them a long time, many of the upper primary young people felt the bike would last one to two years.

Learning about adaptive bikes

Most projects planned to deliver some adaptive bikes within their pilot. At the time of this evaluation, five projects had either ordered or distributed adaptive bikes. Sourcing bikes could be challenging, and took longer than for standard bikes. Most were using a fleet or library model for adaptive bikes. Projects found that it was important to think about storage – with adaptive bikes being expensive and usually larger than standard bikes – and maintenance, which may require specialist skills.

Evidence from a small number of families highlighted the difference that having access to an adaptive bike can make for pupils with additional support needs. Families found that the bikes brought joy, stimulated language and learning, and expanded the range of activities the family could do together.

Learning about impact

Feedback from parents and carers showed that since having access to a bike through the pilots:

- 80% felt their child's cycling skills were a lot better
- 75% felt their child was much more active
- 66% felt their child's physical health was a lot better
- 58% felt their child's mental health was a lot better.

Young people also said they were more active, went outdoors more often, went out in all weathers, spent less time in the house, got out into different environments and new places, felt happier, saw their friends more often, and felt more included. Families also talked of spending more time together, out cycling and walking.

Many schools reported seeing more children now cycling to school, and an increase in bike use more generally in the local community. Some schools found that the pilots were building a more positive culture around cycling to school.

Many families said that without the pilots their children would not have bikes, or would have bikes which were unsafe, expensive to repair, too small or not working properly.

"My daughter would have never got a new bike." Parent

Learning about costs and scalability

Initial exploration by Transport Scotland suggests that the number of children requiring a free bike could range from 80,000 to 160,000. Analysis of pilot project costs suggests that the cost of providing a standard free bike could be in the range of £675 to £768 including the bike, a safety package, storage, maintenance, awareness raising and bike distribution. The cost of providing adaptive bikes ranged from £812 to £2,980.

This does not include any costs for wider support to encourage use of the bike, including cycle skills training and maintenance training – which families found to be essential. There may be economies of scale as the most efficient approaches to providing bikes are adopted. There may also be opportunities to include recycling and re-using bikes within the scheme, and using loans, libraries and fleet approaches so that each bike can meet the needs of more than one child. Further work would need done to explore the life of a bike, how many times it could be refurbished and the costs of this.

Recommendations

Based on the learning from this evaluation, the following issues should be further explored and built into future provision of free bikes for school age children who cannot afford them:

Clear eligibility criteria –

There should be clear criteria for establishing eligibility for free bikes. These should build on recognised methods for targeting support for school age children, including the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, entitlement to Free School Meals and entitlement to school clothing grants. It is recognised that there are children who may not meet these criteria who are in need of support, and there should be some scope for flexibility and local knowledge in determining eligibility.

Age and stage

Providing bikes suitable for a school age child to use from p1 to S6 is likely to involve at least three bikes (lower primary, upper primary/ early secondary, and upper secondary). Further consideration should be given to the age and stage at which young people are offered a free bike. While connecting the offer with Bikeability (P5-7) makes sense in terms of building a positive cycling ethos early in life and building cycling skills for all, this is a stage at which participants expect to grow through their bikes quickly (within a year or two years). Different options may work to meet needs at different ages and stages.

A mix of options

In considering access to free bikes throughout young people's school lives, it is likely that a range of different options could meet needs. Having library, fleet or loan approaches in primary and lower secondary could help address issues around children growing out of their bikes. This could also increase the capacity of the scheme to meet participant needs over time.

Ethos of re-use –

Any approach to providing bikes for school age children should embed and embrace an ethos of re-use. This could include returning bikes when they are grown out of and no longer needed, to meet the needs of other participants; and upcycling and refurbishing bikes to keep them in use and support affordable access to bikes. This approach is logistically complex, in manging returns and distributions – which this evaluation found generally works best at school, school cluster or community level. It

also requires further work to understand the lifecycle of a bike and the cost of re-use. Work in this area could connect with the findings from research into re-use and circular business models undertaken by Cycling Scotland.

Role of schools

Schools played a key role in identifying, targeting and supporting children within the pilots. Future approaches should continue to involve schools as key partners. To do so, it is important to minimise the time involved in administration of the scheme, and consider timing of offers to avoid the busiest times in schools.

Use and re-use of existing bikes

Many of the young people involved in the pilots already had a bike, which was not working or too small. There is scope to consider how best to support maintenance of existing bikes to enable use for their owners or younger family members, to get people using the bikes they already have.

Maintenance support

The pilots demonstrate clearly the importance of support with maintaining a bike, to ensure ongoing use. This requires a proactive approach which is accessible to people who can't transport faulty bikes for repair.

Investment in storage

It is important that lack of storage is not a barrier to accessing free bikes for families who need them. Those least likely to have suitable storage space are those most likely to need support with a free bike. It is important that not having access to indoor storage at home is not allowed to be a barrier to having a bike. Investing in storage options at home, in the community and in schools would help to widen access to the free bikes approach.

Adaptive bikes

Learning about adaptive bikes was at a very early stage at the time of this evaluation. However, the pilots demonstrate the value of a library or loan approach to meeting needs, with school or community based opportunities and a chance to take the bike home for a short period of time. This approach should help to widen access and reduce barriers around storage and maintenance, which are considerably more challenging for larger and more expensive adaptive bikes.

Cost of living

Finally, it is important to consider the resources required for the scheme during a time of a cost of living crisis. It will be important to explore the value of this approach, compared with other types of support for families and school age children.

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