

active travel cymru news

Issue 9

Active young people for healthy futures

Bike It, Bikeability and community projects

Y MUNWCH Â'R MUDIAD


sustrans

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News in brief

Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales

The Welsh Assembly Government recently launched *A Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales 2009 – 2013*, setting targets to increase the percentage of children walking to school from 39% to 46%, increase the number of adults walking to work to 20% and triple the percentage of adults who cycle to work. Further information: www.wales.gov.uk/transport

Active Travel Workplace Toolkit official launch

The bilingual Active Travel Workplace Toolkit had its official launch in February to coincide with the release of *A Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales 2009 – 2013*. The event was well attended and the toolkit received much interest. There is now an online feedback survey to leave comments about the toolkit.

Further information: www.activetravelcymru.org.uk/toolkit

Sustrans hosts a round table discussion with Play Wales

Sustrans Cymru and Play Wales jointly hosted a debate with building professionals and health experts in March which resulted in an invitation by Jane Davidson, Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing to submit a proposal to the Welsh Assembly Government on how putting the needs of children first can be communicated to planners and housebuilders. Further information: www.playwales.org.uk

DIY Streets in Wales

Somerset Street in Cardiff is to be the first of three Sustrans DIY Streets in Wales to start construction. The project encourages the reclaiming of street space with a view to encouraging active play and active travel. Further information:

www.sustrans.org.uk/diystreets

Active Travel Cymru works with policy-makers and practitioners to promote walking and cycling as health-enhancing physical activity. Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity and works on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport to benefit health and the environment.

Photography credits: Sustrans staff, Cycle Experience, Mark Napieralla, 5x60 Officer.

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More people...more active...more often...in Wales



Active young people for healthy futures

In Wales, 36% of children are estimated to be overweight or obese⁽¹⁾ and on average only 21% of young people aged 11, 13 and 15 meet the recommended government guideline of 60 minutes of daily physical activity⁽²⁾.

The school journey

As hectic lifestyles and concerns for pedestrian and cyclist safety on the roads increase, more children than ever before are being driven to school instead of walking or cycling. This contributes not only to environmental issues and road congestion, but the resulting loss of physical activity can be a strong contributor to becoming overweight⁽³⁾. Thus, active travel to school is a regular and inexpensive way of reducing overweight and obesity and boosting fitness at an important stage in life when the body is developing and growing.

Initiatives promoting active travel to school, such as cycling programmes like Bike It, can help children achieve the 60 minutes of daily physical activity known to reduce the risk of obesity and non-communicable diseases in adulthood, including some cancers, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and mental ill-health. In many European countries where child cycling levels are high, adult cycling levels are often high too, showing that cycling

is an activity that may be sustained throughout life.

Bike It works directly with schools who want to increase levels of cycling. Bike It Officers are assigned to a number of schools and help them make the case for cycling in their travel plans as well as making regular visits to promote cycling and run events and rides. Their aim is to work with pupils, parents and staff to help overcome barriers preventing cycling to school, to demonstrate that cycling is a popular choice amongst children and to create a pro-cycling culture in the school which continues after the engagement has ended.

Further information:

www.sustrans.org.uk/bikeit

References

¹ *Welsh Assembly Government, 2008, Welsh Health Survey 2007*

² *HBSC, 2008, Inequalities in young people's health*

³ *Strong, et al, 2005, Evidence based physical activity for school-age youth*

Mae hon yn ysgol Bike It
This is a Bike It school



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Bike It in Wales

According to *A Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales 2009 – 2013* only 2% of children aged 7-11 currently cycle to school in Wales. The plan aims to triple these numbers in four years, and specifically mentions Bike It as a way of doing so.

Last year the Welsh Assembly Government commissioned the appointment of two Bike It Officers in Wales each on a 3 year programme to work with 12 schools annually.

Alongside running assemblies and events, the Bike It officers spend time developing relationships with school staff to ensure they are knowledgeable about the scheme. They also train a 'Bike It Crew' in each school; a team of six enthusiastic pupils who help organise events and are the eyes and ears of the Bike It officers between visits. This encourages schools to take on a culture of cycling so that the intervention doesn't stop once the Bike It officer has left.

"I launched a 'design a Bike It banner' competition before Christmas in my 12 schools. It attracted great enthusiasm with over 650 entries. The winning school, Maes Owen Towyn, had their banner designed and printed for use by all the other schools."

Mike Murphy, Bike It officer for Conwy.

Achievements so far

Bike It programmes in England typically see a trebling of cycling levels at Bike It schools, and in Wales the programme aims for an increase of 15% of children aged 9 to 12 cycling at least once a week and 10-15% of all pupils cycling to school by the end of the first year. To date, a total of 67 activity sessions have been attended by 4,350 pupils across the 12 schools in Neath Port Talbot whilst in Conwy the number of sessions is 37 after 3 months of delivery.

"I've had loads of activities happening in my schools and most importantly great numbers of children cycling to school – over half the school at Bryn Primary cycled to a bike breakfast event! Bike It has become really embedded within my schools and I look forward to building upon this." Louise Powell, Bike It officer for Neath Port Talbot.

The Bike It projects in Wales are funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and the Bike Hub and work in partnership with Conwy Council and Neath Port Talbot Council.

More people...more active...more often...in Wales



Keeping safe on the roads – the National Cycle Training Standard

Fears for children's safety when cycling in today's road conditions can be a concern for parents, but National Standards Cycle Training, now available in Wales, can help alleviate these worries.

National Standards Cycling Training provides a standardised programme that helps young people develop essential skills and confidence for cycling on the road. The training is an outcomes based three stage programme ranging from basic cycling skills to cycling in traffic.

CTC, the national cyclists' organisation, has recently appointed a Cycle Training Development Officer for Wales to work with partners to increase capacity for National Standards Cycling Training throughout the country and introduce Bikeability, the brand currently used to deliver National Standards in England, in bilingual form.

On behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government, CTC will administer bursaries for the training of over 100 instructors and oversee the creation of Wales-wide Training Providers. Instructors will be ready to deliver training by the summer term 2009 and CTC aims to see a substantial number of year 6 pupils trained to Level 2 of the National Standard by the end of the 2 year project. This is a key action towards meeting the Welsh Assembly Government's target of tripling the percentage of children cycling to school by 2013⁽¹⁾.

"Having met the Local Authorities it is encouraging to find that they are keen either to expand the cycle training projects they are already running or to learn more about National Standards and work towards adopting them. We are working with them to ensure a large number of children have access to this high quality cycle training that will allow them to enjoy cycling as part of their everyday lives. It is envisaged that this increased capacity for cycle training will also benefit adults wishing to cycle."

Gwenda Owen, Cycle Training Development Officer, CTC

Sustrans will promote uptake of National Standards Cycle Training in Wales through the Bike It programme and through work with Local Authorities.

National Standards Cycle Training in Wales is funded by Welsh Assembly Government and Sports Council for Wales.

Further information: www.ctc.org.uk

References

¹ *Welsh Assembly Government, 2009, A Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales 2009 - 2013*

Cycling with community youth projects

Community youth projects, such as Mentro Allan and 5x60 in Neath Port Talbot successfully help young people spend time being active outdoors, benefitting their health and wellbeing.



The projects are run through the Council's Physical Activity & Sport Service (PASS). Mentro Allan runs environmental and outdoor adventure activities, and 5x60 is a secondary school based programme aimed at getting young people active for at least 60 minutes, 5 times a week. As part of these projects, mountain biking has been a great success and young people can use bikes in conjunction with PASS and other supporting local organisations for safety training, bike maintenance training and guided off-road rides.

To date, 89 young people have used the bikes, and importantly, the mountain biking sessions are also encouraging young people to cycle in their own time for active travel.

“Mentro Allan is making a major contribution towards the Council’s desire to encourage greater healthy outdoor activity in line with the Welsh Assembly Government’s Climbing Higher Strategy whilst helping to improve the health and well being of local communities.” Councillor Mike James, Cabinet Member for Community & Leisure Services

Recent additional funding has been used to train ten Council staff members in leading off-road rides and cycle maintenance so the bikes can be more widely used and the 5x60 project plans to expand by offering an additional after school session during the summer term.

The Mentro Allan project is funded by the Big Lottery, and delivered in partnership with BTCV Cymru, and the 5x60 project is funded by the Sports Council for Wales.

Further information:
www.neath-porttalbot.gov.uk/pass

The Evidence!

The Evidence is a regular information service identifying research evidence on the benefits of physically active travel.

Lack of opportunities for children to be active

Research from Australia suggests opportunities to engage in active free play in local neighbourhood may be scarce due to a lack of park provision close to home and suggests improving access to parks might encourage parents to allow children greater mobility.

Veitch et al, 2007, Children’s active free play in local neighbourhoods: a behavioural mapping study.

Research papers are available to download from www.the-evidence.org.uk