

Active Travel Case Study

Project title: Active in Ashington

Initiative: Bike Recycling and Loan Scheme

Target group: Unemployed people aged 16+ in Wansbeck District

Setting and area: Hirst Welfare Centre, Ashington, Northumberland

Case study date: From August 2007 to December 2009



Project overview

Active in Ashington aims to increase physical activity levels and sense of well-being amongst residents of Wansbeck District, Northumberland. Active travel is promoted as a means of accessing employment, education, local services, parks, green spaces and the wider countryside.

Since the project started in August 2007, a number of enthusiastic local volunteers have been recruited to support its walking and cycling initiatives.

The Active in Ashington bike recycling and loan scheme was officially launched by former Newcastle United and England striker Peter Beardsley in May 2008. Local volunteers have been trained to become cycle mechanics, and now refurbish bikes donated by Northumbria Police. The recycled bikes are loaned out to the local community in Wansbeck.

Aims

- To overcome transport barriers to work or learning experienced by local unemployed people
- To increase physical activity levels and sense of well-being through active travel
- To address sedentary lifestyles and related diseases including obesity, diabetes, coronary heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, and mental health issues.



Contact us...

For further information, please contact Adam Bell or Mary Clark on: 01670 524063, or email: activeinashington@sustrans

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How people have benefited:

- 50 volunteers trained as cycle mechanics
- 130 bikes refurbished to loan to people who need them
- 110 people have used the bike loan scheme to access work placements

The bike loan scheme enables people from areas with poor transport links to attend placements and training, in places they would not normally have been able to travel to. In turn, this experience helps them to gain the necessary skills in their chosen field of work, and take steps towards gaining a permanent position in the future.

John, a retired electrician, is a dedicated Active in Ashington volunteer, and explains how he benefits from this experience:

"I get a lot of job satisfaction knowing that we are helping people who have been unemployed get to work placements and hopefully into full- time employment."

Activities

- Bike maintenance skills training
- Second-hand bike restoration
- Volunteer recruitment
- Long-term bike loan scheme.

The bike recycling and loan scheme is central to the project. Volunteer bike mechanics work hard in turning old bikes into a safe form of transport that can be used by the community. Nothing goes to waste, and bikes that can not be refurbished are dismantled, and their parts used as spares.

So far, thanks to the local profile of the project and strong partnership working, 400 bikes have been donated; 300 from the local police, 50 from the public and 50 for recyke-y-bike. A hard working and dedicated team of volunteer bike mechanics have fully refurbished 120 bikes, which have been loaned out to people who need them.

Sustainability

The bike recycling and loan scheme is run by volunteers. Active in Ashington Project Co-ordinators Mary Clark and Adam Bell continue to offer and promote volunteering opportunities through the Ashington based Wansbeck Centre for Voluntary Service . Training offered by Active in Ashington helps to build skills within the community, which it is hoped will ensure the sustainability of the initiative.

The project currently has two 40ft shipping containers. One is used for storage and the other as a workshop, now adapted so that it has electricity.

Continual promotional work will be undertaken to ensure that bikes are donated on a regular basis.

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Local partnerships and support

Active in Ashington is delivered by Sustrans in partnership with The Big Lottery, Wansbeck Initiative, Northern Rock Foundation and Northumberland Care Trust. Active in Ashington works in close partnership with Northumbria Police to deliver this scheme.

National partnerships and support

Active in Ashington is a Sustrans Active Travel local project. Sustrans forms part of a Consortium of leading walking, cycling and health organisations being funded by the Big Lottery Fund's Well-being programme, which provides funding to support the development of healthier lifestyles and to improve well-being.

The Big Lottery Fund, the largest of the National Lottery good cause distributors, has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since its inception in June 2004.

What is Sustrans?

Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity.

Our vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. Every day we are working on practical, innovative ways of dealing with the transport challenges that affect us all.

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Information line: 0845 113 00 65

Supporters line: 0845 838 06 51

Head office: Sustrans, 2 Cathedral Square, Bristol BS1 5DD

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