



Bike to School Week 2021

27 September – 1 October

Overcoming barriers to cycling and scooting to school

A guide for schools

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Benefits and barriers

Travelling by bike or scooter to school has many benefits. It can:

- help children be active and feel more energised
- help the environment by replacing a car journey
- improve local air quality and reduce congestion.



But cycling and scooting to school may be harder for some people than others.

There may be economic and/or physical barriers, and different mobility needs.

Barriers for families can include:

- access to a suitable cycle or scooter
- access to a cycle or scooter in a good state of repair
- having the confidence to ride a cycle or scooter (for children and/or parents).



A lack of adequate storage and a lack of safe cycling and scooting routes around the school (the built environment) can also prevent schools from promoting cycling or scooting.



This document aims to give schools information to help families overcome barriers to cycling or scooting to school. It provides ideas for meeting the diverse range of needs that people may have, which might otherwise prevent them from cycling or scooting to school. It also provides links to guidance on cycle and scooter storage and outlines storage funding options.

This document is not exhaustive. Please email us at education@sustrans.org.uk to tell us about the innovative ways you overcome barriers to cycling and scooting to school.

How Sustrans can help

Sustrans works with local and national governments in local areas across the UK. If there is a Sustrans schools officer in your local area, they may be able to work with your school to help promote active travel. Email us at education@sustrans.org.uk to find out if Sustrans is able to provide this service in your area.



Your local authority should also be able to provide help and information on other sources of help locally.

Access to cycles and scooters

Across the country there are lots of amazing organisations making it easier for people to cycle, regardless of their background or their needs.

There are many schemes available to help schools and families access low-cost cycles or scooters. Check out what is available locally and communicate this to parents.

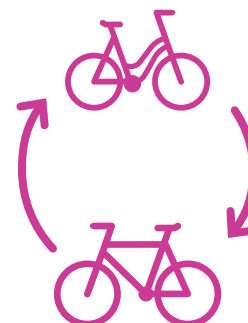
To find out more about what is in your local area you can:

1. Check your local council website. Most will have a page on cycling.
2. Get in touch with bike shops in your local community, they may have discounts or offers on bikes and repairs. Take a look at our [interactive map to find a bike shop near you](#).
3. Research local charity cycling initiatives. Some charities refurbish donated bikes and sell them at affordable prices. For example [Hope2Cycle](#) (Shaftesbury, Sherborne and Bournemouth), [Bike Station](#) (Perth and Edinburgh), [The Wee Spoke hub](#) (Edinburgh), [Bike for Good](#) (Glasgow), [Peddle My Wheels](#) (London), [PuffaJones](#) (Wales) and the [Turnaround Project](#) (Belfast).
4. Encourage families to consider second hand cycles and scooters on online market sites (eg ebay, Gumtree and Facebook). If your school is purchasing themselves, this could be considered too.
5. Research local bike rental companies and share their details with families.
6. Make families aware of subscription services. For a monthly fee families have access to a bike or scooter, for example [The Bike Club](#).



You may also want to set up a cycle and scooter swap shop or loan scheme at your school. Here's what that involves:

1. Ask parents to donate old cycles/scooters their children have outgrown to the school or use school cycles.
2. Hire a mechanic to check over the bikes and scooters.
3. Offer the cycles and scooters for loan (or purchase) to the pupils with greatest need.



Your school's PTA may be able to support the delivery of some of these activities.

Access to non-standard cycles

Some of your pupils or their families may need help finding affordable access to non-standard cycles. These can include:

- drop frames
- tricycles
- tandems
- wheelchair cycles
- hand cycles
- recumbents
- low step bicycles
- tag-a-longs.



You can familiarise yourself with some of the types of non-standard cycles on the [Cycling UK website](#).

As non-standard cycles can be expensive, hiring or borrowing them may be more appropriate for your school and/or families.

There are a number of organisations across the UK which offer loans for and cycle training with adapted cycles. This enables people with a range of different mobility needs to use a cycle to travel to school.

Why not get in touch with one of these organisations to see if they are able to come out to your school and deliver some accessible cycling sessions.

In addition to the suggestions given in the 'Access to cycles' section above, you may wish to:

1. Check out this [list of dealers that offer inclusive and adapted bikes](#).
2. Approach [local inclusive cycling centres](#) who may be able to signpost you to local services that sell or loan adapted cycles. They may also help you find a local training provider with access to adapted cycles.



Other inclusive cycling contacts

You may wish to look up [Cycling Projects](#). They are a UK cycling charity that promotes inclusive cycling through a range of successful community engagement programmes. They give people the opportunity to cycle on a regular basis through help, support and guidance. This is achieved through its two nationally acclaimed initiatives [Wheels for All](#) and [Pedal Away](#).

[Wheels for Wellbeing \(WfW\)](#) is an award-winning charity supporting disabled people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the benefits of cycling. They have produced a [comprehensive guide on inclusive cycling](#).



Area specific inclusive cycling contacts

In Scotland Blazing Saddles, a unique and mobile all-abilities cycling service, has been the catalyst to providing more sustainable cycling across Scotland. [Find out more](#) about how to book the adaptive bikes and kit available in various areas.

[In Northern Ireland](#), there is a nominated Disability Sports Hub in every council area who may be able to help signpost you to adapted cycle providers.

In the West Midlands, [Out on Your Loan](#) supports disabled adults wanting to make cycling journeys in their local area. This includes a long-term loan of an adapted cycle.

In London, [Bike Works](#) run All Ability Cycling Clubs that are free to access and open to all.

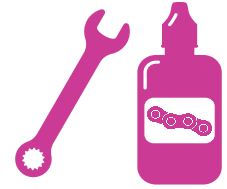
In Wales, [Cycling 4 All Pedal Power/ Beicio I Bawb Pwer Pedal](#) provide unique cycling opportunities for everyone.



Access to bikes in a good state of repair

Sometimes families will have access to a cycle or scooter that needs to be repaired or requires maintenance to be safe and enjoyable to ride. Providing information on local bike repair shops can help families get their cycles ready to use.

Some families will not be in a financial position to pay for cycle faults to be fixed. Helping them overcome these challenges, either by giving them the knowledge to fix simple things themselves or helping them get repairs made free of charge will help more children cycle or scoot to school safely.



All cycles and scooters should be checked before they are used to make sure they are safe.

Here are some ways you could help families get their cycles and scooters ready to go:

1. Share the [Sustrans M-check video](#) to help families make sure their cycles are roadworthy each time they ride.
2. Share the [Sustrans L-check video](#) to help families make sure their scooters are safe to ride.
3. Hold a Dr Bike event. This is the name given to an event where pupils bring their bikes into school for a free safety check with a cycle mechanic. You could do this in the run up to or during an event to promote cycling or scooting. Or indeed at any point during the year.

In some areas (for example South of England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland) Dr Bike is offered free to schools working with Sustrans as part of a funded project. Schools working with Sustrans in Scotland can find out more on our [I Bike website](#).

Your local authority may also be able to provide sessions or funding. Contact your Local Authority to find out what support you can access.

4. Prior to 31 May 2021 Big Bike Revival were offering schools in England and Scotland the opportunity to book a free bike mechanic for the day. Whilst this has come to an end, the interactive map shows who the providers were. They might be able to advise you of affordable ways for repairing bikes in your local area. [Take a look at the map](#).
5. Contact local community bike shops to understand what repair services they offer. They may be willing to offer discounts in return for publicity. And they might want to support your school's efforts to promote cycling in other ways, for example donating prizes for competitions. [Take a look at our interactive map of cycle shops across the UK](#).
6. Help your pupils develop life skills and a sense of independence by running a [junior Dr Bike session](#). Our junior Dr Bike activity guide lists checks for the brakes, wheels, tyres, steering, saddle, seat post, pedals, chain and frame. This checklist can also be shared with parents to do at home. More specialist repairs should be taken to a local bike mechanic.
7. If your school works with Sustrans, your schools officer may be able to run a junior bike maintenance session for you, which can be tailored to the age of the children.

Building cycling skills and confidence

It is important that both children and adults know how to stay safe on the roads. A parent or guardian's lack of cycling confidence can prevent them choosing to cycle the school run as a family, even if their child is a competent cyclist.

Cycle training will help to make journeys safe and enjoyable by teaching many key skills such as good road positioning, signalling, and visibility.

Cycle training can be organised to take place at school, during school hours. You can also signpost families to cycle training which can be completed outside of school time.

If your school works with Sustrans, your schools officer may be able to provide training for you. Your local authority can often advise on cycle training, and may even provide it for free.

You can also find cycle and scooter skills activities online. Here is a cycle skills [Mini Bike Skills guide](#) from the Sustrans website to get you started.

Here's a brief introduction to the cycle training available in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland:

Cycle training in England

Bikeability is the Department for Transport's flagship national cycle training programme for schoolchildren in England. Bikeability cycle training is a practical training programme, which provides children with a life skill and enables them to cycle confidently and competently on today's roads.

At different levels, children learn to:

- develop early cycle handling and awareness skills (Bikeability Balance)
- master pedalling (Bikeability Learn to Ride)
- prepare for on-road cycling (Level 1)
- cycle on single-lane roads and simple junctions (Level 2)
- handle busier streets, complex junctions and roundabouts (Level 3).

If your school works with Sustrans, please ask your officer for further information about cycle training. If your school does not have a Sustrans officer, please visit the [Bikeability website](#) to find out more.

Bikeability also offers training for adults and families throughout England. You can find registered and quality assured Bikeability providers in your area by entering your local authority in the '[Find a course near you](#)' tool.

In London, Transport for London funds the delivery of free cycle training across the city, including Bikeability training. For more information about the training offer for families, adults and school children in London visit the [Transport for London](#) website.

Cycle training in Wales

Sustrans Active Journeys schools (schools working with Sustrans as part of a government-funded programme) receive cycle skills and scooter sessions. Find more and apply for the [Sustrans Active Journey programme here](#).

Cycle Training Wales also provide cycle training in schools and have trained many local authority instructors. Based in Cardiff, they run an award-winning bike recycling and repair workshop. For more information please [visit their website](#).

Local Authorities provide Bikeability training for year 6 pupils. Please contact your local authority to find out more.

Cycle training in Scotland

As the national cycle training programme for school children, Bikeability Scotland is designed to give children the skills and confidence they need to cycle safely on the roads, and to encourage them to carry on cycling into adulthood.

Usually delivered in schools between P5 and S2, it teaches children to cycle safely, to learn how to deal with traffic and aims to get children excited about cycling.

Visit [Bikeability Scotland's website](#) to find out more. There you'll find a School Checker tool to help you find out if your school is already participating in Bikeability Scotland training. Contacts for the local Bikeability Scotland coordinator can also be found on their website.

Cycle training in Northern Ireland

The National Standard cycle training is delivered by Sustrans Cycle Training Instructors in Northern Ireland.

Sustrans can provide cycle training and courses for adults and children, tailored to your needs and budget, including:

- Get back in the saddle. A training session perfect for those who may not have ridden a bike in a while and who are keen to return to cycling.
- National Standards 1, 2 and 3 training to improve on-road cycle skills. Groups can learn to cycle confidently for both leisure and daily journeys over a structured weekly course.

Take a look at the Sustrans website for more information. Please be aware there is high demand for this training and you may need to plan well ahead for this.



Scooter training

Scootability is the UK's first nationwide scooter training, designed to help everyone learn to ride their scooters safely. Their courses are available all year around and are usually delivered through schools, council initiatives and other organisations. Please visit the [Scootability website](#) for more information.



Suitable cycle and scooter storage

Providing secure cycle and scooter parking is a crucial factor in encouraging young people to cycle or scoot to school. And getting it right can be a very effective way for schools to promote active journeys to school and reduce traffic congestion at the school gates.

Not only will the provision of parking allow parents and pupils to feel more relaxed about bringing a bike or scooter to school, it also acts as a striking way of publicising cycling and scootering, and of making those who do feel valued.

See this [School cycle and scooter parking guidance document](#) for further information.



Funding options for cycle and scooter storage

In Scotland, Sustrans manages the School Cycle and Scooter Parking grant fund. Applicants can apply for a maximum of £10,000 per school. [Visit the Sustrans website](#) for more details.

In England and Wales, local authority funding may also be available for cycle and scooter parking. And in London, Transport for London (TFL) sometimes funds cycle and scooter storage for schools. If you have a Sustrans schools officer, they may be able to help you access local authority or TFL funding.

In Northern Ireland, the Department for Infrastructure has indicated to local authorities that funding is available in 2021-22 for infrastructure projects, including cycle and scooter parking at schools. Schools may wish to approach their local authority in this regard.

Some schools also choose to raise money for scooter and cycle storage. Please bear in mind that robust, secure storage can cost thousands of pounds. Please make sure you have considered your requirements and researched costs beforehand so that fundraisers are aware of any challenging targets before embarking on this.

Reputable cycle and scooter providers that have supported Sustrans work with schools in the past include [Broxap](#), [Cyclehoop](#) and [LockItSafe](#).

Built environment

Some barriers to cycling and scooting to school relate to the built environment around the school. There may be a need for good quality, segregated cycle and scooting lanes, a 20 miles per hour speed limit or a School Street (restricting motor traffic at the school gates for a short period of time, generally at drop-off and pick-up times) for families to feel safe cycling or scooting to school.

Sustrans Big Street Survey is an exciting, free curriculum resource enabling pupils to investigate the area around their school and create a manifesto on how to make their streets safer and greener.

If you have a Sustrans schools officer you can speak to them about how to achieve change to your built environment. If you don't already have a schools officer, you may also wish to **make contact with your local Sustrans office**. Let them know you wish to discuss changes to the built environment to encourage more people to travel to school by cycle, scooter, on foot or using a wheelchair.



Other ideas to make cycling and scooting to school inclusive

Speak to other members of staff

Talk to your school's Inclusion or Parent Liaison Officer to identify the pupils who will have the greatest barriers to traveling to school by bike or scooter. If they are interested in cycling or scooting to school but need help to overcome barriers, you can signpost their families to local organisations who may be able to support them with accessing equipment.



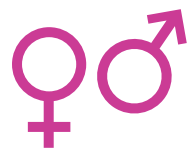
Engage stakeholders

Ensure your stakeholders (senior leadership team, Board of Governors) are aware of your efforts to promote cycling and scooting to school. They may be able to help you make sure that many pupils feel the benefits and help ensure the activities you organise are as inclusive as possible.



Consider gender gap

There can be a gender gap with fewer girls cycling to school than boys, especially at secondary school. Girls may want to cycle in wearing something other than their school uniform (especially if they need to or prefer to wear a skirt at school) and need somewhere to get changed once they arrive at school.



Represent everyone in promoting cycling or scooting

Use images, examples and stories of people cycling and scooting to school from a broad range of different backgrounds, ethnicities, genders and disabilities in promotional materials.



Use images which show a diverse range of cycles (for example drop frame, tricycle, tandems, wheelchair cycles, hand cycle, recumbent, low step bicycle, tag-a-long) and people with a range of mobility needs cycling in promotional materials.

Engage families who live further away

Park and wheel is an option to suggest to families who live too far away to cycle or scoot for the whole journey to school. We'd suggest asking parents who drive to park at least a 10-minute walk from school and complete their journey by bike or scooter. This helps create a cleaner air zone around your school and helps keep them active.



Take part in one of Sustrans' national events

Kickstart active travel at your school and encourage a healthy school run for all students with one of our national events and competitions for schools, [Bike to School Week](#) and the [Big Walk and Wheel](#).

Involve everyone in specific events

Despite your best efforts to help children overcome barriers to cycling or scooting to school, there may still be some children that cannot do this during your event. Try to find ways for all children to do some cycling or scooting during school hours during your events, to help nurture a love of cycling or scooting.



This might involve the school buying, renting or borrowing a pool of cycles or scooters which can be lent or gifted to children who don't own one, or whose families aren't able to transport them into school. You may find some parents are willing to donate old bikes or scooters.

Consider cycling or scooter-themed activities that do not require every child to have a bike or scooter- activities that can done in pairs sharing a cycle/scooter (for example cycle/scooter skills), require one bike per class (eg identify the parts on a bicycle) or don't require a bike or scooter at all (eg show the class how to mend an inner tube puncture, watch a video together, use cycling-themed Sustrans lesson plans).

Build an active travel calendar

Holding an event at more than one point in the year can help give more children a chance to take part in an event promoting active travel. Barriers that may have affected a family previously may not apply at other points in the year (children typically get new bikes for Christmas or their birthdays) and parents' and guardians' work commitments may change during the course of an academic year. We suggest one event each term is a great way to keep things accessible and in everyone's mind.



Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel (formerly known as Sustrans Big Pedal) is the UK's largest inter-school active travel competition. It includes walking and using a wheelchair as well as cycling and scooting. It's a great complement to Sustrans Bike to School Week, which specifically focuses on promoting cycling and scooting.

It also allows you to build on any momentum established by your previous events.

Consider food poverty

Active journeys to school (such as cycling, scooting, walking or using a wheelchair) will consume more calories than travelling to school in a vehicle. Some schools have chosen to run Breakfast Clubs providing a free nutritious breakfast alongside promoting active travel. This helps to ensure children are getting enough sustenance to support this activity.



This is an especially important consideration when active travel initiatives are focusing on promoting active travel to children receiving free school meals and/or when there is any concern a child is experiencing food poverty.

Other useful resources:

[Beginners guide to cycling](#)

[Sustrans education page](#)

[Sources of active travel funding in Scotland](#)

