



About the Widening Participation Fund

In 2022, the Bikeability Trust increased its commitment to removing the barriers to cycle training by investing more than £1.4 million of Department for Transport funding in 44 projects that helped people from underrepresented groups learn how to cycle.

The Bikeability Trust worked with Bikeability providers to identify four areas where uptake of Bikeability cycle training is low:

- areas of deprivation
- ethnic minority groups
- advanced Bikeability (Level 3 Training)
- female teenagers

Whilst the Widening Participation did not target SEND children, as previous investment from the Innovation Fund focused on increasing uptake of Bikeability for those children, we did find that Widening Participation Fund projects also successfully engaged with SEND children.

To remove the barriers to Bikeability in these key areas, the Trust invested in projects that offer an alternative to standard Bikeability delivery, designed to reach more children. More than 9000 people took part in Bikeability thanks to these creative, innovative, and inclusive schemes that support children of all ages, abilities and backgrounds discover the joy of cycling.

The Projects

All projects provided free Bikeability cycling training either through structured sessions in schools and community centres, or via more relaxed sessions such as family cycling days, or drop-in sessions. The types of sessions projects delivered included:

- Bridge the skills gap: focused sessions for children who need extra support to access cycle training.
- Open sessions: open-for-all sessions with a flexible approach that offers children a safe environment to cycle with the support of trained instructors.
- Girls-only sessions: sessions for girls, often led by female instructors and with a focus on empowerment and confidence building.
- Tailored training for disabled pupils: sessions that provided bespoke training for children who have special education needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Family sessions: sessions designed to be similar to open sessions but targeted at families.
- Parent information sessions: to provide parents with information on the benefits of cycling, advice on cycle safety, purchasing bikes and local places to ride.
- Competitions and games events: events were organised for children to showcase their skills, reinforce learnings, and create excitement and enthusiasm around cycling through a competition.
- Cycle maintenance: sessions where a professional mechanic offers free repairs, services and provides tips on cycle maintenance.
- Fleet cycles and adapted cycles: 24 projects provided cycles to use during training for free. Projects also provided adapted cycles for disabled children to use.



The results

Children cycled more

Children who reported cycling at all rose from 57% to 77% after Bikeability

Half of children said they expected to cycle at least once a week after cycle training compared to 24% who cycled once a week before the Bikeability

Children felt more confident cycling

72% of children felt fairly or very confident after Bikeability compared to 36% before

The number of children who felt not at all confident on the road dropped from 30% to 7% after Bikeability

We reached children who do not usually access Bikeability

The percentage of participants eligible for pupil premium was nearly three times as high (28%) as in standard Bikeability (10%).

24% of participants were Asian and 8% of participants were Black. 51% of girls took part compared to 40% and nearly twice as many SEND children

Key Learnings

1) A tailored approach is critical to increasing participation in Bikeability in underrepresented groups. This can include girls-only sessions with female instructors, smaller bespoke sessions with experienced instructors for SEND pupils, or community-based activities with support from community leaders.

2) Providing cycles makes it easier for children from underrepresented groups, particularly those living in low-income households, to access Bikeability.

3) Strong networks and relationships with key school staff and community leaders improves the success of recruiting children from underrepresented backgrounds to take part in Widening Participation Fund Bikeability.

4) Engaging with parents helped to reduce the risk of parents preventing children to take part because of concerns about children's safety when cycling.

