

Community Ideas Hub Case Study



**TRANSPORT
FOR LONDON**
EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

Cycling for homeless people

Overview

The 'Cycling for homeless people' project aims to increase levels of physical activity for people who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless. This project offers learn-to-ride, bike maintenance and led ride sessions at homeless shelters and hostels. The project will also recruit cycling and maintenance champions, who will receive further training and help encourage more people to get involved.

One benefit of this project is it moves the beneficiaries away from a sedentary lifestyle, especially as homeless people may experience higher rates of substance, smoking and alcohol abuse than that of the general public. These have been proven to have a negative effect on both mental and physical health and can lead to shorter life expectancy. Regular access to cycling is linked to prevention of non-communicable diseases, improvement of mental health and healthy ageing. Another benefit is that through cycling, a homeless person's engagement with the wider community increases, as well as their access to more mainstream activities. This can allow beneficiaries to feel more a part of their local community.

There are many barriers preventing homeless people from become involved in cycling, and they are one of the hardest vulnerable target groups to reach, due to their exclusion from mainstream society. It is important to be realistic about barriers such as financial, access, knowledge, confidence, excluding, and to be sensitive to the issues that they may face.

Learn-to-ride and maintenance sessions should be run once a week, per shelter/hostel to ensure participants stay engaged. Group led rides should also be organised once a month. Regular training should also be held for anybody wishing to become a cycling or maintenance champion.

This activity can be delivered anywhere in London, as long as it's targeting homeless shelters, hostels or specific homeless charities.



Target audience and engagement

- The key target audience are people who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless.
- Engagement is through posters and leaflets placed at various homeless shelters and hostels.
- Targeted promotion through presence at these locations to talk to people and encourage them to attend. You can also engage with the target audience through interactive taster sessions where people will be shown how to fix parts of a bike, given a chance to ride, and be informed about the programme – make sure you keep these events fun and as tailored as possible to individual's needs.

Reach

- Small to Large (20 - 120 beneficiaries) – depending on how many bikes you have.

Requirements

- 10 - 60 adult bikes of various sizes, depending on the scale of project you wish to run. Please note we would encourage you to have one bike shared with 2 participants, not only will this increase the number of people you can reach, but it can also ensure the bike stays in a better condition. Talk to local charities, police, shelters and hostels to see if they have any to donate.
- Helmets of various sizes
- Maintenance kit
- Basic spare bike parts
- Please ensure you have enough helmets, maintenance kits and spare parts for the size of project you are running.

Resources needed

Project Leader/Volunteer Coordinator:

- Oversee the project
- Attend and help at all the sessions and taster sessions
- Ensure all funding criteria and documentation is met (if required)
- Run risk assessment for safeguarding, injuries and also to identify any other concerns which may affect project delivery.
- The Project Lead should have the requisite level of CRB. Understand health and safety needs (preferably First Aid trained)

Cycle and Maintenance Trainer:

- Run weekly learn-to-ride and maintenance sessions
- Must have the relevant qualifications

Cycle or Maintenance Champions:

- Attend sessions and help where needed
- Encourage people to attend sessions

Storage space:

- You will need somewhere to store bikes. Talk to hostels and shelters you are engaging with, see if they have any free storage you can use. Otherwise you can contact a local community centre, or perhaps another local business that has storage room. Your Council may be able to provide you with information on who to contact.

Refreshments:

- Tea, coffee and healthy snacks at every session as a further incentive for people to attend.

Costings

Please note, these figures are based on a large project – 120 beneficiaries.

Bikes if different sizes – if possible have these donated!	£0 - £3,000
Project Leader (based on organising and attending 1 session per week)	£800
Marketing	£200
Cycle helmets	£600
Cycling and Maintenance Instructor (based on one session per week)	£1,000
Bike locks	£800
Reflective equipment	£900

Lights	£1,000
Maintenance kit and spare parts	£500
Refreshments	£500

Top tips and key learnings

- Consider wider engagement activities – social media, posters and flyers in local shops, cafés, leisure centres, or train stations to recruit champions and volunteers.
- Try to keep the sessions fun!
- Ensure you are sensitive to each beneficiaries needs and try to keep each sessions as tailored to each individual as possible.
- Provide healthy, substantial refreshments. This is a good incentive to people to come.
- Gain an understanding of whether participants are more confident riders after taking the session. This can be done by a ‘hands up’ survey or with a questionnaire.
- Depending on the area, you could direct participants to free cycle confidence and maintenance courses – please check with your local council and organisations.

Maximising local contacts

- Utilise networks to recruit participants or even get in kind support, including homeless organisations and charities, homeless shelters and hostels, community centres, etc.
- Talk to local organisations and businesses to see what they can provide and donate.
- You might find that a local shop or café is willing to provide water and snacks.
- Engage with your council – they may be able to lend you equipment, help market the project and help secure storage space.