

Community Ideas Hub Case Study



**TRANSPORT
FOR LONDON**
EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

Cycling for the over 50s

Overview

The 'Cycling for the over 50s' project offers beginner cycling courses tailored to men and women over 50 years of age. This group is significantly under-represented in cycling, often due to barriers such as fitness, health problems and cost. Also, many participants will have not ridden a bike for a long time, or they never learnt how to ride.

Not only will this project increase their physical activity, it will also showcase cycling as a cheaper and more convenient alternative to driving. It also includes the added benefits of improving mental wellbeing and reducing isolation through providing a social and supportive environment.

Tea, Coffee and snacks will be provided at each session to create a fun, relaxing and social course. All participants receive a certificate once they complete their course.

The initial sessions aim to build participants' confidence, while regular follow-on rides can be arranged once confidence is established. These rides are led by a volunteer, and all participants should be invited to attend.

Each session lasts about two hours; and four to six sessions should be run over one three month period. Sessions should include one in the morning and another in the afternoon to suit preferences. Sessions run during the summer months are the most likely to attract a good number of participants.

This activity can be delivered anywhere there is space to teach beginners cycling. Example spaces include parks, car parks and schools.

Target audience and engagement

- The key target audience is older adults, aged 50+
- Engagement events, posters and flyers, in parks, libraries, community groups, doctor's surgeries and any location where regular sessions for the 50+ community are held.
- Word of mouth is especially effective for the 50+ generation.



Reach

- Medium to large (40-50 beneficiaries)

Requirements

Equipment needed:

- Bikes of various sizes (or you could ask participants to bring their own)
- Helmets of various sizes
- Maintenance kit
- Basic spare bike parts

Resources needed

Cycling instructor:

- Run the cycling sessions
- Give basic lessons on bike maintenance
- Ensure participants feel confident and well looked-after
- Must be a qualified and experienced instructor, preferably with experience working with older people

Project Leader:

- Oversee the project ensuring the participants feel safe and are enjoying their time and that all equipment is returned
- 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
- Gather feedback from participants
- The Project Lead should have the requisite level of DBS. Understand health and safety needs (preferably First Aid trained)

Volunteers/Project Officers:

- Help answer queries
- Contribute to overseeing activity and potentially fix any equipment issues
- Run the follow-on schedules rides

Storage space:

- You will need somewhere to store equipment. This can be at a 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. You could also use a shipping container, or see if anyone is willing to lend you one. Alternatively you could also purchase one. Try to keep this as close to the location of the sessions as possible.

Publicity:

- Flyers and posters for publicity of the sessions

Refreshments:

- Tea, coffee and snacks at every session. This offers an incentive for people to come, and creates a social atmosphere.

NB: Any volunteers wishing to run the follow-on scheduled rides must have relevant ride leader training.

Costings

Bikes of different sizes (£250 per bike)	£2000-£3000
Cycle Instructor	£0 - £2500 (depending on location)
Helmets	£150
Maintenance kit and spare parts	£150
Project Manager	£500
Flyers and Posters	£100
Refreshments	£60
Ride Leader Training	£150
Shipping container (if relevant)	£1500

Top tips and key learnings

- Make sure the area you choose has good transport links which are accessible, e.g. step free if possible.
- Keep the number of participants low, maximum of six per session. This makes them less intimidating and people are more likely to form closer friendships. It also means participants get much more one-to-one time with the instructor.
- Try to keep the sessions fun and relaxed. Remember this isn't about racing, just about getting older people out and about on their bikes!
- Gain an understanding of whether participants are more confident riders after taking the sessions. This can be done by a 'hands up' survey or with a questionnaire.
- Try to ensure the follow-on rides aren't always the same, otherwise people might get bored and stop coming. These can be rides to different parks or along canals, or stopping at different cafes etc. on the way.
- Make sure you start planning at least six months before the first session.

Maximising local contacts

- Utilise networks to recruit participants, find a free space to run the sessions and store the bikes, or even get in kind support. For example, places of worship,

community centres, leisure centres, playgrounds, schools).

- Also think about how you might be able to run the volunteer follow-up sessions, are there any local cycling groups or volunteer groups, or are you hoping that a participant would like to fill this role?
- Engage with your council – they may be able to lend you equipment, help market the project and help secure a space.
- Try partnering with local council's cycling provider to see if there's any way you can work together – this way you could get subsidised cycling instructor quotes, or even get it for free!

Contact information

If you would like to discuss this project with anyone, please contact Open Age at 020 8962 4537 or mobile 07799 369741.

