

Community Ideas Hub Case Study



**TRANSPORT
FOR LONDON**
EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

Volunteering on your bike

Overview

‘Volunteering on your bike’ creates a network of volunteer participants to use cycling as a mode of transport while helping their local communities. The network of volunteers can be from a range of communities, ethnicities, backgrounds, ages and cycling skills. This is a great way to empower participants, as they learn to cycle more confidently, while helping others in their local area.

There are a number of ways volunteering can be carried out using bikes, both individually and as a group. For example, through the collection and delivery of items such as food and drink, toys, books, clothes and electrical equipment. Goods can be delivered to homeless shelters, soup kitchens, charity shops, events, aged care facilities, libraries and hospitals. Suppliers can be local organisations and businesses, who can collaborate together.

The project aims to target those who do not cycle regularly – either because they never learnt how to ride a bike, or lack the confidence to start riding again. Ideally, those learning to ride should make up at least half of the volunteer network. To recruit new cyclists, regular cycle training and basic maintenance classes can be offered. Alternatively, volunteers can be directed to book cycle skills training sessions through their local borough websites.

Depending on availabilities, participants will volunteer at different times and frequencies. It is important to accommodate all those who wish to participate.

Added benefits of the project are the improvement of health and wellbeing, as well as the work experience and skills it provides participants. It also helps participants feel they are connected and contributing to their local communities.

Volunteering opportunities should be held at least 20 days per year. Each session will vary in length depending on the amount of items that need to be moved, and the number of volunteers available.

This scheme can be run anywhere across London.



Target audience and engagement

- The key target audiences are lapsed cyclists, women, BAME or unemployed people, all from the local community who are looking to improve their cycling skills or offer their time to assist the community.
- Engagement is through social media, schools, local community websites or forums, and especially local volunteer services/organisations and cycling groups.
- Posters and flyers to advertise, and should be available both at events and for targeted promotion.
- Once a volunteer network is established, use regular newsletters to show the great work, and a group chat systems (i.e. WhatsApp) to inform people of upcoming volunteering opportunities.

Reach

- Medium to large (50 - 100 beneficiaries)

Requirements

Equipment needed:

- 3-4 bike trailers for large items or large quantities of items to be moved
- 2-3 bikes of various sizes to accommodate for volunteers who do not have a bike
- Helmets of various sizes
- Maintenance kit
- Basic spare bike parts

Resources needed

Project Leader/Volunteer Coordinator:

- Oversee the project.
- Speak with local contacts to ensure regular opportunities are offered for participants to volunteer.
- Ensure volunteers are attending any sessions they sign up to and all new participants are introduced to the programme appropriately.
- Attend and help at all the volunteer sessions – where not possible to attend, ensure that a regular volunteer is attending.
- 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 Trainer:

- Run regular cycle confidence and maintenance sessions for new participants.
- Must have the relevant qualifications.

Volunteers:

- Attend volunteer events and help to collect and deliver various items
- Help any new participants.

Storage space:

- You will need somewhere to store bikes. This can be at a community centre, or perhaps another local business with storage room. Your local council may be able to provide you with relevant contact information.

Refreshments:

- Tea, coffee and snacks at every session, as a thank you for volunteers. This also provides time for socialising and networking.

NB: If you do not have the funds to hire a Cycle Trainer, you could train the Volunteer Coordinator or a handful of the regular volunteers so that they can conduct these sessions.

Costings

Bike Trailers (£250 per trailer)	£750 - £1,000
Bikes of different sizes (£200 per bike)	£600 - £800
Storage	£500
Cycle Instructor (Optional)	£1,000
Cycle Confidence Training (Optional)	£0 – £500 (depending of local offers)
Bike Maintenance Training (Optional)	£0 - £500 (depending of local offers)
Helmets	£100
Maintenance kit and spare parts	£150
Project Manager/Volunteer Coordinator	£2,000 - £3,000
Flyers and Posters	£100
Refreshments	£200

Top tips and key learnings

- Consider wider engagement activities – social media, posters and flyers in local shops, cafés, leisure centres or train stations.
- Ensure your volunteer network is large enough to account for people’s varying



availability.

- Make sure you do not have too many volunteers at each opportunity. This can lead to people feeling under-utilised, which may stop them from participating in the future. So make sure you tell people if you already have enough volunteers for one event!
- Try to keep the sessions fun – remember, participants are offering their time to help for free!
- Always encourage participants to enjoy some refreshments after their session is finished. This will help to form relationships and make them more likely to keep volunteering.
- 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.
- Direct participants to free Cycle Skills training offered by all London boroughs, or free and maintenance courses offered by selected local councils or organisations.

Maximising local contacts

- Utilise networks to recruit participants or get in kind support. This could include volunteer organisations, places of worship, community centres or schools.
- Talk to local charities and organisations to arrange regular deliveries of goods.
- 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 a space.