

Scottish Transport Awards 2023

Best Practice in Travel to School and Work Schemes – Active Travel Dundee (Schools) Bikeability Scotland cycle training, supported by Cycling Scotland

Who are we?

Bikeability Scotland cycle training in Dundee is overseen by Active Travel Dundee at Ancrum Outdoor Centre, with Outdoor Learning Manager, Derek Napier, heading a team of co-ordinators, including Norbert Boros, Callum Riddoch and Billy Thomson.

The teamwork with volunteers, teaching staff and all 33 primary schools in Dundee to help pupils benefit from cycle training, alongside other active travel initiatives.

This nomination is supported by Cycling Scotland, the national cycling organisation. Working with others, the charity helps ensure that anyone, anywhere can cycle easily and safely. Cycling Scotland manages Bikeability Scotland cycle training, with funding from Transport Scotland.

Project Initiative

While Dundee Council have been engaged with the Bikeability Scotland programme since its inception in 2010, the first few years faced coordination challenges and resulted in no on-road cycle training being delivered in the authority's schools. However, in the subsequent decade, with firstly coordination responsibility shifting to Ancrum Outdoor Centre, followed by annual grant funding support for a designated full-time coordinator post provided by Cycling Scotland, delivery has gone from strength to strength. In the last academic session (2021-22), Dundee was only the sixth local authority in the country to deliver Bikeability Scotland training to all of their primary schools. All but one school offered Level 2 on-road training, with a total of nearly 3,000 pupils having the opportunity to develop this essential skill for life.

Level 2 teaches essential competencies such as effective signalling, making good observations and correct road positioning, encouraging young people to make more short journeys by bike. The decision-making element is critical in enabling children to conduct safe on-road journeys, including, where practicable, travelling to school. This is particularly beneficial as pupils transition from primary to secondary, often facing longer journeys.

Working with Cycling Scotland, the Active Travel (Schools) team at Ancrum, now provides a full package of support for curricular-based cycle training to Dundee schools, including school engagement and road safety information, as well as access to instructors, bikes and bike maintenance. This activity is further consolidated by a range of other services which in the past year have included: support for the development of school travel plans through the establishment of pupil-led active travel clubs; cycle path community litter picks; led bike rides to school trips; after school bike clubs; free bike provision; and essential cycle skills training for families.

Dundee Council's Bikeability Scotland programme has strengthened existing partnerships with and between local primary schools and helps ensure promoting active travel to school is a collective responsibility.

Bikeability Scotland Coordinator, Norbert Boros said, "We are both privileged and passionate about providing Dundee's children with this fantastic life skill, helping them to ride safely on the road. We aim to continue to help deliver a cultural change towards more active travel to and from schools and during non-school time".

Key Results / Outcomes / Performance

- From 2010 to 2016, the average annual delivery rate for Bikeability Scotland cycle training in Dundee was 12% of primary schools, much of which was playground-based.
- In 2021-22, and after two heavily disrupted years during the pandemic, Dundee delivered Bikeability Scotland training to all of their 33 primary schools for the first time, with nearly 3,000 pupils benefitting from the opportunity to develop essential life skills.
- This included 97% of the authority's primaries participating in Level 2 on-road training, with over 1,300 pupils involved. This compares favourably to the national figure of 50%, itself a record for the programme.
- Dundee delivered all 3 levels of Bikeability Scotland training in 2021-22, with over 50 secondary pupils participating in Level 3.
- The Active Travel Dundee team delivered 6 Bikeability Scotland Instructor courses in 2021-22, training 32 volunteers and school staff to support delivery.
- Knowledge and skills acquired through Level 2 on-road training were consolidated on led rides, some of which helped facilitate local school trips. 12 rides took place, involving more than 300 pupils.
- 31 of Scotland's 32 local authorities participate in the Bikeability Scotland programme, with a record of 59% of Scottish primary schools delivering at least one level of Bikeability training in 2021-22.
- Ben Clark, Principal Teacher at Eastern PS said, "As well as offering Bikeability sessions, the Ancrum team met regularly with our active travel group, listening to pupils' voices and helping them promote active travel to school". Eva, a pupil at Eastern added, "Thank you Bikeability for helping me gain my confidence back on my bike".
- 82% of parents are more in favour of letting their children cycle after completing Bikeability Scotland training.*
- 65% of pupils were more confident cycling after Bikeability training, and 45% reported cycling more frequently.*

*source: Give Everyone Cycle Space Tracking Research, Progressive Partnership, 2016