

Scottish Transport Awards 2023

Best Practice in Travel to School and Work Schemes – Cycling Friendly Schools

Who we are?

We are Cycling Scotland, Scotland's national cycling organisation: Working in partnership with other organisations, and with funding from Transport Scotland, we help create an environment where anyone, anywhere can enjoy all the benefits of cycling.

Our Cycling Friendly School programme is designed to support schools who wish to make it easier for children to cycle. The support is delivered through an award scheme and its complementary, dedicated funding stream.

Project

With the average cycle shelter costing over £10,000, access to funding remains a key challenge for schools who wish to encourage more children to cycle. To address this, Cycling Scotland has supported schools with the "Cycling Friendly Secondary School" development fund since 2016.

Until March 2022, the fund was only accessible to secondary schools, who were eligible for up to £4,000 for bikes, accessories and maintenance equipment. Funding for cycle parking in schools was available through a separate fund, Sustrans "Cycle and Scooter parking fund", restricted to local authorities with a 50% match funding requirement.

Following a stakeholder consultation process, Cycling Scotland, Transport Scotland and Sustrans Scotland merged support into a uniform "Cycling Friendly School" fund.

The new fund is open to primaries, secondaries and local authorities, who are encouraged to submit bids projects benefiting multiple schools. With an increased limit of up to £25,000 per school, no match funding requirement and a flexible funding criterion, all can now apply for cycle parking/storage, bikes, accessories, maintenance equipment and training.

The funding is intrinsically linked to the Cycling Friendly Award too. Schools participating in the award are paired with experienced Cycling Friendly assessors who, following a site visit, help them celebrate their successes and develop tailored action plans focusing on three areas of development:

- Facilities and infrastructure. e.g, bike parking
- Development, e.g. training
- Promotion and communication, e.g. events

Action plans are an effective way to share best practice with schools and introduce them to their local support network, e.g., Bikeability Scotland co-ordinators. This is a continual process, during which the school is encouraged to seek regular support from their assessor. It is a proven mechanism to signpost them to funding opportunities that match their requirements, including the Cycling Friendly School development fund.

Outcome

The introduction of the new fund has been well received by key stakeholders and has resulted in a significant boost in participation in the Cycling Friendly School programme:

- Increased participation from primary schools: 117 primary school registrations to the award in 2022/23 vs 36 in 2021/22 or a 325% increase year-on-year.
- Increased in participation from secondary schools: 58 registrations to the award in 2022/23 vs 32 in 2021/22 or a 181% increase year-on-year,
- Increased number of schools funded: 101 schools funded in 2022/23 vs 27 in 2021/22 or a 274% year-on-year increase

- Increased impact per application and reduced admin: each local authority supported six schools per application on average. In total, 13 local authorities were funded to make facilities improvements in 81 schools.

- Standardisation and increased economies of scale: Local authorities have been able to realise significant savings by going through a robust procurement exercise: For instance:
 - Highland Council received £74,000 and single handily supported 17 schools with cycle parking improvements, match-funding another £74,000.
 - East Lothian Council received £134,000 to install 23 shelters across 17 schools, match-funding another £20,000.