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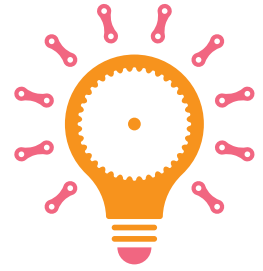
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# 1. Executive Summary

## The project

In 2020 Children in Scotland was asked by Cycling Scotland to explore children and young people's views of cycling and road safety. The project, called Changing Gears, offered 300 children and young people the chance to share their thoughts and experiences and shape future decisions about cycling across Scotland.



## What did we do?

Children in Scotland worked with the children and young people in 2 phases.

Phase 1 involved nine children and young people from across Scotland in a national co-design group. They met five times online in summer 2020 and completed activities and games to consider their priorities in relation to cycling. They also designed the activities for the activity pack for Phase 2.

Six primary schools from three areas of Scotland took part in Phase 2. This involved 300 children with a range of interests and experiences.

Children in Scotland then thought about what the children and young people shared and wrote a report for Cycling Scotland, explaining what the children had said and making recommendations for the future.

## What did we hear?



What the children and young people shared about cycling can be summarised under 10 themes: Family and Friends, Place, Safety, Exercise and Health and Wellbeing, Fun and Enjoyment, Nature, Equipment (for cycling), Education and Learning, Infrastructure (roads and cycle paths) and Negatives.

Not all children and young people like cycling or are able to cycle. Sometimes it can be the cost of bikes and cycling equipment that stops them from taking part. Sometimes it is fears over safety or a lack of nice and safe places to cycle such as well-kept cycle paths and trails. Schools and programmes like the Bikeability programme can help some children and young people to take part in cycling more.

Those children and young people who do cycle see cycling as a fun and enjoyable activity they can do on their own or with friends and family. It can be relaxing and it can be an exciting challenge. It can also keep them fit and healthy both physically and mentally, especially if it is in a pleasant environment, perhaps with lovely views of nature. Cycle paths and trails that are well looked after are a good place to cycle.

## What next?

Based on what the children and young people shared we made recommendations to Cycling Scotland about what they could and should do next.

We believe they should work with the Scottish Government, local councils and schools to make sure all children and families have access to bikes, cycling equipment and safe and nice local places to cycle (this includes cycle paths and trails).

It is also really important that children and young people are involved in this development going forward. Cycling has a key role to play in making sure that children's right to health, play and leisure is met. Cycling Scotland should consider follow up work with children and young people to develop their work and co-produce resources about cycling for children and make sure their voices are heard.

## Thank you!

Children in Scotland staff enjoyed working on this project very much. It has been a very positive experience working with Cycling Scotland and hearing from all the children and young people' about their experiences, opinions and perceptions of cycling.

We believe this work can support a safer and healthier Scotland for all.



## 2. Introduction

In 2020, Children in Scotland was commissioned by Cycling Scotland to explore children and young people's views and perceptions of cycling and road safety. The project, called Changing Gears, has offered an opportunity for children and young people to share their thoughts and experiences and shape decisions about cycling across Scotland.

In this report Children in Scotland will provide an overview of the findings and a series of recommendations for Cycling Scotland to help them include the views of children and young people in their work. This will include suggestions for the Bikeability programme and recommendations that Cycling Scotland can use to influence decision-makers around cycling and transport in Scotland.

### **Project Structure**

The Changing Gears project was split into two main phases:

- Phase 1 – literature review and national co-design group
- Phase 2 – engagement with schools.

The literature review helped Children in Scotland understand what children and young people have said about cycling in recent years. This allowed us to decide what issues to focus on in this project, initially with the national co-design group, then in schools.

The work with the national co-design group ensured that children and young people's views fed into the design and development of the project and that it focused on issues that mattered to them. Children in Scotland worked with a group of nine children and young people aged 9-15 years from across Scotland to identify the key issues relating to cycling and used this to inform the work in Phase 2. This is important as children and young people are experts in their own experience. Working with them at this first stage ensured that Phase 2 would be based upon the issues they think are important.

For Phase 2, Children in Scotland provided an activity pack for schools to complete based on the national co-design group's suggestions for engaging and relevant activities for children their own age. Schools completed the activity pack and returned these to Children in Scotland.

### **Cycling in Scotland**

Cycling Scotland's 2019 Annual Monitoring Report showed that 5.9% of people used cycling as a means of transport in the seven days leading up to the report.<sup>1</sup> 4.9% of people said they cycle to work regularly.<sup>2</sup>

This report also showed that 5.2% of primary school pupils and 1.3% of secondary school pupils cycled to school, showing an increase from 2010.<sup>3</sup> The National Transport Strategy also tells us that around 24% of children travel to school by car.

We also know that owning a bike is affected by how much money people have. The most recent National Transport Strategy highlights that '62% of households with an annual income of £50,000 or more have access to one or more bikes, compared to 20% of households with an annual income of up to £10,000'.<sup>4</sup>

Cycling Scotland has also identified that safety is the number one issue that stops more people getting involved in cycling.<sup>5</sup>

### **Policy Context**

The Scottish Government is incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots Law.

Incorporating the UNCRC means that adults that make decisions need to ensure children's rights are being respected. This includes making sure that children are able to experience the best standard of health they can.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cycling.scot/mediaLibrary/other/english/6353.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cycling.scot/mediaLibrary/other/english/6353.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cycling.scot/mediaLibrary/other/english/6353.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47052/national-transport-strategy.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cycling.scot/mediaLibrary/other/english/8631.pdf>

Cycling has a key role to play in supporting children's health and wellbeing. Some research has shown that parents think that it supports children and young people to be physically active and has the potential to improve their wellbeing.<sup>6</sup> Projects like 'Play on Pedals' have also shown that involvement in projects to increase cycling participation improve physical activity and improved wellbeing.<sup>7</sup>

The Scottish Government has a range of policies relating to cycling and active travel, including;

- The National Transport Strategy (2020)<sup>8</sup>
- The Active Travel Framework (2020)<sup>9</sup>
- The Cycling Action Plan (2017-20)<sup>10</sup>
- The Long Term Vision for Active Travel, 2030 (2014).<sup>11</sup>

There has been rhetorical commitment to improving infrastructure and a policy commitment to increasing active travel. However, Children in Scotland believes many of these policies do not fully consider the reasons why not everyone can benefit from cycling.

Our literature review offers more detail on current policies around cycling in Scotland and what children and young people think about cycling. Please see Appendix B.

### **Coronavirus Pandemic**

The delivery of the project was affected by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Children in Scotland usually works with children and young people in person, as we believe this is the best way to make sure everyone feels comfortable to take part. This has not been possible because of the ongoing restrictions.

In March 2020 all of our engagement work moved on to digital platforms, with an emphasis on virtual meetings and participants completing activities on their own and feeding back. Throughout this period, we have applied our principles and guidelines for participation to ensure all participants were able to take part, share their opinions and have fun.

While this means that the Changing Gears project was delivered in a different way than we had originally planned, we were able to complete the different stages of the project to a standard and level of engagement that met the project requirements.

We are grateful to Cycling Scotland for their flexibility, support and understanding throughout this period.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://bikeability.org.uk/national-survey-of-parents-reveals-the-mental-health-benefits-of-cycling-for-bikeability->  
<sup>7</sup> [https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/migrated/news/play\\_on\\_pedals\\_report\\_january\\_2017.pdf](https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/migrated/news/play_on_pedals_report_january_2017.pdf)  
<sup>8</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47052/national-transport-strategy.pdf>  
<sup>9</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47158/sct09190900361.pdf>  
<sup>10</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/10311/transport-scotland-policy-cycling-action-plan-for-scotland-january-2017.pdf>  
<sup>11</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/33649/long-term-vision-for-active-travel-in-scotland-2030.pdf>

## 3. Methodology

We have provided a short outline of our methodology in this section. A more detailed breakdown can be found in about this in Appendix A.

This section will cover the following steps:

- Rapid review of literature
- National Co-Design Group
- School Based Activity Pack.

### 3.1 Rapid Review of Literature

Children in Scotland read over a number of the most important recent Scottish Government policy documents relating to cycling and active travel. We also read recent work completed with children and young people around cycling in Scotland to understand what they have shared.

#### ***Selection method***

Documents were identified by Google search and provided by Cycling Scotland. Only Scottish policy documents were used and we only considered research that had been done *with* children, *in* Scotland.

We decided not to use documents older than 2014. We extended to 2014 to allow us to include The Long Term Framework for Active Travel as it will run until 2030 and so it still has a role in Scottish policy.

#### ***Purpose of review***

This review of the experience for some children and young people in Scotland helped us decide what issues to focus on with the children involved in the national co-design group and then in the schools involved in Phase 2 of this project.

One key area that informed our work is the gap in policy and prior work with children and young people relating to tackling inequalities and the impact of personal circumstances on how much people cycle. We also decided to explore the impact of issues such as road safety, cycle paths and other travel infrastructure with the children involved in this project.

A summary of what we found through the literature review is included in this report. Please see Appendix B.

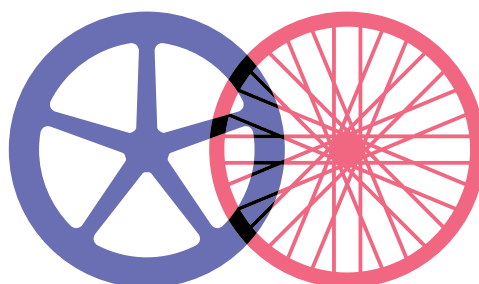
### 3.2 Phase 1 – National Co-Design Group

Children in Scotland had aimed to work with a group of 10-15 children and young people aged 9-15 from across Scotland to help develop our work with schools in Phase 2. We wanted to make sure that this project was developed directly from children's opinions and experiences.

We undertook an open recruitment for this group, creating a film and promoting the opportunity to take part through social media, through known partners and through our wider network, including our 550+ membership of organisations and individuals.

We recruited nine members to the co-design group from across Scotland.

We met with the group five times online over the summer of 2020 and completed a number of activities and games to consider their priorities in relation to cycling. We also discussed the types of activities they thought would be good to include in an activity pack for schools, involving children their own age.



## 2.3 Phase 2 – School Based Activity Pack

Children in Scotland staff then developed the school activity pack based on the suggestions from children in the co-design group, including the topics to explore and the activities that children would enjoy and find engaging.

We aimed to work with six to nine primary schools across three local authority areas. Schools involved were invited to participate through Bikeability contacts provided by Cycling Scotland. Children in Scotland also reached out to some schools through our own contacts.

We worked with primary schools because this is the age when children do the Bikeability course.

It is worth noting here that our original plan had been to work with three schools face-to-face before coronavirus. Working remotely allowed us to work with more schools and more children.

The activity pack was split into the following sections:

- Introductory Activities
- What happens round here – survey
- Journey Map
- Creative Activities.

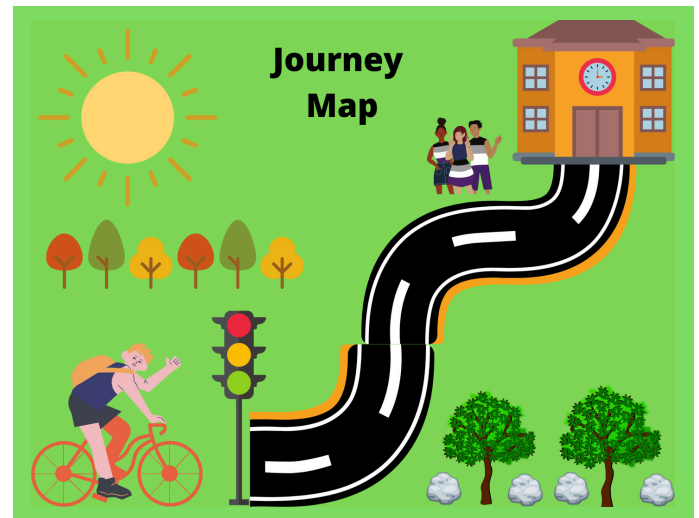
Schools were given clear guidance on how to use the activity pack, including methodology in a Teachers' Notes document and a resource pack with worksheets, relevant images etc.

Schools had one month to complete the activity and were encouraged to do this in a timescale that suited them. Children in Scotland staff organised online introductory sessions with all schools at the start of October. The team then held an end of project session for all schools at the end of October.

### **Analysis**

Schools sent us the completed activity packs back in a way that suited them. Some sent them by post and others sent them electronically.

We worked to analyse the information that we received from schools. We have provided some statistics from our survey of the children involved. We have also sorted the information in to key themes based on what children told us. We have considered what we think Cycling Scotland needs to do to tackle some of the issues we identified and made recommendations based on our findings.



## 4. Participant Data

Across the project we have engaged with a total of 309 children and young people from eight local authorities. This is split between the national co-design group and the school-based activities.

### National Co-Design Group (June - July 2020)

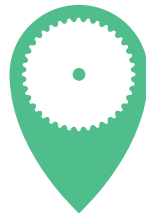
The national co-design group was made of nine members from six local authorities. This was one short of our target numbers for the group. Participants ranged from 9 – 15 years old. One participant identified as having additional support needs.

*Table 1 – Co-design group: local authorities*

Local authority	Number of members
Edinburgh	2
Scottish Borders	2
Falkirk	2
East Renfrewshire	1
South Lanarkshire	1
Moray	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>

*Table 2 – Co-design group: age*

Age	Number of members
9	2
10	0
11	5
12	0
13	1
14	0
15	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>



### School Activity (October 2020)

Six schools from three local authorities completed our activity pack. This was in line with our aims of working with between six to nine schools across three local authorities. As mentioned in our methods section, this is also an increase on the three schools we expected to work with in our original plan before the impact of the pandemic.

In total 300 children and young people participated from across 10 classes (table 3). We know that 145 were male and 137 female. One school did not give a breakdown by gender (Table 4). Through our work we engaged with 22 children and young people who were identified as having additional support needs. We have not provided a table for this as we did not feel it was appropriate to break down by school.



It is also worth noting that we were able to engage with more children than we would have spoken to had we worked in three schools in our plan for face-to-face delivery.

**Table 3 – Numbers of pupils**

School	Local authority	Participating classes	Total participating pupils
Tomintoul	Moray	1	14
Knockando	Moray	1	22
Kinross	Perth & Kinross	1	30
Newhill	Perth & Kinross	5	163
Crieff	Perth & Kinross	2	53
Sidlaw View	Dundee	1	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>300</b>

**Table 4 – Gender split of pupils**

School	Local authority	Participating classes
Tomintoul	8	6
Knockando	6	16
Kinross	20	10
Newhill	83	80
Crieff	28	25
Sidlaw View	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>137</b>

### School profiles

The aim of the project was to hear from children in a range of locations – a mix of cities, towns and more rural environments – to ensure a range of experience was heard and could be considered. We worked with primary schools in line with the aims of the project and were able to achieve this geographical mix in the schools we worked with.

We worked with schools with a relatively narrow range of SIMD<sup>12</sup> scores and none located in the bottom 40% of the countries postcodes (Table 6). We acknowledge that we may have had different findings had we worked with schools in a broader range of SIMD profiles.

**Table 5 – School SIMD scores**

School	SIMD Score	SIMD Decile and Quintile
Newhill	5300	D8 Q4
Knockando	4430	D7 Q8
Tomintoul	3960	D6 Q3
Sidlaw View	3578	D6 Q3
Kinross	3512	D6 Q3
Crieff	3320	D5 Q3
<b>Range</b>	<b>3320 - 5300</b>	<b>D5 Q3 - D8 Q4</b>

 <sup>12</sup> SIMD is a measure that gives a profile of an area. It covers issues like levels of poverty, how safe an area is and the transport connections.

However, some of the schools we worked with in are generally in more access-deprived areas of the country, meaning they do not have access to good transport links. This does depend on the location of the school. Children in the Strathmartine area of Dundee are less access-deprived than those in more rural areas. For children in access-deprived areas, cycling may be an important way of getting to different places and to see their friends.

**Table 6 – Young people who are access-deprived**

School (HSC locality)	% People living in the most access-deprived 15% (2019) <sup>13</sup>
Tomintoul (Moray West)	25.1%
Knockando (Moray East)	31.8%
Kinross (South Perthshire)	43.1%
Newhill (North Perthshire)	46.1%
Crieff (South Perthshire)	43.1%
Sidlaw View (Strathmartine)	0%

### Activity completion

Most schools completed all aspects of the activity pack they were sent and we have responses to each section of the pack from all the local authorities involved.

**Table 7 – Activity completion**

School	Class survey	Journey map	Creative activity
Tomintoul	Yes	No	No
Knockando	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kinross	Yes	Yes	Yes
Newhill	Yes	Yes	Yes
Crieff	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sidlaw View	Yes	No	No



<sup>13</sup> Scottish Public Health Observatory, Scot PHO profiles, profile summary, available at [https://scotland.shinyapps.io/ScotPHO\\_profiles\\_tool/](https://scotland.shinyapps.io/ScotPHO_profiles_tool/)

## 5. National Co-Design Group

This section presents the findings from the first phase of the project with the national co-design group between June and July 2020.

### *Cycling for fun*

Many of the participants in the national co-design group told us that they enjoyed cycling. They participated in cycling for many reasons including for the excitement and the thrill of it. Having friends or family who cycled was also an important factor in why someone might choose to do this as a hobby.

It was also clear that while many considered the environmental benefits of cycling, they did not do it purely because of this. Having fun was a bigger driver of engaging in cycling.

### *Cycling on roads*

The group felt that cycling was cheaper than other forms of transport but there were limitations on where people could go. For longer commutes and journeys they felt cycling was not a good option.

However, one of the key factors that came out across our work with the national co-design group was the importance of having high quality roads and infrastructure.

The group also spoke a lot about what a good cycle path looks like. It should have no potholes and be clean and free of glass or other dangerous obstacles. There should be opportunities to go fast and also to cycle side by side at some points. This emphasised the importance of the social aspect of cycling for the group.

The group spoke a lot about safety and how much this affects whether people cycle or not, including the effect of busy roads, extra traffic and cars going too fast. They said the level of safety of roads might have an impact on whether or not they were allowed by family members to cycle in specific areas. Roadworks could also make a road or area feel less safe for cycling. Some group members associated country roads with being less safe because cars travelled faster than in towns and cities.

The group identified a range of things that could help improve road safety for cyclists. This included building more cycle lanes, more signs reminding drivers to slow down and more lessons for drivers on driving safely near cyclists included in the driving test.

The members of the group also shared that they believed safety was about more than just roads. How safe an area or cycle path felt in general could also affect how much people cycled. The presence of people drinking or causing trouble might, for example, influence whether people want to cycle there.

Group members also mentioned that unsafe buildings, glass on the roads and other debris might affect whether people wanted to cycle in an area. They felt it was easier and more enjoyable to cycle in a nice environment.<sup>14</sup>



### *Other barriers to cycling*

The members of the national co-design group also understood that other factors in people's lives might affect whether they could take part in activities like cycling. They told us that not having enough money might influence whether people could afford to buy a bike.

They also talked about how living in high flats might make it hard to go cycling as people may struggle to get a bike in and out of the home.

The group noted that not having been taught when you were young, having a disability or having had a bad experience of cycling as a child might contribute to whether or not people cycled.

<sup>14</sup> This finding corresponds with findings from our recent Health Inequalities Peer Research project, where the perceived safety of local neighbourhoods impacted on children's likelihood of playing in them – <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Health-Inequalities-Report-Chris-Ross.pdf>

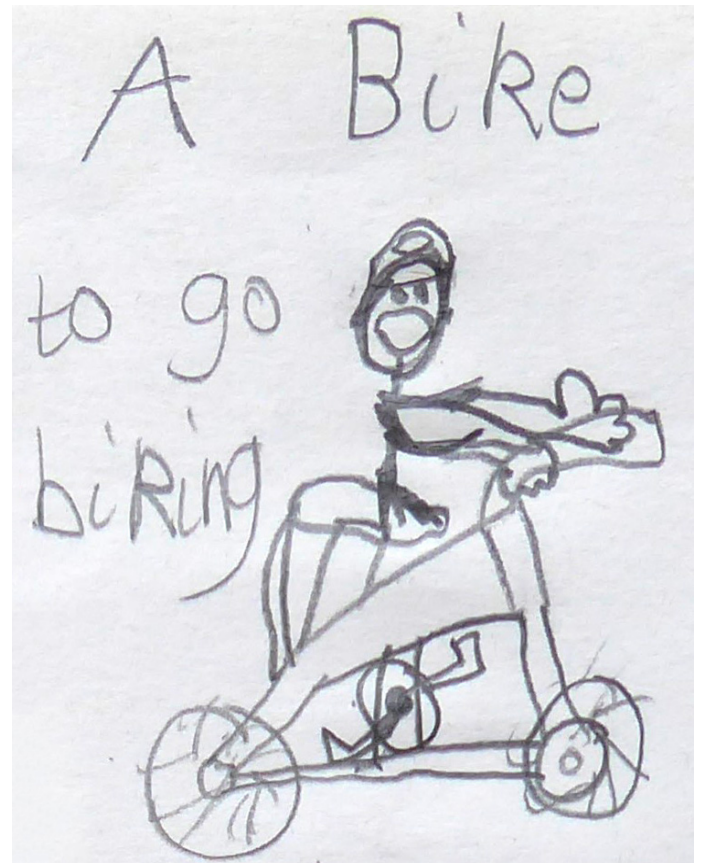
### ***Bikeability programme***

Most of the group had completed the Bikeability programme but had felt it had come too late for their experience. They suggested it would have been of more benefit to do it earlier in school. They also mentioned how equipment available had affected the enjoyment of sessions, such as the bikes offered for use. Most of the group felt the equipment they could borrow was low quality and this put them off taking part.

### ***Activities***

During the fifth session with the national co-design group, we tried out a number of activities that we thought we might use in the activity pack for Phase 2, many suggested by the co-design group themselves.

The co-design group provided feedback on the activities that they trialled and felt strongly that having individual choice was important and would support everyone to participate in sessions in a way that suited their needs. Thus, having creative activities was seen as important as they felt that many young people would like to do drawings and to make things.



Above and on pages 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 24, 25 and 28: illustrations by children who took part in Changing Gears school activities.

## 6. What did we find out?

In Phase 2 of this project we worked with with six schools to gain the children's thoughts on and experiences of cycling. We collected information in a number of ways though the activity pack sent to the school. This included a survey, a journey map to use as a discussion point and various creative activities.

Due to coronavirus the way we worked with the children changed from our original plan. We could not complete the work face-to-face and relied on schools to complete the activity packs in Phase 2 in a way that met their own needs regarding time activities etc. This has meant that Children in Scotland staff have not been able to discuss the creative activities with the children to include their more detailed thoughts.

However, working remotely has allowed us to reach more children than we would have done if we had visited schools directly. We are pleased to have reached a larger than planned number of children across Scotland.

We are also confident that the activity pack provided a range of engaging activities for children to complete as it was developed with the national co-design group. Feedback from the children who took part would suggest this is true (please see Appendix C).

The findings are similar across the schools and link to what we heard from the co-design group. Because of the way data was returned, we were unable to track by gender. They also chime with what we know from a range of our other project work with children and young people.

### Cycling data

The survey questions gave us answers about how many children took part in cycling, how often they cycled and who they cycled with.

Almost all of the children we heard from enjoyed cycling (See Table 8). Most cycled at least once or twice a week, with a high number cycling more regularly than this (See Table 9). We appear to have spoken to children who cycle more than the national average.

We can also see that most children said that they cycled with their friends or family (See Table 10). The importance of this was also obvious in what children shared through the activities they completed in the activity pack.

The fact that most children liked and had experienced cycling should be kept in mind. It highlights that to a degree our findings are from the perspective of keen cyclists. In the future it would be worth exploring research conducted with young people who do not like cycling or have never cycled to find out more about what they think and experience.

**Table 8 – Do you enjoy cycling?**

School	Total respondents	Yes (%)	No (%)
Tomintoul <sup>15</sup>	Unknown	(100%)	(0%)
Kinross	30	30 (100%)	0 (0%)
Newhill	163	153 (93.6%)	10 (6.2%)
Crieff	45	37 (82.2%)	8 (17.8%)
Sidlaw View	18	18 (100%)	0 (0%)
Knockando	DNC	DNC	DNC
<b>Total</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>238 (92.9%)</b>	<b>18 (7.1%)</b>

<sup>15</sup> Numbers not given thus not included in final total in this table.





## Themes

We synthesised the feedback received from the children through the survey, the journey map activity and the creative options and identified 10 key themes. We believe this approach presents a clear picture of children's experiences, opinions and perceptions of cycling in Scotland.

**Table 11 – Table of themes**

Theme
Family and Friends
Place
Safety
Exercise/Health and Wellbeing
Fun and Enjoyment
Nature
Equipment
Education and Learning
Infrastructure
Negatives

We have grouped the findings from the children's responses to the activity pack into the key themes that we felt were most prominent across the different schools. We have also provided a broader negatives / dislikes theme. We will explore each of these issues in turn.

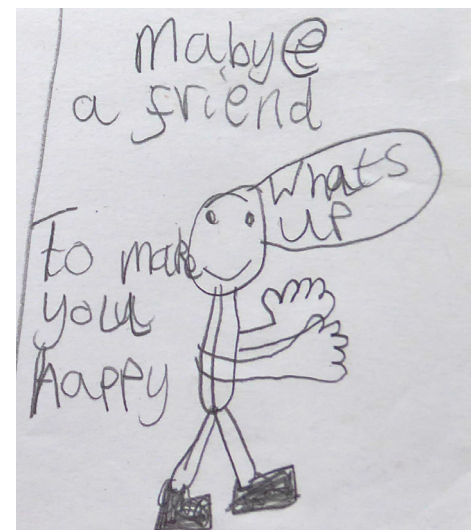
### Family and Friends

Children regularly shared that they wanted to have opportunities to cycle with their friends and family. It was clear that they saw cycling as a social activity where they could spend quality time with important people in their lives. They said cycling is an activity that they could do as a group. This could involve cycling to school or going out for a cycle together. Many viewed having friends and family who were active cyclists as a factor that would support other people to get into cycling and make them more likely to take part.

When describing cycling, a number of children used words like 'fun', 'excitement' and 'happiness', particularly because they got to cycle with their friends and family.

***'I feel happy when I get to spend time with my family'***

***'because I love going on my bike with my dad'***



Interestingly, children also shared that they liked getting to meet new people and other cyclists. This adds to the idea of cycling as providing an opportunity for children and young people to build relationships.

### Place

Children told us how the places that they got to go to could impact on how much children and young people liked to cycle. Through the creative activity many shared local cycle routes that they liked because they were fun or allowed them to get close to nature and wildlife. This suggests that the areas that children grow up in can have a real effect on their enjoyment of cycling as an activity.

We heard that when children thought about cycling, they thought about getting to go to new places, seeing new things and experiencing freedom. This suggests that for some children, cycling provides a chance to explore and have new experiences.

***'You can see things you don't normally see'***

It was clear that children valued the chance to go to what they considered to be 'nice' places, such as the countryside, and see scenery such as mountains and rivers. Others recognised other good places to go nearby like bike paths, cycle parks or places where they could do mountain biking.



Children were also clear in talking about how where they lived and the places they could cycle might put people off taking part. They shared that if people live far away from places to cycle this might put them off. We could also see that if cycling infrastructure was not of good quality, this might put people off. The children suggested that bumpy paths and potholes could be a deterrent, as could litter, glass and dog poo.

We know that not all parts of Scotland have easy access to cycle routes or equitable access to the countryside.

We will explore how Cycling Scotland can support all children and young people to have access to cycling opportunities and how they can encourage all parts of Scotland and communities to support cycling in the implications and recommendations section of this report.

## Safety

Children were clear in their work on the activities in the pack that being safe while cycling was very important to them. They highlighted both the importance of cycling safely and wearing the right equipment and the importance of there being safer roads and less traffic.

They told us traffic and busy roads could put children off cycling as an activity. They commented about cars driving too close to them and traffic getting in their way. The young people shared that they thought that there were too many cars on the road and that they went too fast. It was clear they wanted to be able to cycle without these risks.

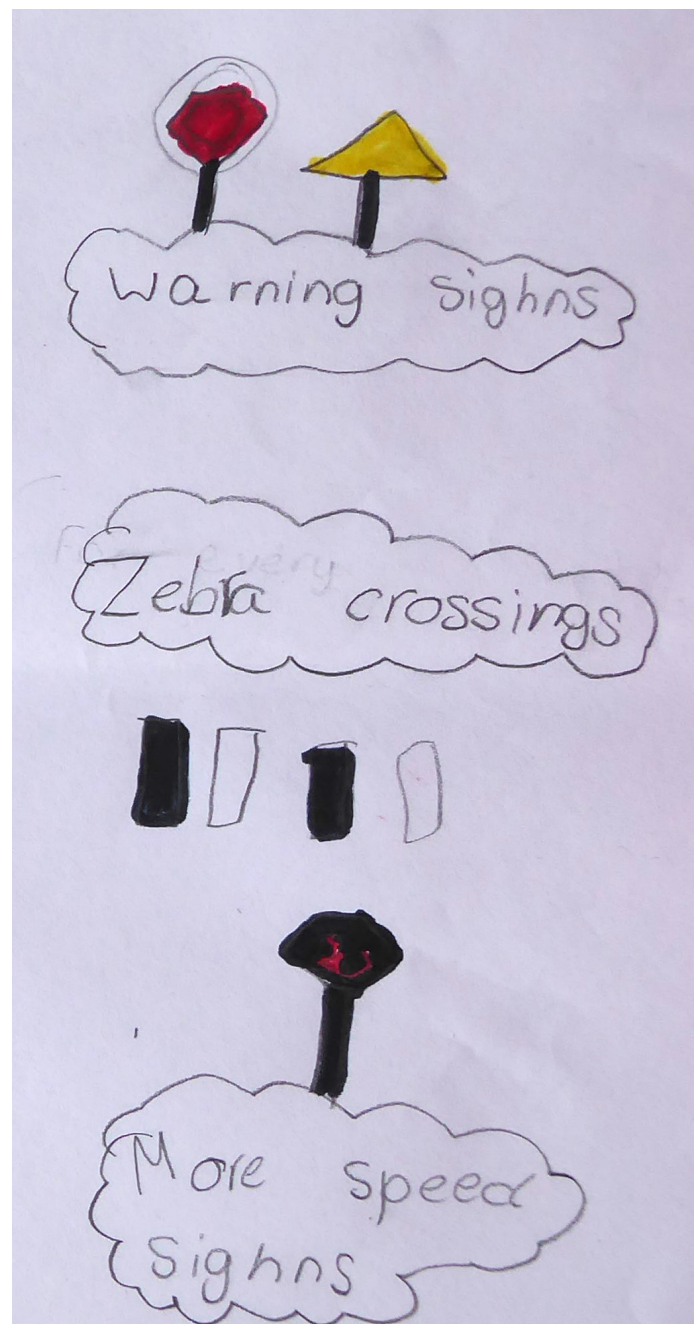
### 'Scared of fast cars going past'

It appears that the volume and speed of cars and other traffic had a big impact on how much children enjoy cycling. Many also highlighted that an ideal cycle route would have no cars. It is clear they want to be able to avoid much contact with traffic while cycling. We will discuss this more in the implications and recommendations section of the report.

However, despite children having concerns about safety when cycling, they also suggested many solutions that could help make it safer.

We heard that children want there to be more rules for drivers. They also want to have paths that were purely for cycling so that they were not at risk of being hit by cars. They said roads would be safer if they had less traffic and cars went slower. The young people specifically highlighted that they would like lower speed limits to make cycling feel safer. They also suggested there should be more zebra crossings available for people to cross roads safely.

Children also want there to be more traffic wardens and lollypop people to make them feel safer when cycling.





It is clear that all education activities supporting children to cycle need to support children to do this safely. However, children clearly find cycling a fun activity. It is important to balance these two unconflicting aspects and make sure children know and understand the risks of cycling without safety guidance putting them off. We will discuss how we believe Cycling Scotland can approach these issues in the implications and recommendations section of the report.

### **Exercise and Health and Wellbeing**

We heard from children that they valued the impact of cycling on their health and wellbeing. They highlighted how it offered chances to exercise and be active. Indeed, it appears to be one of the most common reasons that the children we heard from like cycling.

The young people reflected on feeling active and also enjoying the fact that they could cycle with their friends and exercise together. Some children told us how they liked the positive effect that it has on their mental health and wellbeing. Some said cycling made them feel 'nice' and 'calm'. Others said it got them 'going' for the day.

It is clear that the benefits to health and wellbeing are important to focus on. We know from our wider work with children and young people that they think their health and wellbeing is important. Cycling Scotland should consider how it can continue to focus on these benefits and include children and young people in sharing these messages.

However, it is also really important to remember that the literature review shows us that bike ownership is linked to how much money families have. This means that those who are better off and can afford a bike are more likely to be able to experience the health and wellbeing benefits of cycling. We believe it essential to think about these inequalities and will discuss this in more detail in the implications and recommendations section.



### **Fun and Enjoyment**

Many children told us that they thought cycling was a fun activity. Some said they found it exciting and that they enjoyed challenging cycling. We also regularly heard how children and young people liked to cycle fast and over/around obstacles, because it made it fun.

***'Speed – because I like to feel the breeze on my face when it's hot'***

Children told us that they enjoyed the fact they could play games while cycling and also combine exercising with fun. Some children liked doing tricks and others spoke about getting to go to cool places.

***'Fun – because you can do it with others and play games. There is always things you can try'***



There appeared to be a mix of children and young people who find generally being on their bike fun, and others who specifically like more challenging activities like going down hills, doing tricks and off-roading.

***'He likes cycling because he feels free and when he cycles he always says wee'***

Lastly, as we discussed in relation to friends and family, children indicated that they find it fun to cycle with other people and appear to enjoy the fact that it is a social activity.



## Nature

We heard from children that they valued the opportunities that cycling gave them to engage with nature; this came across particularly regularly in the creative activities. This is really important as we know that engaging with nature can have a positive impact on children and young people.

As we have mentioned, children reported that they liked getting to see nice scenery. They also said they liked getting to see animals and wildlife, and enjoy good weather when they were out. They highlighted that going through forests and woodlands offered opportunities to explore.

Many of the children and young people who took part lived in or around rural areas, and we recognise that this may present one of the reasons why so many children focused on the role of nature in their enjoyment of cycling. This could be less likely to be a focus for children in urban areas. However, it does show us that children feel that the natural environment is an important driver of what makes them like cycling. We see no reason why children in cities would feel differently about this.

While it is harder to recreate some of the environments described in the creative activities in cities, we believe there are a number of things that Cycling Scotland could do to support more children and young people to engage with nature through cycling. We will discuss this in more detail in the implications and recommendations section of this report.



## Equipment

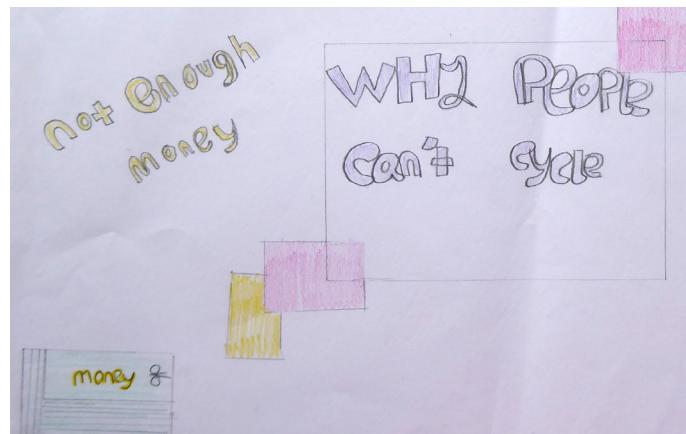
Children spoke regularly across all activities about the importance of having the right cycling equipment; this included things like bikes, helmets, gloves and other protective equipment. Children told us having a good bike could make people want to cycle.

It is clear that children felt they needed access to a full range of equipment to be able to take part in this activity safely and that providing equipment was a key way to support children to cycle more.



Children were concerned by the cost of cycling and the effect that this could have. Some did reflect that not having the right equipment could be a barrier to taking part. They also told us that having low quality equipment might make children not like cycling. One child told us how it could be embarrassing to cycle without the right equipment.

However, the children we heard from also had a range of ideas that they thought could be considered to make sure all children had the right equipment. They said that giving children and young people equipment for free could help more people take part in cycling.



They told us that they thought schools and other organisations could help provide access to equipment. They suggested schools could have a borrowing system or do fundraisers to buy bikes. They also said charities could take donations for bikes.

There is a role for Cycling Scotland in making sure that all children can have access to the correct equipment for cycling. We will discuss this in more detail in the implications and recommendations section and provide recommendations for how they can support all children.

### **Education and Learning**

Children spoke about the importance of opportunities to learn about cycling and how knowledge could affect their enjoyment of it. Children recognised that not knowing enough about cycling might put people off. They also highlighted that chances to learn about cycling would support people to do it more.

We heard that having chances to do things like the Bikeability programme would support children and young people to learn about cycling so they could improve their skills and feel confident. One child also told us it would be good to have chances to learn from other children and young people as well.



### ***'Bikeability gives her A LOT of support'***

We also heard from children that a range of learning opportunities could make more people take part in cycling. They felt it would be good for schools or other places to have a designated bike learning area. They also wanted more opportunities to learn to cycle from a younger age and more cycling clubs so they could embed their skills.

We will suggest how this could affect the make-up of Bikeability and other programmes to support learning about cycling in the implications and recommendations section of the report.

### **Infrastructure**

Children were clear when discussing the journey map activity that they felt that improving the infrastructure for cycling was one of the key ways to help more people cycle.

#### Paths and Trails

They recognised that there needed to be more good quality cycle paths near their local areas. Children wanted cycle paths to be free of obstacles and potholes so they are easy to cycle on.

We also heard that a lack of accessible paths or a lack of well kept paths may prevent people wanting to go cycling.

Children also discussed how cycle paths and trails should be better resourced. They said it would be good to have sheltered cycle paths so people could keep dry and that all paths should be well sign-posted. They also wanted longer paths to have bins, toilets and for there to be places nearby to get food.

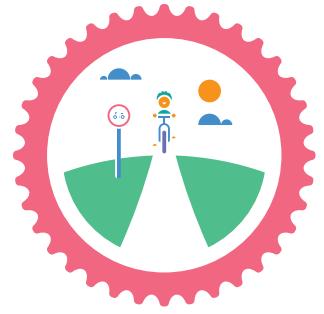


## ***'Have more cycling trails added to sheltered areas (woodland) so that we can still go out in the rain'***

Children would like cycle paths to be accessible from the areas that they live in. This should either mean they can get to them by car or public transport, or that routes are located within the communities in which people live.

Children also stated it would be good to have a range of cycle paths for cyclists of different abilities. They wanted harder tracks for more experienced cyclists and easier tracks for those who are learning.

It is clear that children want places to go that are dedicated for cycling. They want these to be of high quality and to fit a range of needs. These will obviously take on different shapes if they are located in urban or rural environments. We will discuss how we think Cycling Scotland can support the development of cycle paths in more detail in the implications and recommendations section of this report.



### Roads

Improvements to roads and pavements were also highlighted regularly by the children we heard from. Some said they thought larger pavements would help encourage more cycling. Others highlighted that improvements to crossing areas would help. They recognised that zebra crossings would make things safer for everyone, including cyclists.

Children also suggested that it would be good to have more bike lanes on roads and more places to lock up and store their bikes.

### **Negatives**

While most of our feedback from children identified lots of positives about cycling, there were also some key things that children said they disliked about it.

Some children were not fans of cycling as an activity. This was reflected in the survey responses which highlighted that some participants (7.1%) did not like to cycle. Some said it was boring and others said they just were not that interested in things like bikes.

## ***'I don't really enjoy cycling, it's not that I don't like it I just don't think about it much'***

Some people did say that they disliked cycling because they did not have the right equipment. Throughout this project, children spoke about the importance of having the right equipment as a positive. Conversely not having the right equipment might make people less likely to want to cycle. We will discuss this in more detail in the implications section.

Other children spoke about not liking cycling because they had a fear of getting hurt or because they had an experience of injury in the past. It was obvious from our work that safety is a key concern for children around cycling and fears about getting hurt link to this. We will discuss how we think Cycling Scotland can support children in this area in the implications section of the report.

## ***'She broke her foot cycling and she doesn't want to do it again'***

Children also spoke about potentially not liking cycling because it could be tiring or that they did not like exercising. They spoke about their legs getting sore being a key reason for not wanting to cycle.

It was also clear that the attitudes and behaviours of other children might affect how much someone enjoyed cycling. A few children said that some children might laugh at you or that cycling might not be cool. Others said you might feel self-conscious about cycling because people might make fun of them. It was suggested this might become more of an issue as children got older.

## ***'She is a popular kid and all the other popular kids don't cycle'***

As much as nature and good weather were seen as things that could make children like cycling, bad weather was also seen as one of the key things that might make children dislike cycling. Clearly there is little that can be done to change Scotland's weather, however, in the implications section of this report we will lay out how we think Cycling Scotland can support children to enjoy cycling even in bad weather.

## 7. Implications and recommendations

In this section of the report we will make connections from our findings to other work in this area that has been completed with children and young people. We will provide guidance for Cycling Scotland on what we think the implications are for their future work and make recommendations for their future policies and practice.

There are implications for how individuals are supported to cycle but also many that focus on tackling the underlying issues that might affect participation in cycling. One of Children in Scotland's strategic priorities is to Challenge Inequalities. We know that there are inequalities in participation in cycling and that some groups may be missing out. Thus we have also linked the issues that have been raised to other Children in Scotland project work and with other key policy areas.

We have aimed to focus this section on how Cycling Scotland can support all children and young people to experience the benefits of cycling. We also hope that it can provide advice to develop the Bikeability programme and other programmes to complement it.

This project has taken place as Scotland moves towards Incorporation of the UNCRC.<sup>18</sup> The UNCRC will be a powerful tool in advocating for change to support all children and young people to realise their rights.<sup>19</sup> Cycling has a key role to play in ensuring that children's rights to health, play and leisure are met. Cycling Scotland must focus on children's rights and prepare for incorporation of the UNCRC. This project is a meaningful step in doing this and can provide a basis for ongoing engagement with children and young people.

### **Exercise and Health and Wellbeing**

We know that Scotland has some of the widest health inequalities in Europe.<sup>20,21</sup> This means that some people have poorer health outcomes because of aspects of their lives, such as their level of income. We also know that many of these inequalities are already apparent in childhood.<sup>22</sup>

The benefits to health and wellbeing of taking part in cycling are well known. Children involved in the project were well aware of these benefits and saw them as a reason to get involved in cycling. They recognised that cycling could help them get fit physically and support their mental health. There are also clear benefits to their wider development, including in areas such as confidence and risk management abilities. Cycling Scotland should consider how the health benefits of cycling can be shared with children and young people, and also how children can be involved in designing and delivering these messages.



This project highlighted the impact of cost on taking part in cycling. Children reflected on the amount of equipment they need to take part, including safety equipment such as helmets. As we state in our literature review, ownership of a bike is linked to level of income. It is clear that cost will be a factor that excludes some families from being able to participate.

We believe that Cycling Scotland must focus on tackling the financial barriers to cycling so that all children, young people and families can take part in activities like cycling. This is particularly important as recent data has shown that rates of child poverty are increasing in Scotland.<sup>23,24</sup>



### Recommendations:

- Cycling Scotland should work with the Scottish Government to reduce poverty-related barriers to cycling and make sure that all children can access a bike.

<sup>18</sup> <https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-incorporation-scotland-bill/introduced/policy-memorandum-united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-scotland-bill.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

<sup>20</sup> NHS Health Scotland, 2015, Health Inequalities: What are they? How do we reduce them? Available at <http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/1086/health-inequalities-what-are-they-how-do-we-reduce-them-mar16.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Health-Inequalities-Report-Chris-Ross.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> State of Child Health 2020, Scotland, RCPCH, available at <https://stateofchildhealth.rcpch.ac.uk/evidence/nations/scotland/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-forecasting-child-poverty-scotland/pages/2/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/wrong-direction-can-scotland-hit-its-child-poverty-targets/>





## Place

The role of place on health and wellbeing is increasingly well understood. Children in Scotland now regularly uses a place-based approach in our work. Where children live and grow up affects the resources they have access to, and in this case where they can cycle. It was clear from the responses of the children that we heard from that place has a big part to play in how much children and young people cycle and how they viewed it as an activity.

Children will have different experiences based on the place that they live. For example, there will be differences between how and where children cycle in cities compared to the countryside.

We heard in detail from children who live in more rural environments who shared a lot about the role of nature and wildlife as a key thing they enjoyed about cycling. Obviously some of these things will be more accessible for children who live in rural areas where there are more large areas of green space.

Cycling Scotland should consider how it can ensure that all children can be close to nature when cycling regardless of where they live. This could mean linking cycle paths in urban environments with nature walks/reserves to ensure that cycle routes feel like they are taking place in the natural environment. Cycling Scotland should also work with partners across education to support taking children from all schools out to cycle outside of busy urban centres.

It is also important to make sure that all children have access to well-maintained designated cycle paths and areas to learn to cycle, regardless of where they live.

Cycling Scotland should continue to be involved in planning processes to make sure that cycle paths and trails are built in local communities.

It is important that Cycling Scotland works with communities themselves to build cycling infrastructure and ensure that there is a role for children, young people and families to be involved in these processes. The recent Planning (Scotland) Act places a duty on planning authorities to engage with local communities.<sup>25</sup> Cycling Scotland should consider how it can work locally to ensure the views of children in relation to cycling are heard in these processes. It may be possible to identify areas where children are particularly keen to see improvements made. We would encourage such thinking to feature within Children's Services Plans produced by local authorities and health boards.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/13/contents/enacted>

The children we heard from also suggested that they would like to have access to toilets, cafes and places to stop on longer cycle routes. Cycling Scotland should also consider how routes can be linked in with these resources. Planning legislation and guidance will also be important here.

Children are also clear that the cycle paths and trails need to be kept in good condition; they highlighted they should be free of glass, dog poo and litter. Our Health Inequalities: Participative Research Project highlighted that the issues can be common in areas of deprivation, particularly in areas accessed by children.<sup>26</sup> It also identified that children were less likely to use community resources that had these issues.<sup>27</sup>

This could have an impact on whether children in areas of deprivation are likely to get involved in cycling and if so, it would be another way in which poverty and inequality impact on who benefits from cycling.

The Health Inequalities: Participative Research Project also highlighted the amount of abandoned and misused space within areas of deprivation.<sup>28</sup> This backed up research by the Scottish Land Commission.<sup>29</sup> Cycling Scotland could consider how these abandoned spaces can be used as learning spaces for cycling to ensure that cycling is embedded within communities.



### Recommendations:

- Cycling Scotland should work with Scottish Government, local authorities and planning authorities to ensure there are more cycling opportunities for all children, including by:
  - Increasing numbers of designated cycle paths and trails
  - Adding more cycle lanes to roads
  - Transforming derelict land into opportunities to learn to cycle.
- Work to ensure that all children can have opportunities to engage with nature when cycling by:
  - Increasing urban cycle paths that are linked to nature walks
  - Supporting school trips based around cycling that support engagement with nature.

## **Safety**

Children reflected regularly on being safe while cycling. They told us how getting hurt might put people off and how they wanted to be able to keep safe from cars. This could potentially be a factor in reduced participation. This appears to lend weight to Cycling Scotland's view that safety is a key barrier in stopping people getting involved in cycling.<sup>30</sup>

It is really important that Cycling Scotland take steps to make sure that all children and young people can cycle safely and that they feel like cycling is a safe activity to be involved in. We believe there are a number of key ways that Cycling Scotland can support this.



It is very important that Cycling Scotland continues to work to make sure that the environments in which children cycle are made safer. This can only happen through regulation of cars and other traffic to make cycling easier. Children are clear in saying that they would like there to be more designated cycle paths which are free of cars. It is also important to campaign for lower speed limits in areas where children are likely to cycle and for more car-free zones around places like schools.



<sup>26</sup> <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Health-Inequalities-Report-Chris-Ross.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Health-Inequalities-Report-Chris-Ross.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Health-Inequalities-Report-Chris-Ross.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> [https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/downloads/5dd7d4dfa39b6\\_VDL%20in%20Scotland%20Final%20Report%2020191008.pdf](https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/downloads/5dd7d4dfa39b6_VDL%20in%20Scotland%20Final%20Report%2020191008.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.cycling.scot/mediaLibrary/other/english/8631.pdf>



We know the chance of being in a road traffic accident while cycling is small.<sup>31</sup> However, the fear and perception that this may happen are enough to have a detrimental effect on children's participation. The regularity with which children mentioned this leads us to believe it is a key concern.

Road safety should also continue to be a key component of all education and learning opportunities around cycling. This should be positively focused and aimed at supporting risk management. It is important to highlight the risks with cycling, but also ensure that this does not scare children and dissuade them from participating. One key way to do this would be to involve children in the development and delivery of learning opportunities to make sure these respond to their needs.

Some children also spoke about how other people could make them feel unsafe. This was not covered in detail in this project but we know from our other project work that this can have a big effect on how much children want to engage in their communities and we see no reason why it would not affect cycling.

This may be a particular problem in areas of deprivation as was highlighted in our Health Inequalities: Participative Research Project.<sup>32</sup> Children involved in the project spoke about fears about substance misuse or crime and discussed how this could affect what they wanted to do in the community. We know that issues like crime and substance misuse are driven by poverty and inequality. Cycling Scotland needs to focus on understanding the underlying causes of why there are inequalities in participation in cycling.

It is our view that, while teaching people to cycle and ensuring they have the right equipment to do so will be important, if they do not feel safe because of traffic or because of the wider safety issues in their community, they will still not participate.



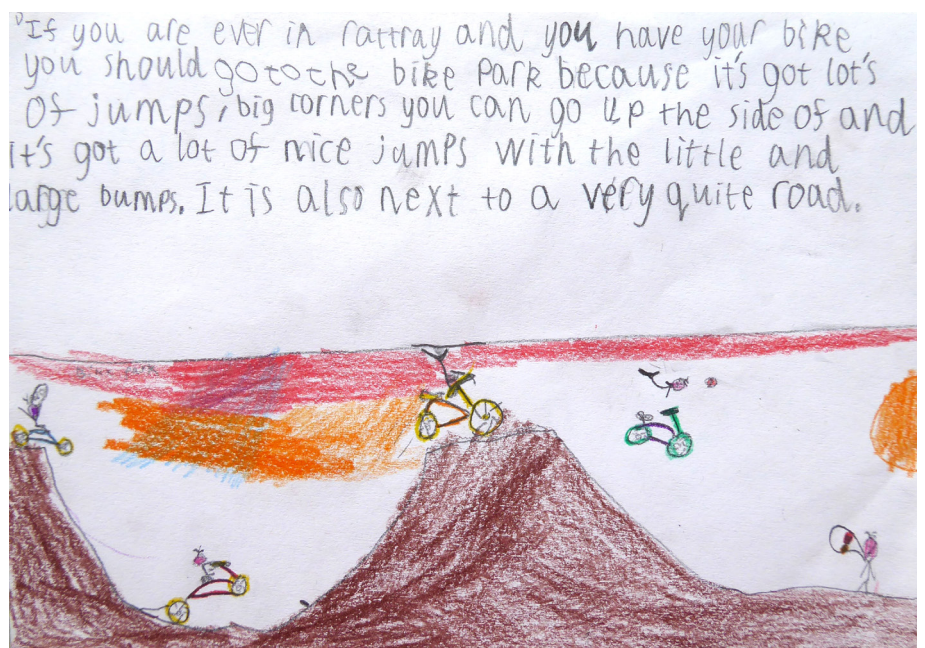
### Recommendations:

- Cycling Scotland should work with Scottish Government to reduce speed limits in areas where children will cycle such as schools and near cycle paths and trails. This could mean increasing the numbers of 20 miles per hour speed limit zones.
- Cycling Scotland should also work with Scottish Government to increase car-free zones around schools.
- Cycling Scotland should ensure that safety continues to be a key part of learning about cycling for children. Children should have a role in co-producing these materials to ensure they respond to their needs.

## **Fun and Enjoyment**

Despite the fact that children are concerned about being safe when cycling they also see cycling as a fun activity that they enjoy. Interestingly, we heard far more children recognising cycling as a fun activity than as a mode of transport. This may be due to their age, however, it reminds us that the fact that cycling is fun should be a central message to encourage children to cycle.

It is also important that the balance between safety and fun is met when children are learning to cycle. We have spoken about ensuring children are supported to feel safe when cycling, but we also need to remind them that it is a fun activity that will benefit their health and wellbeing and that they can do with their family and friends.



<sup>31</sup> <https://www.cycling.scot/mediaLibrary/other/english/6353.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Health-Inequalities-Report-Chris-Ross.pdf>



We believe that the social aspects of cycling and the message of fun should be key to the work Cycling Scotland does to engage children, young people and families going forward. We would view embedding a positive relationship with cycling as being equally important to ensuring they know the skills to cycle. This is likely to be particularly important for younger children.



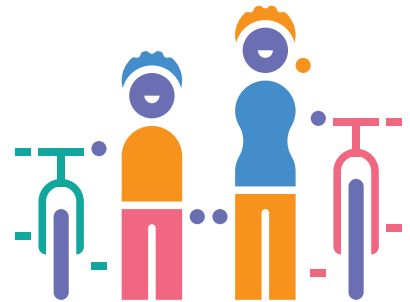
Recommendations:

- Cycling Scotland should ensure all marketing and messaging for cycling emphasises it as a fun and social activity for children to take part in. Children should have a role in co-producing this marketing and messaging to ensure it responds to their needs.

**Family and Friends**

As we have touched on, cycling is seen as a social activity that children can do with family and friends. Cycling Scotland should focus on this social aspect when trying to encourage children to cycle, mindful of how important these relationships are to children’s ongoing development.

It is also important that all language used by Cycling Scotland is inclusive of all different types of families. We know that children have different experiences of family life and live in diverse family structures, and it is important that Cycling Scotland reflects this.

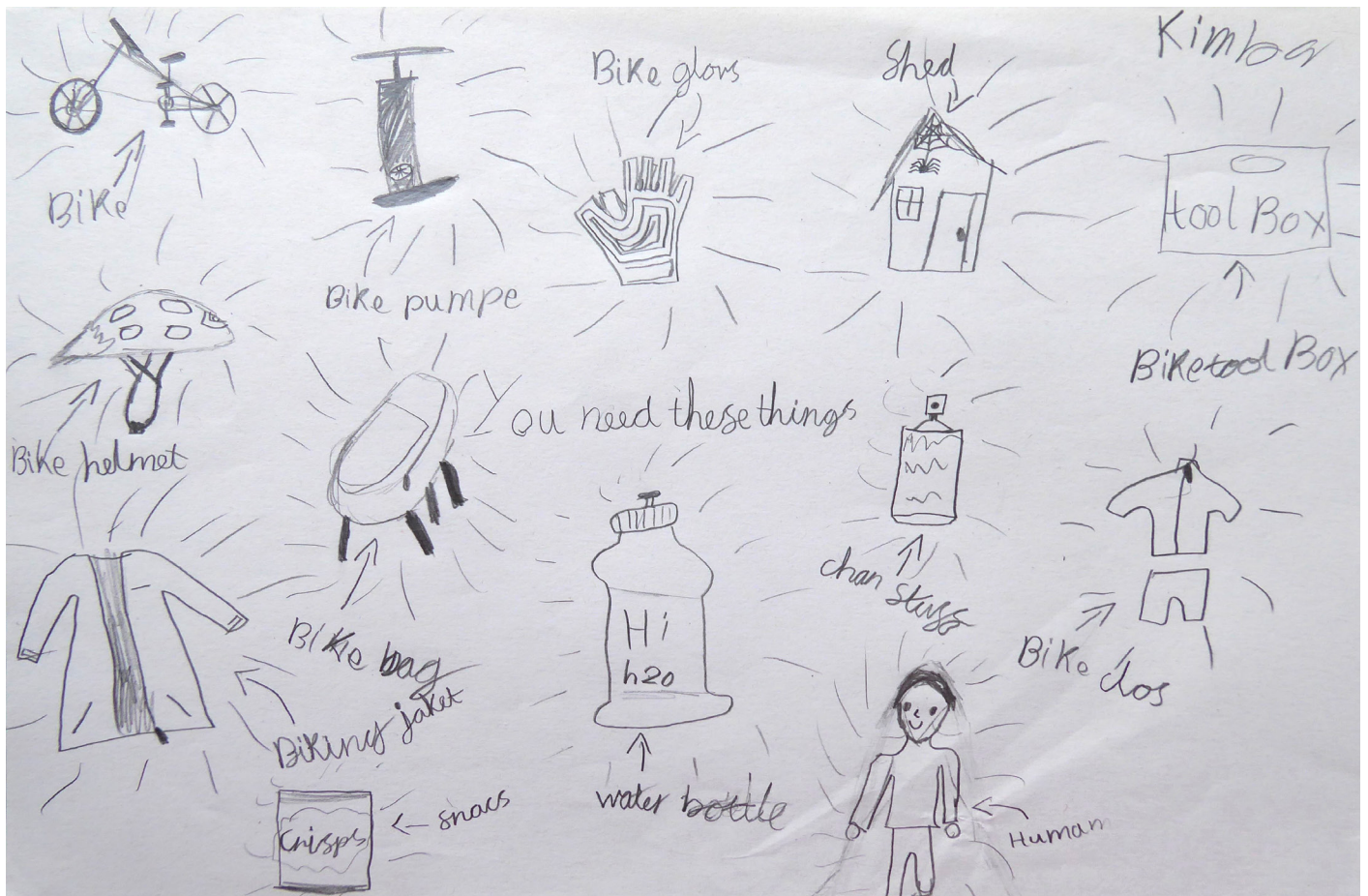


Recommendations:

- Similar to the theme of Fun and Enjoyment, Cycling Scotland should ensure all approaches emphasise cycling as a social activity. Children should have a role in co-producing this approach to ensure it reflects the diversity of family life.

**Equipment**

We have discussed the cost of equipment as a barrier to being involved in cycling in relation health and wellbeing. As stated, we believe Cycling Scotland should advocate for all children to be able to access a bike and to work to reduce the poverty-related barriers to cycling.



Although it did not come up in our research, it is important to highlight that there can also be issues with accessing the correct equipment for children with disabilities. We know this can be a challenge. Cycling Scotland should explore how they can support children with disabilities to access adapted equipment so they can experience the benefits of cycling.

A holistic approach that makes sure children have the right equipment, education and environment to cycle is required.

Children suggested that schools could have bikes to borrow or that children and young people should get free bikes. Cycling Scotland should consider how they can work with Scottish Government to ensure bike access for all. One option could be based round the Hobby Premium used in Finland where all children get a personal budget to access a hobby. Children in Scotland has called on all parties to include a hobby premium in our manifesto for the 2021 election. Cycling Scotland should work to ensure cycling is considered as part of any such scheme.<sup>33</sup>



#### Recommendations:

- Cycling Scotland should work with Scottish Government to find ways of supporting all children to have access to bikes and safety equipment. This may be through schools or through direct policy-influencing.

### **Education and Learning**

From those we spoke to, it was clear that children valued the chances they have to learn about cycling. However, some felt that Bikeability can start too late for many children. They also said it would be good to have more regular opportunities to do Bikeability. Cycling Scotland should consider how a more entry level programme can be built in for younger children as we know how important building these skills early can be. Delivering opportunities across the different stages of primary school would also be welcome.

Children would also like the chance to learn about different types of cycling. Given the importance many placed on more 'extreme' cycling, Cycling Scotland should consider how off-road cycling, tricks and creative bike skills can be built into their education and training offer.



#### Recommendations:

- Cycling Scotland should use the priorities identified in this report to shape the Bikeability programme so it responds to the needs of children and young people
- Children and young people should also have an ongoing role in co-designing the Bikeability course and in finding solutions to increase participation in cycling.
- Cycling Scotland should consider how it can link local Bikeability coordinators in with other local staff like youth workers, community learning and development and children's rights teams to ensure a range of skills are used in learning about cycling.
- Cycling Scotland should expand the Bikeability programme to support whole family learning.
- Cycling Scotland should start the Bikeability programme earlier and have check-in points with children stages (P3, P5, P7).

### **Participation**

As we have touched on throughout this section of the report, it is very important that Cycling Scotland bring children and young people further into the development and delivery of their work.

One route would be to ensure children have chances to learn from each other. We know from our project work that children like, and respond well to, peer learning. This may be possible through the Bikeability programme.

We also know the importance of working with parents to support children's learning. We would suggest Cycling Scotland explores how whole family learning can be expanded within the Bikeability programme. The important role for parents and families was also highlighted in the Play on Pedals project.<sup>34</sup>



<sup>33</sup> [https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Manifesto-2021-26-V1\\_Spreads.pdf](https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Manifesto-2021-26-V1_Spreads.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> [https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/migrated/news/play\\_on\\_pedals\\_report\\_january\\_2017.pdf](https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/migrated/news/play_on_pedals_report_january_2017.pdf)

Parents should continue to be able to support the delivery of the programme, however opportunities for parents to learn to cycle with their children should also be explored. This is particularly important given what we have already covered in relation to the importance of families in supporting children to cycle.

There is a range of resources that could support Cycling Scotland here including How Good is Our School 4 and organisations such as the National Parent Forum Scotland.<sup>35 36</sup>

We would also encourage Cycling Scotland to consider how they can make sure children's views are heard in all their work going forward. Participation and engagement is particularly important as Scotland incorporates the UNCRC. While the requirements on public bodies may not apply to Cycling Scotland, it would be good practice to make sure children can participate in decisions about cycling that will affect them.



We would suggest developing an advisory group to ensure their work reflects the views of children. We would also encourage Cycling Scotland to consider how Bikeability leads who work in schools can be supported to develop skills in participation and engagement. Children in Scotland have our own principles and guidelines for meaningful participation and engagement.<sup>37</sup> We have delivered training on these in the past and would be happy to work with Cycling Scotland and local delivery partners to provide training and support in this area.

It is also important that Cycling Scotland can work in partnership with the other organisations who are supporting children. For many children who are experiencing additional support needs, extra support may be required to engage them in learning opportunities about activities like cycling. Cycling Scotland should aim to support local Bikeability coordinators to work with the organisations who have contact with these children and families and find ways to engage with them.

Cycling Scotland should consider how a child-centred, Getting It Right For Every Child approach can be used in all its work.<sup>38</sup> We would also advocate for all Bikeability co-ordinators to receive training on the key skills and knowledge that are needed for working with children, including child development, child protection, child rights, relationship-based and trauma-informed approaches.



### Recommendations:

- Cycling Scotland should share Children in Scotland's Principles and Guidelines for the Meaningful Participation of Children and Young People with all staff (including Bikeability coordinators) involved in work with children and young people and consider providing training in this area
- Cycling Scotland should consider follow-up work with children and young people to explore the key findings of this report in more detail to develop their work
- Cycling Scotland should consider setting up an advisory group of children and young people to shape their work.

### **Future Engagement**

It is worth reflecting on our experiences of doing the project remotely and with an activity pack for schools. The children we spoke to enjoyed the experience, but also identified that they would have liked to have participated in face-to-face activity. You can see more about how they found being involved in the project in Appendix C.

Cycling Scotland could explore some follow-up work on the key issues raised in this report when face-to-face engagement is more possible. This would include targeted work with children who do not like cycling and also in areas of deprivation.

<sup>35</sup> [https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks\\_SelfEvaluation/FRWK2\\_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2\\_HGIOS4.pdf](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK2_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2_HGIOS4.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.npfs.org.uk/>

<sup>37</sup> <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/CiS-Participation-2019.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/>



## 8. Conclusion



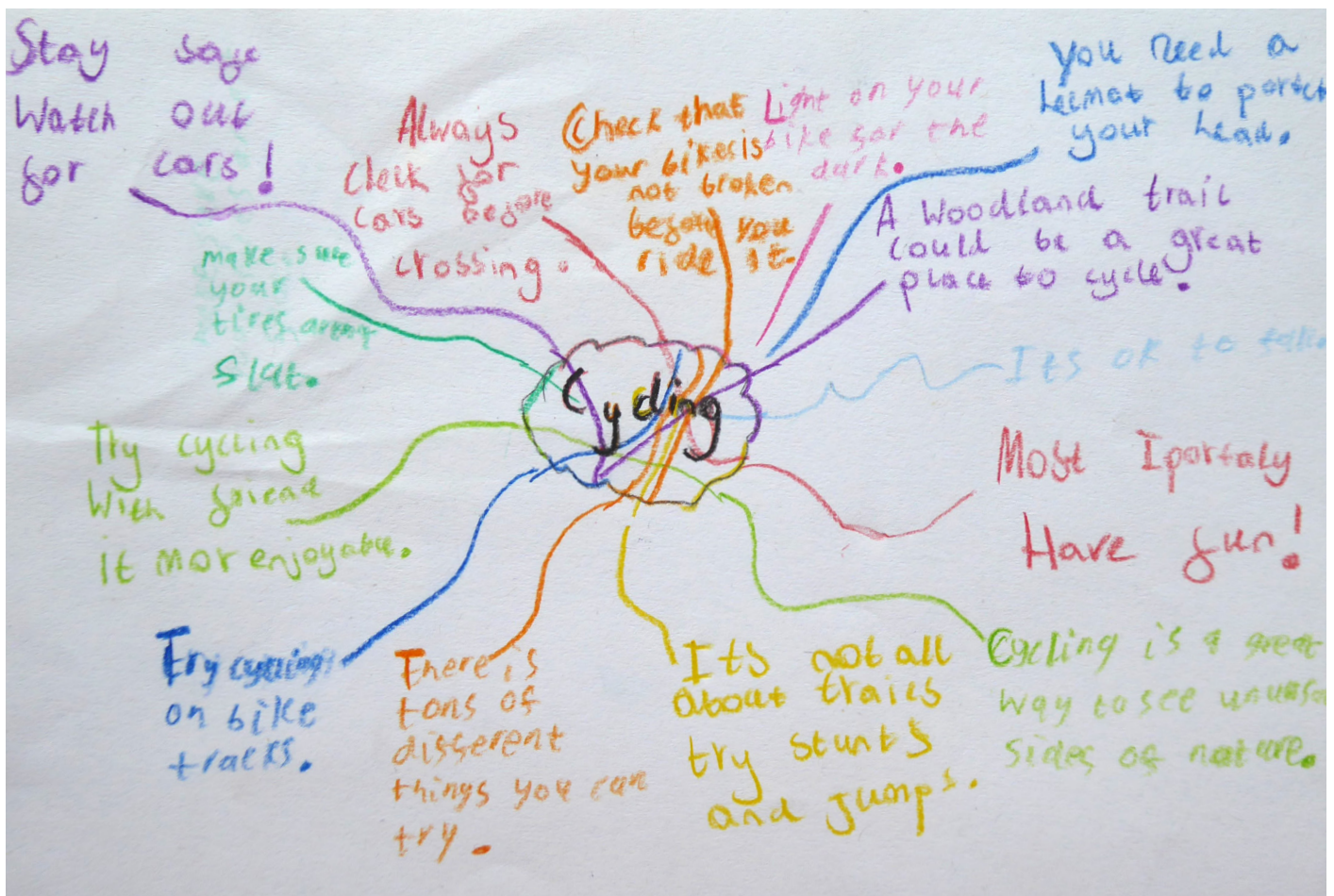
This project has provided an opportunity for children to discuss and share at a national level their views on and experiences of cycling.



It provides a range of information for Cycling Scotland to develop its future work. Children in Scotland has looked to identify areas where Cycling Scotland could develop its policy and practice. Some of this relates to design and delivery of programmes such as Bikeability and making sure this responds to the needs of children and young people.

However, it also suggests areas where we believe Cycling Scotland should advocate for policy change locally and nationally. In some cases this means ensuring a continued focus on aspects such as road safety and cycling infrastructure. In others, it means contributing to tackling the underlying causes that affect people's access to and enjoyment of cycling.

Children in Scotland staff have enjoyed working on this project very much. It has been a very positive experience working with Cycling Scotland and hearing children and young people's experiences, opinions and perceptions of cycling. We believe this work can support a safer and healthier Scotland for all.



## Appendix A: Methodology

This section will discuss how we undertook the project. It will cover the following steps:

- Literature Review
- National Co-Design Group
- School-Based Activity Pack

### Rapid Review of Literature

Children in Scotland read over a number of the most important recent Scottish Government policy documents relating to cycling and active travel. We also read recent work completed with children and young people around cycling in Scotland to understand what they have shared regarding their experiences.

#### ***Selection method***

Documents were identified both by Google search and were provided by Cycling Scotland. Only Scottish policy documents were used and we only considered research that had been done with children in Scotland in our initial review. However, we have referred to some non-Scottish based research identified in these papers where relevant.

We decided not to use documents older than 2014. We identified 2014 as the start year in order to allow us to include The Long-Term Framework for Active Travel which will run until 2030 and still has a role in current Scottish policy.

#### ***Purpose of review***

This review of the current experience for some children and young people in Scotland helped us to decide what issues to focus on with the children involved in the national co-design group and then in the schools involved in Phase 2 of this project.

One key area that informed our work is the gap in policy and prior work with children and young people relating to tackling inequalities and the impact of personal circumstances on how much people cycle. We also decided to explore the impact of issues such as road safety, cycle paths and other travel infrastructure with the children involved in this project.

A summary of what we found through the literature review is included in this report. Please see Appendix B.

### Phase 1 – National Co-Design Group

Children in Scotland had aimed to work with a group of 10-15 children and young people aged 9-15 from across Scotland to help develop our work with schools in Phase 2. We wanted to ensure this project was built and developed directly on children's opinions and experiences.

We recruited nine members to the National Co-Design Group.

#### ***Recruitment***

Children in Scotland held an open recruitment process for participants in the Changing Gears national co-design group. This meant anyone who was interested could apply.

We advertised through social media, through known partners and through our wider network, including our 550+ membership.

Recruitment was open from 8/5/20 – 22/5/20.

#### ***Consent***

All children who wanted to be involved in the national co-design group gave consent to be involved. Everyone read an information sheet and then told us if they were happy to take part. We also asked parents to read the information and give their consent. We gathered specific permissions regarding using video conferencing platforms. Everyone received clear child-friendly guidance on how to use the platform safely.

## ***Project Delivery***

We conducted five x one-hour long video sessions with the national co-design group. All sessions took place on the video conferencing platform, Zoom.

We completed a range of different activities (more details below).

### ***Session 1 - Characterisation***

We used a characterisation exercise to think about why some people might cycle and why others might not. Members of the group created two characters, one who liked cycling and one who did not. We discussed some of the key reasons why the characters felt this way.

We used what we heard to develop our later sessions and explore the points raised by members of the group in more detail.

### ***Session 2 - Case Study/Short Story***

Children in Scotland staff wrote a story about a group of children and young people going out cycling. The story had a number of open questions about how the children in the story felt. We read the story as a group, and at each question we stopped and discussed the group's thoughts.

This story was informed by what we found out in the characterisation exercise and the pre-project literature review.

### ***Session 3 - Hazard Mapping***

Members of the group thought of some of the key things that they identified as helping people to cycle. As a group we then discussed these in more detail.

Children in Scotland staff mapped these onto a Word document with an outline cycle route. As a group we discussed what we thought of the different things people said would help or hinder people cycling.

We used what we heard to think about topics for activities that schools could do.

### ***Session 4 & 5 - Creative Activities***

Children in Scotland used the information we had gathered across the work with the co-design group to make a number of sample creative activities. Members of the group also suggested many of the activities.

The members of the group trialled the different activities and told us which ones they thought would be good for gathering information from other children.

We used the feedback from the group to develop more activities, based round the topics we had discussed with the group.

Feedback was gathered on each activity to help us decide what activities we would include in the activity pack and the topics we would cover.

## ***Informing Phase 2***

Children in Scotland staff considered all the things that children in the co-design group told us to form our school activity pack. Their work was used to choose topics we would explore in the activity pack and to come up with activities that children would enjoy.

## **Phase 2 – School-Based Activity Pack**

We used what we found out in our work with the national co-design group during Phase 1 to develop activity pack for schools to complete and return to the Children in Scotland project team.

### ***Recruitment of schools***

We aimed to work with six to nine primary schools across three local authority areas. Schools involved were invited to participate through Bikeability contacts provided by Cycling Scotland. Children in Scotland also reached out to some schools through our own contacts.

We identified primary schools because this is the age when children can participate in the Bikeability course.

It is worth noting here that we had intended to work with three schools face-to-face before coronavirus. Working remotely allowed us to work with more schools and more children than we had originally planned.

## **Activity Pack**

The activity pack was split into the following sections:

- Introductory Activities
- What happens round here – survey
- Journey Map
- Creative Activities.

(See below for more detail)

Schools were given clear guidance for how to use the activity pack, including a methodology.

Schools had one month to complete the activity and were encouraged to do this in a timescale that suited them.

We found schools to be involved through Bikeability contacts provided by Cycling Scotland. We also found schools through our own contacts.

### **Introductory Activities**

We provided a range of introductory activities such as quizzes and memory games based around cycling as a warm-up and to encourage people to start talking about cycling. These were fun, and interactive, offering a variety of approaches for teachers to use to meet their pupils' needs and interests.

### **What happens round here – survey**

- We wanted to gather basic background information on the children who were participating in the project. To do this we asked some survey questions, such as: Do you like cycling?
- How often do you cycle each week?
- If you do cycle, who do you cycle with most?
- What word would you use to describe how you feel when you think about cycling? Why?

Children were asked to complete the survey questions on their own and give their completed surveys to their teacher. We know that 256 children completed the survey questions.

### **Journey Map**

We used a journey map activity to support the children and young people to begin to think about the sorts of things that might help people cycle, or what might stop them.

The children were asked to work in a group and create a character who was travelling to school or to visit people. They were asked to name the character and think about the following questions:

- Why might ... (insert character name here) enjoy/not enjoy cycling?
- What might support / get in the way of ... (insert character name here) cycling?
- What could people who make decisions about roads / health and wellbeing / where schools are built do to make it easier for ... (insert character name here) to cycle?

Children were asked to write down their answers to each question and to discuss them with their group.

### **Creative Activities**

The creative activities section is split into two sub sections to explore key areas that we felt were most important in the work with the co-design group. The two sections focussed on the following topics:

- Roads, paths and signs
- People's lives are all different.

Children could choose from six different activities across both topics. All children were encouraged to participate in activities for both topics.

## **Roads, paths and signs**

These activities covered the physical resources that affect whether people are likely to cycle and how much they enjoy it.

## **People's lives are different**

These activities covered the issues in someone's personal or home life that could affect how they are able to participate in cycling.

## **Analysis**

Schools sent us the completed activity packs back in a way that suited them. Some sent them by post and others sent them electronically.

We worked to analyse the information that we received from schools.

We have provided some statistics from our survey of the children involved and compared this to some of the national data about cycling.

We then looked at the different parts of the activity pack in turn and identified the key themes from each of these. Once we had worked through each stage of the activity pack we then narrowed down the themes from across the different activities.

This led us to the final list of themes identified in the *What did we find out?* section.

In the *Implications* section of the report we have told Cycling Scotland what we think they need to do to tackle some of the issues identified. We have also linked this to other Children in Scotland work and suggested recommendations across a number of different areas.

## **Appendix B: Literature review**

To inform our work with children and young people we looked at some key documents relating to cycling and active travel. We looked at available national policy documents as well as work already undertaken with children and young people.

In this section of the report we will summarise what we read and evidence how this has influenced the rest of our work.

### **Scottish Policy**

Scotland has a range of policy and legislation relating to cycling and active travel. Organisations including Sustrans, Transport Scotland and Cycling Scotland are heavily involved in this. Key documents that have been considered below include:

- The National Transport Strategy (2020)<sup>39</sup>
- The Active Travel Framework (2020)<sup>40</sup>
- The Cycling Action Plan (2017-20)<sup>41</sup>
- The Long Term Vision for Active Travel, 2030 (2014).<sup>42</sup>

Based on our reading, Scottish policy relating to active travel focuses on interventions to make active travel easier for everyone. This includes improving knowledge, awareness and understanding of active travel. It also includes improving the infrastructure around cycle paths, increasing cycling skills and making roads safer.

There is regular reference within all documents to how active travel, including cycling, can benefit health and wellbeing and has benefits for the environment.

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47052/national-transport-strategy.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47158/sct09190900361.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/10311/transport-scotland-policy-cycling-action-plan-for-scotland-january-2017.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/33649/long-term-vision-for-active-travel-in-scotland-2030.pdf>



The Scottish Government is clear in laying out across these documents that it wants to increase opportunities to cycle and to ensure everyone benefits from it.

Scottish Government policy talks about the fact that there are inequalities in terms of who takes part in cycling. The National Transport Strategy states that 62% of families with a household income over £52,000 have access to at least one bike. For families with household incomes under £10,000 it is less than 20%.<sup>43</sup> It is clear then that children from lower income families are less likely to have access to a bike and are therefore less likely to be able to feel the benefits from cycling. While we have not explored it specifically in this rapid review, this could be expected to impact on health inequalities, given the known health benefits of cycling.

In our view, policy relating to Active Travel does not focus on tackling these inequalities and instead targets action in other areas. While knowledge and awareness raising or better cycle routes are beneficial, they will not help those who cannot afford a bike or whose lives may be busier and more complicated because of their personal circumstances.

### **Work with children and young people**

We found several examples of completed projects designed to identify children and young people's thoughts about cycling. We found two main pieces of work:

- X-Route, Co-designing active travel – Young Scot (2016)<sup>44</sup>
- Edukando Report – Bikeability Level 2 evaluation.<sup>45</sup>

We have subsequently identified the Play on Pedals report, which would have added to this section. We have however referred to it within the Implications section.<sup>46</sup>

These two reports were very different. One was a participation project looking to engage young people in decision-making in southern Scotland, the other is an evaluation of a Bikeability programme. As such the information in each is very different and hard to compare.

Participants in X-Route told Young Scot that young people would use active travel because it is cheaper, more fun and for fitness. They identified a range of key things that would make people more likely to take part in active travel, including:

- Better routes
- Separation of cyclists and traffic
- Confidence
- Incentivised active travel
- Teaching young people how to cycle in PE
- More information about travel routes.

The young people involved identified a range of factors that they felt affected whether people their age would take part in active travel, including:

- Not enough active travel routes
- Too much traffic
- Negative perceptions of safety of roads
- Unfavourable weather
- Not a priority
- Getting lost
- Bikes seen as a luxury item

The report highlighted that some young people saw cyclists as being a cause of issues on main roads rather than cars. They also said that in rural areas, drivers can go very fast, making cycling dangerous.

Having the right equipment was important in order to participate, as was having friends who also cycled. However, it was identified friends also had the power to pressure people out of cycling.me situations.

  
<sup>43</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47052/national-transport-strategy.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> [http://www.sestran.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/XRoute\\_document\\_2016\\_Final\\_2.pdf](http://www.sestran.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/XRoute_document_2016_Final_2.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Final-report-Edukado-Evaluation-Bikeability-Level-2-28-04-2017.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> [https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/migrated/news/play\\_on\\_pedals\\_report\\_january\\_2017.pdf](https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/migrated/news/play_on_pedals_report_january_2017.pdf)

Young people identified having good routes as really important as was having ways to avoid busy roads, such as underpasses. Young Scot also heard that more signage, more lights and cleaner routes would make people feel safer when on a bike.

The Edukando report found that generally people enjoyed the Bikeability programme and their cycling knowledge and awareness improved. Generally people who had taken part felt more confident and were more comfortable cycling around cars.

They reference several papers which showed that training in cycling is good for improving skills.<sup>47 48</sup> Studies quoted in the paper suggest that knowledge and training does not necessarily relate to improved practice.<sup>49</sup>

### **How has this informed our work?**

We used what we learnt in the review to help decide what to cover with the co-design group.

One key area that informed our work is the gap in policy and prior work with children and young people relating to tackling inequalities and the impact of personal circumstances on how much people cycle. We explored this in more detail with the co-design group to identify the impact they thought this would have.

We also decided to explore the impact of paths, road safety and other infrastructure issues with the co-design group, discussing what questions we needed to ask about these issues. These issues were prominent in the in the Young Scot report and within Scottish Government policy.

We had hoped to explore many of the issues included within the Edukando report relating to involvement in the Bikeability Programme and how it affects perceptions of confidence and knowledge. Unfortunately, we were not able to explore this in any detail due to changes in our planned approach as a result of the ongoing coronavirus restrictions. We felt that it would be too complex and laborious to ask schools to identify which children in their class had completed Bikeability and to subsequently match up all completed activities by who had participated in the programme and who had not.

We will also look to compare what we heard through our activity pack with what has already been said by children and young people, linking to the relevant policy areas where appropriate.

## Appendix C: Evaluation

The resource pack sent to schools in Phase 2 included an evaluation activity.

The majority of children (94.9%) who completed the evaluation questions said they enjoyed being involved (See Table 12) and had a chance to share their experiences. They also believe it is important that children be involved in projects such as this (See Tables 13 & 14).

**Table 12 – Did you enjoy it?**

School	Total completed evaluations	Yes (%)	No (%)
Newhill	24	24 (100 %)	0 (0%)
Kinross	30	30 (100 %)	0 (0%)
Knockando	21	21 (100 %)	0 (0%)
Crieff	23	18 (78%)	5 (22%)
Sidlaw View	18	18 (100%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>111 (95.7%)</b>	<b>5 (4.3%)</b>

<sup>47</sup> Richmond, S. A., Zhang, Y. J., Stover, A., Howard, A., & Macarthur, C. (2014). Prevention of bicycle-related injuries in children and youth: a systematic review of bicycle skills training interventions. *Injury prevention*, 20(3), 191-195.

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/bike01/bike01.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> Richmond, S. A., Zhang, Y. J., Stover, A., Howard, A., & Macarthur, C. (2014). Prevention of bicycle-related injuries in children and youth: a systematic review of bicycle skills training interventions. *Injury prevention*, 20(3), 191-195.

**Table 13 – Did you have a chance to share views?**

School	Total completed evaluations	Yes	No	Unsure
Newhill	24	21 (87.5%)	3 (12.5%)	0 (0%)
Kinross	30	24 (80%)	6 (20%)	0 (0%)
Knockando	21	18 (85.7%)	1 (4.7%)	2 (8.4%)
Crieff	23	21 (91.3%)	2 (8.7%)	0 (0%)
Sidlaw View	18	18 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>102 (88.9%)</b>	<b>12 (10.3%)</b>	<b>2 (1.7%)</b>

**Table 14 – Do you think it is important to be involved and to get to share their views?**

School	Total completed evaluations	Yes (%)	No (%)
Newhill	24	24 (100 %)	0 (0%)
Kinross	30	26 (86.7%)	4 (13.3%)
Knockando	21	21(100 %)	0 (0%)
Crieff	23	21(91.3%)	2 (8.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>92 (93.9%)</b>	<b>6 (6.1%)</b>

The children involved appeared to particularly enjoy the quiz and the activities that were in the resource pack. They also regularly told us that they liked working in a group and having an opportunity to learn more about cycling.

***'I enjoyed making a flipbook about cycling because I could take inspiration from the internet and my own experiences of cycling'***

***'I liked talking about what we can do to help people who can't go outside because we could express ourselves and thinking about ourselves compared to others'***

***'I liked finding more information about cycling because you don't get a lot of information but I got a lot of information this time'***

It appears that both the quiz and the activities were good methods for this topic. We suggest any work to engage children in decision-making about cycling should utilise these types of methods where possible.

The children we worked with also told us what could have been better. Some simply did not seem to enjoy taking part. Others told us that they would have liked to have met us in person or had more Zoom chats with us to discuss cycling. It is important to remember this. While digital participation has been needed during the coronavirus lockdown and has many advantages, children do still want to work face-to-face and engage with adults in person. We heard from some children that they would have liked even more choice over the activities.

It is also worth highlighting that many children told us that nothing could have been better.



Chris Ross & Elaine Kerridge  
December 2020

