

Social Housing Partnership Fund – evaluation 2023

Update to evaluation carried out in 2020

Overview

With funding from Transport Scotland, Cycling Scotland delivers the Social Housing Partnership Fund which supports Registered Social Landlords, mainly housing associations, to improve walking and cycling facilities for the benefit of their tenants. The fund was launched in 2019 and is delivered in partnership with Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Living Streets Scotland and Sustrans Scotland and aims to make it easier for those living in social housing to walk, wheel and cycle, alleviating health and transport and social inequalities.

Cycling Scotland has commissioned Enscape Consulting Ltd to provide an update to the Social Housing Partnership Fund progress report from 2020, identifying and analysing relevant data and engaging with key stakeholders.

Additionally, a survey of funded housing associations was conducted by Enscape, with the input of Cycling Scotland, to gather insights through stakeholder communications and encourage participation in case studies.

The full report can be read [here](#).

A research report by Enscape Consulting Ltd for Cycling Scotland

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Key findings:

- Funded by Transport Scotland, Cycling Scotland has allocated £2,314,000 in funding from 2019 to 2023. This has been provided to 65 registered social landlords across 84 projects and 229 residential sites, with an average grant of £28,000.
 - Whilst none of the sites had been completed at the time of the 2020 progress report, as of January 2023, 52 projects (representing 169 sites and across 65 registered social landlords) were completed.
 - Overall 60% of funded sites were in the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland.
 - The funded projects were in city, town, rural and island locations across Scotland:
 - 56%: Glasgow
 - 10%: Edinburgh, Renfrewshire.
 - 9%: Dumfries & Galloway
 - 3%: Fife, Highland, Perth
 - 2%: Dundee
 - 1%: Angus, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, Western Isles, Shetland
 - Across all submitted applications, the most common barriers to cycling identified by applicants were:
 - 92%: lack of/inadequate cycle parking/storage
 - 58%: transport poverty/inequality
 - 37%: lack of/inadequate access to bikes
- With respect to barriers, half of respondents indicated that the lack of separate, safe cycle lane infrastructure was a key significant issue. A lack of skills (e.g. in bike repair) and confidence was a close second in terms of barriers to cycling.
- When asked to what extent funded actions have improved access to bikes for residents, 86% stated cycle storage had improved or significantly improved access to bikes.
 - An important outcome has been the benefits achieved and described by staff working at registered social landlords: de-cluttering communal spaces, and improved access for tenants through closes/stairways by having safe and secure storage opportunities in separate areas.
 - The fund has enabled registered social landlords to engage in a wider and more collaborative way with tenants, rather than this being constrained to traditional, day-to-day housing matters.
 - The funding has been described as invaluable, providing much needed access to safe outdoor space which added to the overall wellbeing and mental health of the community.
 - The flexible nature of the Social Housing Partnership Fund has been identified as one of its key strengths, allowing site adaptation and renovations in a variety of housing stock to accommodate bike storage.
 - Other benefits of the fund which have been identified include:
 - Increased the reach of active travel programmes into the social housing sector.
 - Ensured facility funding is inclusive of those in socially disadvantaged areas.
 - Helped build capabilities for procuring and installing cycling infrastructure and promoting active travel in the social housing sector.
- *Numbers rounded to nearest thousand



Recommendations:

- Support for registered social landlords to further engage with tenants, to understand their needs and preferences with respect to promoting increased cycling levels and other change objectives.
- Need to incorporate capacity building activities alongside future infrastructure and storage support, to provide people with greater confidence when dealing with bikes that need repairs.
- Potential for fund to act as catalyst for registered social landlords to incorporate storage infrastructure into new developments. Where this used to be considered as a “nice to have” there is now evidence indicating that this will increasingly be considered as a core need for new housing developments.

Feedback from the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations

57% of people in social housing in Scotland do not have a vehicle and, with housing developments increasingly being built in greenfield areas, connectivity needs to be considered and reflected on when discussing the value and impact of the fund.

Key views include:

- The Federation believes that the fund is very important, and would like to see it continue at a greater level.
- The fund has helped to change relationships with tenants providing opportunities to engage on a wider range of actions that improve lives
- Actions and investment in storage infrastructure that enable cycling also therefore improve connectivity (e.g. helping young people to get to school) and are a means of addressing wider issues such as the obesity crisis.
- Greater access to cycling helps families get out in the fresh air more and is a way of improving the mental health challenges faced by some people in our communities.
- By supporting people to cycle more, the fund helps housing associations to meet their Net Zero targets.

Case study: Angus Housing Association (Dundee)

Angus Housing Association received £45,000 of funding between 2020 and 2023 for secure cycle storage in Dundee and Carnoustie. They initially applied for £25,000 for secure cycle storage at the Whitfield area, and the success of this project led to a further application for £20,000 for secure cycle storage in Carnoustie which has also been completed successfully.

There has been a clear increase in the number of families going out on bikes with the support assisting with a triangulation of services – networking, capacity building and family learning, with significant health and well-being benefits to come from this. Tenants really want this storage for their bikes, and it can be seen to be driving demand.

Angus Housing Association wants to play a supportive role for tenants, with the cycling and bike storage project helping them to do this, and being viewed by tenants as an organisation which is more than just looking to bring in rental payments. With the current cost of living crisis this means that they are providing a wider role and improving relationships at the same time.

They have been supported by the Dundee & Angus Cycle Hub, linked to them through the funding support. The Hub provides free bikes, helping to create interest and then provide replacement bikes on an ongoing basis. Two Doctor Bike maintenance sessions have been delivered as part of this, with helmets, padlocks, puncture repair kits etc provided.