

Modeshift National Sustainable Travel Awards 2021



Excellence in Cycling - Winner

Midland Mencap Parkride/Transport for West Midlands

Midland Mencap Parkride/Ride Ahead Together

Sponsored by Pindar Creative

What did the project involve?

Midland Mencap Parkride is a fun, free, flexible, and inclusive family cycling project that provides the whole family, regardless of age or need, with the opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors through cycling together! Parkride provides families with access to a range of adapted and mainstream bikes to enjoy together for free and has continued to expand to offer sessions to older generations. It has also delivered Ride Ahead Together, which aims to provide more adapted cycling opportunities at different levels. Funded through the DfT's Active Travel Fund, it seeks to raise the profile of adapted cycling and encourage more people to change their behaviour around cycling; this could be from getting on a bike for the first time at a 'Try Cycle' event, through to 'Cycle with Confidence' sessions to enable people to access cycling infrastructure and roads safely. The project aims to ensure that everybody has the same opportunity to enjoy cycling regardless of circumstance.

Who was involved and what was their role?

Originally developed by Edd Terrey. It is now driven by Dave Pickard, Head of Community Operations, Pam Johnson, Operations Manager, and their team of Parkride staff to create friendly, welcoming and safe sessions for all. They work tirelessly to build relationships within each local authority and are constantly exploring ways to open up to more people.

What was the cost and how was the project funded?

Parkride has received funding from Sport England Families Fund, DfT's Active Travel Fund (£30,000 in Tranche 1 and £120,000 in Tranche 2) and BCC funding for bikes.

How does this project meet at least two of the Awards criteria?

Midland Mencap Parkride is an innovative approach that targets disabled people and those with long term health conditions in a collaborative way, developed to provide a family safe environment enabling disabled and non-disabled people to cycle together. It provides an offer that extends

beyond traditional disabled-only sessions. DfT funding has enabled this to evolve to provide opportunities at different levels to engage a wider audience. We provide five different offers ranging from 'Try Cycle' - introducing people to adapted cycling as a family, 'Cycle with Confidence' - providing education to those wanting to explore using cycling infrastructure and roads, 'Out On Your Loan' in partnership with Cycling Projects - provides long term loan cycles to those who are confident of cycling on infrastructure but unable to purchase their own bike. We also offer profound and complex needs targeted sessions and a bike buddy scheme to connect people to cycle together. Combining this with their existing work is shaping positive change for the West Midlands.

What were the results, and what future plans do you have for the project?

The key to the project is collaboration and ensuring that any cycling offer is engaged. The aim is to normalise cycling for everyone, which means continuing to grow cycling hubs and increasing more variety to engage more people. As a result of this work, we have seen individuals progress from getting on a bike for the first time, to gaining confidence on a bike suitable for their needs, to eventually purchasing their own bike and planning to cycle to work when returning to the office. It has also initiated discussions around increased provision, targeted impairment work, expansion of the offer to engage more levels of ability and developing a mechanism that caters for disabled people needing both adapted and non-adapted cycles. It provides feedback on cycling infrastructure to identify pinch points and where things are working well. In the tranche 1 pilot, we engaged with 269 people, with over 1000 planned for this second phase.

Endorsements:

Pam Johnson, Midland Mencap: *"In partnership Parkride and Ride Ahead Together provides accessible cycling to individuals with additional needs, their families/carers, offering a significant opportunity to inactive people accessing cycling and being active citizens in their communities. The sessions enable participants to achieve improvements in their physical, social, mental health, wellbeing, and confidence. For some people feelings of isolation and loneliness have increased, so these inclusive programmes offer the opportunity to meet new people and build positive relationships. Sessions are open to all abilities/support needs and has significantly increased the number of families provided the opportunity to participate in physical activity together."*

Feedback from the Expert Panel of Judges:

"I voted for this as I like the way it encourages the whole family to cycle together, hopefully those families that took part will continue to do so for many years to come."

"This project extends opportunity for disabled and long-term health conditions from try sessions to loan bikes, and training confidence. Benefit of seeing active travel take off with this group. Focus on inclusion."

Evidence:

<https://midlandmencap.org.uk/parkride/>

<https://www.tfwm.org.uk/plan-your-journey/travel-information/how-to-travel-with-accessibility-needs/inclusive-cycling/>

