

Modeshift National Sustainable Travel Awards 2021



Best Partnership Winner

Brighton & Hove City Council

Brighton & Hove Refuge Cycling Project

Sponsored by Scoot Fit

What did the project involve?

In July 2020, in the Covid-19 pandemic, a cycling project began which has been supporting women and children fleeing domestic abuse and violence. Brighton & Hove City Council's Transport Projects team, working in partnership with community bike workshop Cranks, national walking and cycling charity Sustrans, and the city's local refuge, launched a cycle project that has been reconnecting women and children with the joy of cycling. Following a request by the council for unwanted bikes to support the project, the city's residents responded by donating 155 bikes. The bikes have been re-serviced free of charge by Cranks, and made available to women and children staying at the city's refuge. The council provided funding for the project including commissioning Sustrans, who have delivered weekly cycle training at the refuge over the past year.

Who was involved and what was their role?

Brighton & Hove City Council managed and funded the project, and Brighton & Hove residents donated 155 bikes to support the project. Cranks re-serviced the donated bikes for free. Sustrans delivered cycle training at the refuge each week and put the joy back into cycling, while the women's Refuge enabled access to the refuge and a space for the training to be delivered.

What was the cost and how was the project funded?

Thanks to the contribution of all partners, the project has been low cost to run. The majority of cost is staff and volunteering time spent collecting bikes, re-servicing them and delivering the cycle training at the refuge once a week. The funding that has been used was from the council's grant allocation from the DfT's Access Fund for Sustainable Travel.

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

It involves a joined-up approach, working in partnership with other organisations. The project was established in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic and shortly after the easing of the first national lockdown. It could not have been delivered if there had not been a joined-up approach between

local partners and the willingness of the refuge who enabled access on site, even during the difficult months of the pandemic. All partners recognise the benefit this project brings to women and children at the most difficult times. The project also identifies barriers and provides solutions to allow the target audience to travel more sustainably; women are under-represented in cycling and this project helps to re-engage women and their children with the joy of cycling and overcome barriers. Gifting them a bike offers them a sustainable mode of transport which also helps them save on travel costs.

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

Since July 2020, there has been:

- 20 sessions delivered by Sustrans to the women and children at Brighton Refuge including. Learn to Ride, Cycle Skills, Dr Bike and Puncture repair sessions
- 63 moments of engagement with women
- 48 moments of engagement with children
- 155 bikes and scooters were donated by members of the public
- 29 Bikes, 1 scooter and 2 sets of Skates have so far been gifted to Brighton Refuge.

The project has provided help to a number of women including a mother who was given support to help teach her six-year-old to ride for the first time, and two women who had been scared to ride bikes after bad experiences learning to ride previously. Both now have bikes, and one is aiming to go on bike rides with her 12-year-old son in the spring, who rides his bike to school every day. One of the women said, "I can't afford the bus fare to the beach and it's too far to walk, I'm so excited I can now ride there."

Endorsements:

Shona Kynoch, Domestic abuse caseworker, Stonewater Women's Refuge: *"The bike work at refuge has had such a positive impact on so many women and children living here. One thing that stands out is watching the women cycling around the garden either alone practising or having a lesson with Lucy and seeing the sheer joy on their faces, they look so happy as if for that time they're able to forget the difficulties in their lives and simply enjoy the feeling of riding a bike and the joy that brings. This really empowers them and gives them something to celebrate. It is a really positive experience and a skill they will take with them wherever they move onto after refuge."*

Feedback from the Expert Panel of Judges:

"This idea I found inspiring, and I am glad to hear those mothers and children who have been dealt a bad hand at life, are able to get enjoyment together."

"The focus on working with vulnerable women and children in domestic abuse refuges. Combining the confidence with skills and education work, and access to bikes. Potential to transform vulnerable lives with confidence and independence."