



**Wheels for
Wellbeing**

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Disabled Londoners closer to hiring adaptive cycles as an inclusive cycle hire scheme is piloted

Wheels for Wellbeing is delighted to announce that they will receive support from Sport England's 'Open Call for Innovative Solutions' to develop and pilot an inclusive cycle hire scheme for London, with east London partner Bikeworks.

During the pandemic, people have been encouraged to get their cycles out, but this has not been an option for most Disabled people. The London-wide demand from Disabled people for hiring non-standard cycles (trikes, handcycles etc.) is not currently met and this has been exacerbated as Covid-19 restricts access to inclusive cycling hub sessions. The use of public transport continues to be a concern to Disabled people and people with long term conditions - they need safe ways to travel and cycling is one option. Roads however, have become safer as a result of temporary improvements to cycling infrastructure and reduced motor traffic flows. And changes to new permanent cycling infrastructure will support the use of adaptive cycles as a result of the Government's [Gear Change](#) and [latest highways guidance LTN 1/20](#), influenced by our [Guide to Inclusive Cycling](#). Demand for inclusive cycle hire is also inflated by the very high costs of non-standard cycles, making private ownership currently unaffordable for most. This barrier to cycling is evidenced [by our latest research](#).

Director of Wheels for Wellbeing Isabelle Clement says:

“This funding gives us the opportunity to demonstrate that if we can overcome one of the main barriers to cycling for Disabled people - the cost of a cycle - more will be able to enjoy cycling. “

Lyndsay hired a cycle from Wheels for Wellbeing during the first lockdown. As a Disabled person with cerebral palsy she uses her wheelchair full time and really enjoys the physical health & mental wellbeing benefits that cycling can bring. She reports:

“After cycling, my arms feel that they've had a very good workout, and I have been able to benefit from the fresh air with my 5-year-old son George and my husband, who cycle on their bikes alongside me.”



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Lewisham



Lyndsay with a handcycle loaned from Wheels for Wellbeing

Photo: copyright Wheels for Wellbeing

This inclusive cycle hire scheme pilot aims to bring the joy and many other benefits of cycling to more Disabled people in an accessible, affordable, sustainable way.

Jim Blakemore, Director of Bikeworks, says:

“This project is so exciting and we are all looking forward to rolling it out. The needs for a growing community of cyclists that currently struggle to find the correct cycle for them and or require adaptations in order to ride and control cycles is top of our priority list. Bikeworks and Wheels for Wellbeing are perfectly placed to move this service and agenda forward across London and we hope our findings will lead to scale and integration with other large cycle hire schemes. “

Sport England’s Allison Savich, the Strategic Lead on Data & Market Innovation, affirms:

" We are excited to be supporting Wheels for Wellbeing, who are using innovation to address the inequalities in sport and physical activity that are being heightened by the pandemic. As part of our Open Call for Innovative Solutions, they are one of a cohort of solutions that are challenging the current way of doing things and putting their audiences needs at the heart of their design."

The funding is just for 6 months but as Isabelle adds:

“Assuming the pilot is a success, we hope to secure further funding, maybe through a corporate sponsor, to continue the scheme and integrate it into the Transport for London’s Santander Cycles hire scheme, levelling up cycling options with non-Disabled people.”

Press release ends



Notes to the Editor:

- Sport England's Open Call for Innovative Solutions supports people most affected by the coronavirus pandemic, whether through changes of circumstances, mental health challenges or digital exclusion. It provides financial support through the National Lottery. <https://www.sportengland.org/innovationopencall>
- Wheels for Wellbeing is led by Disabled people and fights for equal rights to enjoy the wellbeing benefits of wheeling & cycling. Our campaign work is informed by our [research](#), including regular surveys. We are currently campaigning for greater accessible infrastructure ([Infrastructure for All](#)), the recognition of cycles as mobility aids ([My Cycle, My Mobility Aid](#)), and the greater representation of Disabled cyclists in cycling policy, images, and language ([Invisible Cyclists](#)). We have recently released a [statement](#) in response to new temporary walking and cycling infrastructure, calling for it to be fully accessible to ensure that Disabled people are not locked out of public spaces as lockdown is eased. The latest highways guidance published in the summer, is influenced by their [Guide to Inclusive Cycling](#). <https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk>
- Bikeworks are a 14 year old London based social enterprise that uses the cycle to deliver a number of services. These include 4 Inclusive Cycling Hubs, 2 training centres where you can learn to become a cycling instructor or take part in non-accredited cycle maintenance courses, through to professional City and Guilds qualifications. They deliver 121 cycle training to adults as well as school Bikeability courses. They also provide onsite and mobile mechanics to both corporate business and local authorities. For more information please contact co-founder and CEO Jim Blakemore - jim.blakemore@bikeworks.org.uk or visit www.bikeworks.org.uk <https://www.bikeworks.org.uk/>
- 19% of the population are over 65 and 21% of UK adults are Disabled. The NHS originally advised 1.8 million people who are extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 infection (who have conditions including blood cancer, MS, or severe chest conditions) to practice 'shielding' and remain at home. The government has now introduced guidelines which individuals must now interpret based on their own circumstances.
- Being isolated indoors for prolonged periods leads to a greatly increased risk of ill health, and greater care needs. The Chief Medical Officer recommends that every adult, including Disabled people, should aim for a minimum of 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity exercise to improve their mental and physical health. Even before lockdown Disabled people were 50% less likely to achieve this. For all citizens, restrictions on the ability to exercise and on social interaction may cause or worsen key medical conditions, leading to an increase in the incidence of disability and higher economic costs.
- Wheels for Wellbeing's last annual survey of Disabled cyclists identified the prohibitive cost of adaptive cycles as the second greatest barrier to cycling for Disabled people. (<https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/WFWB-Annual-Survey-Report-2019-FINAL.pdf>)
- Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling and walking (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england>)

(July 2020) is the government's plan to make England a great walking and cycling nation. It sets out the actions required at all levels of government to make this a reality, including putting cycling and walking at the heart of decision-making and enabling people to cycle and protecting them when they do. The Government has also published new Cycling Infrastructure Design guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>) (July 2020) on how to deliver high quality cycle infrastructure.

For more information about this press release and a 300 dpi image, please email janet@wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk or call Janet Paske on 07740 457 528.