



The Finding New Solutions  
Leisure Cycling Programme  
Summary Report

Produced by CTC Challenge for Change

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working for cycling



Forestry Commission



# Summary Report



This document presents a summary of the final evaluation of the Finding New Solutions (FNS) leisure cycling programme<sup>1</sup>.

The programme was funded by the Department for Transport through Cycling England and delivered in association with three key project partners – The Peak District National Park Authority, Devon County Council and the CTC/Forestry Commission/Hoseasons partnership.

## **The FNS leisure cycling programme**

Each of the three project partners took a different approach to encouraging and promoting cycling in their area. Various cycling events and initiatives were run and in some cases new cycling infrastructure was built. These included cycle training, guided rides, group bike rides and community events amongst others. A number of initiatives were implemented across all three project areas including the Challenge for Change website tool, email communications, 'Challenges' and incentives encouraging people to cycle more often. In all, 4,006 people participated in at least one activity or promotion of the FNS programme.

## **Monitoring and evaluation methodology**

As part of the monitoring and evaluation for the FNS programme, all participants were invited to register for additional online support and other activities. Participants were also required to complete a baseline survey following their initial cycling 'experience', which varied according to location. There were two follow-up surveys, the first in October 2010 and the second in May 2011. The baseline surveys took the form of hard copy and online self-completion questionnaires, while the follow-up surveys were only conducted online.

The table overleaf summarises the response rates to each of the surveys. Note that the baseline survey was completed on registration into the project. Participants continued to register after the 1<sup>st</sup> follow-up survey had been issued in October 2010, hence more participants were invited to complete the May survey than the October survey. Not all participants provided a valid email address upon registration, therefore were not invited to complete either follow-up survey.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see the document titled 'The Finding New Solutions Leisure Cycling Programme' for the full evaluation report.



**Table 1. Response rates for each survey across all three projects**

Project	Participation at Baseline	October survey invites	October Survey responses	Response rate	May survey invites	May survey responses	Response rate
Pedal Peak District	2125	1755	664	38%	1,912	441	23%
Cycle Devon	1397	804	269	33%	1,333	285	21%
Cycle Xtra	484	392	73	19%	451	65	14%
<b>All</b>	<b>4006</b>	<b>2951</b>	<b>1006</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>3696</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>21%</b>

### Classification of cyclists

Based on the responses given to the first question in the baseline survey ("Before your recent cycling experience, how often have you cycled in the last 12 months?"), participants were segregated into three cycling groups:

- **Non-cyclists:** Those who had cycled 'not at all' or 'a few times' in the last 12 months
- **Occasional cyclists:** Those who had cycled '1-3 times a month' or 'once a week'
- **Regular cyclists:** those who had cycled '2-3 days a week' or '4 or more days a week'

These groupings are referred to throughout this evaluation report.

### Key Project Statistics

This report presents an analysis of all participant survey data collected for the leisure cycling programme. Here follows a summary of the key project statistics:

#### Baseline survey results

- **41%** of project respondents were 'non-cyclists' (people who had either not cycled at all or only cycled a few times in the past year).
- **66%** of non-cyclists intended to cycle more often in the 4 weeks after their leisure experience.
- **71%** of non-cyclists reported owning a bike.
- **24%** of non-cyclists were achieving their recommended level of physical activity (30 minutes or more of physical activity on 5 or more days a week).

For more baseline results please refer to **Sections 3.3 and 3.4**



## Follow-up survey results – October 2010

The October 2010 follow up survey achieved a response rate of 34% (n=1006). A chi-square test has shown that the cycling behaviour of those who responded to the October survey was not statistically different to those who only responded to the Baseline Survey ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the respondents of the October survey are representative of all participants in terms of baseline cycling behaviour.

- **41%** of non-cyclists (at baseline) reported cycling 1 day a week or more in September 2010.
- **36%** of the 55 respondents who did not own a bike at baseline reported owning a bike in October 2010.
- **47%** of non- and occasional cyclists (at baseline) reported cycling more often for leisure/fitness in September 2010 compared to September 2009.
- **8%** of respondents to the October survey who cycled 'Not at all' or 'Less than 1 day a week' to work/study at baseline reported they are now cycling 1 day a week or more to work/study.

For more October follow-up survey results please refer to **Section 3.5 - 3.9**.

### Barriers and motivators to cycling

Participants were asked why they were cycling more or less often in the October survey. This question was not repeated in the May survey.

Reasons respondents gave to why they are cycling **more often for leisure/fitness** (N=423):

- Health reasons (23%)
- Owning a new bike (whether new or second hand) (22%)

Reasons respondents gave to why they are cycling **less often for leisure/fitness** (N=149):

- Less time available/too busy (17%)
- Poor health/illness (15%)



Reasons respondents gave to why they are cycling **more often to work/study** (N=123):

- Health/fitness (22%)
- Change of job (21%)
- Owning a new bike (whether new or secondhand) (15%)

Reasons respondents gave to why they are cycling **less often to work/study** (N=86):

- Change of job (16%)
- Retired/not working at present (10%)

### **Follow-up survey results - May 2011**

The May 2010 follow up survey achieved a response rate of 21% (N=791). The late autumn and winter months prior to the May survey and the recent interventions (project fatigue) may have had a role in the low response rates. A chi-square test has shown that the cycling behaviour of those who responded to the May survey was statistically different to those who only responded to the Baseline Survey ( $p < 0.01$ ). Thus care must be taken when reviewing the results of the May survey as the responses of these participants may not be representative of all leisure project participants.

- **39%** of respondents who were non-cyclists at baseline reported cycling at least one day a week in the four weeks prior to the May survey.
- **69%** of respondents who were non-cyclists at baseline reported cycling at least once a month in the May survey.

Focussing on the 138 non-cyclists at baseline who answered both the October and May follow-up surveys:

- **51%** were occasional cyclists by the October survey and 71% (N=50) of these participants retained their new cycling frequencies and were occasional or regular cyclists at the time of the May survey
- **30%** were non-cyclists in October but had increased their cycling to become either occasional or regular cyclists in the May survey
- **21%** of 185 respondents to the May survey who cycled 'Not at all' or 'Less than 1 day a week' to work/study at baseline reported they are now cycling 1 day a week or more to work/study



- **34%** of 56 respondents who had not cycled at all at baseline, reported cycling at least one day a week for leisure or fitness in the May survey
- **51%** of 216 respondents who were doing 2 days or less of physical activity reported doing 3 days or more days of physical activity per week, in the May survey

Due to the wide variation in response rates for the question regarding cycling trips to particular destinations, it is difficult to assert any conclusive comments on the effect of the project on the type of journeys taken by bike, other than to note that there was a mixture of leisure and transport-related trips made.

For more follow-up survey results please refer to **Section 3.10**.



## Results

Overall, a large proportion (58%) of the 659 participants who responded to the May survey were cycling more frequently than they were at baseline (this excludes the 159 participants who were cycling 4 days or more per week at baseline and in the May survey). As the response rates were low for each individual site, the data from all three sites were analysed collectively to give an overall picture of the nature of responses.

By analysing the responses participants gave in each of the three surveys, it is possible to evaluate the results of the project against the primary and five secondary research objectives. A brief summary of these findings are shown below.

### Primary Objective

The leisure cycling programme aimed to answer a primary research objective:

**“To what extent does a positive leisure cycling experience, accompanied by follow-up support and interventions, lead to more habitual cycling?”**

There were 250 respondents classified as non-cyclists at baseline who responded to all three surveys. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of these 250 non-cyclists reported a **sustained** increase in their cycling between the baseline, October, and May surveys. That is, their cycling activity levels meant that they were now classified as either occasional or regular cyclists, rather than non-cyclists. If respondents and non-respondents (to the follow up surveys) are considered together, then 6% of the 1,494 participants who were classified as non-cyclists at baseline in the FNS programme, reported cycling at least one day a week in the last four weeks in May. Some non-respondents will have also increased their cycling, meaning that this figure is a conservative estimate of the impact of the FNS programme on habitual cycling.

The increases in cycling were for a mixture of leisure and transport-related (namely trips to work) purposes. For example, thirty-four percent (34%) of respondents who were not cycling at all for leisure purposes at baseline reported cycling once per week for leisure in May 2011. 21% of those who cycled less than one day a week for work at baseline, were cycling at least one day per week for work journeys in May 2011.



## Secondary Objectives

### **1. What additional influence do follow-on interventions appear to have on cycling behaviour above and beyond the influence of the positive leisure experience? i.e. To what extent are follow-on interventions necessary and do some appear to be more effective than others?**

Beyond the initial leisure cycling experience, the website tool was reported by respondents to be the most influential follow-on intervention. The website tool was rated as either 'influential' or 'useful' by 62-87% of respondents who increased their cycling behaviour across all three leisure projects. 58-74% of these respondents also rated the emails they received as influential or useful. In the Pedal Peak District project, 25% of respondents who were cycling more frequently after the FNS programme found the cycle skills training to be an influential follow-on intervention; however, 38% of those who had not increased their level of cycling also reported that they thought this intervention was influential even though their cycling behaviour was unchanged.

### **2. What proportion of leisure cycling experiences are positive for first time and returning cyclists?**

Non-cyclists were slightly less likely to rate their cycling experience as either 'Excellent' or 'Good' (89% of non-cyclists in Cycle Devon, 85% in Pedal Peak and 75% in Cycle Xtra). On the other hand, occasional cyclists were slightly more likely than non-cyclists to rate their experience as either 'Excellent' or 'Good' (94% in Cycle Devon, 93% in Pedal Peak and 100% in Cycle Xtra).

### **3. What factors make having leisure cycling experiences positive/negative for novice and returning cyclists?**

91% of responses given by respondents about their leisure cycling experience were positive. The most frequently reported reasons for a positive experience were enjoyment/fun (26%), followed by good cycle paths/trails (17%) and scenery (15%). Contrastingly, of the small proportion of first and returning cyclists who rated their cycling experience negatively, 36% cited bad cycle paths/uneven/dog waste, 19% cited bad road experiences and 15% cited lacked experience/too unfit to enjoy fully. It appears that having provide good quality paths and trails contributes to positive leisure experiences (and conversely, poorly maintained or poor quality paths can detract from an experience).





#### **4. What are the motivators that encourage leisure cyclists to have a positive cycling experience in the first place?**

The most frequently reported reasons for cycling at the Peak District site were enjoyment of the local area/scenery (31%), living nearby (24%) and for fitness/health (19%). 11% of respondents reported that they enjoyed cycling in the local area because of the trails, topography etc. Other reasons included spending time with the family (6%), safety/traffic free routes (6%), good weather (4%) and learning to cycle/building confidence on a bike (4%).

Participants in the Cycle Xtra and Cycle Devon projects were not asked about their motivators to cycle in the baseline survey.

#### **5. What motivates leisure cyclists to cycle more frequently for every day journeys?**

The most frequently reported reasons for cycling more often for every day journeys were for health reasons (23%), owning a new bike (22%), enjoyment (11%) and friends/family (11%).

#### **6. Which population segments are most strongly influenced to take up cycling as the result of a positive leisure cycling experience?**

An examination of the demographic characteristics (age, gender, household composition, bike ownership) of non-cyclists between the baseline and follow-up surveys only reveal one characteristic of interest or significance to report – gender. More male non-cyclists had become occasional or regular cyclists than females (October survey = 67% v 33%; May survey = 73% v 66%). However data from the October survey shows that more females increased their cycling frequency than males (53% v 40%). This suggests that although a higher proportion of females increased the frequency that they cycled, the increase would have been smaller than observed in males.



## Conclusion

The results of our evaluation indicate that giving non-cyclists a positive leisure cycling experience encourages them to incorporate cycling into their daily lives and to cycle more regularly for leisure and travel purposes. Each of the three projects were successful in encouraging people to cycle more often.

The results of the October and May surveys suggest that respondents had increased the frequency of cycling trips for leisure and other destinations however it is not possible to tell from the data whether the projects influenced trips escorting children to school. The results appear to show that those who increased their cycling frequency also increased their physical activity levels. However, more research would be required to confirm the hypothesis that this was due to an increase in cycling.

The results of the project support the use of follow on interventions when encouraging people to cycle more. The web tool was reported to be the most influential factor in encouraging people to cycle, further research could be conducted to find out which aspect of the web tool was most influential e.g. logging trips, setting goals, monitoring calories burned etc. 25% of participants who were cycling more frequently after the Pedal Peak District project found the cycle skills training to be influential, highlighting the importance of this activity.

Responses to open-ended questions (discussed in the main body of the report) re-iterate the positive impact of the FNS programme and the importance of providing a supportive physical environment for both leisure and utility cyclists. This data can be used to inform future projects that aim to encourage cycling, as participants provided details on the barriers and benefits that they faced when cycling more regularly. In summary, a pattern has emerged that suggests encouraging people to have a fun positive cycling experience in a leisure environment can result in increased habitual cycling behaviour.

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