



CyclingUK
The Big **Bike**
Revival

The power of local delivery

How a community centre in North Tyneside is encouraging older adults to cycle more

Local partners drive national impact

The Big Bike Revival works to a simple but ambitious goal: making cycling accessible to everyone in England. Through tailored advice, hands-on support and upskilling, Cycling UK ensures that every local activity delivered by our partners across the country aligns with that single national goal.

While our annual impact report captures the programme's collective results, this report goes deeper. It follows the work of a single delivery partner to show how local action drives national change. Choosing which partner to spotlight from 253 was not an easy task; all of them are doing remarkable work.

We have selected the Linskill Centre in North Shields because its focus on older adults addresses one of cycling's most persistent challenges. The proportion of people who cycle regularly falls with age and understanding how to reverse that trend is critical if we ever want cycling to become a genuinely inclusive mode of transport.

The Linskill Centre

The Linskill Centre joined The Big Bike Revival in 2019 and has been a trusted partner ever since, delivering activities to communities across North Tyneside. It sits in the North Shields ward, where almost 40% of residents live in a neighbourhood ranked among the 10% most deprived in England according to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation. Four in ten households in the ward do not have access to a car or van¹, making affordable, active travel not a lifestyle choice but a practical necessity.

The centre runs a well-established programme for adults, particularly the over-55s, offering a range of activities designed to support physical health and emotional wellbeing — from arts and crafts and Pilates to film clubs and, of course, cycling.

¹ Ward profile 2026, Data and Insights team, North Tyneside Council

What they delivered

The events included a mixture of Dr Bike repair sessions, maintenance workshops, led rides, route-planning courses and road safety training.

Across 14 events in 2025, they engaged 63 participants of whom:



² In 2025, the Minimum Income Standard for a single person was £30,500 a year according to The Joseph Rowntree Foundation: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/a-minimum-income-standard-for-the-united-kingdom-in-2025>

What they achieved

After engaging with the Linskill Centre:

**50% of
attendees
increased
how often
they cycle**

**68% of
attendees
felt safer
when
cycling**

**86% of
attendees
said they
felt
happier**

**68% of
attendees
became
more
physically
active**

One of the most successful elements was the Couch to 20K cycling programme — a six-week course designed to build fitness, confidence and distance in manageable steps.

For some, it unlocked independence they had not felt in years. For others, what began as a fitness goal quickly became a source of social connection and mutual support.



**"I met a lot of really nice
people who I probably
wouldn't have met in normal
circumstances. I also cycled to
places I wouldn't normally
have cycled to."
– participant**

**"[I feel] happy... it normalises my life. It went haywire when the brain blew a fuse. It brings everything back to normal and I can be a normal person."
– Jenny**

For Jenny and Paul*, The Big Bike Revival gave back something more important: a sense of normality. After suffering a stroke, Jenny's short-term memory was badly affected and Paul became her full-time carer. When they spotted an advert in a local coffee shop for the Couch to 20K sessions, they decided to give it a go.

Jenny's quote at the top of the page is, perhaps, the most powerful endorsement any cycling programme could hope for. However, there is an additional benefit, too. When Jenny is out riding, safely supported by the group and its volunteers, Paul gets something rare for a full-time carer: time for himself.

*names changed for anonymity



All photos are courtesy of the Linskill Centre

Contributing to strategic goals

These engagements contribute towards Active Travel England's strategic goals in numerous ways.

Improved population health and wellbeing

Almost 70% of participants became more physically active and over 85% reported feeling happier.

Increased social inclusion and reduced inequalities

Nearly half of participants earned below the Minimum Income Standard and the programme actively reached women, older adults and disabled people.

Greater independence for all

Participants gained the skills and confidence to cycle on their own, opening up new possibilities for everyday travel.

Stronger community cohesion

The programme created lasting social bonds, with participants describing the group as a vital source of mutual support.

**"We started to just cycle more and now it has turned into something social as well. People who join up are like-minded – they've lost confidence – and the group is very supportive in that way."
– participant**

What we can learn from Linskill Centre

1) Build trust

The Linskill Centre had been part of its community long before it joined The Big Bike Revival. That established trust meant people were willing to try something new. For programmes targeting under-represented groups, a trusted local partner is not a nice-to-have, it is essential.

2) Design for the whole person

The most powerful outcomes went beyond cycling. Improved mental health, social connection and a restored sense of identity were repeatedly cited by participants. Programmes that understand the wider needs of their audience deliver deeper, more sustainable change.

3) Support carers as well as participants

Jenny and Paul's story highlights an often-overlooked benefit: when a carer's partner is safely supported within a group activity, the carer gains valuable respite. Inclusive programme design should consider the needs of the whole household.

4) Start gently and let confidence grow

The Couch to 20K format — a gentle, progressive six-week course — lowered the barrier to entry and let participants build confidence at their own pace. This approach proved especially effective with older adults returning to cycling after a long break.



Contact us

Email: bigbikerevival@CyclingUK.org

Cycling UK is a trading name of Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC) a company limited by guarantee, registered in England no: 25185. Registered as a charity in England and Wales charity no: 1147607 and in Scotland charity no: SC042541. Registered office: Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 9JX.