

## **CYCLE WEST**

### **Bristol City Council**

Cycle West was launched in 1996 as Project Bike, using Cycle Challenge funding, to promote cycle commuting to major employers in the north of Bristol. It has since expanded, and in 1999 became Cycle West, an independent charity. Other bodies already address issues of policy and provision, and Cycle West focuses on promotion and engaging people. It concentrates on people who are receptive to cycling, and emphasises health and family cycling. The four main current projects are:

- Cycle training
- Health on Wheels
- Take a Stand
- Bike Ability

More information on Cycle West is available on their website at [www.cyclewest.co.uk](http://www.cyclewest.co.uk)

#### *Cycle training*

Cycle West has been providing adult cycle training for about three years, for all ages and abilities, and more recently for young people and schools.

Adult training is provided on a one to one basis, with 212 trained this year in Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Many are trained through employers as part of their travel plans, with the employer often covering the £20 cost of a session. Training is tailored to suit the needs of the individual, and takes place in their locality. Cycle West now has a team of 18 instructors and has been commissioned by CTC to develop a national standard for adult cycle training. Much of the interest in cycle training has been generated through the other initiatives Cycle West is involved in.

At first adult cycle training was seen as a wacky concept, and had to be promoted strongly. Most effective was the widespread distribution of small flyers to shops, health food cafes, surgeries etc. The training is dignified and discrete, aiming to build confidence, to learn techniques to make you a better cyclist and to get the most from your bike. The initial session lasts 90 min, subsequent ones 60 min.

Currently only one in six of school pupils gets cycle training of any sort in Bristol. This year, Cycle West has obtained support from the Cycle Projects Fund to tailor their training courses to schools. This will be a four stage course over 4 weeks, for up to 10 children at a time, at a cost of £400 per course.

#### *Health on Wheels*

The first phase of this project was in 2000 to 2002, improving the infrastructure at healthcare sites and raising the profile of cycling amongst NHS staff. It raised the idea of cycling on prescription, which is being piloted in the second phase of the project with Department of Health funding for three years up to 2005, with a view to rolling it out nationally.

Cycling on prescription involves a three-way partnership, between a network of 50 GPs keen on it and actively participating, Cycle West providing back up and training and the patient, who needs to be receptive. As part of the project, Cycle West is co-ordinating a national network of similar schemes, is setting up a national e-forum and will be organising regional seminars. Cycling on prescription offers cycling to a wide range of patients, for mental as well as physical health needs. Participating GPs were recruited by phone, with the practice nurse often being a key contact.



### *Take a Stand*

With funding from three local authorities, Cycle West offers two free Sheffield cycle parking stands to small businesses, not for profit organisations and community groups. The recipient pays the cost of installing them on their own premises in a location agreed with Cycle West. Launched in 1997, the response has been overwhelming and shows no sign of stopping. Demand is typically driven by cyclists themselves, and Cycle West will sell additional stands if needed, and wall fixings are available as an alternative. The stands are held in stock by a local building contractor. An initial visit is made to the site by bike to agree the locations, and the stands are dropped off subsequently by van to 10 locations at a time.

### *Bike Ability*

Using funding from the New Opportunities Fund and charities, this project focuses on the Easton and Southmead areas of Bristol. These are areas with high unemployment, poor public transport and low car ownership, which should have the potential for more cycling. Cycle West will be offering:

- Free cycle training
- Free maps, free route advice, guided rides, events
- Free cycle maintenance workshops, providing a basic four-week course aimed at beginners.

### **Peer assessment of this initiative (December 2002):**

- ✎ Service level agreement with Cycle West
- ✎ Health on Wheels project
- ✎ Cycling on prescription
- ✎ Grants for cycle parking at small businesses
- ✎ Bike Ability project

*Contact Peter Andrews for further information*

*E-mail Address(es):*

*[peter@cyclewest.org.uk](mailto:peter@cyclewest.org.uk)*