

Case Study

Pupil Referral Unit

Maes Derw, Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

Swansea

Swansea City Council



Figure 1: Bike lessons delivered through the Sustrans Active Journeys team. ©Sustrans

Background

Maes Derw is a registered pupil referral unit, located on the outskirts of Swansea. The school supports pupils' individual needs to help them reintegrate into mainstream schools or transition to further education or employment.

Many pupils face anxiety and mental health challenges, often lacking the confidence to ride bikes. Most are transported by taxis and parents, leading to increased pollution from vehicles on school grounds.

Given the nature of the school, options for modal shift are limited. Therefore, an active travel school plan had to focus on activities within the school gates that encourage active travel among pupils while placing stronger emphasis on staff to model healthy, sustainable travel practices.

Key components

Key components of the active travel plan included improving bicycle and scooter storage, delivering active travel

awareness workshops and exploring alternative transport options to reduce private car use.

Actions of the plan included:

- offering a walking bus to school to pupils to increase participation
- ensuring all pupils are given the opportunity to learn to ride a bike, e.g. through lessons with the Sustrans' Active Journeys team
- providing more cycling opportunities with the school's bike fleet available during break times for practice.

A key element of the plan involved upskilling both pupils and staff in maintaining the school's bike fleet. This not only equipped them with valuable skills but also fostered a sense of pride and ownership in keeping the bikes in good condition.

Achievements

As a direct result of completing the ATSP, the school community have all benefited from the networking connections established.

Notably, some of these connections are through the college, which, having heard about the pupils' enthusiasm, is now planning to create a direct training pathway. This pathway will allow older pupils to learn cycle maintenance through national standards, providing them with potential valuable employment opportunities and transferrable skills in the future.

Quotes

“Staff cycling has also been promoted with the number of staff cycling to work at least once a week has increased from 1 to 5.”

“A number of pupils have gone from being completely unable to ride a bike to riding independently.”

- Martin Thomas, Maes Derw Outdoor Education Co-ordinator

