

Summary

Residential cycle parking

Improving cycle parking for people on a low income
or not in employment



The project

The Residential cycle parking project sought to understand how poor cycle parking stops people on a low income or not in employment from cycling and what can improve it.

The solutions suggested within this report were developed based on an evidence review, a UK survey and focus groups with people on a low income or not in employment.

We believe cycling and its benefits for health, the environment and accessing the things you need to live well should be an opportunity for everyone. This means overcoming barriers, including a lack of access to secure, accessible cycle parking at home.

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Cyclehoop

Cyclehoop creates innovative cycle parking and infrastructure. Our team cares about green mobility and is dedicated to making all kinds of places more cycle friendly. Our award-winning products are designed by cyclists, to encourage everyday people to make the switch and experience the health, social and environmental benefits of riding a bike. www.cyclehoop.com

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Back cover: Brian Sweeney/Sustrans.

Summary

“If I knew that there was the ideal storage there, you know, that would incentivise me to think, okay, I’m going to get my ideal bike. I’m going to save up and get the e-tricycle. I think probably it means that I’d be much more likely to get cycling and stick with it in the long run.”

Female, aged 35-49, not in employment, does not cycle

The need to improve residential cycle parking

A lack of transport choice is holding many people on a low income back

People on a low income or not in employment are less likely to own a car, and for those who do, rising living costs are making it unaffordable to run. For those reliant on public transport, prohibitive train fares and cuts to bus services have restricted their ability to travel.

A lack of transport options that are affordable, reliable, accessible, available and safe is known as transport poverty.¹ Transport poverty can restrict people’s quality of life. It puts people at risk of losing their job or prevents them from accessing work, education, health and care services. This has negative consequences for our health and the economy.

Cycling’s potential to increase transport choice

There are similar disparities when it comes to owning a cycle. Only 40% of low-income households have access to a cycle in comparison to 59% of households in professional occupations.²

1 Public Health Scotland, 2024. Transport Poverty: a public health issue. <https://publichealthscotland.scot/publications/transport-poverty-a-public-health-issue/transport-poverty-a-public-health-issue>

2 Sustrans, 2024. Walking and Cycling Index, 2023. UK Aggregated data set.

A cycle can open up opportunity. Cycling is a low-cost form of transport for many everyday journeys.

31% of people living in households on a low income don't currently cycle but want to start.³

Many people on a low income or not in employment need secure and accessible cycle parking at home if they are to cycle

A lack of residential cycle parking can be a significant barrier. If people do not have a place to park a cycle at home that is convenient, accessible and secure, they are less likely to take up cycling.

We therefore set out to better understand residential cycle parking provision for people on a low income or not in employment across the UK and how it could be improved.

What we did

We conducted an evidence review, a UK representative survey and focus groups to:

- Understand residential cycle parking provision for people on a low income or not in employment across the UK.
- Understand what people on a low income or not in employment require from residential cycle parking to meet their needs.

3 Sustrans, 2024. Walking and Cycling Index, 2023. UK Aggregated data set.

What we found out

“I think if the government wants us to cycle more, then they have to make it easier and more accessible for people.”

Female, aged 35-49, not in employment, cycles

Across the UK, people on a low income want to cycle, but lack cycle parking at home

Our survey found only 12% of people on a low income or not in employment own a cycle and currently use it. We found that just under a third (32%) of people on a low income or not in employment did not have a convenient and secure space to park their cycle at home.⁴ This equates to 3.7 million people who are locked out of cycling, despite being those who need it most.

Disparities in access to cycle parking are even starker for many on a low income or not in employment. 39% of disabled people did not have convenient and secure space to park their cycle at home, as well as 34% of women and 36% of people from an ethnic minority background.

Almost half of people on a low income or not in employment (47%) said they would start cycling or cycle more if they had a place to park their cycle at home which was convenient, secure, safe, and accessible. This equates to around 5.5 million people.

This is a particularly important issue for people living in flats. For example, people who live in a flat are far less likely to have a secure (27%) or accessible (23%) place to store a cycle than people who live in a detached house (60% and 58% respectively).

Security is an important factor for cycle parking, especially in areas of multiple deprivation. 15% of respondents had their own

⁴ Sustrans, 2024. Cycling Opportunity: The case for a cycle voucher scheme for people on low incomes and not in employment (forthcoming).

or knew someone who had had their cycle stolen from where they lived in the past 12 months.

Accessibility is also critical. Two in five people on a low income or not in employment identify as having a long-term health condition or disability. Residential cycle parking must be designed to be inclusive of those who need more expensive specialised cycles, including e-cycles, hand cycles and recumbent cycles.

1.5 million people on a low income or not in employment have been put off buying a cycle due to accommodation restrictions, for example not having a secure, convenient place to park a cycle.

Relatively small and simple changes, for example giving people somewhere secure to keep their cycles, could be transformational for people's lives, and our transport system.

Improving cycle parking for people is straightforward to implement and would have significant benefits for health, wellbeing and access to education and employment.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Local authorities should increase residential cycle parking provision, prioritising flats and areas of deprivation.

- **Action 1.1:** Local authorities and housing associations should provide communal cycle parking for flats and in areas of deprivation.
- **Action 1.2:** Local authorities and housing associations should increase awareness of residential cycle parking amongst local communities and tenants' groups.

Recommendation 2: Governments across the UK should put in place standards, investment and regulations to improve residential cycle parking.

- **Action 2.1:** Strengthen guidance for all local authorities to improve residential cycle parking provision.

- **Action 2.2:** Ensure local authorities have access to long-term funding for sustainable transport that can be used to improve residential cycle parking.
- **Action 2.3:** Reform planning regulations to ensure all new homes have access to adequate cycle parking.
- **Action 2.4:** Amend permitted development rights for householders to allow the installation of cycle stores at the front (principal elevation) of houses and flats.

Recommendation 3: Governments across the UK and local authorities should work together to tackle other barriers to cycling for people on a low income or not in employment.

- **Action 3.1:** Local authorities should audit and improve public cycle parking.
- **Action 3.2:** Governments across the UK should provide financial support to people on a low income or not in employment to buy a cycle.
- **Action 3.3:** Governments across the UK need to work together with local authorities to improve cycling infrastructure.

“I’d really like to start cycling again. They’ve just invested in all these cycle lanes near me and it would save me money to cycle. But I live in like a first-floor maisonette. My only outdoor space is a back balcony, so I’d have to bring a bike up off street level, up the staircase, do kind of a right angle into my front door because there’s two opposing doors at the top on each side, walk through my living room and my kitchen and put it outside on my back balcony and have to do that every time I took it in or out, which for a full size cycle, if it’s not a collapsible one, it’s a little bit off putting.”

Female, aged 25-34, employed, does not cycle



Case Study: Ben, Swindon.

Ben has chronic fatigue, which affects his ability to take long journeys or travel by car. But for getting around his local area, he's found that cycling has helped.

“I use my bike for journeys to the supermarket and into town – it's so much quicker than getting the bus because unfortunately they're not very reliable in this area.

“I do find that cycling helps my fatigue. If you get the balance right, it's a very positive thing.”

However, storing his bicycle securely has been a difficulty for Ben.

“About a year ago, I made the mistake of locking my bike up in the retail park where I used to work. It got stolen while I was working, literally just outside the shop.

“So that's why I got a cheaper second-hand bike which I ride now.”

Storage is particularly difficult in his apartment building, as the shed for tenants isn't secure or well looked after.

Ben has had to resort to paying for storage in a nearby unit to keep his bike safe, but he wants to see things change.

“I like the idea of more safe shelters to lock up your bike, either when you're out and about or in your local area. There aren't any where I live.

“I mean not just locking up to a rack, but some kind of protected storage that's far more secure and covers your bike.

“Obviously, I don't expect for that to necessarily be free – it'd be great if it was, but I would happily pay £10-15 a month just to know that it's safe.”

