

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.

Date of publication: 18 September 2024

© Sustrans, September 2024

Sustrans

We work for and with communities, helping them come to life by walking, wheeling and cycling to create healthier places and happier lives for everyone. www.sustrans.org.uk

Sustrans is a registered charity, no. 326550 (England and Wales) SC039263 (Scotland)

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

Photos: Front cover, page 15, page 31, page 47: Jon Bewley/Sustrans.

Page 3: Colin Hattersley/Sustrans. Page 11: Ben Stuart.

Page 30: Nicky Beecher. Page 34, back cover: Brian Sweeney/Sustrans.



BEST A CYCLE PARKING SPACE HERE

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Summary | 6 |
| The need to improve residential cycle parking | 6 |
| What we did | 7 |
| What we found out | 8 |
| Recommendations | 9 |
| | |
| Introduction | 12 |
| Language | 12 |
| Aims and approach | 13 |
| | |
| The benefits of getting more people cycling | 16 |
| Improving physical health | 16 |
| Cheaper transport | 17 |
| Freedom to travel and access to opportunity | 18 |
| Economic benefits | 18 |
| | |
| Results | 20 |
| People on a low income or not in employment have reduced transport choice, including cycling | 20 |
| People lack access to residential cycle parking provision | 21 |
| Increased residential cycle parking must meet people's needs | 23 |
| Other barriers to cycling also need addressing | 30 |
| | |
| Recommendations | 32 |
| Recommendation 1: Local authorities should increase residential cycle parking provision, prioritising flats and areas of deprivation | 33 |
| Recommendation 2: Governments across the UK should put in place standards, investment and regulations to improve residential cycle parking | 37 |
| Recommendation 3: Governments across the UK should work together with local authorities to tackle other barriers to cycling for people on a low income or not in employment | 44 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Appendix 1: Research methodology | 48 |
| Overall approach | 48 |
| Evidence review | 49 |
| User survey | 50 |
| Focus groups | 51 |

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.”

Introduction

The Walking and Cycling Index, the biggest UK survey of cycling, found only 40% of residents on low incomes had access to a cycle in their household in 2023. This compares to 59% in professional occupations.

This is not down to a lack of interest in cycling. The same research showed 31% of people living in households on a low income want to start cycling.⁵ Importantly, people do not just consider the upfront cost of a cycle but also have major concerns over its long-term security, especially if residential parking options are limited.

People on a low income or not in employment, are more likely to live in deprived areas where crime is higher, and in smaller homes and flats where parking inside and access is typically most challenging.

Overcoming these barriers is critical if we are to increase cycling levels amongst people on low incomes.

Language

People on a low income or not in employment

We use the term people on a low income or not in employment throughout this report to refer to people who were either in employment but earning £17,000 pa or less or not in employment, including students, retirees, carers, and people looking for work.

⁵ Sustrans, 2024. Walking and Cycling Index, 2023. UK Aggregated data set.

Parking versus storage

We use the term residential cycle parking throughout this report. Cycle storage is also commonly used although could imply a lack of use, which is the opposite of how we hope cycle parking infrastructure is used.

Aims and approach

This research project aimed to:

- Understand current residential cycle parking provision for people on a low income or not in employment.
- Understand what people on a low income or not in employment require from residential cycle parking to meet their needs.
- Develop solutions to improve residential cycle parking.

People on a low income or not in employment includes people employed part time, full time and those self-employed as well as those looking for work, students, retirees, and carers between the ages of 16 and 64.

People on low incomes or not in employment face many barriers. A £17k income threshold was chosen as people earning below this level face an additional barrier. They are effectively barred from a discounted cycle from the Cycle to Work Scheme, as any deduction from their salary would take them below the National Minimum Wage.

Across the UK there are approximately 11.7 million people who are on a low income or not in employment based on the above definition.

Research activities

We designed the research with quantitative and qualitative approaches to get an in-depth understanding of people's barriers, needs and ideas to improve residential cycle parking. This included:

1. A rapid evidence review of existing evidence and insight.
2. An independent, representative survey of over 1,000 people across the UK of working age who were on a low income or not in employment.
3. Two online focus groups composed of 18 people from across the UK of working age who were on a low income or not in employment.



Classic

Butler

The benefits of getting more people cycling

There are a wide variety of benefits for people from cycling including for their physical and mental wellbeing, access to places and services as well as societal benefits for the economy and employment. Many of these will contribute towards reducing public health inequalities and improving quality of life.

Improving physical health

A study by the British Heart Foundation found that 39% of UK adults failed to meet the recommended 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise a week, with women 36% more likely to be physically inactive than men.⁶ The most recent Scottish Health Survey found that inactivity amongst adults in Scotland increased with deprivation level. Only 27% of those in the least deprived quintile did not meet guideline levels of moderate or vigorous physical activity, compared to 43% of those in the most deprived quintile.⁷ There is clearly a need to promote increased physical activity in the UK, particularly amongst those on a low income or not in employment.

Cycling has been found to be associated with a wide variety of health benefits including mortality, cardiovascular disease, cancer mortality as well as less risk of having a prescription for mental health conditions.⁸ An evidence review by Transport Scotland also found that people who commute by cycle take an

6 British Heart Foundation, 2017. Physical Inactivity and Sedentary Behaviour. www.bhf.org.uk/-/media/files/for-professionals/research/heart-statistics/physical-inactivity-report---mymarathon-final.pdf

7 Scottish Government, 2022a. The Scottish Health Survey: 2022 Edition. www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2022-summary-report

8 Friel, et al. 2024. Health benefits of pedestrian and cyclist commuting: evidence from the Scottish Longitudinal Study. bmjpublichealth.bmj.com/content/2/1/e001295

average of one to three fewer days of sickness absence than their colleagues who do not commute actively.⁹

The health benefits of cycling create significant savings for the NHS. Physical inactivity is estimated to cost UK health services £1.2 billion a year.¹⁰ Sustrans' own Walking and Cycling Index estimates that current cycling levels saved the NHS £54.9 million in 2023 in the 18 participating cities alone, preventing over 4,000 serious long-term health conditions.¹¹

Cheaper transport

Cycling is one of the cheapest forms of transport. Cycle Scheme estimates that cycling to work costs £396 a year compared to £3,727 a year commuting by car.¹² Public transport is also becoming more expensive. Over the last ten years prices have increased by 64% for bus and coach fares while rail fares have risen by 35%.¹³

Offering greater access to cycles would help insulate those most vulnerable to the ever-increasing costs of public transport and driving by increasing transport choice.

9 Transport Scotland, 2013 Best practice in active travel and its associated benefits: Literature review. www.transport.gov.scot/media/53143/literature-review-best-practice-in-active-travel-and-its-associated-benefits-april-2023.pdf

10 British Heart Foundation, 2017. Physical Inactivity and Sedentary Behaviour. www.bhf.org.uk/-/media/files/for-professionals/research/heart-statistics/physical-inactivity-report---mymarathon-final.pdf

11 Sustrans, 2024. Walking and Cycling Index, 2023. www.sustrans.org.uk/the-walking-and-cycling-index

12 Cycle Scheme, 2017. How much money does cycling save you? Available at: www.cyclescheme.co.uk/community/featured/how-much-money-does-cycling-save-you

13 RAC Foundation, 2024. Transport Price Index (based figures up to June 2024). Available at: www.racfoundation.org/data/cost-of-transport-index

Freedom to travel and access to opportunity

A lack of mobility in transport can exclude people from local services as well as job and education opportunities, for example many people without a car report reduced job opportunities.¹⁴

This seems to be a particular issue for young people who are less likely to have a car. A 2023 report found that young people from the lowest earning 20% of households are 1.4 times more likely to have a low level of mobility compared to those from the highest earning 20% of households.¹⁵

A recent survey of people on a low income or not in employment found 32% of people agreed that cycling is a convenient form of transport in their local area, while 39% disagreed with this statement.¹⁶ Multiple barriers exist for many people including access to a cycle, secure and accessible parking, cycle training, and a safe environment to cycle within.

Economic benefits

Cycling is estimated to contribute £5.4 billion to the UK economy each year,¹⁷ largely through wider benefits including reductions in loss of life, pollution and congestion, as well as contributions to tourism and the sale of cycling products. Considering cycling currently only accounts for 1.7% of non-motorway traffic¹⁸ there is huge scope to boost the economy by facilitating cycling.

14 Government Office for Science, 2019. Inequalities in Mobility and Access in the UK Transport System.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/784685/future_of_mobility_access.pdf

15 Sustrans and UWE, 2023. Transport to Thrive.

www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/projects/2021/england/transport-to-thrive

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

17 Newsom and Sloman, 2018. The Value of the Cycling Sector to the British Economy. www.transportforqualityoflife.com/reports/cyclings-impact-on-the-uk-economy-and-how-it-could-contribute-much-more

18 Cycling UK, 2021 Cycling UK's Cycling Statistics.

https://issuu.com/ctc_cyclists/docs/cycling_uk_statistics_-_january_2021

As mentioned earlier, cycling to work is associated with reduced absenteeism and therefore higher productivity; ‘one less sick day per cyclist’ equates to savings of over £128 million to the UK economy each year based on current cycling levels.¹⁹

Cycling currently generates approximately 64,000 full time equivalent jobs across the UK, the majority of which are in tourism.²⁰ Therefore an increase in cycling could have a significant impact on the economy at a national level.

19 DfT, 2016. Investing in Cycling and Walking: Rapid Evidence Assessment, London: DfT.

20 Newsom and Sloman, 2018. The Value of the Cycling Sector to the British Economy. www.transportforqualityoflife.com/reports/cyclings-impact-on-the-uk-economy-and-how-it-could-contribute-much-more

Results

“Because of my health, I’d prefer an e-bike. But they are more expensive. There’s been thefts of cycles, so we’d need to be careful about where we store it.”

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

People on a low income or not in employment have reduced transport choice, including cycling

People on a low income or not in employment typically have fewer transport choices than other people. This can limit access to employment, education, their community, health and care services and other building blocks of good health.

This is because people on a low income or not in employment are less likely to own or have access to a car than people on higher levels of income. Less than half (47%) of respondents to our survey had access to a car, equating to around 5.5 million people. This makes them more reliant on other forms of transport, which can reduce transport choice if these options do not exist or if the services available are unaffordable. For many, car ownership itself is a cause of significant financial hardship which would be relieved given other transport options.

Almost one in five of our survey respondents (18%) did not have access to a car, use public transport regularly, or own or have access to a cycle or e-scooter. This suggests many people on a low income or not in employment are likely to have extremely limited transport choices.

Cycling is one option to increase transport choice and improve health. However, our survey found only 31% of people on a low income or not in employment had access to a cycle, while even fewer used it (12%). A further 2% of respondents use a public cycle rental scheme.

While cycle ownership and usage was low, many people would like to start cycling. Our survey of people on a low income or not in employment found one in five (20%) or approximately 2.3 million respondents do not cycle but would like to start.

Although 37% of people on a low income or not in employment said they did cycle, there were large numbers who cycle very infrequently. 11% of people on a low income or not in employment cycle less than once a year, for example renting a cycle while on holiday.

People lack access to residential cycle parking provision

Existing research shows that if people cannot access cycle parking, especially at home, they are likely to be discouraged from cycling. Therefore, residential cycle parking is a determinant of cycling for people who currently or may in the future cycle.²¹

Just under a third (32%) of people on a low income or not in employment did not have a convenient and secure space to store their cycle at home.²² This equates to 3.7 million people.

This was even higher for:

- People living in London (38%) and the south-east of England (39%)
- Disabled people and people with a long-term health condition (39%)
- Women (34%)
- People from an ethnic minority (36%)

21 Heinen & Buehler, 2019. Bicycle parking: a systematic review of scientific literature on parking behaviour, parking preferences, and their influence on cycling and travel behaviour. *Transport Reviews*, 630-656.

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

Our research found almost half of respondents (47%) believe they would start cycling or cycle more if they had a place to store a cycle at home which was convenient, secure, safe, and accessible.

This equates to around 5.5 million people on a low income or not in employment who believe improving residential cycle parking would help them start cycling or cycle more.

“I’m trying to figure out where I can store it [a cycle] if there’s space. Once I kind of figure that out, then I’ll buy a cycle, which I would mostly use for leisure riding, but sometimes for commuting. But due to the fact that bike theft is quite common, I wouldn’t want be leaving it out in the city for too long.”

Male, aged 25-34, not in employment, does not cycle

Residential cycle parking within the home may be most secure but it is often inconvenient at best or at worst simply inaccessible. Challenges to park a cycle particularly affects people living in smaller properties, including flats, that often lack sufficient storage space outside or inside and typically do not have a front door at street level. 27% of our survey respondents who lived in flats and 8% of respondents overall did not have access to any outside space where they live.

Outdoor private space, such as private or communal gardens are seen as more secure than the street, however they are not without their problems for security, even within sheds or garages. Having a cycle stolen from a garden or shed was frequently raised during our focus groups. The cost of a secure outside unit, for example a cycle storage box, is also a potential barrier for many on a low income or not in employment.

There is a clear need to widen access to residential cycle parking for people on a low income or not in employment to help them start cycling or cycle more.

“I used to have a nice bike and cycled a lot. I then moved into the flat where I live now about three years ago and got rid of the bike because there wasn't anywhere to store it. I've been thinking recently about getting a bike again and I've noticed there's a shed downstairs, actually a bin shed, which has adequate space. It's not ideal, but there's space and I don't think anyone would steal anything from it.”

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

Increased residential cycle parking must meet people's needs

Many people on a low income or those not in employment frequently lack suitable cycle parking options.

Higher quality cycle parking facilities are associated with more cycle use.²³ The type and quality of cycle parking is also an important factor, when it comes to users feeling that their cycle is safe from theft. Good cycle parking facilities have been categorised as being secure, private, affordable, accessible, and convenient amongst others.²⁴

Our own survey found evidence to suggest at minimum, cycle parking at home should be secure, accessible, conveniently located, safe to use and weatherproof. Our findings suggest 23% of people do not have cycle parking which has any of these features. This equates to around 2.6 million people on a low income or not in employment who do not have access to cycle parking that meets any of their common needs. The focus groups also suggested that residential cycle parking should be cheap or free to use and allow electric cycle charging.

23 Heinen & Buehler, 2019. Bicycle parking: a systematic review of scientific literature on parking behaviour, parking preferences, and their influence on cycling and travel behaviour. *Transport Reviews*, 630-656.

24 Leicester City Council, 2023. Cycle storage: Design guidance for applicants. www.leicester.gov.uk/media/qe4gkael/cycle-storage-guidance.pdf

Security

Existing evidence shows theft is more prevalent within neighbourhoods with higher levels of deprivation, with robbery being 2.1 times more prevalent in the 10% most income deprived areas compared to the 10% least deprived neighbourhoods.²⁵

Cycle theft is also more likely to affect the young and disadvantaged as they are less likely to have access to a secure location to lock their cycle.²⁶

Cycle security is therefore likely to be a concern for many people on a low income. 15% of respondents had their own or knew someone who had had their cycle stolen from where they lived in the past 12 months. This equates to around 1.7 million people on a low income or not in employment.

Only 3% of people on a low income or not in employment with access to a cycle told us they store their cycle in a public area, such as a cycle rack or chained to railings. This indicates the reluctance of people to park their cycle in a public space where it is less secure.

We found that only 43% of people have cycle parking which is secure. Disabled people are less likely to have a secure place to park a cycle (37%) than non-disabled people (48%). As are ethnic minorities (31%) in comparison to white people (47%).

People who live in a maisonette (24%) or flat (27%) are less likely to have a secure place to store a cycle than people who live in a detached (60%) or semi-detached house (52%).

25 Trust for London, 2024. Crimes recorded by neighbourhood income deprivation decile in London (2023).
<https://trustforlondon.org.uk/data/crime-and-income-deprivation>

26 Becket, 2023. How can Britain ever embrace cycling if our bikes keep getting stolen? www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/jan/07/britain-cycling-bikes-stolen-police-cycle-theft-crime

“At home, it’s [my bike] in a shed at the moment, which again is easy enough to break into if someone’s that determined they will. I’m just about to move it to like those plastic storage boxes because I need the room in the shed. It’s certainly vulnerable, if they wanted to steal it. It probably does need to be better, but again, it’s quite hard to find suitable storage. You’re looking at an investment of almost cost of the bike to protect the bike. So it doesn’t come into being that viable.”

Male, aged 35-49, employed, cycles

Accessibility

We found that only 38% of people have cycle parking which is accessible. Disabled people (31%) were less likely to have access to accessible cycle parking at home than non-disabled people (43%).

People on low incomes living in small properties, including converted flats tend to lack suitable storage options, which can lead them to consider purchasing folding cycles that tend to be more expensive. Our survey found only 23% of respondents living in flats had access to accessible cycle parking in comparison to 58% of respondents living in detached houses.

There are two main issues in relation to accessibility of home cycle parking. Firstly, access from the street to a parking place, and secondly the accessibility of the parking facility itself.

“I’m not sure I’ve got anywhere to put the cycle. There’s a shared hallway I might get away with storing it in there, but it is shared and could cause an obstruction. I need a sit-down bike because of my health, so it would be a tricycle, which is harder to store.”

Male, aged 50-64, employed, does not cycle

These access issues are exacerbated for disabled people or people with long term health conditions who need convenient, step free access to parking spaces. This is especially the case if people require an e-cycle, adapted cycle, such as a tricycle or hand-cycle or a cargo bike which can be heavier, and for which typically cycle parking is not designed for.

This can further exclude marginalised groups, especially for many disabled people who rely on a cycle as a mobility aid. Wheels for Wellbeing have developed comprehensive guidance for Inclusive Cycle Parking that should be followed.²⁷

“I was just going to say about ease of access. I’ve seen various cycle structures where you sort of have to lift your bike up and things like that. I struggle with a bad back, so lifting things overhead can be a bit of a struggle sometimes.”

Male, aged 35-49, employed, does not cycle

Conveniently located

We found that only half of people on a low income or not in employment (49%) had home cycle parking which is conveniently located, for example within their home, building or close to the entrance if it is an external facility. Where you live has a significant influence on having access to somewhere to park your cycle at home that is conveniently located. For example 74% of respondents living in a detached house had access to conveniently located cycle parking in comparison to only 33% of respondents living in flats.

Our survey also asked people on a low income or not in employment if they were interested in using a cycle hangar (an on-street communal cycle parking facility) if they had access to one. Half of respondents with a cycle (49%) who were interested

²⁷ Wheels for Wellbeing, 2024. Features of Inclusive Cycle Parking.
<https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/14-features-of-inclusive-cycle-parking>

in a hangar told us they would use it if it was 100m from their home, while 17% would use it if it was 200m from their home.

“I think the hangar looks great and it seems affordable and secure. So that looks like a really good one to me. Well, that solves all the problems really, as long as it’s not too far. I mean at the moment, I walk 10, 15 minutes sometimes to get to a bus stop, so I don’t mind walking that far to get to a place.”

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

Provide protection from the weather

Many people mentioned needing somewhere to park their cycle out of the rain to keep it from rusting over time. Therefore, having a cover or shelter was seen as important for protection.

42% of respondents have a place to park a cycle at home that is protected from the weather. Disabled people (36%) and ethnic minorities (29%) were less likely to have weatherproof home cycle parking than non-disabled people (46%) and white people (46%). People who lived in flats (27%) were less likely to have access to cycle parking at home that was protected from the weather than respondents living in detached houses (65%).

“Weatherproofing is very important. A cycle can erode, you need to keep it in as good condition as possible. So it is very important that you’re going to be able to protect it against rain, snow, whatever comes, even sun can damage the cycle. I used to use your standard PVC covers that you can buy, but obviously they’re not a secure solution.”

Male, aged 35-49, employed, cycles

Safe to use

Only 41% of people on a low income or not in employment have access to cycle parking which is safe to use. Some communal cycle parking can feel unsafe for users, for example if it is in a dark basement of a block of flats or if people need to use it on the street after dark. This is reflected in our survey which found that only 26% of respondents who lived in flats had access to cycle parking which was safe to use as opposed to 61% of respondents who lived in a detached house.

Cheap or free to use

On-going provision for the cost of maintenance of the facilities must be considered for communal cycle parking. Cycle hangars, for example, tend to cost people up to £72 per space for a year's rental to cover maintenance and upkeep of the hangar.²⁸

Often a local authority will subsidise spaces for their residents to make them more accessible and attractive although some places charge even more to provide additional income which can be reinvested in improving cycle provision. We asked people on a low income or not in employment if they would pay for a cycle hangar space depending on the cost of the space.

Table 1: Likelihood of uptake in cycle hangar spaces by people with access to a cycle on a low income or not in employment

| Annual cost | Percentage of people who would be 'very likely' to pay for a cycle hangar space |
|-------------|---|
| £72 | 6% |
| £50 | 10% |
| £30 | 22% |
| £15 | 29% |

²⁸ Cyclehoop, 2024. www.cyclehoop.rentals/bikehangar-rentals-faqs

Based on the above findings if a local authority wants to increase participation for cycle hangars, or presumably other types of communal cycle parking it must reduce the cost for people. This would serve to widen access to these schemes for people on a low income or not in employment.

“I like that one [on-street hangar]. I think I probably would do £10 a month if it was secure and my space was always there. I save a lot of money in the week cycling around, probably £20-£25 a week, so it would be worth it. But it would have to be close by. At the moment I can just get my bike from my shed, so I don't want to have to walk far, about two minutes. If I didn't have the shed, then I'd maybe walk about 10 minutes.”

Male, aged 25-34, employed, cycles

Provide charging points for e-cycles

One participant also mentioned the need for cycle parking to include access to a charging point for e-cycles. This would be helpful to ensure people who require e-cycles can charge them easily. However, fires caused by incompatible chargers, modifications to e-bikes, or faulty or counterfeit products which are purchased online are on the rise in the UK.²⁹ Therefore we suggest improvements to regulation are required here first before introducing charging points.

“If you're looking at sort of getting an e-bike, actually having a power source within it [a communal cycle parking store] so you can cycle and actually charge it rather than having to take it home to charge it.”

Male, aged 35-49, employed, does not cycle

29 London Fire Bridge, 2024. #ChargeSafe: E-bike and e-scooters are London's fastest-growing fire trend. www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/lithium-batteries/the-dangers-of-electric-scooter-and-electric-bicycle-batteries

Other barriers to cycling also need addressing

There are many other barriers to cycling which need to be addressed to help people on a low income or not in employment start cycling or cycle more. These include safety from traffic (43%) and the confidence to cycle (26%) as well as being able to afford the cost of a cycle (20%) and cycle security (14%) when parking away from your home.



Case study: Nicky, West Midlands

For Nicky, who's a retired nurse, a lack of storage at home and in her area is a barrier to her getting a cycle of her own.

Nicky, who lives in Oldbury in the West Midlands, feels like she's "missing out" when it comes to cycling as she is unable to join her daughter and her husband on bike rides.

Her family use a bike rack in their back garden to store their bikes but as Nicky has osteoarthritis, she says she would struggle to lift a cycle out of the garden and through her house.

Nicky said secure on-street storage in her area would encourage her to use a cycle to get to her local leisure centre and to join her family on bike rides. She said:

“With my condition I struggle to walk long distances. With cycling, it's not hard on your joints so I think having secure storage to get my own bike would open up a lot for me.

“I would consider getting storage on my drive at the front of my house – as long as it's good quality, lockable and easy to get bikes in and out.

“Either that or street storage is really appealing, there's so much space around here - it would benefit the rest of the community too. As well as ease - the security aspect of things is also important to me.”



Recommendations

“I think I would probably become insufferable and cycle everywhere [if I had better storage and got a cycle]. I would cycle to work. If it was a bike suitable to do everything, I’d use it for exercise, I’d use it for transport, you know, I’d use it as much as I could really.”

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

Residential cycle parking could be improved across the UK for people on a low income or not in employment. This would unlock cycling for many people.

We make three recommendations and nine actions to help more people have access to secure, accessible and attractive cycle parking:

- **Recommendation 1:** Local authorities should increase residential cycle parking provision, prioritising flats and areas of deprivation.
- **Recommendation 2:** Governments across the UK should put in place standards, investment and regulations to improve residential cycle parking.
- **Recommendation 3:** Governments across the UK should work together with local authorities to tackle other barriers to cycling for people on a low income or not in employment.

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

“It [cycle parking] is definitely the biggest thing because like I said, my friend could literally drop off the bike tomorrow if we had somewhere safe [and then we would use the cycle].”

Female, aged 25-34, not in employment, does not cycle

Actions:

- **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.

Action 1.1: Local authorities and housing associations should provide communal cycle parking for flats and in areas of deprivation

Our research, alongside other evidence,³⁰ indicates a lack of adequate residential cycle parking provision exists for people on a low income or not in employment, especially for those who are living in flats. More and better residential cycle parking provision would help to remove barriers faced by many people to cycle.

Research suggests people would welcome the provision of secure residential cycle parking and that this could tackle the current gap in cycle parking provision for those who are young or disadvantaged.³¹

30 Clean Cities, 2023. London Secure Cycle Parking Study. <https://cleancitiescampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/London-Secure-Cycle-Parking-Study-November-2023-final-reissue-161124.pdf>

31 Becket, 2023. How can Britain ever embrace cycling if our bikes keep getting stolen? www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/jan/07/britain-cycling-bikes-stolen-police-cycle-theft-crime

Local authorities should therefore prioritise installing communal secure cycle provision for residents on a low income or not in employment through the provision of secure communal cycle parking solutions, especially for flats and in areas of multiple deprivation.

This should include retrofitting flats to install communal cycle parking areas as well as introducing communal cycle parking options, such as cycle hangars for street fronted properties, prioritising areas of multiple deprivation.

Some local authorities already offer their own schemes, such as low-cost cycle parking sheds on estates, or on-street hangars, which are available to rent. This support needs to be scaled up across the country.

In London a recent study found that there were an estimated 39,500 secure cycle hangar spaces, with a current waiting list of 60,000.³² The market in London shows a clear demand for these types of solutions although we need to ensure that as they are rolled out there is a focus on people living in areas of multiple deprivation or in high-density dwellings, such as flats.

Another example of city parking provision is the 36 “*Buurtstallingen*” or indoor cycle parking facilities which are offered by the city of Utrecht. These facilities are managed by the



Photo: An on-street cycle storage hangar in Edinburgh.

32 Clean Cities, 2023. London Secure Cycle Parking Study. <https://cleancitiescampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/London-Secure-Cycle-Parking-Study-November-2023-final-reissue-161124.pdf>

city and are designed for those in residential areas without any home cycle parking facilities.³³

We found a quarter of people on a low income or not in employment (26%) who currently do not have access to a cycle would be likely to start cycling or cycle more across the UK if they had access to a cycle hangar. Positively 6% of respondents, who currently have access to a cycle, already had access to a cycle hangar or similar parking space.

Even people who had access to a cycle see the benefits of secure communal parking provision. 35% of respondents who had access to a cycle were interested in using a cycle hangar to store their cycle. While another 21% were not sure.

One area of controversy in some areas is the need to remove car parking spaces to free up space for communal cycle parking on the street. We found our focus group participants were generally supportive of providing on-street hangars in place of parking spaces. Some understood that cycle parking is more efficient than car parking provision and therefore benefited both people cycling and driving.

The London Borough of Lambeth's Kerbside Strategy is actively exploring how to make more efficient use of kerbside space across streets in the borough for its residents including by improving secure resident cycle parking provision.

33 ECF, 2024. Bicycle parking in the Netherlands. https://ecf.com/sites/ecf.com/files/Bezema.M_Bicycle_parking_in_the_Netherlands.pdf

Case study: Transforming cycle parking in Dundee

Sustrans' Walking and Cycling Index in 2021 found 53% of people in Dundee said secure cycle parking at home would help them cycle more.³⁴ This is especially pronounced for people in flats with little room to store a cycle, or who may not be able to use stairs.

Since then, Dundee City Council partnered with Cyclehoop to deliver a trial of 40 "Bikehangar" units, each capable of storing six cycles securely on the street nearby. The council also secured funding from Cycling Scotland to subsidise renting a space in the units down from £72 a year to £11.

Units are now located throughout Dundee with a focus on more deprived areas and housing types less likely to have good quality parking options. The units are extremely popular. Several of them are at full capacity with waiting lists of people wanting to rent a space.

“We are talking about replacing the vehicle for one person with the vehicles for multiple people, that might be three or four people, maybe with one parking space, maybe with efficient design, it might even fit more people.”

Male, aged 16-24, employed, does not cycle

Action 1.2: Local authorities and housing associations should increase awareness of residential cycle parking amongst local communities and tenants' groups

Some people on a low income or not in employment lacked awareness about cycle hangars (12%), while others had concerns over how secure cycle hangars are (15%).

³⁴ Sustrans, 2024. Walking and Cycling Index Dundee 2023. www.sustrans.org.uk/the-walking-and-cycling-index/dundee-walking-and-cycling-index

Cycle hangars and similar devices are relatively new and not yet installed in many areas. Local authorities will need to communicate the benefits of cycle parking options such as cycle hangers.

Some participants also said that it was important to help people understand how best to store and secure their cycle both at home and out and about, for example the benefit of investing in a good cycle lock.

“And also, what locks you use - to not use those cheap ones where you can just cut through and maybe get something more of a new lock, which is a theft deterrent.”

Female, aged 16-24, student and in part-time employment, cycles

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

“I have balance problems, so I'd need a tricycle. I have looked into it and they're more expensive than a standard bike. And then storage is an issue. I live in a flat in a converted house, so there's not much space to store it inside. I might need to get a folding one, but they're even more expensive, and I'm on a limited budget.”

Male, aged 50-64, not in employment, does not cycle

Actions:

- **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.

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

Across UK governments residential cycle parking guidance exists within some national design standards, for example Cycling by Design in Scotland, LTN 1/20 in England and the Active Travel Act Guidance in Wales. More detailed local guidance from individual authorities such as the Cambridge³⁵ or the Leicester Cycle Parking Guide³⁶ also exist.

All UK nations should review their national guidance for residential cycle parking. New guidance should emphasise the need to provide cycle parking for properties like flats which are less likely to have existing parking facilities. New guidance should also cover:

1. Security – guidance to ensure cycle parking is secure to combat cycle theft.
2. Accessible – this should address ease of access from the street to a parking place, and the accessibility of the parking facility itself including for non-standard cycles. We recommend following the excellent guidance developed by Wheels for Wellbeing for Inclusive Cycle Parking.³⁷
3. Conveniently located – nearby where people live for ease of access.

35 Cambridge City Council, 2010. Cycle Parking Guide for New Residential Developments. www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/6771/cycle-parking-guide-for-new-residential-developments.pdf

36 Leicester City Council, 2023. Cycle Storage: Design Guidance for applicants. www.leicester.gov.uk/media/qe4gkael/cycle-storage-guidance.pdf

37 Wheels for Wellbeing, 2024. Features of Inclusive Cycle Parking. <https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/14-features-of-inclusive-cycle-parking>

4. Weatherproof – parking should provide weather protection to ensure cycles are not damaged over time.
5. Safe to use – users of communal cycle parking should feel safe while using amenities, for example ensuring they are located in brightly lit areas.
6. Cheap or free to use – to widen participation, facilities should be free or subsidised.
7. Provision for e-cycle charging – as electric cycles rise in popularity, parking needs to be equipped with bike charging facilities.

“I’m worried about cycle thefts. I know a couple of people have mentioned already, one of my housemates had a bike and her bike got stolen last year. It is just something to be conscious of as well. So I wouldn’t want to buy something really expensive because I haven’t got any storage inside at the minute.”

Female, 16-24, student, does not cycle

Action 2.2: Ensure local authorities have access to long-term funding for sustainable transport that can be used to improve residential cycle parking

Local authorities have faced significant financial pressures recently which has meant many have struggled to meet the demand for statutory services, let alone improving the provision of non-statutory services such as cycle parking.^{38,39}

Very few governments across the UK fund national schemes for cycling parking. One scheme that does exist is in Scotland.

38 Kenyon & Clarke-Ezzidio, 2024. Council bankruptcy tracker: authorities under increasing financial strain. www.newstatesman.com/spotlight/economic-growth/regional-development/2024/01/council-bankruptcy-tracker-local-government-authorities-finances

39 Local Government Association, 2024. Save local services: Council pressures explained. www.local.gov.uk/about/campaigns/save-local-services/save-local-services-council-pressure-explained

The Residential Cycle Storage and Parking Fund is funded by Transport Scotland. This fund aims to tackle the issue of a third of Scottish households living in accommodation without access to “suitable cycle storage”. It allows funding to local authorities and other partners to install secure cycle parking for residents of high-rise buildings.⁴⁰

Another scheme in Scotland is the Social Housing Partnership Fund. It offers registered social landlords, which are predominately housing associations and local authorities, up to £25,000 per site to provide facilities that support walking and cycling for their residents.⁴¹ Governments across the UK should follow the lead of Scotland in prioritising improving residential cycle parking.

We believe local transport authorities should be supported by national programmes to improve residential cycle parking. Another option is that they are provided with long-term devolved funding for improving walking, wheeling and cycling which they can use to improve cycle parking. Some authorities already have access to this funding, for example the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements for combined authorities in England. However, this is not the case elsewhere. All local transport authorities should have access to long-term funding to improve sustainable transport including walking, wheeling and cycling.

“The new flats were built about three or four years ago. But there isn’t any kind of storage and it’s just made me kind of think, what’s the point in getting a bike?”

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

⁴⁰ Cycling Scotland, 2024. Residential Cycle Storage and Parking Fund. <https://cycling.scot/what-we-do/cycling-friendly/cycle-storage-and-parking-fund>

⁴¹ Pettycur Consulting Ltd, 2021. Residential Cycle Storage. <https://cycling.scot/mediaLibrary/other/english/Residential-Cycle-Storage-Report-final.pdf>

Action 2.3: Reform planning regulations to ensure all new homes have access to adequate cycle parking

One way of tackling the lack of cycle parking is by providing it in new housing developments. Governments across the UK should make good quality residential cycle parking facilities compulsory for all new housing developments. This would mirror the requirement for electric vehicle charging in England.

13% of our survey respondents have been put off buying a cycle due to accommodation restrictions, for example not having a secure, convenient place to store a cycle. This equates to 1.5 million people on a low income or not in employment. Providing cycling provision within new housing is attractive for potential residents and responds to demand. Additionally, 6% of survey respondents have been put off renting or buying accommodation due to a lack of cycle parking.

In England the National Planning Policy Framework suggests planning policies should “provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking.”⁴² This is very weak and doesn’t define best practice or clearly define how secure cycle parking should be delivered. In Scotland planning guidance is stronger. National Planning Framework 4⁴³ suggests development proposals that have “safe, secure and convenient cycle parking to meet the needs of users and which is more conveniently located than car parking” will be supported.

The EU has recently enacted the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive⁴⁴ which states that there should be a provision of two cycle parking spaces for every residential building unit in

42 MHCLG, 2023. National Planning Policy Framework.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669a25e9a3c2a28abb50d2b4/NPPF_December_2023.pdf

43 Scottish Government, 2023. National Planning Framework 4.
www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4

44 EC, 2024. Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.
https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-efficiency/energy-efficient-buildings/energy-performance-buildings-directive_en

new residential buildings. However, there are concerns as to how these standards will be transposed into national law and that the requirements leave too many loopholes, for example standards, so cycle parking spaces may not be inclusive.⁴⁵

Similarly, within England, LTN 1/20 suggests a requirement of one cycle space provided per bedroom. However, this is only a suggestion and is not a mandatory prerequisite to housing approvals.⁴⁶ This issue is exemplified in Scotland where there has been some unwillingness among developers to provide cycle parking space in lieu of additional flats in Section 75 planning agreements.⁴⁷

Governments across the UK should at the very least strengthen planning guidance or regulate to ensure any new residential development or those undergoing major renovation should provide at least two secure and accessible cycle parking spaces for every residential building unit.

It must be acknowledged that planning guidance or legislation would only apply to new build properties and does not affect existing housing provision. Furthermore, new builds are typically more expensive to purchase, with the average cost of a new build property in the UK being £367,219 in November 2021 compared to £264,684 for existing homes.⁴⁸ This means it is still critical to increase investment in residential cycling parking across the UK's existing housing stock.

45 ECF, 2024. <https://ecf.com/news-and-events/news/default-two-bicycle-parking-spaces-apartment-rubberstamped-eu-law-takes-final>

46 Turvec, 2023. UK Cycle Parking Standards. <https://turvec.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Guide-to-UK-Cycle-Parking-Standards.pdf>

47 Pettycur Consulting Ltd, 2021. Residential Cycle Storage. <https://cycling.scot/mediaLibrary/other/english/Residential-Cycle-Storage-Report-final.pdf>

48 Goodman, 2022. New-build property prices rising twice as fast as cost of older homes. www.independent.co.uk/money/new-build-property-price-rise-b2051111.html

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

The previous UK Government recently consulted on changing planning laws to make it possible to install cycle stores in front gardens in England.⁴⁹ Scotland already has permitted development rules for cycle parking units to allow them to be installed at the front of a house.

Our survey found 67% of people on a low income or not in employment supported these changes in comparison to only 10% of respondents who opposed them. 25% of respondents, who had a front garden, said a cycle store in their front garden would be useful for them to start cycling or cycle more. While 7% already have a cycle store in their front garden.

English homeowners and renters have faced prosecution on the erection of cycle sheds in front gardens without planning permission. Any planning permission incurs additional cost and can be a long-term process. This is likely to put people off and hinder cycling.

We recommend, governments across the UK ensure permitted development allows cycle parking units to be installed on the principal elevation of all dwellings. This needs to include both houses using their front garden but also extended for dwellings without a private garden. This would prevent excluding people in residential apartment blocks.

The need to install accessible, secure cycle parking in front of the principal elevation of a property is especially important to disabled cycle users who use larger or adapted cycles.

⁴⁹ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-various-permitted-development-rights-consultation/changes-to-various-permitted-development-rights-consultation

“If you are somewhere where you need planning permission, obviously that’s a non-starter, like the amount of faff you’d be going through for that is you’d have to really want to do it.”

Male, aged 16-24, student, does not cycle

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

“And I also think like, not only where I live, but then where I’m going to drop it off at the next location.”

Female, aged 16-24, student and in part-time employment, cycles

Actions:

- **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.

Action 3.1: Local authorities should audit and improve public cycle parking

Participants stressed that good cycle parking needed to extend beyond home and be provided at key destinations such as high streets, workplaces and public transport interchanges. 14% of respondents had their own or knew someone who had their cycle stolen while out and about in the past 12 months.

52% of respondents would start cycling, or cycle more if they had a place to store a cycle while out and about which was convenient, secure, safe and accessible.

It is therefore critical that local authorities understand cycle parking provision when out and about. This should include regular auditing of cycle parking to better understand areas with poor provision and investment to improve cycle parking in areas where people are most likely to cycle to. Many of the recommendations for residential cycle parking will apply elsewhere including secure, accessible, convenient and safe cycle parking.

“It’s all well and good that you have nice and secure storage in your home or a shared one, but you need good storage at places like train stations. If you don’t, what’s the point of having good storage at home.”

Male, aged 35-49, employed, does not cycle

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

The cost of a cycle was mentioned by 20% of the respondents as a barrier to cycling or cycling more. Cost and secure parking of a cycle go hand-in-hand, especially for people on a low income or those not in employment. Our focus groups told us secure and effective cycle parking access could help to encourage people who are considering cycling to purchase a cycle and support people who already cycle to cycle more.

Governments across the UK should introduce voucher schemes that help people on a low income or not in employment purchase a cycle and accessories. These people are currently unable to gain financial support to purchase a cycle and accessories unlike other people who can access the Cycle to Work scheme through their employer and receive a discount of up to 42%.

Sustrans, with the support of the Financial Fairness Trust have undertaken an in-depth study in this area to understand the demand for financial support to help people purchase a cycle and the costs and benefits of doing so.⁵⁰

Action 3.3: Governments across the UK need to work together with local authorities to improve cycling infrastructure

More needs to be done to improve cycling infrastructure in areas of multiple deprivation to improve safety, ideally by introducing cycle paths physically separated from traffic on roads, improving traffic-free, off-road routes and ensuring local residential streets have reduced traffic and speed limits. We suggest focusing on areas of multiple deprivation where existing public transport provision is poor to ensure people are not isolated and increase transport choice.

“While cycle storage at each house would incentivise people to cycle, this needs to be part of a grander scheme to improve cycling infrastructure in a local area in general. Without the infrastructure, improved storage will be useless.”

Male, aged 16-24, employed, does not cycle

⁵⁰ Sustrans, 2024. Cycling Opportunity - The case for a cycle voucher scheme for people on low incomes and not in employment (forthcoming).



Appendix 1: Research methodology

Overall approach

This research project aimed to:

- Understand current residential cycle parking provision for people on a low income or not in employment.
- Understand what people on a low income or not in employment require from residential cycle parking to meet their needs.
- Develop solutions to improve residential cycle parking.

We designed the research with quantitative and qualitative approaches to get an in-depth understanding of people's barriers, needs and ideas to improve residential cycle parking.

This included:

1. A rapid evidence review of existing evidence and insight.
2. An independent, representative survey of over 1,000 people across the UK of working age who were on a low income or not in employment.
3. Two online focus groups composed of 18 people from across the UK of working age who were on a low income or not in employment.

Evidence review

The evidence review focused on the following research questions:

1. What evidence exists around the provision of cycle parking at home across the UK, including specifically for people on a low income and those of working age but not in education or employment? This included a review of:
 - a. Factors that good home cycle parking should have, e.g. accessibility, safety, security, weather, convenience/location
 - b. Different property types and a greater chance people on a low or no income will live in a smaller home, often a flat.
 - c. Security – crime rates etc in areas of higher deprivation
2. What is the impact of these barriers:
 - a. For people on low incomes/ not in employment?
 - b. For local authorities and broader society?
3. What is the scale of this problem, in terms of the number and demographics of people affected and the economic impact on individuals and wider society
4. What home cycle parking schemes exist for people on low incomes and not in employment and challenges for government when seeking to provide cycle parking for people on low incomes/ not in employment?

User survey

Sustrans commissioned YouGov to undertake a representative survey of people across the UK who were aged between 16 and 64 years, and either not in employment or on a low-income (defined as £17,000 pa or less).

This survey took place between February and March 2024 and 1,031 people responded. This included:

- 58% female in comparison to 42% male.
- Concentrated in age groups 16-29 (36%) and 50-64 (35%). More people in these age groups are likely to be in low-income or part time work or are not in employment, for example students (16-29), or retirees and people with a long-term health condition (50-64).
- People spread across all regions and nations within the UK.
- 41% self-identified as being disabled or having long-term illness. This is double the UK population average which is 24%.⁵¹ In the UK disabled people are more likely to not be in employment or on a lower income.
- 79% self-identifying as white, while 21% identified as ethnic minorities. The latest census found 18% of the population of the UK belong to a Black, Asian, Mixed, or other ethnic group.⁵²
- Over a quarter of people on a low-income work either part time or full time (26%), while three-quarters were not in employment (74%). Students comprised the single largest group representing 23% of the total sample, followed by part time workers (19%) retirees (15%), and those not in work due to having a long-term illness or health condition (13%).

51 DWP, 2023. Family Resources Survey 2021 to 2022. www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2021-to-2022

52 ONS, 2024. Census 2021. www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/bulletins/ethnicgroupenglandandwales/census2021

Focus groups

Sustrans commissioned Public Perspectives Ltd to recruit and facilitate two online focus groups with participants from across the UK attending. All participants were of working age and on low incomes (defined as under £17,000 per annum) or not in work.

The focus groups were with people that cited parking issues as a potential barrier to cycling or cycling more, including a mix of participants that own a cycle and those that do not.

The focus aimed to complement other research methods, generating personal stories and case studies, exploring the following:

- Existing travel behaviour, and desired behaviours.
- Barriers to transport and cycling, especially around access to a cycle, financial behaviours and cycle parking (and how these were overcome for those that own a cycle).
- How people perceive the benefits of having a cycle.
- Existing cycle parking people use or could use if they had a cycle.
- How cycle parking could be improved and the impact for people.

The focus groups were conducted online, using Zoom, allowing a geographical spread of participants from across the UK. They took place on the evenings of the 23rd and 24th April 2024.

