

# A beginner's guide to engaging new audiences: Working with students (18+)



## Why work with this audience?

Embedding the low-cost and wider benefits of active travel with students increases the likelihood that cycling for everyday journeys will continue into later life.

Many regular journeys will be relatively short and easy to convert to cycling because students tend to live close to universities and colleges.

Large cohorts of new students at the start of every academic year, means substantial participants at events.



## What are the barriers?

- Cycle theft, or concerns about cycle theft.
- Limited or no cycle maintenance skills.
- Cycle repairs being unaffordable.
- Low knowledge of local cycling infrastructure and routes.
- Road safety concerns and feeling vulnerable compared to other road users.
- Perceived difficulty in carrying things such as bags while cycling.
- Unwillingness to cycle in poor weather.



## What can I do to help?

- Incorporate information on effective locking and university bike storage facilities into events.
- Signpost to sources of affordable second-hand bikes, university hire schemes, and public hire schemes which may have student discounts.
- Incorporate local cycle routes into events, or at least mention them.
- Signpost to cycling specific navigation apps.
- Focus on basic skills like how to fix a puncture, oil a chain, pump up tyres.
- Share tips on carrying belongings on a bike, and for cycling in the rain.
- Focus on promoting the massive benefits of cycling, such as low cost transport but also to fight climate change. Most students will be restructuring their lives, so its an excellent opportunity to introduce cycling and help them form new habits.



## How can I reach this audience?

- Partnering with universities will be essential, try reaching out to their sustainability teams and student societies.
- Online promotion via university channels.
- Run events on a university campus or at student halls/areas of student housing.
- Avoid timing clashes with lectures; evenings, weekends or Wednesday afternoons can work.
- Run events during term time and avoid exam periods.
- Think about what benefits of cycling might appeal most, focus could be on cost, speed and convenience, exercise, environmental considerations or health and wellbeing.

