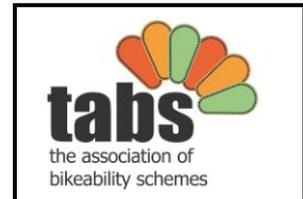


Bikeability for unaccompanied asylum seeking children in Kent

Delivered by: Kent County Council (KCC) Folkestone, Kent.

Further info: Peter Wedlake, Cycle Training Team Leader, KCC Peter.wedlake@kent.gov.uk



Context:

Due to its location, Kent is currently accommodating large numbers of asylum seeking child migrants, who have arrived in UK unaccompanied. Many receive support from Kent Refugee Action Network (KRAN), who in liaison with the Education & Social services (Fostering) authorities made an urgent request for Cycle training for them. Some of the youths were already cycling with no appreciation of the Highway Code nor the risks involved. Many others were actively seeking bicycles as a means of transport, with nationalities such as Eritreans, demonstrating strong cycling traditions. Ages ranged from 12 to 17 years, and language abilities differed greatly, with some speaking very little English. It was not possible to ascertain any previous cycling experience or training. Hence none was assumed.

"Hills and wind are everywhere in Folkestone, but these did nothing to deter the spirits of young people who have faced long and difficult journeys across Africa and Europe.

Our instructors had to be adaptable and creative, using those 'English speakers' in the group to translate where necessary and using lots of demonstration and paired riding to reinforce and evidence outcomes.

The energy levels and physical strength of the boys was evident and provided at times an extra challenge for our instructors! Many of the cyclists were already using some very challenging road infrastructure in their daily lives so Instructors were keen to ride these locations with them to evidence that they were employing appropriate strategies.

The sessions all ended with feedback, including the use of interpreters when possible, and the presentation of certificates and badges, photographs, handshakes and good luck wishes exchanged between all concerned."

Pat Jarman NSIT, Kent County Council.

Objectives & Actions: A programme was developed following the National Standard, and organised on Level 3 guidelines for Student to Instructor ratios. i.e. 1:3 maximum. Groups were organised in same native language groups (as far as possible) and some assistance from Interpreters was secured. No skills were assumed with all sessions starting at Level 1.

Lessons learnt / 'top tips':

Interpreters are too expensive and not necessary for all the training. They came in for the final hour of each day to assist Instructors with debriefing and consolidating learning.

