

Social Prescribing Active Travel

How Environments Encourage us to Move More

How can we socially prescribe walking, cycling wheeling?

- Funded by Active Travel England, the Department for Transport Active Travel Pilot (November 2022–July 2026) focused on Burmantofts, Richmond Hill, and Harehills, targeting areas with the greatest barriers to physical activity.
- The programme was built on evidence that increasing movement improves health and wellbeing, and addressed a gap in social prescribing by promoting referrals to walking and cycling opportunities.
- Led by Leeds City Council Public Health and Active Leeds, with support from Social Prescribing Pathways across primary and secondary care, the pilot aimed to increase participation in active travel.

Environmental improvements and community co-production were central, including the development of local urban trails designed to encourage everyday activity and support community engagement.

Aim

Place based approach to improve physical and mental health and wellbeing

Strengthen social connections and community

Improve referral pathways from social prescribing to active travel (walking, wheeling, cycling)

Encourage activity by making streets safe & accessible

931 participants for cycling



10,000+ Engaged with Community Events

Iqra's Story

After losing her husband in a serious car accident, Iqra faced isolation, low confidence, and long-term physical challenges. Encouraged by family, she joined a weekly walking group in Harehills.

Over time, the supportive environment helped her rebuild confidence, improve her wellbeing, and process grief. Iqra values the fresh air, cultural connections, and shared experiences, which remind her she is not alone.

The group has given her a safe space to open up, helping her feel stronger, more connected, and hopeful again.

7 Step Intervention

1) Communication: Access trusted information via the Walk It. Ride It campaign.

2) Physical & Social Environments: Create safe, clean, and traffic free spaces.

3) Urban Trails: Co-designed routes with wayfinding, rest areas, and toilet access.

4) First Steps to Walking and Cycling: strengthen the role of community partners to provide walking/ cycling activities, including access to equipment and a buddy programme.

5) Learn to Ride: Employ a Walk It. Ride It activator to support cycle providers and offer inclusive cycling.

6) Bike Libraries/Hubs: Use existing cycle infrastructure in East Leeds to promote cycling.

7) Bike Loan: Provide affordable, accessible options for active travel to work and skills opportunities.

“You see very few ladies out on a bike wearing a hijab, we think there should be more.”

27 participants for inclusive cycling

