



## Choose Freedom survey – Report

BikeRight!

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*The Choose Freedom project is wholly funded by Department for Transport through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund*

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## **Key points**

The Choose Freedom survey revealed very high satisfaction amongst those who engaged with the project.<sup>1</sup> The most popular activity in terms of attendance was cycle maintenance training and the least popular was travel advice.

Practical support to overcome travel barriers to work, training or volunteering was valued highly.

Equally highly rated were intangible outcomes of becoming more active and feeling more healthy.

There was significant support for the continuation of the Choose Freedom menu of activities.

Amongst respondents, 12 new cyclists had been created, equating to an estimated carbon saving of 650kg per person per year.

## **Recommendations**

That the Choose Freedom project in 2013-14:

1. Takes steps to meet on-going and increasing demand for the project's services
2. Develops a progressive programme for beneficiaries, to deepen and broaden the benefits they can gain from the project in their path to employability
3. Prioritises on-road cycle training, to convert new cyclists to adopting commuting habits
4. Develops a system for gaining feedback from travel pass beneficiaries
5. Promotes the advantages to young adults of active travel in its engagement activities and marketing messages
6. Continues to work with partners to maximise positive outcomes for beneficiaries
7. Continues to overcome negative perceptions caused by weather and lack of confidence

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<sup>1</sup> This report is based on the responses by 46 respondents, representing 14% of the total beneficiaries for 2012 - 13

## **1. Introduction: Choose Freedom North Liverpool**

“Have you ever fancied a job that seemed too far away? Want to go to college but can't afford to get there? Fancy trying out active forms of travel but haven't got the kit or the confidence?

In Kirkdale and Everton Choose Freedom aims to improve access to employment, training or education opportunities across Merseyside and beyond.”<sup>2</sup>

Choose Freedom is delivered by BikeRight! The project was commissioned by Liverpool City Council in February 2012 and is wholly funded by the Department for Transport through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

In June 2013, a survey of Choose Freedom participants and beneficiaries was undertaken to gain feedback on the Choose Freedom activities. The survey was available online<sup>3</sup> and in paper format. In total, 46 survey responses were received. 26 people responded to the Survey Monkey online version, of which 22 people fully completed the survey and 20 people responded to the paper version.

This represents 14% of the 330 beneficiaries. It appears that the majority of respondents were engaged in community active travel or cycling-related activities. There were no responses from the 27 beneficiaries who had received a bus pass as support for a job start in the previous 12 months. (It should be noted that since the job centres had been issued their own stock of bus passes by Merseytravel, this aspect of the project was much smaller than originally anticipated).

## **2. Demographics and location of survey respondents.**

Slightly more women (54%) responded than men, and the highest proportion of survey respondents were aged 51-60 and 31-40. Twice as many women as men were from the 31-40 age bracket.

70% were residents of L3, L4 or L5 postcode areas. The remainder work in Kirkdale or Everton, or are stakeholders of the Choose Freedom project.

Nearly half (47%) of respondents said they were not in work. Of the remainder, 16% described their main activity as “part-time work” and 37% as “full-time work”.

Five respondents (13%) considered themselves to have a disability and two were from a Black or Minority Ethnic heritage.

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.bikeright.co.uk/freedom/>

<sup>3</sup> The survey is still available online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZTBDX99>

### 3. Survey results

#### Choose Freedom services

The most commonly accessed Choose Freedom services were bike maintenance training (45.2%), cycle skills training (30.9%) and bike rides (26.2%). This result reflects the fact that the cohort of respondents were largely drawn from the community activity strand of the Choose Freedom project who are regularly involved, rather than those who had received a one-off intervention. Future surveys should attempt to redress this imbalance.

One respondent had received training and subsequent employment with BikeRight! as a cycle instructor.

The most popular activities identified for future Choose Freedom provision were bike rides (57%), bike maintenance training (45%), community walks (33%) and on-road cycle-training (31%).

Nearly three-quarters of the survey respondents stated that the Choose Freedom sessions had helped to improve their health or be more active (71%) and over half reported that the sessions had helped them get out and meet other people (52%).

Comments were:

- *“Experience and training for new job”*
- *“To develop confidence”*
- *“My health was already poor and got worse before I could really get into cycling but the courses were brilliant.”*

When asked what would encourage people to cycle, walk or use public transport more often, a significant number of respondents identified travel advice/information on what routes to take (40%), having access to a bike and having somewhere to go (31% each) as key factors. This indicates an on-going demand for Choose Freedom services.

Two respondents already use sustainable forms of transport regularly

- *“I use public transport anyway. I'd cycle more if my health were better”*
- *“I cycle everywhere, and only use public transport when unavoidable.”*

Infrastructure and environmental factors identified as significant were safer routes (50%), cheaper forms (26%), and slower traffic (20%). Choose Freedom's partnership work with Sustrans and the 20 Effect campaign, and involvement with the Liverpool Cycle Forum are significant here.

The majority response (57%) that good weather affects people's decisions about active travel indicates the need for marketing and project promotion to present positive images of walking, cycling and using public transport all-year round and in all weathers.

### **Benefits from contact with Choose Freedom**

The vast majority of the survey respondents strongly agreed that their engagement with the project had a number of positive outcomes. One had got a job, four had become volunteers, and two had started college/training. Other features were:

- "I've learnt new skills" (92%)
- "I am more motivated" (92%)
- "I've met more people" (86%)
- "I've become more active" (84%)
- "I feel more healthy" (78%).

20% of respondents felt much more healthy after their involvement with Choose Freedom activities.

### **Mode of travel before and after involvement with Choose Freedom.**

The survey indicated that there was a 150% increase in people cycling to work, voluntary work or college following their involvement with Choose Freedom.

Before engaging with the Choose Freedom project, half the respondents used car or taxi to travel to work, voluntary work or college. Afterwards this reduced to one third. The numbers who took the bus or walked also reduced, while those who cycled increased from 21% to over 50%. Whilst small numbers are involved, evidence of 12 new cyclists shows that the project is being effective. Using the methodology developed by Cycling England in 2008, this conversion equates to a benefit to the economy of £4,560, and carbon benefit could be estimated as 650kg per person per year.<sup>4</sup>

### **Satisfaction with the Choose Freedom project**

Reported satisfaction with Choose Freedom was very high. 100% of respondents stated that they would recommend (or have already done so) Choose Freedom to family, friends or colleagues.

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<sup>4</sup> Cycling England 2008 – a new cyclist who rides at least 3 times per week will provide health and other economic benefits of £380 over 30 years. Carbon benefit is estimated assuming a small car emission of 130g per kilometre; and non-car travel of 5,000 km p.a. per person

#### **4. Conclusion**

The Choose Freedom project has engaged with 330 beneficiaries in North Liverpool, who have received a range of interventions. The small number who responded to the survey indicated high satisfaction with the services they had received, and give an evidence base for the project to develop both the range of services it offers, and the opportunities to work towards employability and carbon reduction outcomes over the longer term.

During 2013-14 the project needs to be laying the foundations for the on-going sustainability of active travel and sustainable transport practices beyond 2015.