

What cyclists tell us about what inspires them to cycle and transforms their cycling

Powerful stories of lived experience as role models and guidance for policy in Spokes Competition entries

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WHAT? Stories of lived experience can be powerful tools for persuading others to change behaviour because they appeal to people's personal values and emotions. Spokes collected 74 stories from a wide range of cyclists about what inspired them to cycle and/or transformed their cycling experience. The common themes (and absence of others) provide useful insights into how active travel can be encouraged as well as powerful policy pointers.

Cycling on car-free paths even for a short distance means I can relax

HOW? Spokes ran summer competitions in 2018 and 2019 which were open to anyone, widely publicised on social media and cyclists' networks, and offered prizes to a dozen best entries.

- 2019 competition: What inspired you to start cycling?
- 2018 competition: What transformed your cycling life?

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- The study shows that what motivates cycling **uptake** differs from what encourages existing cyclists to cycle more. Social encouragement and individuals' personal circumstance **started people cycling**, whereas material improvements to the cycling experience **got cyclists to cycle more**
- The study confirms that cyclists experience behaviour change motivators from across the ISM (Scottish Government behaviour change) model, and that a **combination of these makes change more likely**
- The stories offer powerful role models from a broad range of people

My frustration with the lack of action on climate crisis began to boil

What inspired people to start cycling?

SOCIAL and INDIVIDUAL motivators

Others providing an example and/or encouragement	13
Life cycle changes (changing job, medical event, becoming parent)	5
Environmental concerns	4
Mental health benefits of cycling	4
Positive experience of trying cycling	4

What 'transformed' cycling?

MATERIAL improvements to the cycling experience

Improved cycling infrastructure	7
Bike improvements or accessories (e.g. trailer, pannier, gears)	7
Getting an e-bike	6

This table shows only the reasons given as main motivation by 4 or more entrants.

- They also provide strong pointers to how active travel initiatives are experienced by cyclists and to what helped (and hindered) them in taking up cycling or cycling more



What started as a simple desire to get the kids active ...

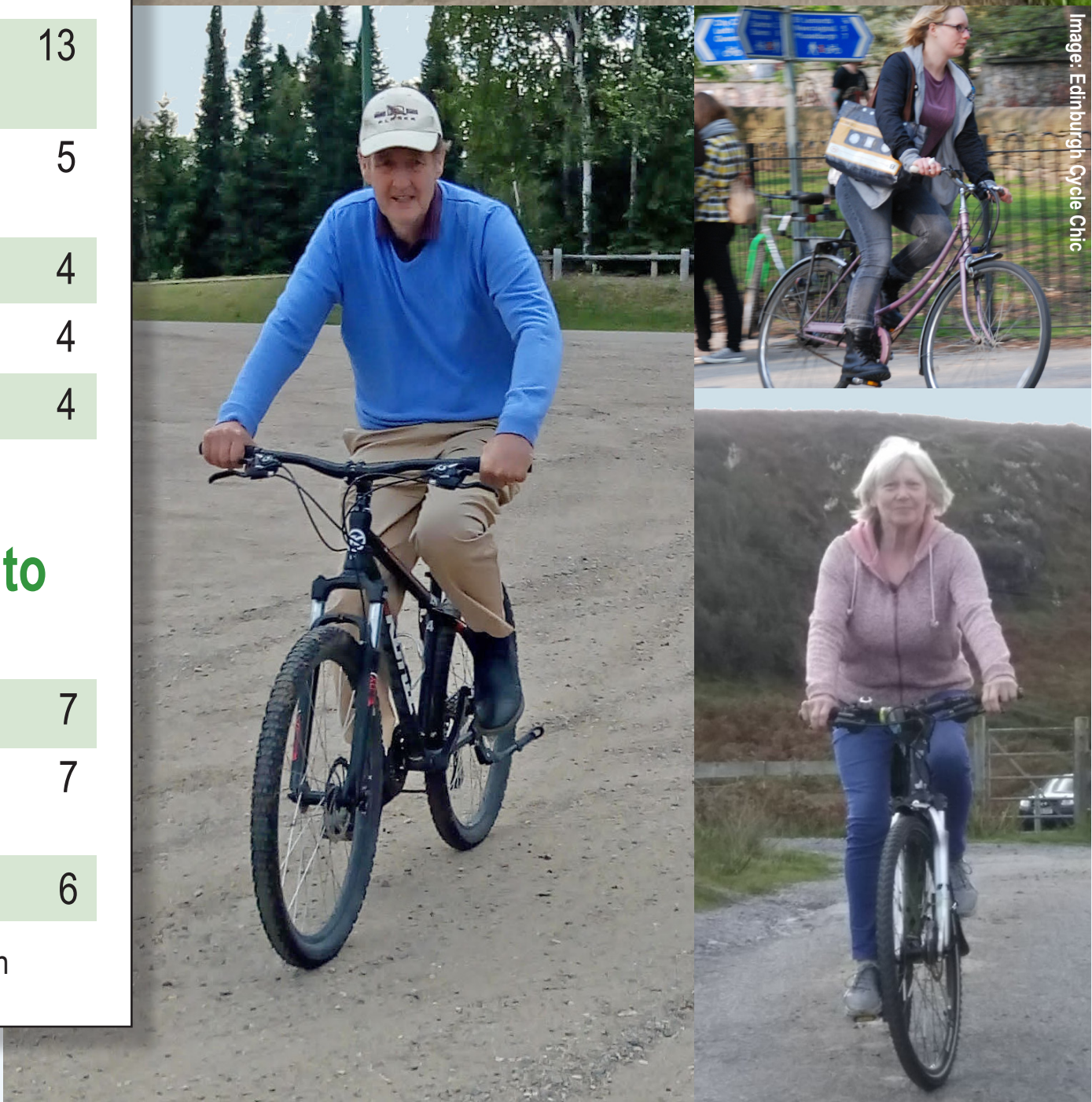


Image: Edinburgh Cycle Chic