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HSBC UK AND BRITISH CYCLING LAUNCH PROGRAMME TO PROVIDE OVER SIX HUNDRED FREE BIKES TO CHILDREN IN DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES ACROSS BIRMINGHAM

Olympic cyclist and West Midlands Cycling and Walking Ambassador, Shanaze Reade, hands over first free bikes given to local children as part of scheme to encourage cycling.

A programme that will help hundreds of children from across Birmingham onto two wheels by providing free bikes and equipment, has been launched by HSBC UK and British Cycling, alongside The Active Wellbeing Society.

The programme aims to reach children within the top 10% most disadvantaged communities of the city, to ensure that, regardless of their background, children have access to a bike and can embrace the joys and health benefits of cycling.

This programme comes hot on the heels of the successful Velo Birmingham and Midlands event where 17,000 people rode up to 100 miles, and in advance of the [Birmingham Lets Ride](#) event that will see a 4km route around Birmingham City.

The Big Birmingham Bikes programme is being rolled out to children aged 15 or under. A Bikeability session was run for pupils and recipients of the first tranche of bikes being given out.

The scheme, which is funded by HSBC UK and British Cycling, is delivered by [The Active Wellbeing Society](#) and will provide hundreds of children aged 15 or under in and around Birmingham with the basics to get them onto two wheels; a bike, helmet and a pump.

Shanaze Reade, Olympian and cycling world champion and [West Midlands Cycling and Walking Ambassador](#) said: “Initiatives like this are fundamental to ensuring that children – regardless of who they are or where they come from - are given the opportunity to learn how to cycle.

“It’s easy to forget that a lot of kids simply don’t have access to a bike and schemes like this help to break down these barriers and ensure that cycling is something that can be enjoyed by all, no matter what your background.

“There are so many benefits to riding a bike – from physical and mental health, to the environment – and by providing hundreds of free bikes and equipment to children across the city, HSBC UK and British Cycling are contributing towards a healthier, fitter and greener nation which is something that should be applauded.”

Luke Harper, HSBC UK’s Head of the British Cycling partnership said: “Our partnership with British Cycling is particularly focused on grassroots participation, encouraging and supporting communities, colleagues and customers to get onto two wheels, contributing to greener, fitter, healthier Britain. This fantastic scheme that will make a real difference to youngsters in disadvantaged communities in Birmingham who might not have the opportunity to own a bike of their own.”

Nick Hayes, Head of Commercial Partnerships at British Cycling, said: “Our partnership with HSBC UK intends to make a real impact on society and ultimately create a shift in culture towards a greener, fitter healthier nation. This initiative in Birmingham will ensure that 500 bikes are given to children at schools and communities in some of the most deprived areas of the city and is a shining example of those values coming to life.”

“In a year where Yorkshire is set to host the UK’s biggest sporting event of the year – the UCI Road World Championships – we want to ensure that every child in Britain, regardless of their background, is given the opportunity to ride a bike. And this programme is just one of the ways that we will make this happen.”

Karen Creavin, Chief Executive at The Active Wellbeing Society said "The Active Wellbeing Society has established networks of community cycle collaboration in the most deprived communities throughout Birmingham, working hard to build a pathway for children and families to get into cycling. We aim to improve the health and wellbeing of children, young people and families by removing the barriers that prevent them being active and we aim to particularly encourage uptake from the communities in most need. We are delighted to work with HSBC UK and British Cycling to bring this vital project to life, and we look forward to lots more people in our city enjoying the freedom and joy of riding a bike".

Bike Banks will be free to use for anyone aged 15 and under (with parent or guardian’s consent).

Since HSBC UK became lead partner to British Cycling in 2017, the partnership has made a real difference to grassroots cycling, including:

- Over 200,000 people taking part in our closed road, mass participation events in some of Britain’s biggest cities over the last two years (110,000 in 2017 and 113,500 in 2018). An even bigger schedule of events is planned for 2019.
- British Cycling has opened a number of new [HSBC UK Disability Hubs](#), including Middlesbrough, Stourport and Clyde, taking the total number of such facilities up to 12. HSBC UK Disability Hubs give people with disabilities the opportunity to take part in coach-led sessions which develop their skills and confidence on a bike.
- Work to narrow the traditional gender gap in cycling has also accelerated, with the flagship [HSBC UK Breeze](#) programme - a ride for women led by women - going from strength to strength - in 2018, over 300 new Breeze Champions were trained, bringing the total number to over 1,260.
- The [HSBC UK Breeze](#) programme has attracted nearly 250,000 participants since its inception eight years ago. Across the entire suite of recreational programmes, 45.2% of participants are now women.
- We have added [HSBC UK Ready Set Ride](#) to our suite of recreational programmes. The initiative equips parents and teachers with the necessary resources to teach kids to ride.
- During 2018 over half a million people took part in a ride organised by British Cycling – a record number.

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Note to editors:**HSBC UK:**

HSBC UK serves around 14.5 million customers across the UK, supported by 32,000 colleagues. HSBC UK offers a complete range of retail banking and wealth management to personal and private banking customers, as well as commercial banking for small to medium businesses and large corporates.

HSBC Holdings plc:

HSBC Holdings plc, the parent company of HSBC, is headquartered in London. HSBC serves customers worldwide from offices in 66 countries and territories in our geographical regions: Europe, Asia, North America, Latin America, and Middle East and North Africa. With assets of \$2,659bn at 31 March 2019, HSBC is one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations.

British Cycling

British Cycling is the national governing body for cycling as recognised by the UCI – the international federation for the sport. Based in Manchester at the National Cycling Centre, British Cycling works across all levels and six disciplines of the sport (BMX, Mountain Bike, Cyclo-cross, Road, Track and Cycle Speedway), from providing the support and encouragement people need to get riding their bikes for the first time, to being home to the hugely successful Great Britain Cycling Team. Continued success at the highest level is inspiring a boom in participation across the nation. There have never been more opportunities to ride a bike, be it for fun or sport, and British Cycling is at the heart of this growth. British Cycling also works hard to represent cyclists' interests at all levels, including campaigning on important issues including road safety. As a membership organisation, British Cycling provides a suite of benefits and support to its members who currently number over 144,000. All membership revenue is invested back into cycling.

For more information, visit www.britishcycling.org.uk

The Active Wellbeing Society

The Active Wellbeing Society was set up as a mutual society and established in 2017. It is grounded in the communities where change needs to take place the most, where inequalities are at their highest. It is innovatively with organisations, institutions, communities and individuals to create a society where people have the autonomy, capacity, resources and skills to become the architects of their own destiny, creating and sustaining happy, healthy communities. We are experts at delivering the necessary 'social knitting', using physical/social activities, that brings about sustainable societal change on a social, environmental and economic level. For more information, visit www.theaws.co.uk