

WALK IT. RIDE IT.



Bubacar's story Burmantofts

After having a brain tumour removed two years ago, Bubacar wanted to start to restore his sense of self and decided to join a Men's Cycling Group. The operation had left him immobile down one side, with very little energy and he suffered a loss of confidence in both his physical and emotional health. Since starting the cycling group, he feels stronger again, and has been able to work his way through the difficult process of recovery to come out on the other side.

Two years ago I had a tumour removed from my brain. The operation went well, but it affected the right-hand side of my body. For a while, I was unable to move that side of my body without difficulty. The GP had referred me to a Physiotherapist, and they helped me with exercises to regain some of my movement. It's been going really well, but I felt there was something missing. I didn't feel good in myself and needed something to help me with my mental wellbeing too.

I got referred through social prescribing to join the Men's Cycling Group at East End Park and have been really enjoying my time on the bike. When I started I was still dealing with a constant pain in my shoulder and down my right arm, so I wasn't sure if I could move my body well enough to cycle to begin with. I used to cycle a lot more back in the day, and I was feeling a little apprehensive as to how I was going to deal with it now, but it all came back to me.

The Instructor from Cycle North, John, turns up each week to try out some cycling skills with us and go for a bit of a bike ride around the local area. The bikes and helmets are already there, provided by Leeds City Council, so you don't need anything to join the group. We always do a few safety checks and then off we go around the park!

The group trainer really helped to ease me back in and he knows how to teach people of all abilities, from total beginners, to people who already have some cycling skills under their belt. He's also really friendly and helpful, and will give me tips to help me feel comfortable when cycling. He has his pannier bag on the back of his bike, which has got all the tools in for any bike fixes needed along the way - he's an instructor and a mechanic all rolled up in one, which really helped to set my mind at ease.

I've been progressing nicely and cycled through the Autumn and Winter weather. We were lucky to experience some bright days of winter sunshine and some beautiful uplifting and refreshing bike rides. There's something 'down to earth' about being outside that makes you feel good and you see new things every time you go out on the bikes.

We've cycled through the park with all the trees and nature around you which is great.



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My favourite place to go is the industrial area. It's quite freeing because there's not many cars around and the ground is flat and smooth. You can take it easy around there and just enjoy a satisfying cycle. It's also a relaxed way to meet new people. There's something nice about doing an activity where you can chat and be a bit social, but also carry on with your own thing too. When you get on the bike, you get to concentrate on that one thing which clears your head, and that really helps my emotional wellbeing.

I've been coming along to the men's cycling group at East End park since October and feel so much better for it. Recently, we did 7 miles on the bike, and it felt great! I just enjoy riding with the group and the instructor, exploring areas outdoors a bit more. It keeps my mind clear. It's made a huge difference to my mental wellbeing. I always feel more positive after being on a bike ride and I'm amazed that I still have the energy to get on with the rest of my day - I'd recommend it to anyone.

I'm also looking forward to what Spring and Summer has to offer on the bike. It will be nice to see the seasons change. If you have the right clothing on you can cycle in most weather conditions.

You don't have to be perfect, just turn up and the instructors will help with the rest!

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