

WTSO 2023-24

End of Year Report



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Walk To School Outreach (WTSO) project (23-24) was funded through a £2 million grant from Active Travel England and delivered by Living Streets in partnership with 15 combined authority, local authority and county council partners. This was year 1 of a two-year funding agreement for WTSO which extends to 2025.

The project's aim is to overcome barriers to walking and help the Government reach its target of 55% of primary school aged children walking to school by 2025. The project also supports increases in physical activity and reductions in congestion in some of the most deprived communities in England, with over one fifth of our partner schools in areas in the lowest Indices Multiple Deprivation (IMD) decile.

The project supported over **312,250 pupils** in **1,121 primary schools** over the project year.¹ Pupils were encouraged to walk/wheel to school using WOW, Living Streets' flagship walk to school programme.

WOW – the walk to school challenge

WOW is a proven and cost-effective incentive-based scheme to increase walking rates in primary schools. WOW support consists of:

- A launch bundle for schools, including a WOW Travel Tracker guide, classroom guides, stickers, letters for parents/carers and more.
- Collectable WOW badges, which pupils earn each month for walking to school at least once a week.
- Provision of our innovative interactive whiteboard software – WOW Travel Tracker (or monitoring wallcharts in a small number of schools) for children to log their journey to school.
- Dedicated support from a project coordinator to launch and run WOW, including staff and pupil ambassador training sessions, school assemblies and promotion of the challenge-boosting WOW Top Ten.
- Intensive local support to overcome barriers to walking, and engage parents/carers through school gate events and visits from our mascot Strider, where possible.
- Lighter touch support for schools that have participated for longer.

“Collecting badges is really fun! I have even managed to convince my parents to walk with me to school rather than driving.” – **Year 3 pupil**

Impact

Walk to School Outreach created a **7 percentage point modal shift to walking and wheeling all the way** in participating schools in 23-24, and a **22.5 percentage point shift to active travel including scooting, skating, cycling and park-and-stride**. That's **9.3 million new walking journeys** at a cost of **£0.21 per active travel stage** and **1.8 million car km removed** from the roads at peak times.

¹ Including phases one and two of the project, see Participating Schools, Beneficiaries and Modal Shift sections for details.

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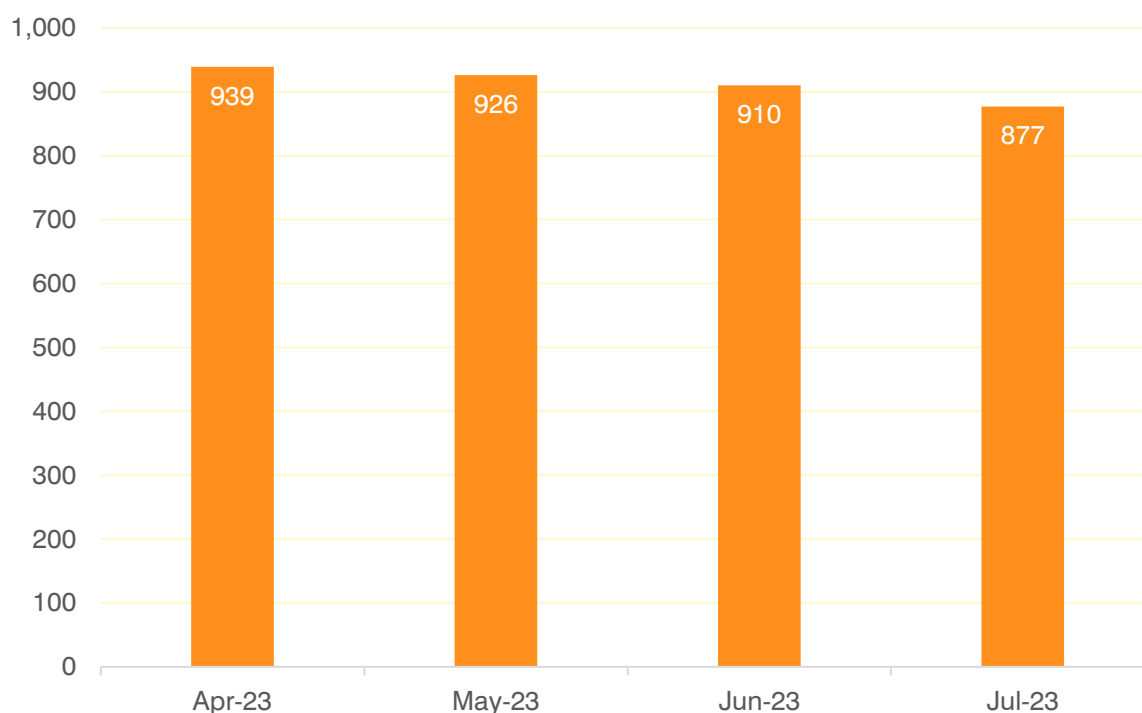
“We wanted to start WOW as it became apparent that our children were very inactive in the mornings before school. After seeing research that exercise before school increases academic performance, WOW seemed like the perfect thing to get our children more active. Also, reducing congestion and cars outside is a bonus, as it keeps our children safer! It’s been a major success in our school, as children want the badges and will find alternative ways to get to school in order to get one. We’re so glad we signed up to WOW! – **Matt Green, Teacher at Bramford Primary School**



PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

The project was delivered in two phases. In phase one, uncertainty over Active Travel England's ability to continue to support the project resulted in project activities being limited to continuing to support the 941 schools active at the end of the previous financial year. Over the summer term 2023, some of these schools ceased their engagement with the project because of the uncertainty about continued support and due to other priorities at the end of the school year, though 877 (93%) were still active in July 2023.

Active WTSO schools in Phase One



Once funding was confirmed, phase two began in January 2024. 276 of these schools were supported for the rest of the financial year (260 active in the final month of the financial year) while focus shifted to recruiting as many new schools onto the program as possible, as the first two years in the programme are when we see the biggest impacts from WOW.

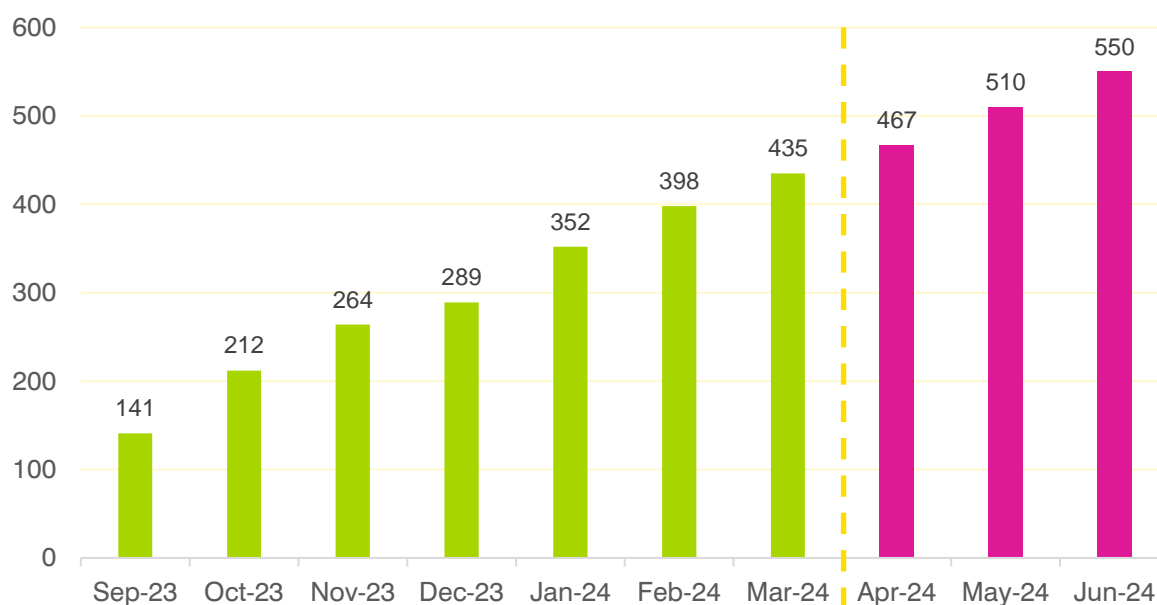
Recruitment proved very challenging as the crucial summer recruitment window had been missed. Schools are much more likely to take on new engagements over the summer term to start in September. In the absence of this recruitment window, and as a result of redundancies made during the period of funding uncertainty, hitting the target of 340 new schools recruited proved challenging. 182 new schools had logged an active month on the WOW Travel Tracker by the end of the financial year, with 175 active in the final month for a total of 435 new or continuing schools that month.

435 schools active in March 2024 was still short of our target of 600 schools active in the last month of the financial year. However, we have included the following three months on the chart below to show that recruitment has continued apace into

the second half of our two-year funding period. With several new partner areas coming onboard over the summer, and with the usual enthusiasm on the part of schools for new things in September, we are confident we will catch up and fulfil our two-year targets by the end of year two.

“Thank you so much for the wonderful mascot visit and assembly. The children have been very excited to launch WOW with you. Our staff have said you were brilliant at engaging the children. Thank you for your support. – **Hannah Bridgewood, Whiteways Primary**

Active WTSO Schools in Phase Two



Working Across the Country

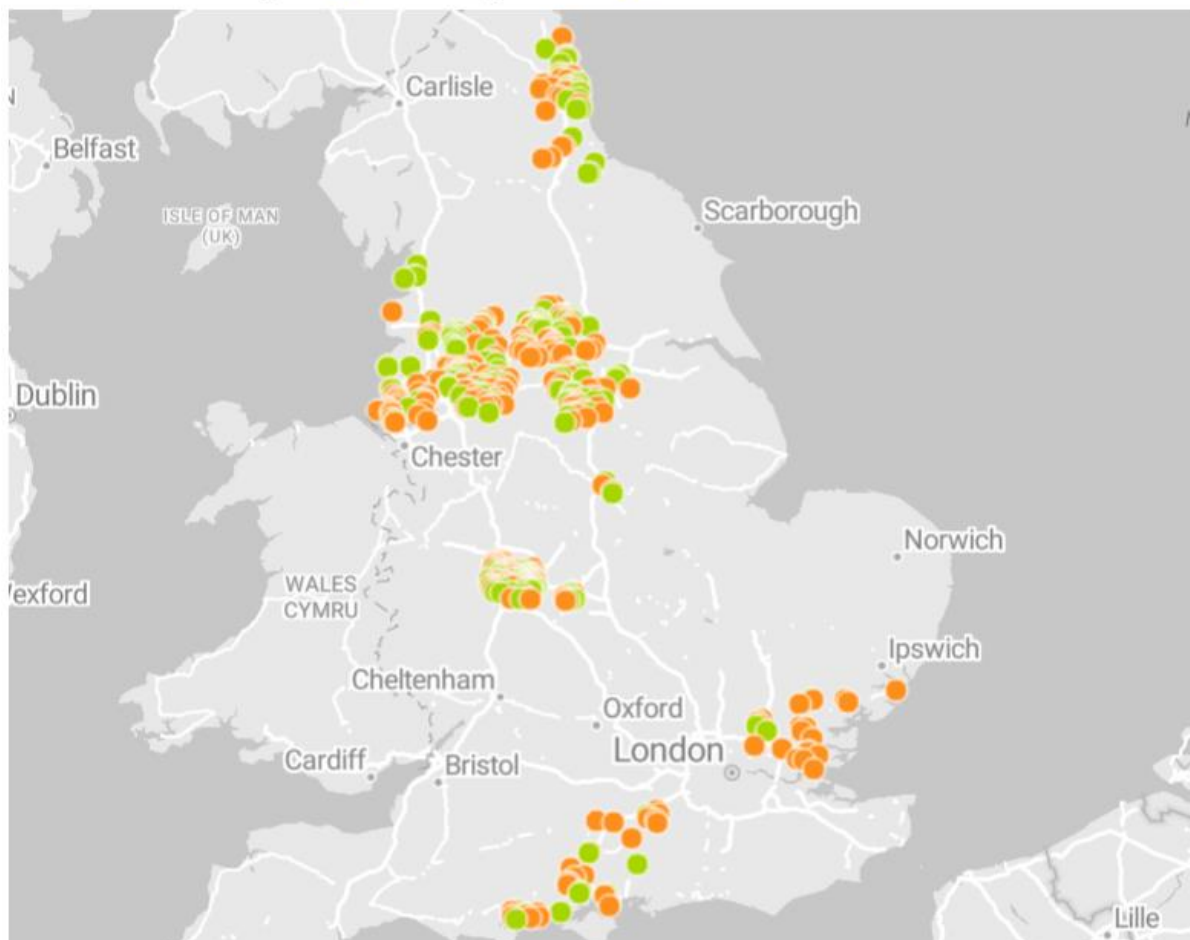
Living Streets worked with schools in 15 local and combined authorities across England, engaging a diverse range of schools. 21% of our schools across both phases were in areas in the lowest IMD decile (25% in Phase Two) and 34% in the lowest quintile (41% in Phase Two). 24% were in the lowest Special Educational Needs (SEN) quintile (19% in Phase Two) and 8% were rural (5% in Phase Two). The table below shows a breakdown of our schools across authorities in Phase Two of the project and up to June 2024.

Total active WOW schools by local authority	Mar-24	Jun-24	Progress against target (%)	Lapsed Schools	Total schools supported against target
Blackburn with Darwen	10	15		0	15
Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole	11	13		0	13
Cheshire West and Chester		1		0	1
Essex	26	29		0	29
Hampshire	24	30		3	33
Lancashire	21	28		1	29

Total active WOW schools by local authority	Mar-24	Jun-24	Progress against target (%)	Lapsed Schools	Total schools supported against target
Liverpool City Region	27	39		4	43
Nottingham	3	3		1	4
South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority	52	58		2	60
Tees Valley	3	6		1	7
TNE	40	57		5	62
Transport for Greater Manchester	62	66		4	70
Warrington					
West Mids Combined Authority (Inc. BCC)	93	123		5	128
West Yorkshire Combined Authority	63	82		7	89
TOTAL	435	550	92%	32	582 (97%)

Active WTSO school locations in Phase Two

New or continuing ... ● Continuing School ● New School



BENEFICIARIES

For the first time this year, it is possible to report a cumulative total of unique beneficiaries across academic years. We continue to be thrilled by the high level of participation in schools and the huge number of pupils and their parents engaging with WTSO. The table below details numbers of beneficiaries engaged in different ways by the programme.

Pupils participating through whole-school activities (school gate events, assemblies etc.) in fully supported, Phase Two schools.	Full year	154,883
Pupil participants logging journeys on Travel Tracker	Full year	150,830
	Phase One only	161,420
	Total	312,250
Parents of logging, engaged pupils	Full year	113,123
	Phase One only	121,065
	Total	234,188
Logging pupil participants from lowest IMD decile	Full year	39,242
	Phase One only	27,724
	Total	66,966
Parents of logging, engaged pupils from lowest IMD decile	Full year	29,431
	Phase One only	20,793
	Total	50,224

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"Children are very motivated by the badge rewards and this is having a trickle-down effect on parents' choices about how they bring their children to school" - **WOW Champion, Kells Lane Primary**

MODAL SHIFT

The headline figures reported for modal shift for this project year compare journeys recorded by pupils on the WOW Travel Tracker app to the baselines recorded in their schools. They take into account Phase One and Phase Two schools and are a weighted average of performance across both groups. Modal shift figures for schools are weighted according to the size of the school, the number of days in the year on which it was active, and whether the school is new or continuing. The inclusion of phase one schools reduces these averages significantly, as can be seen by comparison to the following subsection. Those headline figures follow:

² These totals cover only the financial year 23-24. In the case of 'Phase One only' figures, these are for Sept-December rather than the full year. Totals differ slightly from month-by-month totals reported to ATE as they include pupil information added by schools for past months, after the cutoff for reporting.

Modal shift to walking and wheeling all the way	7.06 %pts.
% increase in walking and wheeling all the way	17.05%
Walking and wheeling all the way % journeys logged	48.70%
Walking and wheeling all the way % counterfactual	41.64%
Modal shift to active travel (walk, wheel, scoot, skate, cycle, park-and-stride)	22.52 %pts.
% increase in active travel	37.12%
Active travel % journeys logged	83.41%
Active travel % counterfactual	60.89%
Children making new walking journeys	29,481
Adults making new walking journeys	6,739
Total new walking journeys	9,344,482
Total new child walking journeys	6,399,316
Total new adult walking journeys	2,945,167
New walking journeys in lowest IMD decile	2,208,252
New walking journeys by non-white students	2,102,393
There-and-back car journeys reduced	2,755,499
Car km removed from the road	1,827,613

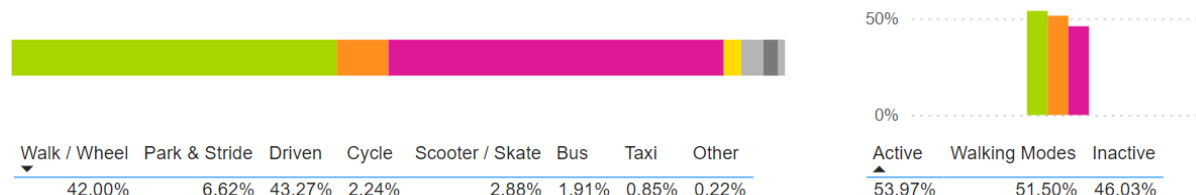
“Just wanted to say we’ve had a huge increase in active travellers!! I am going to increase it (WOW badge threshold) to 2 active journeys from April.” - **Aimee Pickering, Kingfisher Primary School**

Beyond these headline figures, it is interesting to examine modal share detail. We share more detail from schools monitored during Phase Two below.

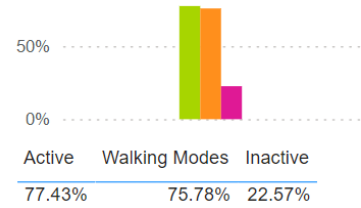
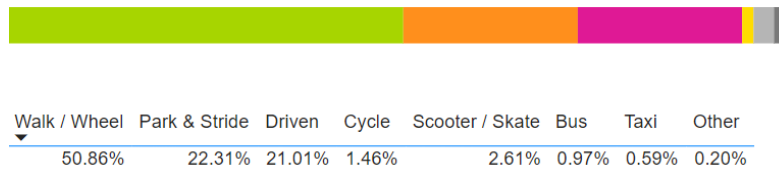
Phase Two WTSO schools reported large rises in modal share for walking and wheeling all the way as well as park and stride, especially the new schools recruited this year. **New schools recruited to the programme saw a rise of 8.78 percentage points in walk/wheel all the way journeys and 15.70 percentage points for park and stride.** These rises came mostly from a large fall in journeys driven all the way to school of 22.16 percentage points, though there were some small reductions in other modes, such as a 0.94 percentage point fall in bus journeys. See the charts below for more details.

Phase Two: New Schools

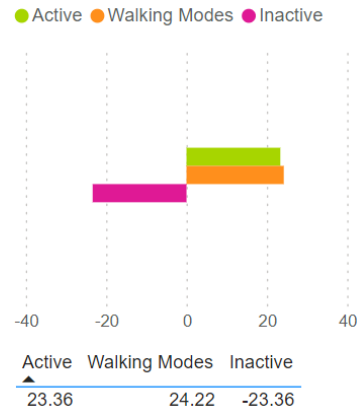
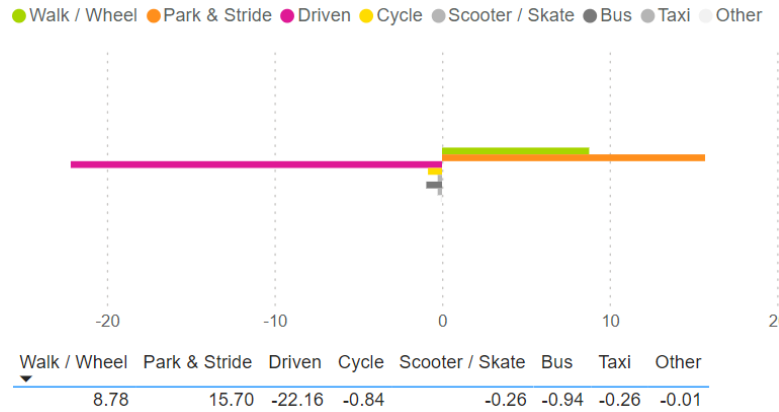
New schools baseline surveys



New schools journeys logged

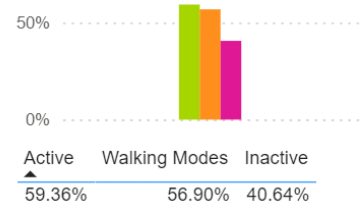
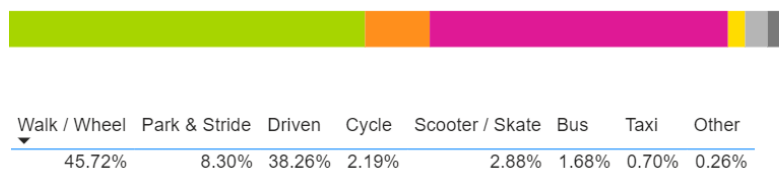


New schools change from baseline (schools with baselines)

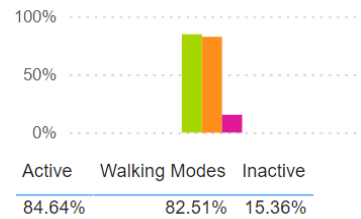
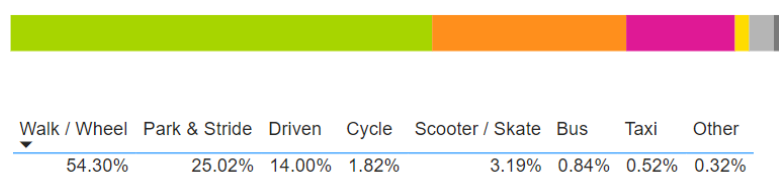


Phase Two: Continuing Schools

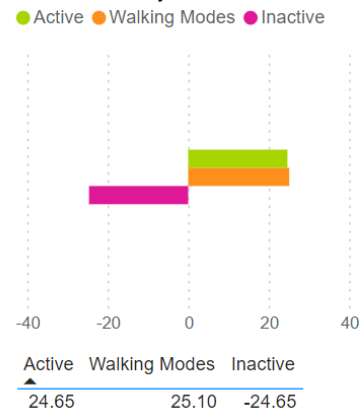
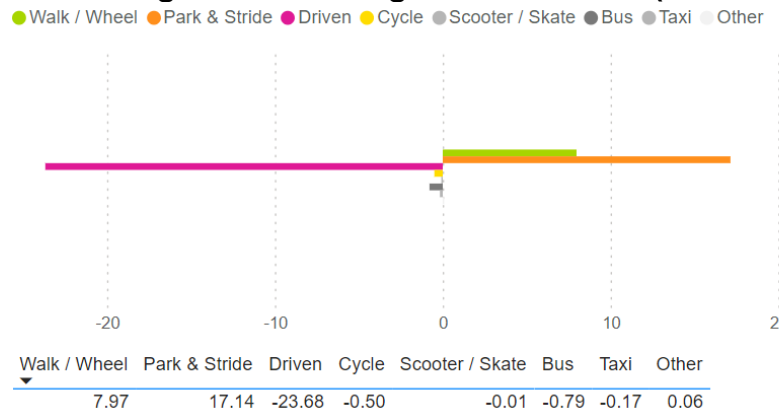
Continuing schools baseline surveys



Continuing schools journeys logged



Continuing schools change from baseline (schools with baselines)



OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO WALKING

Coordinators worked with selected schools to conduct School Route Audits (SRAs) and other activities to increase engagement in WOW and encourage more active journeys to school. An SRA is the first step in identifying what simple changes could be made to help more families swap the school run for a school walk.

On an SRA, a group of pupils, parents and school staff will join Living Streets for a walk around the local streets. The Audit allows the people who use the streets every day to have their say on what could be done to improve them.

The findings from the SRA are written up by Living Streets into a report for the school and the local authority. We make a series of recommendations to the school and local authority and work with them to see the changes implemented. School Route Audits were conducted in Blackburn with Darwen, Bury, Dudley and Oldham, as part of the project.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Outputs from the modal shift and participation analyses were fed into the latest (May 2024) version of the Active Mode Appraisal Toolkit to generate estimates of the impacts of the programme on physical activity, absenteeism, journey quality, greenhouse gases, noise, air quality, indirect tax, collisions from changes in car trips, infrastructure maintenance and congestion. This analysis yielded the following outputs:

£ per active travel stage (children and adults)	£0.21
£ per active travel stage (adults only)	£0.68
£ per active travel stage (children only)	£0.31
Adults only BCR	3.87
BCR including estimated child health benefits	5.54
Value of decongestion (£000's)	1,031
Value of reduction in carbon emissions (£000's)	253
Value of adult health benefits (£000's)	2,859

“The travel tracker has children engaged and thinking about the small changes that they can make on a daily basis to make a big difference to their environment and their health. All our children love the badges and wear them with pride” – Teacher, Gorsefield Primary School

The monetised benefits of the programme are notably lower this year than in previous years due to the delayed start of the programme and subsequent difficulties in recruiting new schools to target. £ per active travel stage (children and adults) was £0.14 in programme year 22-23 compared to £0.21 this year. Likewise, the BCR including child health benefits was 8.43 last year compared to 5.54 this year.

That said, this year's level of monetised benefit still compares very favourably to other interventions in this space and to alternative transport or public health investments. In addition, this year has laid the groundwork for an extremely effective programme in year two as many more new schools come onboard. We expect monetised benefits in year two to exceed previous performance by a significant margin.

PHASE ONE SCHOOLS CONVERTED TO OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

Living Streets has worked with the 939 Phase One schools, local partners and Living Streets Services to find alternative funding sources wherever possible.

To date:

- 276 schools became Phase Two continuing WTSO schools
- 119 schools became commercially funded
 - 56 through their LAs
 - 63 through individual school purchases

WOW DEVELOPMENT

Between April 2024 and September 2025 Living Streets is running a project to develop improvements to WOW, looking at alternative or supplementary rewards to the current badges, alongside improvements to Travel Tracker. The groundwork for this project took place in this reporting year. This included consulting stakeholders on buses and how this mode of travel sits within WOW as well as beginning to develop a new WOW theory of change.

We started the 2023-24 school year with Travel Tracker drop-in sessions to support schools who were both continuing to be supported through the project and those that had become self-funded.

We used feedback from the 2023 WOW survey conducted with schools to make slight changes to our delivery. Overall, feedback was positive.

A new celebration assembly was held at the end of the 23-24 school year, to look back on the academic year and see what had been achieved. A map showing where Strider the WOW Mascot had visited was developed, WOW awards were presented e.g. WOW top ten, schools with the most walkers. There was also a pick'n'mix party bag for schools to take away with them over the summer. Schools choose 6 out of 10 activities to do over the holidays, ask parents to sign and return to school in September and they will be awarded with a digital certificate.

LOOKING AHEAD TO YEAR TWO

Continuing Schools

We will offer all 550 schools support in year two with the focus on maintaining high engagement and walking rates. A core team will deliver regular activities throughout the academic year building on the success of year one, including termly WOW Top Ten booster challenges, themed assemblies, pupil WOW Ambassador training, targeted communications, Strider visits and engagement at school gates. We will continue working in partnership to support local schemes like School Streets, School Travel Plans and Modeshift and provide the professional, friendly dedicated support that our school contacts value so highly.

New Schools

In year two we will support 480 new schools. To reach this target and achieve the higher modal shift that we see in the first year of school engagement, we are extending our reach into new project areas. Through ATE's regional network, we have offered support to local authority partners across England. To date, we have approached 32 new local authorities, and 14 new partners are already on board. In addition to the 4,264 schools in our existing areas, across new partner areas there are 3,309 primary schools who have not recently participated in WOW. We have huge potential to engage with new schools and support active travel to schools across all delivery areas. Recruitment for September is underway in both existing and new areas and we are confident that we will reach the new school target.

SRAs and Integration with Capital Investment Plans

We will be working closely with combined and local authority partners to align the delivery of 30 School Route Audits with ATE self-assessment criteria. Using the project management tool Monday.com and schools' data from Power BI, we will map and identify highest potential locations for delivery against previous audit delivery, and capital investment plans close to active WOW schools. Meetings with partners have already taken place around identifying areas for 24-25 delivery and how SRAs can not only influence and support street design plans but also be used as part of the community consultation process. Our systematic approach will allow us to monitor actioned recommendations from SRAs and identify which funding stream the work will be supporting.

Extending Our Reach: Scalable Remote Delivery Pilot

In 24-25 we will pilot a new, scalable approach to offer of a series of online events to 180 non-WOW schools in England. These events will be designed to raise the salience of active travel for pupils and staff, directly increasing active travel at schools by prompting conversations that would not otherwise happen, and indirectly increasing it by increasing the likelihood of the school participating in more intensive interventions such as WOW.

APPENDIX 1: FULL OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Outputs	Subgroup	Value
Legacy schools supported	Phase One only	663
Existing schools supported for a full year	Full year	276
New schools onboarded	Full year	182
All schools supported	Total	1,121
Pupils participating through whole-school activities (school gate events, assemblies etc.) for one academic year	Full year	154,883
Pupil participants logging journeys on Travel Tracker	Full year	150,830
	Phase One only	161,420
	Total	312,250
Parents of logging, engaged pupils	Full year	113,123
	Phase One only	121,065
	Total	234,188
Logging pupil participants from lowest IMD decile	Full year	39,242
	Phase One only	27,724
	Total	66,966
Parents of logging, engaged pupils from lowest IMD decile	Full year	29,431
	Phase One only	20,793
	Total	50,224
% students non-white	Full year	33.06%
	Phase One only	32.09%
	Weighted average	32.56%
% settings in lowest IMD decile	Full year	25.34%
	Phase One only	17.17%
	Weighted average	20.51%
% settings in lowest IMD quintile	Full year	41.48%
	Phase One only	29.21%
	Weighted average	34.23%
% settings in lowest SEN quintile	Full year	19.21%
	Phase One only	26.72%
	Weighted average	23.65%
% settings rural	Full year	5.47%
	Phase One only	10.36%
	Weighted average	8.36%
Print, online and broadcast reach on articles linked to WTSO		2,450,000

Outcomes		
Modal shift to walking and wheeling all the way		7.06 %pts.
% increase in walking and wheeling all the way		17.05%
Walking and wheeling all the way % journeys logged		48.70%
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