



The cost of living crisis and the impact on Community Cycle Clubs

Community Cycle Clubs (CCCs) are a Cycling UK behaviour change programme delivered across England which work with over 5,000 participants and volunteers each year. The programme, funded through Sport England and the Department for Transport, has developed over 100 volunteer led clubs which provide opportunities for communities underrepresented in cycling to take part in regular social rides, learn to ride sessions or bike maintenance activities. All CCCs were established to benefit one or more of the following groups: ethnically diverse communities, people with long term health conditions, lower socioeconomic groups, women and girls, older people and disabled people.

In November 2022, Cycling UK investigated the impact of the cost of living crisis on Community Cycle Clubs. The impact of the crisis was determined through a survey sent to CCC leaders; 40 responses were received, representing around one third of clubs taking part in the programme at that time. The survey invited respondents to provide suggestions for financial and non-financial methods of support Cycling UK could provide, enabling staff to identify routes for adapting the CCC programme to help alleviate the impacts of the crisis.

The impact of the cost of living crisis

80% of clubs said that the cost of living crisis was impacting their delivery. When asked about the specific impacts of the crisis, challenges related to volunteering were amongst the most commonly cited.

It being 'difficult to attract volunteers', 'existing volunteers having less time' and 'volunteers lack support (financial or otherwise) to remain engaged' making up three out of the four most referenced impacts. 68% of CCCs mentioned at least one challenge related to volunteering in their response.

80%

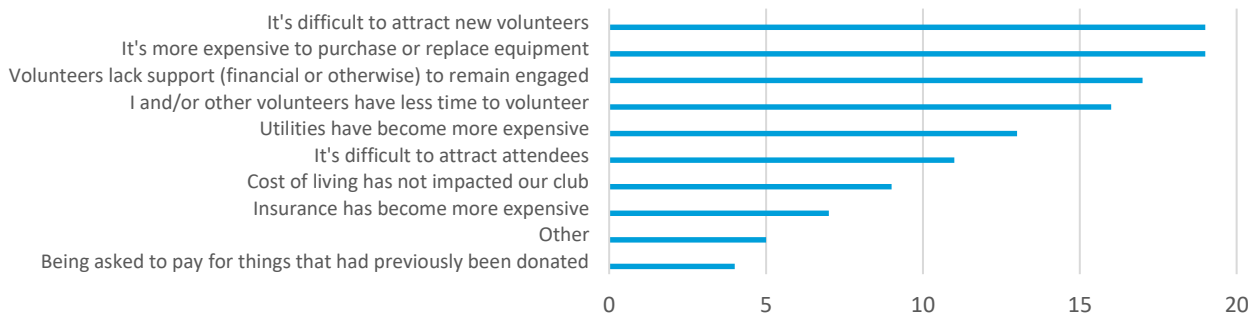
of Community Cycle Clubs are affected by the cost of living crisis

“People are having to work more to pay bills etc and therefore have less time to give”

Community Cycle Club leader

The other most common impact was that 'equipment has become more expensive to purchase or replace'. CCC responses suggested that the effects of the crisis across clubs were not uniform as none of the suggested impacts had been cited by more than half of respondents.

How has your community cycle club been impacted by cost of living increases?



Only 33% of CCCs mentioned utilities costs as having an impact on their club, perhaps a reflection of cycling being primarily an outdoors activity and that not all clubs have a physical premises.

Support through the crisis

When asked for their suggestions of support that Cycling UK could provide to clubs, 68% of CCCs said that help with participant recruitment or advertising would be helpful, making this the most popular non-financial support request. Around a third of CCCs said the cost of living crisis was making it harder to get the word out about their events and get people to join in activities, suggesting that while promoting themselves is always a challenge, the cost of living crisis is making it worse for some.



Paying volunteers for their time or funding for staff time when volunteers were not available or while clubs were new featured in many survey responses. Other proposed volunteer benefits included perks, club cycling kit, travel expenses and refreshments, with some of these being suggested for club participants also. Volunteer training including new types of courses and an easing of volunteer responsibilities also featured in responses. The survey suggested that some CCCs lacked full knowledge of the financial support available, as they proposed some funding costs which could already be met by the existing programme offer.

Actions Cycling UK has taken

Cycling UK is campaigning hard to make sure the government funds cycling – including targeting local communities where they need more support. We also work in collaboration with a range of other charities to innovate and lobby for the voluntary sector, getting politicians to recognise the invaluable role of volunteers in our communities. With Community Cycle Clubs specifically, since the survey we have been able to fund volunteer expenses, participant refreshments, contents insurance and storage related costs, as well as reminding clubs that they can include utility bill contributions and winter clothing if needed. We have improved our non-financial support offer, for example, creating template volunteer role profiles to help CCCs attract new ride leaders and administrators, giving advice on promoting clubs and extra guidance on recruiting and engaging volunteers.



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