

Shifting Gears - Participant FAQ

General

Shifting Gears is The Bike Station's flagship community programme in Perth and Edinburgh. We launched in April 2021, and are now delivering the second year of the programme.

The programme offers year round opportunities to get involved with cycling and cycling-related activities. We work together with a range of partner organisations in the two cities who refer people to the programme. Once you are a participant you have access to the range of services that make up Shifting Gears and can choose which ones you wish to take part in. Please note that places on all Shifting Gears services are limited.

Q Can I apply to Shifting Gears?

A Yes, so long as you are a member of one of our partner organisations for year two (listed below) then you can get in touch with your representative there to sign up.

Edinburgh:

Cyrenians Social Bite Village
Shakti Women's Aid
Edinburgh Women's Aid
VOCAL Carers Hub
Saheliya

Perth:

Perth Women's Aid PKAVS Carers Hub
RASAC Perth & Kinross
One-Stop Women's Learning Service (OWLS)
PKC CASA Team (Children Alone Seeking Asylum)
Mears Group

Q I have a child, do you have creche facilities?

A We endeavour to provide childcare support for those that require this to join our activities, but availability is limited. Please get in touch to discuss your requirements if you know that you will be needing creche support to attend your chosen activities.

Q Are there any costs for Shifting Gears activities?

A No, all activities offered through the programme are free of charge to participants. We do charge for some bike repair services outside the 3 month warranty period for your Shifting Gears bike but aim to provide affordable options for all participants. See below for further details.

Referral Bike

Our referral bike service gives you the opportunity to get a refurbished bike, along with a lock, lights, and helmet so that you can get riding straight away! When we receive your referral our mechanics will match a bike of the correct size based on your height and set it up just for you. Once ready, you will be given the option of collecting your bike from us at the shop or, in Edinburgh only, collecting it from one of our partner hubs on selected days. Please note that this service primarily offers adult bikes for ages 16 and up.

Q Is it a new bike?

A At The Bike Station we specialise in refurbishing second-hand donated bicycles. All of our bikes are different, but they are all built to the same high standards. We pride ourselves on our work and in giving bikes a second chance!

Q Can I choose my bike?

A Yes, you can choose your bike from our Shifting Gears range of bikes. We strive to offer everyone a choice of bikes in a suitable size, this is subject to availability since our bike range is dependent on the bike donations we receive for refurbishment.

Q Can I swap my bike?

A If you think that your bike is not the correct size then we can arrange a swap. Please get in touch with us as soon as possible using the appropriate email address below and we will arrange for you to get a more suitable bike.

Edinburgh: calumg@thebikestation.org.uk

Perth: jrogers@thebikestation.org.uk

Q What if something goes wrong with my bike?

A All of our bikes are covered by a 3 month warranty which covers any mechanical fault that occurs or adjustments that need to be made to the bike during this time. The warranty does not cover punctures, usual wear and tear, issues caused by improper use or a lack of maintenance or tampering, or accident damage. See [here](#) for more information about our warranty.

Q What if something goes wrong with my bike that is not covered by the warranty or after the 3 month warranty period has ended?

A For the two years you are with Shifting Gears (e.g. 2022/23 and 2023/24), you have access to maintenance classes and 1-to-1 maintenance workshops. At these sessions our mechanics can help you identify what is wrong with your bike and repair it.

After the programme, Shifting Gears participants also get lifetime free access to Fix Your Own Bike at both our Edinburgh and Perth locations. These sessions happen once a week and you will be given all the support, tools and knowledge you need to identify and repair your bike to keep it on the road!

We also offer a 50% discount to current and former Shifting Gears participants on all our standard repair services. A list of which can be found [here](#).

Q Do you have bikes for children?

A Yes, we take family referrals as well as individuals. An adult (18+) joining the programme may also request bikes for one or more children aged 4-15. As with all our services, requests for children's bikes are subject to availability.

Q I don't live close to The Bike Station, can you deliver my bike to me?

A Arrangements are different in Edinburgh and Perth:

Edinburgh: While we encourage participants to collect their bike from us where possible, if this is not convenient then we are able to arrange for the bike to be delivered to you. Our normal delivery days are Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday from 10am - 4pm. Please get in touch with us directly to arrange this (calumg@thebikestation.org.uk).

Perth: The standard arrangement for getting a bike is to pick it up from our shop. If you are unable to do this and don't have anyone who could help with transport, please speak to your contact at the Shifting Gears partner organisation who referred you to the programme (see above for a list). We don't want this to be a barrier to getting a bike.

Q Do I have to give the bike back?

A No, the bike is yours to keep. You can donate your bike back to us if you want to but this is completely optional.

Q What about accessories?

A As part of the referral bike service we provide you with a helmet, lights, and a quality lock to make sure you have all the things you need to get you moving.

1-to-1 Cycling Workshops

Get moving and build your riding confidence with cycling workshops for people of all abilities. Our trainers offer 1-to-1 and group workshops to teach you the skills you need to ride a bike and feel confident to make the journeys you want to make. Sessions are tailored to your ability and interests. The first sessions will always be in a safe, off-road environment (such as a playground or carpark) and you will only progress to riding on the road when you are ready.

Q I have never ridden a bike before, can you teach me to ride?

A Shifting Gears has been designed to accommodate people of all abilities. If you have never ridden or haven't ridden in many years, we can teach you from the beginning. You will start by getting comfortable moving and controlling the bike on foot, then learning to scoot, steer and brake without pedals, and finally pedalling. If you can ride but want to improve your skills to give you more confidence on the road then we can help too.

Q I can ride already, what will I do at a 1-to-1 cycling workshop?

A Our cycle tutors can help you with anything you want to achieve with your bike! Here are just some of the options:

- refresh basic cycling skills e.g. using gears, signalling
- show you how to ride safely on roads
- find new routes in your local area
- help you plan the best way to make a specific journey
- provide some friendly company and motivation to get out and rediscover the fun of cycling
- advise on kit and accessories, nutrition, setting cycling goals or training

Q Can I start anytime?

A Yes, we recommend you book a 1-to-1 cycling workshop to get started and your trainer will then recommend further sessions and activities for you.

Q Can I bring someone with me?

A Yes, you can book a 1-to-1 cycling workshop for yourself and a support worker, friend or family member if you want a bit of moral support. You can also team up with someone else on the Shifting Gears programme and do workshops together.

Q Can children join cycling workshops?

A Yes, you can book a 1-to-1 cycling workshop for your family including yourself and any children. Use the session to learn about the best routes for your family, build your skills together with games and challenges, or practice riding safely together on the road. Children under 16 must have a responsible adult with them at all times during activities.

Q Do I need to bring anything with me?

A It's a good idea to bring any drinks or snacks you may need to keep you going during the workshop. Dress appropriately for the weather and consider bringing an extra layer or waterproof. You may also want to consider gloves to protect your hands.

Q I don't have a bike, how can I get involved?

A As a participant in Shifting Gears, you can apply to get a bike and any accessories that you need to get you started.

Q Do I need to wear a helmet?

A It isn't compulsory but we do advise wearing a helmet if you have one.

Group Rides

Our group rides are guided social rides in small groups (usually a maximum of 5 to 8 people) along quiet routes in Edinburgh and Perth. They are a great opportunity to practice your cycling skills and to explore new routes and places in your area. As part of this service we hope to run interactive planning sessions in which you will have the opportunity to discuss places you would like to visit and design the routes which we later ride.

Q I don't have a bike, how can I get involved?

A As a participant in Shifting Gears, you can apply to get a bike and any accessories that you need to get you started.

Q Are these rides family friendly?

A Yes. There will be some rides which are suitable for families and all rides will be accompanied by trained members of staff. While the rides are guided, we remind parents that they are responsible for their children.

Q Can I bring my friend?

A Unfortunately, rides are only open to members of the Shifting Gears programme and we cannot accommodate others.

Q How often are the rides?

A We will provide a calendar of rides nearer the time.

Q Do I need to bring anything with me?

A It's a good idea to bring any drinks or snacks you may need to keep you going on the ride. Dress appropriately for the weather and consider bringing an extra layer or waterproof.

Q Do I need to wear a helmet?

A It's not compulsory but we do advise wearing a helmet if you have one.

Bike Care + Repair

Join Bike Care + Repair group classes and 1-to-1 Bike Maintenance Your Way sessions where you can learn how to look after your bike. We understand that bike maintenance can

seem messy and daunting, so we have designed these classes to be inclusive and straightforward.

Q Are courses open to beginners?

A Our Bike Care & Repair: The Basics courses are designed as an introduction to looking after your bike, and so are beginner friendly. By the end, you will be able to name the parts of your bike, check that it is safe to ride, know how to clean and lubricate your bike, and be able to fix a puncture.

Q I already know the basics, are there more advanced classes?

A Yes, at the Bike Maintenance Your Way sessions you can choose what you want to learn. We have a menu of topics covering a range of skills from basic to advanced, or you can choose a bespoke session to fix any specific problems with your bike.

Q Where will the classes take place?

A Classes will be hosted at The Bike Station or at locations in the community by our partner organisations.

Q Do I need my own tools or equipment for the sessions?

A No. All equipment and tools will be provided by The Bike Station on the day but please bring your own bike to work on.

Q I don't have a bike, how can I get involved?

A As a participant in Shifting Gears, you can apply to get a bike and any accessories that you need to get you started.

Velotech

Velotech training courses are industry recognised qualifications in bicycle maintenance and repair. As a participant in Shifting Gears you have the opportunity to gain these qualifications and take your knowledge of bikes to the next level. The courses are arranged into three distinct levels - Bronze, Silver and Gold - which go from making adjustments and addressing simple issues on a bike to being able to completely strip and rebuild a bike. Courses will run in the autumn and places are limited.

Q Are there any prerequisites to joining?

A The requirement for the Bronze qualification (where you must begin) is a reasonable understanding of the basic functioning of a bicycle, how to address minor issues, and make adjustments. We will cover many of these themes in the Bike Care + Repair service, so if you don't have this knowledge already we recommend signing up for that.

Q Is there a minimum age requirement for joining?

A Yes. The minimum age for participation is 16.

Q Do I need to go through all three levels?

A You must complete the levels in order (from Bronze to Gold) but it is completely up to you which level you want to reach. If you only want to complete Bronze then that is okay, if you want to go all the way and become Gold qualified then we will support you all the way!

Q How long are the courses?

A All three levels - Bronze, Silver, and Gold - take place over two days.

Work Placement

Over the winter months there will be opportunities to learn more about what we do at The Bike Station and gain experience alongside our mechanic teams in-branch. If you have fallen in love with bikes, like we have, and would like to explore a career in the bicycle industry then this could be just the thing for you!

Q Who can apply?

A Anyone who has completed at least four Bike Care + Repair classes or Bike Maintenance Your Way sessions can apply.

Q How long does the placement last?

A The placement is 5 months starting towards the end of the year. More information will be available close to the time.

Q How many placements are there?

A There is currently one full time equivalent paid work placement available in each of our branches (one in Edinburgh and one in Perth). Each role could be filled by two people working part time hours (this was the case at both branches in 2021/22) There may also be volunteering opportunities.

Q Is the role paid?

A This is a paid work placement.

Ride Leader Qualification

Designing and leading bike rides can be great fun and is a good skill to learn. If you are a confident cyclist and a good communicator you may want to train to be an assistant ride leader on Shifting Gears rides or to run your own rides. If there is sufficient demand from Shifting Gears participants we may run a one day Ride Leader course. For more details about this course, see the [Cycling Scotland website](#). Please get in touch with one of the Shifting Gears team if you are interested in running your own rides.

Cycle Trainer Qualification

If you enjoyed taking part in our cycling lessons and can ride confidently in busy traffic, including multi-lane roads and roundabouts, you may feel that you would like to share your cycling skills with others. You also need excellent communication skills. There may be an opportunity as a participant in Shifting Gears to take a four day course to become an instructor. More details about the course are available on the [Cycling Scotland website](#). Once qualified (and if you are over 18) you would be able to run Bikeability sessions in schools or your own cycling lessons using the Essential Cycling Skills syllabus. If you are interested in becoming a Cycle Trainer get in touch with one of the Shifting Gears team.