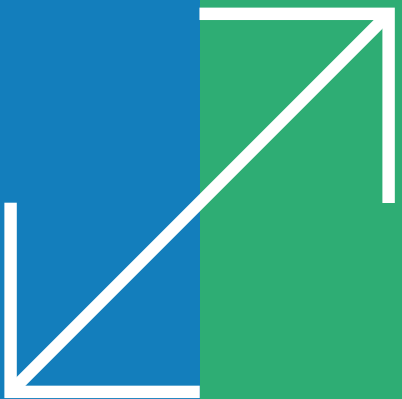
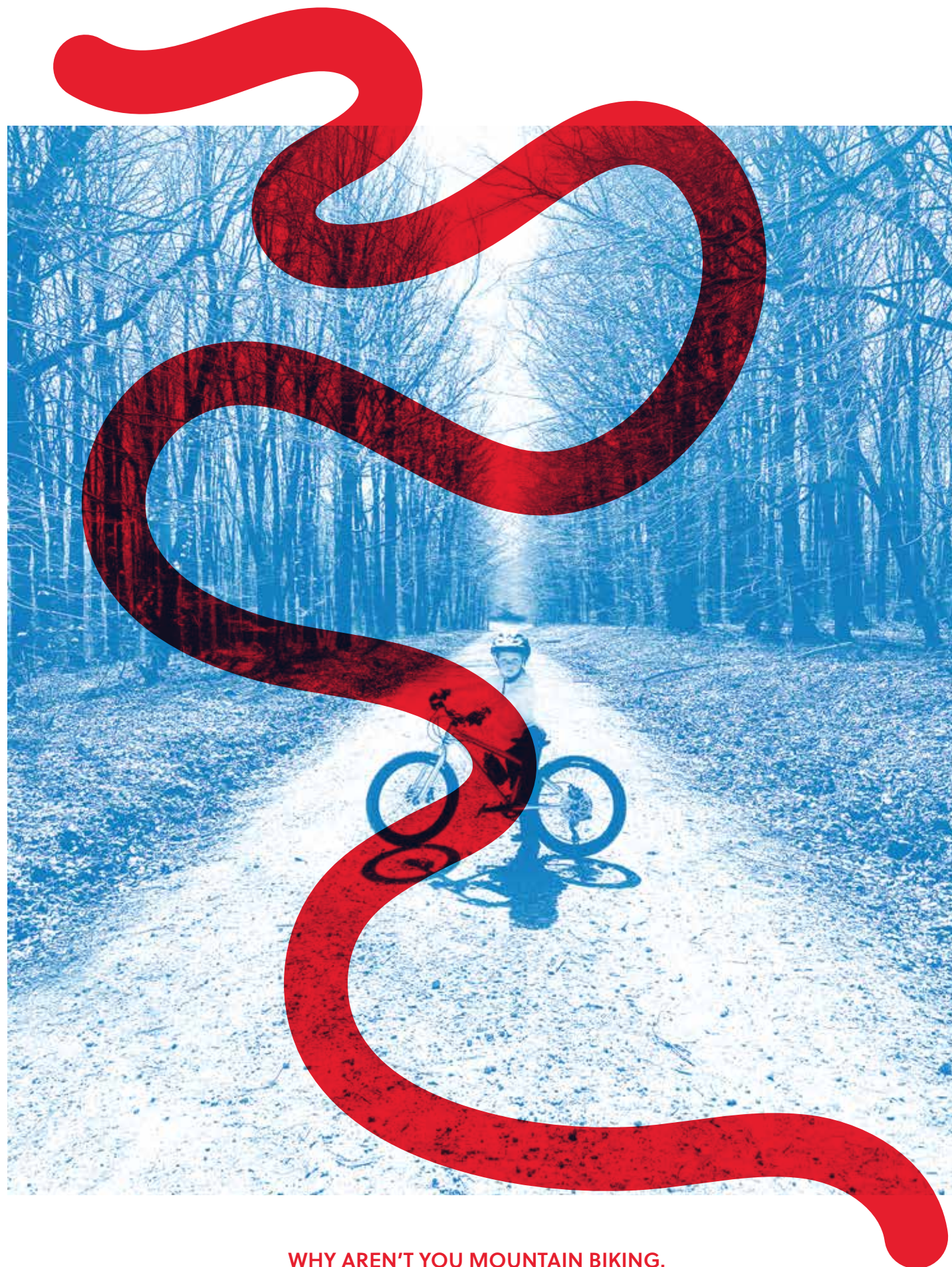


Why Aren't You Mountain Biking.





WHY AREN'T YOU MOUNTAIN BIKING.



Welcome to the Toolkit

Mountain biking has the power to bring people together, improve mental and physical well-being, and foster a deep connection with nature. Yet, not everyone feels welcome or able to participate. We ask, "Why aren't you mountain biking?" not as a challenge, but as a call to action.

This toolkit is your friendly guide to making mountain biking welcoming for everyone. We know many of you are super passionate to make a difference but often have limited capacity or resources. Mountain biking communities also frequently face a lack of support as they evolve. So, we've packed this guide with easy, practical steps you can use right away, and grow with as your group gets bigger. Think of it as a progressive roadmap for fostering inclusion, guiding you through different stages, much like advancing from green to black graded trails. Start where you feel most ready, continuously learn and adapt, and take practical steps to evolve your approach.

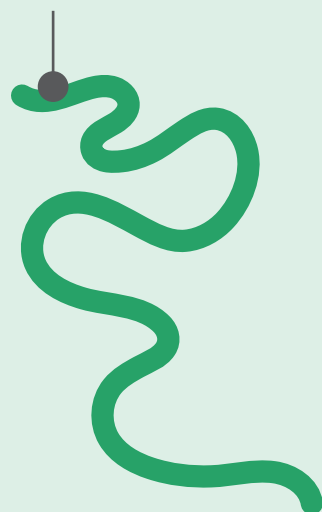
While sustainability conversations often focus on "people, place, and planet," the "people" aspect can sometimes be overlooked. This toolkit champions bringing people to the forefront, aiming to improve trails for existing riders and create welcoming spaces for new participants. Ultimately, it's about building a stronger voice for everyone to grow a more inclusive and vibrant mountain biking community.

The Toolkit: Built on Real Experiences

We engaged with a wide range of people, listening to their experiences. We conducted a comprehensive survey with over 400 people, held in-depth discussions with community leaders and riders, and reached out to trail associations and cycling organisations. Every recommendation within is a direct reflection of these real stories and authentic insights.

Getting Started

GREEN GRADE



What is the context

As champions, we're passionate about trails, but sometimes our focus means we miss who's not riding. We might feel like everyone's welcome, but the numbers tell us otherwise. This first step is all about shifting our focus and getting curious: understanding the barriers better and creating a foundation for building a stronger community in mountain biking.

Stat

We often assume mountain biking is for everyone, but our numbers tell a different story. While 38.4% of all respondents see the culture as inclusive, that feeling drops significantly among marginalised and underrepresented communities, indicating a notable gap in perceived inclusivity within mountain biking.

36.9%

Of women find it inclusive.

22.7%

Of people of colour find it inclusive.

22.5%

Of LGBTQ+ individuals find it inclusive.

19.33%

Of disabled individuals find it inclusive.

Feedback from community groups and organisations like Every Body Outdoors further echoes concerns about inclusion and accessibility, particularly for plus-sized individuals, reinforcing that design and affordability is a significant barrier.

Testimonial

// The sport isn't as welcoming as it likes to think it is.

// It's hard to get technical clothing at my size (uk 24-26).

// Seeing more girls mountain bike in recent years has definitely made me feel more included.

GREEN





ACTIONS

- Actively gather stories and opinions about inclusion from your riding community and through social media.
- Identify and connect with diverse local groups (like youth clubs or disability organisations) and map them out.
- Create a simple map of your local area and list all relevant community groups.
- Find passionate individuals in your area who can help lead and build on inclusion.
- Write a simple constitution, adapting a template to your group's specific needs.
- Explore different options for constituting your group to find the best fit.
- Review other available toolkits that provide detail on building your community (e.g., UK Trails Project, FIAS).

Photos: @rideresilience



Case Study

What They're Doing Well:

Understanding community

Rider Resilience highlights mountain biking's deeper, personal side, moving beyond just adrenaline. This initiative shares authentic stories from diverse individuals, showing how mountain biking builds resilience, fosters community, and promotes personal growth. A passionate team of volunteers and role models drives this by actively reaching out to people to find these compelling narratives sharing these stories through films, blogs, and social media posts. By showcasing different lived experiences, Rider Resilience effectively broadens who mountain biking is for, proving it's accessible and appealing to everyone.

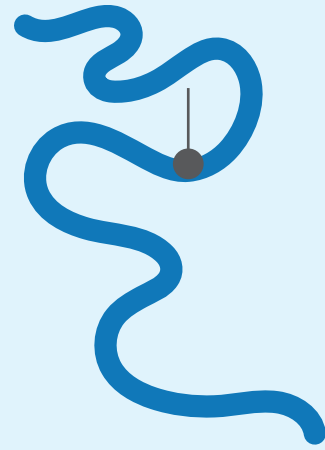
Building a foundation

Trail Collective North Wales is a prime example of building an inclusive foundation. They formed a Community Interest Company (CIC), establishing an official voice. They actively built a diverse committee, ensuring representation from Welsh speakers and young riders, which helped them engage the wider community and amplify previously unheard voices.



Finding Flow

BLUE GRADE



What is the context

Most people discover mountain biking through friends, family, or partners, highlighting its reliance on personal connections. There's a clear divide in perception: while riders see it as fun, challenging, and offering freedom, non-riders often view it as dangerous and risky. This media portrayal, focusing on risk, contrasts sharply with what riders actually say motivates them – primarily well-being and mental health. This stage is all about shifting that perception, showcasing mountain biking's true benefits beyond the 'gnar,' and creating clear, inviting pathways for more people to discover its joy.

Stat

An overwhelming 79% of respondents discovered mountain biking through a friend (48%), partner (16%), or family member (15%). In contrast, only 3.2% discovered mountain biking at school and 6.2% through a cycling club highlighting the lack of opportunity and easy-to-find pathways for newcomers.

More people bike for mental health and wellbeing than for the thrills. Over 78% said they mountain bike for their wellbeing, being outdoors and enjoyment. In contrast, 9.5% said they mountain bike for the thrills and risk.

Testimonial

// The image that MTB has to be descending technically challenging routes or climbing 'mountains' probably puts most off - trail riding or 'off road' riding might be a better sell?

// I find it hard to join group rides or events because I find lots of mountain bikers don't understand queer or trans identities. Instead I gravitate to doing activities that more of my queer friends do like hiking and climbing.

// It's a great way to be outdoors, gives you the opportunity to explore nature in a different way, you can cover more ground than walking and you get to roll with the hills. Mountain biking makes me feel free.

// Representation is important - both in terms of 'who' is seen riding, but 'how' and 'where' they are riding. To be as inclusive as possible, there needs to be more inclusive, responsible representation in media.

BLUE

- Open up conversations within your group on how to shift common perceptions of mountain biking.
- Highlight the well-being and mental health benefits of MTB, not just the thrills.
- Share diverse stories through your social media and communications that reflect varied experiences of mountain biking.
- Find community champions in your area who can connect you with local communities.
- Reach out to other active groups like hiking or climbing clubs to encourage people to give MTB a go.
- Organise events that are easily accessible, perhaps through public transport or carpooling.
- Offer beginner-friendly taster sessions for anyone new to mountain biking.

WOMEN ON
WHEELS
**BRISTOL
SHREDDERS**

Case Study

What They're Doing Well:

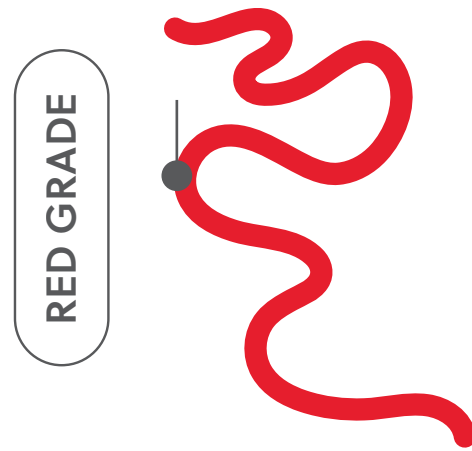
Increasing Access and Participation

Women on Wheels (WOW) is all about bringing mountain biking to new riders, especially women and non-binary individuals in urban areas who face financial hurdles. They tackle these barriers head-on by organising car shares to trailheads and holding sessions in local parks, making it super easy to join. They also use a "pay what you can" model and provide all the bikes and kit (often from community donations), so no one is left out due to cost. Their focused approach has dramatically increased participation among these groups, helping new riders gain confidence and connect with the wider mountain biking community.

Reshaping Mountain Biking

Fi Spotswood from Ride Bristol and Ollie Cain from Pedal Progression set up 'Bristol Shredders' to make mountain biking a fun, regular part of family life, especially for young kids. Founded with a strong focus on gender inclusivity from day one, they aim to show that mountain biking isn't just "what men do." They welcome neurodiverse children too. They offer affordable family rides and "SPOKE" rides (where kids ride exclusively), and provide free bikes through Pedal Progression to remove cost barriers. Their secret? A culture of support, celebrating positive behaviour, and encouraging kids to lead and cheer each other on. This approach has boosted kids' participation, built confidence, and created a year-round, inclusive riding routine for families.

Making Traction



What is the context

So, we've started understanding our community, but what keeps people from truly embracing mountain biking? Often, it comes down to cost, having the right gear, and simply knowing where to ride. Trails can also sometimes feel like a well-kept secret. This stage is all about tackling these practical hurdles head-on. It's about removing those barriers, making it easier for new riders to feel confident on the trails, and forging stronger partnerships to ensure mountain biking is accessible and enjoyable for everyone, for the long haul.

Stat

For many, the path to becoming a mountain biker isn't straightforward. Our findings reveal that a lack of readily available information and infrastructure, coupled with common concerns around cost and safety, significantly impact an individual's ability to get started in the sport. Specifically, 21% of respondents described accessing knowledge about trails as one of the biggest constraints to starting mountain biking. There is little infrastructure in place to help new riders better access mountain biking.

When non-riders were asked what would encourage them to go mountain biking, 19% said if they were able to join a group of learner mountain bikers, 12% said being able to hire a bike for a month, and 11% said being able to access information about routes for new mountain bikers.

The main constraints people experienced when they started mountain biking were affordability (22%), kit (15%), and knowledge about the trails (21%). For people that don't mountain bike, their main constraints are: 'they don't have a mountain bike' (19%), they're 'worried about crashing or hurting themselves' (19%), and 'mountain looks/is scary' (12%).

Testimonial

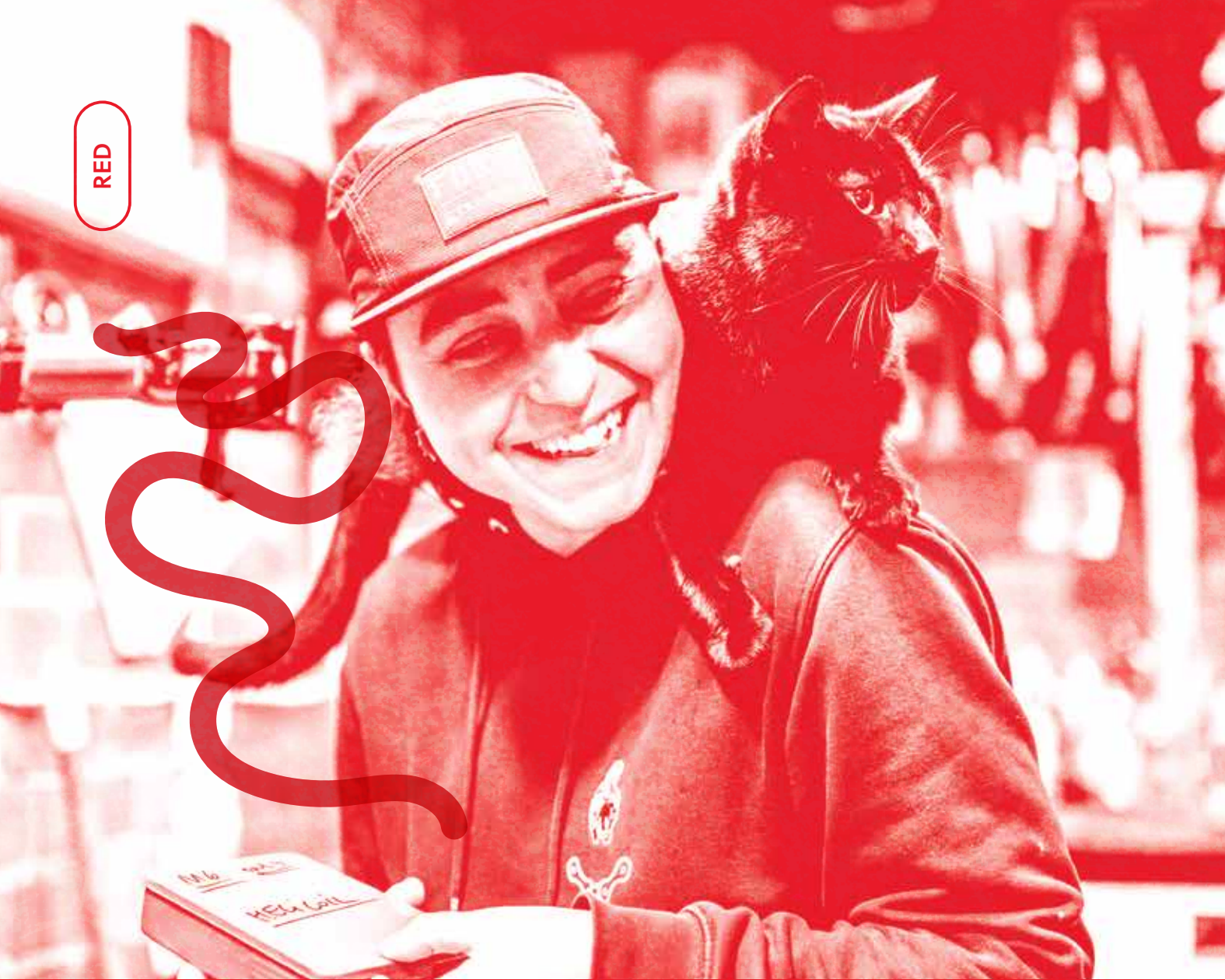
// It makes such a difference having a mountain bike to ride on but paying the money to buy one is such a commitment that is not one many can afford. It took me 2 years to save to buy a mountain bike after hiring ones often to trial it.

// This is something that may exist but if a local MTB group had a pool of bikes or an association with local cycling businesses with access to a pool of bikes, that would be an incentive.

// Disabled people do not have MTB trails or clear information about MTB trails that allow for off-road adaptive and aMTB cyclists to ride and enjoy.



- Remove cost barriers and partner with local bike shops for bike access, and organise kit upcycling events or donations to help new riders get geared up affordably.
- Build trail knowledge & confidence with providing clear, detailed information about trails (levels, terrain, accessibility) via your website or popular trail apps. Consider a 'buddy-up' scheme for new riders.
- Collaborate with other local cycling groups and specialised organisations to create inclusive events and activities tailored for specific groups.
- Enhance trail access & facilities by engaging landowners to improve signage on more accessible trails and add practical information about facilities (toilets, parking) to your website.
- Adapt the delivery of events to suits the needs of the groups you are working with.



THE BIKES COLLEGE

ADAPTIVE
Riders
COLLECTIVE

Case Study

What They're Doing Well:

Making Mountain Biking Affordable

The Bike College is a brilliant example of tackling mountain biking's biggest hurdle: affordability. They make it possible for more people to ride by providing recycled bikes at affordable prices. They do this by teaming up with partners like Leeds City Council and bike brands, getting discounted parts and passing those savings directly to the community. This initiative has seen a big increase in participation across their rides and races, with more people confidently getting out on trails, enjoying better health, and building a "support the others" riding culture.

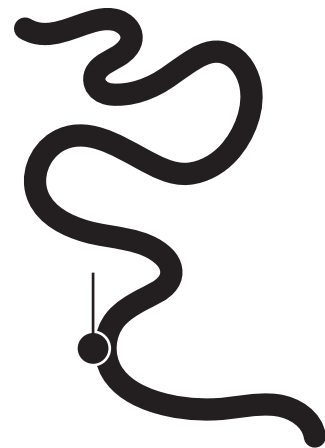
Building Partnerships through Collaboration

The Adaptive Riders Collective is doing incredible work to make adaptive mountain biking (aMTB) a core part of the cycling world. They focus on breaking down barriers and creating lasting opportunities for riders with physical disabilities, not just in the UK but globally. They achieve this by building powerful partnerships with disability organisations, industry leaders, and governing bodies. The Collective ensures riders get access to vital information, specialised equipment, and knowledge about accessible routes (for example, on platforms like Komoot). They also actively campaign for accessible facilities and provide leadership training, empowering adaptive riders. Their impact is clear, with a significant increase in participation among disabled individuals.



Build Momentum

BLACK GRADE



What is the context

As mountain bike groups, we have an incredible chance to become even more connected to our wider communities. There's often a lack of diverse voices in leadership, which means we're missing out on vital perspectives within mountain biking. What's more, people's direct experiences on the trails can be the deciding factor on whether this sport is for them. This stage is all about stepping up our game: making sure diverse voices are heard, building stronger community ties, and educating the mountain bike community on how to foster a culture that's truly open to everyone.

Stat

Building connections with people and communities outside of mountain biking can play a significant role in encouraging new riders. Our research shows that when non-mountain bikers are introduced to mountain biking, they are significantly more likely to engage: 44% of respondents reported that individuals they introduced to mountain biking subsequently started biking, in stark contrast to just 8% who showed no interest after an introduction. This highlights the vital impact of direct engagement and social networks in broadening participation.

A critical challenge facing mountain biking is the lack of diversity in leadership and at decision-making levels. As expressed by the community leaders we spoke with, this absence restricts the range of perspectives and understanding of what the sport truly needs to become more inclusive.

This is further reflected in how mountain biking culture is viewed by participants and non-participants alike. When asked to describe the culture, respondents consistently revealed a homogenous view of mountain biking as male-dominated, with a perceived lack of racial diversity, and an emphasis on 'extreme and dangerous' aspects. This narrow representation of what mountain biking is and looks like on the trails can be a significant barrier to entry for individuals who do not see themselves reflected in the sport.

To counter these perceptions and encourage broader participation, there is a clear opportunity for community groups and trail associations to actively promote a more inclusive culture and create a welcoming atmosphere for new mountain bikers on the trails.

Testimonial

// Mountain biking like any sport has a vibe when you're at trail centres etc. Whilst on the whole people are friendly it is quite intimidating even as a longer time mountain biker.

// Still feels unsafe to go mountain biking alone, as a female.

// Any form of community needs to give back a little. If you take away the adrenaline hit, what's left of mountain biking is its core essence – and that's what we need to cultivate.

// Mountain biking is one of the best sports out there, it doesn't matter what you ride, how fast or how slow, all that matters is that you ride. Enjoy every minute. The only ride I've ever regretted is one I didn't do.

BLACK





- Take MTB to local schools and engage young people in the work you do
- Build a strong MTB community voice by getting involved in broader initiatives, and advocate for accessible trails in local infrastructure plans, ask local disabled riders to audit your trails.
- Actively seek out and include underrepresented voices on boards and in decision-making, setting aspirational goals for gender balance.
- Champion campaigns like 'Be Nice and Say Hi,' share feedback on inappropriate actions, and educate riders on mutual respect.
- Know your community through data to understand who is (and isn't) present in your community, guiding outreach efforts beyond just riders.
- Share knowledge and find opportunities to share best practices and engage the wider community (not just riders) in activities like dig days.



Case Study

What They're Doing Well:

Working with Young People

The TVTA (Tweed Valley Trails Association) has teamed up with Selkirk and Peebles High Schools to give students a hands-on mountain biking experience. This isn't just about riding; kids also learn vital bike maintenance and trail building skills, to lead toward exploring potential career paths in the industry. They especially focus on students who may not thrive in traditional academic settings. This brilliant partnership, which grew from working with the school cycle club, helps young people discover new passions, gain valuable skills, and work towards qualifications or becoming mountain bike leaders. It's a fantastic way to show that mountain biking offers more than just riding – it offers a future.

Empowering Women in Trail Building

This initiative is all about getting more women involved in trail building. Aberdeenshire Trail Association does this by hosting women-only dig days that are supportive and intimidation-free, proactively challenging outdated attitudes. They make it easier for women to participate by focusing on a social atmosphere, picking appealing trails, and scheduling digs at times that work around childcare and work commitments. This approach has led to a huge increase in women's involvement, with more women joining committees, influencing trail development, and becoming dig leaders themselves, ultimately creating a more inclusive trail building culture in North East Scotland.



Next Steps

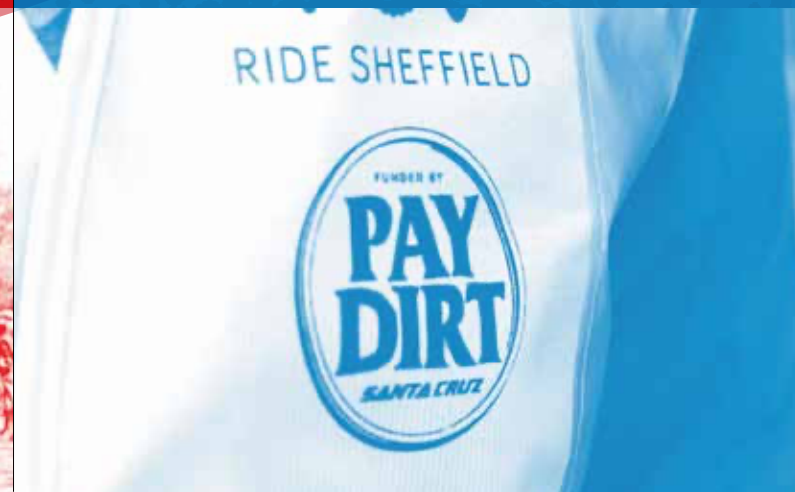


This toolkit provides a roadmap for inclusion in mountain biking. To build on the momentum you've created, here's some steps you can take:

- **Start Somewhere, Keep Going:**
Don't feel you need to perfect one stage before moving to the next. Begin where you feel most ready, iterate, and remember that consistent effort leads to significant change over time.
- **Revisit and Reflect:**
Regularly revisit each stage of this model. What have you learned? What new barriers have emerged? How can you deepen your impact in each area based on your community's evolving needs?
- **Measure Your Progress:**
Continue to gather feedback and data from your community. Use this information to understand what's working well, identify new opportunities, and celebrate your successes.
- **Continue Championing:**
Remember that building a truly inclusive mountain biking community is a shared, evolving responsibility. Keep the conversation alive, adapt your approach, and continue to challenge inequalities to give everyone a chance to experience the joy of mountain biking.

Resources: Relevant reads for this toolkit:

- The Trail Its People Place and Time Research Report: UK Trails project
- Fostering Inclusive Action Sports: The FIAS Women+ MTB Community Building Toolkit
- Why Do You Ride?: A Characterization of Mountain Bikers, Their Engagement Methods, and Perceived Links to Mental Health and Well-Being

[READ MORE](#)[READ MORE](#)[READ MORE](#)



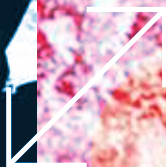
People we'd like to thank

This toolkit simply wouldn't exist without the incredible community that helped shape it. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who shared their valuable perspectives, insights, and real-life examples of how they're driving change on the ground. A special thank you also goes to the hundreds who completed our survey, providing the crucial data to highlight the perception of a truly inclusive mountain bike culture. Your collective voices made this guide possible. and for that, we are immensely grateful.

Emily Horridge	_____	The MTB Foundation
Kath Goodey	_____	Trail Collective North Wales
Marc Crowley	_____	Tweed Valley Trails Association
Fiona Dewsbury	_____	Forestry England
David Matyjas	_____	The Bike College
Robin Grant	_____	UK MTB Trail Alliance
Jon Dallow	_____	Sheffled council
David Rose	_____	Forestry England
Fee Wallace	_____	Aberdeenshire Trail Association
Henry Norman	_____	Ride Sheffield
Neil Russell	_____	Adaptive Riders Collective
Belinda Everett	_____	Bee Pedal Ready
Steve Aitchison	_____	Can't Quit Cartel
Jo Shwe	_____	Trash Free Trails/ The Colour Collective
Emily Williams	_____	Every Body Outdoors
Amelia De Clemente	_____	The Bike College
Fiona Spotswood	_____	Ride Bristol
Katie Zaffke	_____	PayDirt
Kate O'Callaghan	_____	Rider Resilience
Holly Barwick	_____	Women on Wheels
Ginny Allende	_____	Wave Adventure
Jasmin Patel	_____	Reframing MTB

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LET THE TRIAL GUIDE YOU

