

Welcome to the Summer edition of the Schools Go Smarter newsletter, the place to find out about sustainable travel initiatives in Northumberland.

For more information about anything you see here please email [tracy.aitken@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:tracy.aitken@northumberland.gov.uk)

### International Walk to School Month

This year's W2SM exceeded our expectations with a record 36 schools taking part in the month and celebrating walking and wheeling to school.

This year we gave out 200 classroom challenge packs encouraging over 6000 pupils to complete the 5 Day Walking Challenge.

We made 23 hi vis resource packs and delivered 24 reflector kits, helping schools to reinforce messages about Be Bright Be Seen.

Our schools continued to amaze us with their ingenuity and amazing ideas delivering an average of 9 activities over the month, which this year has included a coffee van to encourage parents to park and stride, a whole school community walk, DT challenges, Bling your Bike, Scavenger Hunts and much more.

Walk to School Month has become our flagship annual event with schools rating it at 4.8 out of 5 as an activity to take part in, here's just one of the lovely comments we received.

*'Our pupils thoroughly enjoyed the month and the activities encouraged them to become more active. The walk to school month homework was a huge success with more pupils than ever taking part'. Stamfordham Primary School.*

### Why not add it to your school diary and take part in October 2026



## Have you booked your free Bikeability training yet?

Outspoken Training are NCC's contractors for delivery of FREE Bikeability Training to schools in Northumberland. Bikeability training is available to schools targeting years 5 and 6 for Level 2 training and years 3 and 4 for Level 1. Schools should get in touch with Outspoken at [admin@outspokentraining.co.uk](mailto:admin@outspokentraining.co.uk) to discuss their training options, you'll also find information about the training including a Parent FAQ section on Outspoken's [website](#).



## Balance Bike Libraries

Our two newest Balance Bike Libraries have just started operating in Hexham and Berwick libraries, they join Ashington and Bedlington as part of our successful partnership with our fantastic libraries' teams. Schools can book directly with their nearest library via the contact details below.

On offer is a fleet of 10 bikes and helmets and a helpful booklet with fun activities to deliver with Early Years and Reception classes.

***Please note schools must be able to arrange pick up and drop off the balance bikes from the libraries.***

[Berwick.library@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Berwick.library@northumberland.gov.uk) [Hexham.library@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Hexham.library@northumberland.gov.uk)  
[Ashington.library@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Ashington.library@northumberland.gov.uk) [Bedlington.library@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Bedlington.library@northumberland.gov.uk)

## Get Cycling in Schools from Bikeability

Bikeability are once again offering free balance bike training for school staff and gifting schools a fleet of 8 balance bikes and helmets as part of their Get Cycling in Schools Programme.

Schools can nominate 2 members of staff for a half day training session. Twenty Northumberland schools have already taken advantage of this fantastic opportunity with staff now trained to deliver Balance Sessions to their Early Years and KS1 classes and in return they have received 6 bikes and helmets.

Bikeability will be running more half day training sessions for school staff as soon as there is enough interest in our area, schools can find out more and register an interest [here](#).

***If members of staff who took part in the training last time are no longer working at your school, we may be able to offer additional training for a new member of staff. Please note you will not be eligible for any additional balance bikes, please get in touch to discuss this with [getcycling@bikeabilitytrust.org](mailto:getcycling@bikeabilitytrust.org)***



## Let's encourage more walking to school

Do you want a fun and engaging way to encourage more pupils to walk to school, then why not have a look at the [Living Streets WOW Challenge](#).

WOW encourages more families to be active on their journey to school and reduce traffic at the school gate by tracking and rewarding pupils each time they travel actively to school.

Living Street's mascot Strider might even pop along to meet your pupils, just like he did at Ellington Primary School.

[Find out more here](#) or contact our North East Coordinator [sam.prior@livingstreets.org.uk](mailto:sam.prior@livingstreets.org.uk) for a chat about WOW.



## Modeshift updates

There have been some new features and updates to the Modeshift platform, I'll forward these onto all users and add a copy to our [Padlet](#), but here are a couple of highlights;

- New [Active Travel Inspectors](#) resources are now live- more on this next term
- An 'Expiring this Term' column will now appear on the Accreditation Progress tab showing how many initiatives are due to expire
- School must deliver at least 1 new initiative every year as a minimum
- The length of approved level accreditation has been reduced from 10 years to 1 to keep it in line with other levels of accreditations

## Active Travel Ambassadors

The free Modeshift Active Travel Ambassadors (ATA) programme is designed to empower students aged 11-18 to design and run their own active travel campaign within their school community. The programme has been running across the UK for over 4 years, and this September has been introduced to the North East.

We are thrilled with the progress in Northumberland so far! Participating schools

have successfully completed facilitated sessions, deepening their understanding of active travel benefits, identifying local barriers, and researching specific transport issues unique to their school environment.



Now the schools will create their own impactful campaigns and prepare to pitch for that vital funding at the Campaign Junction event to a panel of industry experts at County Hall. With 4 schools already running active sessions and 8 more showing keen interest, we anticipate a very busy and successful next term.

Interested in bringing the free ATA programme and this fantastic leadership opportunity to your students? It's not too late to get involved just email: [lou@modeshift.org.uk](mailto:lou@modeshift.org.uk)

[The Active Travel Ambassador \(ATA\) Programme | Modeshift](#)



## Independent Travel Training Programme

Northumberland County Council aspires to support all young people in Northumberland to reach their potential. Our Independent Travel Training programme teaches young people with additional needs how to travel independently and safely between home



and their school or workplace so that they can take steps toward living a fulfilled and independent life and access more future opportunities. The initiative helps young people learn new skills and significantly improve their independence when travelling alone and is a project which has changed many lives already. To find out more, watch this inspiring film [ITT video](#)



## Have you used our School Parking Information Toolkit?

We are seeing an increase in complaints about irresponsible and dangerous parking around our schools. This is concerning and a reminder that we need to keep reinforcing the message to parents and carers on acceptable behaviour when driving to school.

[Check out the Padlet here](#) or scan the QR code.



Created in partnership with our Road Safety team you can download the resources to use on your social media platforms, parent mail or newsletters.

The start of a new term or school year is an ideal opportunity to make sure everyone knows what expected of them.

### Please remind families:

- To walk or wheel to school whenever possible
- Park and Stride if this is an option
- If there is no alternative but to drive to school, then park at least 5 minutes from the school gate and always in a careful and responsible manner

If you are posting on social media, please tag [@NorthumberlandCC](#) to help us spread the message wider and encourage everyone to be a Smarter Parker!

## Northumberland Schools Sustainability Network

Would you like to get involved in the **Northumberland Schools Sustainability Network** and see how your school could contribute to addressing Climate Change?

The NSSN is a group of Teachers and School Staff who come together to discuss climate change and sustainability, the sessions offer a chance to talk about work schools are getting involved in, share best practice and chat through new ideas and activities.

Sessions are delivered online via Microsoft Teams every quarter for roughly 45 minutes to an hour.

**If you have any questions or would like to be contacted when the next dates are out, please email:**

[climate@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:climate@northumberland.gov.uk)



## Modeshift Accreditations Summer 2025

There is a lot of hard work and determination that goes on behind the scenes to develop a travel plan and we wanted to say a huge congratulations to those schools who achieved Modeshift STARS accreditation at the beginning of this term.

**Allendale Primary School – Excellent Travel Plan**

**Ellington Primary School – Very Good Travel Plan**

**Mowbray Primary School – Good Travel Plan**

**Grange View Primary School – Good Travel Plan**

**Seaton Sluice Middle School – Good Travel Plan**

**Seaton Valley High School – Approved Travel Plan**



**Have a lovely Christmas, see you next term**



## Dates for your diary

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Modeshift Autumn Accreditation deadline              | 31 December 2025         |
| Annual Mode of Travel Survey                         | Spring Term 2026         |
| <a href="#">Big Walk and Wheel</a>                   | 16- 27 March 2026        |
| <a href="#">Brake Beep Beep Day</a>                  | 18 March 2026            |
| <a href="#">Walk to School Week   Living Streets</a> | 18-22 May 2026           |
| <a href="#">Great Big Green Week</a>                 | 6-14 June 2026           |
| Northumberland Bike Month                            | 1-30 June 2026           |
| <a href="#">Clean Air Day</a>                        | 18 June 2026             |
| <a href="#">World Car Free Day</a>                   | 22 September 2026        |
| <a href="#">International Walk to School Month</a>   | 1-31 October 2026        |
| <a href="#">Bikeability Cycle to School Week</a>     | Tbc (12-16 October 2026) |
| <a href="#">Road Safety Week</a>                     | Tbc (November 2026)      |

## Useful contacts

**Bikeability Provider** [admin@outspokentraining.co.uk](mailto:admin@outspokentraining.co.uk)  
[becky@outspokentraining.co.uk](mailto:becky@outspokentraining.co.uk)  
[highwaysprogramme@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysprogramme@northumberland.gov.uk)

**Balance Bike Libraries** [ashington.library@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:ashington.library@northumberland.gov.uk)  
[bedlington.library@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:bedlington.library@northumberland.gov.uk)  
[berwick.library@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:berwick.library@northumberland.gov.uk)  
[hexham.library@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:hexham.library@northumberland.gov.uk)

**Climate Change Team** [climate@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:climate@northumberland.gov.uk)

**Independent Travel Training** [itt@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:itt@northumberland.gov.uk)

**Parking queries** [parkingservices@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:parkingservices@northumberland.gov.uk)

**Road Safety/Highways issues** [highwaysprogramme@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysprogramme@northumberland.gov.uk)