

Study title: Older Adults CycLE (**C**ycling **L**ived **E**xperience) study.

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Project overview

Background: Cycling is often perceived as an accessible and affordable form of physical activity and has increased in popularity for the older adult population (Baughn et al. 2022). It is considered a healthy form of physical activity (Bauman & Rissel, 2009), whereby its non-weight bearing nature means it is considered less stressful on the body compared to jogging or other running sports (Rissel et al., 2013). Cycling has been reported to have a positive relationship with several health markers, such as, cardiorespiratory fitness, functional abilities, and disease risk factor profiles (Oja, Titze, Bauman et al., 2011). Furthermore, cycling may have other benefits for older adults, such as opportunity for recreation and socialising, and as an affordable form of transport (Rissel et al., 2013). To date, studies have typically focused on healthier population groups and/or higher-income populations, with lesser known about the experiences of older adults with complex or multiple long-term conditions and/or older adults in lower-socioeconomic groups (Useche et al., 2026). If the benefits of cycling are to be realised by older adults across these population groups, more needs to be understood about how to develop inclusive and accessible cycling interventions or programmes, and how we might engage groups not traditionally reached. Furthermore, there is a need to consider how older adults who participate in cycling embed it into daily life and how they adapt to barriers, beyond infrastructural ones (den Hoed, 2025).

Aims: This study will aim to address these gaps in the literature and inform future cycling programmes or interventions, by answering the following research questions:

1. What are the perceived multi-dimensional barriers and facilitators to adoption (uptake) and/or maintenance (continuation) of cycling for older adults with long-term health conditions? And,
2. How might cycling programmes address these barriers to become more inclusive and accessible to older adults?

Methods

Research design: This study will aim to understand the perceptions and lived experiences of older adults. This study will use multiple methods, such as, questionnaires, focus groups and interviews, and will be linked to a parallel study. This will enable the researchers to gain a multi/cross-disciplinary understanding of the factors associated with cycling and related physical activities for this population group.

PPIE (Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement): This study idea and research questions were co-developed with a representative from the funding organisation (Willesden Cycling Club). To ensure that the project remains informed and supported by the community, a wider PPIE group will be formed. This group will include 3 members that will be representative of the sample population (see details below).

Participants and recruitment: Up to 40 older adults (i.e. over 50 years old) who experience one or more long-term health conditions will be recruited to the study. Recruitment will take place at Brunel University of London, primarily during the university ageing research showcase, but also through the Brunel Older People Research Group network and word of mouth. As a thank you for taking part in the study, participants will receive a £25 gift voucher.

Data Collection:

Questionnaires: Ahead of attending a focus group or interview, participants will be asked to complete a series of Physical Activity questionnaires. This questionnaire data will provide quantitative insight into enjoyment of physical activity (e.g. PACES) and current physical activity levels (e.g. IPAQ-short form). Self-efficacy for exercise scale and Falls Efficacy Scale – International will also be recorded for those not participating in the parallel study.

Focus groups: Up to four focus groups will take place and each focus group will include 8-10 participants and will last approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. The focus group will be guided by a 'photo elicitation' approach, in which photos and images will be used to prompt conversation about barriers and facilitators to cycling and/or other physical activities. The focus group guide and accompanying photos and images will be decided and agreed by the PPIE members, which will ensure appropriate and relatable questions and imagery is used for this population. Using photos and images as stimuli has been found to encourage discussion and will provide rich and descriptive data to answer the research questions (Bates et al., 2017). The focus group will be split into two parts, 1) barriers and facilitators to cycling (as per research question 1), and 2) idea generation for an inclusive and accessible cycling programme (as per research question 2).

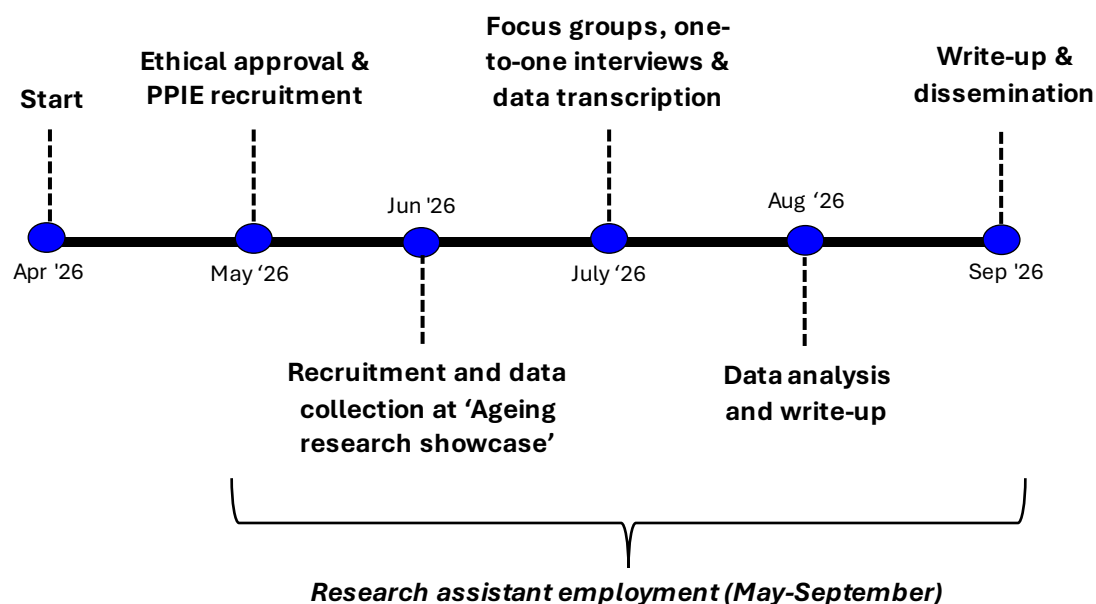
One-to-one interviews: If potential participants wish to take part in the study but cannot attend one of the focus groups, they will be offered an opportunity to attend a one-to-one online/telephone interview with the research team. This interview will last approximately 45 minutes and will include the same structure and questions as the focus group.

Data Analysis and Dissemination:

The data collected from this study will be appropriately analysed by the research team and an executive summary of results provided to the funder (Willesden Cycling Club). The results from this study and the parallel study may be written up and disseminated in academic settings/publications e.g. journal publication, academic conferences, knowledge translation events. The funder will be acknowledged in any dissemination or publication activity related to this study.

**A summary of expected timelines and an overview of total costings is provided on the next page.*

Expected timeline of activities



Costings overview

Brief description of item/cost	Approx. cost (£)	Total (£)
Undergraduate research assistant (Grade 4)	75 hours @ £19.89/hour	£1491.75
Focus group materials and refreshments	£50	£50
Participant reimbursement for focus group / interview (£25 voucher)	40 x £25 voucher	£1000.00
Engagement and dissemination costs (e.g. PPIE costs, dissemination and/or conference fees)	£458.25	£458.25
	Total	£3000.00