**MEDIA RELEASE – 11th October 2019**

**The Bikeability Trust welcomes a £13 million pound Government funding boost for children’s cycle training**

More schoolchildren across England will now learn essential cycling skills, thanks to a **£13 million Government investment** in the Bikeability cycle training programme - topping off a record year for the cycle training programme.

Bikeability training is offered at three levels, based on a child’s age and experience. Skills taught start with basic bike-handling in a controlled traffic-free environment and build up, so that children can manage a variety of traffic conditions on different types of roads and become confident cyclists.

In the year up to April 2019, around 400,000 children completed the scheme, and the total number of children trained since Bikeability was launched in 2006 has now reached three million. The funding will ensure that the programme is able to continue for another year, so that approximately **50% of primary schools across England will be able to access the programme.**

**Paul Robison, Chief Executive Officer of the Bikeability Trust, said:**

 “We are delighted that DfT funding for Bikeability in 2020/21 has been confirmed.  High-quality cycle training enables confident and enjoyable cycling, raises awareness of skilful cycling among all road users, and contributes to better transport, health and wellbeing.

Children love Bikeability and parents value the training their children receive. Independent research confirms Bikeability helps children cycle more safely, more often. And children who cycle regularly are more likely to become active adults.”

The Bikeability Trust is also very encouraged to see the support across all government departments for Bikeability training which can help to tackle a range of issues from reducing child obesity, contributing to children’s confidence and self-esteem, reducing CO2 emissions and air pollution:

**Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Transport, said:**

“Cycling and walking are great forms of exercise, helping to reduce child obesity, and boosting people’s physical and mental health. I am delighted to see Bikeability has now supported three million children to take to their bikes safely and confidently, kick-starting a lifetime of cycling for them. I hope that the £13 million investment announced today will help them continue to train millions more young cyclists over the coming years.”

**Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education, said:**

 “The benefits of cycling to school go far beyond providing an active and fun way for children to get to school. Cycling cuts carbon emissions and traffic levels outside of schools by taking cars off the road. The Government’s Bikeability scheme gives young people the knowledge and confidence they need to cycle safely, providing peace of mind to parents, pupils and schools and I’m so pleased that we’re able to invest this new money in the programme – it’s an investment in our future.”

**Jo Churchill, Public Health Minister, said:**

“The extension of this scheme is a vital step in encouraging more children to be active. Physical activity has so many health benefits for our children – it keeps them fit and healthy, strengthens muscles and bones, increases self-esteem, and improves concentration and learning in school. As part of our prevention green paper, we set out our ambition to promote more active travel. Building activity into the school run is one of the many ways to do this and the Bikeability scheme will help more children stay active every day. What’s more, its fun!”

**Dr Karen Exley, Group Leader of Air Pollution at Public Health England, said:**

 “Bike to School Week is a great way of cutting congestion by encouraging people to get out of their cars on short journeys such as the school run. It will help to reduce idling outside schools, which will improve air quality where children congregate, and increase the amount of exercise young people take.”

**Ends**

**Notes for Editors:**

1. Bikeability is a practical training programme offered at three levels, that aims to develop children and young people’s skills and confidence to cycle on roads, and ultimately encourage more people to cycle more safely, more often. It is funded by the Department for Transport and delivered through local authorities and School Games Organiser Host Schools. In 2018/19, 411,069 DfT-funded Bikeability training places were delivered in just under half of all primary schools in England (outside London, where Bikeability is funded by Transport for London).
2. Parents say Bikeability improves their children’s on-road cycle safety and gives them confidence to allow their children to cycle more ([Ipsos MORI 2015](https://bikeability.org.uk/download/616/)).  Trained children are significantly better at perceiving and appropriately responding to on-road cycling hazards months after training ([NFER 2015](https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/1624/bike01.pdf)).  Bikeability has positive, statistically significant impacts on children’s cycling rates, parents’ confidence in their children’s cycling, and children’s knowledge of cycling safely on the road [(SQW 2019](https://bikeability.org.uk/download/2102/)).

For more information about Bikeability visit the Bikeability website <https://bikeability.org.uk/> or contact the Bikeability Trust: contact@bikeabilitytrust.org