# BuyCycles- A supported purchase for bike ownership

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| Type your abstract here. 300 words max. |
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Poverty is a great barrier to cycling for those who experience mental illnesses, substance addiction, and those recently released from prison. These people seldom have driver’s licences or own cars, may have social phobias regarding using public transport and many report poor motivation and may have chronic physical health problems which impacts on walking. Their world is small. Having a bicycle opens up employment, educational, social and recreational and physical activity options for this very disadvantaged population(s).

Since February 2018 BuyCycles has been providing a wraparound bike-buying service to those referred from the Mental Health and Correction sectors. Volunteers provide advice concerning the type of bike required, quality bike brands and appropriate frame size. They also arrange purchase and pick up. Volunteer mechanics ensure all bikes purchased for the scheme are in safe and good condition. The customer fixes their pay-back regime at a rate that will not cause financial hardship, and a volunteer bookkeeper logs payments. The project buys wholesale locks and helmets and on-sells these to clients at a slightly reduced cost to minimise debt.

BuyCycles ran as a pilot for 7 months and was then evaluated. At that point, 65% of clients had completed or started payment. Recurring themes was that owning a bike improved participants’ subjective mental wellbeing and gave a sense of autonomy and control. It was agreed to continue BuyCycles as a permanent project, extending its outreach to former refugees and migrants who often have similar financial and transport disadvantage.

Since June 2020 the project has supported 162 people with bike purchase.