

## Michael's story

Michael has been learning to cycle through our free Cycle Confidence sessions. Here he tells us how his instructor has helped him to build his skills and begin to cycle confidently for the first time in years.

*"I am Michael Bahrami-Hessari and I am currently a funding recipient of the Adult Cycle Training Scheme. I am emailing to express my gratitude for the training I have been receiving from Dilys Gartside (Cyclewise Southampton).*

*"When I moved to Southampton a month ago after living in Manchester for two years (another bike-friendly city), I knew I wanted a sustainable way of commuting to work that was cheap and efficient as I currently have no car. While biking was an option, for years, friends have tried to teach me and invariably failed. It also did not help that I was traumatised after being hit by a cyclist during a trip to Edinburgh last year. Added to this was the self-consciousness I would feel when people walked past a mid-30-year-old who could barely keep his balance. However, determined to cross this skill off my "to-do list", I signed up for Dilys' classes and my experience has been very positive. After only four lessons, I can now confidently bike around the Common. While I still fear hitting dogs, pedestrians (especially prams with babies!), lampposts and trees, I feel with a little bit more practice, I should be okay. Last week Dilys and I had a wonderful ride around the Common and I finally felt the exhilaration my cyclist friends had always been raving about. It was quite overwhelming.*

*"Dilys is a very empathetic, patient and kind teacher. She understood what made me scared and adjusted accordingly. She knew how to motivate and yet challenge me at the same time. She truly is passionate not just about cycling, but teaching people.*

*"While I still cannot (and am not confident to) ride to work, with a few more lessons, I think I will be able to do so.*

*"Dilys told me about the big bike festival ride in Southampton that happens in July. I really hope by that time I am able to join in.*

*"Kudos to your organisation for this wonderful programme. Thank you for helping me realise one of my life goals."*