

## Matt's story

Keen cyclist Matt was asked by Society of St. James to deliver cycle training as part of its Saints4Sport (S4S) project. S4S won funding from My Journey to help local jobseekers access employment opportunities using active travel modes. Here Matt tells us how he supported S4S volunteer Steph, a returning cyclist, to build her confidence and develop the skills to commute by bike.

*“Steph is an active volunteer with the Society of St. James (SSJ) and received a bike through S4S ‘My Journey to Employment’ grant which was awarded by Southampton City Council.*

*“However, Steph was returning to cycling after a long break and was nervous about getting on a bike again. S4S offered her cycle training to increase her confidence with gear changing, braking and road cycling etc. I was asked to provide this training and I was only too happy to do so, especially as I was keen to give back to S4S, being a participant in S4S activities and an ex-service user with SSJ.*

*“Through my engagement with S4S and Cycling UK, I was able to qualify as a mountain bike and road group leader, as well as a Ride Manager with Sustrans.*

*“I met Steph at her home address, which was 2.4 miles from her volunteer place of work. The most direct route is along the A3024 which at the best of times is very busy and quite daunting, especially to one who is returning to cycling. Nevertheless, Steph was determined to cycle this route.*

*“So we set off aiming to use the roads and cycle paths. Along the way I made Steph aware some of the hazards, such as car doors opening into the cyclist’s path, cars coming out of driveways, pedestrians on shared pathways etc. Steph grew in confidence the further we cycled.*

*“At the end of our journey, I showed Steph how to secure her bike to deter theft. And she was excited about the new found freedom a bike would deliver.”*

Since completing her training with Matt, Steph has since gone on to secure permanent employment working two days a week. Well done Steph!

