

PRESS RELEASE

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Local company pledges bikes for Merseyside's NHS Heroes

A local organisation focused on getting people involved in cycling has pledged to provide more than 100 of its hire bikes to NHS staff across Merseyside hospitals, as a means of supporting the current fight against COVID-19 (coronavirus).

Social enterprise, [HYPE Merseyside](#), will be delivering 100 bikes to frontline NHS workers over the next month, after their initial offer to staff from Arrowe Park Hospital was met by an overwhelming response.

Sixty applications for the first 100 bikes were received in just 48 hours from NHS employees living within five miles of the hospital.

The main reasons cited for wanting access to one of the donated bikes were to save money by not having to take taxis when public transport wasn't available, to save time and allow them to spend more time with their family (rather than waiting at bus stops and train stations) and to improve their own health and general fitness.

HYPE is now inviting other NHS workers from Merseyside to apply for a bike and has launched a crowdfunding campaign to raise £20,000 to help it deliver even more bikes to members of the 50,000+ NHS staff community across the region.

The bike donations will allow recipients to travel for free and avoid having to use public transport while travelling to work during the pandemic. It is also hoped that the campaign will encourage frontline workers and the wider community to use cycling as a way of staying fit and healthy.

All money raised from the crowdfunding campaign will be spent on buying more bikes and repairing those donated by the public, ready to be provided to brave NHS workers across Merseyside.

Matthew Houghton, Chief Executive at HYPE Merseyside, said: "We believe that the NHS staff working tirelessly across the region in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak are true heroes, the real 'pride of Merseyside' and we wanted to find a way to show our appreciation and help them during this crisis.

“Providing 100 bikes from our existing fleet was an immediate and obvious way that we could help. However, it quickly became clear that the demand was far greater than our initial supply.

“With the help of the people of Merseyside, we can use our network and expertise to go even further and source more bikes, providing more frontline workers with free, healthy and safe transport.”

Julie Barnes, Lead Commissioner for Transport and Technology at Wirral Council, said: “The innovative scheme, launched by HYPE, is helping our amazing NHS staff on the frontline during this uncertain time, including those at Arrowe Park, Wirral.

“It is important that we all look after one another during the ongoing COVID-19 situation and I am delighted that a sustainable, healthy and free option is being made available for those who need to travel for work. I’d like to encourage all our NHS workers to take this opportunity and apply for one of these bikes and thank them as they continue to help us to fight this virus.”

Janelle Holmes, Chief Executive at Wirral University Teaching Hospital, said: “This is a great initiative that offers an extra option for staff to travel to work at such an important time. Health and wellbeing of staff is a priority and this offers an additional benefit of exercise. The support the Trust has had from the community during the COVID-19 outbreak has been fantastic and I would like to say a very big thank you.”

Members of the public can support HYPE Merseyside’s campaign by either making a donation via the crowdfunding page or contacting them directly to donate any unwanted bikes that they may have. The organisation will be collecting unwanted bikes from homes across the region throughout April and May.

Matthew added: “We want bikes that are too big, too small, rusty or those that you simply don’t have space for anymore. Our team will be happy you collect them, repair them and give them a new lease of life before handing them over to one of our local NHS heroes.”

Established in 2007 to deliver workshops for teenagers in deprived wards during the summer holidays, HYPE Merseyside’s cycling and development plan now focuses on getting more people, more active, more often through cycling. It also aims to make cycling cheaper, safer, more accessible and a natural choice for transport.

The company's sustainable plan is to provide more bikes to NHS staff within the next six months from its refurbished and recycled stock. Each recipient will retain the donated bike until the end of the year, after which they will be absorbed back into HYPE Merseyside's fleet of hire bikes, for use in its community activities. Any additional money raised beyond the organisation's crowdfunder target will be donated to NHS Charitable trusts.

If you are an NHS worker in Merseyside and would like to apply for a bike, please complete HYPE's online form www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NHSbikes

To donate to HYPE Merseyside's crowdfunding campaign, visit: www.crowdfunder.co.uk/bikes-for-nhs

For more information, images or to arrange an interview with Matthew Houghton, please contact Nikki Girvan on 07834072989 or nikki@nonconform.co.uk

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NOTES TO EDITOR

ABOUT HYPE MERSEYSIDE

HYPE was set up in 2007 to deliver workshops for teenagers in deprived wards during school holidays. There was an unmet need for this and during the school holidays antisocial behavior is at its highest.

HYPE's first workshops supported by Expanding Horizons (Erasmus partners) made a big impact in each community and on the young people that attended them.

After the holiday workshops delivery then took HYPE into community centres, empty shops, primary and secondary schools and in 2016 HYPE started to enhance neglected parks and deliver within parks locally and internationally.

HYPE's small but effective team of eight staff, three directors and three members on the advisory board continue to be innovative and reach more children and young people each year.

For more information, visit: hype-merseyside.co.uk/

