

Sustrans School Streets

Southampton

March 2019

This year Sustrans worked with partner local authorities and schools to create a mass UK-wide street closure event with 40 schools, focused on transforming air quality and safety at the school gate and on the school run.

So often the streets around schools are dominated by cars at drop-off and pick-up times, resulting in air pollution and an unsafe environment that is generally unpleasant for walking and cycling. Our children deserve better and we know that schools, local authorities, parents and communities want to address the issue.

In partnership with Southampton City Council, we aimed to...

- raise awareness and profile of the problem
- demonstrate the difference that closing the roads outside of schools at drop-off and pick-up times can make
- encourage more regular closures or permanent change
- share our learning and encourage more schools to consider this approach



Four sites were chosen for the closures in Southampton based on criteria including school engagement and support, road layout and potential impact. The schools involved in the project were:

- St Monica's Primary School
- St Mary's CE Primary School
- Fairisle Infant and Junior Schools
- Sholing Infant and Junior Schools

Closures were arranged for the four sites to cover the busiest periods at school drop off and pick up times, as well as leaving extra time at the end of the day for families to enjoy the space outside the schools safely.

Lead officers were assigned to each site to coordinate a team of staff from Sustrans, My Journey and the wider council team and volunteers from our projects and the schools themselves.

As well as organising activities and equipment for the children to enjoy and marshalling the closures, staff collected feedback on the event from residents, parents, children and teachers.

Key Statistics

Initial analysis of the feedback from the Southampton events includes:

- **92%** of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the road felt safer to use
- **82%** of residents surveyed strongly agreed that the road was more child friendly
- **72%** of those who usually drive their child to school felt the street was a more enjoyable place to be
- **66%** of respondents agreed that the surrounding streets were less congested
- **93%** of those surveyed supported a street closure happening more regularly outside the school
- **2,325** active journeys to school recorded in four of the six schools involved on School Streets day



"Everyday would be great! It brings peace of mind."
Parent @ Sholing Infant School

"What an amazing day, the children and parents were so positive about the day and really enjoyed playing outside together."
Teacher @ St Mary's CE Primary

"Being a child of the 50s, this is how we played. Days like today are great for children. It was good to tell my granddaughter how it used to be, she was amazed!"
Grandparent @ St Monica's Primary

"Absolutely loved not being a 'prisoner' in or out of my own home."
Resident @ St Monica's Primary

Next Steps ...

We will continue to work on the aims of School Streets in partnership with My Journey. Together we will use the valuable experience of these events and others when implementing a longer term trial closure at St Mary's CE Primary in the summer term. This will not only continue to demonstrate the value of these type of schemes, but also provide an excellent body of evidence through robust monitoring of the closure's impact. Alongside this our Sustrans Bike It Officers will continue to promote active travel to school as the healthy, happy choice for families in the Southampton Access Fund area.