



## IONA O'DONNELL Inspiring young cyclists to explore and have adventures

At just 10 years old, Iona O'Donnell is already a role model for young cyclists everywhere. She has cycled to school, attended parkruns across the country and has also embarked on memorable cycling tours in England and the Netherlands – all while sharing her experiences on YouTube to inspire others to take up cycling.

Iona's passion for cycling began when she joined her dad on his cycling adventures. Her first cycle tour at age nine not only strengthened their bond but also sparked a love for exploration and eco-friendly travel. Through her YouTube channel and social media, she encourages other young people to discover the joys of cycling, showing how two wheels can open up a world of possibility.

"I got into cycling as I wanted to join my dad on his cycling adventures and fell in love with it myself. I love that it's good for the environment, and you get to see places from a different perspective," Iona says.

Iona's dedication to sustainable travel and her adventurous spirit serve as an inspiration to her peers and beyond. Her inclusion in the 100 Women in Cycling celebrates her ability to promote cycling as more than simply a mode of transport. For Iona, it's also a way to connect with the world, embrace new experiences and live more sustainably.

## KHADIJA PATEL Breaking barriers and inspiring communities

Khadija Patel's journey with cycling began as a way to improve her own health and wellbeing, but it quickly became something far bigger. As the founder of the cycling club at Krimms Girls Youth Club in Bolton, Khadija has created an inclusive and welcoming space for Muslim women and girls to cycle, breaking cultural and societal barriers along the way.

Khadija was initially inspired to start the club after hearing from women in her community who wanted to cycle but didn't know how to start or felt self-conscious.

"The women asked: 'Can we do organised cycling sessions?' So we just said yes," Khadija explains. However, starting the club wasn't without challenges. Facing resistance from within her own community, Khadija remained resolute: "Why can't Muslim women do what everyone else does? Why shouldn't they

feel accepted on a bike?"

By leading rides herself, she became a role model, demonstrating that cycling is for everyone, regardless of culture, religion or background. What began with just a handful of women has now grown into a thriving group with 65 participants. Khadija highlights one standout moment: organising 5am rides so women could enjoy quiet roads and watch the sunrise, free from judgement or busy traffic.

"It's about showing them it can be done," she says. "Seeing a group of Muslim women being confident on bikes at that time is something I'm so proud of."

The club addresses barriers head on, providing access to bikes through local partnerships and supporting women with confidence-building beginner sessions in nearby parks.

Beyond cycling, Khadija's leadership has created a ripple effect, empowering



Khadija set up a cycling club in Bolton for Muslim women and girls

women to become ride leaders themselves and inspiring others to start their own groups. She wants other women in her town to become ride leaders to provide further opportunities to other women and girls in Bolton. ●