

Interview

## Hamida Jogee

Hamida rode a bike for the first time as an adult in her late 50s. Group rides are now the highlight of her week.

Tiia Jaakola spoke to her

**HAMIDA** was already a member of the volunteering team at SAS Rights, a grassroots, women-led community group that addresses social injustice and empowers marginalised communities in Blackburn.

She hadn't been on a bike as an adult, although she had learned to ride as a toddler. As someone who also doesn't drive and tends to walk everywhere, when an opportunity came along to participate in a public protest ride, she jumped at the chance. She said: "I wanted to take part because I did cycle as a child, and it felt like my moment to start again, but in the Muslim community it's not something we often do."

The ride was organised as a soft form of activism to break down taboos and the stigma associated with Muslim women riding bikes. Hamida agreed to it instantly, as the opportunity to get back on a bike made her very excited. It offered a great way to get out and about more and meet new people.

### The Big Bike Revival

When word got around about the upcoming group ride, interest kept growing and growing. However, many women who wanted to take part, including Hamida, weren't sure where to get bikes and helmets from, given the costs involved. Thankfully, all the equipment and the use of park facilities needed were secured through the help of Darwen Re:fresh, a local health and wellbeing initiative.

From that first ride, Hamida and the rest of SAS Rights built a relationship with Cycling UK staff. Since the initial Big Bike Revival grant, they have become an official Community Cycle

### The Real Yellow Jersey

Hamida is one of Cycling UK's Real Yellow Jersey winners for 2025. Ten hand-knitted yellow jerseys are awarded to everyday heroes who've transformed their lives through cycling and our Big Bike Revival programme. Because cycling isn't just about sport – it's a powerful, everyday activity that supports health, independence and social connections, and that helps fix some of society's biggest challenges. [cyclinguk.org/real-yellow-jersey](https://cyclinguk.org/real-yellow-jersey)

Club run by women. They organise bike rides every week to boost mental and physical health, while instilling confidence and a sense of community.

"I'm so glad we came across The Big Bike Revival programme, the events and activities as a group," Hamida said. "We are doing so well and I'm so proud to be involved."

### Social cycling

The social benefits have been huge, as the group has served as a way to meet a diverse range of people. Many who have joined are not from the Muslim community, so the initiative has improved community cohesion.

Hamida has thrown herself in the deep end and has fearlessly tried new things. She's also excited about the potential employment and volunteering opportunities that might come through the club, as she's interested in training to become a group ride leader.

In the Tour de France, the yellow jersey is worn by the race leader. Our Real Yellow Jerseys celebrate a different kind of cycling hero

Beyond this, the new confidence she has gained through cycling has had even more positive effects and opened new doors. Hamida has improved both her public speaking and local leadership skills, and the cycling club has become like a new family to her.

### The joy of bike riding

Hamida loves it and said that the rides are the highlight of her week. "It's made a big difference to me. I've gained confidence and made a lot of special friends along the line, learning new things all the time. It's improved my health, physically and mentally.

"Making new friends has helped me be more social, and I've learned how to cycle more safely, both off and on the road. All this I've learned from riding in a group, because we support and look out for each other.

"Simply put, cycling makes me happy. Getting on a bike makes me feel exhilarated." 🍅

