The project

Every year thousands of children from across the UK put their best feet forwards for road safety: to say "yes!" to the health and planet-saving benefits of walking, and "no!" to fast driving that threatens children’s safety. Schools who take part are sent a free Giant Walk pack including a banner, posters, tips on making the walk fun and safe, and ideas for curriculum-relevant road safety and active travel projects in the classroom. The event is also a great opportunity to raise funds for Brake’s work stopping casualties and caring for the victims.

Participation

Brake’s Giant Walk took place on Wednesday 15 June 2016 and was kindly sponsored by Ageas Insurance. Brake is still collecting feedback and it’s currently estimated that more than 45,000 children took part from across the UK, spreading important road safety messages in their local communities. The Brake team collects feedback from schools who register. The following figures are accurate as of August 2016.

"The UK has a poor record for protecting children on foot and bike compared to many European neighbours. Half our children are driven to school, increasing pollution, danger and damaging health."
Star schools

At St Augustine's Academy, Bedfordshire, the children played road safety games and discussed how to be safe when crossing the road. They then created their own posters and used these, along with Brake’s, to take to the streets during a long two-mile walk to raise awareness of road safety in their local community. The children enjoyed using their posters to communicate important messages about slowing down to drivers and the school went on to incorporate road safety into lessons.

Pupils and parents from St John’s C of E Primary School in Abbots Langley, London, joined forces to campaign for safer roads in their community. The children made their own placards and made up songs to encourage drivers to slow down. Teachers said they found it a really positive experience, bringing the school communities together to help raise awareness of road safety. Fantastically, alongside all of their hard work they raised more than £1,000 for Brake!

Brake’s mascot Zak the Zebra joined more than 300 children from Neilston Primary School in Scotland. They learned about how to be safe on their walk before meeting up with another school and holding mini road show. A local police officer talked about the importance of road safety and school principal Jane McDermott said “Watching the children out on their walk gives a great feeling of togetherness and community.”

The children at St John the Baptist C of E Primary School in Penistone, Yorkshire, had lots of fun showing off their posters as they walked around the local village. A local councillor and staff from their local Tesco store also joined them, encouraging drivers to slow down and supporting their message of not driving to school. Check them out in action in our 2016 video.
Marketing

As a charity, Brake has to make sure it uses cost-effective measures to promote events to schools, relying on the continued support from local education and road safety teams to achieve this through emails, articles, newsletters and website entries. The Brake team works hard to get support from external publications too, as well as calling schools directly and sending out bulletins to our 6,000+ supporters and road safety professionals.

Resources

Each school registering for the event receives a free resource pack, both electronically and in the post. These contain: a checklist and advice sheet to help plan the day effectively; posters promoting road safety messages to display in the school; a banner to be held at the front of the march; certificates and stickers for each child to take home; Zak masks; assembly guide and sponsorship envelopes for those who decide to fundraise.
To help promote the event through the media, Brake issued a national, and 12 regional, press releases calling on school routes to be made safer. As well as promoting regional walks, the releases focused on a survey of 1,000 people, which showed more families would walk and cycle to school, if they felt it was safer to do so. As a result Brake secured coverage from at least 99 national, regional and local press outlets. Regional and local broadcasters covered the campaign in news bulletins, and Brake’s media team conducted an additional 10 interviews, including on BBC and ITV.

Social media helped boost reach of the campaign with many schools sharing their activities on Twitter and Facebook. The Brake team attended four events, sharing photos and video footage to our 14,000+ Twitter and 6,500+ Facebook followers.

72% think more children would walk/cycle if school routes were safer

67% want more walking paths and dedicated cycle paths

38.6K Twitter impressions on 15 June 2016

#BrakesGiantWalk
Fundraising

Brake’s Giant Walk is an important fundraiser, with schools raising significant sums for the charity. So far this year, £8,151.62 has been received from schools, with more money due in autumn 2016. Money is raised by children getting individual sponsorships, schools running non-uniform days, or through bake sales and other activities. This is vital in aiding Brake’s campaign and support work with road crash victims.

Ageas Insurance partnership

This year’s Brake’s Giant Walk event was kindly sponsored by Ageas Insurance, whose sponsorship covered the production and postage of resources for participating schools and telesales staffing costs. This critical funding means funds raised by participating schools and children go towards Brake’s wider work supporting families affected by road crashes and campaigning for road safety.

To everyone who helped support this year’s project, we would like to say…

THANK YOU!