

ROAD SAFETY MANIFESTO



Mutual Respect

British Cycling's Road Safety Manifesto aims to foster a culture of mutual respect between cyclists and motorists to create a safer cycling environment on the roads.

British Cycling wants action on:

1 Cycle friendly road layout –

central government investment in safe and attractive cycling conditions throughout our road infrastructure in accordance with a nationally consistent set of guidelines to ensure that infrastructure is designed to ensure cyclists are safe. Short term priority should be the identification and redesign of junctions which have been shown to be unsafe for cyclists.

2 Cycling awareness –

investment in a national 'Think Bike' campaign focussing on mutual respect between all road users, including the importance of cyclists riding sensibly and obeying traffic laws.

3 Driving Test & Highway Code –

changes to the driving test to make cycle awareness a core part of driver training and testing with emphasis on how much space to give cyclists and how to safely overtake cyclists.

4 HGVs –

changes to the HGV test and Certificate of Professional Competence to make cyclist safety a core part of driver education and assessment. Retro-fitting of all HGVs, without exception, with mirrors to eliminate blind spots, the scrapping of the loopholes which allow construction related lorries to operate without side bars. The suspension of the DfT trial of longer articulated HGVs until the proper safety assessments have been carried out.

5 Urban speed limits –

reduction of speed limits in residential areas which will significantly reduce the severity of injuries sustained in any accidents.

6 Enforcement of laws to protect vulnerable road users –

greater investment in traffic police to enforce road traffic laws including illegal mobile phone use, speeding and uninsured vehicles to better protect cyclists. Sentencing guidelines to be reviewed so that sentences better reflect the consequences of dangerous or careless driving.

1 Cycle Friendly Road Layout

Creating the same quality and coverage of cycling infrastructure as bike friendly European countries like Denmark, where cycling accounts for 19% of total journeys, will require a co-ordinated long term national strategy and political leadership. European experience shows that high levels of bicycle use rely on traffic planners accepting the cyclist as a normal traffic participant with equal rights. In the UK the damage caused by road schemes that took no account of the cyclist, will take significant investment to reverse.

We will always be handicapping ourselves as a nation in terms of encouraging participation in cycling if we don't extensively redevelop junctions which were not designed to safely accommodate cyclists. Looking to the future we need the government to adopt a policy of ensuring that all new roads and junctions properly take into account the needs of cyclists to travel on a safe network.

Action

- In the short term the priority should be to identify and improve the most dangerous road junctions.
- Consideration should be given to altering traffic light sequencing at major junctions to allow cyclists a few seconds to get ahead of other traffic and the Advance Stop Lines at busy urban junctions should be actively promoted and policed to discourage drivers from stopping in them.
- All transport infrastructure developments must follow a nationally enforced set of guidelines to create safe and attractive cycling facilities which follow the same pattern throughout the country.

2 Cycling Awareness

The DfT has funded a series of THINK! road safety campaigns covering issues such as speed, drink driving, drug driving, mobile phones and horses on the road. These campaigns have successfully raised awareness of these critical road safety issues amongst all road users.

Action

- With the increase in cycling over the last ten years, we believe that it is time for the government to back a nationwide 'Mutual Respect' campaign.
- This campaign should include the message to cyclists that in order to be respected it is important that they ride in a sensible, considerate manner complying with the law.

3 Driving Test & Highway Code

Practical Test

Currently, there is no cycling specific component to the practical driving test. Therefore if the candidate does not come across a cyclist during his or her test there is no chance that their ability to drive safely in the proximity of cyclists will be assessed.

Action

- We need to make sure that driver training and assessment requires new drivers to be aware of the importance of looking for cyclists in the right places on the road; drive safely near them; make allowance for the possibly erratic manoeuvres of inexperienced cyclists and to see cyclists as legitimate road users who have a right to be treated with respect and consideration.
- We believe that the practical test should be adapted so that part of it tests a driver's ability to safely pass a cyclist.
- We believe that the examiner should ask one of a series of questions designed to test the driver's understanding of cyclist behaviour.

Theory Test

As it currently stands the multiple choice and hazard perception components of the driving theory test contain very little content related to cycling and cyclists. The multiple choice test consists of 50 questions which are randomly generated from a bank of 1,120 questions drafted by the Driving Standards Authority. The test pass mark is 43 out of 50. As it stands there are 40 questions in the bank which relate to cycling.¹ Here are some examples:²

You are behind this cyclist. When the traffic lights change, what should you do?

- 1 Try to move off before the cyclist
- 2 Allow the cyclist time and room
- 3 Turn right but give the cyclist room
- 4 Tap your horn and drive through first.

You are driving along a road that has a cycle lane. The lane is marked by a solid white line. This means that during its period of operation:

- 1 The lane may be used for parking your car
- 2 You may drive in that lane at any time
- 3 The lane may be used when necessary
- 4 You must not drive in that lane.

Secondly, the Hazard Perception component of the driving test consists of 14 video clips which present the driver with a series of developing hazards which they are required to correctly identify. The pass mark is 44 out of 75. Currently there is no requirement that any of these clips should be related to cycling, for example by presenting the driver with a situation where a cyclist is approaching a junction whilst being partially obscured by the vehicle in front

Action

- We believe that the theory test should include more questions about cyclists. These should include how to pass cyclists safely; the importance of looking out for cyclists and how to predict their movements. The test should be calibrated so that all candidates will be asked at least three questions about cyclists.
- We believe that during the Hazard Perception component of the theory test, at least one example per test should be related to cycling.

¹ <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/foi/dsa-ia0082111/dsa-ia0082111a.pdf>

² http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Dio1/DoltOnline/Doitonlinemotoring/DG_4017669

Re-testing of Inexperienced Drivers

Statistically, drivers who have recently passed their test, particularly if they are young, cause many more accidents and casualties than experienced and mature drivers. There are a number of ways that road and policing policy could work to help prevent road accidents involving inexperienced drivers

Action

- We believe that if the police intervene with a driver within the first two years of them being granted a licence, for example if they are caught speeding, they should automatically be required to pass their test again.
- We believe that this is a simple and enforceable method of detecting young and/or inexperienced drivers whose standard of driving is a danger to other road users. It would represent an extension of the provisions of the New Drivers Act under which a driver who gets more than six points in the first two years of driving loses their licence.

Highway Code

The Highway Code contains a number of sensible provisions such as rule 211 which covers carefully looking for cyclists and rule 213 which concerns paying attention to cyclists changing direction. Rule 163 also states that motorists should “*give motorcyclists, cyclists and horse riders at least as much room as you would when overtaking a car.*” However, the experience of our members is that relatively few motorists do this.

This contrasts with the situation in France where the law requires motorists to allow cyclists a mandatory minimum safe passing distance of 1 metre in urban areas and 1.5m in non-urban areas and it is our members’ experience that car drivers in France generally allow cyclists more space when overtaking.

Action

- We believe that a law similar to that in France should be considered in the UK, requiring drivers passing cyclists to allow a minimum of 1 metre in urban areas and a minimum of 1.5 metres in non-urban areas.³

³ Article 414-4 of the Code de la Route,

<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006074228&idArticle=LEGIARTI000006842216&dateTexte=20120112>

⁹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/motoring/road-safety/8989366/Graphic-Londons-cycle-accident-black-spots-mapped.html>

4 HGVs

Statistically, Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) pose a significant risk to cyclists and other vulnerable road users. In Greater London, lorries were sadly involved in 9 of the 16 cycling fatalities in 2011 despite making up just 5% of the traffic and a TfL study recently showed that cyclists involved in collisions with HGVs are 78 times more likely to be killed than those hit by a car.

According to Transport for London data, around a third of HGVs involved in incidents of cyclist fatalities involve vehicles which are not fitted with side bars. These are typically vehicles like cement lorries or skip trucks which are exempt from the standards imposing side bars because they are used in the construction industry.

Action

- No HGV operating on UK roads should be exempt from the legal requirement to fit side bars. The exemption for cement lorries, skip trucks, etc must urgently be cancelled so that all HGVs operating offer cyclists the same level of protection.
- HGVs should not be allowed onto our streets with potentially lethal blind spots. We believe that the government must act immediately to require that all HGVs over 3.5 tonnes that run on this country's roads are fitted with Class IV, Class V and Class VI mirrors with no exceptions.
- Given the accident figures involving HGVs it is also vitally important that the HGV driving test and Certificate of Professional Competence are revised to include elements that test a driver's understanding of how cyclists behave, the common causes of accidents with cyclists and how these can best be prevented.

Longer Lorries

In October 2011 the DfT approved a 10-year trial of up to 1,800 longer semi trailers in the UK. We believe that these longer trailers are potentially more dangerous than existing HGVs because of increased cut-in and tail swing, increased turbulence effects and the implications for junction design to accommodate these larger vehicles. These risks were not researched prior to the trial and we believe that it should be halted until the risks are properly evaluated. Collisions with lorries typically account for around 20% of cycle fatalities in any given year in Britain, and over 50% of those in London, with most of these involving lorries making turning manoeuvres at junctions. We therefore support any policies which have the effect of reducing the number of lorries on the road.

Action

- We are calling for an urgent review of the trial of longer lorries currently operating on UK roads to ensure that the safety implications for cyclists and other vulnerable road users are comprehensively addressed

5 Urban Speed Limits

A recent study by the Transport Research Laboratory found that of all the interventions to increase cycle safety, the greatest benefits come from reducing motor vehicle speed. This is supported by recent research in the British Medical Journal, and 65% of our members questioned on road safety in 2011 said that they thought that reducing urban speed limits from 30mph to 20mph would reduce the severity of injuries sustained in any accidents. The BMJ found that the number of cyclists killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents fell by 37.6% in 20mph zones.⁵

Action

- We believe that an important part of encouraging greater cycle use in urban areas is the reduction of speed. To be effective this needs to be an agreed national policy which is consistently enforced by the police.

⁵ http://www.bmj.com/highwire/filestream/398316/field_highwire_article_pdf/0.pdf

6 Enforcement of Laws to Protect Vulnerable Road Users

A major concern of our members is the enforcement of the law on mobile phone use and in the 2011 survey which we conducted of our membership 35% of respondents said that they had had an accident or near-miss due to a driver being distracted while using a mobile phone.

There has been an 11.6% reduction in traffic police numbers over the last five years, more than six times the amount that overall police numbers went down during the same period.

Action

- We need increased investment in traffic policing and a commitment from the Home Office and ACPO that the enforcement of these laws is an important part of making the roads safer for cyclists.

Sentencing

We believe that all too frequently the sentences handed down in cases where cyclists are killed and injured on the road send the wrong message about how we as a society value human life and the rights of people to safely cycle in an environment of mutual respect.

An example is that of Rob Jefferies, a British Cycling member and ex colleague in his role as volunteer co-ordinator. He was hit from behind on a wide open road and killed. The driver, who was 18 years old, had been driving for 4 months and had already been caught by the police for speeding. He pleaded guilty to causing death by careless driving and was disqualified from driving for 18 months, ordered to retake his test and sentenced to 200 hours community service. British Cycling sought the advice of leading criminal barrister Mark Wall QC as to the prospect of a successful appeal against the lenient sentence. He advised that *"It is with much regret that I must advise those who instruct me that there are no reasonable avenues open to them in their attempt to have a greater penalty imposed."*

Action

- We believe that the sentencing guidelines need to be revised to more properly reflect the harm caused to the victim. The Sentencing Council recently undertook a consultation exercise on the guidelines to be followed in assault cases and a new set of guidelines was published in March 2011 which has increased consistency in sentencing and is aimed at ensuring that offenders receive sentences that accurately reflect the harm they have caused their victim and their culpability. We are engaging with the Sentencing Council to undertake a similar review of the guidelines in cases of bad driving.
- We believe that it is now time to review the effectiveness of the offence of causing death by careless driving which was introduced by the Road Safety Act 2006, and whether or not the courts now have the right tools to properly deal with cases of bad driving which lead to death and injury.
- We also believe that the merits of requiring guilty drivers involved in cycling accidents to write an impact assessment should be explored.

Conclusion

British Cycling's six manifesto points are largely based on the road safety survey of its members which was carried out in 2011.

The changes which are being called for in this manifesto will require a significant amount of investment and a long-term commitment to put cycling at the heart of road and transport policy.

We believe that effective road safety policies require consistent political leadership and investment supported by a vision to improve the culture of mutual respect on our roads. Disjointed and voluntary policies won't work, we need national leadership and investment and we must move away from any "them and us" language in the discussion around road safety. Around 85% of our members are also car drivers and a better, safer, more respectful road environment will benefit us all, whether we are in our cars, on our bikes or on foot.

As British Cycling's President Brian Cookson said:

"More and more people are cycling and we fully expect London 2012 to inspire even greater numbers to take to their bikes. As a nation we need to embrace this and ensure the roads are as safe as they can possibly be. Change has to happen and it will only do so with strong political leadership and proper investment. Just as investment in the sport has made us such a successful cycling nation we urge the government to work to make Britain a great place for all cyclists."

Perceived risk

British Cycling's calls for action on road safety should be balanced against the fact that deaths and serious injuries are proportionally trending downwards and perceived risk must be balanced against the health benefits for example in fitness⁸ and life expectancy.⁹

The distance travelled by bicycle has, according to DfT figures, dropped from 5.3 billion kilometres in 1990 to 4.2 billion in 2000, before gradually rising to 5.0 billion km in 2010. During this 20-year-period, the cycling fatality rate per billion kilometres cycles has more than halved.

Cycling isn't a risky activity - statistically there is only one death every 32 million kilometres cycled, which is 800 times round the world.¹¹

According to TfL figures the number of daily cycle trips on its road network has risen by 150% since 2000, (in 2010 there was a 15% year on year rise in cycle trips), while the number of deaths per cycling trip has dropped by 60% over the corresponding period.¹²

'More' and 'safer' cycling are entirely compatible and countries with high levels of cycle use tend to be less risky for cyclists. The evidence on this suggests that this is because drivers grow more aware of cyclists and therefore better at accommodating them and also because with increased cycling penetration the average driver is more likely to either be or know a cyclist, therefore increasing their level of empathy.

Netherlands has the highest rate of cycling in Europe with a total journey share of more than 30%. Between 1985 and 2005 it witnessed a 45% increase in cycling and a 58% decrease in cyclist fatalities.¹³

At 2%, cycling's current share of all journeys in Britain is one of the lowest in Europe so there is plenty of room for growth.¹⁴ The average distance cycled in Britain is 67.5km per person per year.¹⁵ This compares to between 800km and 1000km for Denmark and Holland.

Downward trend of cycling deaths over the last 20 years¹⁰

Year	KM cycled (billion)	Deaths	Deaths per billion KM
1990	5.3	256	48.3
2000	4.2	127	30.5
2010	5.0	111	22.2

⁸ British Journal of Industrial Medicine vol. 43. pp 733-753,1986.

⁹ New England Journal of Medicine, vol. 314(10) pp 605-613, 1986.

¹⁰ DfT Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain, 2010.

¹¹ CTC Safety in Numbers report, 2009.

¹² Transport for London, Pedal cyclist collisions and casualties in Greater London, September 2011.

¹³ Ministerie van Verkeer en Waterstaat. Cycling in the Netherlands, 2007.

¹⁴ Ministerie van Verkeer en Waterstaat. Cycling in the Netherlands, 2007.

¹⁵ <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/national-travel-survey-2010/nts2010-03.pdf>

British Cycling is the national governing body for cycling in Great Britain whose aim is to inspire participation in cycling as a sport, recreational activity and sustainable means of transport through achieving worldwide success.



British Cycling
Stuart Street
Manchester M11 4DQ

T: +44 (0) 161 274 2000
E: info@britishcycling.org.uk
britishcycling.org.uk

