

A high-angle, close-up photograph of a person riding a bicycle on a road. The focus is on the front wheel, the rider's leg in a dark jacket and brown shoe, and the front fender. The road surface is dark asphalt with white painted markings, including a large, faded 'B' or 'H' shape. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the road and some red debris.

ROAD SAFETY REPORT

**Summary of the views
of British Cycling Members**

January 2012



Introduction

In the final quarter of 2011, British Cycling canvassed the views of its members on road safety matters.

This work was carried out in conjunction with Leigh Day, British Cycling's Personal Injury Solicitors, who manage cases on behalf of its members involved in accidents.

The key drivers for this were three-fold:

- Firstly in recognition of British Cycling's role in encouraging more people to ride bikes. This has been hugely successful, and with that comes a responsibility to protect the needs and rights of all cyclists.
- Secondly, in response to the fact that over the past 10 years, almost 90% of accidents reported to British Cycling by its members occurred on the road outside of competition.
- Thirdly, it is known from other research that personal safety, and the perceived risk associated with cycling, is recognised as a major barrier to participation, especially amongst women.

To provide some additional context, it is worth noting that the level of reported incidents per British Cycling member fell from 2.13% in 2006/07 to an estimated 1.02% in 2011/12

Emerging Themes

The most common causes of accidents or near misses when cycling on the road were vehicles pulling out of junctions into the path of a cyclist and vehicles overtaking too close to a cyclist. Other regular causes were vehicles overtaking and then turning left soon afterwards causing the cyclist to brake suddenly, and vehicles pulling in too quickly after overtaking a cyclist. From directly experiencing such situations,

and within the wide-ranging topic of road safety, a number of specific policy areas emerged as being important through the input received from British Cycling members. These policy areas are listed below and they all fit in with the theme which clearly emerged from members, namely that the most effective way of making cycling safer are measures that create more mutual respect between different road users.

Under the theme of mutual respect, these are the policy areas highlighted by British Cycling members as likely to have most impact in terms of road safety for cyclists:

- **Driving Test** – The widespread feeling was that there should be greater cycle awareness in the driving test. The areas highlighted for particular attention were that drivers should know how to overtake cyclists safely, and how much space to allow cyclists. Other popular suggestions were that drivers should be educated on how to look out for cyclists at junctions, and that drivers should be more aware of how dangerous their vehicle is to other road users. There was also the sense that drivers should be aware of the manoeuvres cyclists are allowed to make, such as riding two abreast.
- **Self-protection** – Cyclists can protect themselves, and gain the respect of motorists, by maintaining good awareness and observation, as well as maintaining the correct road position and cycling away from the kerb in order to be as visible as possible.
- **HGVs** – HGVs need to improve their ability to see cyclists, with the compulsory introduction of improved mirrors to reduce blind spots being seen as the most effective means of this being achieved. It was also felt that better education for drivers to ensure they look out for cyclists and better education for cyclists about the risks of cycling on the inside of HGVs would help minimise the risk of HGV-related accidents.
- **Law enforcement** - Better enforcement of laws designed to protect cyclists and other road users, such as the ban on using mobile phones whilst driving.
- **Road layout** – With regards to road layouts, the most common complaint was about cycle lanes that end too abruptly. Poorly laid out road junctions were also flagged as a key concern, as was fast roads that are too narrow to accommodate cyclists.
- **Speed limits** – A clear majority of members believe that the reduction of urban speed limits from 30mph to 20mph would reduce the severity of injuries sustained in any accidents. This is in line with with recently-published Transport Research Laboratory report 'Infrastructure and Cyclist Safety', which concluded 'of all interventions to increase cycle safety, the strongest evidence is for benefits resulting from a reduction in motorised vehicle speed'. However, many members acknowledged that this policy area was complex and that, for example, drivers might become agitated if they had to drive at that speed.

Conclusions and next steps

The number of people cycling in Britain has grown over the past few years and with London 2012 on the horizon, there is no doubt that more people will be inspired to get on their bikes and take to the road, be it for leisure or commuting. With that in mind, it is essential that everything possible is done to ensure their safety.

We are convinced that 'more' and 'safer' cycling are totally compatible and countries with high levels of cycle use tend to be less risky for cyclists. For example, the Netherlands has the highest rate of cycling in Europe with a modal share of more than 30%. It witnessed a 45% increase in cycling from 1985-2005 and a 58% decrease in cyclist fatalities. Britain's current modal share is one of the lowest in Europe so there is plenty of room for growth here.

Informed by the views of its members on road safety policy priorities and, in particular, the message that it is fostering a culture of mutual respect which will make the biggest difference, British Cycling will be engaging with ministers and other policy makers to push for change.

Appendix: Background Statistics

British Cycling

There is a downward trend of reported incidents per British Cycling member over the past six years.

Year	Reported Incidents	British Cycling Membership (as at end Mar)	Reported Incidents per British Cycling Member
Apr 2006 - Mar 2007	427	20,046	2.13%
Apr 2007 - Mar 2008	406	21,260	1.91%
Apr 2008 - Mar 2009	417	25,891	1.61%
Apr 2009 - Mar 2010	451	26,466	1.70%
Apr 2010 - Mar 2011	483	30,003	1.61%
Apr 2011 - Mar 2012	460	45,000	1.02%*

*Forecast based on figures for the first nine months of this period

Department for Transport (DfT)

The general trend of distance travelled by bicycle, according to DfT figures, dropped from 5.3 billion km in 1990 to a low of 4.0 billion in 1998, before gradually rising to 5.0 billion in 2010. During this period, the cycling fatality rate per billion kms cycled has more than halved.

Nationally, the number of cyclists killed increased by 7% from 104 in 2009 to 111 in 2010. The number seriously injured in accidents reported to the police increased by 2% to 2,660. Total reported casualties among cyclists also rose, by 1%, compared to 2009. Cyclist traffic levels are estimated by the DfT to have risen by 1% over the same period.

Year	km cycled (billion)	Deaths	Deaths per billion km
1990	5.3	256	48.3
1991	5.2	242	46.8
1992	4.7	204	43.1
1993	4.0	186	46.4
1994	4.0	172	42.8
1995	4.1	213	51.4
1996	4.1	203	49.8
1997	4.1	183	44.8
1998	4.0	158	40.0
1999	4.1	172	42.2
2000	4.2	127	30.5
2001	4.2	138	32.6
2002	4.4	130	29.4
2003	4.5	114	25.3
2004	4.2	134	31.8
2005	4.4	148	33.4
2006	4.6	146	31.7
2007	4.2	136	32.4
2008	4.7	115	24.5
2009	5.0	104	20.8
2010	5.0	111	22.2

Appendix: Background Statistics

Transport for London (TfL)

In London alone, there was a 15% increase in levels of cycling during 2010, outpacing cycling injuries in the capital which rose by 9% over the previous year. However, there were 16 cycling fatalities in the capital in 2011.

The number of daily cycle trips in London has risen by 150% since 2000 with this rise coinciding with a significant downward trend in the number of deaths per cycling trip, thereby highlighting the sense that the more cyclists there are on the roads the safer cycling becomes.

A TfL study of cycling potential in the capital (dated December 2010) reported that concern for personal safety was “the most significant barrier to cycling in general.”



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