



25 November 2009

Cycle Safety Action Plan Replies
Transport for London

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am responding to the Mayor's Cycle Safety Action Plan as the Chair of the London Disability Cycling Forum. Our comments will also hold good for supporting older people to cycle.

The Forum is an informal network of people involved in supporting disabled people to cycle. Members include groups representing people with specific impairments such as the [Royal National Institute for the Blind](http://www.rnib.org.uk). Key stakeholders are the [London Sports Forum for Disabled People](http://www.london-sports-forum.org.uk), [the London Cycling Campaign](http://www.londoncyclingcampaign.org.uk) and yourselves, [Transport for London](http://www.transportforlondon.gov.uk). It is driven by providers of cycling services to disabled people and any disabled person is welcome to be involved. You can find out more about the Forum at <http://www.wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/index.php/ldcf/> including our terms of reference.

We are very pleased that the Mayor is concerned about the safety of cyclists and believe that there is much to recommend in the various initiatives which are happening during his tenure. These include the desire to reduce the rate of cycling fatal and serious casualties, to increase the public's perceptions that cycling is a safe and attractive transport option and to improve awareness and cycle training for commercial drivers and highways engineers.

Our comments inevitably focus on those areas where we differ with his point of view – please find them in the attached note.

If you have any queries please get in touch,
Yours faithfully

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Wheels for Wellbeing

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Comments on the Mayor's Cycle Safety Action Plan from the London Disability Cycling Forum

Reducing speed – the major cause of harm to cyclists

The focus on HGVs distracts from the other causes of danger to cyclists – the speed of traffic. If the Mayor is serious about reducing fatal and seriously injured statistics he would reduce road speed. This would also encourage more people to consider cycling, a key aim of the Cycling Safety Action Plan.

TfL did a review in 2003 of 20 mph zones in London boroughs. This showed that installation of these reduced road user casualties within the zones by 45% and fatal or serious casualties (KSI) by about 57%. The KSI rate for children fell by 60%.

A recent survey by the Transport Research Laboratory of 20mph zones across the UK and in other European countries found child road collisions fell by 67%, cyclist collisions by 29%. Traffic flow also improved.

<http://www.roadpeace.org/index.asp?PageID=135> provides further evidence that reducing speed limits can reduce the numbers of road users who are killed and seriously injured.

Transport for London (TfL) also has research which shows that disabled people believe that London roads favour the motorist ("All Ability Cycling Access: a qualitative study", NOP Consumer for TfL, December 2004). Allowing traffic to travel too fast shows favouritism to motor vehicles by discouraging cyclists.

Disbanding the Commercial Vehicle Education Unit

Although we recognise that a voluntary approach works for many organisations in dealing with safety, only the existence of a mandatory approach will get the results that are needed in all. We strongly believe that the Mayor's decision to disband the Met Police's Commercial Vehicle Education Unit Lorry is a backwards step in dealing with the 8 out of 10 cyclist deaths caused by HGVs this year. Relying on TfL's "Freight Operators Recognition Scheme" which has voluntary membership suggests a lack of true commitment to reducing these unnecessary deaths.

Increasing cyclist numbers

The underlying emphasis of the Action Plan is on increasing cyclist numbers on the road whilst improving cyclist safety. Although no mention is made of disabled people in this Plan there are many already cycling on the road, whether on 2, 3 or 4 wheeled cycles, and many more who would be cycling if they were inspired to do so and the barriers to cycling for them were removed.



Someone with mental health issues having an on road cycle lesson



Cycling from work

Ways to increase the number of disabled people cycling (and also older people) include:

- § Reinforce many of the actions required to get non-disabled people cycling as they are equally relevant, if not more so, to disabled people eg
 - We believe that allowing motorbikes to use bus lanes will reduce the likelihood that potential cyclists will start cycling. Although TfL is doing a monitoring exercise as motorbikes have been allowed into bus lanes it is not clear how the impact on potential cyclists is being measured. Even experienced cyclists find the addition of more traffic in the bus lanes disturbing – especially the acceleration, noise and sometimes aggressive behaviour. The bus lanes are now starting to get crowded.
 - Ensure the Cycle Superhighways do provide a safe, fast and efficient way into central London from the outer boroughs with easy to follow routes that are designed to help people start cycle commuting, or to cycle to work or college more often. Early experience of their design suggests this will not be the case.
 - § Cyclists are being expected to cross lanes of fast moving traffic to get into the right lane at the Oval junction, for example. This is a manoeuvre even experienced cyclists dislike.
 - § Getting the camber right becomes more important for people on trikes, as well as making sure the surface is smooth. Potholes cause more hazards for a person on a trike than a bike due to the way the trike moves.



Trikes are already being used at work and on the street

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- § A disabled person may ride a bicycle, trike, recumbent, tandem, handcycle or other cycle so:
 - all cycle parking should take account of this, whether on road, in new housing developments, at offices, shopping centres and in residential homes. I have already received a query about design standards for bike storage at a residential home. Not being able to lock a cycle securely is a major deterrent, especially for 3 and 4 wheeled cycles which tend to be more expensive than many 2 wheelers.
 - the cycle hire scheme should take account of this. At least trikes should be made available through this scheme.
 - the cycle superhighways should take account of this. Level smooth road surfaces are crucial for people on trikes.
 - all cycle lanes, as well as superhighways, should be built to accommodate at least the width of a regular trike.

- § Disabled people need to be recognised as a potential pool of cyclists and inspirational message and promotions targeted at them, on all types of cycle. These messages need to be available in an appropriate format.

- § Make sure cycle training is promoted to disabled people whether on 2, 3 or 4 wheels. A new module for disabled cyclists is being developed in 2010 for the national cycle training standards which will make delivery easier for instructors.

- § All TfL materials aimed at disabled people should be amended with a view to including cycling eg. the Getting Around London Guide.

- § Cycles (whether bicycles, trikes, recumbents, tandems, handcycles) can be mobility aids for disabled people. TfL should use its influence to ensure that all transport operators accept them as such, in the same way that wheelchairs are treated as mobility aids. The Cycling Tourists' Club are investigating this at the moment with some train companies.

- § Cycling should be included in the Travel Mentoring Service for disabled people. This could be provided under contract with organisations providing cycle training. Buddying is already recognised as a tool to get people cycling for transport.

- § Cycling in parks and other green spaces should be encouraged. Any person, disabled or not, who is new to cycling needs time to build up confidence before riding on the road. All boroughs should be required to make provision for regular sessions for people who need to use 3 or 4 wheeled cycles so people can develop their skills. These cycles can be quite expensive so people need time to try them out properly first before deciding to buy one of their own.

- § Boroughs should also consider introducing a cycle hire scheme which allows someone a longer period to hire a cycle. They can then find out whether cycling is a possibility for them, allowing them to work through the storage implications and see which journeys they can realistically do, before they purchase their own cycle. This would fit very well with the introduction of the personalisation agenda in health and social care – individuals could include the cost of participating at cycle sessions or hiring a cycle as part of their individualised budget. The cost of buying a cycle and/ or putting in storage in private homes may also be covered by this scheme.
- § Some special schools already receive cycle training. However many children are missing out as there are no cycles suitable for them to ride. Experience shows that children who have cycle lessons with the cycles they need derive as much pleasure, increased self confidence and competence to cycle as others. The aim for cycle training for all children should at least be “to be able to cycle in a park with their family” – and this means that a range of cycles should be available for use. Requiring boroughs to provide 3 and 4 wheelers in at least one location means that no pupil need miss out.