

## Comments for the Disability Equality Scheme meeting with Transport for London

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Someone with mental health issues having an on road cycle lesson



Neil Smith cycling from work

### Background

Issues/ actions to consider

Appendix 1 How cycling helps disabled people

Appendix 2 Summary of TfL's 2004 commissioned research on "All ability cycling access"

Appendix 3 A range of cycles ridden by disabled people

### Background

#### *Benefits*

Most disabled people can find a cycle which will enable them to enjoy the same benefits as non-disabled people. Many disabled people can enjoy other benefits too eg improved mobility, and mitigation of their impairment eg by using muscles they wouldn't otherwise use.

For the general benefits of cycling you could read:

Valuing the Benefits of Cycling (May 2007) published by Cycling England. This covers the health, pollution and congestion benefits of cycling.

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/cyclingengland/site/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/valuing-the-benefits-of-cycling-full.pdf>

For more details of benefits specific to disabled people please read Appendix 1 "How cycling helps disabled people".

*Cycling as transport*

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Many disabled people are able to ride on the road if they have an appropriate cycle (whether a bicycle, trike, tandem, recumbent, handcycle etc) and have the confidence to do so. Many can use cycling as a form of transport even if not cycling on the road, by making use of London's many green ways.

For information, a different set of skills is needed to ride a bike and a trike. A bicycle requires balance, whereas a trike has to be actively steered and is more sensitive to the surface camber.

*TfL and disabled cyclists – the story so far*

In 2004 Transport for London started to consider the needs of disabled people who were or could be cyclists. It commissioned research in December 2004, "All Ability Cycling Access: a qualitative study", which was produced by NOP Consumer. Appendix 2 contains a copy of the executive summary.

The London Cycling Action Plan (2004) mentions disabled people at objective 6.2:

Objective 6 actions	Lead agency & key partners	Delivery
6.2 Support for disabled people: Support a programme of measures to promote inclusion and encourage disabled people to cycle. This will include provision of all-ability cycling information, acceptance of standards for cycling infrastructure and full inclusion in cycling events and opportunities	TfL LCC, Disability groups	E-guide early 2004 Annual programme of events and standards by end of 2005

The LCC produced an "All Ability Guide" which was recently revised and is to be reissued. A cycling event was organised at City Hall.

The full action plan can be found at [http://www.croydon-lcc.org.uk/downloads/2004\\_TfL\\_LondonCyclingActionPlan.pdf](http://www.croydon-lcc.org.uk/downloads/2004_TfL_LondonCyclingActionPlan.pdf)

The Community Cycling Fund London has awarded some grants to groups which are supporting disabled people to cycle.

Since then, other than occasional references in cycle training reports, little seems to have happened to support disabled people to cycle.

The Mayor's new Transport Strategy, which is currently out to consultation, makes no reference to supporting disabled people to cycle. The Strategy can be found at [http://mts.tfl.gov.uk/docs/MTS09\\_Complete.pdf](http://mts.tfl.gov.uk/docs/MTS09_Complete.pdf)

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TfL's draft Disability Equality Scheme makes no mention of cycling and no members of the IDAG appear to be cyclists.

Who will benefit from a greater focus on disabled people?

Although we are focusing on disabled people the issues/ actions raised here will equally apply to older people.

Many of the actions will also encourage non-disabled people to take their first towards cycling, as they may accompany a disabled person to a cycling session where there are a range of 2,3 and 4 wheeled cycles. At Wheels for Wellbeing we find about 2/3 of people at our sessions are disabled people and the rest are non-disabled people accompanying them. This sideways approach can be less threatening so giving people space to realise that they too could cycle if they wanted.

### **Issues/ actions TfL should consider**

Some of these issues are closely related to the Mayor's proposals in his Transport Strategy which is out to consultation. However, these concerns are not specifically mentioned so will require attention to make sure that they are seriously considered. The Forum will make its own response to the consultation.

TfL's DES should seriously consider the following in addressing the needs of disabled people and supporting them to cycle:

- § Amend the composition of the Independent Disability Advisory Group so that a cyclist is included.
- § Reinforce many of the actions required to get non-disabled people riding bikes as they are equally relevant, if not more so, to disabled people eg
  - Traffic is the reason many people give not to cycle. Keeping motorbikes out of bus lanes will reduce the likelihood that people new to cycling will start cycling. There is no way to measure how many people have been put off as a result of the recent introduction of motorbikes in bus lanes.
  - Reducing traffic speed eg to 20 mph. The introduction of a 20mph limit can make the urban realm a more pleasant place to cycle, reduce collisions and save lives. 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. This has already been introduced in Portsmouth.
  - Ensuring 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 experienced cyclists dislike.

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- Make sure cycle training is promoted to disabled people.



- § A disabled person may ride a bicycle, trike, recumbent, tandem, handcycle or other cycle.
  - 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.
  - 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 super highways, 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.
- § Review all TfL materials aimed at disabled people 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. 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

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riding on the road. All boroughs should be required to provide 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.

- § Boroughs should also consider introducing a cycle hire scheme. 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 could 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.
- § Experience in parks such as Wandsworth and Richmond demonstrates that paths split into two, with one side for pedestrians and one side for cyclists causes more problems than 100% shared use of the path. Everyone needs to give way to everyone else, with pedestrians taking priority. Removing split paths will reduce the ability of cyclists to speed through, a key problem for pedestrians, disabled or not, and cyclists lacking confidence.

### Appendix 3 A range of cycles ridden by disabled people

			
trike.	T-bike	handcycle	handcycle
			
recumbent	recumbent	tandem	2 wheeler with cross bar
			
2 wheeler with step through frame	trike tandem	go kart	quadcycle
			
side by side tandem	Companion cycle		

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