

Cycling for everyone

A guide for inclusive cycling in cities and towns



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Cycling for everyone

A guide for inclusive cycling in cities and towns

This guide is designed to support people in local government and the transport sector including designers, planners, engineers, and decision makers make cycling a more inclusive activity for everyone.

Whilst our recommendations are primarily focused on the UK, they are equally applicable in cities and towns across the world.

There are many successful and truly inspiring examples where cities have made cycling more inclusive. With the right political will, investment and knowledge cycling can help people from all backgrounds, ethnicities, ages, abilities and genders.

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Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute. Join us on our journey.

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www.sustrans.org.uk 

Arup is an independent firm of designers, planners, engineers, architects, consultants and technical specialists, working across every aspect of today's built environment. Together we help our clients solve their most complex challenges – turning exciting ideas into tangible reality as we strive to find a better way and shape a better world.

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Photo: Jonathan Bewley

Foreword



Photo: Jools Walker

Jools Walker, Author of 'Back in the Frame' and cycling blogger

“When people in power and people who govern, design and deliver transport and cycling do not represent the wider population, unconscious and conscious bias can mean decisions, policy and schemes are not designed around the needs of other people as they are not fully understood or considered.”

As I read through this report, this particular paragraph stood out to me. Not because it’s revolutionary; it’s an obvious statement. It’s one that should automatically elicit a response of agreement upon seeing it.

Yet it still needs to be said or typed out time and time again, because better representation is still not happening in cycling.

I’ve been in this industry for just over a decade. The fact I’m nearing being on a bike for longer than the 10-year hiatus I had away from cycling fills me with absolute joy. During this time, I’ve waxed lyrical about the benefits and happiness riding bikes can bring. Still, I’ve also spent a lot of that time advocating for more diversity and inclusion in all facets of cycling.

Witnessing some improvements occurring in planning better infrastructure and accessibility in cycling has been encouraging, but at this point, it’s still not enough. It’s not enough when those who have the power are not factoring in the needs and concerns of marginalised groups and those who don’t cycle. It’s not enough when these groups aren’t reflected by those who sit on these decision-making boards.

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Strategic transport planning committees can often be an echo-chamber; filled with people who face no barriers to entry or who already cycle and have a fixed idea on what ‘cycling’ is and who ‘cyclists’ are. Blinkered perspectives like these only further perpetuate the problem.

The narrative needs to change, and there has to be a significant shake-up within this sector if they’re going to change it. It’s a huge step to admit that you’ve ‘got it wrong’ in the past - this is something I know both Sustrans and Arup have done. But I challenge sectors like these to do more.

If widening participation and improving planning for more marginalised groups to get into cycling is a goal, then all of these voices need to be given the platform to be heard, ensuring that the decisions made are rounded, informed and of course, genuinely representative.

I call out to all of the strategists, politicians and decision-makers who will be reading this report intending to make changes; please remember that cycling is for everyone, not just the reserve of the privileged and elite. The focus must be on all people and making sure that representation exists.

All of this has to go beyond conducting further research and producing more reports into why there is lower participation in marginalised groups cycling and why some people do not cycle at all. Yes, collating data for research is essential - but actions speak louder than words. If the aim is to design cycling for everyone, then everyone needs to have a seat at the table.

Find Jools’ blog at [VeloCityGirl](#) 



Daisy Narayanan, Director of Urbanism, Sustrans

We are witnessing a change in the narrative around walking and cycling, a real acknowledgement of the imbalance and injustice built into our current transport system. However, the pace of change is slow – even today I sometimes find myself the only woman in a meeting of a roomful of transport professionals and more often than not, the only woman of colour.

At Sustrans, we are committed to our work being for everyone, and the principle of being inclusive is at the heart of all we do. But we cannot create safe and accessible places if we do not value difference, to really listen to what people regard as barriers and challenges. We cannot create inclusive environments if the discussions and decision-making are not truly inclusive.

Only by ensuring that voices of underrepresented groups are integrated in policy, planning, design and implementation, can we ensure that we create places that meet the needs of the diversity of people who want to use them. I am grateful to everyone who has contributed to this report and our collective work going forward will be strengthened thanks to this collaboration.



Susan Claris, Global Active Travel Leader, Arup

Transport is fundamental to the quality of life experienced in towns and cities. But for the past century, the car has dominated how we plan and grow our urban areas.

We need to place people back at the heart of our cities and drive a human-centred approach to the design of the built environment. And we must make sure that this human-centred approach includes all people – we must not design for an “average” that does not exist.

Our aim at Arup is to shape a better world. Our focus is on planning, designing and delivering better cities, their component parts and systems for everyone. We need to re-prioritise our streets for people. We know that the more we cycle and walk in our communities, the better the town and city is in every respect.

The health, wellbeing and social benefits of cycling in our towns and cities are clear. But these benefits are not equally felt by everyone, and we need to do more to ensure that cycling truly is accessible for all. This guide for inclusive cycling in cities and towns should help us all ensure that we improve places, support all people to cycle and improve governance.

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Photo: John Linton



Executive summary

The objective of this guidance is to help make cycling attractive and accessible to everyone. Cycling can help people access the things they need: work, education, food, health services and recreation. Cycling can benefit physical and mental wellbeing and help reduce social and economic inequity.

However, many people are currently excluded from cycling. Despite a large appetite from different demographic groups to start cycling, 85% of people aged over 65, 78% of disabled people, 76% of women, 75% of people at risk of deprivation and 74% of people from ethnic minority groups never cycle.

Everyone should have the choice and freedom to cycle.

Many of the improvements we have made in the UK have increased the number of people cycling. However huge gaps in the diversity of people cycling remain. Investment and the wider cycling industry can too often focus on cycling as a lifestyle choice, as opposed to a necessity.

For too long cycling policy in the UK has focused on the question: how do we increase the number of journeys cycled each year? We believe that solely focusing on the number of cycling trips is detrimental to many people's ability to cycle, their wellbeing, and societal equity.

Cycling, as for all transport, is not an end in itself, it is a means to an end.

Cycling investment, plans and delivery should be designed to help reduce the health, economic and societal inequities many people encounter throughout their lives. Policy should focus on the people who have the greatest need and stand to benefit the most – how can we help people and improve their lives?

All urban design, including cycling, is not neutral, it either perpetuates or reduces social inequity.

People working to design, plan and improve transport, decision-makers and politicians, now more than ever, need to better understand the implications of the decisions they take. We are too often part of the problem even if we do not realise it.

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This guide is a call for people working on and making decisions on cycling across the UK to ensure cycling is inclusive and helps address wider inequity within cities and towns.

We believe the starting point for all policy in relation to cycling should focus on people. Where have people been ignored, left behind? Who is cycling and who isn't? And how could we benefit them?

Cycling policy has too often served the needs of people that are more likely to already cycle. People that are already privileged in society.

The potential to engage others is huge: 55% of people from ethnic minority groups, 38% of people at risk of deprivation, 36% of women, and 31% of disabled people who do not cycle would like to start.¹

People want to cycle but we are not doing enough to address their needs. In fact, there is often a lack of data on who is cycling. Very few cycling strategies and plans exist that focus on people and the diversity of people cycling.

We need to openly admit that we have got some things wrong and need to improve as a sector.

If we are to normalise the activity of cycling, people cycling must be representative of people who live and work in towns and cities across the UK. This should be the explicit goal of every cycling strategy and plan, how investment is made and how we are evaluated.

We have the collective skills, expertise and ambition as a sector to start designing cycling as a tool to support everyone, putting those with the greatest need, for example areas with reduced public transport and local services and amenities, first.

We have more in common than we often think.

Our research found that whilst differences exist between different demographic groups, many of the barriers that we need to overcome to increase diversity in cycling are shared.

Many solutions would help most people who do not cycle, to start. More and more local authorities, community organisations, businesses and individuals are seeking to address these barriers.

How do we improve cycling for everyone?

Cycling must become more inclusive, and help address inequity in society. We make a number of recommendations in this guidance for local and national government under three themes:

1 Improving governance, planning and decision making.

1.1 [Design cycling strategies and plans to address, and be evaluated against, how they reduce inequity.](#)

Action 1: Design cycling strategies and plans to reduce inequity and improve outcomes for people.

Action 2: Increase long-term funding for cycling.

1.2 [Increase diversity and representation in decision-making and the transport sector.](#)

Action 1: Increase diversity in the transport sector.

Action 2: Increase representation in decision making and commissioning.

1.3 [Improve decision making through better evidence and public engagement.](#)

Action 1: Improve consultations to be more representative.

Action 2: Employ multiple engagement techniques for capturing people's views.

Action 3: Improve the evidence base for policy.

2 Creating better places for everyone to cycle in.

2.1 Improve road safety, primarily through protected space for cycling, and low-traffic neighbourhoods.

Action 1: Provide protected space as part of a cohesive cycling network.

Action 2: Implement low-traffic neighbourhoods to cater for all journeys.

Action 3: Implement other measures to make cycling safer.

2.2 Address personal safety and harassment.

Action 1: Improve route planning and ensure a choice of routes is available.

Action 2: Improve the design of infrastructure and places.

Action 3: Eradicate harassment including institutional harassment and racism.

2.3 Ensure cycling infrastructure is fully inclusive.

Action 1: Remove barriers on existing cycle infrastructure.

Action 2: Ensure inclusive design standards are set and followed.

Action 3: Embed inclusive design and engineering practice.

2.4 Better integrate cycling at home, at destinations and with public transport.

Action 1: Improve secure cycle storage at home, prioritising flats and multiple occupancy buildings.

Action 2: Improve cycling facilities at destinations.

Action 3: Improve integration with public transport.

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2.5 Prioritise infrastructure where transport options are poor, especially where this coincides with multiple deprivation.

Action 1: Prioritise cycle routes upon 'need' as well as the number of potential people cycling.

Action 2: Improve reach and inclusivity of public cycle share schemes.

3 Welcoming and supporting all people to cycle.

3.1 Use inclusive language and imagery, and ensure cycling is welcoming and celebrates diversity.

Action 1: Use inclusive language and imagery.

Action 2: Welcome all people who want to cycle and celebrate diversity.

3.2 Ensure cost is not a barrier to access a cycle.

Action 1: Ensure cost is not a barrier for anyone to purchase a cycle.

Action 2: Improve the purchasing experience.

3.3 Offer free cycle training for all children and adults.

Action 1: Free cycle training for all people

Action 2: Build confidence, and make cycling fun

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Introduction

In the UK you are less likely to see a woman, a disabled person, a person over the age of 65, a person from a minority ethnic group or a person at risk of deprivation, cycling. Men on average cycle 2.5 times more trips and four times as far as women, and male adults in their forties cycle the most.²

Arup and Sustrans want to support cities and towns to be inclusive and equitable. This guidance aims to share how we can make cycling more inclusive and how cycling can support more equitable cities and towns.

Why is inclusive cycling important?

Transport is at the heart of society. It is vital in getting people to work, meeting family and friends, and accessing services like healthcare and education. More inclusive and equitable transport is central to a fairer economy and society.

Women, disabled people, older people, people at risk of deprivation and people from ethnic minority groups, can face deep-rooted barriers to their experience of, and interaction with, transport systems and travel. This shapes and sometimes limits individual travel choice.

Many journeys in cities and towns are relatively short. In Greater Manchester half of all trips are less than 2km and 38% of these short trips are driven by car.³ At a relaxed pace you can cycle over four miles in 25 minutes. So cycling can be ideally suited for urban life and connect people to the places they need to reach. Cycling has the potential to play a crucial role in increasing accessibility and freedom, especially in urban areas where most journeys are shorter in length.

At the end of the 19th and start of the 20th century, cycling was a symbol of women's emancipation. However since then cycling has declined as an everyday mode of transport in cities and towns as they were increasingly designed around the car. Today cycling is not an easy option for many people.

Bike Life, the largest assessment of cycling in twelve major UK cities and urban regions, found only 28% of residents thought cycling safety was good.⁴ Less than one in five (17%) felt that the safety of children's cycling was good.

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Bike Life

This guidance is partially based upon data from Bike Life, the UK's largest assessment of cycling, in cities and towns. Bike Life reports every two years and measures infrastructure provision, travel behaviour, attitudes towards cycling, and the impact of cycling for people and their city.

For this research we analysed Bike Life aggregated data from 2019. This came from an independent and representative survey of over 16,000 residents living in twelve cities and regions of the UK: Belfast, Bristol, Cardiff, Dundee, Edinburgh, Greater Cambridge, Greater Manchester, Inverness, Liverpool City Region, Southampton City Region, Tyneside and the West Midlands.

Further details are available at www.sustrans.org.uk/bikelife 

Cities and city regions participating in Bike Life



Glasgow, Perth, Stirling, Tower Hamlets and the Dublin Metropolitan Area also participate in Bike Life. However, they are not part of the 2019 aggregated data set as a different survey methodology was used.

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Our aims

This guidance aims to:

- » Improve knowledge and understanding of the needs of demographic groups which are often excluded from cycling in urban areas
- » Help secure sustained political commitment to improve cycling in urban areas for everyone
- » Inform long-term planning, design, delivery and ongoing maintenance of infrastructure in cities and towns that enable people from all backgrounds and abilities to cycle

Who is less likely to cycle?

Bike Life, the UK's largest assessment of cycling in cities and towns, shows that there are five adult demographic groups who tend to cycle less than their equivalent group. These five groups were explored in detail to develop our guidance.

This guidance does not focus on children although it does look at the role adults have on accompanied journeys with children. Many of the recommendations made are likely to also benefit children's participation in cycling both with their parents and independently.

Significant intersectionality exists between these different groups. Our research does not attempt to explore in detail specific issues faced by groups of people with intersecting characteristics.

Women

- » **We compared women with men.** (This study did not attempt to review people who define their gender in another way. The Bike Life sample size for non-binary gender was deemed too small to draw robust conclusions. There is a need for more research in this area).

Older people (aged over 65)

- » **We compared people aged over 65 with people aged 16 to 65.** We defined older people as aged over 65. Data from Bike Life shows a fall in cycling participation over the age of 65. This group was compared with people aged between 16 and 65 (inclusive).

People from ethnic minority groups

- » **We compared people from ethnic minority groups in the UK with people from White groups.** Ethnic minority groups include Black, Asian, other minority ethnic groups, as well as people who identified

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as White gypsy and traveller, and people of mixed race. White groups include White British, White Irish and White other.

Disabled people

- » **We compared disabled people with non-disabled people.** People who self-identified as disabled people (including those having a physical and/or mental health condition and people with visible and non-visible disabilities) were compared with people who do not identify with having a physical or mental health condition (non-disabled).

People at risk of deprivation

- » **We compared people at risk of deprivation with people not at risk of deprivation.** Bike Life uses the Market Research Society's classification for socio-economic groups. People from socio-economic groups D and E were compared with people from all other groups (A, B, C1 and C2). People from socio-economic groups D and E are in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations, and people not in employment. People living in households from socio-economic groups D and E are more likely to be at risk of deprivation than other groups.

Scope of this study

This study consisted of five steps which took place in 2019 and 2020:

1. A literature review of the evidence base around behaviours, attitudes, barriers and solutions to increasing participation in cycling amongst older people and disabled people and their wider socio-economic and transport contexts.
2. Analysis of attitudes and behaviours in relation to cycling for older people and disabled people using Sustrans' Bike Life data from 2019.
3. Focus groups in cities across the UK with women (carried out in 2017-18 by Sustrans using a similar approach), disabled people, older people, people from ethnic minority groups, and people at risk of deprivation, to better understand their travel context, barriers and potential solutions to making cycling more inclusive.
4. Workshops with decision-makers, the transport sector and organisations who work with the underrepresented groups, to identify and develop solutions to make cycling better for all people.
5. The development of a database of case studies of successful projects and initiatives within cities and towns where cycling is more inclusive.

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The socio-economic and travel context

Many people experience inequity: unfair, avoidable differences arising from poor governance, corruption, racism or cultural exclusion. This puts people at a disadvantage in society and often means health, social and economic outcomes are worse.

Transport, including cycling can play a role in both causing and reducing inequity. For example people living in areas of multiple deprivation may be exposed to higher levels of cars and their impacts – risk of being in a collision, community severance and air pollution. Making public transport free and improving service frequency can increase the accessibility of employment and education and reduce loneliness.

Barriers to transport, including barriers to cycling can affect lots of people but be amplified when inequities already exist.

This is the case for women, older people, disabled people, people from ethnic minority groups and people at risk of deprivation.



“When I ‘became a cyclist’ in 2013, I felt liberated from street harassment. I was never still long enough for someone to try to harass me and even if I were, I could get away so much more quickly on two wheels.

However, cycling made me more vulnerable to road traffic. This unfair tradeoff between safety from street harassment and safety from road traffic danger underscores the importance of the right to safe urban mobility.

We all deserve to be able to move around our cities without fear of harassment and traffic. This means that perceptions of safety, which are shaped by race, gender, class, etc., need to enter into infrastructure design and decision-making processes.

UN Women recommends conducting gender safety audits to enable women’s and girls’ perceptions and experiences of safety to count. After all, to make cycling more inclusive, we must democratise the right to safe urban mobility.”

Tiffany Lam, Consultant

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Women

Gender inequity damages the physical and mental health of millions of girls and women around the world including the UK.⁵ The UK has made little or no progress recently on improving gender equity in comparison to other nations.⁶

There are major differences in the UK regarding gender and employment. For example, only 74% of women are employed, in comparison to 84% of men.⁷ Differences also exist in roles; only 5% of women in comparison to 28% of men work in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) occupations.⁸

A significant pay gap still remains between men and women. Women, on average earn 17% less than men.⁹ At the same time women do on average 60% more unpaid care work than men.¹⁰

Significant differences also exist in power, for example the share of women ministers was only 31% and the share of women parliamentarians was only 29% in 2018. Women make up only 36% of members of regional assemblies. The share of women on the boards of the largest publicly listed companies was 29% in 2018.¹¹

Women and travel choices

Women make up 51% of the UK population¹², however their journeys are often ignored in transport planning where a focus on commuting exists. Women are typically more likely to walk or use the bus than men and less likely to drive or travel by train.¹³

Women's journeys around cities are typically shorter. Women are more likely to use different modes of transport and involve 'trip-chaining' (multi-stop journeys) which tend to be for a balance of child care, work and household responsibilities. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to have a fairly simple twice-daily commute into and out of the city centre. In London, women are more likely than men to be travelling with buggies and/or shopping¹⁴ and 25% more likely to trip-chain.¹⁵

The root causes of these journey differences are largely structural – they are a result of the roles and responsibilities played by men and women, as well as learned behaviours or preferences that may be mediated by gender.

“I don't use my bike at all, it's sitting in the garage, still new. Now that I've got the kids, in the morning, getting up, and it's a case of getting them ready, dropping them off and then going to work, so I'm having to use the car.”

Female focus group participant, Glasgow

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Women are more likely to be worried about personal safety and experience anti-social behaviour whilst travelling¹⁶. A recent survey by Plan International UK found 66% of girls aged 14-21 in the UK have experienced unwanted sexual attention whilst in a public place.¹⁷ Another survey found 85% of women aged 18–24 and 64% of women of all ages reported that they had experienced unwanted sexual attention in public places.¹⁸

This can result in women using a different mode of transport, walking a longer route, pretending to be on the phone, or dressing differently to avoid harassment.

“I don’t like going out on my own when it’s dark I would much rather get my husband to take me down to the car at night to try and get a parking space closer. I feel quite vulnerable getting out and going onto the street.”

Female focus group participant, Glasgow

Sustrans’ 2019 Bike Life survey found:

Men are more than twice as likely to cycle regularly as women, and most women never cycle

- » 9% of women cycled at least once a week in comparison to 21% of men
- » 76% of women do not cycle

Safety is a significant barrier, but many women want to start cycling

- » Only one in four women (27%) felt cycling safety was good in their city
- » 36% of women who currently do not cycle would like to

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Older People (aged over 65)

Older people made up 18% of the UK population in 2018. This is expected to rise to 24% by 2038¹⁹. Older people have seen both their cities and transport change significantly.

“You would see them walking, and on bicycles to the shipyard nobody had cars then, they couldn’t have afforded them.”

Older focus group participant, Belfast

The likelihood of being disabled and/or experiencing multiple chronic and complex health conditions increases with age.²⁰ In addition, women outnumber men at older ages. 54% of people aged over 65 are women.²¹

Loneliness and social isolation can also be prevalent amongst older people, especially those that live alone. Within the next 10 years, 2 million people aged 50 and over in England are projected to be lonely if efforts to tackle loneliness are not made.²²

Older people and travel choices

Driving remains the most common form of transport for older people in the UK, with 68% of households where someone is aged over 70 having their own car.²³

Many older people also use public transport, partially as a result of free travel on many services. Despite free access to many services, 32% of people in England aged over 65 never use public transport, whilst another 27% use it once a month or less.²⁴ This suggests public transport does not appear to meet the needs of many older people.

In the focus groups conducted from this research, older people felt transport had become harder in cities as car use and populations have grown. Older people are reluctant to travel during the rush hour as it gets too busy. Walking was popular for local journeys.

Older people were very positive about having access to a free bus pass, although views about local bus services varied depending on coverage, frequency and reliability of buses.

“[Free bus passes] make us go out. We don’t just sit around in the house, we go out and we do stuff. In the summertime people go out on day trips and it doesn’t cost you anything.”

Older focus group participant, Belfast

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Physical activity declines with increasing age. 42% of persons aged between 75 and 84, are physically inactive and 66% of people aged over 84 are inactive.²⁵ This means they do less than 30 minutes of activities each week. This compares to 25% of the population as a whole who are physically inactive²⁶.

“I’m frightened to cycle as my reactions aren’t as quick. I can’t pedal as quick and therefore I can’t react and get out of problems or avoid difficulties.”

Older focus group participant, Belfast

The appetite from older people to start cycling is lower than other demographic groups in the UK. However, countries like Denmark, the Netherlands and Japan demonstrate that cycling participation amongst older people can be high with the right environment, and when habits are instilled earlier in life.

With rising numbers of older people in the UK it is important that older people are encouraged to cycle. The rise of electric-cycles and increased policy focus on older people is helpful in this regard.

Sustrans’ 2019 Bike Life survey found:

Older people cycle less than any other adult age group and less interest exists amongst older people to start cycling

- » 7% of people aged over 65 cycle at least once a week, in comparison to 17% of 16-65 year olds
- » 18% of older people who do not cycle would like to start cycling
- » 30% of people aged over 65 think ‘cycling is not for someone like them’.

Older people do not think cycling is safe

- » Only 25% of people aged over 65 think cycling safety in their city is good.

Older people tend to take different journeys

- » Older people, who do cycle, are more likely to cycle for shopping, personal business or social trips, as well as purely for fitness or recreation and less likely to cycle for work and education.

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Disabled People

In 2018 there were over 14 million disabled people in the UK, approximately 21% of the population²⁷. Our research focused on people with reduced mobility, learning disabilities, deaf or hearing loss, partial sight, and mental health conditions. Some impairments are visible and some are invisible to other people.

There is a large crossover between older people and disabled people; 44% of pension age adults are disabled in comparison to 19% of working-age adults²⁸.

Whilst many disabled people are in work, disabled people are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as non-disabled people.²⁹ In addition a study by Scope found life is significantly more costly for disabled people by on average £583 a month.³⁰ This means the proportion of working age adults in houses where someone is disabled living in poverty (28%) is higher than the percentage of working age adults in homes where no one is disabled living in poverty (18%).³¹

Independence is also restricted in the UK for disabled people. Over a quarter of disabled people say that they do not frequently have choice and control over their daily lives.³² In the UK we follow the social model of disability. This model is based upon the presumption that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. The social model of disability helps us recognise barriers that make life harder for disabled people. Removing these barriers creates equality and offers disabled people more independence, choice and control.

Discrimination is also more likely to be encountered by disabled people than non-disabled people. For example in 2008, 19% of disabled people experienced unfair treatment at work compared to 13% of non-disabled people.³³ Furthermore a third of disabled people experience difficulties in accessing public, commercial and leisure goods and services.³⁴



“Cycling has been an essential form of mobility, transport and health throughout my life. I used to walk (with difficulty) using crutches and ride a standard bike, I am now a fulltime wheelchair user and handcyclist. When I used a standard bike the main barriers I faced were attitudinal – people refused to accept that I was disabled if I was able to use a bike and would not let me cycle in situations where I was unable to walk.

As a handcyclist the main obstacles I encounter are infrastructural, cycle ways and barriers are too narrow to accommodate me. Cycle parking is always a problem. Cycle stands are not designed for non-

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standard cycles or for disabled people who cannot easily lift their bike and they are often too far away from the desired destination. Cost is prohibitive for many disabled people, non-standard cycles and adaptations are expensive, especially in the context of the disability employment and pay gaps.

Kay Inckle, Lecturer

Disabled people and travel choices

A significant review of disabled people and travel took place in England in 2017.³⁵ It found:

- » Disabled people travel less and for different purposes in comparison to non-disabled people.
- » The nature and type of an individual's disability links to travel behaviour, for example sight loss relates to an individual driving less and using public transport more.
- » It is essential not to consider disabled people as homogenous – a wide variety of impairments, 'grades of impairment' and travel behaviour and experiences exist.

“You haven't really got a choice; you have to adapt when it comes to travelling. You have to plan in advance and try and find the easiest way for yourself.”

Focus group participant with reduced mobility, Greater Manchester

Barriers to transport and the wider built environment can restrict choice for disabled people when considering travel options. For example steps for people with reduced mobility or a lack of accessible information for people who are partially sighted or deaf.

“Barriers can affect people's confidence to travel, especially during busy or crowded times. At their worst, barriers can push people to stay at home and not travel at all. “I rely on my sight so much – it's all visual. I just makes me nervous that I can't hear a car coming. I can't run in the dark as I can't see and it affects you so much.”

Deaf or partially deaf focus group participant, Cardiff

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Sustrans' 2019 Bike Life survey found:

Disabled people are less likely to drive and are more reliant on public transport

- » 39% of disabled people do not have access to a car in their household, in comparison to only 19% of non-disabled people
- » Disabled people are more reliant on public transport. 53% of disabled people use public transport at least once a week in comparison to 43% of non-disabled people

Most disabled people never cycle

- » 9% of disabled people cycle at least once a week, in comparison to 17% of non-disabled people. 78% of disabled people never cycle
- » 23% of disabled people think cycling is not for people like themselves in contrast with 11% of non-disabled people

There is strong appetite to start cycling

- » 28% of disabled people who do not cycle would like to start
- » 51% of disabled people think an electric cycle would help them to cycle more

“The fear of being knocked off scares me more than anything, especially as my back is very precarious. If anything happened to me, yeah it fills me with quite a lot of anxiety. I wouldn't want to have any more operations than I have already had”

Focus group participant with reduced mobility, Greater Manchester

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People from ethnic minority groups

According to the 2011 Census, 14% of people living in the UK were from ethnic minority groups.³⁶ We define ethnic minority groups to include: Asian ethnic groups, Black ethnic groups, Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups, other non-White ethnic groups, and White traveller/gypsy.

It is important to acknowledge limitations when considering ethnic minority groups, recognising that there is a vast diversity in attitudes, cultures and experiences.³⁷ There are also many differences in discrimination, racism and barriers people from ethnic minority groups face.

Between the 2001 and 2011 Census, the proportion of people identifying as White British declined from 88% to 81%. At the same time people identifying as White Other and Black African groups had the greatest proportional increase.

A much greater proportion of people from ethnic minority groups live in urban areas in contrast to people from ethnic majorities. Significant regional differences exist in the concentration of different ethnic minority populations. The average age of people from ethnic minority tends to be lower than that of the White population.

England and Wales population by ethnicity, % urban and median age³⁸

Ethnicity	Percentage of total population	Percentage living in urban location by ethnicity	Average (median) age by ethnicity
All	100%	82%	39
Asian	8%	97%	29
Black	3%	98%	30
Mixed	2%	92%	18
White	86%	79%	41
Other	1%	97%	30

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Inequity between the health, economic and educational outcomes of people from ethnic minority groups and White people continues to be prevalent across the UK.

In 2019, people from all ethnic minority groups except Indian and Chinese, were more likely than White British people to live in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in England.³⁹

People from ethnic minority groups were almost twice as likely to be unemployed. 4% of White people were unemployed in 2018, compared with 7% of people from all other ethnic groups combined.⁴⁰ Unemployment rises to 9% for Black people.

People from ethnic minority groups are more likely to be less affluent and more likely to be key workers—within the NHS, transport sector, care industry, as well as the gig economy. One in every 13 workers from an ethnic minority background is in temporary or zero-hours contracts, compared with one in 20 white workers.⁴¹ This means people from ethnic minority groups are more likely to be in insecure and low paid work.

The global Covid-19 pandemic has further exposed this deep-rooted and structural inequity across society, for example people from ethnic minorities face a disproportionately higher risk of becoming critically ill from Covid-19.⁴²

People from ethnic minority groups and travel choice

“You notice more if you go on public transport. You learn more about cultures and feel liberated. If you drive you feel in a bubble.”

Focus group participant, Birmingham

The impact of ethnicity on travel choices, and in particular to cycling, is not as well researched within the UK. This lack of research can add to the marginalisation of these groups as there is a general lack of awareness and understanding of the specific challenges people from ethnic minority groups face.

People from ethnic minority groups tend to travel shorter distances and take fewer trips than White people.⁴³ People from Asian, Black and other minority ethnic groups tend to take more journeys for education, whilst White and Mixed ethnic groups tend to take more journeys for leisure purposes.

For Mixed, Black and Other ethnic groups walking was the most common mode of transport accounting for between 29-35% of their total trips. Conversely for Asian and White people, driving was the most common mode of transport, however, this was significantly greater for White people.⁴⁴

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For journeys to and from work, white people are more likely to drive and people from ethnic minorities are more likely to use public transport including both trains, trams, the underground and buses. The percentage of journeys to work by bus for Black people (24%) is almost twice as much as any other ethnic minority group (12-14%) and four times as much as for White people (6%).⁴⁵

“It may sound silly but it’s good to vary your journey a bit sometimes like walking on the other side of the road or taking second left instead of first left. You get to know where you are – it’s good for that. When I was a child I walked more and I knew my local streets much better than I do now.”

Focus group participant, Birmingham

Sustrans’ 2019 Bike Life survey found:

More people from ethnic minority groups want to start cycling than any other group

- » 55% of people from ethnic minority groups who currently do not cycle would like to start

However, people from ethnic minority groups currently cycle less than White people

- » 12% of people from ethnic minority groups cycled at least once a week in comparison to 16% from White groups
- » Only 9% of people who are Black or Asian cycle at least once a week.
- » 74% of people from ethnic minority groups do not cycle

Whilst safety is a significant barrier, people from ethnic minority groups experience other barriers far more than other people

- » 33% of people from ethnic minority groups are not confident in their cycling skills (in comparison to only 24% from ethnic majorities), and the cost of a suitable cycle is a barrier for 20% of people from ethnic minority groups (in comparison to 15% from ethnic majorities).
- » 32% of people from Arabic ethnic groups stated ‘cycling is not for people like me’ was a barrier to them cycling.

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“Learning to ride a bike as an adult can be daunting; let alone cycle on busy roads; with limited cycle lanes. In 2014, while delivering the SCOREScotland Green Futures cycling pilot Project, I learnt how to ride a bike together with other women from BAME backgrounds.

This was a safe and supportive group that wanted to learn together and overcome limitations to cycling related to cultural backgrounds, but had cycling aspirations which hadn't yet been met.

Although learning to cycle can be a quick process, chances that an adult BAME woman is likely going to pick up her bike and ride immediately from attending a cycling course are very slim. This is due to a number of limitations that include but not limited to: low numbers of BAME women cycling, socio-economic factors, cycling infrastructure to make cycling from one's front door to school runs, work, etc. I think improving diversity in cycling will be a bonus to inclusive cycling.”

**Jolly Oluka, Development Officer,
SCOREScotland Green Futures Project**

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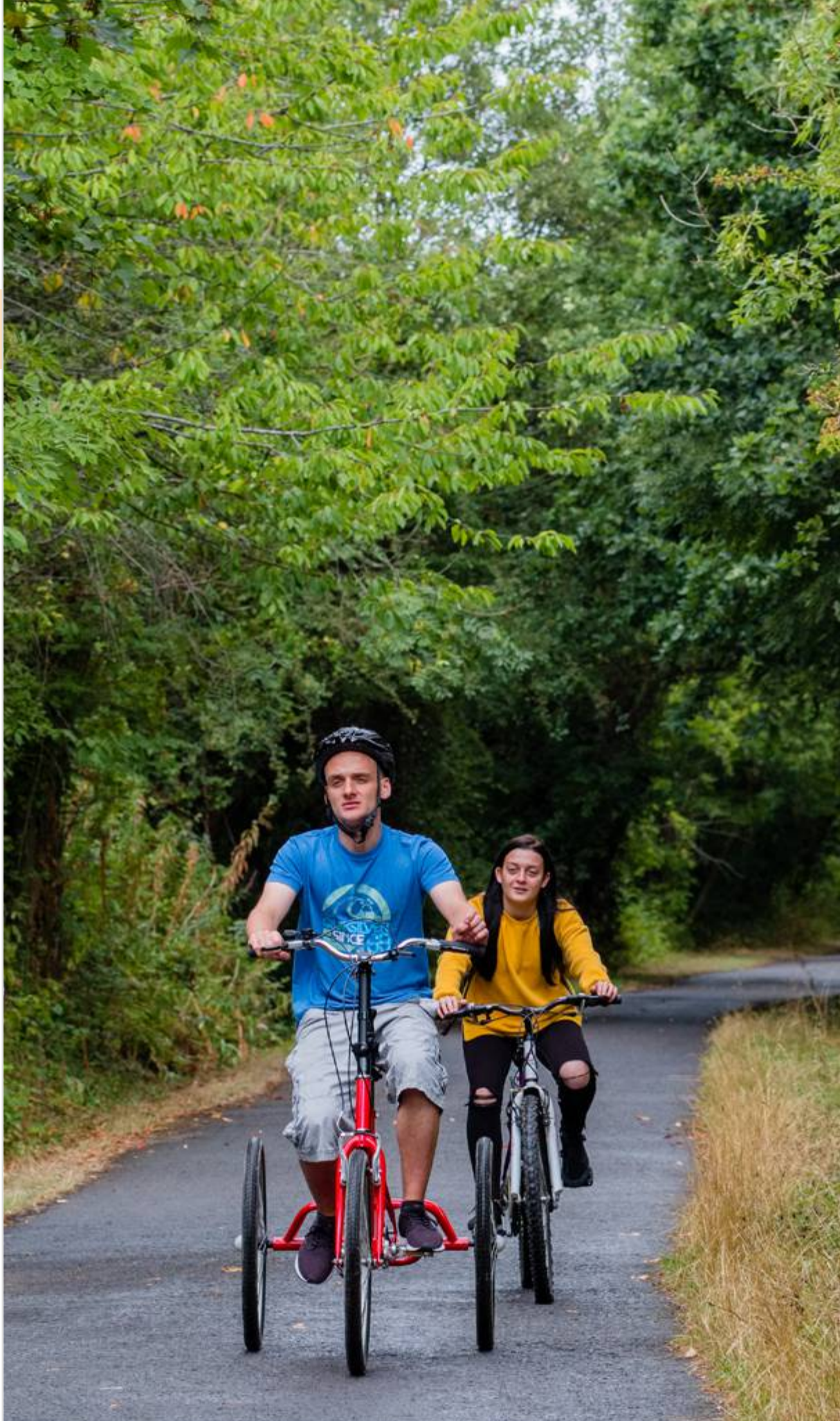


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People at risk of deprivation

People at risk of deprivation is used to define and include people living in areas of multiple deprivation, people on low incomes, people not in employment, and people living in poverty.

Multiple deprivation is a relative measure used to identify areas with high levels of deprivation based upon seven factors – income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services and the living environment.⁴⁶ It is measured slightly differently in different UK devolved nations.

Deprivation tends to be dispersed across the country and most places have pockets of high levels of deprivation. While 88% of neighbourhoods in the most deprived decile in 2019 were also the most deprived in 2015, many London Boroughs have reduced the proportion of highly deprived neighbourhoods.⁴⁷

Living in a deprived area is likely to increase the risk of poverty. In 2019 the Social Metrics Commission estimated that 14.3 million people in the UK were in poverty, of which 8.3 million were working-age adults, 4.6 million were children and 1.3 million were pension age adults.⁴⁸

People at risk of deprivation and travel choices

Research demonstrates mobility and accessibility inequalities are highly correlated with social disadvantage.

A Government Foresight report on inequalities in mobility and access in the UK transport system⁴⁹ found:

- » Car owners and main drivers in households are the least mobility constrained across all social groups.
- » Lowest income households have higher levels of non-car ownership, 40% have no car access – female heads of house, children, young and older people, people from ethnic minority groups and disabled people are concentrated in this quintile
- » There are considerable affordability issues with car ownership for many low-income households.

The same report also found low-income households and other vulnerable population groups, such as children, older people, and disabled people are also more exposed to health-related externalities of the transport system:

- » People living in disadvantaged areas tend to live in more hazardous environments, with greater proximity to high volumes of fast-moving traffic and high levels of on-street parking and, as such, they have higher levels of exposure to road traffic risk.

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- » Young people (11–15 years) from disadvantaged areas are more involved in traffic injuries than their counterparts living in other urban areas.
- » Traffic-related air pollution is associated with worse pregnancy outcomes and the risk of death and exacerbation of asthma and chronic chest illnesses in children.

Travel and transport are vital to reduce deprivation as it provides access to employment, education and other services and amenities. Different modes of transport can improve and damage physical and mental health.

Data from UK national statistics shows people at risk of deprivation or with less household income are less likely to own a car or a van.⁵⁰ Not having access to a car can reduce mobility and make journeys in cities and towns more challenging for many people, especially areas with fewer facilities and amenities nearby, where public transport provision is poor, or expensive to use.

“It was devastating to lose my driving licence. I struggled to get to work once my license was lost.”

Focus group participant, Newcastle

However, more cars is not the answer. The social and environmental issues associated with cars are clear. Access to more sustainable and fair modes of transport must be improved, with a focus on where mobility and accessibility needs are greatest.

Cycling is a relatively affordable and potentially equitable form of transport, and yet many people at risk of deprivation do not have a choice to cycle for their everyday needs.

“I used the Cycle to Work Scheme and my employer had a leader board, with rewards – this was good. Employers are trying, but it’s not enough.”

Focus group participant, Newcastle

Sustrans’ 2019 Bike Life survey found:

Bike Life uses the Market Research Society’s socio-economic classification based upon household occupation. Socio-economic groups D and E, where the household representative is in semi or unskilled employment or not in employment, are more likely to be at risk of deprivation.

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People more likely to be at risk of deprivation are less likely to cycle regularly, however many would like to start

- » 10% of people more likely to be at risk of deprivation cycled at least once a week, in comparison to 16% of people less likely to be at risk of deprivation
- » 38% of people more likely to be at risk of deprivation who do not cycle would like to start

Safety is a significant barrier but other barriers are much greater for people at risk of deprivation in comparison to other groups.

- » Safety concerns was a barrier for stopping 39% of people more likely to be at risk of deprivation from starting to cycle or cycling more.
- » The cost of a suitable cycle (19%), and 'cycling is not for people like me' (20%) were barriers that were greater for people more likely to be at risk of deprivation.

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How to make cycling more inclusive

Focus on what we have in common

While differences exist between different demographic groups, many of the barriers that we need to overcome to increase diversity in cycling are shared.

Therefore rather than focusing on the differences between people, this guidance attempts to instead address common issues and solutions that would benefit multiple groups and most people in the UK.



“Cycling has the potential to create an equality to all people like no other mode of transport. With the many different versions of a bike, there really is a bike for everyone and that includes those who have goods to carry, or those who might need an e-bike to give a bit of help up those hills, and I include myself in that category at times too!”

If we are to provide the maximum benefit of cycling, for the maximum number of people, it is vital we all broaden our outlook on what cycling is and how we provide for people on bikes. A country that is truly built for cycling caters for all the different types of bike by ensuring infrastructure is as accessible to a balance biker heading to nursery, their grandparents visiting the shops, their cousin who uses a trike or the delivery driver making the last mile deliveries on an e-cargo bike.”

Dame Sarah Storey
Active Travel Commissioner, Sheffield City Region

Photo: Team Storey Sport

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1: Improving governance, planning and decision making

Recommendation 1.1: Design cycling strategies and plans to address, and be evaluated against, how they reduce inequity

Too often transport strategies and plans set out clear aims and objectives aligned to health, social and environmental benefits but fail to align to these bold aims in their approach and investment. We need to better ensure transport and cycling plans are based on addressing the needs of residents and reducing inequity across society.

For example, cycle planning and policy has often focused on physical activity benefits for health, while not prioritising infrastructure in areas that are suffering from poor health.

Lower income households have lower levels of car ownership – female heads of house, children, young and older people, ethnic minorities and disabled people are concentrated in this group.⁵¹ In addition, there are considerable affordability issues with car ownership that can lead to a risk of transport poverty.⁵² Cycling helps people who do not have a car to access essential services and amenities.

Cycling strategies and plans however tend to focus too much on the numbers of people cycling, not who would benefit most. In England, the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy⁵³ and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans do not always take account of who investment and infrastructure is aimed at and the benefits cycling can bring.

In addition, ‘Inclusive’ Transport Strategies for all forms of transport often overlook cycling as an important transport mode for disabled people.⁵⁴

All transport strategies, planning and investment should be designed around the needs of people, including delivery actions and monitoring. Cycling strategies should be better integrated with transport strategies and other modes, especially housing development and urban regeneration.

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Actions

Design cycling strategies and plans to reduce inequity and improve outcomes for people

- » Recognise the potential of cycling to reduce social and economic inequity and provide affordable, healthy and safe mobility for people.
- » Design your cycling strategies and plans around improving outcomes for people and reducing inequity from high-level ambition statements right down to investment and delivery.
- » Introduce measurable targets relating to relating to the diversity of people cycling and publically report these each year.
- » Prioritise infrastructure in areas of a city where local services and amenities and public transport provision is lower, especially where this coincides with multiple deprivation.
- » Integrate cycling with other transport and spatial planning policy.
- » Adopt a planning principle of 20-minute living, where all basic needs can be found within a 20 minute return walk of where people live. This ensures increased accessibility and more journeys can be walked or cycled.

Increase long-term funding for cycling

- » National governments should ensure all local authority budgets have significant, long-term funding for cycling in place, ensuring smaller towns and suburban areas are not omitted.
- » Ensure funding is tied to evaluation requirements to ensure the diversity of people cycling increases and schemes help address inequity.
- » Better integrate funding pots - transport, health, housing and local economic development.

Case studies

[Lambeth Transport Strategy and Transport Strategy Implementation Plan](#)

Lambeth is reshaping transport in the borough to improve air quality and make it safer to walk and cycle and reduce emissions. A guiding principle for the plan is to make the transport network accessible to all and ensure the benefits of improved transport provision are shared across the whole community. The plan proposes health routes for people to access a range of everyday services and needs by walking and cycling and uses a neighbourhood approach to do so through motor traffic reduction

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measures. The plan has meant that Lambeth was able to respond quickly when Covid-19 happened, increasing space for people walking and cycling whilst fast-tracking many of the measures already agreed in the plan.

[Oakland Bike Plan – Let’s Bike Oakland](#)

The Oakland Bicycle Plan has a vision for a cycle-friendly city where cycling provides affordable, safe and healthy mobility for all residents. The plan was based on a representative survey of Oaklanders and engagement strategies were used to reach underrepresented Oaklanders, including digital engagement tools. In-person mobile workshops were used to meet people where they are at across the city. The result is a clear focus on equity, and a more equitable distribution of programmes.

The plan focuses on disadvantaged groups and uses an ‘equity framework’ to guide delivery by asking:

- » Who are the city’s most vulnerable groups?
- » What is the desired condition of well-being that the city and residents want for Oakland’s most vulnerable communities?
- » How can implementation of the plan work towards these conditions?

The plan includes a target to increase the share of women cycle commuters to at least 50% of all cycle commuters. It also includes actions to:

- » Increase access to jobs, education, retail, parks and libraries, schools, recreational centres, transit, and other neighbourhood destinations
- » Address barriers so that vulnerable populations can take part in the improvements
- » Reduce travel times for low-income households
- » Prioritise the needs and trip patterns of vulnerable populations
- » Serve disabled people



Photo: “16th Annual Bike to Work Day” by Tim Wagner via [Bike East Bay / CC BY 2.0](#)

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Recommendation 1.2: Increase diversity and representation in decision-making and the transport sector

Members of Parliament, assemblies and councils, as well as senior civil servants and transport planners are not typically representative of the wider population. Women, disabled people, people from ethnic minority groups and people at risk of deprivation are often underrepresented, especially at senior levels.

For example, in Scotland in 2017 women made up 52% of the population but only:

- » 35% of Members of the Scottish Parliament
- » 25% of local councillors
- » 6% of heads of transport bodies⁵⁵

Women also still lag far behind men in terms of equal representation in the House of Commons. In 2019, 220 MPs were female out of 650 seats (34%).⁵⁶ Only one in ten of the 650 MPs elected in 2019 were not White, and reports suggest there may only be five disabled MPs.⁵⁷

Whilst women make up 47% of the UK workforce, women remain underrepresented in the transport sector accounting for only 21% of workers⁵⁸, with female engineers only representing 11% of the workforce.⁵⁹

When people in power and people who govern, design and deliver transport and cycling do not represent the wider population, unconscious and conscious bias can mean decisions, policies and schemes are not designed around the needs of everyone as they are not fully understood or considered.

Actions

Increase diversity in the transport sector

- » Commit to and invest in equality, diversity and inclusion programmes and embed these within organisational strategy and practice.
- » Implement diversity and inclusion standards through procurement processes.
- » Build the skills, development and leadership of women, people from ethnic minority groups, and disabled people working within the transport sector.
- » Invest in programmes that increase the diversity of people entering the transport sector.

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Increase representation in decision making and commissioning

- » Recruit a high-level and public-facing role outside of the political process, for example a walking and cycling commissioner or inspectorate. These roles or bodies should be designed to represent marginalised groups.
- » Invest in longer-term programmes that support diversity within Governments and positions of leadership.
- » Take steps to tackle the structural issues that preserve decision making roles for people from white, male and richer backgrounds, such as racism and inertia within society.

Case studies

Anne Hidalgo – Paris and the fifteen-minute neighbourhood

Anne Hidalgo was re-elected as Mayor of Paris for a second term in June 2020. She is the first woman to hold this office. Anne has arguably done more in her first term as Mayor to improve Parisian streets and tackle air pollution than any other European city Mayor. In May 2016 she started ‘Paris Breathes’ which banned all cars in certain parts of the city on the first Sunday of the month as well as making public transport and the city’s cycle and electric vehicle schemes free for the day. Anne has also pushed the building of cycle infrastructure across the city at pace to combat climate change and pollution.



Photo: Mat Reding

Transport for London – Responsible Procurement

Transport for London (TfL) aims to be a fully inclusive employer, valuing and celebrating the diversity of the workforce to improve services for all Londoners. TfL has a Director of Diversity and Inclusion to oversee this.

TfL’s impact and reach however is much broader. The organisation procures hundreds of services each year worth around £6bn.⁶⁰ TfL wants its supplies to share diversity and inclusion goals and use procurement



Photo: Ehimetalor Akhere Unuabona

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frameworks with a diversity and inclusion requirement to ensure suppliers meet these aims. TfL has also launched the first TfL diversity and inclusion supplier forum to encourage a shared approach to tackling these issues.

Walking and Cycling Commissioners

Recently several high profile walking and cycling commissioners have been appointed across the UK. As these commissioners represent people and are often well-known to the public we need to ensure they either represent a more diverse audience or speak knowledgeably about the benefits and need for diversity and inclusion.

Existing commissioners include Paralympic athlete Dame Sarah Storey, Walking and Cycling Commissioner for Sheffield City Region, and Lee Craigie, Active Nation Commissioner for Scotland. Further appointments are to be made soon including a new national cycling and walking commissioner and inspectorate for England.



Lee Craigie, Active Nation Commissioner for Scotland.
Photo: James Robertson



“Don’t take this personally, but this isn’t about you. To paraphrase the Spiderman comic, with great privilege comes great responsibility. And using your power for good is difficult, but in order to make the world a more equitable place, that means doing the work. It’s easy to take the well beaten path, but building new ones? We all know how hard it is to get a decent cycle lane put in!

This means fighting personal stereotypes you may hold (it’s ok, we all have them), diversifying the voices that you listen to, providing stepping stones for potential riders to use, and giving people second chances.

The best way to reach people who are not like you, is to find a champion in that community, and pay them for their work in creating that connection - you will be returned tenfold for your investment. Anything that expands our beautiful cycling community can only be a good thing.”

Jenni Gwiazdowski, Director, London Bike Kitchen

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Recommendation 1.3: Improve decision making through better evidence and public engagement

Decision makers and transport planners are never likely to fully represent the diversity and views of wider society and everyone's needs. Therefore it is essential that people are engaged and listened to. At the same time, we need to ensure the evidence base upon which decisions are made is robust.

Engagement with the public, however, often lacks diversity and inclusion. Public consultation tends to occur towards the end of a process and is set through online consultations or meetings. Change relies on people being proactive in responding.

68% of people living in 12 major cities and urban regions across the UK never cycle. **Bike Life, 2019**

If we are to normalise cycling for people, we should design improvements for people that do not already cycle. However, these are the people that are least likely to respond to a consultation on cycling.

Women are typically more likely to shoulder a greater proportion of unpaid work alongside paid work.⁶¹ People in lower paid employment often have multiple jobs which can be part-time or zero hours.⁶² Both women and people on lower incomes often have less free time, limiting their opportunity to participate.

IT literacy, access, and language are also common barriers to responding to a consultation.

[Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Safety Consultation](#)

In 2018 over 14,000 responses were made to the Department for Transport's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) Safety Consultation.⁶³ However, only 24% of these responses were from women, and only 5% were from disabled people. 86% of respondents indicated that they cycle at least once a week. This means views were predominantly from men, people who were not disabled, and cycle regularly.

In addition, we need to ensure the evidence base upon which we take decisions is robust. Most data for existing cycling behaviours comes from automatic counters on the street. These are often 'cordon' counters that measure people cycling into and out of the city centre through a cordon. They therefore focus on city centre commuting and miss other journeys. Counters are designed to purely count the number of people cycling. This means we may not have any data on who is cycling.

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[The Propensity to Cycle Tool](#)

The Propensity to Cycle Tool is widely used in England and Wales to understand where to build cycle routes that are likely to increase the number of people cycling.⁶⁴ It uses different scenarios, including a ‘gender equality’ scenario. The tool contains two layers, commuting and (in England) more recently added, travel to school. The second is particularly important for gender equity, given that men are over-represented in commuting and women in the school run.

Actions

Improve consultations to be more representative

- » Consultations should be accessible – they should be visual, engaging and avoid weighty, long, technical documents.
- » Ensure demographic questions are asked in order to understand who is responding and take action to boost responses from groups who are under-represented.
- » Ensure consultations are genuine – do not ask people to contribute and then ignore their views.

Employ other engagement techniques for better representation

- » Conduct surveys as they can ensure a representative sample of people are listened to.
- » Use focus groups or citizens’ assemblies to allow a more representative sample of people to explore an issue in depth.
- » Recruit advisory panels that are representative of all residents or marginalised groups, to provide advice and guidance for local decision making.
- » Digital engagement can be effective to engage some groups, including younger adults.
- » Use a range of channels to reach people through existing networks and social media.

Improve the evidence base for policy

- » Better data is required to understand diverse trip patterns and needs. Currently, we over emphasise commuting and trips into and out of the city centre.
- » We need transport appraisal guidance, used to demonstrate a business case for investment, to better account for socio-economic inequity.
- » Other data aspects may also need improving, for example, cataloguing near misses and all collisions, not just people killed or seriously injured.

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- » Cities and towns should use the Go Dutch/E-bikes scenario when using the Propensity to Cycle Tool. These scenarios have been found to lead to more uptake among women, and these are more ambitious scenarios which are more inherently equity-focused.

Case studies

[Commonplace](#)

Commonplace is an online platform for consultation. It is a useful tool to engage with the community on a number of issues and can be used by residents to propose ideas and solutions to improve streets and public spaces in their local community. It is effective in engaging younger adults as part of the consultative process and bringing in views earlier on in the design of a scheme.



Photo: Janie Meikle Bland

[The Citizen's Assembly of the Republic of Ireland](#)

The Citizens' Assembly (An Tionól Saoránach) was established in Ireland in 2016 to consider several political questions including the Constitution of Ireland, abortion, fixed-term parliaments, referendums, population ageing, and climate change. 100 people considered these topics over multiple weekends, with input from expert, impartial and factual advisors. Their conclusions formed the basis of a number of reports and recommendations which went on to be debated and passed by politicians including empowering an independent body to address climate change in Ireland.



Photo: Kieran Ryan

[Vivacity Labs](#)

Vivacity Labs use technology to detect and analyse traffic trends, including people walking and cycling. Anonymised data is delivered in real time. The underlying data comes from video analytics, allowing a deep understanding of behaviours, interactions, and speeds of different classes of road users.

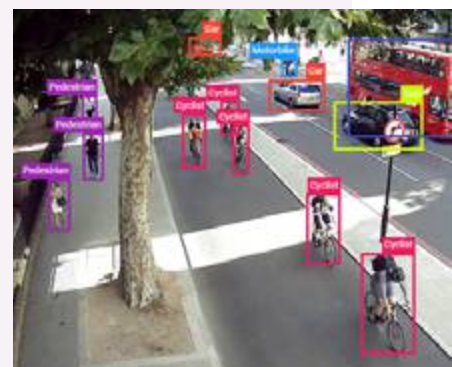


Photo: Vivacity

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Photo: Jonathan Bewley

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2: Creating better places for everyone to cycle in

Recommendation 2.1: Improve road safety, primarily through protected space for cycling, and low-traffic neighbourhoods

The main reason most people do not cycle in the UK is because they think it is dangerous. Bike Life, the largest assessment of cycling in cities and towns found only 38% of residents feel that their city is a good place to cycle.⁶⁵ Almost three quarters of urban residents (74%) think safety for cycling needs to be improved.

People cycling have to share roads with motor vehicles for most urban journeys in cities and towns in the UK. This puts many people off cycling or limits journey choice to routes that are perceived to be safe, for example off-road leisure journeys. Our main roads lack protected space for cycling, and levels of traffic have increased on quieter, residential roads partially as a result of the use of in-car navigation apps to beat congestion.⁶⁶

Risk is not shared equally. The chance of being in a collision is often worse for certain people:

- » Women report more near misses when cycling than men.⁶⁷
- » The consequences of a collision can be greater for some older and disabled people.⁶⁸
- » A lack of familiarity and personal experience of cycling from older generations can reduce perceived levels of safety.
- » People living in disadvantaged areas are more likely to live in proximity to high volumes of fast-moving traffic and have higher levels of on-street parking. This increases road traffic risk.⁶⁹

Actions

Provide protected space as part of a cohesive cycling network.

- » Ensure main roads (including radial and orbital routes) have physically protected cycle tracks.
- » Ensure cycle tracks and pavements are continuous across side streets, with motor vehicles entering/exiting side roads having to give-way.

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- » Ensure junctions and crossroads are improved, including treatments that allow people cycling and driving to move through a junction at difference times.
- » Ensure off-road routes are connected to urban cycling networks.
- » Maintain cycling infrastructure, including repairs, removing debris and gritting.

81% of people from ethnic minority groups think protected space on roads is helpful to start cycling or cycle more. **Bike Life, 2019**

Implement low-traffic neighbourhoods to cater for all journeys

- » Develop low-traffic neighbourhoods where filtered permeability is used to remove through-traffic from residential areas, and city, town and district centres.
- » Close roads around schools either permanently or during drop off and pick up times (School Streets), and encourage children and parents to walk, scoot or cycle.
- » Create direct routes on quieter streets that complement protected routes on main roads and have few cars, for example the Red Carpet approach in Belgium.

68% of older people and 64% of disabled people agree with the need to restrict through-traffic in residential areas. **Bike Life, 2019**

Implement other measures to make cycling safer

- » Introduce a default urban speed limit of 20 mph for all streets.
- » Introduce more crossings for walking and cycling to reduce community severance.
- » Introduce dedicated enforcement and education of dangerous behaviour, for example the West Midlands Police's Close Pass scheme.
- » Reduce tensions between people walking and cycling including: separating people walking and cycling in high-footfall areas, reallocating dedicated space for cycling from the carriageway and not the pavement, and continuing to improve the design and consistency of challenging infrastructure, for example, floating bus stops.

Two thirds of people from ethnic minority groups and people at risk from deprivation think 20 mph speed limits would be helpful to start cycling or cycle more. **Bike Life, 2019**

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Case studies

[Oxford Road cycle track, Manchester](#)

This ‘Dutch-style’ cycle track on Oxford Road in Manchester has created protected space for cycling in one of the UK’s busiest bus corridors. A cycle track now runs along each side of the road and includes bus stop bypasses to reduce conflict between people cycling and buses. Cars have been banned from the route.



Photo: Jill Jennings/TfGM

[Red Carpets in Ghent and Antwerp](#)

Red carpets are urban routes that are direct, easy to follow and have very few motor vehicles. The tarmac on a red carpet street is painted red to make the route easily visible and ensure continuous priority at junctions for people cycling on the red carpet. Red carpets use alternating one-way controls along each section to ensure the only cars encountered are those of local residents or delivery vehicles.

Red carpets are used in the [Traffic Circulation plan in Ghent](#) which aims to divide Ghent into six neighbourhoods where driving is discouraged between zones. The first zone covering the inner city has seen motor vehicles fall from 55% to just 27% of trips. Cycling and public transport use have both increased across the city and Ghent has seen a 17% increase in restaurant and bar startups, and the number of empty shops has reduced.



Photo: Tim Burns

[See Sense – smart cycle lights](#)

See Sense has developed cycle lights that react to the environment around them, for example, flashing more brightly at riskier moments like junctions, filtering in traffic, or to approaching car headlights. The lights also gather data as people use them while riding around, collecting information on issues such as near misses, poor road surface and potential problem junctions. See Sense is working with local authorities to understand and use this data to improve road safety.



Photo: See Sense

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Recommendation 2.2: Address personal safety and harassment

Increased harassment exists in the UK in relation to ethnicity, gender and disability.

Studies show that women experience disproportionate levels of sexual and general harassment in public compared to men.⁷⁰ Women are more likely to experience and be concerned about physical and sexual assault.⁷¹ Women are also more likely to be abused and harassed by drivers when cycling⁷². For many disabled people, sadly, harassment is also a commonplace experience.⁷³

Concerns over personal safety connected with increased visibility may exist amongst people from ethnic minority groups.⁷⁴ Concerns over racist and sexist harassment connected with increased visibility while cycling were noted anecdotally.⁷⁵ Finally people from more deprived communities are also more likely to be affected and fear crime.⁷⁶

91% of people from at risk of deprivation, 90% of older people, 90% of disabled people, 89% of women and 89% of people from ethnic minority groups think reducing anti-social behaviour or crime is important for improving cycling safety. **Bike Life, 2019**

Women often report changing their behaviour or route choice to avoid certain streets or areas.⁷⁷ Many cycling routes are along former railway paths or in quiet areas that feel unsafe and suffer from increased levels of crime, especially during hours of darkness.

Many disabilities are invisible which causes other issues through misunderstanding. Adapted cycles are rarely seen in the UK, for example tricycles, and they can be perceived to be uncool.

Finally, concerns over harassment from the police have been documented in the UK and are commonplace in the USA. These are connected to increased visibility whilst cycling.⁷⁸

Personal safety and harassment are often overlooked in comparison to road safety by transport planners. However, personal safety and harassment can be a significant barrier for many people including when cycling. Perceptions of how safe a route or a place is, as well as actual incidences of crime are important.

Off-road routes away from traffic and through green space may be favoured during daylight hours. However, the same route can suffer from higher levels of crime and feel less safe during hours of darkness. In the evening a physically protected cycle track on a busy street may be more welcoming.

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Institutional harassment and racism is a societal issue and is deeply challenging to overcome. Between April 2018 and March 2019, there were 4 stop and searches for every 1,000 White people, compared with 38 for every 1,000 Black people.⁷⁹ This can damage confidence in the police from some communities.

We need to do much more to tackle unfair or racist harassment from institutions that are designed to protect people. Being Black should not mean you are assumed to be a criminal,⁸⁰ being disabled should not mean you cannot get exercise in fear of your benefits being taken away.⁸¹

The transport sector has a role to play in reducing it, both in working to reduce inequity in mobility and transport, but also to work with people who are unfairly persecuted, government and institutions like the police.

Actions

Improve route planning and ensure a choice of routes is available

- » Ensure access to a choice of different cycle routes is available including protected routes on main roads, low-traffic streets and neighbourhoods, and off-road routes.
- » Provide dedicated digital and non-digital route planning tools and maps, and ensure signposting for all routes.

Improve the design of infrastructure and places

- » Consider the needs of all users and actively engage them in schemes through the design process.
- » Ensure all routes that pass through less populated areas, including parks, former railway lines and quiet streets, are well-lit
- » Ensure incidences of harassment and anti-social behaviour are monitored and provide police presence where necessary.
- » Tunnels should have no corners – only curves. Ideally you should always be able to see daylight and the way out.

94% of women stated that better lighting on cycle routes in poorly lit areas was important for improving cycle safety. **Bike Life, 2019**

Eradicate harassment, including institutional harassment and racism

- » Provide safe spaces to enable people to report situations that involve anti-social behaviour and harassment, including free advice and legal support where required.
- » Provide more resource to reduce harassment in public places, including whilst cycling.

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Case studies

SafetiPin [↗](#)

The 'My Safetipin' app was originally developed in India. It sources data from people who can drop a pin in places where they feel less safe and can also conduct safety audits by rating nine physical and social parameters. This can then result in more effective responses, for example in Bogota, Safetipin data helped in improving cycling infrastructure to encourage more women to use it at night.



Photo: SafetiPin

Her Barking, StreetSpace [↗](#)

StreetSpace is a social enterprise working with people to reimagine their streets and spaces to make them feel safer, bring joy and social connection in Barking and Dagenham and Bradford. One of the projects, Her Barking, is a women-led movement, experimenting to collaboratively design and test low cost interventions to make streets and spaces feel safe. In Barking, 51% of residents do not feel safe after dark, compared to a national average of 21%. Since 2018, they have been identifying spaces, developing, and testing ideas with local people to improve perceptions of safety.



Photo: StreetSpace

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Recommendation 2.3: Ensure cycling infrastructure is fully inclusive

The Equality Act (2010) places a duty upon the public sector to protect people from discrimination in wider society. Local services should be designed to be inclusive for all users. Yet, across the UK, much of our cycling infrastructure does not meet this duty.

Cycling infrastructure is often not suitable for all people cycling and different types of cycles. The width of cycle lanes and tracks and the space provided for turning circles are often not wide enough to use many types of adapted or cargo cycles. Other obstacles include ramps which are too steep to use, cambers on the path and steps to navigate.

These barriers can be frustrating for everyone, however they can stop some people from being able to complete a journey by cycle.

- » Disabled people and older people may be more likely to need to use an adapted cycle. Hand-cycles, tandems, tricycles, and recumbents require more space, are harder to fit through access gates, use on a camber, and are typically much heavier than a basic bicycle.
- » Women are more likely to travel with children.⁸² Infrastructure is not always suitable and can be harder to use when using a cargo cycle, trailer, or just cycling with a heavier bicycle with children.⁸³

A wide range of UK cycling infrastructure exists in the UK from a painted lane on the ground, shared paths with pedestrians right up to protected tracks with side road priority and floating bus stops. Cycling infrastructure design has improved significantly, however issues still exist.

Firstly, a wide range of cycling infrastructure guidance exists which differs in different places. This can be confusing to people cycling, walking and driving in different places. Secondly and more importantly, design guidance is easy to ignore where a lack of political will exists. This results in a wide variety of practice on the ground, often even on the same route, which can be dangerous, exclude access, or be confusing to users.

One example occurs when people are cycling or walking across side roads on a main street. People walking and cycling, just like cars, should have priority with road users entering or existing side roads giving way in all situations.

This confusion will always be highest for people who are new or returning to cycling, the very people we are trying to design for. Current design and mixing of visual and tactile language for cycling infrastructure creates confusion for many disabled people with sight loss, hearing loss or learning disabilities.

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“From my own lived experience of discovering cycling (shared by thousands of others), I cannot stress enough the benefits of making cycling fully inclusive. Experiencing independent mobility & the effect of endorphins, accessing the outdoors etc is transformational for those of us for whom moving is otherwise a chore.

Counter-intuitively maybe, cycling is easier than walking for huge amounts of Disabled people and therefore, a perfect tool for accessing places, people and opportunities of all kinds whilst improving our health and wellbeing.

Having built and catered for one main profile of cyclist for too long (the middle aged male on a bicycle), we have baked in long standing barriers to cycling for Disabled people (inaccessible infrastructure, prohibitive costs of equipment, a dearth of expert advice and information etc.). It is time this changed!

Let’s bring an end to Disabled people’s unwarranted over-dependency on motorised and inactive transport modes. Together let’s bring in cycling equality!”

Isabelle Clement, Director, Wheels for Wellbeing

Actions

Remove barriers on existing cycle infrastructure

- » Remove or adjust gates and access barriers, address ramp angles, steps and cambers to ensure they are suitable for all types of cycle and users.
- » Widen existing routes and provide adequate turning space where necessary for all adapted cycles.
- » Give equal cleaning and maintenance priority to cycle lanes that is given to roads.

Only 22% of older people and 24% of disabled people think the condition of cycling routes in their local area is good. **Bike Life, 2019**

Ensure inclusive design standards are set and followed

- » Develop inclusive design standards as part of wider cycling infrastructure standards that must be adhered to, or give powers to the proposed Cycling and Walking Inspectorate to ensure design guidance is followed.

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- » Cycle route design should be intuitive for all users, and street design should give greater priority to more vulnerable modes (walking and cycling).
- » Improve the consistency of cycling infrastructure, including design, prioritisation of movement, colour, signage, and surfaces.
- » Give priority to people walking and cycling across side roads with motor vehicles and people cycling entering or exiting side roads always giving way.
- » Develop better guidance for improving neighbourhoods to reduce the volume and speed of motor traffic in residential areas using area-wide approaches.

Embed inclusive design and engineering practice

- » Introduce continuing professional development (CPD) training for designers and engineers on inclusive cycling. This should include experiential training where transport professionals meet different users to understand other perspectives and try out adapted cycles.
- » Develop guidance to audit existing streets for inclusivity including walking and cycling. This will help prioritise and address issues.
- » Set up an Inclusivity Advisory Group to ensure needs are met from different users throughout the planning, design and delivery of new cycling infrastructure.

Case studies

Removing 16,000 barriers on the National Cycle Network

In 2018 Sustrans, the custodians of the National Cycle Network, undertook an extensive audit that led to 15 recommendations. Following this audit the aim has not been to extend the Network but to make it better for everyone. This includes working to remove or redesign all 16,000 barriers on the Network. The removal of barriers from the Fallowfield Loop in Greater Manchester led to increased usage and satisfaction.⁸⁴



Photo: Jonathan Bewley

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Inclusive Design Guidance

Cycle design guidance from [Highways England](#) and [Transport for London](#) are both supported in their recognition of the need to design for all types of cycle. Highways England specifies designing for a cycle measuring 2.8 metres long and 1.2 metres wide. This ensures designs are equipped to cater for all types of adapted cycle commonly used in the UK. The DfT is about to update its cycle infrastructure design note (LTN 02/08) although this has not yet been published.

[Developing turning circle software for cycling](#)

When designing streets, planners and engineers have traditionally ensured that the proposed layout will accommodate the way in which motor vehicles move – but this is not enough. Sustrans supported the development of AutoTURN Pro, new swept path analysis software to simulate the movement of cycles, ensuring these are fully accounted for in the design process. This will help designers better understand how cycles move and turn, and how much space they need, ensuring cycling infrastructure can be designed to be more inclusive and accessible.



Photo: Jonathan Bewley



Photo: Jonathan Bewley

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Recommendation 2.4: Better integrate cycling at home, at destinations and with public transport

Not having a secure space to store cycles at home is a barrier for many people, especially those who live in smaller homes, flats in multiple occupancy buildings, or those with stepped access.

It is especially challenging if you use an e-cycle or an adapted cycle. Women make more journeys with children⁸⁵ and may be more likely to use a cargo bike.

It may also be more difficult for anyone with reduced mobility to remove cycles from storage due to reduced strength and or dexterity.

Some ethnic minority groups were found to prefer storing cycles inside, due to greater concern of cycle theft and damage in the US.⁸⁶ However, space inside may be trickier for people from ethnic minority groups. 13% of ethnic minority households were found to be overcrowded in London, compared with 5% of white households.⁸⁷

On average, people on low incomes live in smaller homes and have less storage space⁸⁸. They may also be more likely to live in flats and high-rise properties where storage is trickier. People on low incomes are more likely to live in areas of higher crime and fear crime.⁸⁹ This is likely to lead to greater concerns for cycle security. Having secure space to store cycles at work or other destinations is also a barrier for many people.

Greater cultural expectations exist for women than men in terms of appearance, and a lack of workplace facilities often exist, for example showers.⁹⁰

Travel by public transport is highly gendered. In 2017 across England, a third more women than men travelled by bus and a third more men than women travelled by rail.⁹¹ Older people and disabled people are often reliant on public transport. People from more deprived households who live in more suburban areas and estates are more likely to live in areas with poor transport connections.⁹²

Cycling to public transport hubs is often difficult, especially where cycling infrastructure does not exist. Public transport hubs typically only have parking for standard cycles, step barriers also exist, and security is often poor.

Space on trains for larger adapted cycles does not exist and booking cycles on trains can be difficult, especially for commuter trips. Very little provision for cycles on buses exists in the UK.

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Actions

Improve secure cycle storage at home, prioritising flats and multiple occupancy buildings

- » Retrofit secure cycle storage facilities into multiple occupancy housing.
- » Increase the roll-out of cycle hangars and prioritise their use where they are likely to serve the most benefit. Ensure they are free or affordable for residents.
- » New housing and workplace developments should have secure cycle storage built into the property design for all residents as standard.

25% of people from ethnic minority groups stated that a lack of facilities at home or work, for example secure cycle storage and shower facilities was a barrier to them cycling. **Bike Life, 2019**

Improve cycling facilities at destinations

- » Introduce standards or guidance to ensure secure cycle parking provision for workplaces, schools and everyday destinations, especially for public sector buildings.
- » Improve access for disabled people who use cycles as a mobility aid at destinations. For example linking with the Blue Badge Scheme to support accessible and secure cycle parking adjacent to destinations and including improving pavement design adjacent to destinations to ensure access for wheelchairs and adapted cycles.
- » Ensure adequate public toilet provision exists in cities and towns.
- » Ensure provision of facilities like showers, bike pumps and cycle tools where people work.

Improve integration with public transport

- » Provide accessible and secure cycle storage adjacent to public transport hubs, including space for adapted cycles.
- » Give priority on trains for cycles which are mobility aids and avoid hooks for cycles on trains.
- » Consider the feasibility of extending the TfL Mobility Card to allow cycles to be used as a mobility aid on buses and consider its roll out in other cities.
- » Buses and coaches should be adapted to be able to take cycles for longer journeys.
- » Provide accurate information about the size of lifts in stations and step-free access provision.
- » Public cycle share schemes should be run as part of an integrated transport offer in a city or town, for example through partnerships with the private sector.

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79% of people from ethnic minority groups stated that better links between cycling and public transport would help them to start cycling or cycle more. **Bike Life, 2019**

Case studies

[The FalcoPod, Bike Hangar](#)

The FalcoPod is an on-street bike hangar from Falco where a key element of the design was inclusivity. Most hangar products only fit a standard bicycle. The FalcoPod can accommodate child seats (front and back) as well as panniers or cargo racks and provide e-bike charging points. Adapted or various styles cycles can also use the bike hangar and flexible locking bars on the hangar frame ensure better security.



Photo: Falco

[Cambridge - improving cycle parking within the city centre and at train stations](#)

Cambridge has two city centre multi-storey car parks that now include spaces for secure cycle parking. Park Street car park, for example, has space for 282 cycles, including special racks for bikes with trailers and other adapted cycles. Cambridge Cycle Point at Cambridge railway station also has space for over 3,000 cycles.



Photo: Jonathan Bewley

[Waltham Forest cycle parking hubs at stations](#)

The London Borough of Waltham Forest operates eight cycle parking hubs at railway stations across the borough. These provide over 500 cycle parking spaces including spaces for cargo bikes. The secure hubs use key fobs to enter and cost £30 per year for members.



Photo: Waltham Forest Council

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Recommendation 2.5: Prioritise infrastructure where transport options are poor, especially where this coincides with multiple deprivation

Prioritisation of new cycling infrastructure in the UK tends to focus on routes that are likely to have the highest potential for cycling. These tend to almost always be radial journeys into the city centre for commuting purposes. However these are also routes more commonly used by men.⁹³

Exclusively taking an approach that focuses on radial routes into the city or town centre is likely to ignore the needs of other people. For example people aged over 65 are more likely to be retired, and disabled people are less likely to be in employment,⁹⁴ and therefore may have more varied journey patterns. Women are more likely to make multi-stop trips, often by different modes.⁹⁵ However, Asian and Black people take more trips for education, and commuting purposes than white people.⁹⁶

Furthermore, better data on trips to the centre tends to exist, for example from cordon city data counters. There is often a lack of data, and therefore understanding, of other trip patterns. This is important as only 35% of cycle trips are commuter trips. 35% are for shopping, leisure and other purposes and 18% are for leisure, and 12% are for school, college and university.⁹⁷

51% of people from ethnic minority groups would find cycle routes to shops, schools and other local destinations helpful to cycle more. 33% of older people and 44% of disabled people would find cycle routes to green spaces and the local countryside helpful to cycle more.

Bike Life, 2019

Evidence from the USA suggests cycling infrastructure tends to disproportionately serve wealthier neighbourhoods.⁹⁸ Whilst we are not aware of similar data from the UK, other aspects of cycling provision, such as public cycle share schemes, can also reinforce a focus on the city centre, and exclude other areas and people.

Public cycle schemes have potential to be a relatively cheap and inclusive way to travel that can increase transport choice and accessibility for people.

Most public cycle share schemes only operate in the city centres and many ignore more deprived areas. In London, research from 2012 found there was a high demand for cycle sharing schemes in more deprived areas,⁹⁹ and women were underrepresented among users.¹⁰⁰ However, a more recent study found women tend to make up 40% of people riding shared bikes.¹⁰¹ This is far higher than the proportion of women who cycle overall.

Other aspects of public cycle share schemes may also exclude people, including the need for a smart phone, and only offering standard bicycles.

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Actions

Prioritise cycle routes upon 'need' as well as the number of potential people cycling

- » We need to better prioritise cycling improvements in areas which stand to benefit most from investment in cycling infrastructure, for example, neighbourhoods with poorer public transport access. To support this, the Propensity to Cycle tool has been updated to include school journey data in England. Other journeys should also be considered.
- » Cities and towns should develop complete networks for cycling including radial and orbital routes alongside low-traffic neighbourhoods that better link with a much wider range of everyday destinations than just the city centre.
- » Ensure cycle routes are as direct as possible.

Only 20% of women and 15% of older people think the 'directness' of cycle routes is good. **Bike Life, 2019**

Improve reach and inclusivity of public cycle share schemes

- » Ensure financial sustainability to operate over the long-term, while making schemes affordable
- » Aim to reach all geographic areas, and prioritising roll out in more deprived areas, and neighbourhoods with poorer public transport provision
- » Integrate with bus, rail and metro services
- » Include electric cycles as a proportion of the fleet and using lighter bike designs that are easier to manoeuvre
- » Provide options for people who do not have Smart Phone technology and ensuring cycles are simple to hire out
- » Do not impact on the pedestrian environment, especially for dockless cycles
- » Extend the 'free' time per ride in larger cities and urban regions beyond 30 minutes, e.g. Mexico City extended 'free' time to 45 minutes¹⁰²
- » Develop models in partnership with local inclusive cycling organisations to fund longer-term hires for adapted cycles.

67% of people from minority ethnic minority groups and 60% of people more likely to be at risk of deprivation would find improvements to public cycle share schemes in their area helpful to cycle more.

Bike Life, 2019

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Case studies

[Low-traffic neighbourhoods – London Mini Holland Schemes](#)

The Mini Holland scheme was explicitly aimed at outer London boroughs where residents are more car-dependent. Investment has provided infrastructure changes including: segregated cycle lanes, measures to reduce neighbourhood motor traffic, redesigned town centres, cycle hubs, pedestrian crossings and new public spaces, alongside a range of programmes such as community bike rides.

The scheme resulted in residents, living in areas of significant change, being 24% more likely to have cycled in the previous week. Residents were found to have walked or cycled for 41 minutes per week more than those where such improvements have not yet been made.¹⁰³



Photo: Jonathan Bewley

[Velib Metropole – public cycle share](#)

Vélib Metropole is a large-scale public cycle sharing system in the Paris Metropolitan area. First launched in 2007, the system now encompasses around 21,000 bicycles and 1,230 bicycle stations. The scheme covers a wider geographical area than any equivalent city across Paris and 64 surrounding municipalities. Recently 30% of the bicycles used are electric which makes moving around easier.¹⁰⁴ There is an average daily ridership of 100,000 in 2017.



Photo: "Paris 2008" by zopeuse / CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

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Photo: Chris Foster

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3. Welcoming and supporting all people to cycle

Recommendation 3.1: Use inclusive language and imagery, and ensure cycling is welcoming and celebrates diversity

The relative visibility of cycling and how it is represented in the media and sport means cycling often has strong associations with identity. This can be attractive to some people who ‘fit’ this perceived identity, whilst alienating many others.

Being a ‘cyclist’ is associated with a certain type of person and characteristics. For example, as a sport where you have to be physically fit and own Lycra, or as an activity predominantly done by white men. Cycling can also be perceived as a negative activity in the media.¹⁰⁵ This image moves cycling away from being perceived as an everyday activity or transport choice for people and means many people do not associate with cycling.¹⁰⁶

Despite this, Bike Life found significant interest and demand from many groups who tend to cycle less.

Demographic group	Do not associate cycling as an activity for people like them	Do not cycle but would like to start
Ethnic minority groups	16%	55%
More likely to be at risk of deprivation (socio-economic groups D and E)	20%	38%
Women	17%	36%
Disabled people	23%	31%
Older people (aged over 65)	30%	18%

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We found evidence to suggest that:

- » Many people worry about their age, weight, safety, cycling with children, or kit being uncomfortable as it has not been designed for them from the focus groups conducted in this research.
- » Cycling isn't seen as feminine, and culturally there is still an expectation to be more feminine and meet physical appearance expectations.¹⁰⁷
- » Keeping up with other people cycling can be off-putting for older people and disabled people (Focus Groups)
- » For many people cycling is associated with being a mode of transport for those who cannot afford an alternative.^{108 109} The car industry and government have over many years led a culture of it being aspirational to drive and own a car.
- » Perceptions exist that meeting clients on a cycle can appear unprofessional.¹¹⁰
- » Low rates of participation can be self-perpetuating – people from ethnic minority groups may be more likely to turn to activities with a higher ethnic minority presence (e.g. football) than join a cycle club (focus groups).

Actions

Use inclusive language and imagery

- » Use language that people can relate to, for example people who cycle. Avoid using the term 'cyclist' as most people do not relate to this term and picture a road bike, Lycra and helmets. This reinforces unnecessary barriers. People who cycle, usually also walk, use public transport and may drive a car.
- » Use the term cycle as a noun and a verb. A cycle ensures people who cycle on a tricycle, quadricycle, hand-cycle, and other adapted cycles are included. Avoid using the terms 'bicycle' or 'two-wheels' unless specifically referring to a bicycle.
- » Consider the audience, for example gentle exercise or social activity may be a better term than 'cycling' for some situations.
- » Use imagery to show the everyday diversity of people cycling and types of cycles used.
- » Use real-life stories and case studies to inspire and help people better relate to cycling.

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Welcome all people who want to cycle and celebrate diversity

- » Show that cycling is easy, available for everyone, safe, and fun.
- » Make cycling straight-forward - get on your bike in your normal clothes and go. Better reflect the multiple-identities of people who cycle and reduce emphasis on the techy side of cycling.
- » Work through existing community groups to share messages and engage different groups and support real-life champions to share their enthusiasm.
- » Work with the media to portray cycling more positively and adopt cultural references of cycling, for example on EastEnders.
- » Support more cycling clubs that focus on a more diverse audience.

Case studies

[London's Cycleways](#)

Transport for London undertook research that found the term Cycle Superhighways in London was less understood by ethnic minority respondents. TfL decided in 2019 to change the name of all cycle routes in the capital to Cycleways.



Photo: Jonathan Bewley

[This Girl Can – Sport England](#)

This Girl Can is an award-winning campaign which aims to normalise getting active by reducing the fear of judgement. The campaign promotes an active lifestyle in a range of different activities and works with partners to overcome different issues. The campaign has helped more than 500,000 women and girls to become more physically active.



Photo: Ryan Thwaites/Sport England

Groups which aim to increase diversity

There are many groups across the UK which aim to bring cycling to new audiences. For example [Cycle Sisters](#), a Walthamstow-based Muslim women cycle group, and [Brothers on bikes](#) a UK-wide cycling club that aims to share their love of cycling with brothers from all faiths and beliefs. The Black Cyclists Network aims to increase diversity in cycling.



Photo: Black Cyclist Network

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Recommendation 3.2: Ensure cost is not a barrier to access a cycle

Whilst cycling is cheaper than driving, the initial outlay to purchase a cycle can be too much for many people. Support exists to reduce the cost through the Government's Cycle to Work Scheme, however this excludes anyone not in work and many people in work but on the National Living wage. Women, disabled people, older people and more deprived households are less likely to be in work, and typically in lower-paid jobs.¹¹¹

One in five people from ethnic minority groups (20%) and people more likely to be at risk of deprivation (19%) state the cost of a suitable cycle as being a barrier for not cycling. **Bike Life, 2019**

The cost of a cycle can also be prohibitive amongst people on lower incomes or not in work. It is also much harder to purchase a cycle with poor credit ratings. People do not just consider the upfront cost of a cycle but also have concerns over security and insurance in the longer term. The cost and maintenance of a cycle is associated with lower cycle ownership in minority ethnic communities¹¹².

Only 15% of people more likely to be at risk of deprivation think that cycle security is good in their local area. **Bike Life, 2019**

A gender pay gap still exists in the UK. In 2019 women on average earned 17.3% less than men¹¹³. Coupled with this, women are more likely to not work or work part-time.¹¹⁴ Women are also more likely to look after children¹¹⁵ and do the shopping run and therefore may require more costly electric or cargo cycles.

20% of women stated that having to travel with children, other passengers or too much stuff to carry was a barrier that stops them from cycling. 39% of women would find access to a cargo cycle helpful for them to cycle more or start cycling. **Bike Life 2019**

Older people and disabled people may have a greater need for more costly adapted cycles and electric cycles. Cycles are also not included in the Government's Motability Scheme, despite cycles being used as mobility aids for many disabled people.¹¹⁶

The purchasing experience of buying a cycle can be a daunting experience for some people. Perceptions exist that you should be an expert which puts people off asking questions.

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Actions

Ensure cost is not a barrier for anyone to purchase a cycle

- » Develop a UK-wide scheme to subsidise the cost of a cycle for people who are not eligible for the existing Cycle to Work Scheme. They include people not in employment, or in work but on low wages. People at risk of deprivation should receive greater support than others to access a cycle. The UK Government should also consider removing VAT from cycle sales.
- » Increase funding for local community cycle centres that make cycling available for different users.
- » Increase funding for social prescribing to enable patients to either buy or loan a cycle, and access local community cycling programmes for support.
- » The government should consider additional support in the form of grants to purchase more costly adapted cycles where they are needed by the user, for example, through the Motability Scheme.
- » Support schemes that help increase access to cycles, including hire schemes, public cycle share and maintenance.

Access to an electric cycle would be helpful for 64% of people from ethnic minority groups and 57% of people more likely to be at risk of deprivation to start cycling or cycle more. **Bike Life 2019**

Improve the purchasing experience

- » Develop approaches through marketing and in-store to improve the customer experience for all people more welcoming and approachable when purchasing or maintaining a cycle.
- » Take steps to improve the diversity of staff working in cycle shops around the country.
- » Improve the designs and range of cycles and associated kit for different audiences – ensure all people are able to access clothing and equipment that make people feel comfortable.

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Case studies

[Big Birmingham Bikes](#)

Big Birmingham Bikes gave away 7,000 free bikes to people living in more deprived areas of the city as part of the Birmingham Cycle Revolution programme. The aim was to improve health and wellbeing, and increase access to workplaces, education and training. This was delivered in partnership with The Active Wellbeing Society who continue to run a number of projects and activities to make cycling more inclusive.



Photo: Jonathan Bewley

[Bikes for All](#)

Bike for Good, a cycling charity in Glasgow, runs Bikes for All; a programme which provides discounted membership to the Nextbike city-wide bike hire scheme for residents on low or no income. Membership is £3 instead of the standard £60 per year and the first 60 minutes of each rental is free instead of the standard 30 minutes. Participants can sign up without the need of a bank card.



Photo: Katie Noble/Sport England

[Try before you Bike](#)

Try before you Bike is a scheme that helps people try cycling before having to purchase a cycle. It is run by the London Borough of Lambeth. Residents can trial a new or nearly new cycle for a small fee, including electric and cargo cycles. Cycles are delivered straight to the household and come with a free cycle skills session to increase confidence. Cycles come with locks, lights and a helmet and maintenance and theft cover is included.



Photo: London Borough of Lambeth

[The London Bike Kitchen](#)

The London Bike Kitchen is a mechanic owned and operated open DIY workshop where you can work on your own bike instead of getting someone else to fix it. The London Bike Kitchen runs Women and Gender-variant (WAG) nights and a Women of Colour Cycling Group with author Jools Walker, both of which have proven to be a stepping stone for getting more people comfortable with their cycles.



Photo: London Bike Kitchen

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[Cycling Without Age](#)

Cycling Without Age is a movement started in 2012 to help older people, often with limited mobility, cycle. Cycling Without Age offers free cycle rides using trishaws. It enables people to reconnect with their city, socialise and feel the wind in their hair as they are pedalled by volunteers in rickshaws. Cycling Without Age now works in 2,200 locations across 50 different countries including every part of Scotland where over 29,000 rides to approximately 43,500 passengers have occurred through the generous support of more than 2,400 volunteers.



Photo: Ronnie Anderson

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Recommendation 3.3: Offer free cycle training for all children and adults

Many people have never learnt to cycle, or are not confident enough to cycle in their city or town, especially on roads. Some people may have migrated to the UK from countries where cycling is less practiced, or not practiced amongst certain groups, such as women. They may be less aware of how to find support and language barriers may exist.¹¹⁷

35% of women and 33% of people from ethnic minority groups (in comparison to 15% of men and 24% of White people) are not confident in their cycling skills. **Bike Life, 2019**

National programmes to help people cycle, such as the DfT Access Fund, often focus on education and employment, thereby excluding people who are retired or are less likely to work.¹¹⁸ They also do not exist in all places. In addition to training riding in a group, as part of a socially-led ride, with other people helps to develop confidence, skills and knowledge.



Cycling take-up in the UK is unequal, and many miss out on its benefits. Children are disproportionately excluded. In England a paltry 3% of adult commuters cycle to work in England; but fewer than 2% of children cycle to school.

Yet there is even greater scope for cycling to school. The Propensity to Cycle Tool shows that if English commuters travelled to work at the same rates as Dutch commuters (based on trip distance and hilliness), one in five would cycle. But if English schoolchildren cycled to school at the same rates as Dutch children, again based on distance and hilliness, more than two in five would cycle.

Schoolchildren have been forced off our roads, which prioritise adults in cars. Making cycling more inclusive is a children's rights issue. This is so important now, after we've asked children to sacrifice schooling and play primarily to keep adults safe.

Dr Rachel Aldred, Reader in Transport, University of Westminster

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Actions

Free cycle training for all people

- » Training should be provided to all children in the UK, ensuring accessibility, for example where children might need adapted cycles.
- » Cycle training, including Bikeability, should also be offered to all adults too.
- » Work, through existing community organisations, with groups that culturally may be less inclined to cycle and ensure community organisations and increase long-term financial support for third sector projects that bring cycling to new audiences.
- » Support community training provision by offering access to adapted cycles and in assisted cycling, for example, rickshaw sides which allow people to experience the feeling of cycling without actually cycling.
- » Take cycling to people through mobile hubs – do not assume people will come to you.
- » Better link to the health sector. People listen to messages from professional and trusted people like doctors, for example the use of social prescribing.

66% of people from ethnic minority groups, 63% of people more likely to be at risk of deprivation, 57% of women, and 55% of disabled people would find cycle training helpful to start cycling or cycle more. **Bike Life, 2019**

Build confidence, and make cycling fun

- » Deliver social guided cycle rides
- » Create spaces for people to cycle and socialise with others, for example by having a café and social activities ran alongside cycle training.
- » Workplaces should do more to promote inclusive cycling amongst their employees, for example setting up a cycle club, and reimbursing staff who cycle for work at a competitive rate compared to using public transport.

Case studies

[Bikeability](#)

Bikeability is a cycle training programme. It was announced in 2020 that Bikeability would be expanded so that every child in England is offered cycle training. The Bikeability Delivery Guide has also recently been rewritten to ensure delivery is more inclusive.



Photo: Paul Mitchell

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[The St Matthews women's cycling project, Leicester City Council](#)

The St Matthews women's cycling project was established in 2019 by Leicester City Council as part of a wider programme focused on improving Air Quality in urban environments. The project consists of two strands, learning to ride and for those who can, led rides. The project is delivered entirely by women trainers and women ride leaders and to date over 80 women have been reached, with 9 languages spoken. Participants are predominately Muslim women, some of whom are experiencing riding a bike for the first time. The sense of community and friendship created is a very happy by product of the programme.



Photo: Leicester City Council

[Bikeworks](#)

Bikeworks, a community interest company based in East London, runs All Ability Cycle Clubs. The Clubs aim to make cycling accessible and possible for everyone, regardless of age, disability or experience. This includes All Ability mobile sessions using a van to go to communities. This ensures ease of access and that people can cycle in an environment that they are comfortable with.



Photo: Bikeworks

[Pedal Power](#)

Pedal Power is a charity based in Cardiff that encourages and enables children and adults of all ages and abilities to experience the benefits of cycling. Pedal Power helps to remove the barriers to cycling that many people face. Pedal Power has a membership of around 1,600 people, many of whom require an adapted cycle to ride. The café at Pedal Power provides an important part of the service as a space to meet and make friends through activities, such as singalong sessions, quiz evenings, and board game afternoons.



Photo: Jonathan Bewley

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[The Bristol Bike Project](#)

The Bristol Bike Project is a member-led co-operative for repairing and rehoming cycles across Bristol. Their Earn-a-bike programme works with adults experiencing long-term barriers to employment to refurbish a donated bike. Participants learn basic mechanical skills at the end of which participants get to keep the bike. Bristol Bike Project also runs women only sessions and sessions for children.



Photo: Jonathan Bewley

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