

Cycle Safety

Briefing for the Westminster Hall debate on Tuesday 26th November, 4.00pm

- 1 CTC, the national cycling charity, was founded in 1878. CTC has 70,000 members and supporters, provides a range of information and legal services to cyclists, organises cycling events, and represents the interests of cyclists and cycling on issues of public policy.
- 2 CTC's 'Safety in numbers' campaign (www.ctc.org.uk/campaign/safety-in-numbers) has shown that 'more' and 'safer' cycling can *and should* go hand in hand, as well as calling for the actions needed to ensure that they do. CTC's ongoing 'Road Justice' campaign (www.roadjustice.org.uk) is highlighting the inadequacies of the responses to bad driving from the police, prosecutors and the courts, while calling for action to improve these.
- 3 CTC played a key role in shaping the Times newspaper's 8-point 'Cities fit for cycling' manifesto, and the subsequent parliamentary 'Get Britain Cycling' inquiry and report, whose 18 recommendations we fully endorse. In response, the Prime Minister has now publicly stated his ambition to launch a "Cycling revolution". The Government is now drafting a Cycle Delivery Plan, aimed at fulfilling this ambition. CTC is represented on the steering group providing high-level input to this Plan, and recently hosted 3 days of discussions with Department for Transport (DfT) officials to discuss proposals. We also have regular dialogue with officials from DfT and other departments or governmental bodies, including the Highways Agency.

Summary

- 4 Cycling is essentially a safe activity, causing little risk either to cyclists themselves or to other road users – you are less likely to be killed in a mile of cycling than a mile of walking. Its health benefits far outweigh the risks involved, i.e. despite those risks, cycling significantly increases one's average life expectancy. Moreover, there is good evidence that cyclists gain from 'safety in numbers', with cycling typically becoming safer as cycle use increases. In other words, more and safer cycling can, and should, go hand in hand.

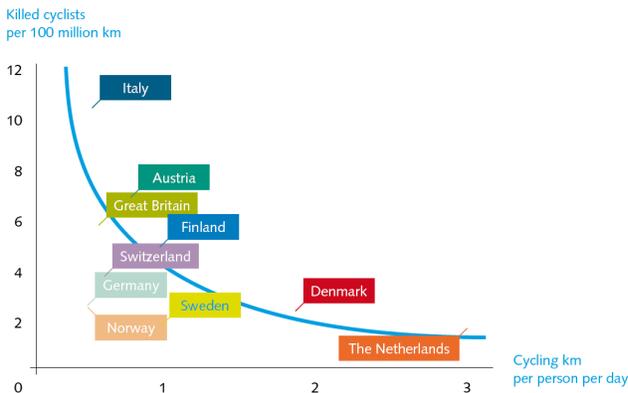
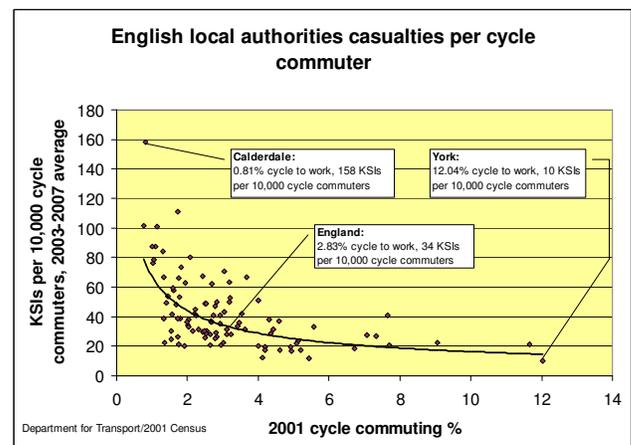


Figure 8: Relation between accidents and bicycle usage

Safety in numbers: in Europe...



...and within Britain

- 5 Cycle safety is nonetheless a good deal worse in Britain than in many neighbouring continental countries. Despite its health and other benefits, people in Britain are deterred from cycling (or from allowing our children to do so) by both the actual and perceived risks involved.
- 6 To maximise the health, economic, environmental and other benefits of more and safer cycling, the focus of action nationally and locally needs to be on removing those actual and perceived risks: unsafe road and junction designs, traffic volumes and speeds, irresponsible driving (and a legal system that fails to respond adequately to this), and lorries.

- 7 Cycle training also has an important role to play, not only in giving would-be cyclists of all ages the confidence and skills needed to cycle safely and legally, but also to improve driving standards as part of the driver training and testing process, particularly for drivers of lorries and other large vehicles.

Recommendations

- 8 In order to deliver the Prime Minister's proposed "Cycling revolution", CTC proposes the following safety-related recommendations for inclusion in the Government's forthcoming Cycling Delivery Plan:

Political and resource commitments

- Targets should be set for increased cycle use, in line with those proposed in the 'Get Britain Cycling' report. These should be backed up with both national and local targets for improved cycle safety, measured both in 'rate-based' terms (e.g. risk per mile or per trip) and in terms of public perceptions of cycle safety.
- Long-term funding should be made available for delivering increased cycle use and improved cycle safety, as recommended by the 'Get Britain Cycling' report (i.e. at least £10 per person annually, rising to £20 as cycle use increases).

Cycle-friendly planning and design

- The Departments for Transport and for Communities and Local Government should collaborate with local authorities, the Highways Agency, cycling stakeholders, professional institutions and others to ensure that consistent high standards of cycle-friendliness are designed into all highway and traffic schemes, all new developments and all planned highway maintenance work.
- These partners should collaborate to draw up new design standards and guidance (based on continental best practice), regulatory changes, design and audit processes and professional training to ensure high-quality cycle provision in all the above scheme-types. The regulatory changes should include the means to give cycle tracks priority at unsignalised crossing points, 'Dutch roundabouts' and signal-controlled junctions, including cyclists' traffic lights.
- 20mph speed limits should become the norm for urban streets, with highway authorities having the freedom to identify appropriate exceptions. Zones of 40mph or lower limits should be widely introduced for rural lane networks.

For more information, see CTC's campaigns briefing on cycle-friendly planning and design:

www.ctc.org.uk/campaigning/views-and-briefings/cycle-friendly-design-and-planning-overview.

Also two blogs on recent developments in trialling continental infrastructure:

www.ctc.org.uk/news/dutch-style-roundabouts-and-low-level-signals-tested and

www.ctc.org.uk/blog/chris-peck/cycle-infrastructure-trials-could-finally-mean-good-cycle-tracks-are-built-0



Cycle tracks with priority over minor roads, cycle-specific traffic lights and 'Dutch' roundabouts are all common in other EU countries, but are currently not permitted in the UK. Off-street trials are underway, with a view to legalising these options in 2015. However, several cities who have received 'Cycle City Ambition' or cycle safety grants from the Department for Transport are urgently seeking authorisation for on-street trials now, as their funding funds out in 2015!

Driving standards

- Cycle awareness, and preferably actual cycle training, should be incorporated into the driver testing and training process, particularly for drivers of lorries and other large vehicles. This should be included in the forthcoming Green Paper on driver testing and training.
- Driver awareness campaigns should focus on the need to look for cyclists at junctions, and to leave space when overtaking them. They should explain why cyclists avoid staying close to the kerb or to parked car doors, for their own safety.

Cyclist awareness and training

- Cycle training should be made widely available, not just for young children but also for teenagers and for adults wishing to discover or rediscover cycling in later life. It could also be used by the police as a sanction for minor cycling offences (i.e. those which were not endangering others), in the same way that driver retraining is used for offending drivers.

For more information, see www.ctc.org.uk/training.

Road traffic law and enforcement

- Roads policing needs to be given far higher priority and resources by the Home Office, Police and Crime Commissioners and by police forces. This is important not only for deterring traffic offences but also to substantially improve road crash investigations and victim support.
- Guidance on both the prosecution and sentencing of bad driving offences should be reviewed: (a) to prevent driving which caused obviously foreseeable danger being dismissed as mere “carelessness”; and (b) to make greater use of driving bans for those who have driven dangerously but who do not need to be locked up for public protection.
- The Department for Transport and Ministry of Justice should collaborate to improve the data on (and public accountability of) the police, prosecutors’ and courts’ responses to bad driving.
- Road crash victims and bereaved families should be offered better support and information about decisions relating to their individual cases.

For more information, see www.roadjustice.org.uk, and particularly CTC’s series of Road Justice briefings on roads policing, prosecutors and the courts, and the legal framework and sentencing – all downloadable from <http://www.roadjustice.org.uk/information/legal>.

Lorries

- The Government, freight industry and other stakeholders should collaborate (and lobby the EU as required): (a) to improve the design standards of lorry cabs – notably by reducing the driver’s cab height and the amount of window area in front of and to the sides of the driver; (b) to establish consistent standards for camera and sensor systems; (c) to incorporate cycle training into the training and Continuous Professional Competence processes for lorry drivers; and (d) to raise cyclist awareness of the risks of riding on the left hand side of lorries.
- The Government should investigate continental best practice on solutions for reducing the numbers of lorries on the busiest roads at the busiest times, including the option of peak-time lorry bans.

For more information, see CTC’s briefing on goods vehicles:

www.ctc.org.uk/campaigning/views-and-briefings/goods-vehicles-lorries-hgvs-vans-etc.

Also two news stories and a blog, responding to the recent spate of cyclist fatalities:

www.ctc.org.uk/news/ctc-condemns-rising-toll-of-cyclists-deaths-in-london,

www.ctc.org.uk/news/hold-hauliers-to-account-over-cyclist-fatalities-says-ctc,

www.ctc.org.uk/blog/roger-geffen/boris-must-stop-ducking-responsibility-for-action-to-save-lives