



The Cycle Advocacy Network (CAN), which aims to get more people cycling, has more than 300 representatives across the UK.
cyclinguk.org/CAN



Left: Joelle Dymond; right: John Wellings

Transport

IMPROVING WOMEN'S SAFETY

Women make half as many cycling trips as men, largely due to perceptions of risk. **Sophie Gordon** outlines what Cycling UK plans to do about it

Who are the women in your life whom you struggle to persuade to get on a bike? Perhaps it's your sister, daughter, partner or friend? You'd love them to experience the freedom that cycling can bring, but they're not having any of it. It's sad but unsurprising. Women make half as many cycle trips per year as men, and are more likely to be put off cycling by a fear of traffic.

That's why one of Cycling UK's campaigning aims this year will be focusing on how we can make cycling feel safer for women, in order to even up those numbers. The gender disparity in perceptions of safety is reflected across the UK and is especially noticeable in urban areas. A 2024 survey of more than 2,000 respondents showed that 90% of women fear cycling in cities.

There are other factors that tend to affect women more than men: 62% said they are scared of road rage or harassment; and 56% of women fear cycling at night. Some of those things are down to wider societal issues, and you might rightly ask how a cycling charity could hope to tackle them.

But there are changes that could have a significant effect. The design and location

of cycle paths has a big impact on how safe they feel to use. Are these facilities protected from motor vehicles and well connected – or isolated, dark and disjointed? Are they wide enough to cycle with a cargo bike or trailer – or blocked by barriers? And do route plans reflect the zig-zagging short trips that women still tend to make more often, or are they just linear commuting routes into town centres?

It's not just about cycle paths. We need roads to feel safer, too. Reducing speeds and restricting residential rat-running makes cycling more appealing for everyone, but again, has particular benefits for women. We also need to make sure that councils have the funding – and the confidence – to make changes, knowing that residents will support them.

Since the days of the first pioneering female cyclists of the 19th century, CTC (and later Cycling UK) members have been at the forefront of championing equal access to cycling. Let's continue that legacy by striving for the day when women in the UK are just as likely to cycle as men. Because if we make cycling safer for women, it will feel safer for everyone.



Scotland & Wales

CYCLING BUDGETS IN JEOPARDY

The draft budgets for Scotland and Wales were announced in December. The Scottish government plans to slash active travel funding by £31m, while the Welsh government's budget doesn't mention funding for cycling at all. But there's still time to act before the budgets are voted on in late February. If you live in Wales or Scotland, write to your MS or MSP using Cycling UK's online tool and ask them to save the cycling budget. cyclinguk.org/budget-action

Politics

WELCOME TO NEW TRANSPORT SECRETARY

Cycling UK warmly welcomes the appointment of Heidi Alexander MP as Secretary of State for Transport. As someone who cycles, and as a former Deputy Mayor for Transport in London, she understands the significant benefits of active travel. Cycling UK looks forward to continuing our longstanding relationship and urges the Secretary of State to put cycling at the heart of the new Integrated Transport Strategy.