



E-bikes permitted

Government right hand, meet government left hand. There's a tax incentive to buy an e-bike for commuting thanks to the government's Cycle to Work scheme. But you can't use it to cycle to many government buildings because you're not allowed to park electric bikes there!

The problem isn't exclusive to e-cycling civil servants, writes *Duncan Dollimore*. Cycling UK started to receive the odd email last summer, which became a trickle and then a tide: people contacting us to say that their employer wouldn't allow them to park or store their e-bike at work. In almost every case, the employer was merely the bearer of bad news; these were essentially insurance-driven decisions.

Wrong smoke, wrong fire

Most of you will have seen something in the news over the last two years about e-bike fires. I say e-bike fires because that's how

they've often been reported, even though e-bikes purchased from reputable brands and retailers are extremely safe products.

However, there are unsafe batteries, chargers and conversion kits sold online. And there are people using illegal machines that should be described as electric motorbikes or mopeds as they don't comply with the maximum power and speed limiter rules for e-bikes (250 Watts, with the power assist cutting off at 15.5mph). These do present a fire risk, but the insurance sector has largely heard the headline 'e-bike fire risk' message and has increasingly reacted by excluding e-bike storage from buildings insurance policies, essentially forcing the owner of the premises to ban e-bikes from its cycle parking facilities.

To counteract some of the misinformation around e-bike safety issues and promote the safe use of e-bikes,

Cycling UK worked with the Bicycle Association (BA) and the Association of Cycle Traders (ACT) to establish the Electric Bike Alliance and launch the E-Bike Positive campaign. BA is the national trade association for the UK cycle industry, while ACT is one of the UK's largest cycle trade membership organisations, committed to supporting and strengthening specialist cycle retailers.

Dodgy electronics & delivery riders

Collectively we've had some success in shifting the media narrative to focus on the products, market places and practices that create a risk, rather than e-bikes generically, and in highlighting the incredible potential and benefits of e-bikes. Sadly, increasing e-bike use and maximising those benefits will be tough if people can't park their e-bikes securely at many buildings.