Cycle training

THIS BRIEFING COVERS

National Standard for cycle training/Bikeability; national targets; National Curriculum; cycle training and local authorities; schools & workplaces; cycle training, road safety & drivers; quality assurance.

HEADLINE MESSAGES

- Cycle training is a very effective way to encourage more people to cycle. It boosts riding skills and confidence, particularly in imperfect cycling conditions, and also grounds trainees in the rules of the road.
- Widely available cycle training benefits not just young children, but also teenagers as they become more independent and start using busier roads. It can also encourage adults of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to discover cycling for the first time, or help them overcome any fears they have if they decide they'd like to rediscover it later in life.
- By improving trainees' road skills, cycle training could also affect how quickly teenagers and others learn to drive and enhance their ability to manage the risks both to themselves and to others with whom they share the roads.
- Cycle training could also play a role in tackling offending cycling, in the same way that driver training is used as a remedial response for acts of unlawful driving.

KEY FACTS

- In a 2010 survey, 93% of parents whose children had been 'Bikeability' trained said that it had a positive impact on their child's on-road cycling safety; the survey also found that 93% of children felt more confident about cycling in general afterwards.
- Children who have received Bikeability Level 2 training are more confident and significantly better able to perceive a hazard on the road and respond appropriately than untrained pupils of the same age.
- A Cambridge survey found that 13% more trained than untrained pupils reported 'normal frequent cycling' to school; and that 37% of untrained pupils cycled on pavements, cycle paths or lanes separated from traffic, but only 10% of trained pupils did the same.
- The benefits of providing cycle training for all ages outweigh the costs by at least 7.4 to 1.
- In 2007-08, English local authorities between them claimed about £1 million from the Government to fund 27,000 Bikeability training places; in 2015-16, they claimed almost £10 million to deliver 259,289 places.

Cycling UK VIEW

- Cycle training in the UK should comply with the National Standard. This represents best practice because it introduces trainees to real-life, on-road conditions, helping to equip adults and children with the skills they need to ride confidently in today's traffic.
- National government should establish and fund a national target to give every child the opportunity to take part in 'Bikeability'[1]. Children should be offered training at least to Level 2 free of charge before they leave school/college. The best way to guarantee this is to include Bikeability in the curriculum for all schools.
- Local authorities should support and encourage all schools to organise age-appropriate Bikeability training. They should also offer inclusive programmes to help people with disabilities reach National Standard outcomes, Bikeability courses for adults and special groups, and joint parent/child training classes.
- Providing cycle training is one of the most important ways in which schools and workplaces can directly encourage people to cycle and help realise the many benefits of increased local cycle use.
- The Government should require local authorities and schools to collect data directly from pupils on the impact of Bikeability training, and provide the tools to do this.
- Integrating cycle awareness and cycle training itself into driver instruction and testing would promote better understanding between cyclists and other road users and contribute to road safety objectives. It should also become a compulsory element of the professional training/qualifying process for the drivers of large vehicles (lorries, buses, coaches etc.).
- Disqualified and offending drivers should be offered a course of cycle training to improve their driving behaviour and encourage them to use a cycle for their transport needs during and after their period of disqualification. The police and courts should also have the power to require drivers who have been convicted of offences involving cyclists to participate in such a course.
- The Government should commission and fund comprehensive, long-term research into how quickly Bikeability trainees subsequently learn to drive and how safe they prove to be once qualified. Motor insurers should also consider offering discounts to those who have completed Level 3 Bikeability.
- National government should continue to maintain/support: the National Standard; the training of National Standard Instructors (NSIs); regular reviews; quality assurance processes and registration systems; and an accessible national database of qualified NSIs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. National Standard for cycle training/Bikeability

Cycling UK view: Cycle training in the UK should comply with the National Standard. This represents best practice because it introduces trainees to real-life, on-road conditions, helping to equip adults and children with the skills they need to ride confidently in today's traffic.

a. Background

Launched in 2005[2], the National Standard for cycle training was originally developed by over 20 organisations including Cycling UK. Since 2007, certain courses based on it have been promoted through the 'Bikeability' brand name. Its predecessor, 'Cycling Proficiency', mostly took place in the playground, but Bikeability – or 'cycling proficiency for the 21st century' – is designed to introduce trainees to real-life, on-road conditions, which is demonstrably the most effective approach.[3]

There are three Bikeability levels, all suitable for adults as well as children:

- Level 1 - basic cycle control skills (away from traffic and roads)
- Level 2 - cycling training on roads with moderate traffic for short trips (e.g. cycling to school/work)
- Level 3 - training for all types of road conditions and more complex situations.

In schools, Levels 1 and 2 are often delivered in England during Years 5 or 6 (= Years P6/P7 in Scotland), and Level 3, where it is available, at secondary school.

In 2015, the DfT announced the start of a 'Bikeability Plus' pilot to enhance the existing Bikeability training programme with additional cycling activities and extra training based on the core course.

In England, the Standard is maintained by the Department for Transport (DfT). Bikeability in London is managed by Transport for London (TfL), in Scotland by Cycling Scotland and in Wales, the training is available through Road Safety Wales.

- England: www.gov.uk/the-national-standard-for-cycle-training; http://bikeability.dft.gov.uk/
- London: https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/cycling/cycling-in-london/cycle-skills
- Scotland: www.cyclingscotland.org/our-projects/bikeability-scotland-2
- Wales: http://www.roadsafetywales.co.uk/training/
- Northern Ireland: https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/cycling-proficiency-scheme (Cycling Proficiency Scheme).

Only qualified National Standard Instructors (NSIs) with an NSI registration number are permitted to deliver Bikeability training in England and, in turn, NSIs can only obtain their qualifications through recognised instructor training organisations (ITOs). All NSIs have to be registered with an ITO and they are listed on an official, national database.

- For more on the National Standard (revised in November 2012) see: www.gov.uk/the-national-standard-for-cycle-training
- For more on Bikeability see: http://bikeability.dft.gov.uk/

b. Bikeability evidence: experience, attitudes and impact

Even before the advent of the National Standard, research found that cycle training has a positive impact. In 1996, a TRL report concluded that child cycle training improved cycling skills and knowledge, and the effects lasted for at least two years.[4] In 2003, feedback from adults and children trained independently of school by CTUK, one of the UK's biggest training providers, showed that the majority cycled with greater confidence, further and more often, and were happier about cycling all year round.

Subsequent research into Bikeability for children shows a similar range of benefits: it improves cycling skills and confidence, encourages more cycling and is popular with them and their parents:

Nationally,

- A 2010 report prepared by Ipsos MORI for Cycling England/DfT[5] about the perceptions and experiences of Bikeability training, found that:
  - Parents' concerns about their children cycling on the road focus mainly on the dangers posed by motor traffic (e.g. speeding, volume etc.);
  - While many of the parents interviewed felt confident about teaching their children to ride on the roads, 95% believed that formal cycle training was important;
  - The vast majority felt that Bikeability had a positive impact on their child's on-road cycling safety (93%) and they were more confident about them cycling on local roads (87%);
  - 93% of Bikeability trained children said they felt more confident about cycling generally; and 86% more confident about riding on the road;
  - About 50% of the children trained cycled more often;
  - Of parents whose child had not been trained, 86% said that they would be likely to give their children permission to participate, and 81% believed that Bikeability would improve their child's road awareness.
- Research published in 2015 suggests that children who have received Bikeability Level 2 training are more confident and significantly better able to perceive a hazard on the road and respond appropriately than untrained pupils of the same age. The researchers also found that this effect is sustained over a period of at least two months afterwards, but that the ability declines over time if children don't practise the skills they've learnt.[6]
- A study from 2012 that looked at the level of cycling to school since Bikeability was introduced in England during 2006/07 concluded that "there are some encouraging indications that Bikeability is positively associated with higher levels of cycling to school." [7] It suggested that:
  - Bikeability training for feeder primaries leads to higher cycling levels at secondary schools;
  - The longer a local authority has delivered training, the higher the proportion of children who cycle to secondary school;
  - Authorities who draw down more Bikeability funding from central government see larger increases in cycling to secondary schools than those who draw down smaller sums.
- A 2014 report published by TABS (The Association of Bikeability Schemes)[8] based on a survey of 1,345 trained and untrained Year 5 and 6 pupils in 25 primary schools in seven local authorities in England, suggests that trained children:
  - are more likely to cycle to school than untrained children;
  - are more likely to cycle on roads and less likely to cycle on pavements;
  - feel more confident than untrained children cycling on the road, particularly in areas where children generally cycle less, and especially for girls;
  - trained children enjoy cycling more, especially trained girls (although most children enjoy cycling very much).
- During the pilot of Bikeability Plus, the number of children who cycled to school at least once a week more than doubled.[9]

- An evaluation of Bikeability Scotland training found that it had a positive effect for the majority (approx. 75%) of children participating. Most parents said the training had improved their child's confidence when cycling.[10]
- On the other hand, a study of 3,000+ 10–11-year-olds, whose schools offered Bikeability in 2011–2012, found no evidence of its short-term effects on cycling frequency or independent cycling, but highlighted the need for future investigations on its longer-term effects. TABS, however, questioned the study's findings, pointing to much of the other research mentioned above and below.[11]

Locally,

- An evaluation of Level 2 cycle training for children in Merseyside (2009),[12] where Bikeability had been delivered since 2006, found that it:
  - Led to increased levels of cycling – 37% more utility trips and 63% more leisure trips;
  - Had a strong, positive impact on the perceived safety and enjoyment of trainees, with 97% of parents noticing an improvement in their child's safety when cycling;
  - Had a strong impact on their immediate family's attitudes towards cycling and how much they rode, with parents reporting that they were more willing to allow their child to cycle.
- In December 2010, Merseyside Transport Partnership (MTP) reported a 14% rise in cycling levels over the preceding four years.[13] The number of trips made by bike rose for the second year in a row too, by 10% between April 2009 and March 2010. MTP cited their investment in cycle training as significant contributory factor.
- A 2013 survey[14] commissioned by Cambridge County Council found that, in four urban schools in Cambridge (rounded figures):
  - 10% more Bikeability-trained than untrained pupils reported frequent cycling overall (i.e. at least once a week);
  - 13% more trained than untrained pupils reported 'normal frequent cycling' to school;
  - 20% more trained girls than untrained girls normally cycled frequently to school;
  - 17% more trained than untrained pupils normally cycled to the pool or sports centre;
  - 54% of trained pupils mainly cycled on the roads with traffic, compared to 27% of untrained pupils; 10% of trained pupils cycled on pavements, cycle paths or lanes separated from traffic, compared to 37% of untrained pupils.

c. Value for money

Having looked at four interventions to increase cycle use, a report on the economic benefits of cycling concluded that cycle training for all ages represented the best value for money. Even on the basis of very conservative estimates, they calculated that the benefits outweighed the costs by 7.4 to 1. [15]

d. Cycle training and health advice

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) advocates active travel as a healthy physical activity and it recognises the value of cycle training. Its guidance to local authorities on how to promote walking and cycling, includes the following advice: [16]

- *"Ensure training is available for those who are interested in cycling, either as a form of transport or as a recreational activity."*
- *"Ensure all children can take part in 'Bikeability' training […]. Ensure cycle training is age-appropriate and timed to allow cycling to school to become a habit."*

e. Inclusive cycle training

People with disabilities/limited mobility can also achieve National Standard outcomes via specialist training courses (see 3c below).

f. Equality

A study that looked at which schools offer cycle training and who takes part found that around half of children in England receive Bikeability cycle training in school, but that schools with a more deprived student body offered it slightly less often; and that participation is higher in children who are White, affluent or sporty.

As a result, the authors concluded that: *"Offering high-quality cycle training free of charge in English schools reduced but did not eliminate inequalities in cycle training participation. Further promoting the scheme to parents and schools, particularly in deprived areas, would be expected to increase uptake and help reduce current inequalities in participation."*[17]

g. Cycle training and cyclists' behaviour

Bikeability is designed to help trainees assess and manage risks, and the requirements of the law are covered at Level 2. Cycling UK believes that cyclists should behave responsibly and within the law, and suggests that those who have committed a cycling offence should be offered a course of cycle training as an alternative to prosecution or a fixed penalty notice (FPN). However, we also believe that a system of compulsory licensing and cycle training is unworkable and unjustifiable.

- See our briefing *Cyclists' Behaviour & the Law* for more:
www.cyclinguk.org/campaigning/views-and-briefings/cyclists-behaviour-and-law

h. Recreational cycle training

While Bikeability aims to teach on-road riding skills mainly for transport (e.g. cycling to school or work), there are other types of structured training to help people build on their recreational cycling techniques – e.g. GO MTB, a five-level series of progressive achievement awards designed to help young people get more from mountain biking, provides extended learning opportunities, proves abilities and can help lead to a career through the Leader Awards or Skill Instructor schemes. www.gomtb.org.uk

Cycling UK also provides MTB Leader courses. www.cyclinguk.org/courses-training

i. Other road safety measures

Further research needs to be done on the impact of cycle training on cyclists' safety (see 5c below) and it should not be seen as a panacea in this respect in any case. Improvements to the road environment and traffic regulation are also needed, including: lower speeds, stronger traffic law and enforcement, high quality cycle-friendly design and road layout, and addressing bad driving and the threats posed by heavy goods vehicles.

Indeed, some adult cycle trainees questioned by researchers pointed out that training does have its limitations, i.e. that it is not sufficient on its own to overcome fear of traffic if roads and infrastructure remain poor for cycling and dangerous driving is seen to be tolerated.[18]

- For more, see Cycling UK's briefing: *Cyclists and Road Safety: Overview:*
www.cyclinguk.org/campaigning/views-and-briefings/road-safety-and-cycling-overview

2. National targets and the school curriculum

Cycling UK view: National government should establish and fund a national target to give every child the opportunity to take part in 'Bikeability'. Children should be offered training at least to Level 2 free of charge before they leave school/college. The best way to guarantee this is to include Bikeability in the curriculum for all schools.

a. Targets and funding

Given the health, economic and environmental benefits of cycling,[19] national governments should commit to providing on-going funding for National Standard training and its support structures (see section 6). This should be backed up by a national target to give every child the opportunity to take part in Bikeability training at least to Level 2 before they leave school.

Over the past few years, both national and local government have recognised the value of Bikeability and invested in it on an increasing scale:

- Since the introduction of Bikeability in England, the DfT has invited local authorities outside London to bid for central funding to train children to cycle, at a cost of up to £40 per place. The total funding claimed has increased from £1 million (approx.) in 2007/08 (which paid for the delivery of around 27,000 training places) to almost £10 million in 2015/16 (which paid for 259,289 places). (Note: these figures are for funding claimed by local authorities only).
- The number of English local authorities bidding for the above grants has also increased considerably, from 33 in 2007/8 to 107 in 2015/16.[20]
- Bikeability Scotland receives funding from Transport Scotland, the Scottish Government's transport agency, which it distributes as grants to local authorities or to certain other bodies (e.g. school partnerships). The Government is committed to supporting all three levels of Bikeability. In 2014/15: of the 29 local authorities participating in the scheme, over 1,500 primary schools were offered Level 1 training out of a possible 2,044; over 32,000 pupils participated across all levels; and over 40% of primary schools in participating authorities offered Level 2.[21]
- All local authorities in Wales offer cycle training, supported by the Welsh Assembly.
- In London, 47,294 children received Bikeability training in 2014/15, and the ambition is to offer it to every school pupil every year in future.[22]

b. National Curriculum

Although it is now more widespread, National Standard cycle training is still subject to a 'postcode lottery' because neither schools nor local authorities are currently obliged to provide it – some are enthusiastic, but others less so.

The ability to swim is considered to be a crucial life skill and the same could easily be said of being able to cycle on the roads confidently and safely for transport purposes. Like swimming, regular cycling also contributes to fitness and is recommended by health professionals (see 1d above). Unlike swimming and other sports, however, cycling can also help tackle congestion, local air pollution and climate change, as well as teaching young people road-craft skills. Despite this, swimming has a place on the National Curriculum, while cycling currently does not.

When the Department of Education (England) consulted on changes to the National Curriculum in 2013, Cycling UK and other organisations (including TABS, the AA and the IAM) made a joint request for the inclusion of Bikeability. See also 'Schools', 4a below.

3. Cycle training and local authorities

Cycling UK view: Local authorities should support and encourage all schools to organise age-appropriate Bikeability training. They should also offer inclusive programmes to help people with disabilities to reach National Standard outcomes, Bikeability courses for adults and special groups, and joint parent/child training classes.

a. Schoolchildren

As mentioned in section 2, central funding is available to local authorities to provide Bikeability training for schoolchildren. Cycling UK believes they should take full advantage of this and allocate sufficient resources to engage all schools in their area, promote the scheme and help organise training sessions with qualified instructors. From 2012/13, the DfT expanded the grant rules to include Level 3 and a broader range of school age children (England). See also 4a below.

b. Adults

National Standard instruction is also suitable for adults and many NSIs offer this either through local authorities, or privately. It can teach cycling from scratch, or refresh the skills and boost the confidence of people who have not ridden for some time. Research into adult cycle training carried out in Greater Manchester found that the higher the level of training, the more an individual was likely to cycle, feel confident about riding in traffic, and use their bike for utility purposes.[23] (See also 'Case Studies' below).

c. Special/inclusive training

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance on walking and cycling advises local authorities to ensure that cycle training *"includes an understanding of the needs of people with impairments."*[24] Indeed, local authorities can source specialist training to help people with specific needs, disabilities or limited mobility achieve National Standard outcomes and benefit from cycling.

If trainees need additional support, (e.g. the use of adapted cycles), there are specialist centres to help, including the 40 Inclusive Cycling Centres across England that Cycling UK supports.
www.cyclinguk.org/community-outreach/inclusive-cycling-network

For best practice on inclusive training, see *Delivering Inclusive Cycle Training: A Good Practice Guide for Disability Cycle Training.* (DfT, 2013):
https://professionals.bikeability.org.uk/documents/

Photo: Cycle trainers learn about adapted cycles

d. Adding value

Local authorities can add value to their Bikeability programmes by: arranging for classes that allow parents and children to train together; providing free 'Dr Bike' cycle safety checks; and cycle maintenance courses.

They can also provide training that enhances its attraction for specific groups of people. NICE, for example, advises local authorities to *"Ensure all training is sensitive to cultural issues, for instance, by providing women-only groups with female trainers, where appropriate."* [25]

4. Schools, colleges and workplaces

Cycling UK view:

- Providing cycle training is one of the most important ways in which schools and workplaces can directly encourage people to cycle and help realise the many benefits of increased local cycle use.
- The Government should require local authorities and schools to collect data directly from pupils on the impact of Bikeability training (e.g. on cycling levels), and provide the tools to do this.

a. Schools

As mentioned in 2a above, central government and/or its agencies provide the funds for local authorities to supply Bikeability training at school. Most of the training takes place during the day, although after-hours cycle training activities may also be an attractive option (e.g. for child + parent courses; at bike clubs etc.).

High quality cycle training helps schools (i.e. headteachers/governors etc.) feel more confident about promoting cycling and it is reassuring for parents (see 1b above). It can also form a valuable learning opportunity by teaching, for example, road safety awareness, risk management, navigation, local geography, mechanics and the skills needed for independent mobility.

School Games Organiser Host Schools (England): working in partnership with their local authority, these schools can draw down Bikeability funding directly to manage and deliver their own training scheme to their pupils. There are organisations who can help, e.g. The Youth Sports Trust. This is a particularly good way of building up an enthusiastic, committed cycling culture within a school.

Cycling UK believes that Bikeability should be included in the school curriculum (see 2b above).

Cycle training is just one of the measures that schools can introduce to encourage healthy, active travel. For more, see Cycling UK's briefing *Cycle-friendly Schools*
www.cyclinguk.org/campaigning/views-and-briefings/cycle-friendly-schools-and-colleges-ctc-views

b. Collecting Bikeability evidence in school

While broad national level data does not indicate a change in the level of pupils cycling to school since the introduction of Bikeability (it remains at about 2%), more 'granular' evidence gathered a local level does suggest that it is making a difference.

The figures from Cambridge, for instance, (quoted in 1b above) demonstrate the value of local data, collected in a robust, cost-effective and efficient way. Cycling UK therefore believes that national government should introduce a consistent system to enable all local authorities and schools to collect and return data on the impact of Bikeability on schoolchildren and their level of cycling.

Collecting local Bikeability data - good practice:

In 2013, Cambridgeshire County Council commissioned 'proof of concept' research to establish whether Bikeability-trained children cycled more than untrained children in the area.

For this, the researchers developed an online 'travel' (rather than 'Bikeability') survey, using simple multiple-choice options based on National Travel Survey questions. Years 5 and 6 were invited to complete it at four schools in Cambridge, and it took each child only about five minutes during ICT class time, using school laptops. The response rate was high (224 responses from 320 children).

The process was low-cost, quick and efficient, and provided good, primary evidence (see 1b above).

More at:
www.bikehub.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Bikeability-cycling-outcomes-pupil-survey-FINAL.pdf

c. Colleges/Universities

A significant number of higher education students rely on their bikes for utility transport, and not only in the university towns of Oxford and Cambridge where levels of cycling are already relatively high. Offering cycle tuition to 'freshers' is not only a good way to equip them to ride safely and confidently whilst at college, but may also encourage cycling as a healthy, lifetime habit. Equally, it could help reduce the volume of motor traffic that big educational institutions tend to generate. (See 'Case Studies' below).

d. Workplaces

Boosting levels of both cycle commuting and cycling for business purposes has many advantages for employers, e.g. a fitter workforce less likely to take days off, lower costs per vehicle parking space, tackling peak time congestion etc. Offering cycle training to employees is a useful step to take, although participating in it should not be a prerequisite for any kind of work-related cycling either for commuting or for business purposes. Forcing it on staff puts up a barrier, and runs the risk of suppressing any budding interest in cycling.

Many NSIs offer specifically tailored, private cycle training for workplaces of all sizes.

- For more on cycle training and other measures that employers can take to increase cycling levels, see Cycling UK's briefing *Cycle-friendly Employers*:
www.cyclinguk.org/campaigning/views-and-briefings/cycle-friendly-employers-ctc-views

5. Cycle training and road safety

Cycling UK view:

- Integrating cycle awareness and cycle training itself into driver instruction and testing would promote better understanding between cyclists and other road users and contribute to road safety objectives. It should also become a compulsory element of the professional training/qualifying process for the drivers of large vehicles (lorries, buses, coaches etc.).
- Disqualified drivers should be offered a course of cycle training to improve their driving behaviour and encourage them to cycle for their transport needs during and after their disqualification period. The police and courts should also have the power to require drivers who have been convicted of offences involving cyclists to participate in such a course.
- The Government should commission and fund comprehensive, long-term research not only into the impact that Bikeability has on cyclists' safety, but also on how quickly trainees subsequently learn to drive and how safe they prove to be once qualified. Motor insurers should also consider offering discounts to those who have completed Level 3 Bikeability.

a. Driver training and testing

Naturally, a motorist who has personal cycling experience is more likely to appreciate the needs of cyclists than someone who rarely cycles, if ever. The results of a survey of drivers published by TRL in 2002 suggested that, although motorists who cycle can be just as negative about cyclists than non-cycling drivers, they are better able to identify with the issues they typically face (being 'cut-up' by a motor vehicle, for example). [26]

National Standards training teaches people the techniques they need to cycle safely and if a driver has benefited from this insight, they will be more likely to appreciate what influences cyclists' behaviour and interact with them considerately (for example, they'll understand that they are following recommended advice when they ride well away from the kerb or take an assertive position whilst negotiating a pinch-point to stop drivers overtaking them too closely).

Another aspect of cycle training is that it teaches how important it is to act responsibly and safely on the roads. These skills are vital for all road users, including drivers.

Widespread, formal cycle training is therefore a good way of promoting understanding and respect between cyclists and motorists and, in doing so, helps to create safer conditions on the road for everyone.

Teenagers: Bikeability training is also a useful pre-qualification for teenagers to take when they are approaching driving age. Level 3 in particular deals with complex road junctions and road positioning, and provides experience on how all road users behave and the safest way of interacting. Ideally, Level 3 instruction should include a re-cap of earlier levels. This knowledge may well help if they learn to drive (see 6c below) and, indeed, when it comes to the test itself.

Unfortunately, Level 3 is not yet available in schools/colleges on a sufficient scale – less than 4% of the Bikeability training places delivered by local authorities in England were at Level 3 in 2015/16.[27] Some local authorities do offer heavily subsidised one-to-one tuition at this level for adults, however.

The Test: Cycling UK believes that driving test candidates should be strongly encouraged to undertake cycle training, unless they have already completed Bikeability Level 3 cycle training.

Professional drivers: In Cycling UK's view, cycle awareness training should be a requirement for anyone who drives professionally and a mandatory qualification for fleet drivers (e.g. of haulage, bus, coach or taxi firms). This should be refreshed regularly. Ideally, practical cycle training to Bikeability Level 3 should be compulsory too. This is particularly important for the drivers of lorries, which present a disproportionate risk to cyclists. Also, when large development projects are proposed, early plans should be made to supply cycle awareness training to the drivers of all construction vehicles, as happened with the Crossrail project.[20]

- For more, on driver training and testing, see:
www.cyclinguk.org/campaigning/views-and-briefings/driver-training-testing-licensing

b. Offending drivers/Disqualification

Offending and/or disqualified drivers are often sent on remedial driving courses (e.g. focusing on speeding), but they would also benefit from formal cycle training. This could help improve their driving behaviour and, for those who have lost their licence, encourage them to take up cycling as an alternative form of transport. The courts should be able to require drivers convicted of offences involving cyclists to undertake such a course.

c. Research

While a number of studies have been carried out on the impact that cycle training has on cycling skills, confidence and cycling frequency (see 1b above), little research has been done into the impacts of cycle training on driving competence and behaviour.

A comprehensive investigation into this would help identify any contribution that cycle training makes to road safety in general and its potential role in driver training programmes in particular. For example, it would be useful to know whether Bikeability-trained teenagers learn to drive more quickly (i.e. because they have gained useful road-craft skills as cyclists); and whether people who have had cycle training become better drivers.

An added incentive for people to qualify at the highest level of Bikeability training (Level 3) would be for insurance companies to offer them discounts on their motoring policies. Naturally, this is more likely to happen if the type of research we recommend confirms that cycle training improves driving skills.

Photo: Avanti

d. Cycle helmets

Some local authorities/schools insist that trainees wear helmets whilst under instruction. Cycling UK does not believe that this should be a requirement for a variety of reasons, e.g. it gives an exaggerated impression both of the risks of cycling and the effectiveness of helmets in mitigating those risks, thus undermining the promotion of cycling as a healthy, normal and enjoyable activity. Furthermore, barring individuals from an activity simply because they do not own, wish to borrow or buy a relatively costly item of personal safety equipment effectively discriminates against them.

- For more on Cycling UK's view on cycle helmets, see www.cyclinguk.org/campaigning/views-and-briefings/cycle-helmets

6. Quality assurance

Cycling UK view: National government should continue to maintain/support: the National Standard; the training of National Standard Instructors (NSIs); regular reviews; quality assurance processes and registration systems; and an accessible, national database of qualified NSIs.

To make sure that Bikeability remains effective, it is important to maintain high and consistent standards wherever it is offered, and whoever offers it.

The DfT (England) already plays a vital role in overseeing the quality and consistency of its delivery, i.e. via the professional registration of both NSIs and the organisations authorised to train them; maintaining the database of qualified NSIs; and reviewing the course framework and training materials. The last review, which invited input from scheme providers and instructors, took place in 2012. See: www.gov.uk/the-national-standard-for-cycle-training

It is, of course, important to ensure that all qualified instructors regularly undergo continuous professional development (CPD) to refresh, improve and broaden their skills. Although the DfT recommends CPD for all NSIs at least annually, along with routine mentoring from more experienced instructors, the system if not formalised. In the absence of a robust CPD process, standards of competence are inevitably at risk of slipping.

CASE STUDIES

Since the introduction of the National Standard and Bikeability, many people of all ages and abilities have enjoyed and benefitted from cycle training:

- Cycle Chiltern's summer Bikeability sessions in Tring and Amersham resulted in 37 children qualifying at Level 1 or 2. A led ride at the end of the two weeks' course meant parents could see for themselves what their children had learnt. Feedback was very positive. One parent said that as a result of the course, he couldn't get his child off their bike!
  www.cyclinguk.org/case-study/cycle-chilterns-summer-bikeability-sessions-give-children-more-confidence

- To help make sure that they had the skills and confidence to ride safely in Oxford during their time there, new students at Oxford University were invited to sign up for cycle training at their 'Freshers' Fair'. As a result, several students enjoyed free Level 1 & 2 training over the course of a day. One trainee said: *"You are really showing me something that will change my life!"* www.cyclinguk.org/case-study/how-to-change-someones-life-cycle-training-oxford-undergraduates

- 'Up 'n' Cycling!' in Swindon, run by Cycling UK's Development Officer there, helped a number of older people to start or return to cycling through Level 1 and 2 Bikeability courses. One participant said: *"To learn to ride a bike for the first time in a few hours at the age of 63 was a wonderful achievement for me."* www.cyclinguk.org/case-studies (1/10/2011)

FURTHER READING/WEBSITES

- http://bikeability.dft.gov.uk/ - Bikeability
- www.gov.uk/the-national-standard-for-cycle-training - The National Standard
- www.bikeabilityscotland.org/ - Bikeability Scotland
- www.cyclingscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/2013-Parents-Guide-Level-1-3.pdf - Cycling Scotland's guide to Bikeability for parents
- www.cyclinguk.org/training - Cycling UK's training pages, with course details
- www.tabs-uk.org.uk/ - The Association of Bikeability Schemes (TABS)
- *Cyclecraft* – 'the complete guide to safe and enjoyable cycling for adults and children' by John Franklin. First published in 1988, revised 2014. www.cyclecraft.co.uk/
- *Delivering Inclusive Cycle Training: A Good Practice Guide for Disability Cycle Training*. DfT. 2011. https://professionals.bikeability.org.uk/documents/

[1] 'Bikeability' is the brand name for certain cycle training courses that conform to the National Standard. Some instructors offer National Standard training that is not publicised as 'Bikeability'.
[2] While the *National Standard* was officially launched in 2005, Cycling UK published *Adult Cycle Training* for national use in 2003. Its development was funded by the Departments for Transport and of Health and it formed the basis of the National Standard.
[3] E.g. Savill, T et al.*The Effectiveness of Child Training Schemes.* TRL.1996. www.trl.co.uk
[4] *Ibid*
[5] Ipsos MORI for DfT/Cycling England. *Research to explore perceptions and experiences of Bikeability training amongst parents and children.* Dec 2010. The survey was based on questionnaires returned by 470 parents and 470 children. http://bikeability.org.uk/publications/
[6] Hodgson, C & Worth, J. *Research into the impact of Bikeability training on children's ability to perceive and appropriately respond to hazards when cycling on the road.* Published by NFER. Feb 2015. http://bikeability.org.uk/publications/
[7] Steer Davis Gleave for DfT. *A review of school census and Bikeability delivery data.* March 2012. http://bikeability.org.uk/publications/
[8] TABS. *2014 Bikeability School Travel Survey Report*. Dec 2014. http://www.tabs-uk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2014-Bikeability-School-Travel-Survey-Report-England-FINAL.December17.2014.pdf
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[10] Scottish Government. *Tackling the school run research study.* Oct 2016. www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00513039.pdf
[11] Goodman A et al. *Impact of offering cycle training in schools upon cycling behaviour: a national experimental study*. Published in Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act. March 2016. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4784314/ / TABS comments (April 2016): www.tabs-uk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/TABS-response-to-Anna-Goodman-paper-April-2016.pdf
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[13] Reported in BikeBiz 1/12/2010. *Cycling up 14 per cent in Merseyside*. www.bikebiz.com/news/read/cycling-up-14-per-cent-in-merseyside
[14] Frearson, M. *Bikeability cycling outcomes pupil survey proof of concept.* (Outspoken Cycle Training; Cambridgeshire County Council; The Association of Bikeability Schemes). May 2013. 224 pupils responded to the survey. http://www.bikehub.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Bikeability-cycling-outcomes-pupil-survey-FINAL.pdf
[15] SQW for Cycling England. *Valuing the Benefits of Cycling*. May 2007. www.apho.org.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=118319
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[18] Sherriff, Graeme. *Communicating Cycle Training: Perceptions and Experiences of Adult Cycle Training*. University of Salford, Manchester. Aug 2014. www.salford.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/468994/Communicating-Cycle-Training-2014August-RGB.pdf.
[19] See Cycling UK's briefings on: *Cycling and Health*, *Cycling and Climate Change* and *Cycling and the Economy*. All at www.cyclinguk.org/campaignsbriefings
[20] DfT. *Bikeability Delivery Statistics 2006-16: Local Authorities*. Nov 2016. https://bikeability.dft.gov.uk/publications/
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TfL. *Delivery Plan for Schools and Young People* 2014/15 update. April 2015 http://content.tfl.gov.uk/delivery-plan-schools-young-people-010415-singles.pdf
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[27] DfT. *Bikeability Delivery Statistics 2006-16: Local Authorities*. Nov 2016. https://bikeability.dft.gov.uk/publications/