

Research Briefing

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Active Travel FAQs



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Summary

Active travel is a wide-ranging policy area and covers matters such as cycling, walking, and issues around micromobility (e.g., using electric bikes, e-scooters and mobility scooters). Policy making in these areas is devolved in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but there is a reservation to Westminster when it comes to type approval for certain vehicles e.g., what sorts of vehicles can be used on roads and traffic offences. This paper answers FAQs on the following topics:

Active travel

Who is responsible for policy on active travel; what the government is doing to encourage it, including funding; its benefits; its safety; and the role of local authorities.

Cycling: general

Cycling cities and mini-Hollands; cycle to work scheme; bicycles on trains; bikeability.

Cycling: safety and offences

Liability for accidents; wearing helmets; local authority powers; registration, insurance and road tax; riding on pavements; tackling bad cycling; rules on lights and bells.

Walking

Personal safety; shared spaces; council liability for slips and falls on the pavement.

E-mobility

Rules for using e-bikes, e-scooters, and mobility scooters on the road; when and where e-scooter trials are happening; e-scooter safety.

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

What are low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs); what are 15-minute cities; public perception of LTNs; effectiveness of LTNs.

1 Active Travel

1.1 Who is responsible for policy on active travel?

This is a wide-ranging policy area and covers matters such as cycling, walking, and issues around micromobility (e.g., using electric bikes, e-scooters and mobility scooters). Policy making in these areas is devolved in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but there is a reservation to Westminster when it comes to type approval for certain vehicles e.g., what sorts of vehicles can be used on roads and traffic offences.

England

It was announced in January 2022 that the Department for Transport (DfT) had created a new executive agency, Active Travel England (ATE) to manage walking, wheeling and cycling policy. ATE is responsible for managing the active travel budget and inspecting funded schemes on completion. ATE is also responsible for inspecting, and publishing reports on, highway authorities for their performance on active travel, as well as helping local authorities with following good practice in design, implementation, and public engagement.¹

At a local level, a great deal of policy making now rests in the hands of elected metro mayors (also known as combined authority mayors). There are currently nine of these in: West Midlands, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Liverpool City Region, South Yorkshire, West of England, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, North of Tyne, and Tees Valley. These mayors have varying levels of autonomy in deciding what policies to pursue.²

Local road networks are managed by around 300 local authorities – county, unitary and district councils – and regional transport bodies like Transport for London and Transport for West Midlands.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities also provides local authorities with general funding which can be used for local active travel, while ATE/DfT provide discreet pots of capital funding specifically for active travel.³

¹ Department for Transport Written Statement, [New executive agency Active Travel England launches](#), 24 January 2022

² Commons Library Briefing SN05000, [Directly elected mayors](#)

³ Department for Transport Transparency data, [Active travel fund: local transport authority allocations](#), 20 May 2022

The DfT works with the Ministry of Justice on road traffic offences, including maximum sentences.

Scotland

Schedule 5, Part II, Head E of the Scotland Act 1998, as amended, prescribes those areas reserved to the UK Parliament; everything else is devolved. The 1998 Act was substantially amended in 2012 and 2016. There are no specific reservations regarding local active travel – active travel is a devolved matter for the Scottish Government. However, as noted above, there are reservations in the form of road traffic offences and vehicle type approval.⁴

Wales

Schedule 7A, Part II, Head E of the Wales Act 2017 prescribes those areas reserved to the UK Parliament; everything else is devolved. There are no specific reservations regarding local active travel – active travel is a devolved matter for the Welsh Government. However, as noted above, there are reservations in the form of road traffic offences and vehicle type approval.⁵

Northern Ireland

Local active travel in Northern Ireland is completely devolved, governed by separate legislation, and managed in a different way. The NI Department for Infrastructure is responsible for policy and funding.⁶

1.2

What is the Government doing to encourage active travel?

England

Gear Change Strategy

The Government's current policy for England is set out in Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking for 2020-25, published in July 2020. This strategy was described by the Prime Minister as “most ambitious plans yet to boost cycling and walking”.⁷ Some of the key policies to deliver this ambition were:

⁴ [Scotland Act 1998](#), sch 5, pt 2, Head E

⁵ [Wales Act 2017](#), sch 7A, pt 2, Head E

⁶ Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure, [Active Travel](#), [online] (accessed 17 March 2023)

⁷ Prime Minister's Office Press release, [PM kickstarts £2bn cycling and walking revolution](#), 28 July 2020

- £2bn of ringfenced funding for walking and cycling overseen and administered by Active Travel England, to ensure projects meet new design standards, and be delivered on time.
- The creation of a ‘national e-Bike programme’ to enable the elderly, or those who travel far to take to bikes as part of journeys.
- A new approach on health piloted in selected places with poor health rates to encourage GPs to prescribe cycling, with patients able to access bikes through their local surgery.
- Improvements to the National Cycle Network.
- Making streets safer by consulting to strengthen the Highway Code to better protect pedestrians and cyclists; improving legal protections for vulnerable road users; raising safety standards on lorries; and working with the police and retailers to tackle bike theft.⁸

In July 2021 the Government published *Gear Change: one year on*. The report stated that since *Gear Change* was published, hundreds of school streets, at least 150 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, and more than 100 miles of new segregated cycle lanes had been delivered. In terms of funding for the 2020/21 period, the report stated the following had been provided:

- over £220 million to local authorities in two tranches of the Active Travel Fund.
- over £100 million to Transport for London to deliver the London Streetspace programme, supporting the creation of segregated cycle lanes and adult cycle training.
- £20 million of revenue funding to local authorities to allow them to deliver a wide range of cycling and walking programmes.
- Over £20 million to the Fix Your Bike voucher scheme and to pop-up “Dr Bike” cycle maintenance facilities.
- £13 million to support Bikeability programme to teach children to cycle.
- £2 million to Cycle UK for the Big Bike Revival campaign to help more people cycle, particularly from disadvantaged groups.
- £2 million to Living Streets for the “Walk to School” outreach campaign.⁹

No further update reports are expected for this strategy.

⁸ Department for Transport, [Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking](#), 27 July 2020

⁹ Department for Transport, [Gear Change: one year on](#), 30 July 2021

Cycling and Walking Investment Strategies

The Government published its first Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) in 2017. It set out the Government’s “ambition that cycling and walking are the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey.”¹⁰ The Government set out four objectives to be achieved by 2020:

- Increase cycling activity, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of cycle stages made;
- Increase walking activity, where walking activity is measured as the total number of walking stages per person;
- Reduce the rate of cyclists killed or seriously injured on England’s roads, measured as the number of fatalities and serious injuries per billion miles cycled; and
- Increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school.¹¹

In July 2022, the Government released the second CWIS. The revised strategy considers the aims and targets set out in the first CWIS and the vision set out in Gear Change. It sets out the objective and aims for the period April 2021 to March 2025 to:

- Increase the percentage of short journeys in towns and cities that are walked or cycled from 41% in 2018 to 2019 to 46% in 2025
- Increase walking activity, where walking activity is measured as the total number of walking stages per person per year, to 365 stages per person per year in 2025
- Double cycling, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of cycling stages made each year, from 0.8 billion stages in 2013 to 1.6 billion stages in 2025
- Increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 who usually walk to school from 49% in 2014 to 55% in 2025.¹²

Wales

The Welsh Active Travel Act was passed into legislation in 2013.¹³ The Act aims to promote walking and cycling as a mode of transport. The Act requires local authorities in Wales to produce maps of walking and cycling networks, and to deliver year on year active travel improvements along the mapped routes and their related facilities. It also includes provision for making people aware of

¹⁰ Department for Transport, [Cycling and walking investment strategy](#), 21 April 2017, p6

¹¹ Department for Transport, [Cycling and walking investment strategy](#), 21 April 2017

¹² Department for Transport, [Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), 6 July 2022

¹³ [Active Travel \(Wales\) Act 2013](#)

existing and future routes and for highway authorities to make enhancements to routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in all new road schemes.¹⁴

The Welsh Government published the Active Travel Plan for Wales in 2016, with the vision that “for people in Wales, we want walking and cycling to become the preferred ways of getting around over shorter distances”.¹⁵ The Plan sets out actions in the areas of leadership; legislation, standards and tools; infrastructure; promotion and behavioural change; skills and training; and monitoring and evaluation.¹⁶

Scotland

The Scottish Government published its Active Travel Framework in February 2020. The Framework sets out the key policy approaches improving the uptake of walking and cycling in Scotland. The Scottish Government’s vision for 2030 is built around five high level outcomes:

- Increase the number of people choosing walking, cycling and wheeling in Scotland
- High quality walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure is available to all
- Walking, cycling and wheeling is safer for all
- Delivery of walking, cycling and wheeling is promoted and supported by a broad range of partners
- Walking, cycling and wheeling is available to all¹⁷

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure has a number of sustainable transport policies, primarily focussed on cycling and walking.¹⁸ This includes its Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland, which was published in 2015. The strategy lays out a three-pillar approach to:

- Build a comprehensive network for the bicycle
- Support people who chose to travel by bicycle
- Promote the bicycle as a mode of transport for every day journeys¹⁹

¹⁴ Welsh Government, [Active Travel Act guidance](#), 16 July 2021

¹⁵ Welsh Government, [Active travel action plan](#), 1 February 2016, p6

¹⁶ Welsh Government, [Active travel action plan](#), 1 February 2016, Annex 1

¹⁷ Transport Scotland, [Active Travel Framework](#), 21 February 2020

¹⁸ NI Department for Infrastructure, [Active Travel](#), [online] (accessed on 27 March 2023)

¹⁹ NI Department for Infrastructure, [A Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland](#), August 2015

1.3

What funding is available for active travel?

England

In the second CWIS the Government projected that £3,559 million would be invested in cycling and walking from April 2021 to March 2025. This includes funding allocations previously announced, successful funding proposals from local bodies, and an assessment of the proportion of investment into active travel projects from wider government funds.

Table 1 Projected investment in walking and cycling 2021 to 2025

Active travel revenue and capital funds	£1,073 million
Wider DfT programmes	£1,328 million
Other central Government funding	£1,158 million
Total	£3,559 million

Source: Department for Transport, [Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), 6 July 2022

The Government has announced two additional allocations of funding for active travel since CISW2 bringing the total projected investment to £3.8 billion:

- In January 2023, the Government announced an allocation of £32.9 million in funding for local authorities to train engineers and planners to conduct high-quality engagement and consultation sessions with local communities.²⁰
- In February 2023, the Government announced a £200 million fund to improve walking and cycling routes. The Active Travel England fund is available to local authorities in England for projects to be designed in consultation with residences and businesses.²¹

In a written statement to Parliament on 9 March 2023, the Transport Secretary Mark Harper announced a further £100 million capital commitment to active travel over the next two years, as part of around £3 billion investment in active travel over this Parliament.²² Although, it was not

²⁰ Active Travel England, [£32.9 million to create national network of active travel experts](#), 2 January 2023.

²¹ Active Travel England and Department for Transport, [£200 million to improve walking and cycling routes and boost local economies](#).

²² Department for Transport Written statement to Parliament, [Record investment plans for transport network](#), 9 March 2023

highlighted in the statement, this would represent a cut to previously committed spending, from the £3.8 billion previously projected to £3 billion.

This prompted a coalition of charities to urge the reversal of these cuts in funding in an open letter to the Prime Minister. The letter stated:

In a written statement on 9 March, the Transport Secretary announced that overall active travel funding for the current parliamentary term is being reduced from £3.8 billion to £3 billion.

This includes a two-thirds cut to promised capital investment in infrastructure for walking, wheeling and cycling, from £308 million to only £100 million for the next two years.

We were disappointed to see vital active travel budgets wiped away in England, at the exact time when they are most essential to the UK's economic, social and environmental prospects.²³

The Government defended its position on this issue when asked in March 2023 on why they had made a cut to active travel funding, saying:

The Department does not recognise the reduction that the Honourable Lady refers to. The figure of £3.8 billion was a projection of total investment from a wide range of Government funding streams over the five-year period of the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2), published in July 2022. The Department has had to make savings across all modes of travel to meet inflationary pressures caused in part by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Despite this, the Department continues to invest very significantly in active travel and will continue to do so.²⁴

Wales

The Welsh Government supports local authorities with annual funding to deliver active travel schemes. Funding levels were enhanced in 2018 and in 2021/22 £70m was allocated via the Welsh Active Travel Fund.²⁵ This fund enables local authorities to make small scale continuous improvements and pre-work for main schemes. Some funding is also available on a competitive basis for larger schemes, including multi-year schemes. For 2022/23 this figure is expected to be £60m and this could increase further to £80m per annum in 2023/24 and 2024/25 to encourage larger schemes.²⁶

Other funding schemes available in Wales are:

- The Safe Routes in Communities Grant – indicative total funding for financial year 2023 to 2024 is expected to be approximately £5 million

²³ Sustrans, [Stop active travel funding cuts](#), 14 March 2023

²⁴ PQ 163807 [[Cycling and Walking: Finance](#)], 20 March 2023

²⁵ Welsh Government Press Release, [£75 million investment to get more people walking and cycling](#), 20 March 2021

²⁶ Senedd Research, [Active Travel Research Briefing](#), March 2022, p2

available to local authorities for individual schemes or school street schemes.²⁷

- Road Safety Grants – funding is available for road safety capital (expected to be approximately £1 million in 2022/23) and road safety revenue (expected to be £1.6 million for 2022/23). Proposals must demonstrate how grant objectives including prioritising high risk and vulnerable groups and promoting increased levels of active travel.²⁸
- The Local Transport Fund – funding available to deliver the vision and priorities of Llwybr Newydd (the Welsh transport strategy), including encouraging people to shift to sustainable transport. Funding is only available to local authorities for existing schemes.²⁹

Scotland

Much of the active travel funding awarded by the Scottish Government is for partner organisations, who may then offer grant funding.³⁰ This includes:

- Places for Everyone, which is run by Sustrans Scotland to provide advice, support, and funding for the creation of cycling and walking infrastructure. Local authorities, National Parks, Regional Transport Partnerships and other public bodies are eligible for funding.³¹
- Cycling Friendly Programme, which is run by Cycling Scotland with funding available to help promote and support cycling locally and is available to employers, communities, social housing providers, schools, colleges, and universities.³²
- The E-bike grant and loans, run by the Energy Saving Trust to support large scale adoption of e-bikes by local authorities, public sector agencies, colleges, and universities.³³

1.4

What are Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans?

The first CWIS introduced Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). LCWIPs are used by Local Authorities (LAs) in England to identify

²⁷ Welsh Government, [Safe routes in communities grants: guidance to applicants 2023 to 2024](#), 20 December 2022

²⁸ Welsh Government, [Road safety grant 2022 to 2023](#), 22 December 2021

²⁹ Welsh Government, [Local Transport Fund and Resilient Roads Fund: guidance to applicants 2022 to 2023](#), 21 January 2022

³⁰ Scottish Government, [Active Travel funding opportunities](#), [online] (accessed 27 March 2023)

³¹ Sustrans Scotland, [Places for Everyone](#), [online] accessed on 27 March 2023

³² Cycling Scotland, [Cycling Friendly](#), [online] (accessed on 27 March 2023)

³³ Energy Saving Trust, [eBike Grant Fund](#), [online] (accessed on 27 March 2023)

and prioritise investment for cycling and walking schemes from local funds and relevant national funding streams. Technical support was provided by the Government to local authorities to help them develop these plans.³⁴

The DfT has published guidance on the preparation of LCWIPs to help local bodies interested in increasing cycling and walking in their local areas.³⁵ Adoption of these plans is not mandatory, but the Government has said that it is “keen that as many areas as possible do so”.³⁶ In August 2022 78 upper tier authorities confirmed that they had developed LCWIPs for some or all of their areas.³⁷

A number of local transport authorities complained that support for developing LCWIPs has been insufficient.³⁸ Further, concerns have been raised that without specified funding for implementation, the plans risk becoming redundant. In 2018 Cycling UK said that most councils lack any earmarked funding to deliver their plans, which inevitably limits their ability to draw up ambitious long-term plans in the first place, given the lack of confidence as to whether they will be able to deliver them.³⁹

The House of Commons Transport Committee welcomed the development of LCWIPs in its active travel inquiry report of 2019. The Committee was also impressed by the level of ambition several local authorities have shown for increasing levels of walking and cycling in their areas. They therefore recommended the Government, first, assess how successful the LCWIP pilot has been and second, to commit to providing technical support to help all local authorities in England develop them if the initial assessment is positive.⁴⁰

The Government’s response to the Committee report said that its next CWIS would “build on local authority engagement to understand how to best promote active travel at the local level.”⁴¹

³⁴ Department for Transport, [Cycling and walking investment strategy](#), 21 April 2017

³⁵ Department for Transport, [Local cycling and walking infrastructure plans technical guidance](#), 21 April 2017

³⁶ Department for Transport, [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Government response to the consultation on the draft strategy](#), 26 March 2017

³⁷ PQ 138344 [[Cycling and Walking: Infrastructure](#)], 7 February 2023

³⁸ See for instance Kent County Council’s evidence submitted to the Transport Select Committee active travel inquiry: Transport Committee, [Active Travel Inquiry](#), 24 October 2018, ATR0030

³⁹ Transport Committee, [Active Travel Inquiry](#), 24 October 2018, ATR0075

⁴⁰ Transport Committee, [Active Travel Inquiry](#), 23 July 2019, HC1487, para 43

⁴¹ Transport Committee, [Active travel: Government Response to the Committee’s Eleventh Report](#), 4 October 2019, HC 2662, para 5.

1.5

What are the benefits of active travel?

Environmental benefits

Getting people to travel by bike and foot, rather than by car can reduce CO₂ emissions and improve air quality. Transport is currently the largest emitting sector of the UK economy, responsible for 25% of total UK greenhouse gas emissions.⁴² Such emissions can be reduced by replacing short car journeys with active travel. Air quality can also be improved by switching away from cars. The latest Air Pollution Compliance summary for the UK stated that in 2021 10 out of 43 zones exceeded annual mean NO₂ limits, with the low number of zones in exceedance was attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic which reduced traffic on roads.⁴³

The Government's 2021 Transport Decarbonisation Plan stated that increasing cycling and walking could result in a saving in CO₂ equivalent emissions of 1-6Mt from 2020 to 2025 and produce £20-100m in air quality benefits by 2050.⁴⁴ A study by the University of Oxford's Transport Studies Unit in 2021 found that the shift from cars to cycling only had to be small to have a significant impact on CO₂ emissions. It found that those who already cycle had 84% lower CO₂ emissions from all daily travel than non-cyclists and that switching just one trip a day from car driving to cycling can reduce a person's carbon footprint by 0.5 tonnes over a year.⁴⁵

Health benefits

The Government's Gear Change strategy reports that physical activity like walking and cycling can help to prevent and manage over 20 chronic conditions and diseases, including some cancers, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and depression. Physical inactivity is responsible for one in six UK deaths and is estimated to cost the UK £7.4 billion per annum.⁴⁶

A 2016 study by academics at Cambridge University found that the benefits of cycling into work far outweigh the damage to one's lungs caused by air pollution: "even in Delhi, where pollution levels are 10 times worse than London, people would need to cycle for more than five hours a week for the damage to outweigh the benefits".⁴⁷

⁴² BEIS, [Final UK greenhouse gas emissions national statistics: 1990 to 2021](#), Table 1

⁴³ Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, [Air Pollution in the UK 2021 – compliance assessment summary](#), September 2022

⁴⁴ Department for Transport, [Transport Decarbonisation Plan](#), 14 July 2021

⁴⁵ University of Oxford, [Get on your bike: Active Transport makes a significant impact on carbon emissions](#), 2 February 2021

⁴⁶ Department for Transport, [Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking](#), 27 July 2020, p8

⁴⁷ Tainio M et al., [Can air pollution negate the health benefits of cycling and walking?](#) [online via ScienceDirect], Preventive Medicine, Vol 87, June 2016

Researchers from the University of Glasgow published a study in 2017, showing that cycling to work is associated with a 41% lower risk of dying compared to commuting by public transport or car. Those that commuted by walking showed no association with a lower risk of dying but did have a 27% lower risk of heart disease according to the study.⁴⁸

Economic benefits

A DfT-commissioned report examining the “value of cycling” published in March 2016 found a range of economic benefits from cycling, including:

- Annualised infrastructure costs in compact, less car-dependent metropolises are 33% less than in low-density, car-oriented ‘sprawl’;
- Public realm improvements, including those that cater for cycling, have been shown to result in increased trade at local businesses; up to 49% in New York City;
- Cycling schemes can achieve more for less, with benefit-to-cost ratios in the range of 5:1 to 19:1 – some as high as 35.5:1;
- A typical “cycling city” could be worth £377 million to the NHS in healthcare cost savings, in 2011 prices;
- Facilities allowing children to cycle to school save on the public cost of school travel: amounting to £390 million per annum in the Netherlands in 1987 prices;
- Cycle tourists on average spend more: around 9% per head per trip, or around £81 per head per trip; and
- Cycle freight offers a competitive advantage in city locations and is cheaper than motorised freight for small payloads over short distances. Cost savings range between 39% and 64% compared to a van-based service.⁴⁹

The research provider Transport for quality of life published a report in 2018 on the value of the cycling sector to the British economy. The findings show a contribution of £5.4 billion per year from cycling to the economy, with the largest share (£4.1 billion) coming from wider impacts, particularly the loss of life and reduced pollution and congestion. It also stated that cycling generates 64,000 full time equivalent jobs in the UK, including from tourism, sales and repair, manufacturing and cycle infrastructure.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ The Conversation, [Cycling to work: major new study suggests health benefits are staggering](#), 20 April 2017

⁴⁹ Department for Transport, [The value of cycling: rapid evidence review of the economic benefits of cycling](#), 27 March 2016

⁵⁰ Transport for quality of life, [The Value of the Cycling Sector to the British Economy: A Scoping Study \(PDF\)](#), June 2018

1.6

How safe is walking and cycling?

Cycling

Safety concerns may deter people from walking and cycling. In the most recent National Travel Attitudes Study (NTAS) from 2020 when asked “Is it too dangerous for me to cycle on the roads” the majority of respondents (65%) agreed or strongly agreed.

Government statistics show that between 2004 and 2021 fatalities of cyclists have decreased by 17% (from 134 to 111), while serious injuries rose by 27%. Overall pedal cycle traffic grew by 62%. The statistics also show that averaged over the period 2016 to 2021 two pedal cyclists died and 84 were seriously injured per week in reported road casualties. These statistics show that:

- While the majority of cycle fatalities (59%) do not occur within 20m of a junction, 32% of all serious injuries do.
- Almost half (46%) of pedal cycle fatalities were in two vehicle collisions between a pedal cycle and a car.
- 56% of pedal cycle fatalities occurred on rural roads compared to 29% of traffic.
- 82% of pedal cycle fatalities or seriously injured casualties were male.
- The most common contributory factor for pedal cycle fatalities or serious collisions with another vehicle was ‘driver or rider failed to look properly’.⁵¹

However, the official statistics may not capture the full range of safety concerns cyclists face on a day-to-day basis. One study by academic Dr Rachel Aldred, found near misses are an everyday experience for cyclists in the UK. In this ‘near miss study’, over half the cyclists surveyed suggested that of the reported near misses most could have been prevented, particularly through separation from motorised traffic.⁵²

However, cycling groups such as Cycling UK emphasise that given the right conditions, the more people who cycle, the safer it is likely to become (the ‘safety in numbers’ effect).⁵³

⁵¹ Department for Transport, [Reported road casualties in Great Britain: pedal cycle factsheet](#), 2021, 29 September 2022

⁵² Aldred R, [Cycling near misses: Their frequency, impact, and prevention](#), [online via ScienceDirect], Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice, Vol 90, August 2016

⁵³ Cycling UK, [Road safety and cycling: Overview](#), 14 November 2017

Walking

Between 2004 and 2021 the number of fatalities of pedestrians decreased by 46% (from 671 to 361), while the number of people seriously injured fell by 51%. During this period pedestrian traffic (distance walked) grew by 10%. Averaged over the period 2016 to 2021 this was equivalent to 8 pedestrian deaths and 115 serious injuries per week. The most common contributory factor was found to be the pedestrian failing to look properly.⁵⁴

A number of concerns have also been raised around personal safety as a pedestrian. This is addressed in question 4.1.

Modal Comparisons

In 2021 in Great Britain there were 16,654 road traffic collisions involving injuries to pedestrians, of which 4,597 were serious and 361 were fatal. There were 16,458 collisions involving injuries to cyclists, of which 3,904 were serious and 111 were fatal.⁵⁵

There is no definitive measure of the safety of walking and cycling compared with other modes. The table below shows data from the Department for Transport on road collision injuries (“casualties”) in 2021. This data measures only personal injury accidents reported to the police.

Road casualties by severity in Great Britain by road user type, 2021						
Number of casualties and rate of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) per billion miles						
Road user type	Number of casualties					KSI per billion miles
	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total	% Fatal	
Car occupant	676	8,520	59,994	69,190	1.0%	42
Pedestrian	361	4,597	11,696	16,654	2.2%	360
Cyclist	111	3,904	12,443	16,458	0.7%	956
Motorcyclist	310	4,852	10,676	15,838	2.0%	2,040
LGV occupant	42	526	3,345	3,913	1.1%	10
Bus or coach occupant	5	179	1,578	1,762	0.3%	102
HGV occupant	18	131	586	735	2.4%	7

Source: Department for Transport, [Reported Road Collisions, Table RAS0201](#)

The number of casualties and fatalities is highest for car occupants compared with other types of road user. However, car travel is also the most common kind of road traffic, so this statistic is not very informative on its own.

When comparing casualties with the estimated number of vehicles miles undertaken, motorcyclist had the highest fatality rate, and pedal cyclists and

⁵⁴ Department for Transport, [Reported road casualties Great Britain: pedestrian factsheet 2021](#), 29 September 2022

⁵⁵ Department for Transport, [Reported road casualties Great Britain, annual report: 2021](#), 29 September 2022

pedestrians had higher fatality rates than car occupants. However, this isn't necessarily a measure of safety. It doesn't take into account that a car journey would typically be longer than a pedestrian or cycle journey, and that the average road user would travel less far by cycling or walking than by driving.

An alternative measure looks at the percentage of all casualties that were fatal. For car occupants, around 1.0% were fatal, compared with 0.7% for cyclists, 2.2% for pedestrians, 1.9% for motorcycle riders or passengers, and 2.4% for HGV occupants.⁵⁶

1.7 What is the Government doing to make walking and cycling safer?

In 2018, the Government consulted on how to improve cyclist and pedestrian safety. The Government's response was published on 22 November 2018, and sets out "several new measures and ideas, covering such areas as infrastructure design, law and guidance, enforcement, education, risk reduction and planning policy." Some of the key interventions include:

- Reviewing guidance in The Highway Code to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians (the Code was updated in 2022 – see question 1.6);
- Encouraging local councils to invest around 15% of their local transport infrastructure funding over time on safe and efficient cycling and walking infrastructure;
- Investing £100,000 to support the police to improve enforcement by developing a national back-office function to handle footage provided through dash-cam evidence;
- Enforcement against parking in mandatory cycle lanes;
- Appointing a cycling and walking champion to raise the profile of Active Travel; and
- Engaging with key cycling and walking organisations to develop a behaviour change campaign fully aligned with our Action Plan.⁵⁷

The Government set its ambition in the first Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy in 2017 for 'better safety' by 2040, including safer traffic speeds, cycle training for children and better-connected communities. One of the performance measures for the strategy is to "reduce the rate of cyclists killed

⁵⁶ Department for Transport, [Reported Road Collisions, Table BAS0201](#)

⁵⁷ Department for Transport, [Government Response to Call for Evidence: Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy: Safety Review](#), November 2018, para 1.13

or seriously injured on England's roads, measured as the number of fatalities and serious injuries per billion miles cycled".⁵⁸

The Government's Gear Change strategy in 2020 also included a commitment to mandate higher safety standards on lorries owing to the disproportionate number of cyclists killed or seriously injured by lorries.⁵⁹

The Government's second Cycling and Walking Strategy stated that investment will focus on increasing safety. This includes changes to the Highway Code (which were made in 2022 and described in question 1.6), delivery of high quality infrastructure, training and behaviour change programmes, and integration with the road safety strategy framework.⁶⁰

In 2018 the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents' Pedestrian policy set out a number of recommendations to improve pedestrian safety. These included:

- A further adoption of the Safe System approach throughout Great Britain.
- A national design standard for roads to ensure that all schemes are delivered to a set safety standard.
- Where average speeds are below 24 mph, 20mph limits can be introduced.
- Walking routes should be adapted to be made continuous, direct and join up residential areas, commercial areas, and schools.⁶¹

In January 2023 the Government said that the Department for Transport is working on the road safety strategic framework, which they hope to publish in spring 2023. This is based on the safe system approach, which has the key principle that recognises that people make mistakes and things can go wrong, accepting that responsibility is shared, and that collisions can be the result of a combination of factors that can be mitigated.⁶²

The walking charity Living Streets has also been campaigning for more 20mph speed limits to create safer streets. They are calling for an area-wide default speed limit, which includes main roads and high streets where many people live, work, shop, and play. They base this on the statistic that at 20mph a pedestrian has a 97% chance of survival, compared to a 92% chance at 30mph.⁶³

In July 2021 the Welsh Government announced that from 17 September 2023 a default 20mph speed limit on restricted roads across Wales would be introduced. Restricted roads are usually located in residential built-up areas

⁵⁸ Department for Transport, [Cycling and walking investment strategy](#), 21 April 2017

⁵⁹ Department for Transport, [Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking](#), 27 July 2020

⁶⁰ Department for Transport, [Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), 6 July 2022

⁶¹ Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, [Pedestrian Safety Policy Paper](#), August 2018

⁶² [HC Deb 9 January 2023 c112WH](#)

⁶³ Living Streets, [20mph](#), [online] (accessed 23 March 2023)

where there are lots of people, and often have streetlights on them, placed no more than 200 yards apart.⁶⁴

The UK Government stated in January 2023 that it has not undertaken any recent assessment of 20mph roads or the impact on road users and has no current plans to do so.⁶⁵

1.8 How have changes to the Highway Code impacted Active Travel?

The Highway Code applies to England, Scotland and Wales (separate guidance is available for Northern Ireland).⁶⁶ In January 2022 changes were made to the Code following public consultation between July and October 2020. The most significant changes for those walking and cycling were:

- The introduction of three new rules about the ‘hierarchy of road users’. The hierarchy places those road users most at risk in the event of a collision at the top of the hierarchy.
- When people are crossing, or waiting to cross, at a junction, other traffic should give way.
- New guidance in the code about routes and spaces which are shared by people walking and cycling, with people cycling asked to not pass people walking closely or at high speed, slow down when necessary and let people walking know they are there, and remember that people walking may be deaf, blind or partially sighted.
- An update to guidance for people cycling about positioning themselves, including riding in the centre of the lane on quiet roads, in slower moving traffic and at the approach to junctions or road narrowing. There is also a requirement to stay at least 0.5 meters away from the kerb edge when riding on busy roads.
- People cycling in groups should consider the needs of other road users but can ride 2-abreast, particularly in larger groups or when accompanying children.
- Updated guidance on safe passing distances and speeds for drivers and motorcycles overtaking vulnerable road users including at least 1.5 meters when overtaking people cycling at speeds of 30mph and allowing at least 2 meters of space and keeping at a low speed when passing people walking in the road.

⁶⁴ Welsh Government, [Introducing default 20mph speed limits](#), 17 March 2023

⁶⁵ PQ 117969 [[Speed Limits](#)], 16 January 2023

⁶⁶ Department for Transport, [The Highway Code](#), 27 July 2022

- The code has been updated to clarify that people driving or riding a motorcycle should give priority to people cycling on roundabouts.
- The code recommends a new technique when leaving vehicles, sometimes called the ‘Dutch Reach’, which involves opening the door using the opposite hand to the door side forcing them to look over their shoulder. They are then less likely to cause an injury to cyclists passing on the road or people on the pavement.
- For the first time the code also includes guidance on using electric vehicle charging points, including displaying a warning sign if possible and returning cables and connectors neatly to minimise the danger to other people.⁶⁷

In January 2023, one year after the changes, a YouGov poll was carried out on behalf of Cycling UK. This poll found that a quarter (25%) of British adults asked were not aware of the changes to the Highway Code. Of those who were aware of the changes, the poll found no discernible improvement in awareness of changes on correct distance for drivers overtaking cyclists.⁶⁸

Despite the Government having launched a ‘THINK!’ campaign to raise awareness of the Highway Code changes in July 2022,⁶⁹ Cycling UK said this had been a “short-lived” campaign, and the poll showed the “government’s failure in communicating the changes.”⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Department for Transport, [The Highway Code: 8 changes you need to know from 29 January 2022](#), 26 January 2022.

⁶⁸ Cycling UK Press Release, [Most drivers still don’t know Highway Code changes one year on](#), 28 January 2023

⁶⁹ Department for Transport Press Release, [Government THINK! campaign launched to improve road safety for those most at risk](#), 12 July 2022

⁷⁰ Cycling UK Press Release, [Most drivers still don’t know Highway Code changes one year on](#), 28 January 2023

2 Cycling: general

2.1 What were Cycling Cities and Towns, Cycling Ambition Cities and Mini-Hollands?

Cycling cities and towns

Between April 2008 and March 2011, the Department for Transport, the Department of Health and Cycling England spent around £50 million to create one Cycling City and 11 Cycling Towns (CCTs) in England. The programme built on the experience of the six original Cycling Demonstration Towns (CDTs).⁷¹ CCT finished in 2011. End of programme reports for each area are available.⁷²

Cycling ambition cities

Cycling Ambition Cities (CACs) were announced by the then Prime Minister in August 2013 with spend of £10 per head to build cycle networks in Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich and Oxford.⁷³ It was a competitive fund open to the 28 cities in England with City Deal status. Government funding totalling £191 million was made available for the five years to 2018.⁷⁴ Key features of the CACs included new networks of quiet routes, segregated cycleways, improved lighting and parking infrastructure and better links between key services.

In the final evaluation of the scheme published in 2021 it was stated that in all eight cities, city-wide cycling levels increased during the course of the CAC programme between 4% and 79% from baseline to final levels based on data from automatic cycling counts. However, surveys of cycling participation did not show an increase in the proportion of people who cycle. It was deemed that five of the 12 schemes for which robust evidence was available showed increases in cycling levels that were highly likely to be attributable to the CAA investment.⁷⁵

In February 2018, DfT gave CACs the chance to bid for a share of £6.5 million of Government funding to trial new schemes aimed at improving road safety

⁷¹ Department for Transport, [A Sustainable Future for Cycling](#) (PDF), January 2008

⁷² Department for Transport, [Cycle England Cycling City and Towns end of programme reports](#), 9 February 2012

⁷³ Department for Transport, [Government shifts cycling up a gear](#), 12 August 2013

⁷⁴ Department for Transport, [Cycle City Ambition programme: 2013 to 2018 evaluation](#), 20 July 2021, p5

⁷⁵ Department for Transport, [Cycle City Ambition programme: 2013 to 2018 evaluation](#), 20 July 2021

and creating more bike-friendly areas. There were six successful bids (Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Leeds, Manchester, and Norwich).⁷⁶

Mini-Hollands

Between 2013 and 2021, Transport for London and three London boroughs undertook the mini-Hollands Scheme. This was aimed at London boroughs where residents were more car dependent than inner London and had the objective to make these areas as cycle friendly as their Dutch equivalents. The £90 million scheme saw implementation of measures such as cycle hubs, community bike rides, traffic calming, redesigning of town centres and new pedestrian crossings. A study investigating the early impact of the program found that residents in 'high-dose' areas were 24% more likely to have cycled in the previous week, than those where such improvements have not been made.⁷⁷

In the Government's Gear Change strategy in 2020 a commitment was made to create more mini-Hollands with 12 non-London local authority areas in England.⁷⁸ Nineteen local authorities have received funding as part of Active Travel Fund allocations for the year 2021 to 2022 totally £78,947 for a mini-Holland feasibility study.⁷⁹

2.2

What is the cycle to work scheme?

The Government-sponsored Cycle to Work scheme allows for tax relief to apply to loans of bicycles and equipment, provided employees use the cycle to travel to work. Tax relief can be claimed for a scheme set up by any employer UK-wide. However, the scheme is not mandatory - it is up to the employer whether they take it up or not. Individual employers can vary the conditions they set when launching this type of initiative, to determine its take-up, its cost, and the associated administrative burden. Employees who participate in schemes could make significant savings on the cost of a new bike. Since a portion of the salary is foregone, the employee pays less tax and National Insurance Contributions (NICs).⁸⁰

The Government revised the cycle to work scheme guidance in June 2019. This revision updated the guidance originally published in 2011, with the option added to apply it to Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle (e-bike) purchases. With few e-bikes available at below the old £1000 maximum, the new guidance lets employers' schemes provide e-bikes and equipment worth over this value.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Department for Transport, [Government funding boost for Cycle Ambition Cities](#), June 2018

⁷⁷ Department for Transport, [Case Study: London Mini Hollands](#), 7 February 2020

⁷⁸ Department for Transport, [Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking](#), 27 July 2020

⁷⁹ Department for Transport, [Active travel fund: final allocations](#), May 2022

⁸⁰ Sustrans, [The Cycle to Work scheme explained](#), 15 November 2019

⁸¹ Department for Transport, [Cycle to work scheme implementation guidance for employers](#), 28 October 2019

Tax relief for Cycle to Work is now consolidated in section 244 of the Income Tax (Earnings & Pensions) Act 2003, as amended.⁸² HMRC have details of the rules regarding this relief in their Employment Income Manual. The Manual goes on to explain that employers may provide this benefit in conjunction with a ‘salary sacrifice’ scheme.⁸³

2.3 Can I take my bike on a train?

It depends on the rail service. There are different practices on different rail services regarding taking bicycles onto trains. PlusBike is an information portal (funded by DfT) that provides information about bike facilities at stations and on trains in Great Britain.⁸⁴

The Government made a commitment to make sure the railways work better with cyclists in its a Gear Change strategy. The strategy states that the Government “will invest substantial sums on safe cycle routes to stations, particularly in commuter towns such as Guildford, and increase cycle storage at stations. It also committed to increasing space on existing trains for bikes where practically possible.”⁸⁵

In the Gear Change: one year on report it was reported that cycle rail funding in 2020 provided a further £2.5 million to train operating companies to deliver 1,180 new cycle parking spaces at 30 stations.⁸⁶ Cycle rail funding has been provided by the Department for Transport since 2012, with the latest funding round for 2021/22 seeing awards totalling £2.6 million. A full list of funding awards can be found on gov.uk.⁸⁷

2.4 What is Bikeability?

Bikeability is the Government’s national cycle training programme with a mission to help five million children take up Bikeability cycle training and cycle more confidently, more often. The programme is managed by the charity Bikeability Trust.⁸⁸ On 10 March 2022, the Department for Transport announced £20 million of funding for Bikeability for the next year of the

⁸² [Income Tax \(Earnings and Pensions\) Act 2003](#)

⁸³ HMRC, [Employment Income Manual](#), 3 March 2023, EIM 21664

⁸⁴ National Rail, [PlusBike by National Rail](#), [online] (accessed 22 March 2023)

⁸⁵ Department for Transport, [Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking](#), 27 July 2020

⁸⁶ Department for Transport, [Gear Change: one year on](#), 30 July 2021, p19

⁸⁷ Department for Transport, [Cycle rail fund: awards](#), 22 January 2022

⁸⁸ Bikeability, About us, [online] access 22 March 2023

programme, stating 3.6 million children have been trained by the scheme since 2007.⁸⁹

BikeAbility Wales and Bikeability Scotland also run similar schemes.^{90 91}

2.5 What is ‘best practice’ in other countries?

Cycling groups often refer to the Netherlands and Denmark – particularly their capital cities – as examples to follow when it comes to cycling achieving high levels of cycling modal share. Accordingly, transport planners and cycling campaign groups in the UK have sought to learn lessons from these countries and find specific approaches that could be deployed here.⁹²

A notable report by Urban Movement for Transport for London in 2014 compared 14 cities of different character with researchers conducting interviews with local practitioners, as well as observation and riding in those cities. The report concluded that the many and varied differences between cities, and even parts of cities, mean the best design solutions will arise from the application of sound principles and good standards in the local context, rather than cutting-and-pasting rigid designs.

However, the report did also find a range of common conditions that occurred with mature cycling cultures, areas with significant recent growth in cycling, or in cities with commitments to growing cycling. These include:

- There is strong, clear political and technical pro-cycling leadership.
- Increasing cycle mode share is part of an integrated approach to decreasing car mode share but is not designed to detract from public transport and walking.
- There is clear, widely accepted and routinely used guidance on cycling infrastructure.
- Making better provision for cycling is an ongoing challenge that needs clear planning, even in the most well-cycled cities.⁹³

A further study by Urban Movement for Cycling Scotland in 2015 looked at the cause-effect relationships in terms of cycling trends of five countries

⁸⁹ Department for Transport, [Bikeability receives record £20 million government investment to improve access to cycle training](#), 10 March 2022

⁹⁰ [BikeAbility Wales website](#) (accessed on 7 March 2023)

⁹¹ Cycling Scotland, [Bikeability Scotland](#), [online] (accessed on 27 March 2023)

⁹² European Cyclists Federation, [ECF Cycling barometer](#), [online] (accessed 27 March 2023)

⁹³ Urban Movement for Transport for London, [International cycling infrastructure best practice study](#), (PDF), December 2014

(Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Spain, and Austria). From the causal factors the study focussed on the following was found:

- Pro-cycling policy is an essential pre-condition to seeing change, but it needs to be backed up by significant funding.
- It is possible to trace a positive general relationship between the length of cycle lanes/tracks and the amount of cycling.
- Education and training is almost always part of the overall approach to growing and maintaining cycling in places with high levels of cycling, or clear growth in cycling over time.
- Significant cycling programmes tend to be pursued by cities that are serious about growing cycling.⁹⁴

There are also databases of case studies from across Europe, for example:

- Eltis: The urban mobility observatory (includes examples from Ireland, Portugal, Denmark, Austria, Spain and many other countries).⁹⁵
- European Cyclists' Federation (includes examples from Belgium, Germany, Austria and Hungary)⁹⁶

Further, the Cycling Embassy of Denmark (CED) is a comprehensive network of almost 50 members who work professionally with cycling in private companies, local authorities (on both a local, regional and national scale), and non-governmental organizations.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Urban Movement for Cycling Scotland, [International Comparator Study](#), (PDF), November 2015

⁹⁵ Eltis, [Case Studies](#), [online] (accessed on 23 March 2023)

⁹⁶ European Cyclists' Federation, [Best practice example](#), [online] (accessed 23 March 2023)

⁹⁷ Cycling Embassy of Denmark, [Cycling – Danish Solutions](#), [online] (accessed 23 March 2023)

3 Cycling: safety and offences

3.1 Should drivers be liable by default for accidents with cyclists?

Currently, in England and Wales, there is a common law 'tort' system. The Government's road safety review explains that this places "a duty on all road users to take appropriate and reasonable steps to ensure that they do not harm other road users as a result of their actions or failure to take certain actions."⁹⁸ Further, any claimant must prove that the defendant was negligent – this is the same regardless of whether the claimant is a pedestrian, cyclist or motorist. There is a significant body of case law and legal tests which guides the judiciary in determining negligence in such cases.⁹⁹

In its road safety review, the Government explained the significant impact that changing liability laws would have, saying:

Switching to a presumed liability system for road traffic collisions would shift the burden of proof, so that the defendant would be presumed liable unless he or she could prove they were not negligent. As such, it would be a highly significant change to the legal system in England and Wales, almost certainly with many unexpected effects and one whose likely costs, benefits and practical effects are unknown. Civil liability law is different in Scotland and responsibility for it lies with the Scottish Government.

We intend to work together with the Ministry of Justice to commission research to understand the advantages and disadvantages of a change in liability rules. We will discuss with the Scottish Government whether they wish to research the likely impact of changes to Scots law too.¹⁰⁰

Liability insurance, such as motorists are required to have and some cyclists elect to have, covers these road users from the financial risk of them being found to have negligently caused personal injury or property damage to another road user.

⁹⁸ Department for Transport, [Government Response to Call for Evidence: Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy: Safety Review](#), 9 March 2018, para 6.36

⁹⁹ Department for Transport, [Government Response to Call for Evidence: Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy: Safety Review](#), 9 March 2018

¹⁰⁰ Department for Transport, [Government Response to Call for Evidence: Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy: Safety Review](#), 9 March 2018, para 6.41-42

3.2 What powers do local authorities have to make roads safer and easier for cyclists?

As of 31 May 2022, the Government gave local authorities in England outside of London new powers to enforce ‘moving traffic offences’, under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004.¹⁰¹ The Government hopes that the change will encourage behavioural shift towards sustainable travel choices, including making cycling easier. The levels of fines which can be applied range from £20 for lower-level penalties paid promptly, up to £105 for late payment of high-level penalties (which includes parking a vehicle on a cycle path).¹⁰²

3.3 Should cyclists wear cycle helmets?

Rule 59 of the Highway Code states that “you should wear a cycle helmet which conforms to current regulations, is the correct size and securely fastened”.¹⁰³ The Government recommends that all cyclists wear helmets and particularly encourages children to wear helmets.¹⁰⁴

This view was confirmed in the Government’s 2018 Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) safety review, where it said it would:

- Continue to promote and encourage cyclists to wear helmets, especially children.
- Provide strengthened advice on fitting of cycle helmets for children, as part of wider advice on use of safety equipment and attire when cycling.
- Review evidence and international experience on mandatory helmets for children and provide clear guidance to help parents choose what is appropriate for their child.¹⁰⁵

Cycling UK’s view is that “there is no justification for making helmet-wearing compulsory: it could undermine levels of cycling use, and, in any case, the effectiveness of helmets is far from clear.”¹⁰⁶ The Government also hold this view, stating in March 2023 that while helmet wearing is strongly advised, mandating use may deter people from cycling, with any safety benefits undermining wider health and environment benefits.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ [Traffic Management Act 2004](#), Part 6

¹⁰² Commons Library Insight, [Councils in England to get new powers over traffic offences](#)

¹⁰³ Department for Transport, [The Highway Code](#), 27 July 2022

¹⁰⁴ PQ159092 [[Cycling: Helmets](#)], 14 March 2023

¹⁰⁵ Department for Transport, [Government Response to Call for Evidence: Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy: Safety Review](#), 9 March 2018, para 8.10-12

¹⁰⁶ Cycling UK, [Cycle helmets](#), 14 June 2019

¹⁰⁷ PQ 159091, [[Cycling: Helmets](#)], 14 March 2023

3.4 Should cyclists be registered, have insurance, and pay ‘road tax’?

There are sometimes calls for cyclists to be subject to some sort of registration scheme so that they can be licensed, taxed and insured.

The Government’s 2018 road safety review explained that it had “no plans to introduce a registration and licensing regime for cyclists because the costs and complexity of introducing such a system would significantly outweigh the benefits.” The Government’s rationale for not introducing a licensing system was that the costs of a formal testing and licensing system for cyclists would significantly outweigh the benefits cycling has to the country’s economy, health and environment. In addition, the Government said the safety case for a testing/licensing system for cyclists is not as strong as that for drivers.¹⁰⁸ The Government reaffirmed this position as of November 2022.¹⁰⁹

Cycling UK says that such a scheme would be impractical due to cycles changing owners very frequently and being more likely to belong to children than to adults; that the added bureaucracy of registration might put newcomers or occasional cyclists off cycling; and that there was no evidence that registration would provide any safety benefits. While it does not believe that third party insurance should be compulsory, it does encourage it and provides cover for its members.¹¹⁰

3.5 Can I ride my bike on the pavement?

In general, no.

It is a criminal offence to ride a bicycle (defined as a ‘carriage’ by section 85 of the Local Government Act 1888, as amended¹¹¹) on a “footpath or causeway by the side of any road made or set apart for the use or accommodation of foot passengers” under section 72 of the Highway Act 1835, as amended.¹¹² Cycling on the footway is also prohibited in London under section 54(7) of the Metropolitan Police Act 1839 and in other areas under section 28 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847.^{113 114}

¹⁰⁸ Department for Transport, [Government Response to Call for Evidence: Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy: Safety Review](#), 9 March 2018, para 6.45

¹⁰⁹ PQ83536 [[Bicycles: Registration](#)], 15 November 2022

¹¹⁰ Cycling UK, [Ten common questions about cycling, with answers](#), 23 May 2022

¹¹¹ [Local Government Act 1888](#), Section 85

¹¹² [Highway Act 1835](#), Section 72

¹¹³ [Metropolitan Police Act 1839](#), Section 54(7)

¹¹⁴ [Town Police Clauses Act 1847](#), Section 28

Cycling UK emphasise there are occasions where cycling on the pavement may be a legitimate course of action:

- Where they consider the road to be too dangerous;
- Where there's an obstacle in the road that makes it temporarily hazardous for a cyclist to pass; or
- Where a feature of the road layout that makes a particular spot easier to travel through by diverting onto the pavement.

Further, parents may not want their young children to cycle on the road. Children cycling on pavements remains a grey area in legal terms. Children under the age of 10 are under the age of criminal responsibility, which means that if they are spotted cycling on the pavement by the police they cannot be prosecuted or served with a Fixed Penalty Notice. Children over 10 but under 18 are also likely to be treated differently from adults who cycle on the pavement.¹¹⁵

Shared use paths

In some areas cyclists and pedestrians may share the footpath, known as shared paths. There are two ways that shared paths are designated:

- Under Section 65(1) of the Highways Act 1980 a footway (which are found alongside carriageways) can be converted to a cycle track, which also allows rights of way for pedestrians.¹¹⁶
- Under Section 3 of the Cycle Tracks Act 1984, which allows local authorities to designate a footpath (which is away from carriageways), or any part of it, as a cycle track.¹¹⁷

If a shared pathway is designated and there is no segregation between footways/paths and cycle tracks signage must be provided to indicate this under the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.¹¹⁸ The Department for Transport also sets out design guidelines for shared paths in its Cycle Infrastructure Design Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20. These guidelines advise that shared paths should only be used as a last resort as they are not favoured by pedestrians or cyclists. The guidance gives the situations (if well designed and implemented) in which shared use may be appropriate:

- Alongside interurban and arterial roads where there are few pedestrians;

¹¹⁵ Cycling UK, [Should children cycle on the pavement](#), 9 March 2015

¹¹⁶ [Highways Act 1980](#), Section 65(1)

¹¹⁷ [Cycle Tracks Act 1984](#), Section 3

¹¹⁸ Department of Transport, [Manual of Streets](#) (PDF), Chapter 3, para 11.11.13, 2019

- At and around junctions where cyclists are generally moving at a slow speed;
- In situations where a length of shared use may be acceptable to achieve continuity of a cycle route; and
- In situations where high cycle and high pedestrian flows occur at different times.¹¹⁹

Cycling UK has expressed concerns about the potentially confusing nature of the arrangements for shared paths:

The proliferation of ‘shared use’ pavements is confusing. Sometimes it’s legal to cycle on the pavement, and sometimes it isn’t - and sometimes it’s hard to tell what the difference is. Engineers and law-enforcers should take this on board.¹²⁰

What penalties and enforcement are in place?

The maximum available penalty for cycling on the footway is a fine of £500.¹²¹ However, it is much more likely to receive a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). The FPN level for this offence is £30 issued under Section 51 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.¹²² Cycling UK has suggested that cyclists caught cycling on the footway could be given the option of training instead of an FPN.¹²³

Over the years there has been a great deal of debate about how the police enforce this offence. The charity Living Streets, who campaign for everyday walking, have stated that they want the law to be better enforced around pavement cycling. They have called for an urgent review of “how the justice system deals with mistakes, carelessness, recklessness and deliberately dangerous behaviour by all road users”.¹²⁴

There have been reports that the police are turning a blind eye to pavement cycling. For example, it was reported in the first 6 months of 2020 that there had been a 48.5% drop in the number of enforcement actions being issued in London. In response Detective Superintendent Andy Cox said, “I’ve been really, really super-clear to our staff that our priority is to target the most risky issues and people, and that is about protecting the cyclist not targeting the cyclist”.¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ Department for Transport, [Cycle Infrastructure Design Local Transport Note 1/20](#), Section 6.5, July 2020

¹²⁰ Cycling UK, [Ten common questions about cycling with answers](#), 23 May 2022

¹²¹ Department for Transport, [The Highway Code](#), Annex 5, 27 July 2022

¹²² [Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988](#), Section 51

¹²³ Cycling UK, [Ten common questions about cycling with answers](#), 23 May 2022

¹²⁴ Living Streets, [Walking and Cycling](#), [online] (accessed 23 March 2023)

¹²⁵ [Enforcement actions issued to cyclists in London drops by nearly 50 per cent, new figures reveal](#), The Telegraph [online], 16 August 2020

This has previously been echoed by other police forces. In January 2017, police in Camden said that they would not enforce the offence.¹²⁶ West Midlands Police have also been reluctant to prosecute in recent years. Superintendent Dean Hatton said that it was largely ‘not in the public interest’ to prosecute the offence.¹²⁷

The Government stated in March 2023 that while cycling on the pavement is an offence, the enforcement of cycling offences is an operational matter for the police.¹²⁸

3.6 What laws are there to tackle bad cycling?

The Road Traffic Act 1988, as amended, provides for cycling offences that include:

- Dangerous cycling (maximum penalty: level 4 fine: £2500);
- Careless or inconsiderate cycling (maximum penalty: level 3 fine: £1000);
- Cycling under the influence of drink or drugs (maximum penalty: level 3 fine: £1,000 fine); and
- Failing to give (or giving a false) name or address following an allegation of dangerous or careless cycling.¹²⁹

Riding dangerously or carelessly

Sections 28 and 29 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, as amended, contain provisions in respect of dangerous or careless riding of bicycles, tricycles and cycles having four or more wheels.

The definition of ‘dangerous cycling’ given in section 28 is if the way one rides “falls far below what would be expected of a competent and careful cyclist, and it would be obvious to a competent and careful cyclist that riding in that way would be dangerous”. In this context, “dangerous” refers to danger either of injury to any person or of serious damage to property. What would “be obvious to a competent and careful cyclist” in a particular case includes not only the circumstances of which he could be expected to be aware but also any circumstances shown to have been within the knowledge of the accused.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ [We won't punish cyclists for riding on London's pavements, say police](#), Evening Standard [online], 19 January 2017

¹²⁷ [Police accused of refusing to prosecute dangerous cyclists](#), Birmingham Live [online], 14 October 2016

¹²⁸ PQ HL6127 [[Cycling: Pedestrian Areas](#)], 16 March 2023

¹²⁹ [Road Traffic Act 1988](#), Sections 28 to 32

¹³⁰ [Road Traffic Act 1988](#), Section 28

The definition of ‘careless and inconsiderate cycling’ given in section 29 is that “if a person rides a cycle on a road without due care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for other persons using the road, he is guilty of an offence”.¹³¹

The maximum penalty for dangerous cycling is £2,500 and for careless or inconsiderate cycling is £1,000.¹³²

Cycling while unfit and being in charge when drunk

Section 30(1) of the 1988 Act provides that it is an offence for a person to ride a bicycle, tricycle or cycle having four or more wheels, not being a motor vehicle, on a road or other public place, whilst unfit to ride it through drink or drugs. ‘Unfit to ride’ is defined as being “under the influence of drink or a drug to such an extent as to be incapable of having proper control of the cycle”.¹³³

Police have no power to require a cyclist to provide a specimen of breath, blood or urine. Nor can the prosecution rely on any refusal by a cyclist to provide a specimen of blood or urine as support for its case. The maximum available penalty is a £1,000 fine.¹³⁴

Section 12 of the Licensing Act 1872 makes it an offence to be “drunk while in charge on any highway or other public place of any carriage, horse, cattle, or steam engine”. The maximum available penalty is a £200 fine or one month’s imprisonment.¹³⁵

Other offences

It is an offence under section 31 of the 1988 Act for a person to promote or take part in an unauthorised race or trial of speed of cycles on public highways.¹³⁶

It is an offence to cycle through red traffic lights under section 36 of the Act.¹³⁷

3.7

Is there an offence for cyclists causing death by careless or dangerous riding?

Section 35 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 causing bodily harm by wanton or furious driving or wilful misconduct has been used in cases

¹³¹ [Road Traffic Act 1988](#), Section 29

¹³² Department for Transport, [The Highway Code](#), Annex 5, 27 July 2022

¹³³ [Road Traffic Act 1988](#), Section 30(1)

¹³⁴ Cycling UK, [Alcohol and Cycling](#), 1 April 2015

¹³⁵ [Licensing Act 1872](#), Section 12

¹³⁶ [Road Traffic Act 1988](#), Section 31

¹³⁷ [Road Traffic Act 1988](#), Section 36

involving a cyclist causing serious injury or death. This allows for a prison sentence of up to two years.¹³⁸

In September 2017, the DfT appointed independent legal expert, Laura Thomas to conduct an “urgent review into cycle safety” following a series of high-profile incidents involving cyclists.¹³⁹ The review looked at whether a new offence equivalent to causing death by careless or dangerous driving should be introduced for cyclists, as well as wider improvements for cycling road safety issues.

This report concluded that in order to bring cycling into line with driving offences “there is a persuasive case for legislative change to tackle the issue of dangerous and careless cycling that causes serious injury or death.”¹⁴⁰

The Government launched a consultation on new cycling offences in August 2018, asking whether a new offence of causing death by dangerous cycling should be implemented.¹⁴¹

As of March 2023, the Government had not issued its response to this consultation. The Government said in March 2023 that it was considering bring forward legislation to introduce new offences concerning dangerous cycling and that it would publish a response to the consultation as soon as it can.¹⁴²

3.8

Do cyclists need to use lights and bells?

All bicycles that are used on the road at night must have a white front and red rear lights, which must be kept lit and unobscured. The bike must also have a rear red reflector (and amber pedal reflectors, if manufactured after 01/10/85) which must be kept unobscured. The lights must be used between sunset and sunrise and must be approved to the British Standard. This is reflected in Rule 60 of the Highway Code.¹⁴³

DfT has prepared guidance and advice on the legislative requirements in Great Britain relating to lights and reflectors on pedal cycles. This states that the relevant offence is a contravention of the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 (SI 1989/1796), as amended. Under section 91 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988, as amended, the maximum penalty for a contravention of these regulations by a cyclist is a fine of level 3 on the

¹³⁸ [Offences against the Person Act 1861](#), Section 35

¹³⁹ Department for Transport, [Government launches urgent review into cycle safety](#), 21 September 2017

¹⁴⁰ Department for Transport, [Cycle safety review independent legal report](#), 9 March 2018, para 17.2

¹⁴¹ Department for Transport, [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy safety review: proposals for new cycling offences](#), 12 August 2018.

¹⁴² PQ HL6052 [[Road Traffic Offences: Cycling](#)], 13 March 2023

¹⁴³ Department for Transport, [The Highway Code](#), Rule 60, 27 July 2022

standard scale (£1,000). More usually it would be dealt with by a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).¹⁴⁴

There are no legal requirements that Bicycles need to be sold with lights – it is the duty of the owner to fit them if they intend to use the bicycle at night.

The situation with bells is almost the exact reverse – it is illegal to sell a bicycle without a bell, but after purchase owners may remove them. This is provided for in Section 4 of the Pedal Cycle (Safety) Regulations 2003, which came into force on 1 May 2004.¹⁴⁵ The use of bells is reflected in Rule 63 and 66 of the Highway Code.¹⁴⁶

The Government said in March 2022 that it did not intend to legislate to make the use of bells on cycles mandatory, as there are other ways for people who cycle to warn other road users of their presence.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Department of Transport, [Guidance: Pedal cycles – lighting](#), 1 November 2010

¹⁴⁵ [The Pedal Bicycles \(Safety\) Regulations 2003](#), Section 4

¹⁴⁶ Department for Transport, [The Highway Code](#), Rules 63 and 66, 27 July 2022

¹⁴⁷ PQ 132381 [[Bicycles: Safety Measures](#)], 7 March 2022

4 Walking

4.1 What is the Government doing about personal safety on streets?

In May 2022 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released results of their survey on perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment in Great Britain, which asked people about feelings around personal safety when walking alone in different public settings. The results showed that:

- People felt less safe walking alone in all settings after dark than during the day; with women feeling less safe than men in all settings after dark.
- Disabled people felt less safe in all settings than non-disabled people.
- More women (27%) than men (16%) reported they has experienced at least one form of harassment in the previous 12 months.¹⁴⁸

In August 2021 the Government released a call for evidence on reviewing personal safety measures on streets in England. The purpose was to provide evidence for an update of the Manual for streets and Manual for streets 2. The call for evidence asked questions on factors influencing personal safety and improving safety and confidence.¹⁴⁹

As of March 2023, the Government has not released a response to this call for evidence. In January 2023, the Government said that the formal consultation response and announcement of next steps would be released as soon as possible.¹⁵⁰

4.2 Are shared spaces safe for pedestrians?

Shared space or shared streets encompass a design approach that seeks to change the way streets operate by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles, primarily through lower speeds and encouraging drivers to behave more accommodatingly towards pedestrians. There is no such thing as a definitive

¹⁴⁸ ONS, [Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment, Great Britain: 16 February to 13 March 2022](#), 25 May 2022

¹⁴⁹ Department for Transport, [Reviewing personal safety measures on streets in England: call for evidence](#), 27 August 2021

¹⁵⁰ PQ 127869 [[Roads: Safety](#)], 24 January 2023

shared space design. Each site is different and the way a street performs will depend on its individual characteristics, the features included and how these features work in combination.

There have long been concerns by people with disabilities and those campaigning on their behalf, and particularly on the behalf of blind people, that shared space is dangerous. Concerns over shared spaces and accessibility were raised during the Transport Committee’s 2019 active travel inquiry. In light of these concerns, the Committee recommended that the Government conduct a review that looked at (amongst other things) “measures necessary to ensure that infrastructure improvements for pedestrians and cyclists do not adversely affect other road users, and in particular disabled people.”¹⁵¹

The Government response said it was updating its Local Transport Note 2/08, which provides detailed advice to local authorities on the design of cycling infrastructure. It also said the revised advice is being reviewed “especially in terms of safety and inclusivity for disabled cyclists and pedestrians.”¹⁵²

4.3 Is the council liable if someone slips and falls on the pavement?

Highway authorities have a legal duty to maintain the highway, including the pavement, under section 41 of the Highways Act 1980, as amended.¹⁵³ The standards of repair that local highway authorities must follow are set out in Well-managed highway infrastructure: a code of practice, published in October 2016 by the UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG). It is not a statutory document but is published with the backing of central and local government.¹⁵⁴

There are two defences available to a highway authority faced with claims under section 41 of the 1980 Act for failure to maintain the highway: a common law defence and a statutory defence as provided for in section 58 of the 1980 Act:

- The **common law** defences available to the highway authority are listed in the Encyclopaedia of Highways Law & Practice and are, briefly: act of God or inevitable accident; act of a third party; contributors negligence; and *volenti non fit injuria* (one who knowingly and voluntarily consents to

¹⁵¹ Transport Committee, [Active travel: increasing levels of walking and cycling in England](#), 23 July 2019, HC 1487, para 85

¹⁵² Transport Committee, [Government Response: Active travel: increasing levels of walking and cycling in England](#), 4 October 2019, HC 2662, para 25

¹⁵³ [Highways Act 1980](#), Section 41

¹⁵⁴ UKRLG, [Well-managed highway infrastructure: a code of practice](#), October 2016

and takes on a risk cannot ask for compensation for the damage or injury resulting from it).

- **Section 58** provides the highway authority with a complete defence if it can prove that it had taken such care as was reasonably required to ensure that the part of the highway to which the action relates was not dangerous to traffic ('traffic' includes pedestrians and animals). Generally speaking, a highway authority is expected to take reasonable care of the highway and should have procedures laid down for inspection and repair. In essence, a judge must be satisfied that a council did all that was reasonably required to avoid there being any danger to pedestrians and motorists if a council is to succeed in using the special defence provided by section 58.¹⁵⁵

The Institute of Highway Engineers' Well Managed Highway Liability Risk, published in 2017 and updated in 2019, provides a reference source and practical guidance on best practice in the management of highway liability risk exposures for local highway authorities.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ [Highways Act 1980](#), Section 58

¹⁵⁶ Institute of Highway Engineers, [Well Managed Highway Liability Risk](#) (PDF), July 2019

5 E-Mobility

5.1 Can I use my e-bike on the road?

You can ride an electric bike (e-bike) in England, Scotland and Wales if you're 14 or over, as long as it meets certain requirements.¹⁵⁷ There are different rules in Northern Ireland.¹⁵⁸ The UK requirements are set out in the Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (EAPC Regulations).¹⁵⁹ The requirements are:

- The cycle must be fitted with pedals that are capable of propelling it.
- The maximum continuous rated power of the electric motor must not exceed 250 Watts.
- The electrical assistance must cut-off when the vehicle reaches 15.5 mph.

A vehicle that does not comply with the above EAPC classification will need to be registered, insured and taxed (Vehicle Excise Duty) as a motor vehicle.¹⁶⁰

'Twist and go' e-bikes

Prior to 2015, UK Regulations allowed for what are known as 'twist and go' e-bikes – where the throttle can take the bike to full speed without any pedalling at all. The only throttles legal within the UK's EAPC legislation are those that assist the rider without pedalling up to a maximum speed of 6 km/h (3.7 mph) – i.e., starting assistance only.¹⁶¹

If the rider is rolling – but not pedalling – faster than 6km/h, the throttle cuts off. If the cyclist pedals at the same time, then the throttle can still assist up to the general limit of 15.5mph.¹⁶²

However, e-bikes with a full-speed throttle purchased before 1 January 2016 are still considered to be EAPC compliant with the relevant laws. This means they do not require registration, or to be taxed.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁷ Department for Transport, [Electric bikes: licensing, tax and insurance](#), [online] (accessed 23 March 2023)

¹⁵⁸ NI Direct, [Electric bikes \(electrically-assisted pedal cycles\)](#), [online] (accessed 23 March 2023)

¹⁵⁹ [Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles \(Amendment\) Regulations 2015](#)

¹⁶⁰ Department for Transport, [Electrically assisted pedal cycles \(EPACs\) in Great Britain](#), 22 June 2015

¹⁶¹ Cycling Weekly, [Electric bikes and UK law: what you need to know](#), June 16 2021

¹⁶² As above

¹⁶³ As above

5.2 Can electric scooters be ridden anywhere?

No. Being classed as “motor vehicles” e-scooters are forbidden from use on:

- footpaths, on bridleways and restricted byways ([Section 34 of Road Traffic Act 1988](#))
- cycle tracks, cycle lanes on roads, or other spaces dedicated to pedal cycle use only ([Section 21 of Road Traffic Act 1988](#)).
- on private land without the permission of the landowner ([Section 34 of Road Traffic Act 1988](#))

The only e-scooters that can legally be used on public roads are those that have been rented as a part of the government’s e-scooter trial (See Question 5.3 below).

5.3 When and where are e-scooter trials happening?

E-scooter trials are ongoing in 30 locations in England. They were first launched in Spring 2020 and have been extended until 31 May 2024.¹⁶⁴

The Government announced in May 2020 that it was bringing forward trials of e-scooters originally planned for 2021. It also announced that the trials would be opened to all local areas compared to the original plan to take place in four Future Transport Zones.¹⁶⁵

The Government consulted on its proposals and on 30 June 2020, then Transport Minister Rachel Maclean confirmed the Government’s intention to hold e-scooter trials starting from 4 July 2020.¹⁶⁶ The Government also laid Regulations in Parliament to enable the trials to take place, and published guidance for areas and rental operators.¹⁶⁷

The e-scooter trials were available to local areas that opted in and provided appropriate high-level requirements and objectives for the trials. For the trials:

¹⁶⁴ PQ 28907 [[Electric Scooters: Pilot Schemes](#)], answered 6 July 2022

¹⁶⁵ Department for Transport, [£2 billion package to create new era for cycling and walking](#), 9 May 2020

¹⁶⁶ Department for Transport, [Legalising rental e-scooter trials](#), 30 June 2020; Department for Transport, [Rental e-scooter trials to be allowed from this weekend](#), 30 June 2020

¹⁶⁷ [The Electric Scooter Trials and Traffic Signs \(Coronavirus\) Regulations and General Directions 2020](#); Department for Transport, [E-scooter trials: guidance for local authorities and rental operators](#), 30 June 2020

- E-scooters are allowed on roads and cycle lanes, but are banned from pavements;
- E-scooters will be limited to 15.5mph
- Riders are recommended to wear helmets, but this is not mandatory.
- Privately owned e-scooters remain illegal on roads.
- Riders will need a full or provisional car, motorcycle or moped licence to use the vehicles, and they must be aged 16 or over.

In December 2022, the Government released its national evaluation of the trials, covering the 32 trials across 55 areas that have been implemented. Factors which were deemed as contributing to successful delivery were partnership working, establishing clear governance processes, and being adaptive to dealing with challenges. Conversely, the biggest challenges from the trials were cited as characteristics of local areas, public perceptions related to a new mode of transport, resource constraints within local authorities, and the legal status of private e-scooters.¹⁶⁸

In July 2022, then Transport Minister Trudy Harrison said that the Government had decided to allow current e-scooter trials to be extended to the end of May 2024 to allow the Government to gather further evidence.¹⁶⁹

In an e-scooter follow up session by the Transport Committee in February 2023, several witnesses expressed that they did not see the value in extending the trials and getting a Government decision on the next steps was more important. For example, Head of Transport Innovation for Milton Keynes Council, Brian Matthews, said “We are very close to the point where we are not learning much more from the trials”¹⁷⁰ and Head of Policy for Voi technology (one of the operators of e-scooter trials), Matthew Pencharz, said “We feel that there is not much more learning that the Government need in order to decide to legislate. We have proven the demand”.¹⁷¹

The Government has said it intends to introduce primary legislation to create a Low-speed Zero Emission Vehicle (LZEV) category. This will be followed by consultation and secondary legislation which will ultimately legalise private and rental use of e-scooters. This was confirmed in a recent 2022 parliamentary question response by Transport Minister Jesse Norman:

When parliamentary time allows, the Government intends to create a Low-speed Zero Emission Vehicle (LZEV) category that is independent of the cycle and motor vehicle categories. The first focus of this new system will be e-scooters, which we are looking to legalise for private and rental use through secondary legislation. This will require setting robust technical requirements and clear expectations on users. No decisions have been made on the details

¹⁶⁸ Department for Transport, [National evaluation of e-scooter trials in England](#), 15 December 2022

¹⁶⁹ PQ 28907 [[Electric Scooters: Pilot Schemes](#)], 6 July 2022

¹⁷⁰ Transport Committee, [E-scooters: follow up](#), 8 February 2023, HC 1077, Q64

¹⁷¹ Transport Committee, [E-scooters: follow up](#), 8 February 2023, HC 1077, Q65

of the regulations for e-scooters, and we will consult before any new arrangements come into force.¹⁷²

Further information about the government's e-scooter trials can be found in the House of Commons Library Briefing paper [Regulating electric scooters \(e-scooters\)](#) and on [gov.uk](#).

5.4 Are e-scooters safe?

Owing to the short period over which e-scooters have been used, there is limited data available on their safety.

Statistics for 2021 show that there were 1,352 collisions involving e-scooters, up from 460 in 2020. In total there were ten fatalities, all of which were e-scooter riders. It is estimated that there were 421 serious injuries and 1,003 who were slightly injured. The Metropolitan police reported the highest number of all casualties at 36%, with the remainder spread over the other 43 police forces, including the second highest for Avon and Somerset at 7% of casualties.¹⁷³

In the Government's evaluation report, according to a user survey it was found that 5% of e-scooter users had experienced a collision in the 12 months before the study. The majority did not include other road users with the main contributing factor being rider error. The majority of collisions led to either no injury or minor injuries.¹⁷⁴

There has been concern raised about the safety of e-scooters for pedestrians, particularly those who are visually impaired. In evidence given by Clive Wood on behalf of Guide Dogs to the Transport Committee's e-scooter follow up session in February 2023 they stated that "the feedback we are getting is that over 80% of the blind and partially sighted people we have asked have come in contact with e-scooters. Over 70% of them said that it was in a negative way." In addition, he stated that "50% of blind and partially sighted people tell us that they are now changing their routine. They avoid going to certain places" and "Twelve per cent of them have had e-scooters hit their mobility tool, either hitting their cane, or brushing up against their dog."¹⁷⁵

The Government responded to concerns over safety of e-scooters for those who are visually impaired in February 2023, saying the Department for Transport has put in place measures to improve safety for disabled people, such as requiring all e-scooters in trials to have a bell or horn. It also says it

¹⁷² PQ 105246 [[Electric Scooters: Death](#)], answered 15 December

¹⁷³ Department for Transport, [Reported road casualties Great Britain: e-scooter factsheet 2021](#), 29 September 2022

¹⁷⁴ Department for Transport, [National evaluation of e-scooter trials in England](#), 15 December 2022

¹⁷⁵ Transport Committee, [E-scooters: follow up](#), 8 February 2023, HC 1077, Q7

will continue to work with groups representing individuals who are visually impaired, to review options for regulations.¹⁷⁶

5.5

What are the rules for using a mobility scooter?

A licence is not required to drive a mobility scooter or powered wheelchair, but it may have to be registered. This depends on the class of mobility scooter. Class 2 vehicles are those with an upper speed limit of 4mph and are designed to be used on pavements. Class 3 vehicles are those with an upper speed limit of 8mph and are equipped to be used on roads as well as pavements.¹⁷⁷

Class 3 vehicles must be registered but are not subject to vehicle excise duty. Insurance is also not required, although it is recommended. Although Class 3 vehicles can be used on the road they cannot use bus lanes, cycle only lanes or motorways, and should avoid using dual carriageways with a speed limit over 50mph. They may also be used on the pavement but must adhere to the 4mph speed limit.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ PQ 146947 [[Electric Scooters](#)], 27 February 2023

¹⁷⁷ Department for Transport, [The Highway Code](#), 27 July 2022, Rule 36

¹⁷⁸ Department for Transport, [Mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs: the rules](#), [online] (accessed 24 March 2023)

6 Low traffic neighbourhoods

6.1 What are low traffic neighbourhoods?

‘Low-traffic neighbourhoods’ (LTNs) have been around for many years but have only recently become known by this name. Perhaps the first one was created in De Beauvoir Square in Hackney, London in the early 1970s to make residential streets safer for children.¹⁷⁹ LTNs can be created by local authorities across Great Britain using Traffic Regulation Orders created under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.¹⁸⁰

LTNs are groups of residential streets, bordered by main or roads, where “through” motor vehicle traffic or “rat-running” is discouraged or removed, while every resident can still drive onto their street, get deliveries etc. This can be achieved in a range of different ways:

- by installing planters, bollards, or other street furniture that physically block the road; and/or
- by camera-enforced ‘gates’ that do not physically block the road, but illegal use is enforced through fines.¹⁸¹

Local authorities provide exemptions LTN restrictions for emergency service vehicles. Most local authorities provide exemptions to blue badge holders who need access in their ‘home’ low traffic neighbourhood. Some authorities also exempt taxis and some private hire vehicles, although this can depend on the LTN in question.¹⁸²

LTNs are not a new concept, although they gained renewed attention as part of the Government’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic. As part of this response, the Government encouraged local authorities in areas with high public transport use to reallocate road space to people walking and cycling; LTNs were one of a range of tools local authorities used to do this.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Sustrans, [What is a low traffic neighbourhood?](#), 2 November 2020

¹⁸⁰ Parts I, II and IV of the [Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984](#); Commons Library Briefing SN06013 [Traffic Regulation Orders \(TROs\)](#)

¹⁸¹ Living Streets, [Low Traffic Neighbourhoods: an introduction to Policy Makers](#) (PDF), [online] (accessed 23 March 2023)

¹⁸² For example see Lambeth Council, [Low Traffic Neighbourhood \(LTN\) dispensation frequently asked questions](#) (accessed 30 March 2023); Islington Council [People-friendly streets Individual Exemption FAQs](#) (accessed 30 March 2023)

¹⁸³ Department for Transport, [Traffic Management Act 2004: network management to support active travel](#), 1 April 2022

The Government's Gear Change Strategy published in 2020 included a commitment to create more LTNs and to consult on creating a community right to create them.¹⁸⁴ In Gear Change: one year on, it was stated that new data collected by councils with LTN schemes installed indicated that there had been significant reductions in traffic, and significant increases in cycling and walking within the LTNs.¹⁸⁵

There are now numerous examples of LTNs, particularly in London, but also in other cities in England and Scotland.¹⁸⁶

6.2 What is the public perception of low traffic neighbourhoods?

LTN schemes are now being implemented across the country using a combination of temporary, experimental, and permanent Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).¹⁸⁷ However, they have provoked opposition in several London boroughs. For example, Wandsworth Borough council suspended its LTN trials in September 2020 following an initial review of the trials that identified concerns with emergency access and traffic flows.¹⁸⁸ Across England, there have been some examples of planters and bollards installed as part of LTN trials being subject to vandalism and arson.¹⁸⁹

Concerns over LTNs have tended to focus on one or more of the following issues:

- Lack of consultation with local residents
- Accessibility for elderly and disabled residents
- Access to streets for the emergency services
- Increased congestion on surrounding streets.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁴ Department for Transport, [Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking](#), 27 July 2020

¹⁸⁵ Department for Transport, [Gear Change: one year on](#), 30 July 2021, p19

¹⁸⁶ RAC, [Low Traffic Neighbourhoods – what are they? And will they appear nationwide?](#) 3 November 2022; City of Edinburgh Council, [Developing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods for communities across Edinburgh](#), 8 February 2021

¹⁸⁷ Commons Library Briefing SN06013 [Traffic Regulation Orders \(TROs\)](#)

¹⁸⁸ Wandsworth Council, [Low Traffic Neighbourhood trials suspended](#), 11 September 2020

¹⁸⁹ The Guardian, [London council to step up security as vandals target low-traffic zones](#), 19 July 2021; Mail Online, [Is this Britain's most hated bollard? Residents and drivers repeatedly smash down and even set FIRE to plastic barriers that council installed to block residential road](#), 25 November 2022; Yahoo News, [Low traffic neighbourhood barricades set on fire hours after being installed](#), 28 March 2023

¹⁹⁰ Transport for All, [Pave The Way: The impact of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods \(LTNs\) on disabled people, and the future of accessible Active Travel](#), January 2021; The Guardian, [Opponents of LTNs claim they delay emergency services – but look at the facts](#), 23 April 2021

In November 2020, in the wake of local opposition to some LTN schemes, the Government's network management guidance was updated stressing the need for engagement and consultation with affected communities.¹⁹¹

At the same time the Government released the findings of research into public attitudes towards LTNs, and the outcomes they are designed to achieve. This research found:

- 65% of people across England support reallocating road space to cycling and walking in their local area.
- Nearly 8 out of 10 people (78%) support measures to reduce road traffic in their neighbourhood.
- In London, 19% of people oppose LTNs, 52% support them and 25% are neutral.¹⁹²

In June 2022, the Centre for London found that 47% of Londoners support LTNs, and 16 per cent oppose them – while 37% don't have a strong opinion or don't know about them.¹⁹³

6.3

Are low traffic neighbourhoods effective?

The Centre for London published a comprehensive review of LTN rollout in London in June 2022. It stated that there is strong evidence that low traffic neighbourhoods can:

- reduce traffic, which creates a safer environment to walk and cycle;
- encourage people to take fewer journeys by car, and more by other modes of travel; and
- displace some motor traffic to nearby roads in the short term, but this tends to reduce in the medium term.¹⁹⁴

Traffic

The Government's Gear Change: one year on report summarised evidence of the impact of LTNs on traffic on boundary roads. Overall, it was found that although traffic had risen on 15 of them, it had decreased on 35.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ Department for Transport, [Network management duty guidance: reallocating road space](#), 1 April 2022

¹⁹² Department for Transport, [Public attitudes towards traffic, road use and low-traffic neighbourhoods](#), 13 November 2020

¹⁹³ Centre for London, [Street Shift: The Future of Low-Traffic Neighbourhoods](#), June 2022, p2

¹⁹⁴ Centre for London, [Street Shift: The Future of Low-Traffic Neighbourhoods](#), June 2022

¹⁹⁵ Department for Transport, [Gear Change: one year on](#), 30 July 2021, p29

A study by Possible (a UK based climate charity) from January 2023 conducted a systematic review of traffic data presented in monitoring reports from 46 LTN schemes in 11 boroughs which were introduced between May 2020 and May 2021. It was found that all metrics showed a substantial decline in motor traffic on internal roads. However, for boundary roads around LTNs there was only a marginal change in traffic volume with 47% seeing a decrease in traffic and 53% seeing an increase in traffic, although the report notes that this may have been linked to non-LTN site-specific factors.¹⁹⁶

Public health and air quality improvement

A study by Imperial College London looking at the impacts of three LTNs in Islington on air pollution, found that LTNs reduced NO₂ both within intervention areas (by 5.7%) and in boundary areas (by 8.9%). These results should also be viewed in the context that the study found that traffic levels decreased in the LTN area by 58.2% and in the boundary sites by 13.4%.¹⁹⁷

However, evidence of impact on air quality is lacking. The Centre for London report states that this is owing partly to the fact that local authorities did not have air pollution trackers on LTN streets before and after the introduction.¹⁹⁸

Emergency Service Access

A 2020 study looked at the impact of introducing LTNs on fire emergency service response times in Waltham Forest. The findings showed that response times were similar in LTNs to the rest of Waltham Forest and response times on LTN boundary roads were similar or better.¹⁹⁹

A further study in 2021 on 72 LTNs in London also found that there was no evidence that response times inside the LTNs or on boundary roads were affected. The study did find that fire crews reported more delays due to “traffic calming measures” in LTNs, but this was entirely offset by a decrease in delays for other reasons, particularly traffic.²⁰⁰

It has also been reported that a Freedom of Information Request by Cycling UK revealed that no LTN schemes were introduced without the relevant Ambulance Trust’s knowledge and that no delays to emergency response times had been identified because of them.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ Possible, [Changes in motor traffic inside London’s LTNs and on boundary roads](#) (PDF), January 2023

¹⁹⁷ Yang X et al., [Evaluation of low traffic neighbourhood \(LTN\) impacts on NO₂ and traffic](#), [online via ScienceDirect], Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment, 2022, Vol 113

¹⁹⁸ Centre for London, [Street Shift: The Future of Low-Traffic Neighbourhoods](#), June 2022

¹⁹⁹ Goodman A et al., [The Impact of Introducing a Low Traffic Neighbourhood on Fire Service Emergency Response Times, in Waltham Forest London](#), [online via Transport Findings], Findings, 2020

²⁰⁰ Goodman A et al., [The Impact 2020 Low Traffic Neighbourhood on Fire Service Emergency Response Times, in London](#), [online via Transport Findings], Findings, 2021

²⁰¹ [Covid bike and walking schemes do not delay ambulances, trusts say](#), The Guardian [online], 13 February 2021

6.4

What are the rules councils must follow when creating and enforcing low traffic neighbourhoods?

The main legal mechanism that local authorities in Great Britain use to create Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) are Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), created under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.²⁰²

Local authorities must adhere to certain rules when creating TROs. For permanent TROs, these rules require them to:

- Consult with emergency services, road haulage representatives, the relevant NHS trust, public transport representatives and other stakeholders as appropriate;
- Publicise the planned TRO in local newspapers (as well as any other means to ensure people affected by the TRO are made aware of it);
- Allow a period of no less than 21 days for public objections to be made;
- Allow for a public inquiry to be held, if the TRO would prohibit loading at certain times, interfere with bus routes, or create a one-way street;
- Seek consent from the Secretary of State (or Ministers in Wales/Scotland) in certain circumstances, for example if the TRO would prevent access to property for 8 or more hours in a day, or would affect strategic trunk roads.²⁰³

These are minimum requirements for permanent TROs. Local authorities can carry out more extensive consultation and engagement with affected communities if they see fit.

Experimental Traffic Orders

Experimental Traffic Orders (ETO) do not have as many rules attached to them as permanent TROs and can be introduced without the same requirements for prior publicity and an objections period. Once an ETO is in place a decision must be made on whether to make the changes permanent within 18 months, or the ETO lapses and the changes must be reverted.²⁰⁴

²⁰² Parts I, II and IV of the [Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984](#); Commons Library Briefing SN06013 [Traffic Regulation Orders \(TROs\)](#). There is no equivalent of Traffic Regulation Orders in Northern Ireland.

²⁰³ [Local Authorities' Traffic Orders \(Procedure\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 1996](#) as amended; [Local Authorities' Traffic Orders \(Procedure\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 1999 \(SI 1999/614\)](#), as amended; The requirement for consent from the Secretary of State is [in Part II, Schedule 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984](#)

²⁰⁴ [Section 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984](#)

Many local authorities use this mechanism to trial an LTN before deciding whether to make it permanent.²⁰⁵

Enforcement and revenue from fines

It is a criminal offence to contravene a TRO. A person guilty of an offence is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.²⁰⁶ Contravention of a TRO is more often subject to a fixed penalty notice (FPN).²⁰⁷

Enforcement of TROs is a police matter in Scotland, and most of Wales.²⁰⁸ Any fines collected by the Police for infringement of a TRO will be passed onto general devolved Government funds.

In many areas of England, local authorities – rather than the Police – can enforce TROs (and therefore LTNs) using civil enforcement powers. In London, borough councils and Transport for London (TfL) have had such civil enforcement powers for many years.²⁰⁹ In England outside of London, many councils are currently in the process of acquiring new civil enforcement powers.²¹⁰

Where civil enforcement powers exist, local authorities may install Automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras²¹¹ to detect contraventions of TROs – for example, where a car enters a restricted area without a permit. The local authority may then access DVLA data to identify drivers using the number plate information, and then issue a FPN to the car’s registered keeper.²¹²

The UK Government has said that “the primary purpose of penalty charges is to encourage compliance with traffic restrictions, not for raising revenue.”²¹³ Local authorities can only spend the revenues raised from TRO fines on certain permitted activities. These include recouping costs of TRO

²⁰⁵ For example, see Oxfordshire County Council, [Traffic Filters FAQs](#) (accessed 30 March 2023)

²⁰⁶ [Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988](#), sections 9 & 33(1), and Schedule 2, Part I

²⁰⁷ FPNs can be issued for TRO contravention under Section 51, and Schedule 3 of the [Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988](#); See RAC, [Fixed Penalty Notices: all you need to know](#), 16 February 2022

²⁰⁸ In Wales, local authorities can acquire civil enforcement powers via [The Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions \(General Provisions\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2013](#). Cardiff Council acquired such powers in 2014 (See Cardiff Council, [Annual Parking and Traffic Enforcement Report 2017/18 \[PDF\]](#)).

²⁰⁹ In London, borough councils and TfL have civil enforcement powers through the [London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2003](#).

²¹⁰ These powers are granted under [Part 6, Traffic Management Act 2004](#). See Commons Library Briefing CBP-9322 [Roads and Vehicle regulation FAQs](#) 1.9 ‘What are ‘Moving Traffic Offences’ and who enforces them?’; Commons Library Insight [Councils in England to get new powers over traffic offences](#), 25 May, 2022

²¹¹ Devices must adhere to standards set by the DfT. See DfT Guidance [Traffic enforcement equipment certification guidance for local councils](#), 22 December 2022

²¹² Access to DVLA data is governed by [Regulation 27 of the Road Vehicles \(Registration and Licensing\) Regulations 2002](#)

²¹³ DfT Statutory guidance, [Traffic Management Act 2004: statutory guidance for local authorities outside London on civil enforcement of bus lane and moving traffic contraventions](#) Updated 21 October 2022

implementation, spending on public transport provision and road maintenance.²¹⁴

6.5

What are 15-minute cities/20-minute neighbourhoods?

‘Fifteen minute cities’ are a concept or an aspiration – there is no one ‘fifteen minute city’ policy for any councillor or MP to vote on. In recent months the concept has attracted criticism by people who fear the concept may reduce freedom, especially for car users.

The concept of 15-minute cities, sometimes known as ‘20-minute neighbourhoods’, was first advocated by Professor Carlos Moreno, an academic at Sorbonne University in Paris. In 2019, Moreno argued that access to ‘essential living needs’ like schools, shops or green space should be closer to residents, ideally taking no longer than 15 minutes by foot or bike. This would reduce car-based pollution and congestion, save people time, and lead to benefits for public health and the environment.²¹⁵

Some critics of LTNs – as well as other schemes such as Clean Air Zones and London’s Ultra Low Emission Zone – have made a link between them and the ‘fifteen minute cities’ concept. There have been claims that such schemes are anti-democratic, inhibit personal freedoms and may damage local businesses.²¹⁶ In 2022, local councillors in Oxford who were planning LTN-style traffic filters in the city received threats and abuse. Some residents had falsely claimed the filters would mean they would be confined to their local area, as part of a “sinister” ‘fifteen minute city’ plan to limit freedom of movement.²¹⁷ The council later issued a statement to allay such fears.²¹⁸

As outlined in Section 6.4 above, LTNs can only be introduced following decisions by elected local government politicians, and are subject to legal requirements for consultation and public engagement. There are strict rules about the way local authorities can access personal data, and how they may use revenues raised from LTN fines.

In March 2023, a YouGov poll found that a majority of the British public (62%) would support their local authority making it a target to make their area a 15-

²¹⁴ In London, these are specified in [Schedule 2 of London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2003](#), in the rest of England in [Regulation 31 of The Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions \(Approved Devices, Charging Guidelines and General Provisions\) \(England\) Regulations 2022](#); in Wales in [Regulation 23 of The Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions \(General Provisions\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2013](#)

²¹⁵ Carlos Moreno, [The 15 minutes-city: for a new chrono-urbanism](#), 30 June 2019

²¹⁶ GB News, [These deeply illiberal, unBritish 15-minute cities are beyond the pale](#), 11 February 2023

²¹⁷ BBC News, [Oxford residents dubbed 'guinea pigs' over traffic policy](#), 14 January 2023

²¹⁸ Oxfordshire County Council Press Release, [Joint statement from Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council on Oxford’s traffic filters](#), 22 December 2022

minute neighbourhood. This included three quarters of Labour (73%) and over half of Conservative voters (57%).²¹⁹

The Scottish Parliament Information Centre addresses some of these controversies in its article ‘So, what’s this about a “climate lockdown”?’²²⁰

²¹⁹ YouGov, [Most Britons would like their area to become a ‘15-minute neighbourhood’](#), 6 March 2023

²²⁰ Scottish Parliament Information Centre, [So, what’s this about a “climate lockdown”?](#), 27 January 2023. Although the focus of this article is Scotland, most of the legislation discussed is identical in Wales and England.

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