



A handbook for inclusive cycling advocates



What are we campaigning for?

Many aren't aware of the fact that disabled people cycle. Growing numbers do and use standard bicycles, as well as non-standard cycles (tricycles, handcycles and e-bikes etc.) to get around. However, there are a number of physical, financial and cultural barriers that continue to prevent more disabled people from taking up cycling in the UK. These include:

- **Infrastructure**

There is a lack of fully inclusive infrastructure across cycling networks. Narrow cycle lanes; speed reduction treatments; physical obstacles; barriers and potholes can reduce accessibility for non-standard cycles, which are often wider, longer and heavier than standard bicycles.

- **Cost**

Non-standard cycles are typically more expensive than standard bicycles, with access to hire and loan schemes also limited. Disabled people are more likely to be on lower incomes than those who are non-disabled, creating a further financial disadvantage when it comes to purchasing the right cycle.

- **Facilities**

The majority of cycle parking and storage facilities fail to accommodate non-standard cycles. Without reliably available parking facilities (and fully integrated modes of transport) disabled cyclists will be discouraged from venturing out in the first place and from participating in active travel.

- **Cycles not recognised as mobility aids**

Many disabled people find cycling easier than walking. However, under existing legislation cycles are not listed as a mobility aid (unlike wheelchairs and mobility scooters), meaning disabled cyclists may be asked to dismount in places where 'cyclists dismount' signs are displayed (despite the fact that walking or wheeling a cycle might be physically impossible for some).

- **Imagery and language**

Images and photos of non-standard cycles and disabled cyclists are under-represented in cycling, transport and design publications. Disabled cyclists are further excluded from cycling culture through use of the word 'bicycle', which fails to acknowledge the wider range of cycles available; the branding of electric-assistance as 'cheating'; and the perception that cycling is for the fit and athletic.

Our policy asks



Better infrastructure

1. We will lobby for all cycling infrastructure to be fully inclusive and to meet the specifications of Highway England's ['cycle design vehicle' standard](#);
2. We will develop and champion an inclusive cycling policy 'blueprint', as well as training and guidance for local authorities.



Better facilities

3. We will work with a number of local authorities to pilot and implement a 'Blue Badge' scheme for disabled cyclists;
4. We will work with government, cycle shops and employers to improve opportunities for the hire and purchase of non-standard cycles, such as through the Cycle to Work scheme;
5. We will campaign to grow the number of inclusive cycling 'hubs', where disabled people can find opportunities to try cycling, develop confidence and skills.



Better recognition

6. We will lobby government for legislative change so that cycles are recognised as a mobility aid when used by a disabled person for that purpose;
7. We will work with transport bodies to improve the visibility of non-standard cycles and disabled cyclists in policy imagery;
8. We will continue to push for behavioural, cultural and political change so that attitudes towards cycling really do go 'beyond the bicycle'.

How can you take action?



Write to your local councillor or MP

If you feel that you're being discriminated against as a disabled cyclist then let your local representative know. If it's a local issue (e.g. an anti-motorcycle barrier has been installed in a nearby park and restricts your tricycle), then you should contact your local council. For national and more general issues, it's probably worth getting in touch with your MP. You can find out who your local MP is at: [TheyWorkForYou.com](https://www.theyworkforyou.com).

Top tips – writing to your MP:

1. Let them know you're a constituent (give your name and address) and keep it personalised. Try and avoid template letters.
2. Know the issue you're talking about. Do your homework and get your facts straight.
3. Research your MP and ask yourself some questions: Are they likely to be on my side? What's their voting record on this issue? Are they pro-cycling?
4. Keep your letter simple and concise (one page of A4). Split it into 3 parts:
 - (a) Introduce yourself;
 - (b) Explain the issue (3 or 4 bullets/key points);
 - (c) Say what action you'd like your MP to take/what needs to change.
5. Don't be too critical of your MP or the government: try to be positive, constructive and offer solutions.
6. Proof-read, check your grammar and cite any references. You're good to go!



Start a petition

Still not getting heard? Why not set up a petition or campaign? [Change.org](https://www.change.org) and [38degrees.org.uk](https://www.38degrees.org.uk) are great platforms for this.



Keep a photo log

Cycle lane on the way to work too narrow for your tricycle? Local park just installed anti-motorcycle barriers that restrict your recumbent? Take a photo, note down the location and add it to [cyclescape.org](https://www.cyclescape.org) – a website specially designed to allow cyclists to map, share and discuss infrastructure issues/complaints. It will help inform other cyclists, as well as your local council.



Write a blog or story

Personal stories often provide the most powerful type of news – why not write to your local paper about your experiences as a disabled cyclist, or an injustice that you've encountered? We're always on the lookout for personal stories/case studies to feature in our campaigns newsletter. Send us an article of between 400-500 words and we'll see if we can put it in! Email us at info@wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk.



Set up a local inclusive cycling campaign group

Your voice is more powerful if it's part of something bigger. Do you know other disabled cyclists where you live? Why not set up a local campaign or meeting group, where you can share ideas and discuss issues? If you want to get more political and start a campaign, survey or a petition, let us know and we can try and help.



Factsheet

Disability

- **1 in 5** people in England and Wales have a disability – *Office for National Statistics (2011)*
- Disabled people are **half as likely** as non-disabled people to be active – *Public Health England (2014)*
- Physical inactivity is the **fourth largest** cause of disease and disability in the UK – *Public Health England (2014)*
- Disabled people are much more likely to be **socially isolated** and have smaller support networks – *Public Health England (2015)*

Disability and cycling

- **17%** of disabled Londoners cycle regularly or occasionally compared to 19% of non-disabled Londoners – *Transport for London (2015)*
- **One third** of disabled cyclists have experienced abuse or disability hate crime whilst cycling – *Wheels for Wellbeing survey (2017)*
- **Inaccessible cycling infrastructure** is the number one difficulty faced by disabled cyclists – *Wheels for Wellbeing survey (2017)*
- **69%** of disabled cyclists find cycling easier than walking – *Wheels for Wellbeing survey (2017)*
- **1 in 3** disabled cyclists have been asked to dismount their cycle, despite using it as a mobility aid – *Wheels for Wellbeing survey (2017)*

Resources



Articles and publications:

‘How do we build an inclusive culture for disabled cyclists?’ (*Guardian*, 2017)
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/bike-blog/2017/jun/20/how-to-build-inclusive-culture-disabled-cyclists>

‘Don't assume disabled people aren't interested in cycling – or in proper bike lanes’ (*Guardian*, 2016)
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/bike-blog/2016/apr/26/dont-think-disabled-people-interested-in-cycling-proper-bike-lanes>

‘Disabled cyclists in England: imagery in policy and design’ (*Institution of Civil Engineers*, 2015)
<http://www.icevirtuallibrary.com/doi/full/10.1680/udap.14.00048>



Useful links and websites:

Cycling Industry News – stats, facts and evidence resource pack
<https://cyclingindustry.news/the-advocates-resource-the-evidence-you-need-to-build-a-case-for-cycling-in-your-area/>

Cycling UK – local campaigner's information kit
<http://www.cyclinguk.org/local-campaigners/cycling-uk-local-campaigners-information-kit>

Cycling Industry News – 5 key tips for the cycling infrastructure campaigner
<https://cyclingindustry.news/five-key-tips-for-the-first-time-or-veteran-cycling-infrastructure-campaigner/>

Cycling Fallacies – common myths about cycling
<http://cyclingfallacies.com/en/>

Cycle Law – cycling and the law
<http://www.cyclelaw.co.uk/>

