

My Cycle, My Mobility Aid

About the campaign

The majority of Disabled cyclists find cycling easier than walking, with many using their cycle as a mobility aid. However, under existing legislation cycles are not recognised in this way, unlike wheelchairs and mobility scooters. We think this is discriminatory and discourages many Disabled people from taking up cycling.

Our campaign aims to ensure that cycles are legally recognised as a mobility aid, when used by a Disabled person for that purpose – putting them on a level playing field with wheelchairs and mobility scooters. It is wrong that Disabled people are being discouraged from taking up cycling, or worse, penalised for choosing active travel over more sedentary forms of transport. Cycling can offer tremendous health benefits for Disabled people who, as a group, are already half as likely as non-Disabled people to be physically active.

What is a mobility aid?

A mobility aid is something – usually a device or piece of equipment – that helps someone with a mobility impairment to get around. Generally speaking, when people talk about mobility aids they are referring to wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

According to [Ask the Police](#) there are three types, or 'classes', of mobility vehicle:

- **Class 1** (manual wheelchairs) – self/attendant propelled and not electrically powered
- **Class 2** (powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters) – intended for footpath or pavement use only with a maximum speed limit of 4mph
- **Class 3** (powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters) – for use on the road, with a maximum speed limit of 8mph but with the facility to travel at 4mph on a footpath or pavement

What about cycles?

Under the [Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations \(UICHR\) 1988](#) – the legislation responsible for setting out the Class 1, 2 and 3 definitions – cycles are not

listed as a type of mobility aid, or 'invalid carriage'. This means they are not permitted on footways or in pedestrianised areas, unlike wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

The problem

Because cycles are not legally recognised as a mobility aid, Disabled cyclists regularly encounter difficulties. This might be being asked by a police officer to dismount and walk their cycle on the footway, in a pedestrianised area or in a 'cyclists dismount' zone, for example - even when they might be physically unable to do so.

The solution

We believe there are a range of options available to government, both legislative and non-legislative, which would help remedy this situation and encourage more Disabled people to take up physically active lifestyles.

Legislative:

1. Amending the Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations (UICHR) 1988 to recognise the use of cycles as a mobility aid.
2. Changing existing laws to permit the use of mobility scooters on cycle lanes, together with the creation of Dutch-style 'mobility lanes', which would be accessible by bicycles, non-standard cycles and mobility scooters alike.

Non-legislative:

1. Launching a public information campaign to raise awareness of the fact that many Disabled people can and do cycle, and use their cycle as a mobility aid.
2. Revising and reaffirming the 'Boateng guidance' used by police officers, making explicit reference to the needs of Disabled cyclists.
3. Designing a leaflet and/or badge that can be used to help identify Disabled people who use their cycle as a mobility aid (e.g. like TfL's 'please offer me a seat' scheme).
4. Piloting and implementing a more formal Disabled cyclist's 'Blue Badge' scheme, giving Disabled cyclists certain rights and exemptions.

Helping the Government to meet its objectives

Taking the measures outlined above would help the Government to meet its commitments to:

- **Ensure Disabled people can travel confidently and easily**
- **Reduce levels of physical inactivity**
- **Reduce air pollution and tackle climate change** (given that Disabled people are more likely to rely on private car hire and taxis to get around)

What Disabled cyclists have said

"I use my bike as a sort of rolling walking stick when I walk and I can cycle very long distances without pain. I therefore class my bike as a mobility aid. However, it is very difficult to have this recognised in certain situations – for example in parks or other large outdoor venues. All they see is a bike. It would be so easy to modify a 'no bikes' rule to say 'unless used as a mobility aid'." (Phil, aged 60, Preston)

"People tend to express the view that anyone fit enough to pedal a cycle cannot possibly be Disabled. Disabled people are often considered as only those who are wheelchair users. People are generally ignorant of the concept of a mobility aid - and the more so if it is a bike." (Anonymous Disabled cyclist)

Facts & figures

- **Three-quarters** of Disabled cyclists use their cycle as a mobility aid, with the same proportion finding cycling easier than walking. Of these:
 - **45%** have been asked to dismount and walk/wheel their cycle
 - **14%** have been told they were allowed to cycle in a pedestrianised area once they had explained that they use their cycle as a mobility aid

(Wheels for Wellbeing [survey](#) 2018)