

Safer Streets for All: The Upcoming Government Road Safety Strategy

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The
Bikeability
Trust



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Foreword

Our streets should be places where everyone can feel safe, supported, and empowered, whether walking to school, cycling to work, or wheeling to the local shops. Yet far too often, vulnerable road users face avoidable risks and everyday journeys are marked by danger.

This report sets out recommendations for the Government's upcoming Road Safety Strategy. Drawing on polling, case studies and a call for evidence that received responses from across the UK, we aim to shine a light on the daily realities experienced by people walking, wheeling and cycling; offering practical, evidence-based recommendations for government, local authorities and other stakeholders. From making The Highway Code meaningful in practice, to embedding cycle training for children in the national curriculum, to tackling pavement parking and unsafe vehicle speeds, our proposals aim to save lives and promote healthier, more inclusive communities.

The development of a new Road Safety Strategy presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity. But it must not be a strategy written solely in Whitehall. The voices in this report, parents, young people, children, teachers, experts, campaigners, delivery riders - must shape the direction of travel.

At The Bikeability Trust, we know that training can transform confidence. At Living Streets, we understand that simple changes in design and policy can make walking feel natural and safe again. But neither training nor infrastructure can succeed in isolation. We need systemic, integrated action that makes active travel a realistic and safe choice for everyone.

Every day, people navigate our roads and streets in different ways, often shifting between modes of transport depending on their needs and circumstances. This report seeks to recognise our shared interest in safer streets, regardless of how we travel.

We are grateful to all who contributed to this report and hope that decision-makers will hear the message loud and clear: safer streets are urgent and the current danger felt on our roads is unacceptable.

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Summary of Recommendations



Highway Code

- Increase Highway Code compliance through police, insurers, and government-led campaigns.
- Make the hierarchy of road users self-enforcing via presumed liability laws.
- Align The Highway Code with street design (e.g. side road zebras, continuous footways).
- Regular public awareness and behaviour change campaigns to improve Highway Code understanding.
- Introduce graduated licensing for new and young drivers.

Road User Training

- Mandate cycle awareness training for all Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs).
- Expand and fund the Cycle Savvy Driving programme nationwide.
- Ensure police receive ongoing Highway Code training and assessment.
- Long-term, fully funded Bikeability training for all school-age children.
- Bikeability to be part of the National Curriculum with a statutory target (e.g. Level 2 before leaving primary school).
- All adult cycle training to meet National Standard and be quality assured like Bikeability.

- Introduce national training standards for commercial cargo bike and pedicab riders.
- Basic training and strengthened HSE guidance for gig economy delivery riders.

School Travel

- Create a dedicated Routes to School Fund within the Active Travel Fund.
- School Streets Capacity Fund for scheme planning, implementation, and enforcement.
- Routes to School Fund for safe walking and cycling infrastructure (e.g. 20mph zones, modal filters, safe crossings).
- Authorise nationwide use of Side Road Zebra crossings.

Vision Zero and Safe System Approach

- Adopt Vision Zero targets and build road safety strategy around a Safe Systems approach.
- Design self-explaining roads for self-enforcing safe behaviour and speed compliance.
- Use digital tools (e.g. Collisionmap) to proactively identify and fix crash hotspots.
- Set a national 20mph default speed limit in built-up areas.

- Enable civil enforcement of speed limits with fine revenues used to cover enforcement costs.

Safe Vehicles

- Mandate Intelligent Speed Assist (ISA), Emergency Lane Keeping Systems (ELKS), and Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB) on all new vehicles.
- Regulate to curb the size and weight of private vehicles, especially SUVs and pickups.
- Encourage councils to introduce higher parking charges for large vehicles (e.g. like Paris, Bath, Islington).

Road Danger Review

- Embed road safety education (Bikeability, Highway Code) into primary and secondary school curricula.
- Introduce progressive fines based on income, similar to Sweden.
- Implement comprehensive training and support for new drivers.
- Introduce graduated licensing for new and young drivers.
- Combat distracted, drink, and drug driving through education and tech solutions.

- Introduce stricter penalties for dangerous driving (e.g. longer bans, tougher jail sentences, lifetime bans for killers).
- Make cycle awareness training a requirement for ADIs.
- Ensure all police forces implement updated STATS19 data collection specifications.

Pavement Parking

- Implement a national ban on pavement parking, similar to existing laws in London and Scotland.

Integration of National Policy and Funding into Local Practice

- Allocate 10% of all transport funding to walking and cycling, with at least £35 per person/year for active travel infrastructure.
- Maintain a strong national mandate for safe street design through partnerships with CIHT and LGA.



Why this report?

On 7 January 2025, the Minister for the Future of Roads, Lilian Greenwood MP announced the development of a new government road safety strategy.

This joint report by The Bikeability Trust and Living Streets presents actionable, evidence-based recommendations for inclusion in the forthcoming strategy.

The Bikeability Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with the vision to ensure everyone has the confidence to cycle and enjoy this skill for life. The Trust manages, develops and promotes the Bikeability programme on behalf of the Department for Transport.

Living Streets is the UK charity for everyday walking. They want a nation where walking is the natural choice for everyday local journeys. Their mission is to achieve a better walking environment and inspire people to walk more.

Both organisations are passionate about reducing road danger and keeping vulnerable road users safe.

The report collates responses to a Call For Evidence launched in March 2025, YouGov polling and best practice thinking with an overarching focus on improving safety for cyclists and pedestrians.

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Polling Methodology



The Bikeability Trust and Living Streets commissioned YouGov to complete a UK-representative poll relating to road safety. The polling is referenced throughout this report to not only set context as to the status quo in awareness of issues, but also to highlight the political realities of a road safety strategy and, in many cases, how there is widespread support for measures to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads - as well as improving perceived safety of daily travel.

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2113 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 14th - 17th March 2025. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).

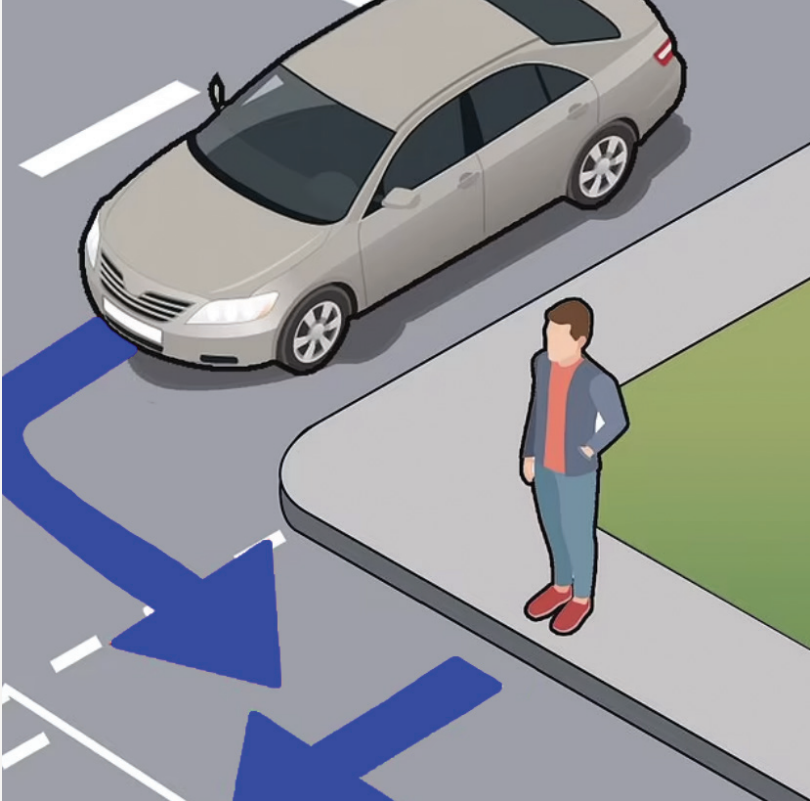
YouGov is registered with the Information Commissioner and is a member of the British Polling Council.

The Highway Code

We Asked:

Imagine you are driving a car on a main road and want to turn left onto a side street. A pedestrian is waiting to cross the side street. Would you:

- A. Proceed and turn into the side street
- B. Stop and wait for the pedestrian to cross



Polling headlines

Less than two thirds of adults were able to correctly answer The Highway Code question around pedestrian priority at a side road junction.

31% of respondents said they would turn across the path of a pedestrian trying to cross a side road

Younger people aged 18-34 were significantly more likely to get The Highway Code question correct than people aged 35-54.

Cyclists were 21% more likely to answer The Highway Code question correctly than the national average



Highway Code: Current Situation

In January 2022, the UK Government implemented updates to The Highway Code to enhance road safety, particularly for vulnerable users such as pedestrians and cyclists. A key change was the introduction of a “Hierarchy of Road Users,” which assigns greater responsibility to those operating vehicles that can cause the most harm in the event of a collision. This hierarchy places pedestrians at the top, followed by cyclists and horse riders, with drivers of larger vehicles like HGVs and buses bearing the most responsibility to ensure the safety of others.

Drivers to leave at least 1.5 metres of space when overtaking cyclists

Additional amendments included clarifying that drivers should give way to pedestrians crossing or

waiting to cross at junctions, and that cyclists should be given priority when they are going straight ahead at junctions. The code also advises drivers to leave at least 1.5 metres of space when overtaking cyclists and introduces the “Dutch Reach” technique to prevent dooring incidents, where drivers open car doors into the path of cyclists.

Road users are required to be aware of and understand the rules in The Highway Code - part of the **Safe Road Users** aspect of a Safe Systems approach to road safety.

Unfortunately, surveys and polls since the changes indicate poor public awareness of The Highway Code, putting vulnerable road users at risk.

Highway Code: Call for Evidence

Our call for evidence revealed a perception of widespread disregard for The Highway Code, particularly the January 2022 changes and particularly by motorists. Individuals report frequently witnessing motorists breaking speed limits, cutting up cyclists, and failing to give pedestrians priority at crossings.

Research by Cycling Scotland evidenced, in Scotland, “poor levels of public awareness of the changes made to The Highway Code in 2022”. Our own YouGov polling shows that 31% of respondents would turn across the path of a pedestrian trying to cross a side road, increasing to 38% in the Midlands. A mother living in London, expressed her fear due to “careless and often reckless speeding” and drivers “turning in front of us, even after we have entered the junction, when by law we as pedestrians have the right of way.”

A recurring theme in our evidence is the disconnect between drivers’ perceptions of what vulnerable road users are permitted to do on the highway and the rights these users actually have, resulting in conflict. The police’s lack of understanding of The Highway Code was also raised, one cyclist mentioned that he was “pulled over and cautioned by the police for riding two abreast”, something permitted in The Highway Code.

A mother living in London, expressed her fear due to “careless and often reckless speeding”

The consequences of this non-adherence are significant for vulnerable road users. Cyclists are put at risk by drivers failing to provide adequate passing distance; pedestrians feel unsafe crossing roads, even at marked crossings. National walking charity The Ramblers note that walkers are often “forced to cross, or walk along, roads without pavements and adequate crossing points and where the speed and attitudes of drivers can at best be discouraging and, at worst, highly dangerous”. A resident of Leeds stated that pedestrians are “forced to wait to enable cars and other road users to keep moving.”



The lack of enforcement of The Highway Code is a recurring theme in the submissions. Many feel that motorists face little accountability for breaking the rules, leading to a culture of impunity. There are calls for greater enforcement, including empowering local authorities to act and increasing penalties for violations. One respondent suggested that the public should be encouraged to submit camera footage of violations.

Several contributors recommend further public information campaigns to raise awareness of The Highway Code changes. It is suggested that the importance of the hierarchy of road users should be highlighted and that mandatory education should start in schools and continue through adulthood, such as Bikeability. There are also calls for incorporating pedestrian safety and considerate driver behaviour as mandatory elements of driving tests. Younger people aged 18-24, many of whom will have passed their driving test more recently, were significantly more likely to get The Highway Code question correct than people aged 35-54.

Highway Code: Recommendations

Increasing Highway Code compliance will require action by various agencies including police, insurance providers and government-led public information campaigns.

The hierarchy of road users should be made self-enforcing, via existing insurance and claims processes, by introducing **presumed liability** for injury to those higher in the hierarchy by those lower in the hierarchy. The UK, Ireland, Cyprus and Malta are the only Western European countries without some form of presumed liability law².

The Highway Code should be consistent with street design to support all road users. Since drivers are required to yield to pedestrians crossing side roads, this should be reflected in the road layout - through features like side road zebra crossings and continuous footways where appropriate.

Public understanding of The Highway Code, particularly in relation to recent updates, should be significantly improved through regular public awareness and behaviour change campaigns, targeting the human side of those who disregard The Highway Code and the negative effects dangerous driving has on vulnerable road users.

We recommend the introduction of graduated licensing for new and young drivers such as those systems that are in place in several states of USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Norway, Finland, France and Northern Ireland. Cycle awareness training for Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) was trialled through the “Cycle Savvy Driving” pilot delivered by the Bikeability Trust. We recommend mandating cycle awareness training for all ADIs, who are best placed to instil vulnerable road user awareness in new drivers from their first lessons onward.

We recommend mandating cycle awareness training for all ADIs

The police should possess the highest level of understanding of The Highway Code, underpinned by regular training and ongoing assessments. As frontline enforcers of road safety, it is essential that those responsible for upholding the law have a thorough and up-to-date grasp of what is legal and safe on our roads, especially for vulnerable road users.

1. <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/scottish-road-users-awareness-of-highway-code-rules-relating-to-vulnerable-road-users/>
2. <https://www.cyclinguk.org/briefing/compensation-injured-cyclists>



Call for Evidence

Training, alongside infrastructure, is crucial to empower children with the skills and confidence to cycle safely. Modelling from The Future of Transport indicated a significant association between Bikeability Level 2 training and KSIs, whereby increased levels of Bikeability training delivery is associated with fewer KSIs, and fewer cyclist KSIs, at the local authority level. Kidical Mass London argues that “Our experience is that children as young as 5 years old can often comfortably cycle long distances unaided (for example rides of up to 6 miles) and enjoy doing so. [...] it is not children’s ability or will that holds back cycling, but rather other factors including the lack of safety and lack of dedicated infrastructure on the road network”. Cycle training, alongside reallocating road space away from driving around schools, increases walking and cycling levels and decreases KSIs.

[Boland | Barriers and Facilitators to Cycling to School for Children in the UK: A Systematic Review | Active Travel Studies](#)

Drivers continue to lack awareness of safe behaviour around cyclists and pedestrians. In a 2021 Brake survey, 50% of drivers admitted to not understanding safe passing distances for cyclists, and over one-third said they had never been taught how to overtake cyclists safely. The Cycle Savvy Driving programme, developed with The Bikeability Trust and funded by DfT, has begun addressing this gap for Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs), but coverage remains limited.

Empathy-based training also shows promise. The “Exchanging Places” and “Safer Road Use by All” (SRUBA) programmes, which allow HGV drivers and cyclists to experience each other’s perspectives, have been linked to improvements in driver awareness and cyclist confidence.

The growth of commercial e-cargo bike use has outpaced the establishment of safety standards. A 2022 DfT study identified that the lack of a formal training and licensing system for cargo bike operators contributes to inconsistent safety practices across the sector. Untrained riders, many of whom use e-bikes for work, are at higher risk of collisions and mechanical failure, particularly when carrying loads. Employers currently lack recognised benchmarks to assess rider competency.

Many gig economy riders operate without training, and frequently lack knowledge of UK traffic laws. Observations from towns such as Northampton have highlighted that delivery cyclists regularly breach The Highway Code, raising risks for themselves and others. The HSE’s own guidance notes that “workers who drive or ride for work” are subject to duty-of-care requirements, yet few platforms provide or require training.

We recommend that The Government commit to a long-term, fully funded programme to provide universal access to Bikeability cycle training for all school-age children in England on the national curriculum. This should be delivered as a core component of the Government’s active travel strategy, delivered by the Bikeability Trust, and a target number of children to be reached with Bikeability within the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 3 (CWIS3).

All adult cycle training should align with the National Standard for Cycle Training and be subject to the same quality assurance processes as Bikeability. This would guarantee a consistent, trusted standard for those learning or returning to cycling.

There is an urgent need for national training standards for commercial cargo bike use

The Cycle Savvy Driving programme should be expanded and funded to reach all Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) and be incorporated into learner driver education. Early exposure to cyclist awareness will improve driving behaviours and reduce conflict on the road.

There is an urgent need for national training standards for commercial cargo bike use, including pedicabs. These should cover load handling, urban navigation, and risk management, either as an extension of existing cycle training standards or as a standalone framework. A recognised qualification system would support rider competency, professional development, and employer confidence, while formal maintenance training would improve vehicle safety and reduce operating costs.

Finally, delivery riders in the gig economy must be covered by strengthened Health and Safety Executive guidance. Licensing regimes should require basic training for riders, ensuring safe and professional standards across the sector.

Polling Headlines

	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
Top 3 by Support (% selecting this measure in their top 5)	1. Increasing number of safe crossings 65% 2. Preventing cars/other vehicles blocking the pavement 64% 3. Safe cycling and walking routes segregated from traffic 64%	1. Increasing number of safe crossings 64% 2. Safe cycling and walking routes segregated from traffic 63% 3. Preventing cars/other vehicles from blocking the pavement 61%

The above table is a summary of responses to the question “Which, if any, of the following do you think are the most important measures needed to enable primary and secondary school pupils to travel via cycling and/or walking, to and from school?”

Main road crossings, pavements clear from parked cars and segregated cycle lanes were the most important measures to achieve this.

Soft measures, like training and flexible work are important but need safe physical infrastructure to enable them.

10% of parents said they walk less than once a month or never.

Parents with children 4 years or younger were twice as likely to avoid walking because of pavement parking.

Bikeability Level 2 graduates are significantly more likely to cycle for fun or to get somewhere than non-graduates (Source: Bikeability Data).

Parents of primary children are 64% more likely to be put off walking by the speed of traffic along the route (23% of parents with primary children vs 14% national average).

Objection to increased levels of motor traffic around schools increases with age

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
68%	73%	81%	81%	87%

In London, 72% of people agree there is too much motor traffic around school compared to 81% nationally.

Parents with older children are more likely to agree that older primary school children should feel safe walking to school independently.

Households with children were 25% more likely to say it is not safe enough for children to walk or cycle near school.

Only 23% of people disagree that closing school streets off to motor vehicles at pick up and drop off times would have a positive impact on their local area.

Walking to school levels have remained healthy wherever trips are less than 1 mile (although 17% of primary and 9% of secondary school trips under 1 mile are still driven). Source: National Travel Survey, DfT.





School Travel: Call for Evidence

71% of primary school journeys covering 1-2 miles are made by car (Source: National Travel Survey 2023, DfT), yet 81% of people agree there is too much motor traffic around schools. A parent of a pupil at John Ball primary school said “people are speeding to get their kids to school on time, the exact same journey we make on foot”. Reallocating road space around schools provides a significant opportunity to enable active travel journeys to school.

The first step towards achieving modal shift around schools is implementing School Streets. School Streets can demonstrate the benefits of reduced traffic and increased safety in the immediate vicinity of schools, potentially building public support for wider active travel infrastructure. Across 18 School Street schemes in London, **motor traffic outside schools fell by 68% on average and walking rates increased by 30%, and cycling/scooting by 7%.**³ The experience of quieter, safer streets during these times can illustrate the positive impacts of reducing motor vehicle dominance in the wider neighbourhood. 81% of parents **supported** School Streets in London after experiencing the scheme.⁴

3 <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/school-streets-evaluation-report-website.pdf>
4 <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/school-streets-qualitative-research-2022.pdf>

Our own YouGov polling showed that people want **safe routes that link residential areas to school gates** with minimal conflict with vehicles. Main road crossings, quiet 20mph streets and segregated cycle lanes were the most important measures to achieve this. One measure that could achieve a continuous safe walk to school are side road zebra crossings. Early pilots saw **up to 80-90% driver compliance** at side road crossings with zebra markings. **TRL Research**⁵ found that side road zebras **reduce mean entry speeds of drivers by 3 mph.**

TRL's Overall Conclusion

“Side road zebras (without beacons) substantially improve pedestrian priority and safety at side road crossings, without causing unacceptable delay or confusion for motorists. Well-designed raised crossings deliver the highest compliance and should be strongly encouraged.”

(TRL, PPR994, 2022)

A comprehensive approach to walking and cycling infrastructure is essential to achieve a modal shift in

5 Transport Research Laboratory, 2021-2023

how children travel to school. Kesgrave is a town near Ipswich with a developed historic network of safe walking and cycling infrastructure; at Kesgrave High School 86% of journeys are walked, wheeled or cycled.

Kidical Mass London submitted extensive evidence on the topic of home to school travel, including on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods which provide “area-wide safe zones and have been shown to cut casualties by at least 50% with no harm at boundaries. This facilitates cycling as a viable mode for families transporting children across a range of local activities in a given area: to school; to clubs; to friends; to leisure activities etc. Where LTNs have been introduced there has been a significant increase in cycling recorded.”⁶ They go on to say “Protected space (high quality cycle lanes fully separated from traffic) is also critical to facilitate safe cycling for children and has been shown to reduce the chance of injury by 40-65%”

“Living Streets’ WOW year-round walk to school challenge inspires children to walk to school more. In it’s work with Barton Moss Primary’s pupils in Salford, Living Streets provided intensive support alongside the challenge, and ran a School Route Audit, looking at the local walking environment with school pupils and their families. In finding issues with road markings and a lack of school lighting, Living Streets made recommendations that both were improved, which were made, providing a safer route to school. At the end of 2022, 17% of journeys recorded on the WOW Travel Tracker in class showed pupils were being driven all the way to school, compared with a national average of 43%.”

Safe, Sustainable Travel Torbay advocates for a default 20mph speed limit in areas where people and traffic mix, unless there are compelling reasons to make an

6 <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/tfl-impacts-of-low-traffic-neighbourhoods-feb-2024-acc.pdf>
7 <https://findingspress.org/article/18226-cycling-injury-risk-in-london-impacts-of-road-characteristics-and-infrastructure>

exception. Our own YouGov polls show that this is a popular policy amongst the public. Three quarters of respondents thought that 20mph zones were needed to enable primary and secondary school pupils to travel via cycling and/or walking, to and from school. QDL Training, a provider of haulage training courses, reports that most of their professional drivers support the introduction of 20mph speed limits in built-up areas, especially near schools, considering it a worthwhile strategy.

Bikeability training, alongside infrastructure, is crucial to empower children with the skills and confidence to cycle safely. Research from the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) indicated a significant association between Bikeability Level 2 training and KSIs, whereby increased levels of Bikeability training delivery is associated with fewer KSIs, and fewer cyclist KSIs, at the local authority level. Kidical Mass London argues that “Our experience is that children as young as 5 years old can often comfortably cycle long distances unaided (for example rides of up to 6 miles) and enjoy doing so. [...] it is not children’s ability or will that holds back cycling, but rather other factors including the lack of safety and lack of dedicated infrastructure on the road network”. Cycle training, alongside reallocating road space away from driving around schools, increases walking and cycling levels and decreases KSIs.

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Case Study: Trafford



Trafford has five School Street schemes operating, two of which are marshalled full time and the others part time. The creation of a School Streets Officer post (22.5 hours per week) working in conjunction with the Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Lead on the Public Health team has enabled the schemes to be established rapidly alongside a high level of engagement with each school community. School Street consultations have involved letters to parents and residents, in person and virtual feedback events, residents' meetings, school assemblies, work with school staff and school councils / eco teams, as well as the gathering of feedback from pupils. Ongoing engagement activities on the School Streets to foster sociability and a sense of community, engage people with the benefits and attract new volunteers have included fancy dress, treasure hunts and races. This level of in depth engagement has resulted in high levels of community support for the School Streets.

A recent parent survey at Seymour Park shows that 87% of parents 'Strongly Agreed' with the statement: "School Streets are having a positive impact."⁸ The School Streets Officer role also allows for continual recruitment and support of volunteers, increasing the likelihood that the School Streets will be sustainable and that schools in areas of socio-economic deprivation can participate in the scheme without needing additional staff capacity.

School Streets in Trafford have benefited from strong political support, with the Leader of the Council volunteering on a trial and several Exec Members and other councillors volunteering on a regular basis. The situation of the School Streets Officer role in the Public Health team has meant that School Streets can be used as a mechanism for achieving wider strategic priorities, particularly with regard to tackling health inequalities.

School Travel: Recommendations

We recommend that the Government establish a dedicated funding stream within the Active Travel Fund (ATF), administered by Active Travel England, specifically to support the delivery of safe and inclusive active travel infrastructure around schools. This Routes to School Fund should be ringfenced and allocated to local authorities alongside existing ATF allocations. The fund should be structured in two complementary components:

School Streets Capacity Fund

This initial tranche should focus on enabling local authorities and schools to build the capacity required to plan, implement and manage School Streets schemes. This includes funding for outreach, training, staff time, engagement, TROs, and monitoring, with additional funding available in further tranches for ANPR enforcement.

Routes to School Fund

The second tranche should support the delivery of infrastructure that enables safe, direct and attractive walking, wheeling and cycling routes between residential areas and school gates. Interventions may include, modal filters and traffic-calming on local streets, 20mph zones, safe crossings on main roads, short sections of segregated cycle infrastructure, parking management and traffic calming near school sites. Overall there should be a greater space allocation to people travelling actively.

Allowing authorities to implement Side Road Zebras could be transformative nationwide for parents and children walking to school. Our own YouGov polling shows motorist compliance with The Highway Code is poor when it comes to giving pedestrians priority crossing side roads. In Greater Manchester, trials of Side Road Zebras showed drivers giving way to pedestrians 65% more often with a Side Road Zebra.⁹

Bikeability

We recommend that The Government commit to a long-term, fully funded programme to add Bikeability Training to the National Curriculum for all school-age children in England. This should be delivered as a core component of the Government's active travel strategy and embedded within the Department for Transport's ongoing Active Travel Fund (ATF) framework, with delivery overseen by Active Travel England.

- **No child to leave primary school without Bikeability Level 2 training, by placing a statutory target similar to swimming**
- **All Adult cycle training to be based on the National Standards and subject to same quality assurance of Bikeability**

8. [1] <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/piHGtUBJBwUrDja/>

9. <https://beeactive.tfgm.com/walking/side-road-zebras/>

Road Danger Review: The current situation

Traffic deaths and injuries are violent and tragic. They have a hugely damaging socio-economic impact, and every one is avoidable.

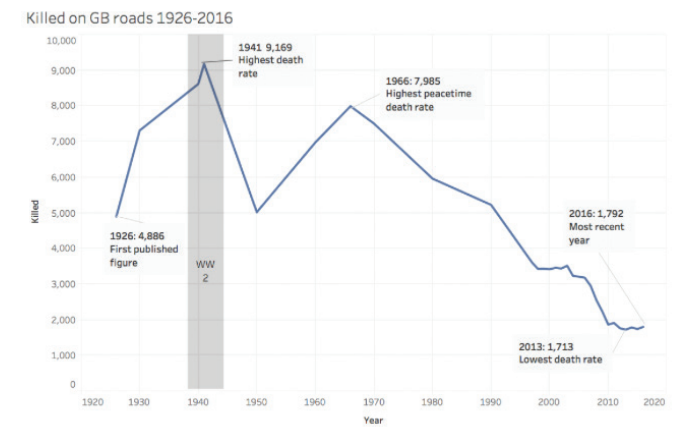
The last government Road Safety Strategy was published in 2011. Since then, fatalities on Britain’s roads have continued to decline at a much lower rate than they did in the preceding 50 years. The reduction in fatalities has been in line with the 2011 Strategy’s baseline forecasts, but rates of serious injury, and therefore overall numbers of people killed or seriously injured (KSI), have stayed higher than the worst case forecast from 2011.

Some measures from the Strategy were implemented, including:

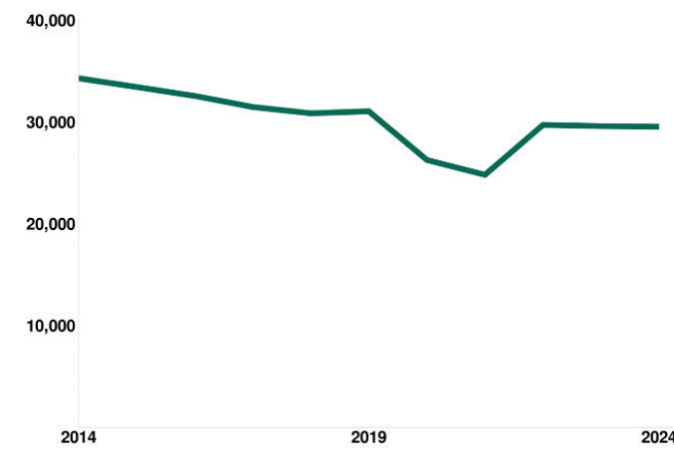
- Fixed penalty notices for careless driving
- Stricter rules for drivers failing a roadside drink-driving breathalyser test
- A new drug driving offence and introduction of roadside drug testing devices
- Safety messaging during driving theory tests.
- Wider use of vehicle forfeiture powers, particularly for uninsured or dangerous driving offences

One recommended measure that has not been implemented is a new post-test vocational qualification to succeed Pass Plus and improve novice driver safety. The government has also recently ruled out Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) for young and new drivers, despite this group being at particularly high risk and GDL having proven effective in other countries.

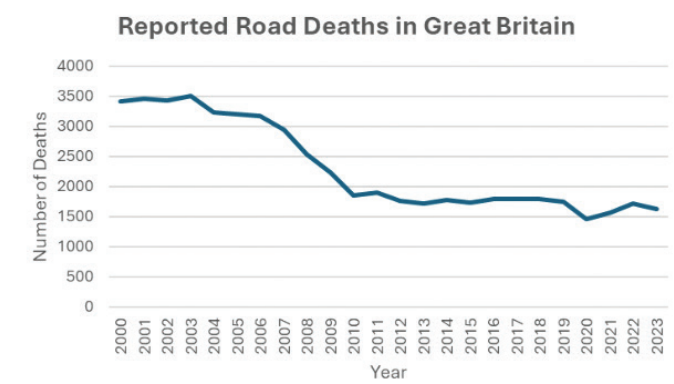
In the absence of government measures to reestablish a strong downward trajectory in KSI figures, many devolved regional authorities in the UK have adopted Vision Zero plans, typically aiming to reduce road deaths and serious injuries to near-zero by around 2040. National KSI statistics suggest their ambitions will remain aspirational, not achievable, without strong supporting policy from UK government. A fundamental shift is needed towards prioritising the safety and needs of vulnerable road users and actively promoting sustainable travel.



Fatalities 1926-2016



Reported KSIs to year ending June 2024 (provisional)



Fatalities 2000-2023

Polling headlines

Women are 30% more likely than men to say they feel less safe walking or cycling in their local area than 12 months ago

10% of UK adults say they walk (including use of mobility aids) less than once a month or never.

Men are nearly 3 times as likely as women to cycle regularly.

In Cycling Scotland’s research, “Attitudes and Behaviours towards Cycling in Scotland”, “Two thirds of respondents [to a poll] agreed ‘the roads where they live are too busy to be safe for people cycling’”, and “70% of respondents identified ‘not feeling safe enough on the roads’ as one of the main barriers to cycling”

Road Danger Review: Call for Evidence



A central theme emerging from submissions was the disproportionate risk faced by vulnerable road users. Wheels for Wellbeing, a Disabled people's organisation, state "Data from our own and others' research suggests that the main barriers to active travel for Disabled people include: infrastructure, parking and storage, the cost of non-standard cycles, lack of opportunities for share and hire, attitudes (institutional and social), and wider transport and mobility barriers". The Ramblers, Britain's largest walking charity, assert that "in many ways, walkers are the most vulnerable users of the road network". Cycling Scotland believes that "infrastructure that separates bikes from motorised traffic is the top priority to improve safety and the perception of road danger".

These risks are even more pronounced for women. Between 2009 and 2015, 82% of female cyclist deaths in London involved HGVs, compared to 43% of male cyclist deaths. Our own YouGov polling shows that women are 22% more likely than men to say they feel less safe walking or cycling in their local area than 12 months ago; men are nearly 3 times as likely as women to cycle regularly (once a week or more). A mother of three young children in London expressed feeling "fed up with the conditions of the road for pedestrians and tired of feeling powerless about it." Kidical Mass London wrote about the importance of actual and perceived danger facing women and girls using "Secluded paths, routes through parks at night, on towpaths and unlit routes [which] can disproportionately leave women and young people feeling risks to personal safety, even where road safety is

addressed. Cycleways should be direct and on well-lit and secure routes through populated areas.

The lack of consistent and effective enforcement of traffic laws is a significant concern raised across the evidence and raised particularly by Living Streets' local campaigners. There are suggestions that local authorities should be empowered to enforce a wider range of traffic offences, including speeding and pavement parking. Speeding contributes to approximately a quarter of fatal crashes, yet current penalties for speeding offences do not reflect the devastating harm caused to victims and their families. Action Vision Zero advocates for online reporting mechanisms to increase detection of careless driving and calls for a focus on investigating serious injury collisions. There are calls for reviewing sentencing for driving offences to ensure appropriate deterrence, particularly for actions that cause harm to vulnerable road users.

The increasing prevalence of larger and heavier vehicles, particularly SUVs, is highlighted as a growing threat to road safety, especially for pedestrians and cyclists. The SUV Alliance presents evidence from the US indicating that "children are 8 times more likely to be killed in a collision with an SUV than with a traditional small car"¹², and that "for every one life saved by an SUV (through better occupant safety) 12 more are lost."¹³ They argue that this trend is driven by persistent marketing and a lack of regulation and propose measures such as regulation on vehicle size and weight and a ban on SUV advertising.

Road Danger Review: Recommendations

The new Road Safety Strategy should adopt Vision Zero targets and be built around a Safe Systems approach to make Vision Zero a realistic goal.

Safe roads are designed to reduce the risk of crashes occurring, and the severity of injuries if a crash does occur.

- Minimum 10% of all transport spend should be on active travel including segregated cycle network, unobstructed footways and safe walking routes to schools
- Self-explaining road layouts, to make speed limits and good driver behaviour self-enforcing
- Proactive approach to identify crash or near-miss hotspots and improve them, for example through use of digital tools like Collisionmap¹⁴

Safe speeds reduce both likelihood and severity of impacts

- A national default speed limit of 20mph in built-up areas would save lives, enable alternative travel choices, and improve neighbourhoods.
- Enabling civil enforcement of speed limits could raise compliance, reduce burden on police forces, and allow local authorities to more easily target locations where dangerous speeding occurs. This would be complemented by legislative changes enabling local authorities to claim back their enforcement costs from the income generated by fines.



¹⁰ <https://cycling.scot/knowledge-and-data/monitoring/collecting-data/attitudes-and-behaviours-research>

¹¹ <https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/our-campaigns/publications-and-research/>

¹² <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0022437522000810>

¹³ <https://www.economist.com/interactive/united-states/2024/08/31/americans-love-affair-with-big-cars-is-killing-them>

¹⁴ <https://www.collisionmap.uk/>

Case Study: Wales - 20mph default speed limit reduced road casualties by nearly a third



The Welsh Government committed to introducing a 20mph default speed limit for restricted (lit) roads after being given the necessary legal powers in 2017. A Task Force in 2019/20 advised on the necessary legal and technical steps and the relevant legislation came into force on 17 September 2023. Local highway authorities still have the power to set local speed limits but relatively few 30mph 'exceptions' were made at that time, particularly in North Wales, and over 90% of the urban road network was made 20mph overnight. The Task Force had recommended substantial engagement by both national and local government in the run up to this 'go live' date, particularly on Exceptions, but budget and capacity constraints meant that this was not as extensive as it should have been.

There was a considerable backlash, much of it driven by misinformation over the impact of the new limit on vehicles' engines and air quality, and scepticism over the safety benefits. A petition calling on Welsh

Government to rescind the legislation received around 470,000 signatures, mostly during the first two weeks after the change. Following the appointment of a new Transport Minister in Spring 2024, Welsh Government has now issued new guidance on the setting of Exceptions and it is expected that a small number of main roads will revert to 30 mph over the next few months.

However, the change in speed limits has had a very significant impact on reducing road dangers and fatalities, demonstrating that the Welsh Government was justified in introducing the policy. In the nine months since implementation, road casualties on 20mph and 30mph roads decreased by 28% compared to the same period prior. Fatalities on these roads dropped by more than a third, from 29 to 19.

<https://www.gov.wales/police-recorded-road-collisions-january-march-2024-provisional-html>

Road Danger Review: Recommendations

Safe Vehicles are designed, built and regulated to minimise the occurrence and consequences of crashes

Until now, advances in car safety technology have focused on the safety of car occupants - the measurable outcome in the 2011 Strategy is % of drivers injured per collision by age of car. This outcome does nothing for pedestrians and cyclists who account for 26% of road casualties, and 29% of fatalities, usually after being struck by a car.

Cycling Scotland submitted evidence for their support of "the adoption of the General and Pedestrian Safety Regulations in the UK as a vital measure for improving the safety of people cycling and walking. The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) has been particularly vocal on this important issue."

Proven technologies such as Intelligent Speed Assist (ISA), Emergency Lane Keeping Systems (ELKS) and Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB) should be mandatory on all new cars, as is already the case in EU countries.

We recommend legislating to curb the rising size and weight of private cars on UK roads. SUVs and pickup truck sales have increased ten times in two decades, and now account for 66% of all new vehicle registrations in the UK. As well as posing increased risk to vulnerable road users in a collision, the trend towards heavier vehicles increases energy consumption, accelerates wear on road surfaces, and causes congestion due to vehicles' unwieldy size.

Case Study



In February 2024 the city of Paris voted to increase parking charges on the largest cars by as much as three times. In the UK, Bath and Islington councils have introduced similar measures. The government can encourage other councils to replicate these efforts given the higher risk posed to vulnerable road users from larger vehicles.

15. <https://www.pacts.org.uk/still-unvaccinated-gsr-one-year-on/>

16. <https://www.pacts.org.uk/pacts-joins-with-others-to-call-for-improved-vehicle-standard-safety/>

Road Danger Review: Recommendations

Safe road users are encouraged to use roads safely and comply with road rules, with a philosophy of shared and proportionate responsibility

- **Education and Bikeability:** Research shows higher rates of Bikeability training in schools is linked to fewer overall and cyclist KSIs. Road safety education like Bikeability and The Highway Code should be a core part of primary and secondary education, embedding safe values of shared and proportional responsibility on the roads from an early age.
- **Progressive fines based on income percentage:** Fines for traffic violations could be based on a percentage of a person's income, similar to the system in Sweden, to ensure fairness and encourage compliance across different income levels.
- **New drivers:** This recommendation of the 2011 Road Safety Strategy was never implemented. There should be more comprehensive training and support for new drivers to ensure they are adequately prepared to handle diverse driving conditions and understand the importance of road safety from the outset.
- **Drink, drug and distracted drivers:** Although much has been done to combat drink and drug driving, it still accounts for a large number of casualties - drink driving fatalities hit a ten-year high in 2022. Education and technological solutions are needed to combat the ever-growing

distractions to drivers from smartphones and in-car touchscreen systems.

- **Stricter enforcement on speeding and dangerous driving:** We recommend stricter punishment for the most serious speeding violations, including significantly lengthened driving bans. We further urge the Government to review sentencing guidelines for drivers who kill or seriously injure others on the roads. This review should include the introduction of tougher jail sentences and a lifetime driving ban for those whose actions result in death. The consequences of reckless driving must be made clear: taking a life on the road through dangerous behaviour should carry serious, life-changing penalties.
- Cycle awareness training required as part of the process to qualify as an Approved Driving Instructor, extending knowledge of cycling behaviours to learner drivers.
- Post Collision Response - data on road casualties in Great Britain comes from the STATS19 dataset collected by police forces. Changes to the way in which data is collected were recommended in 2019 following a DfT review; the majority of UK police forces have adopted the changes but it is essential that the remaining forces implement the new specification as soon as possible to enable better understanding of and action against the causes of collisions. It should also be considered whether reporting of collisions in STATS19 reflects The Highway Code's hierarchy of responsibility.



Pavements for People: Pavement Parking



The issue of pavement parking emerged as a significant and recurring concern across numerous submissions, particularly from Living Streets members. Pavement parking undermines pedestrian freedom, forcing people to take risks by moving into the road, and particularly obstructs access for wheelchair users and parents with buggies. Simplified legislation for local authorities, more widespread enforcement, and a nationwide ban could all form part of the solution for safer, more accessible streets.

The current situation

London

Since 1974, pavement parking has been prohibited across all 32 London boroughs and the City of London under the Greater London (General Purposes) Act. The Highway Code specifies: “You **MUST NOT** park partially or wholly on the pavement in London.” Exceptions exist where signage explicitly permits pavement parking.

Scotland

In December 2023, Scotland implemented a nationwide ban on pavement parking, double parking, and parking at dropped kerbs, as outlined in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. Local authorities were granted powers to enforce these restrictions, aiming to enhance pedestrian safety, particularly for vulnerable groups. Edinburgh was the first city to enforce this ban in January 2024, followed by Glasgow on January 29, 2025.

England and Wales

Pavement parking is not uniformly prohibited across England and Wales. Local authorities possess limited powers to address the issue, typically relying on Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to enforce restrictions in specific areas. This process can be cumbersome and resource-intensive, leading to inconsistent enforcement. The police retain authority to address instances where vehicles cause unnecessary obstruction, but resources are stretched.

Managing Pavement Parking Consultation

In August 2020, the Department for Transport (DfT) initiated a consultation titled “Managing pavement parking,” seeking views on potential reforms to address pavement parking issues. The consultation presented three options:

- 1. Improving the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)**
Process: Streamlining the existing system to enable local authorities to prohibit pavement parking more efficiently.
- 2. Allowing Civil Enforcement of ‘Unnecessary Obstruction’:** Granting local authorities with civil parking enforcement powers the ability to enforce against unnecessary obstruction of the pavement.
- 3. Introducing a London-Style Pavement Parking Prohibition:** Implementing a nationwide ban on pavement parking, similar to the existing regulations in London.

Pavements for People: Call for Evidence

Our call for evidence revealed a consistent and deeply felt public concern about the dangers and inequalities created by pavement parking. Across diverse locations and demographics, individuals reported being forced into the road due to blocked pavements, with particular impact on disabled people, older adults, those using wheelchairs or buggies, and parents with young children. A resident from Bromley highlighted a recurring issue of those less mobile: “My elderly mother is forced to travel by mobility scooter in the road, unable to walk along the pavements at all.”

Wheels for Wellbeing, highlights a national charity representing disabled cyclists, said: “Pavement parking is a major issue for Disabled people. Active travel begins with pavements. However, nationwide, pavements lack dropped kerbs and correctly installed tactiles, and pavements are often narrow, with poor or dangerous surface quality and covered in street furniture/clutter. Pavements are also increasingly obstructed by parked (and sometimes moving) cars. All of which makes them impassable for many Disabled people. WfW recommends a nationwide, enforced, pavement parking ban.” 70% of wheelchair users said pavement parking was a regular problem that forced them into the road - Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), 2020

Our own YouGov polling, conducted in March 2025, showed parents with children under four were twice as likely (21% compared to 11% nationally) to reconsider walking due to pavement parking. “There are many pavements in my neighbourhood that I can’t walk down hand in hand with one of my children, let alone two, because of the cars parked on the pavement.” - From a 46-year-old father in the south-east of England. Respondents reported not only the barriers created by pavement parking, but also the public appetite for action. Many called for clearer rules, visible enforcement, and stronger local powers to act. Councillors from Manchester and Hertfordshire noted that enforcement is limited and inconsistent, with councils reliant on outdated processes and overstretched resources.

There is strong support, both from citizens and from local representatives, for giving councils and police the tools they need to act locally and consistently. While we understand there is concern about the political popularity of pavement parking enforcement, we note, for example,



that a Daily Express reader poll highlighted that 78 percent were in support of a ban, resulting in the story: “Inconsiderate pavement parking blasted as readers back UK-wide ban.”

Not only is a pavement parking ban popular, it also cuts complaints to councils in half. In Edinburgh, where a ban was introduced in January 2024, complaints about pavement parking, double parking, and blocked dropped kerbs fell from 1,316 in February to just 687 in April.

Many contributors also emphasised that a patchwork of enforcement will not go far enough and asked for a default nationwide ban on pavement parking, as seen in London and Scotland. “We now need the necessary resources and powers to take clear and consistent action.”
- **Eve Holt, ex-councillor at Manchester City Council**

Pavements for People: Recommendations



We recommend that, during this Parliament, the government implement Option 3 - **a national, London-style ban on pavement parking nationwide.** This policy has worked in London and is already being successfully rolled out in Scotland. Since the London ban was implemented in 1974, the number of private motor vehicles registered on UK roads has almost trebled, from 13.95 million to 41.2 million. Pedestrians in towns and cities across England and Wales now face obstruction on a similar scale to that which required a pavement parking ban in 1970s London - a similar national policy is needed to restore their freedom.

The number of private motor vehicles registered on UK roads has almost trebled



Integration of National Policy and Funding into Local Practice

Polling headlines

Urban residents are 10 times more likely than town / suburban residents to say that walking or cycling in their local area is more safe now than 12 months ago.

Two thirds of people in rural or fringe areas say there has been no change in their safety in walking or cycling in the last 12 months.

22% of Londoners said the roads near them are safer now than 12 months ago. This is nearly 3 times higher than the national average of 8%.

Integration of National Policy and Funding into Local Practice: Call for Evidence

Adequate and sustained funding is essential for local authorities to deliver meaningful improvements in road safety. Campaign group Safe, Sustainable Travel Torbay highlighted that despite the adoption of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) in 2021, **“little progress has been made on its priorities since then”**, suggesting that adoption of plans alone is insufficient without corresponding funding and political will.

London has recently invested more per head in active travel infrastructure than any other region in the UK. Our own YouGov polling showed that 22% of Londoners said the roads near them are safer now than 12 months ago. This is nearly 3 times higher than the national average of 8% **and is directly proportional to the average spend per head on active travel** at £10 nationally and £24 in London.¹⁷

These results reaffirm the saying: “You get the outcomes you design for.” Regions that invest in active travel will see directly corresponding benefits in modal share, health and wellbeing, and reductions in congestion, air pollution and road traffic collisions. Kidical Mass London highlights that “It is very noticeable how the majority of attendance to our rides comes from London Boroughs which have invested in safe cycling infrastructure and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. These are the areas where families feel safest and most comfortable to cycle”

The Government faces a clear challenge: to scale up national investment in safer, more sustainable modes of travel - such as walking, cycling, and public transport - so that the benefits are felt across the whole country, not just in London and other major cities. Our own YouGov polling shows that urban residents are ten times (urban residents 10% vs national average 1%) more likely than those in towns and suburban areas to say that walking or cycling locally feels safer now than it did 12 months ago.

While perceptions of road safety may differ between urban and rural communities, no one should be denied investment that supports their health and wellbeing. The devolution of powers to metropolitan regional authorities could help tackle regional inequalities, but this must be supported by clear national standards and funding guidelines to ensure local spending aligns with broader transport and public health goals.

A recurring theme in submissions was a desire for clear national standards. Wheels for Wellbeing recommend **“Enforced national standards (rather than guidance) on pavement accessibility”**. We should celebrate the UK’s success in enormously reducing road danger from the mid-1960s until circa 2010 - this success was achieved by requiring all designers of roads to comply with the same national design guidance (e.g. Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Manual for Streets). Much of that guidance needs revisiting and updating to align with today’s “people first” design principles, and should allow for innovative new designs like CYCLOPS junctions - but it’s essential that a road user placed anywhere in the UK immediately understands the road layout and what behaviour is expected of them.

National policy and funding need to address disparities in active travel provision and road safety across different regions and for different population groups. Wheels for Wellbeing highlight the lack of **“nationally representative baseline data regarding Disabled people”**, making it difficult to assess whether new schemes are addressing inequalities. They recommend **“A national strategy to improve data collection in all evidence gathering regarding Disabled people’s mobility and active travel”**.

¹⁷ <https://www.ippr.org/media-office/years-of-under-investment-in-englands-streets-has-left-people-walk-wary-and-cycle-cautious-says-new-report>

Integration of National Policy and Funding into Local Practice: Recommendations

We recommend that 10% of all transport spend should be on walking and cycling, with a minimum of £35 per head per year on physical infrastructure for active travel.

The Government should maintain a strong national mandate for safer streets, keeping local authorities and designers up to date with changes to design standards through partnership with professional bodies such as the CIHT and the LGA.

**The Government
should maintain a
strong national mandate
for safer streets**



Safer Streets for All: The Upcoming Government Road Safety Strategy

Version 1.0, May 2025



The
Bikeability
Trust