

**Developing a London
cycling safety code
10001
December 2010**



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- Research conducted by 2CV

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Introduction

Background

- As put forth in the Cycle Safety Action Plan earlier this year, *‘As well as an unprecedented investment in the delivery of innovative cycling schemes like cycle hire and cycle superhighways, we must make sure that every person who gets on a bicycle feels and most importantly is as safe as possible’* – *Kulveer Ranger, Mayor of London’s Transport Advisor*
- Towards this end, Better Routes and Places (BRAP) are looking at opportunities to develop educational tools and safety advice for cyclists to encourage cyclists to ride more safely and considerately for themselves and for others
- Research is required to explore the potential of a London cycling safety code and how to create engagement with it. In addition, some messages have been developed and research is required to assess response to these messages and likely impact on behaviour



Research Objectives

- *To understand how a London cycling safety code/tips may be of benefit to London's cyclists and encourage them to ride more safely for themselves and others*
 - *Spontaneous ideas for what a cycling safety code may include*
 - *Response to the proposed cycling safety code stimulus*
 - *Ideas for improvement: concept, content, language, tone of voice, how to optimise engagement and adherence*

Sample

- The research comprised of eight groups with London cyclists

Group	Age	Gender	SEG	Inner/outer London	Cyclist status
1	20-35	Female	ABC1	Inner	Less experienced
2	35-55	Female	ABC1	Outer	Experienced
3	20-35	Male	ABC1	Inner/Outer	Less experienced
4	35-55	Male	ABC1	Inner/Outer	Experienced
5	20-35	Female	ABC1	Inner	Less experienced
6	35-55	Female	ABC1	Outer	Experienced
7	20-35	Male	ABC1	Inner/Outer	Less experienced
8	35-55	Male	ABC1	Inner/Outer	Experienced

- The sample included a mix of commuter and leisure cyclists from a good geographical spread of London areas
- Research was conducted by 2CV in December 2010

Stimulus

- A number of different stimulus elements were provided to the group to assist in development of the London cycling safety code

12 x safe cycling advice messages developed by TfL

Statistics about cycling in London

Logos of potential contributors to the campaign (e.g. TfL, Mayor of London, Met Police, Evans, London Cycling Campaign, DfT etc)

Examples of other cycling safety codes



**Summary and
conclusions**

Summary and conclusions

1. Cyclists quickly get into habits (good and bad) which are mainly driven by learning from observations and experiences on the road.
2. Like most drivers, cyclists quickly develop a self-perception of being a good cyclist.
3. Again like drivers, cyclists generally agree on the need for 'good' behaviours but at the same time justify their own rule-breaking behaviours.
4. Whilst all agree in principle with the **concept** of a '*cycling safety code*', in reality the messages suggested by cyclists and evaluated in research contain no 'new news' and in any case (like drivers) cyclists tend to adhere to or breach the rules according to their own judgement.
5. In order to change cyclists' behaviours, messages (and the media in which they are transmitted) need to prompt Acceptance, Reflection and Adoption (i.e. they need to make cyclists re-examine their behaviours and work out for themselves why the rules are there, and why it's in their interests to comply).

Summary and conclusions

6. In conclusion, whilst it is important for cyclists to be aware of, and adhere to, the desired behaviours, a simple code of conduct is unlikely to change their behaviours because they are deeply-ingrained at an early stage, and cyclists justify them rationally (as they see it).
7. A more indirect method of changing the behaviours is required, which would consist of (but not be limited to)
 - Embedding the twelve guidelines into existing collateral (as has been done for cycle hire)
 - Positioning them as a way of 'enjoying safe and responsible cycling' as opposed to a set of rules
 - Positioning them as a cyclist-to-cyclist set of guidelines, as opposed to a TfL-to-cyclist set of rules

Cycling in London

Mindset and risks

A spectrum of cyclists exists

Cautious



- Less experienced and more infrequent cyclists. Lack confidence
- Create a bubble around themselves and do not interact with other road users
- Feel intimidated by other road users
- Open to training / additional support

Bigger Picture



- More experienced and cycle regularly
- Confident / positively assertive
- Read the road ahead
- Desire to learn to become a better cyclist

Over confident



- High frequency and 'professional' cyclists
- Aggressive and competitive cycling style
- Do not want to pressure or advice from others

Cautious and Bigger Picture cyclists are both open to becoming better cyclists

Cyclists learn on the go from practical experience and advice

- For most cyclists, the only formal training they have received (if any) has been cycle proficiency tests at school:
 - The ‘basics’ of cycling (control of bike, arm signals, basic maintenance)
 - Training at school or on residential streets, not inner London
- Most useful and practical learning happens as you cycle:
 - Mirror other cyclists’ behaviour, get tips from friends
 - Develop own coping mechanisms
 - Limited to location and circumstance
 - Learning by consequence – eg when bad things happen
 - Learn from own mistakes, other people’s experiences, known ‘hot spots’ (eg junctions, ghost bikes)
 - Can result in the wrong habits being formed

“I’d say the biggest learning curve was the first two weeks of commuting, after that I became a bit more aware and after about six months I was confident”

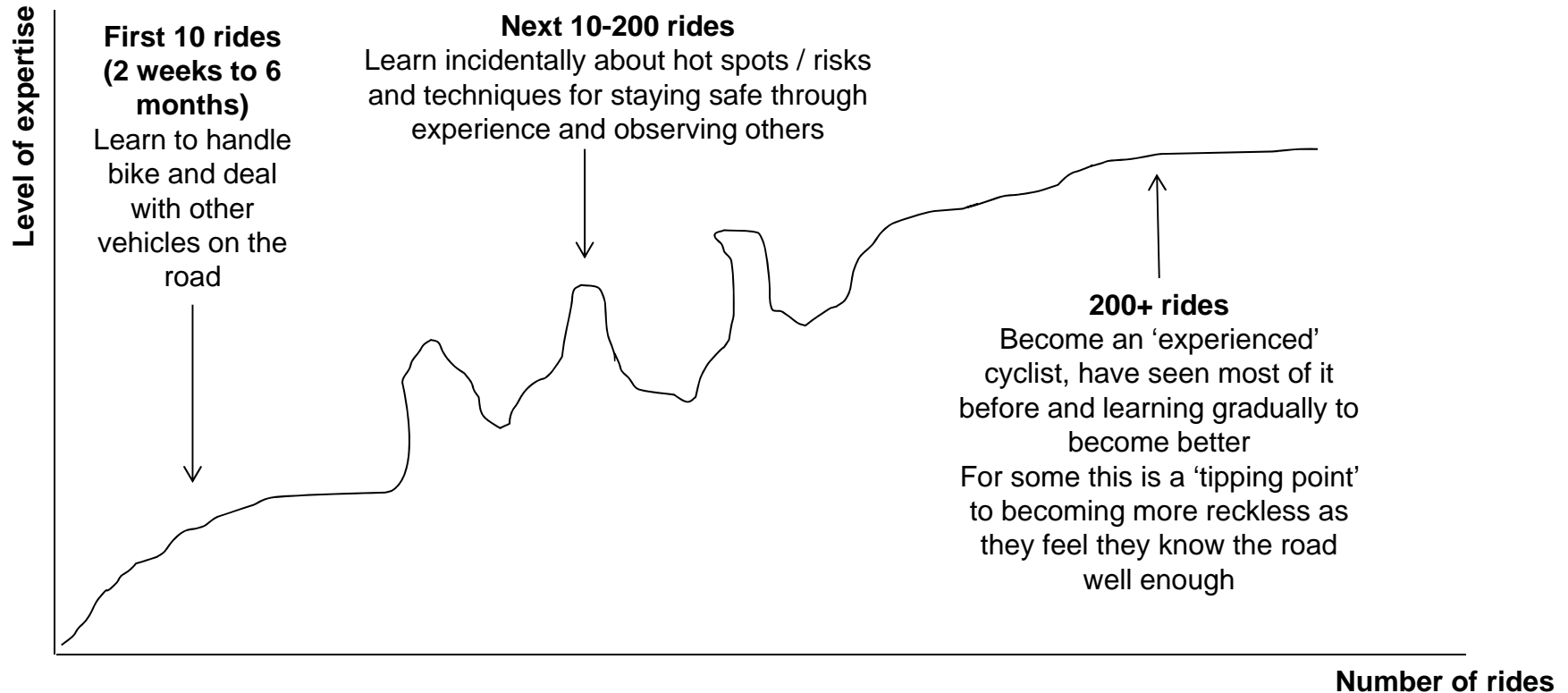
Experienced, Male

“I’ve learnt from my partner who bought me my bike, I like cycling with him at weekends, but wouldn’t want to do it alone”

Female, Inexperienced

Informality of learning leads to many individual approaches and coping mechanisms

The learning curve



Most relevant learning happens on the road, from both good and bad experiences / observations

London cyclists' psychology: I trust my judgement

- Cyclists develop a coping mechanism to deal with fear and the inherent risk of cycling in London – a belief that *their 'judgement' will prevail and keep them safe*

Cautious

More likely to be cycling 'in a bubble' – shutting down awareness of other road users to lessen feelings of fear (not making eye contact), may never feel confident or motivated to look around them

→ *Take as few 'risks' as possible and cycle passively believing this is the safest they can be*

Bigger picture and Overly confident

These cyclists become experts, are comfortable multi-tasking and taking in their surroundings. Making confident and bold decisions makes them feel safer

→ *Believe their judgement is king and will protect them from adversity*

The more confident you become cycling on London's roads, the more you rely on your own judgement. Learned and repetitive behaviours are hardest to change

The majority of cyclists are unified by a common attitude of how cyclists 'should' behave

- In principle, cyclists share the idea that they should abide by the rules of the road and respect other road users
 - A safety code is suggested to highlight the rules
- However, the reality of London roads can lead to a disconnect between this belief and their actual behaviour



“Cyclists can be so badly behaved, running red lights and being a danger to themselves and others. It’s not right, something needs to be done”

Experienced, Male

“There are basic rules everyone should abide by, like using lights, and keeping your bike in good condition”

Inexperienced, Male

All cyclists want to be taken seriously – be seen to be ‘doing their bit’ and not in the wrong
The challenge is to get this belief translated into action on the roads

Times when behaviours bend under pressure

- Cyclists can feel threatened by vehicles and will rationalise bending the rules to protect them from dangerous situations
- See other cyclists doing the same
- Revert back to 'leisure' ideas of cycling – carefree, disregard for other road users
- Perceived to be few laws for cyclist behaviours, or they aren't enforced very often

“There are some nasty junctions on my route that I know are safer if I pull away before the lights turn

Experienced, Male

“If I've had a few drinks and it's quiet then I might ride on the pavement for parts of the journey – just to be safer

Experienced, Female

Lack of enforcement creates a culture of disobedience against other road users

The rules of 'safe' cycling in London are multi-dimensional

Cycling in general

- *Common sense – learn from cycling proficiency when young, being a driver*

Fixed considerations

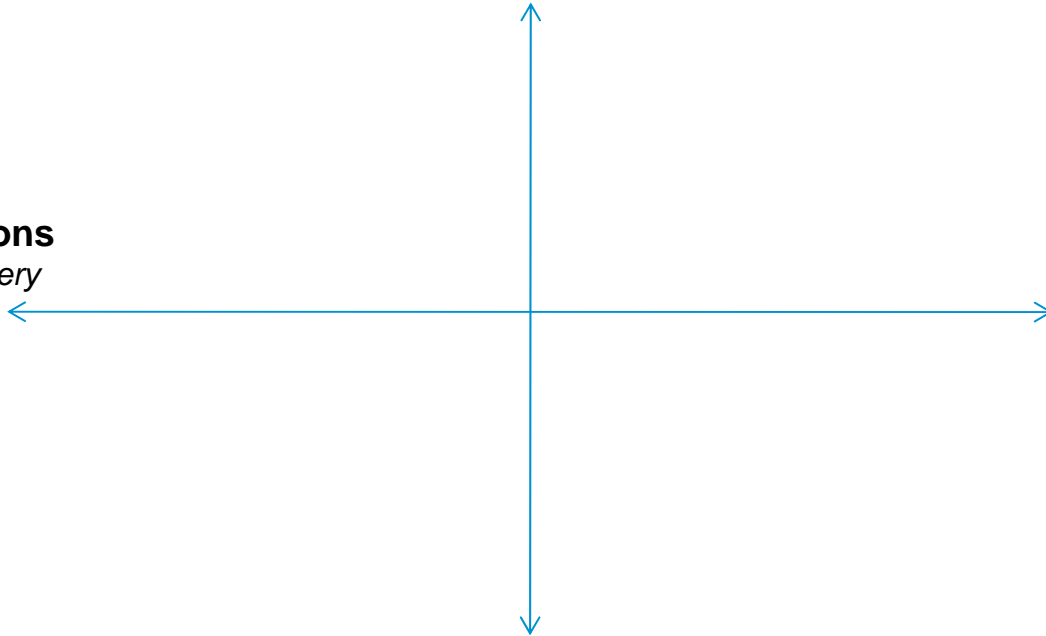
- *Always relevant, every time you ride*

Circumstantial considerations

- *Context dependent, making a judgement call*

Cycling in London

- *Experience – learn from own/other people's experience, mirroring other cyclists behaviour*
- *Cycling as a mode of transportation*
- *Pressure from busy road conditions*



The rules of 'safe' cycling in London

The basic 'rules' of cycling

- Wear a helmet
- Wear appropriate clothing – visibility
- Bike lights after dark – red and white
- Signalling to other vehicles
- Maintenance of your bike
- Looking twice before proceeding

Fixed considerations

'Doing my bit' on London's roads

- Confidence – make a decision and go for it, ability to multi-task (look, signal, accelerate, check twice etc.)
- Know your rights, highway code
- Allow full door's width from parked cars
- Ride away from the gutter
- Considerate cycling – safer if you acknowledge other vehicles, make eye contact
- Cyclists have responsibilities too
- Know your route – otherwise can get distracted
- Consider the weather and time of day
- Use all of your senses to stay alert – no headphones
- Undertaking at junctions can be fatal

Cycling in general

Cycling is for fun

- Pavement – if it gets dangerous, safer on the pavement
- Drinking and cycling – only had 1-2 drinks, then ok
- Running red lights – anyone around? If not then it's ok

Circumstantial considerations

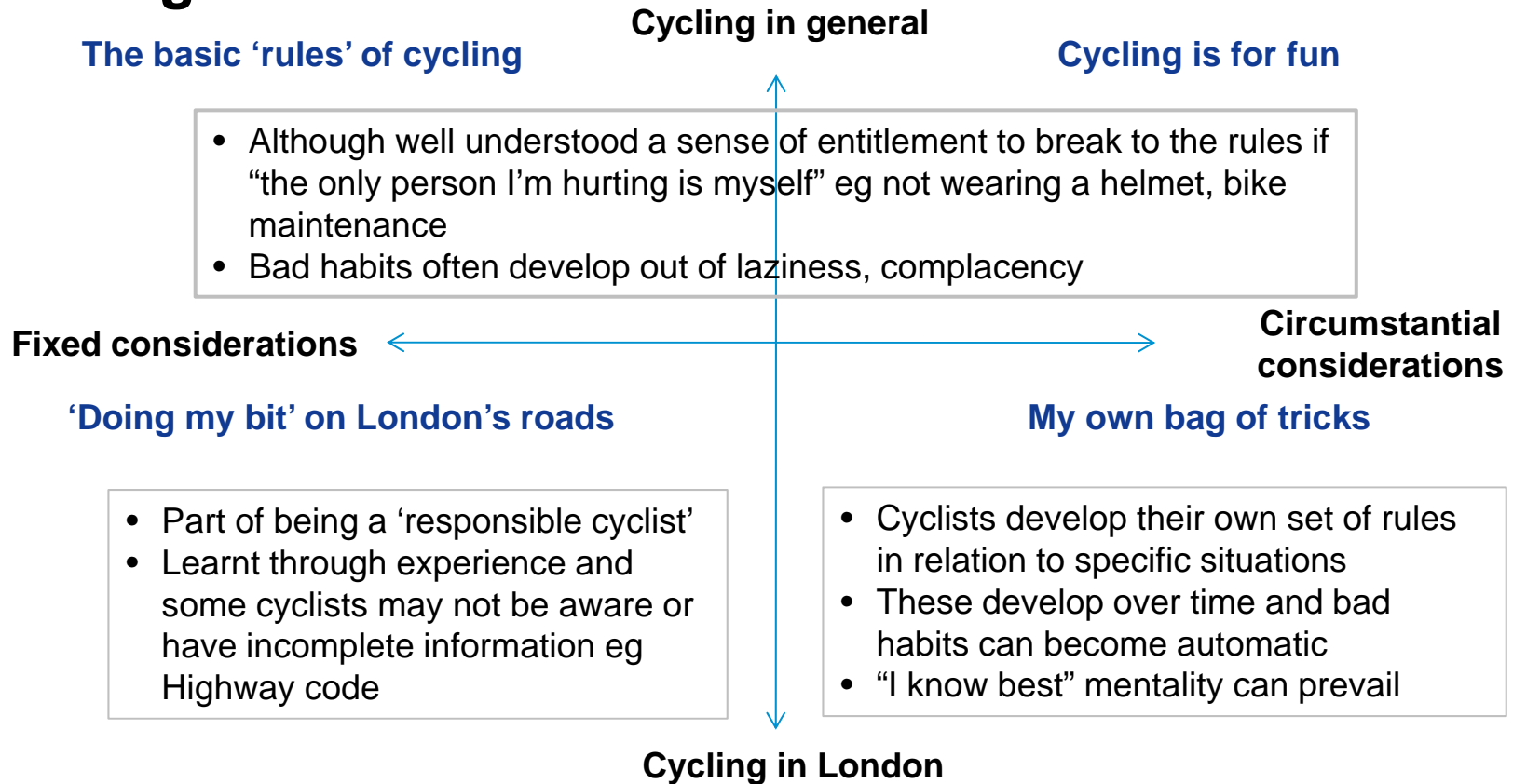
My own bag of tricks

- Running reds – can keep you safer
- Going the wrong way down a one way street to avoid busier roads
- Wait at the front of cars – helps with visibility, swerving through traffic if necessary
- Turning left at red light at junctions – can keep you safer
- London's roads are unpredictable-need to change your positioning, relation to other cars as need be
- Often safer to pass on the right
- Roundabouts – can get on pavement
- How to deal with buses, taxis, motorbikes – depends on driver, pressure to go faster, etc

Cycling in London

*Messages tested

Breaking the rules



Many rules are seen as personal judgement calls and thus rule breaking is rife

Each journey is the accumulation of many different safety decisions



Cyclists are not always consistent, even within their own decision and many different factors lead to each decision they make: situation, mood, purpose of journey, adrenaline, who they're with etc

Cycling case studies – over confident

Male, Soho tattooist, experienced

- Ashley has been cycling in London for over 10 years, since he was 18 – he commutes to work daily on his bike
- He feels very confident about his ability to read the road and considers himself a high risk taker. He often cycles with headphones on and likes to race couriers
- Despite this over-confident stance he will not ride through red lights as considers this foolish
- He was not aware that it is against the law to ride at night without a red light on the back. He has a white light and thought this was sufficient as he is visible

Male, graphic designer, experienced

- Tom grew up in London and has been cycling more regularly for the past 5 years
- He is also a car driver and feels that makes him a very safe and confident cyclist
- Tom regularly rides home after having a few drinks after work, and does not wear high visibility clothing or lights. He also wears his headphones at times
- He justifies this behaviour by saying that when he drives his car he can always see cycle riders – even if they don't wear high vis or use lights, and so when he is on his bike, other car drivers must be able to see him too
- He is convinced that he will be able to keep himself safe in any circumstance

Cycling case studies – bigger picture

Fiona, experienced, outer London

- Fiona has commuted to work in outer London for the past 18 years and her journey is mostly on cycle paths and through parks. She tries to avoid busy roads
- Does not wear a helmet but will sometimes wear reflective bands once it gets dark
- Does not always abide by the rules of the road and has learnt the hard way – fined for jumping a red light, stopped once for riding her bike after too many drinks after work
- She does think it is safe to ride past stationary vehicles to get to the front of the traffic and will stay behind when riding on the road

Sam, female, experienced

- Sam has been cycling in London for many years. She cycles everywhere, always wears a helmet and lights but doesn't wear reflective clothing as it '*costs too much*' and '*doesn't look great*'
- She also goes through red lights occasionally where it is safer to stay ahead
- Sam used to undertake lorries at junctions to get ahead but saw a girl killed at Hackney by a LGV. Since then she has tried to avoid going on the inside because there are more important things than getting ahead. However she feels that other cyclists often pressure her by shouting or ringing their bells. She used to give into the pressure but not anymore.

Cycling case studies - cautious

Jane, less experienced, inner London

- Jane has been cycling for just over a year and only rides on short journeys to friend's houses in South Kensington
- Tends to cycle mostly in the evening and sticks to the back streets. Jane will sometimes ride on the pavement if it is quiet as she feels safer
- As she is riding when it is dark she will always wear a reflective yellow vest but does not wear a helmet as she finds it uncomfortable

Alison, less experienced, commuter

- Alison cycles to work a few days a week having started commuting eight months ago. Her husband cycles and persuaded her to try
- She is very safety conscious and always rides wearing a helmet, reflective lights and bicycle lights
- Alison feels intimidated on the road by traffic and other more experienced cyclists who sometimes shout at her for blocking their path. She will get onto the pavement as busy junctions
- She wants to learn and asks her husband for advice and has sometimes buys Cycling Weekly



**Creating safer cycling
behaviours**
Opportunities

All cyclists agree in principle how cyclists should behave

- The rules proposed by cyclists are consistent regardless of level of experience and risk taking
- They are also consistent with what is proposed by TfL currently

Get cycling / Cycle safely

Be alert

- Be aware of what's going on around you
- Watch out for pedestrians stepping off the kerb
- Watch out for vehicles pulling into the kerb or turning left
- Watch out for vehicles coming out of side streets
- Look out for drivers trying to move onto the road you're on



Be safe, get seen

- Wear a properly-fitting helmet and replace it if it gets a knock
- Wear bright or reflective clothing
- Put reflective strips on your rucksack, panniers, jacket or wrist bands
- Use lights after dark - it's the law

This code could act as a reminder of what they already know

There is agreement that these 'rules' should be endorsed

"They should put this on posters around London"
Experienced, Male

"Cyclists in London could do with being reminded"
Inexperienced, Male

"It would be good for new cyclists"
Inexperienced, Female

London Cycling Safety Code

- Do not run red lights*
- Use front and rear lights*
- Wear a helmet*
- Wear appropriate clothing*
- Signal every manoeuvre*
- Do not undertake*
- Do not cycle on the pavement*
- Cycle considerately*
- Be aware of your environment and other road users*
- Know your route*

"The things that every cyclist should know"
Experienced, Female

"I don't think it's patronising, I think it's good to remind people of cycling safely and it's common sense"
Experienced, Male

"This is what I do already, it's good to remind other people though"
Experienced, Male

However, regardless of agreement, the rules bring no new news

A minority of the messages were more contentious in terms of comprehension

Confident cycling

- Could be misinterpreted as aggressive cycling
- Confidence is a skill learned through experience rather than instruction

Road positioning

- Felt to be quite circumstantial
- More experienced required to execute
- Need to be able to read the road conditions
- Fear of intimidation from drivers
- Concerned it could put cyclists at greater risk

However, even if these were new news, neither were going to be actively taken on board without personal experience or coaching

Behaviours are engrained and a challenge to change

- All cyclists said the code would have minimal impact on their own behaviours

Cautious

Convinced they are being safe / cycling with care already

Lack confidence to change manoeuvring

"I like the idea, but if I feel scared then I am still going to jump onto the pavement"

Inexperienced, Female

"I don't trust myself sometimes to take my hands off to signal"

Inexperienced, Female

Bigger Picture and Overly Confident

Feel they have clocked up the miles to have the right to cycle how they want

Judge each scenario and the rules as they arise

"It's a good idea and I'd like to see it.... But, I've been cycling since I was 18 and can judge the traffic and know when it is safe to jump the lights"

Experienced, Male

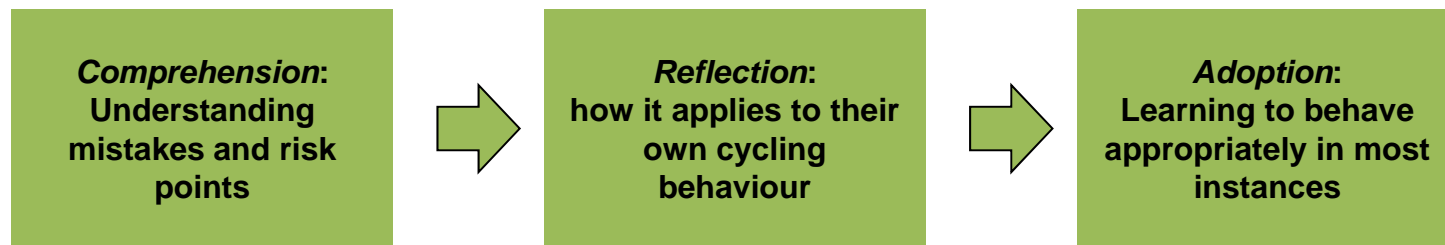
"It's good for people who have recently taken up cycling but it's not really relevant to me"

Experienced, Female

As the rules are familiar, they do not provide a motivating fact to drive behaviour change

What role can a cycling safety code play in changing behaviours?

- Due to the complex nature of cyclists behaviour (an accumulation of hundreds of different decisions on each ride) changing behaviour requires a complex and multi-stage process:



- Almost all messages achieve comprehension currently, but do not cause reflection or application
- A cycle safety code highlights the basic rules of the road but is not new news across all cyclists in London and does not tackle the more nuanced behaviours
- Achieving adoption of safer behaviour requires a high level of on-going engagement from cyclists with a commitment to continuously consider how they could cycle more safely

Whilst a cycling safety code reminds people of the basics it would not create behaviour change. A campaign that demonstrates how to be safer will be required to change behaviours.

Prompting reflection is a complex challenge

- Statistics on cycling safety didn't seem surprising or prompt reflection
- To make cyclists reflect, some cyclists claim demonstrating the worst case scenario can challenge their self perception and prompt immediate reflection
- However, whilst these are motivating, they are not ideal as they would scare many cyclists off cycling - particularly the less experienced

"They do campaigns for drivers, and that one for teen road safety, but nothing for cyclists, maybe they need to do something to remind us of the risks"
Male, Experienced



There is a need to empower rather than scare

Opportunity for reflection lies in cyclists' shared experiences

- Cyclists learn from their own experiences or shared stories from close groups eg partner, friends, work colleagues
- Use videos as a proxy for a greater wealth of experience
 - These are not hard and fast rules but demonstrate specific scenarios to aid cyclists with future decision making
 - Cyclists can easily imagine themselves in the same situation
 - Showing the consequences (not shocking but close scrapes) provide greater explanation for the recommendations

"I saw someone get killed by a lorry in Hackney and now I will never undertake a lorry, even though I sometimes get pressured by other cyclists to go up the inside

Female, Experienced

I got knocked off by cars a few times when I first started cycling to work and it was in the same situation at a junction– when the car has turned left and not seen me going straight on. Now I move out into the middle of the lane

Male, Experienced

A more practical and engaging demonstration of the code of conduct

And training can benefit cautious cyclists

Cautious

Currently lack the awareness to look up and learn from other cyclists on the road

Pool of experience is very limited

Recognise they lack confidence and this is a cause for concern

Spontaneously suggest training would be of benefit

Bigger Picture and Overly Confident

Very difficult to engage these groups with training courses as they feel they know best

An opportunity for training in bike maintenance or route planning to avoid accident hot spots

Help to demonstrate 'confident' cycling techniques

Safety messages require relevant hooks

- Cyclists are hard to engage with 'safety' messages as they think they are riding safely
- Due to the complex nature of cycle safety behaviour, there are three areas to target:
 - Cycling is for fun: benefits from reminders that behaviour is often illegal, greater enforcements
 - Doing my bit on London's roads: appeal to the sense of responsibility that many cyclists have, meeting other road users half way
 - My own bag of tricks: demonstrate familiar scenarios but with increased risks associated with the behaviour

A campaign will have to work hard to be relevant – messages must immediately cause reflection

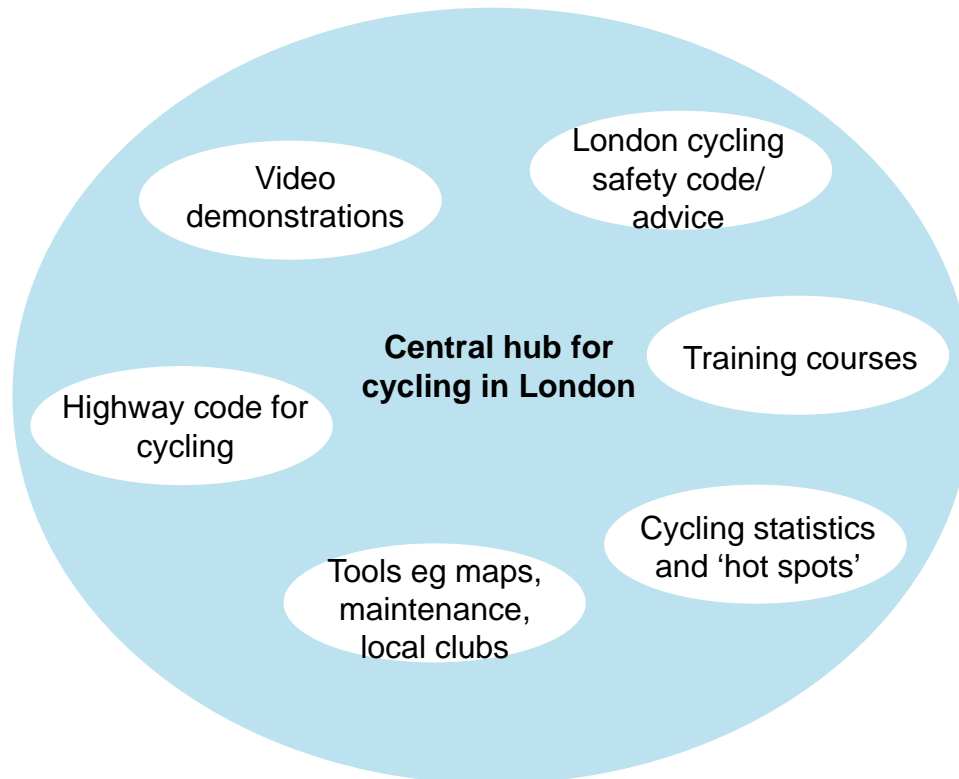
A multi-platform campaign would work best

- For example:

Distribute select safety videos across social networks and online	Raise awareness for training with posters and radio	Editorials in major London papers on safety advice and personal stories	Partnerships with cyclist brands	Gorilla tactics such as messages on bike racks, bike handlebars	Cycling events, work or schools
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Can work towards culture change, which will support reflection and adoption

Suggestions for how to engage cyclists with safety messages



An opportunity to create a more accessible pool of information that cyclists can access which incorporates both authoritative and user generated content

1. Videos: an opportunity to encourage reflection and adoption

- A proxy for real life experience
- Opportunity to create content that is from the perspective of the cyclist and therefore feels empathetic
 - Do not put the blame on the cyclist but explain objectively why their actions may put them at risk
- Role for user generated content and creating a community of London cyclists helping to educate each other
- [User generated footage](#)



2. Training: building confidence for cautious cyclists

- One on one training gives feedback on cyclists' habits and behaviour on the road
- Cycling along a familiar, commuter journey helps to point out positioning tips
- Building awareness is key – many respondents did not know it was available through local borough
- Obstacles to involvement can be inexperienced cyclists' inhibitions, uncertainty over how to book and whether the training is applicable for your personal level of experience



3. Cycle safety code: important component, all cyclists agree

- Achieves the first step of educating cyclists can be a component of the broader campaign
- Agreement over the principles and the name
 - London safety tips
 - London safety code
- Tonality needs to be carefully pitched
 - Must talk in a language that is compelling and engaging to all cyclists
 - Must be adult to adult tone and not point blame
 - Should deliver an element of new news
 - Could also pose questions to prompt greater reflection
 - [An example of safety messages:7 mistakes you are making with your cycling](#)

London Cycling Safety Code

- *Rules of the road*
- *London specific application*



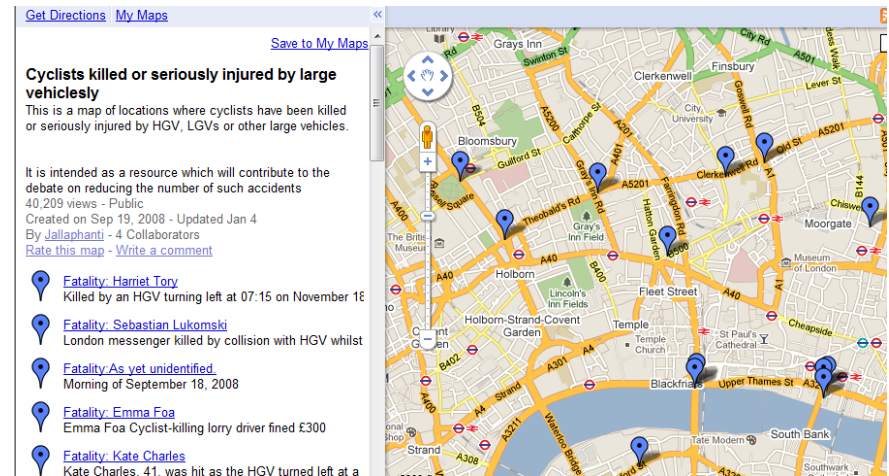
4. Cyclist highway code: many cyclists don't know the rules

- Information is not easy to find
- Some cyclists have never taken a driving test
- Need to know consequences of certain behaviours eg laws and fines
- Effective at forcing people to re-evaluate their breaking of the basic rules of cycling, especially when this rule breaking has become habitual
- Greater enforcement can help to address the sense that cycling is 'lawless' and the animosity this creates between other road users
- This could exist as a test for cyclists to test their knowledge, 'how safe are you?'



5. Statistics: need to be relevant to cyclists

- Plotting on maps so the statistics are applicable to cyclists' own routes
 - [Example of hot spot map](#)
- Statistics are more engaging if demonstrated visually
- Do not just list deaths as this can be too scary but list accidents
- Provide a clear message for why the statistic is how it is.... E.g. junctions / undertaking so that cyclists can learn from it



6. Resources for cycling in London

- Cycling maps for download
- Route suggestions for commute and leisure
- Training courses for all levels
- Local cycling groups
- Video tutorials on maintenance



Leverage existing resources

- Respondents cited many examples of resources already available online
- Possible to utilise partners as opposed to creating content from scratch

<http://www.ghostbikes.org/>

<http://bicycletutor.com/>

<http://www.wired.com/autopia/2010/12/new-app-marks-the-end-of-automotive-anonymity/>

<http://www.criticalmasslondon.org.uk/main.html>



Tailored areas for different levels of experience

- Content dedicated to cyclists with different levels of experience will be important

Inexperienced

Training
Rules of the road
Road positioning and hand signals

“I didn’t know about the free courses. I’ll definitely look into this when I get home. Is the info on the TfL website?”
Female, Inexperienced

“I’m going to have a think about my road positioning. I can see the argument but I want to speak to more people first ”
Female, Inexperienced

Experienced

London cycling developments
Maintenance sessions
Route finding
Clubs

“I’d like to learn how to give my bike a service rather than paying a bike shop ”
Male, Experienced

“It would be good if I could look at different route suggestions”
Female, Experienced

Credibility can be achieved through collaborative authorship

- Cyclists agreed that a collaborative approach to branding worked best:
 - Each brand brings its own benefits to the campaign:

MAYOR OF LONDON



Working together for a safer London

passionate about cycling

the transport authority in London / maps and tips and tools

and other cycle shops – specialist cycling expertise / vouchers / offers

linked to developments in London cycling (superhighways, cycle hire)

the law

- Other brands are less important to include:



lower awareness, but could provide an important bank of information

TfL replace the need for this

important brand in road safety. This was not tested but came up spontaneously