

How safe are our roads for Bradley and the nation's cyclists?

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A new government-funded study is to be carried out into how Britain's roads could be made safer for cyclists to reduce the risk of cycling injuries, encourage more people to use bikes and improve public health.

Amid fresh calls for action on road safety after the recent separate accidents involving world-famous cyclist Bradley Wiggins and the top [cycling](#) mentor Shane Sutton, researchers at The University of Nottingham are leading a study which will assess the effectiveness of the current cycling infrastructure and ask 'which features installed for cyclists are most effective at reducing the risk of injury to cyclists?'

The research has been funded by the National Institute for Health Research Public Health Research (NIHR PHR) Programme and the team of public health researchers are working with members of cycle campaign groups, PEDALS and Nottingham University Hospitals Trust's Bicycle Users Group. The work will examine and compare the effectiveness of a wide variety of cycling infrastructure in developed countries including the UK, USA and Australia.

Keen cyclist, Dr Caroline Mulvaney, who has worked in [injury prevention](#) at The University of Nottingham for more than 10 years said: "At a time when we hear much about increasing levels of obesity and reducing levels of activity, the benefits of cycling cannot be underestimated. There is a wider benefit to [public health](#) in fewer car journeys and therefore cleaner air. However, in 2011 in England there were 107 pedal cyclist fatalities and 3,085 reported seriously injured casualties. There are many more cycle-related injuries that are not reported to the police and thus do not appear on the police databases but nevertheless require medical attention. Tackling the fear of injury is a priority to persuade more people to get on their bikes."

Hugh McClintock from PEDALS said: "Recent months have seen a very high profile for cycling both as a sport and as a means of daily transport and also for the potential risks that are too often still faced by cyclists of different kinds on our roads and streets. This clearly increased interest makes the focus of the Cycling Infrastructure study even more timely and important. A wide review of modern cycling infrastructure like cycle lanes, cycle boxes at [traffic](#) lights and cycle specific regulations and signage is essential and will inform future improvements to the road network for cyclists."

Cycling infrastructure includes measures to manage cycle traffic and motorized traffic to varying degrees and generally takes one of three main forms:

- Road layout that manages the road space for shared use by both motor vehicles and cyclists and includes cycle lanes.
- Separation of cycle traffic from motorized traffic which includes special routes for use exclusively by cyclists but which may also be shared with pedestrians.
- Management of the traffic network including traffic regulations that ban certain types of traffic from making particular turns and speed management.

There is already some evidence to show that infrastructure can positively influence cycling rates with cyclists choosing to use routes serviced by bicycle facilities. There is also some evidence that infrastructure is effective at reducing injuries. This study aims to review relevant websites, databases, cycling surveys and controlled trials of road systems to determine the effectiveness of various forms of infrastructure at reducing cycling injuries in [cyclists](#).

More information: 'Maximising cycling safety to improve public health' is a *Cochrane Review*.

Provided by University of Nottingham

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