

British adults want to cycle more but feel unable to make the final move

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An in depth study of British adults' attitudes to cycling over the last four years has found that a large number want to cycle more for everyday short journeys but feel unable to do so – with a major factor almost certainly being that they feel intimidated by sharing the roads with motor traffic. The survey also shows that people now believe that cyclists should be taken seriously (68%), that they are doing their bit for the environment and that they are actually rather brave (50%).

Researchers at UWE-Bristol asked YouGov to help survey GB adults in both 2010 and 2013 to get their views on a range of issues linked to cycling in this country. They found that in 2010 33% of the GB sample agreed they were contemplating cycling for short journeys, and 18% agreed they'd actually made plans to take up cycling. However, as the 2013 data makes clear, these plans didn't materialise, with cycling levels amongst the population remaining broadly flat.

A major barrier to these good intentions is lack of confidence. In the 2013 survey, 34% of GB adults agreed that, 'I'm not confident enough to consider

cycling'. New [cyclists](#) want to be protected from motorised traffic, and this may be why as many as 65% of GB adults support an increase in funding to support more cycling for everyday journeys. Indeed, and contrary to the 'road wars' anti-cycling media hysteria of recent times, cycling is very warmly regarded by all but the hardened few. In the 2013 [survey](#) cycling was regarded as good for the [environment](#) by 72% (vs only 8% disagree). Meanwhile Britain would be a better place if more people cycled had 54% agreement (with 13% disagreeing), and even the hyperbolic cycling is a great way of solving some of the world's problems had 30% agreement. Only 10% thought cycling to work isn't normal and 46% agreed that cycling is cool.

Media bias is increasingly recognised as such: a recent Top Gear piece making jokes at cycling's expense should be set against the finding that 37% agreed (18% disagree) that TV motoring programmes are too negative about cycling, for example.

Professor Alan Tapp of UWE Bristol noted that, "Our data is clear that anti-cycling media rhetoric does not represent the views of the majority. A majority of adults in GB support cycling and want to see more money spent on it. Moreover, people recognise the environmental and congestion reducing potential of cycling, and many people would cycle more themselves – if only they felt more confident to do so.

This is more evidence to back up the key recommendation of last year's All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group: government must meet the urgent need for a safer cycling environment by investing in cycleways. At the moment enormous budgets are allocated to road building without any opposition, and yet much more modest recommendations for [cycling](#) are prevented from happening. This surely needs to change."

Provided by University of the West of England

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