

## Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

**Petition Number:** [PE1802](#)

**Main Petitioner:** Pat Johnston

**Subject:** Improved safety for cyclists

Calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to; establish a standard mandatory brightness and width of flood for bicycle lights; carry out a publicity campaign to encourage responsible cycling and increase availability of training facilities

### Background

**Lighting:** Road vehicle lighting requirements are set out in The Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations 1989, as amended. The minimum design requirements for new bikes sold in the UK are set out in the Pedal Cycles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1983. Both sets of regulations were made under Road Traffic Act 1988 and its predecessors, the provisions of which are reserved to the UK Parliament.

Most collisions involving cyclists occur during daylight. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents [states that](#):

“Around 80% of cycling accidents occur in daylight - which is when most cycling takes place. For child cyclists, 90% of their accidents occur during the day. The most dangerous hours for cyclists are 3.00 to 6.00 p.m. and 8.00 to 9.00 a.m. on weekdays. However, cycling accidents in the dark are more likely to be fatal.”

The UK Department for Transport commissioned TRL to investigate the [causes of collisions involving cyclists](#) on the UK's roads. This research concluded that 83% of collisions which resulted in the death or serious injury of a cyclist involved a collision between a motorised vehicle and bike. The research also investigated to what extent drivers/riders or cyclists were primarily responsible for such collisions, noting that:

“It can be seen that attribution is split fairly evenly between cyclist and driver/rider of the motorised vehicle. However, a strong variation with cyclist age can be seen at each severity. For children, contributory factors were more likely to be attributed to the cyclist (in over three-

quarters of serious collisions). This proportion decreases with age, with cyclist casualties aged over 30 being more likely to have the contributory factor assigned to the driver”

Where the cyclist was found to be primarily responsible for a collision “not displaying lights at night or in poor visibility” was judged to be a factor in 5% of fatal collisions, 4% of collisions resulting in serious injury and 3% of collisions resulting in slight injury. This compares with the most significant contributory factor in collisions between bikes and cars, which is a “driver/rider’s failure to look properly”. Where a driver/rider was judged to have been responsible for a collision, this was the main factor in 44% of fatal collisions, 56% of collisions that resulted in serious injury and 58% of collisions which resulted in slight injury.

The key safety recommendation resulting from this research was that “Taking measures to reduce vehicle speeds and collisions with HGVs (particularly in cities) will clearly be important in reducing the number of cyclists who are killed or seriously injured.”

**Cycle training:** The Scottish Government provides funding to [Cycling Scotland](#), which co-ordinates the provision of a number of cycle skills training programmes. These include the Scotland-wide [Bikeability Scotland](#) training programme for school children and [essential cycle skills](#) training for adults that are new or returning to cycling.

**Safe cycling campaigns:** Cycling Scotland and local authorities promote cycle safety to both drivers and cyclists, e.g. the City of Edinburgh Council’s [“Drive safe, cycle safe, be bright, be seen”](#) campaign.

## **Scottish Government Action**

The Scottish Government sets out its policies on safe cycling in the [Cycling Action Plan for Scotland 2017-2020](#). It also funds Cycling Scotland and local authorities to provide cycle training and safe cycling campaigns.

## **Scottish Parliament Action**

The Scottish Parliament has not considered the issues raised in this petition.

**Alan Rehfish**  
**Senior Researcher**  
March 2020

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