

## Programmes to promote cycling – evidence for NICE from CTC

### Introduction

CTC, the national cyclists' organisation, was founded in 1878. CTC has 70,000 members and supporters, provides a range of information and legal services to cyclists, organises cycling events, and represents the interests of cyclists and cycling on issues of public policy.

This paper has been prepared for NICE in advance of oral evidence given on activities to promote cycling. NICE's Public Health Guidance on 'Walking and Cycling: local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel or recreation' specifically excludes programmes that focus solely on environmental changes.

Clinical quality evidence for the efficacy of activities to promote active travel is very thin, however, some interventions appear to have been associated with increases in active travel in the short term. In general, most interventions are neither solely promotional, nor environmental. It is possible that the most effective interventions to increase walking and cycling are those that employ a combination of physical environmental and promotional measures, particularly with the aim of reducing motor vehicle use.

### Environmental vs promotional measures

Programmes to promote active travel through marketing or engaging cyclists through outreach projects are generally funded through **revenue** funding while environmental changes are generally taken from **capital** budgets.

However, as was noted during the finalisation of the scope, very few interventions are solely capital or solely revenue and most will have elements of both. Investment purely in capital schemes such as new paths or cycle parking is likely to be far less effective unless activities to make potential users aware of that infrastructure are conducted. Likewise projects to persuade people to take up active travel are likely to be less effective if they are not linked to changes in the physical environment.

However, establishing which aspects of the programme contribute to the observed change in behaviour is challenging.

### Car use and physical activity

The recent review of evidence of the effect of transport on physical activity conducted for the Department for Transport (Mackett and Brown 2011) concluded that schemes that reduce car use achieve greater modal shift than either changing the physical environment or promote active travel. London's congestion charge is discussed and, although it coincided with a revival of cycling in London causation is difficult to establish as there were of course a range of other interventions occurring concurrently, including some promotional activities.

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Four examples of programmes to promote cycling are given below.

### **1. Cycle Superhighways**

Although principally a capital-intensive programme, a significant proportion of London's Cycle Superhighways project is revenue funded measures based on a package of promotional activities. It is always very difficult to disentangle the effects on cycle use from various concurrent measures.

The first two Cycle Superhighways were launched in the summer of 2010 to a mixed reception in the press. Surveys of users suggest that satisfaction is high, with 4 out of 5 users supporting the measures (TfL 2011).

Alongside the changes to infrastructure (often minimal), each Cycle Superhighway was launched with the offer to organisations based along the route of cycle parking grants, maintenance sessions and cycle training. Workplaces and residents near the route were leafleted and 938 businesses expressed an interest in the first two routes. In the end 164 businesses were registered to benefit from support packages, employing 72,000. The package of measures included:

- 4,113 cycle parking spaces
- 4,370 hours of cycle training
- 4,143 bicycles maintained

Of the £18.02m overall cost of the first two pilot routes, £3.27m was spent on promotional activities.

Cycle usage on the Cycle Superhighways before and after the programme (June 2009 – June 2011) showed in increases of between 46-83%, with between 20-28% of the users being new.

Although CTC still has major reservations about the design of the infrastructure, we strongly believe that the measures such as cycle training, maintenance and promotion can be very effective in changing perceptions of cycling and encouraging use.

## 2. Workplace Challenges

Since 2008 CTC, working with Challenge for Change, has run 38 Workplace Challenges engaging more than 66,000 people and 2,900 organisations. Overall, these Challenges have inspired more than 21,500 'non-cyclists' to get back onto a bike again, many after years of not cycling.

The Challenges take the form of a fun competition between different workplaces and between different departments within workplaces to see how many of their staff they can get to try riding a bike. Different workplaces/departments are entered into size categories to compete with similar sized organisations.

In 2011 9 Challenges were undertaken and a database of 'non cyclists' (ie – had cycled only once or never in the last 12 months), occasional (once a month or more) and regular (twice a week or more) cyclists was developed. 3 months on a follow up survey was conducted the results of which was as follows:

- 40% of non-cyclists reported cycling at least once a week
- 43% of occasional cyclists (once a month) reported cycling regularly (at least two days a week)
- 31% of former non-cyclists **cycling to work** at least once a week
- 32% of previously non-commuting occasional and regular cyclists **cycling to work** at least once a week
- 12% of people who previously stated that their main mode of travel to work was by car had switched to cycling

Analysis using the WHO's Health Economic Assessment Tool for cycling suggested that the benefit to cost ratio of the programme was 7.6:1. This is based only on the reduction in mortality (not other environmental, health or economic benefits from increasing cycling) and assumes that 10% of the cycling measured is as a result of the programme (Challenge for Change 2011)

## 3. Adult cycle training

A review of adult cycle training (Margolis 2011) carried out in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets examined cycling levels and physical activity amongst recipients. A three month follow up survey was conducted and 28% of those who had been trained (n=130) responded.

The results were as follows:

- 46% reported cycling more frequently

- The number of days cycling per week for at least 30 minutes rose from 1 day/week to almost 2 days/week
- Amongst those who had never ridden a bike before training cycling rose to 1.5 days per week
- The amount of physical activity increased in line with the amount of cycling, suggesting that the extra cycling did not displace recreational physical activity

Results should be treated with caution: those attending cycle training were self-selected, while those who responded to the survey were a further self-selected group.

#### **4. Cycling City and Towns**

The Cycling City Towns (CCT) programme was developed by Cycling England and involved 18 cities and towns across England – 6 in an initial phase from 2005-2008 and a further 12 (plus the original 6) between 2008-2011. The idea behind the programme was to invest in cycling at a level far higher than usual - £10 per head per year rather than £1. The programme was based on a similar, if more comprehensive scheme, developed in the city of Odense, Denmark.

In the first round of the CCT interventions were a mixture of capital investment (around 80% of budget) and revenue funded 'smarter choices'. The latter measures included cycle training, workplace challenges, school-based interventions, promotional events, marketing materials, cycle maps and personalised travel planning. The initial 6 towns recorded an increase of around 27% (Sloman et al 2009).

For the second round of the CCT a higher proportion of the £43m budget went to revenue funded schemes (33%), with a greater focus on workplaces and integration with public transport. Full findings from the second round of towns are awaited (AECOM 2011).

#### **Conclusion – weakness of research**

High quality evidence for the effectiveness of programmes to promote active travel is scarce. Where evaluation has taken place it has usually been conducted by the organisation conducting the intervention, whose objectivity must be in doubt. One of the areas where greatest concern has been expressed is that of personalised travel planning, whereby households are supplied with marketing materials and other interventions based on an assessment of how susceptible they may be to changes in behaviour.

One reassessment (Morton and Rees, 2010) of a programme of personalised travel planning in Australia claimed that the supposed 10% reduction in driver miles and 23-27% increase in active travel and public transport use was a statistical artifact.

In a review of programmes to promote cycling Yang et al (2010) also expressed concern about the quality of similar schemes and reiterate the need for better quality research.

Promotional and media programmes appear to be more effective when combined with effective capital measures to increase cycling and walking. They are also most likely to succeed in the context of national and local policies to restrict car use as described by Mackett and Brown (2011).

## References

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