

## Appendix

### Anecdotal Evidence of experiences of Blind and Sight Impaired People's Experiences with Cyclists

#### Guide Dogs for the Blind Association

The following quotes were provided to [REDACTED] by [REDACTED] (Guide Dogs London Engagement Manager).

"After being hit by a cyclist last time I had to take anti-anxiety medication... I still feel very anxious and nervous when crossing roads. Bad cyclists make my life a misery and I am less independent as a result..."

"I've had to stop mid pedestrian crossing because I could hear a cyclist but could not see where in the road they are or which side of me they will pass... The twirl cone is spinning to indicate I can cross but cyclists do not stop for the red light, therefore they almost hit me (close to the pavement) and could potentially break my symbol white cane leaving me stranded mid journey."

"I was walking home from the tube station with my guide dog. I was halfway along the road when I was struck by a cyclist coming towards me on the pavement. My dress was torn, the contents of my handbag damaged and I was left with damage to my shoulder and hip... The police dealt with the matter so inappropriately that I had to make a complaint, which took time for me to deal with."

Anecdotal Evidence of Blind peoples experiences with cyclists emails

The following anecdotes are responses to a question that was posted to two email lists. All participants agreed that their information could be shared.

ViGenAccess

**[REDACTED]** Question:

Hi, Croydon Council have introduced an Experimental Order allowing cyclists to use the pedestrianised North End area of the town centre. At a recent meeting with the Council I was told that there was very little evidence of accidents when cyclists shared the same space with pedestrians. Of course this isn't quite the same as there being no accidents, and often this kind of research doesn't seem to take into account blind/VIP's experiences.

So, I'm putting together anecdotal evidence of our experiences with cyclists, not just in pedestrianised areas, (although they would be really helpful), but any shared space such as a pavement environment. Have you been hit by a cyclist? When? Have you had cyclists go past you? Did that increase your stress levels?

If you are willing to share your experiences with the list, would you also be happy for me to share them with Croydon Council?

Cheers

Yusuf

Responses

**[REDACTED]**:

I've had many encounters with cyclists. One even ran over the tip of my

cane once, then tried to blame me. I was in high vis, using cane correctly. That time, another member of the public saw what had happened and tore strip off cyclist. The cyclist was well on the path and should not have been riding. That's not to forget the near misses on paths etc. and that's in my local area of Ipswich, literally within fifty yards of my door.

[REDACTED]

About five years ago, I was walking to work, and a cyclist came past me along the pavement, and clipped the end of my long cane, knocking it out of my hand and hurtling it about ten feet along the pavement. He retrieved it, complaining that I'd damaged the spokes of his bike wheels. Thankfully for me, another pedestrian witnessed the incident, and challenged him with: "You had no business cycling on the pavement, you prat!" I once got my cane caught in the spokes of the wheel of a moving bike, and it sliced the end off, with an impressive but disconcerting 'Thwock'. It decked the cyclist.

[REDACTED]

A number of years ago I was working a guide dog on a pavement when the dog was hit in the ribs by a cyclist. At the time I had a GDMI with me who had never seen a dog hit during 16 years whilst she worked for GDBA. She did tare a strip off the cyclist at the time which was useless.

Later Email:

Another problem we have in the Wakefield area is a white line on the pavement. Cyclists are supposed to go one side of the line and people walking on the other side of the line. We did inform the Wakefield M.D.C. that guide dogs were taught to work centre pavement. The suggestion from them was that all the dogs would have to be retrained!

[REDACTED]

I've only had one actual collision with a cyclist. I was stepping up on to a kerb and had to turn sharp right to get to the park entrance. As I turned right, a cyclist ploughed straight into me on the pavement. My dog was with me but luckily was ahead of me and wasn't hit. The cyclist took no notice whatsoever and seemed incapable of speech or any other human reaction. I did yell at him something like "This is a FOOT path, you wazzock", but this didn't rouse him from his zombified state. This is very unusual, admittedly, and was probably about 4 years ago. I had some bruised ribs for a few days, so it wasn't that serious, but pretty worrying nonetheless.

More difficult are situations where there are lots of cyclists about moving unpredictably on paths, pavements and, of course, shared surfaces. This is more anxiety provoking than actually injurious, but it would be even more of a problem if I was totally blind. My guide dog does not seem to have been trained to notice bikes, which doesn't help, though presumably he realises that they are obstacles. This does restrict my movements somewhat at weekends and holiday times because there are some paths near me that typically become harder to navigate when the weekend cyclists are about. Most cyclists, I'm glad to say, are competent and very often polite and may speak to me, which all helps, but it's not a pleasurable walk if you're constantly trying to dodge bikes.

I certainly don't think it's a good idea to mix up pedestrians and other traffic unless there is plenty of space and, preferably, there are lanes for the other types of traffic (marked up in a way that you can feel with your feet).

[REDACTED]


The end of my cane was bent and irreparable after a cyclist came over

the brow of a hill too fast. My Rehab Officer was with me teaching me how to get back home from a College. The cyclist just shrugged his shoulders and rode off. Fortunatley the RO had his car to get a badly shaken me home and had a spare cane for me to use.

Another time, again with my RO, a postman stopped and amongst other things said for him to "keep her under control". The RO complained to Royal Mail and got an apology to pass on to me. Admittedly this did happen on a cycle path, but the path is wide and used by everyone to avoid having to walk right next to a very busy road carrying many HGV etc.

Occasionally cyclists alert me to their presence by actually using their bell, so I stop as instructed by my RO and GDBA, thanking them as they go past, for which I get a polite acknowledgement. However this does not happen often and I am only aware that a cycle has past me when I hear the tyres on the pathway.

Even when sighted some cyclists scared me half to death whizzing past from behind, even on footpaths when a cycle path was just metres away.




I would like to say that on many occasions I have nearly been knocked over by a cyclist when out walking with my guide dog. This happens mostly when crossing a pedestrian crossing and the traffic has stopped and as I cross or step off the pavement or even whilst waiting at the kerb a cyclist will either ride through the pedestrian crossing or ride on the pavement because they do not observe the rules of the static traffic and continue riding past the static traffic and on a couple of these occasions I had stepped off the kerb and have nearly been injured by a cyclist.

Unfortunately in many cases you do not hear the cyclist coming up on

you and to my opinion they should all have a bell on their cycles and should after eighteen years of age should have to have a licence with a registration number on their cycle so that they could be filmed when breaking traffic conditions because they do not want to wait and the police could give them a fine. The trouble is that many cyclists could not give a damn for pedestrians. Lots of cyclists are students from other countries and do not appreciate what it is like to be totally blind or deaf and do not observe the Highway Code.

One of the biggest problems is that on some pavements you can have shared surfaces where a cyclist can ride alongside pedestrians on the same pavement. Blind people cannot distinguish which side they are to walk on.

It needs better understanding and more communication so cyclists are taught that it is illegal to ride through pedestrian crossings when we think that it is safe to cross the road because the traffic has stopped and the signal has started.

 I almost got flattened by a cyclist about 3 years ago. It was his fault, I was ambling thru a subway near home but there is a turn in it and he came flying down, saw me and the dog, just missed me in his efforts to avoid us and he ended up in a bush!! To be fair, the dog had drifted and I should have realised but even so. He was very profuse in his apologies and was really shaken, poor man. But hopefully it taught him to be a bit more careful after that.

Later email:

I'm used to shared space with cyclists, our town centre has been like it for

years though they aren't now supposed to actually ride but they do.

[REDACTED]

Cyclists, even if the irresponsible ones are a minority, are nonetheless a hazzard for us that's been increasing ove the years.

Not a pedestrian area issue really, but I have more than once crossed a junction in central Birmingham where three roads funnel into a one way street. Not that cyclists seem to have any regard for that detail as, when crossing, I've had cyclist near misses as they fly into the juction from the left thus travelling, and at considerable speed, the wrong way into the junction.

I wish cyclists could be licenced and face similar penalties including being barred from cycling for periods for this sort of crass and dangerous behaviour.

Not a cat in hell's chance of course this being the everyone for themselves society we live in.

I've heard of more than one long cane being mangled by pavement cyclists too.

ViTransport

[REDACTED] Question:

Hi, I'm looking for people's experiences in using either pedestrianised areas, or ordinary pavements and close encounters with cyclists. Croydon Council have issued an Experimental Order allowing cyclists to use the main pedestrianised shopping area, North End, in Croydon. In a recent meeting Council officers told me that there was little evidence of accidents increasing when cyclists were allowed to share pedestrian areas with pedestrians. As so often happens there's nothing about the

experiences of blind/VIP.

I'm looking for anecdotal evidence. Have you been hit by a cyclist on a pavement or pedestrianised area? Have you experienced cyclists moving past you and do you find this disturbing? When have these events happened? Finally, do you mind me using your experiences as part of any evidence I may present to the Council?

Cheers

[REDACTED]

Responses

[REDACTED]

I was nearly run down by a cyclist late at night on the pavement outside where I live. This happened a couple of years ago. The cyclist managed to stop in time. I am not happy to walk in areas where cyclists are allowed to share a pavement or path because I cannot feel sure that they will notice me, as a blind person with a cane, and avoid bumping me. Cyclists can travel much faster than pedestrians and they often surprise us when coming from behind to pass us. Older people and doubtless others are similarly uncomfortable sharing space with cyclists.

[REDACTED]

I am a registered blind person with a very useful degree of sight. This means that I always carry a white stick, not because I need it to establish that there is a kerb or step ahead, but as an insurance policy. Should I be hit by a cyclist or a car, I wish to be able to make a valid claim to the appropriate insurance company. I live in Olney, which is a small town in the Milton Keynes conurbation and its High Street is part of the A509 from Milton Keynes to Wellingborough. Cyclists are



regarding the use of the pavement as a safer option than riding their cycles up and down the main road.. On one occasion I was approaching the Kirb to cross a side road when I was nearly hit by a cyclist riding down the path of the side street as he cut the corner in front of me. The cyclist was shocked by his near miss of me and lost his balance and came of his cycle a few yards beyond me. We did have an exchange of words.

A few years ago a friend of mine, who is also blind, was struck by a cyclist whilst he was shopping in the new Shopping centre in Shepherds Bush. This collision resulted in my friend spending several days in hospital. As a result of this incident I understand that the Management of the Shopping centre banned the riding of cycles in their premises.

I note that the Council Officers of Croydon are maintaining that there is no evidence that the riding of cycles is a particular danger to disabled pedestrians. Doubtless there are no stats which show the number of such near misses or actual accidents and until there are a number of serious injuries or fatalities, they will not recognise that there is a problem. What they are not able to understand is that the elderly, the visually impaired and many other disabled people are deterred from venturing out of their homes. Consequently there will be no such stats but what will manifest itself will be the consequences of social isolation etc.