

Guidance note: use of cycle training warning signs during Bikeability Scotland

Since the introduction of the UK-wide National Standard for Cycle Training in 2005, and subsequent updates, there has been a strong commitment to help children develop skills and confidence to cycle, through provision of training in realistic, dynamic, on-road environments.

Delivery providers must ensure that the training area has been risk assessed and where necessary, suitable mitigation measures are in place to support learners. This must include consideration of appropriate instructor / pupil ratios, peak traffic times, regular scheduled services such as buses or bin collection, and good visibility to support riders to develop skills.

In Scotland, the majority of Bikeability Scotland is delivered by local authority teams, with defined operating processes and procedures. This has sometimes included use of 'cycle training' warning signs on the road as a risk mitigation measure.

In 2018, the [National Standard for Cycle Training](#) was updated to ensure that training was more realistic to prepare riders, including the introduction of core functions.

Therefore, **Cycling Scotland discourages the blanket use of 'cycle training' warning signs within an organisation's operating procedures and policies.** Schools, authorities and delivery providers must ensure there is sufficient justification before setting out such signs for training sessions.

Factors that influence decision making include:

Realism

The [Bikeability Trust](#) identifies that training should be realistic as a key principle of effective Bikeability delivery: *"Level 2 and 3 **must** take place on real roads and junctions where riders learn how to interact with other road users. It does not require any specialist training equipment or clothing".*

Feedback and experience demonstrates that where cycle training warning signs are used, many other road users modify their behaviour in an unpredictable manner, creating unanticipated situations that are counterintuitive for children to learn in.

To best prepare children develop the core functions to make everyday trips by bike, training environments should be chosen based on their existing layout and regular road speeds. Sites should be unaltered, to simulate everyday conditions as closely as possible.

Progressive training

During training, the instructor's role is to enable riders to make independent decisions to manage risk effectively and adapt to changing situations. During training, riders learn through practice as preparation for future riding without instructor or parental supervision.

Riders have better opportunity to develop and demonstrate core-functions, systematic routines and meet national standard outcomes when they gain experience using an area with different road layouts.

Venue risk assessments can identify junctions to be avoided within a wider location, rather than a detailed schematic of a single T-junction.

An area with a wide choice of junctions will also allow for greater progression as riders are exposed to more challenging cycling environments as their skills and confidence grow

Practicality

There are practical and logistical challenges in setting out 'cycle training' warning signs in advance of every training session:

- Layout of signs requires additional time by school staff or instructors, already delivering in a congested timetable.
- There is a cost consideration in the number of signs required to cover every road layout, and the practicalities of storage between sessions.
- The location of signs must not block pavements or impede the passage of other road users.
- On windy days there is a danger that signs will move or blow over without adequate installation
- Manual handling guidelines need to be considered for heavy or bulky signs.

Staff and instructor teams may identify a benefit in laying out 'cycle training' warning signs for specific circumstances. However, Cycling Scotland encourages schools to consider existing risk mitigation measures, including the best location and time for training and the appropriate ratios of instructors to riders, before using warning road signs.