

Cycling Gets New Proficiency Standard – and £1 Million to Train Instructors

Cycling England has announced a new National Standard for Cycle Training. Building on the old RoSPA cycling proficiency test, which was phased out as a national scheme more than a decade ago, the new national standard has the backing of the Government, the Road Safety Officers' Association (LARSOA) and over 20 cycling groups and local councils which have contributed to its development.

To ensure that cycle instructors teach the new Standard, Cycling England is funding bursaries to help pay for instructors' training and official accreditation with a budget of £1 million over the next three years. The funding is available to applicants both from local authorities' professional staff and commercial training providers.

The Standard is set for 3 levels – Level 1 for basic bike handling skills; Level 2 for safe cycling on minor roads with less heavy traffic, especially for school trips; and Level 3 for all cycling trips. Designed for both children and adults, it is the first time that a national standard has been set which requires on-road training experience.

The national standard is not compulsory, but local authorities will be encouraged to bring their local schemes in line with this best practice as soon as possible. Details of the standard can be found by calling the national training helpline: 0870 607 0415, or by visiting www.ctc.org.uk/cycletraining.

The standard will be regularly monitored by the Cycle Training Reference Group (CTRG), a voluntary body representing all the major cycle training experts and practitioners; it reports to transport ministers through Cycling England.

The CTC Charitable Trust, in partnership with a consortium of training providers, has been awarded a contract by the DfT to deliver the instructor training and accreditation; several training centres have already been accredited for this purpose.

Phillip Darnton, Chairman of Cycling England said: "It's good news for parents, teachers, children – and indeed adult cyclists – that we have now got a national standard for all cycle training. Over the past 20 years, many local authorities and other training providers have done a good job, but standards have been variable. A national standard, and official accreditation, provide the necessary reassurance that the pupils have been properly taught to deal with today's road conditions.

Instructor training schemes will start immediately through the winter months which will treble the number of people ready to train adults and children from the spring of 2006."

Kevin Clinton, head of road safety for RoSPA said "This new and unprecedented funding to train cycle instructors is excellent news and will help to ensure that more people, young and old, receive effective training to help them cycle safely and confidently."

Steve Whitehouse, cycling advisor to LARSOA and representative on the CTRG said: "We welcome this initiative to equip young people with the skills to ride safely in modern traffic conditions; invaluable skills which they can also take forward into later life."

Ends

For further information please contact Phillip Darnton, Cycling England chairman on 07778 555 387 or Steve Garidis, Projects Coordinator on 07900 264 820

Note to editors

- Cycling England is a new national body to plan and co-ordinate the development of cycling across the country. It was launched by the Minister for Local Transport in March 2005 and replaces the previous National Cycling Strategy Board. Cycling England is supported by a Government Group comprising several government Departments, including those covering health, education, planning and sport, as well as transport
- Further details about Cycling England's work programme can be found at www.cyclingengland.co.uk
- Further information on the National Standard for Cycle Training can be found at: www.ctc.org.uk/cycletraining