



Imtac statement on cycling

(April 2018)

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Making our information accessible

As an organisation of and for disabled people and older people Imtac recognises that the way information is provided can be a barrier to accessing services and participation in public life. We are committed to providing information about our work in formats that best suit the needs of individuals.

All our documents are available in hard copy in 14pt type size as standard. We also provide word and pdf versions of our documents on our website – www.imtac.org.uk. In addition we will provide information in a range of other formats. These formats include:

- Large print
- Audio cassette or CD
- Daisy disc
- Braille
- Electronic copies on disc or via email in PDF or word
- Easy read
- Information about our work in other languages

If you would like this publication in any of the formats listed above or if you have any other information requirements please contact:

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About Imtac

The Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (Imtac) is a committee of disabled people and older people as well as others including key transport professionals. Its role is to advise Government and others in Northern Ireland on issues that affect the mobility of older people and disabled people.

The aim of the Committee is to ensure that older people and disabled people have the same opportunities as everyone else to travel when and where they want.

Imtac receives support from the Department for Infrastructure (hereafter referred to as the Department).

Background

In recent years cycling has had a growing profile. This has been reflected in a greater policy focus on promoting cycling by Government in Northern Ireland, the rest of the United Kingdom and in many other countries. Locally the Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland¹ published by the Department in 2015 aims “to make Northern Ireland a cycling community”.

For Imtac cycling issues present two key, and in some ways conflicting, challenges. Firstly some disabled people and older people are cyclists. This includes some disabled people who use their cycle as an aid to mobility rather than just a mode of travel. The Committee has a duty to represent and promote the best interests of older people and disabled people who cycle as well as those who wish to begin cycling.

Secondly anecdotal evidence locally as well as studies² elsewhere indicate that conflict between pedestrians and cyclists impacts most negatively on disabled people and older people, creating an unsafe and stressful environment that often leads to people affected avoiding these areas altogether. Through its work Committee must also highlight the impact that conflict between cyclists and pedestrians can have on the lives of many older people and disabled people.

Through discussions with policy makers and organisations who promote cycling, Imtac believes that there is a clear desire to make cycling more inclusive and to reduce and remove conflict between pedestrians and

¹ [A Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland \(August 2015\)](#)

² See for example <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/1864/sharing-the-space-report.pdf>

cyclists. Moreover this engagement has also demonstrated the common barriers that affect both pedestrians and cyclists and the value of working in partnership.

Imtac has developed the statement below to set out its approach to cycling informing its position in relation to the delivery of the Bicycle Strategy and proposals for a future Belfast Bicycle Network.

Statement on cycling

General principles

Both pedestrians and cyclists are made vulnerable by a society and public policy framework that gives priority to motorised traffic over people. Through its work Imtac promotes a road user's hierarchy where pedestrians and then cyclists are given priority over other road users.

Imtac's attitude towards cycling is unequivocal – cycling is a good thing and has overwhelming positive benefits for society and individuals. The Committee supports a policy agenda that promotes and encourages more people to cycle.

The Committee firmly believes that cycling should be an inclusive mode of travel, open to all including older people and disabled people. Inclusivity and accessibility must be a key mainstream consideration in the development cycling policy and infrastructure.

Infrastructure design

Imtac supports the development of dedicated infrastructure for cyclists. As a default position any new cycling infrastructure should be separate and segregated from both pedestrians and motorised traffic. It must be designed to be accessible to people who use a range of cycles, especially accessible and adaptive forms such as tricycles, tandems, hand cycles, recumbent cycles and wheelchair cycles.

In most circumstances Imtac does not support the use of shared footways between cyclists and pedestrians. Shared footways can impact negatively on all users, but has a particular impact on some older people and disabled people by creating an environment where they feel unsafe. More generally this type of infrastructure is likely to create conflict between users and frustrate both cyclists and pedestrians in equal measure.

Imtac recognises that some interaction between cyclists and pedestrians is unavoidable – where this occurs the Committee expects infrastructure to be designed and clearly signposted to give pedestrians priority over cyclists.

Imtac supports the creation of more traffic free paths and routes including new Greenways which involve shared use. Great care is required to ensure the design of this infrastructure is inclusive and accessible to all and minimises conflict between pedestrians and cyclists.

Education and promotion

Imtac recognises that conflict exists between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians and that this can be created by the behaviour of some motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. Education programmes that challenge the behaviours of all road users are essential. For the Committee programmes that promote respect and understanding between pedestrians and cyclists are particularly important.

Imtac expects any initiatives designed to promote increased participation in cycling to be inclusive and to target increased participation by older people and disabled people in particular.

Partnership & collaboration

Imtac believes that effective collaboration between policy makers, cyclists, disabled people and older people is an essential component of designing and implementing successful and inclusive cycling infrastructure and education programmes.