

Briefing

Communications Unit

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Cyclist casualties

- There has been an increase in the popularity of cycling and the County Council welcomes this as a positive development, particularly in terms of the health benefits it can bring. An increase in some cycling accident figures must be taken in the context of the clear increase in the number of cyclists.
- The trend in cyclist casualties across North Yorkshire has been upwards since 2004, but there was a reduction across the county between 2015 and 2016 from 205 to 188. It is too early to know if this is the start of a new trend.
- In Richmondshire, the number of cyclist casualties of all severities increased slightly from 20 in 2015 to 22 in 2016. The number killed or seriously injured in 2016 was 11, the same as in 2015. Six cyclists were killed or seriously injured in 2014 and four in 2013.
- Countywide, there were reductions in both accidents and casualties among children and young people cyclists during 2016. In the 0-10-year-old age group there were no casualties in 2016.
- Across the county, adults aged 25 to 49 account for the largest number of cyclist casualties, which was 51% of all the casualties in 2016. The over-50s made up a further 35% of all cyclist casualties.
- Approximately 29% of cyclist casualties were not wearing a cycling helmet at the time of their collision, a slight increase from 26% the previous year.
- The County Council promotes safer cycling initiatives throughout the county, especially on the Tour de France and Tour de Yorkshire and other popular routes. The “Cycle Yorkshire, Ride the Routes” app and website uses maps and videos to provide advice on a range of issues, including rural riding preparation, avoiding fatigue-related collisions and hazard recognition and avoidance techniques. The website is at www.ridetheroutes.co.uk.
- Our road safety team distributes cards and fliers to cycle shops, hire centres, guest houses and cafes on cycling routes to get safe cycling messages to cyclists who are riding our long-distance routes, such as the Way of the Roses.
- “Riding the Routes” advice leaflets for cyclist have been distributed widely, including through the Great Yorkshire Show with support from Welcome to Yorkshire.
- Our road safety team writes to organisers of sportive and charity rides, sharing information on cyclist casualties and advice on best riding practice.

- In 2016, the team increased the number of face-to-face events with cyclists to reinforce further the safety messages and to distribute campaign materials.
- Safety messages to cyclists focus on “keeping yourself safe”. Messages to other road users raise awareness of their responsibilities towards vulnerable road users, especially to look out for cyclists.
- In Richmondshire in 2016, 600 Year 5 and 6 primary school pupils took part in the Bikeability cycle training programme. Cycling awareness sessions were held for children too young to attend Bikeability training.
- Also in the district, information and advice to promote and encourage cycling for commuting and leisure were provided at summer events. A number of Tour de Yorkshire events were organised involving cycle skills and road awareness sessions for families.
- Developing links with cycle shops and establishments saw the road safety team support a “dark skies” event hosted by Stage 1 cycle in Hawes. Here the team emphasised the need for cyclists to stand out from their surroundings while out and about. In addition, cycle shops in the district were provided with cycle safety literature and two engagement events were held at Dales bike centre, Reeth.
- The County Council has supported the Yorkshire Dales National Park to create the Swaletrail – a cycling route which takes in back roads and bridleways.
- Our public health messages promote the physical health and mental well-being benefits of cycling, which as a form of transport can fit into daily and leisure routines and when undertaken regularly helps people to maintain a healthy weight. As a low-impact form of exercise, it is also easier on joints than high-impact aerobic activities.

Ends

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