My Cycle My Mobility Aid legislative changes asks: Frequently Asked Questions

11 Why is it important to change the law around mobility aids?

At the moment, only wheelchairs and mobility scooters are recognised as ride-on mobility aids, under the old “invalid carriage” laws from the 1980s.

We know that many Disabled people use cycles and e-scooters as mobility aids. But without legal recognition, people using these aids too often face abuse, are prevented from getting to places they need to go, and can’t access suitable parking, storage or funding options.

The invalid carriage laws also mean that new mobility devices such as power add-ons and some clip-on e-assist handcycles for wheelchairs are not currently legal.

The “invalid carriage” legal restrictions mean that there’s not much innovation in mobility aids: Certainly nothing like the fast development we’re seeing for micro-mobility. We want more development of attractive, economic, practical mobility aids!

And we want to see streamlining of regulations so the same speed restrictions, passenger and cargo carrying restrictions apply to mobility scooters as to micro-mobility and cycles: Why should a Disabled person using a suitable e-cycle be allowed to transport three children or a friend at 15.5mph, while the same person using a mobility scooter may only transport themselves at 8mph?

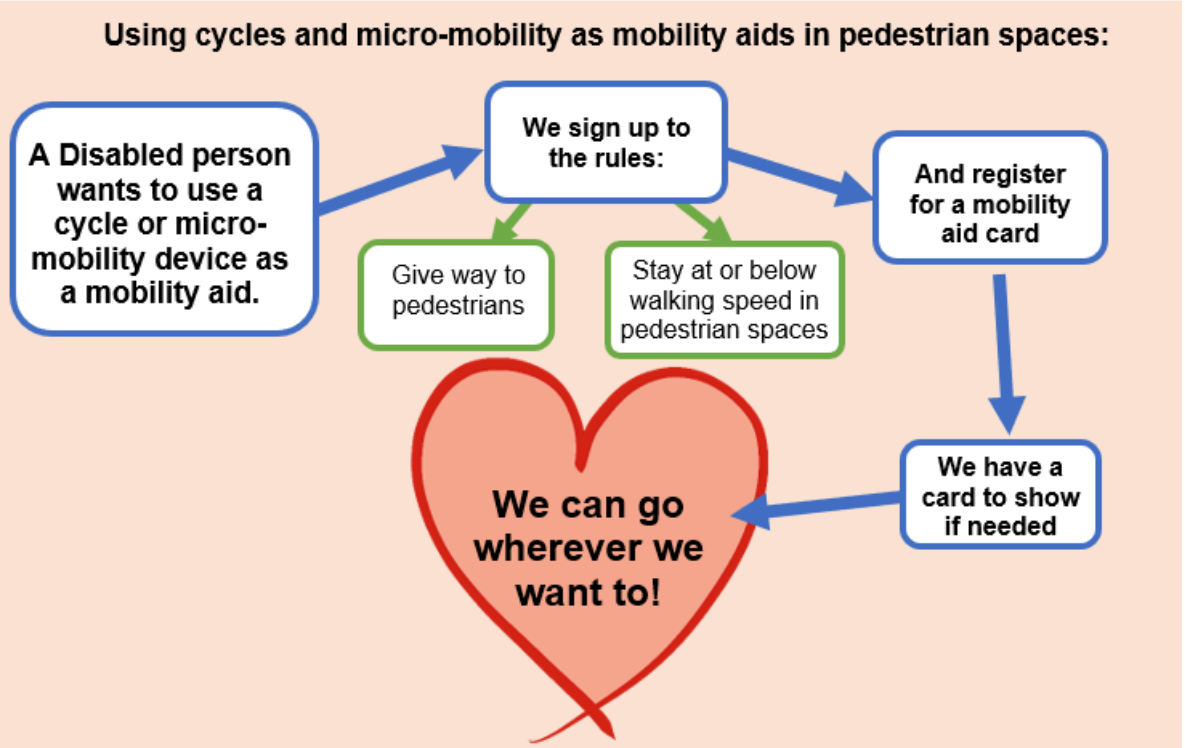
12 Could Disabled people really choose any micro-mobility device or cycle as a mobility aid?

Yes! It’s just a case of changing the law to recognise the reality that Disabled people are already using cycles and micro-mobility as mobility aids. Then far more Disabled people could have the option of using cycles and micro-mobility.

The World Health Organisation recognises tricycles as mobility aids. The UK has also signed the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which says that countries should facilitate “the personal mobility of persons with disabilities in the manner and at the time of their choice, and at affordable cost” – by signing the UNCRPD the UK has promised to help Disabled people use the mobility aids of our choice, when we want to, and to make those mobility aids affordable.

One possible way a scheme could work is shown here:

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13 How could you stop non-Disabled people abusing a cycles/micro-mobility as mobility aids scheme?

The scheme would only allow people to use a cycle, e-scooter or mobility scooter on pavements and in pedestrian spaces **at walking speed**. We don't think that many non-Disabled people will abuse this scheme, in the same way that few non-Disabled people buy themselves RADAR keys to abuse accessible toilets (even if the few that do are so annoying).

We think that it's important every person can choose appropriate mobility aids:

We believe following the social model of disability is important, recognising that filling out forms and having to justify our needs to officials creates barriers to Disabled people travelling that simply don't exist for non-disabled people. We don't want Disabled people to be excluded from making active journeys by a scheme which is difficult to access, as happens regularly with PIP, Blue Badges and private schemes like the Nimbus Access Card.

This means we think it's really important to have a self-certification scheme for mobility aids. If people have to apply to a local authority, charity or national scheme, too many Disabled people will be excluded from using the mobility aids we need, both by those administering the scheme not understanding the need/suitability and also by the extra burden of having to complete an intrusive application form.

14 How would you make sure Disabled pedestrians, especially visually impaired people, are safe?

Keeping all pedestrians safe is really, really important! This scheme just means people could use cycles or any other small, electric mobility aid they chose in the same way people use mobility scooters and electric wheelchairs now. These aids weigh less than an average mobility scooter and, in pedestrian spaces, will be moving at the same maximum speed, so it wouldn't make pedestrians any less safe than they are presently.

In fact, we hope this scheme would make all pedestrians safer:

a) Allowing Disabled people to use cycles and micro-mobility as mobility aids will help more people make active journeys instead of using private vehicles and taxis. This could help cut the numbers of vehicles driving on roads and the numbers of parked cars, which would help make our streets safer for pedestrians. In addition, more people out-and-about on the pavements makes everyone safer by increasing the amount of 'natural surveillance' that prevents crime.

b) We want to see the development and rollout of safety options for micro-mobility devices such as scooters. This could include:

   i. Regulation of the micromobility market

   ii. installing sound-emitters on micro-mobility devices

   iii. using technology to limit micro-mobility and cycle e-assist to walking speed on pavements and in pedestrian spaces.

   iv. Bans on leaving micro-mobility devices and cycles on the pavement, requiring that they are parked where they don't cause an obstruction to pedestrians and users of mobility aids.

Dangerous behaviour on the pavements would still be illegal – including any dangerous behaviour by Disabled people. .

We're asking to change rules about cycle parking so that parking for cycles (and scooters) is placed by default on carriageway not on pavements: Organisations planning cycle parking would have to show that there was a good reason to place cycle parking on pavements (such as the whole area being pedestrianised or there being plenty of space just outside a big shop) before it was permitted – including showing that any cycle parking installed would not reduce accessibility.

15 Would it really stop members of the public and officials from trying to stop me cycling or using a scooter?

No scheme is perfect. We think that legal recognition of cycles and micro-mobility as mobility aids would be a great start. Then, we need a scheme which provides Disabled people with a digital or physical card to show if they want to have this, which will hopefully help some more.

We're also working to raise public awareness of Disabled people cycling and wider mobility choices: We won't be done until Disabled people have equitable access to all transport options.

Successful schemes include works access schemes such as on Wandsworth Bridge and Boord Street Bridge which explicitly permit Disabled cyclists to use pedestrian paths at walking speed only, without dismounting.



16 Will I be able to take my mobility cycle on public transport?

That's more difficult: At the moment, many folding cycles and some bicycles can be taken on public transport. You can even book rail passenger assistance to help transport some cycles onto trains. Most wheelchairs can legally be used on public transport (though it's not always possible in practice!) and some companies allow smaller, usually 'class 2', mobility scooters onto public transport within specific dimensions and often with prior assessment and certification by the company.

In some countries, Disabled people are allowed to take cycles up to a certain size onto public transport. We're campaigning for all Disabled people to be able to take their chosen mobility aids onto public transport – but in some cases that's going to need new public transport vehicles, too. We'll get there in the end!

In our My Cycle, My Mobility Aid campaign we're calling for level boarding and more flexible space on trains (and trams, buses and coaches) to allow Disabled people to use our chosen mobility aids for multi-modal journeys.

17 What do you mean by walking speed?

We haven't defined "walking speed" with a set number in our campaign because of the different walking speed settings in use around the world: A regulation setting maximum "walking speed" lower than what is in use somewhere else will lock Disabled people here out of the market for that device.

If the speed someone is going at is reasonable for the number of pedestrians and the amount of space available, it doesn't really matter what their speed is, within reason. If the speed someone is going at is unreasonable and dangerous, for example because the area is so busy or they're likely to lose control, it being just below some arbitrary limit like 4mph or the current 8mph for class 3 "invalid carriages" doesn't stop it being too fast for the circumstances.

18 Can you give me an example of where cycles being recognised as mobility aids would help?

Many Disabled people find cycling much easier than walking, and cycling is their main form of mobility. Without a cycle some of us have practically no mobility at all.

This means cycles recognised as mobility aids would help:

a) Every time there's a 'dismount' sign, at the entrance to a park, path, pedestrianised or shopping area for example where the person wants or needs to go;

b) Every time there is a cycle lane that directs you onto a road that seems too dangerous, the pavement becomes an option;

c) Every there is a pedestrian area where the cycle parking is on the far side (or in the middle), with cyclists expected to dismount and walk the cycle through;

d) Every time Disabled people want to access public and green spaces that currently ban cyclists.

e) With many cycle types it should also be possible to use a cycle in public transport hubs and even in some large shopping centres, healthcare centres and sporting venues, to name just a few places where long "walking" distances can present a huge barrier for Disabled users.

"Just get off and walk!"

- Dismount signs can be journey-ending or facilitate abuse of Disabled cyclists.
- Clear permission to ride on pavements at walking speed would help end this discrimination.



19 What could a mobility aid card be like?

a) Credit card sized for convenience (and there could be a digital version)

b) Explains the user is Disabled and the device is a mobility aid

c) Explains the new legal position e.g. that cycles are mobility aids and , can be ridden in pedestrian spaces at walking speed

d) Gives website for further details

110 At the moment people hiring e-scooters need to have a driving licence: would one be required with these changes?

No!

Low-speed zero-emission electric vehicles (LZEVs) have so much less capacity to cause danger to others that requiring driving licences is disproportionate. The requirement to have a driving licence discriminates against Disabled people. Very many Disabled people are not allowed to drive, while others can't afford or don't have the chance to learn.

111 Is this all you want from the new legislation?

No!

We will be working with other organisations and supporting proposals including:

a) Banning pavement parking across the UK, except in designated marked bays (extending London's rules to the rest of the country).

b) Ensuring micro-mobility services are accessible to and inclusive of Deaf and Disabled people, while being delivered with minimal negative impact on other Disabled street users including pedestrians.

    i. As part of this, making sure that e-scooters and e-cycles are available to hire that give permission for more than one person to ride them, thus making them an option, on occasion, for Disabled people who can't use them alone.

c) Require that charge points for electronic vehicles are by default sited on the carriageway (with level access from the pavement).

d) Require that charge points for EVs are accessible for Disabled users.

112 References/Further reading/Resources:

a) Equality Act (2010): https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

b) LTN 1/20 Cycle infrastructure design: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120

c) Wheels for Wellbeing Guide to Inclusive Cycling (4th edition, 2020): https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/campaigning/guide/

113 Background data:

a) **90%** of mobility impaired people do not have a suitable mobility aid to complete a 1km journey (Disabled Ramblers, 2022)

b) More than **63%** of Disabled people report that cycling is easier than walking (WfW, 2022)

c) The World Health Organisation (**WHO**) defines **tricycles as mobility-aids** for Disabled people (WHO, 2011)

d) Disabled people face transport inequality and make **38% fewer journeys** across all transport sectors than non-disabled people. (Motability, 2022)