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PRESS RELEASE

The Government's new Think Cyclist! campaign fails to recognise that the consequences of aggression or error on the part of the driver of a motor vehicle are far greater than in the case of error or aggression by a cyclist. Cambridge Cycling Campaign is concerned that because advice is directed equally at drivers of motor vehicles and at cyclists it appears to share the blame equally. In reality, in the vast majority of cases, errors or aggression by the driver of a motor vehicle have much more impact on the victims of crashes than anything a cyclist does.

Jim Chisholm, Liaison Officer for Cambridge Cycling Campaign says:

“Clearly among all communities there are those who are aggressive, but the consequences of aggressive behaviour with a motor vehicle are far greater than those on a bike or on foot.

Even human errors have far greater consequences for others when the human is controlling a motor vehicle rather than a bicycle.

Studies in London show that far more of those on bicycles are injured by motor vehicle disobeying priority at junctions than when it is the reverse.

We need to do better in protecting innocent and vulnerable road users from the actions or errors of those in motor vehicles.”

10% of pedestrian casualties result after a motor vehicle has left the road, and 73% of injuries to riders of cycles in Cambridge occur when they are simply going straight ahead, often being hit by left or right turning motor vehicles.

Jim says:

“Clearly some crashes are caused by irresponsible cycling, be it lack of lights, alcohol levels etc, and though these cases are sad if there are serious injuries

to the rider or an innocent driver suffers stress, they extremely rarely cause serious physical injury to others.

Irresponsible driving creates orders of magnitude more innocent victims, be they passengers in motor vehicles, or vulnerable road users on foot or on cycles.

If we wish to reduce road casualties significantly, it is the actions and attitudes of those driving motor vehicle that must change. Effective enforcement alone of existing laws would reduce crashes. We must all obey the law, but it is the consequence of failures by drivers of motor vehicle, that creates huge numbers of victims.”

TRL studies show that for crashes involving cyclists over the age of 25 in 70% of cases the police considered it was the driver only who was responsible. Only in the very youngest age groups was it the cyclist only that was considered responsible in more than 50% of cases.

ENDS

For further information please contact:

Cambridge Cycling Campaign
01223 690718 or via e-mail (preferred) to contact@camcycle.org.uk .

Notes for editors:

1. Cambridge Cycling Campaign was formed in 1995 and now has over 800 members. Run by volunteers, it campaigns for “better safer and more cycling in and around Cambridge”. Its website, at www.camcycle.org.uk, contains a wide range of information on its activities.
2. The DfT press release for the Think Cyclist! campaign can be found at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/news/press-releases/dft-press-20120920b>
3. Sources: Cambridgeshire County Council, Tf & DfT national statistics
4. http://www.trl.co.uk/online_store/reports_publications/trl_reports/cat_road_use_r_safety/report_technical_annex_to_ppr445_collisions_involving_pedal_cyclists_on_britains_roads_establishing_the_causes.htm