



30<sup>th</sup> March 2014

Leon Daniels  
Managing Director, Surface Transport.  
Transport for London  
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197 Blackfriars Road  
London SE1 8NJ

## Cyclists stay back stickers

Dear Mr Daniels,

Thank you for your response to our concerns about 'cyclists stay back' stickers on the back of motor vehicles.

We welcome Transport for London and the Mayor's backing for proposals recently approved by MEPs for safer lorry designs, including action to improve lorry drivers' direct vision of pedestrians and cyclists. We very much hope you will be successful in persuading ministers to do likewise.

We think there has been a misunderstanding about our concerns. We do not think that the presence of the stickers on HGVs particularly affects the attitudes and behaviour of lorry drivers – the problem is principally about how the use of the stickers on other vehicles (including vans and cars) might affect the attitudes and behaviour of drivers in general. Recently in court, a lawyer cited the presence of a sticker on the back of a vehicle as justifying a driver's failure to check the nearside mirror before turning left. If lawyers can take this view, we suggest that some drivers certainly will.

You ask for robust research based evidence for this suggestion. This would require detailed study of driver attitudes and behaviour prior to the use of stickers compared with those at some stage in the future. This cannot now be done, nor do we think we should have to do this. We rely on what we think is a common sense consideration about the messaging of the stickers and existing knowledge about driver behaviour.

As you know, the evidence in the Cycle Safety Action Plan is clear that the principal form of collisions leading to London cyclist KSIs is close proximity collisions. In this type close driver overtaking and failure to use nearside mirrors is implicated. Failure of drivers to expect and watch out for cyclists to be legitimately on their near side is a significant problem.

Furthermore, anything that discourages drivers from giving way to cyclists on the nearside when turning left will make the segregated infrastructure now proposed by TfL and its partners more dangerous. In European countries with good segregated cycle infrastructure, drivers are required to check their nearside and give way to cyclists and pedestrians when turning right. Without these checks, segregated infrastructure decreases cyclists' safety rather than increasing it. For these reasons the stickers should certainly not be on taxis, vans or cars – they

were never intended to be there anyway and as a matter of urgency we call for them to be removed from them.

We do not agree that these stickers are suitable for buses, which do not pose the same danger to cyclists, as the drivers have a complete view of the area around their vehicle. There is also a lack of clarity about what kind of behaviour is actually being promoted, with a potential implication that overtaking on either side of a bus is never appropriate. This lack of clarity can result in the stickers being ignored in situations where advice to avoid nearside passing – with HGVs – should be heeded. Naturally, if evidence is presented in CSWG that there is a need for a type of warning sticker on buses, coaches or other vehicles we must consider this.

We also do not accept that the wording 'cyclists stay back' is appropriate, as it conveys no useful information to cyclists. We have suggested that wording should specifically draw attention to the risk from left-turning HGVs. We intend to work in the CSWG with TfL officers to provide an effective form of messaging and hope you will instruct FORS staff to be part of this process.

You stated that the matter should have been raised at CSWG. This was done at the December meeting, and cycling organisations present asked both for the stickers to be removed from vehicles other than HGVs, and for the wording to be changed. We thought the response was inadequate, hence our original letter.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

Roger Geffen, CTC

Charlie Lloyd, London Cycling Campaign

Dr. Robert Davis, Chair, Road Danger Reduction Forum

Amy Aeron-Thomas, RoadPeace

David Dansky, TABS (The Association of Bikeability Schemes)

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