



Communication and campaigns

Communication is an important tool for promotion of cycling and road safety. Effective co-operation among the actors involved is necessary to produce desired behavioural changes. After discussing such subjects as communication strategies and campaigns for more cycling the chapter ends with a section on campaigns for improved road safety.



Contents

Necessary knowledge about communication	30
Communication strategies	30
Campaigns for more cycling	35
Campaigns for improved road safety	39

Necessary knowledge about communication

Travel behaviour is not solely the product of rational processes. Up-bringing, feelings and habits play a considerable role. But upbringing, habits and feelings can be influenced, and when applied appropriately, be used to change travel behaviour.

Campaigns can be used to advantage by municipal administrations, NGOs, commercial enterprises, associations etc. As the message or the angle of a campaign will vary depending on whether it focuses on, for example, traffic, environmental, health, road safety or educational conditions, a wide range of administrations and organisations may be interested in participating in or initiating a campaign. Experience has shown that collaboration and co-financing are often necessary in order to achieve significant results.

Campaigns in this context should be broadly understood to comprise TV

Two Danish ministers Svend Auken and Thorkild Simonsen on bicycles.



PHOTO: Danish Cyclists Federation



PHOTO: Birgitte Høj Nielsen

Abilities on bicycle are tested during the Cyclist Trial.



Good ideas about road safety campaigns are presented in this book.

spots, contributions to the public debate, events, roadside posters, police enforcement etc.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the basic knowledge about communication and campaigns, and about perceptions and the stages of behavioural changes.

Communication strategies

Much has been written about effective communication and campaigning. For an overview of communication strategies for the promotion

of cycling reference can be made to the EU project INPHORMM¹¹⁰, while for road safety campaigns we recommend the guidelines published by the Danish Road Safety Council “Kør kampagnen sikkert hjem” [Drive Your Campaign Home Safely]¹⁴.

A communication strategy must explain who says what to whom, when and using what medium. The most effective approach is to direct the communication at interested groups and persons who intent to change their behaviour.

Broadly speaking, there are three kinds of campaign: Campaigns to raise public awareness, campaigns to targeted groups and settings, and campaigns to individuals and households. Campaigns to targeted groups, individuals etc, are more effective when public awareness campaigns have been carried out locally or nationally, because the

The Danish channel TV2's revenue from advertising in the category “land-based” transport in 1997¹¹¹:

Motorised transport	DKK 82,454,920
Public transport (train)	DKK 17,010,003
Bicycle traffic	DKK 3,677,171

public will then be more receptive to attempts at influencing attitudes and behaviour.

It is essential to know what stage the general public has reached in the process of behavioural change, as otherwise money will be wasted on campaigns that miss their target. The basic goal of communication strategies is to influence the public just sufficiently to tip the balance in the direction of modal transfer and safer behaviour – at minimum expense. Once the balance has been tipped, it is important to maintain the change of behaviour.

Public awareness campaigns

To carry out a successful awareness campaign it is necessary to have a basic knowledge concerning people’s attitudes to and acceptance of eg restrictions on car use and promotion of cycling and improved road safety in order to be able to define messages of the campaign. Attitudes vary from the major cities to rural districts and from city centres to the suburbs. If there is a larger potential among some groups than others, it is important to identify target groups both with respect to the choice of message and media and also for later use in more targeted campaigns at, for instance, selected companies or households.

Awareness campaigns reach the widest public by using a number of media at the same time and spontaneously making use of other related events that have received broad media coverage as an inexpensive way of disseminating the message. Events, gimmicks, “surveys”, other campaigns and new infrastructure can all help to draw attention to the message. Since most people react positively to the message of more and safer cycling, it is possible to make extensive use of the mass media.

The primary goal is to create awareness of problems and solutions, acceptance of the need for change and to change attitudes to the bicycle, the car and road safety. Awareness campaigns alone rarely change people’s behaviour, but can help to keep cyclists cycling and reinforce safe behaviour.

Experience has shown that it can easily take three years to get people to accept a new message and, as a consequence, acknowledge that there is a need for change.

Credibility is important. There is nothing to be gained from referring cyclists to unsafe roads or combat-

An example of a communication strategy for more cycling¹¹⁰.





Hvor sætter du smertegrænsen?

Danish Road Safety Council's campaign "Lower Your Top Speed" [What is your pain tolerance?]

ing bad habits that may be irritating but are not dangerous. Both the problems and solutions must be clearly presented, but keep an eye open for topics that the media are already dealing with.

Campaigns to targeted groups and settings

These campaigns aim at demonstrating how citizens can promote more and safer cycling in practice. The settings could be eg schools, universities, companies, medical

clinics, shopping streets and centres, sports clubs etc. It is the solidarity and social norms at these settings, which can change the behaviour of the individual.

In order to start the campaign, the school, sport club etc, must agree to participate. A credible persuasion strategy is essential. Appropriate messages in this part of the process could be: Fewer cars at schools mean safer roads, an accident is a tragedy and cost, more cycling

gives fewer days lost through illness and better mental health, fewer parking spaces for cars can save money, more cycling and improved road safety can create a green and caring image.

Seen from the outside it is important to find one or several persons at the setting who are willing and have time to partly carry out the campaign. The person chosen does not have to be a director or school principal, but may be a cyclist or safety steward.



PHOTO: Danish Cyclists Federation

The chosen persons should be informed and motivated to such a degree that the process of promoting more and safer cycling becomes self-supporting or, even better, becomes self-reinforcing in the group or setting in question. It is important that the chosen persons can root the campaign at the setting and maintain behavioural changes.

The campaign is about promotion of cycling and greater road safety among pupils, employees etc. A way to start is to mention the cam-

The bicycle lift, Trampe, has set focus on Trondheim and the promotion of cycling.

paigned in the house organ, the local newspaper and the like. Right after these measures have to be implemented.

Rewards are often a catalyst for behavioural changes, and could be a possible measure. Rewards could in this case be, eg company bikes, bicycle lamps or helmets. Rewards can also be used to maintain good behaviour, eg awards for the cyclist of the month at the company or the safest schoolchild of the year etc.

Other measures could be: Competitions, improvement of physical conditions for cyclists, claim for bicycle equipment, claim for bicycle helmets and claim for safe driving in company cars.

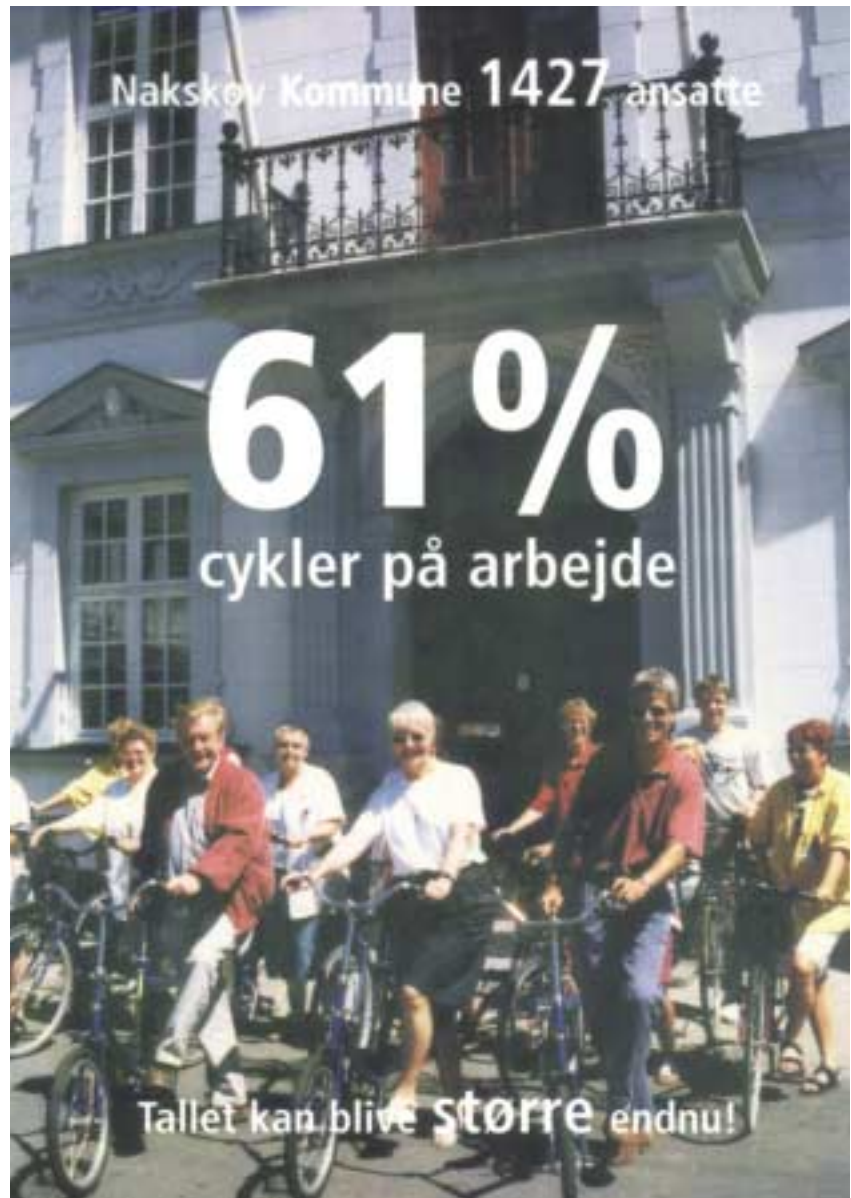
A good idea is to define goals for changes in the particular setting. These should be short-term goals, eg over a period of a year, so that the project does not run out of steam.

Schools are an obvious target for promotion of more and safer cycling. The subject can be naturally integrated in teaching on traffic, the environment or social conditions. It can be carried out locally through contact between the municipality and schools by, for example, staff responsible for Agenda²¹. This can lead both to an increased awareness among schoolchildren and also to the influencing of parents “from below”.

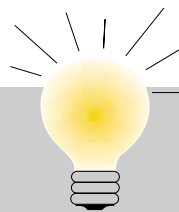
At two schools in Belgium parent and teacher escorts for cycling school pupils has led to a 12% increase in the number of children who cycle²⁶.

Individualised campaigns

The motivation parameters in personal approaches concerning the promotion of more and safer



The campaign “Nakskov cycle to work”.



Initiatives for GPs

- Leaflet in waiting-room on physical activity and health
- Recommendations when talking with patients concerning physical activity, eg daily cycle trips
- Leaflet in waiting-room on physical and mental state and road safety
- Recommendations to patients of safety precautions when cycling
- Leaflet in waiting-room about local activities for the promotion of more and safer cycling
- Visits to schools and commercial enterprises with health checks and the like

Dutch experience from travel plans for companies has shown that 0-8% of all employees can become new cyclists ¹⁰⁴.

cycling are primarily a matter of individual benefits, such as financial savings, health, reduced risk, enjoyment etc. Even minor changes in travel behaviour of individuals make a difference to the overall picture. Mode choice for certain trips can easily be changed – just as it is easy for motorists to drive more slowly. It is often necessary for individualised campaigns to be supported by a prior public awareness campaign.

The goal is to increase awareness of cycling and road safety among selected persons and households

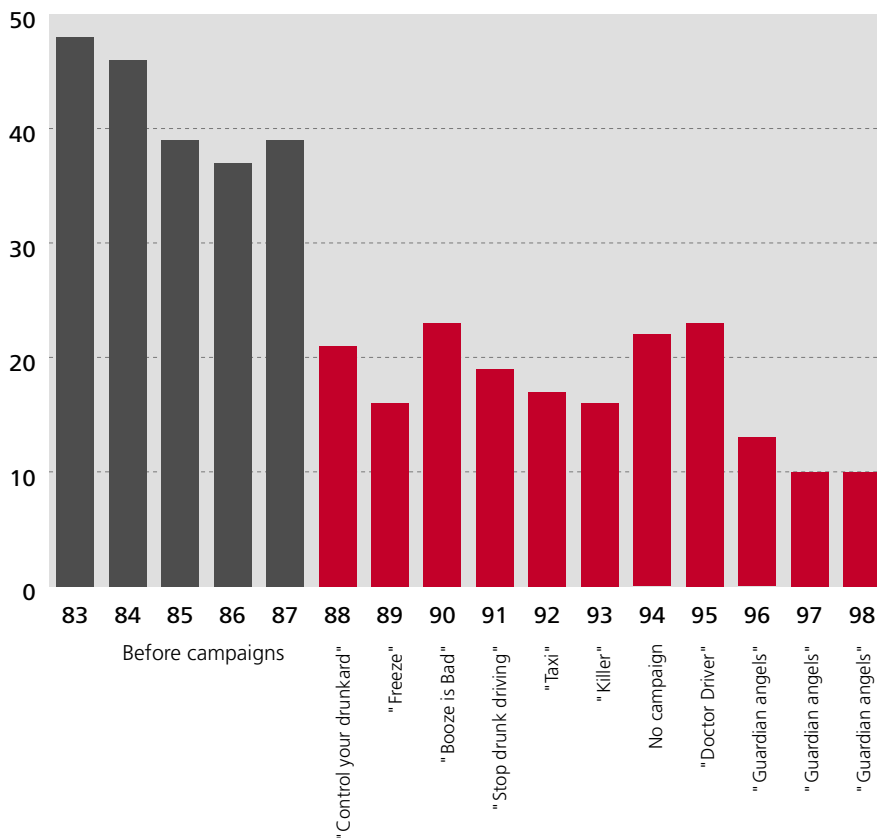
and to change erroneous perceptions of cycling. It is especially effective to inform and influence persons who has moved, changed job/school and now has a new cycle network and other local services, eg shops, institutions and leisure activities. Such persons are easy to access. A cycle map can contain information on individual benefits. The personal approach has proved effective for road safety, eg in combating drunk driving. Bicycle accessories and helmets can also be improved/disseminated through personal contact. Recurrent violators of the Road Traffic Act are an obvious but unfortunately rarely used target group for approaches from Road Safety Councils, the police and road administrations. Finally, house owner and residents associations can be used to identify particularly careless cyclists and motorists.

Telephone calls, letters, newspaper ads and brochures are ways of recruiting individuals and families who are motivated to change their travel behaviour. Travel diaries are a good instrument to this end, since they make it simple to identify trips, which easily can be made by bicycle, and to follow individual transport patterns. Personal contact with specialist guidance is particularly productive. Here experience has shown that a monthly follow-up for 3-6 months changes individual travel behaviour and consolidates this change.

Local features in nation-wide campaigns

It is a general rule that the more uniform the target group, the more effective communication will be. The effect for the individual is larger as the target group becomes

No. of accidents involving illegal alcohol levels



Individualised campaigns more than halved the no. of accidents involving illegal alcohol levels.





In its BikeBus'ers project the Municipality of Århus induced habitual motorists to cycle or take the bus between home and work and to keep travel diaries on their transport patterns – with free bicycles, season tickets for the bus, rain clothes etc. The offer was made through the local press and in brochures for motorists. Almost 10 times as many people applied as the 175 who participated in the project. The travel diaries showed that the project increased the bicycle share of all trips by a factor of almost six in the summer and a factor of three in the winter. Car trips were more than halved. The changed travel patterns were maintained after the end of the project ¹²⁴.

smaller ¹²⁸. On the other hand, it is of course true that the narrower the group, the fewer the people who will be influenced.

A good idea is to introduce a local delimitation into a national or regional campaign. As an inhabitant of Copenhagen one will feel that “Copenhagen cycles to work” is a more relevant message than a nation-wide “We cycle to work”, even though there is no other local content than the changed name of the campaign. This also applies to road safety campaigns.

Links between hard and soft policies

The majority of people will not change their travel behaviour solely on the basis of campaigns. It is

therefore an advantage to co-ordinate campaigns with better physical conditions for cyclists, restrictions on car use, safer road layout and police enforcement. A co-ordinated programme has the greatest chance of success.

On the one hand, it is extremely important that there should be broad support for and an understanding of changes in or the introduction of new infrastructure or charges. On the other hand, the effects of hard policies are greater when they are served together with soft messages.

Campaigns for more cycling

The goal for cycle promotion campaigns may be to transfer short car trips into cycle trips, but it may also

be to do the same with longer car trips. There is a tendency for people to make long trips in order to shop if they are travelling by car. With a little thought the shopping can be done by bicycle if one chooses local shops.

The majority of the population would like to see fewer cars on roads and streets. Citizens are highly aware of the problems caused by traffic growth and have partially accepted that something needs to be done, eg by treating cyclists better than motorists ¹³¹. It is therefore a question of influencing the general public's view of cycling as a possible substitute for the car and at the same time showing that more bicycle traffic benefits both the individual and society.



PHOTO: Linda Hansen



PHOTO: Linda Hansen

situation. In some circles and contexts it would be seen as quite inappropriate to cycle, in others it would be inadvisable not to do so.

It is people's perceptions of the conditions and not the actual conditions that determine their mode choice. For this reason campaigns in connection with new bicycle facilities can have a strong effect. People do not change their perceptions of infrastructure if they do not see or hear about or try out new or reconstructed facilities.

One example of this is a cycle route in Lund, Sweden. After it had been completed many people continued to use other routes. Only after an awareness campaign was there a significant increase in the number of cyclists using the route⁷⁰.

People who rarely or never cycle tend to judge a cycle trip as not so comfortable or safe than it is. Similarly new cyclists are surprised by how quick bicycles are, how much one can transport on a bicycle and how good the weather is⁹³.

It is widely recognised that cycling gives exercise and health. But many



PHOTO: Linda Hansen



PHOTO: Lars Bahl

Mode choice is influenced by perceptions

The volume of bicycle traffic is not solely determined by the physical conditions for cyclists, topography, public transport supply and economic factors. Other components enter into the individual's mode choice such factors as weather, attitudes to health and physical activity, the need to transport things or people, clothing and other people's expectations of one's mode choice.

Norms and expectations vary from person to person and situation to



PHOTO: Linda Hansen



PHOTO: Polfoto/Patrick Kovarik

with the message “Det er sundt at cykle året rundt” [It’s healthy to cycle all year round], distribution of company bikes to interested enterprises, distribution of breakfast and information in the morning peak hour, the “Vi cykler til arbejde” [We Cycle to Work] campaign with prizes for participants.

Copenhagen’s introduction of city bikes in 1995 gave colossal publicity and a large advertising effect for the enterprises that have had their

logo on bikes and stands. The effect on mode choice has been modest, but the city bikes have made Copenhagen known to the outside world as the city of bicycles.

In 1995 the Holstebro section of the Danish Cyclists Federation carried out the campaign “Kom en puter på cyklen” [Com a Puter On Your Bike], which has given rise to other similar projects. Participants in the campaign were inspired by a health festival and rewarded with a bicycle

Doping in cycle races – what does that mean?

people tend to assess air pollution and road safety as bigger problems for cyclists than other road users. Many people are therefore not aware that cycling increases one’s mean life expectancy. With respect to air pollution it has been documented that, contrary to the general belief, motorists are exposed to 3-4 times higher concentrations of particles, benzene, toluene etc, than cyclists^{34, 59}.

Many people, especially women, are astonished when the Danish Heart Foundation tells them that they are in poor form¹²⁴. Experience show that women are more susceptible to influence through campaigns than men. Only one in four adult Dane gets the recommended amount of exercise²⁷. An increasing proportion of children has poor motor skills as a consequence of insufficient physical activity.

Examples of campaigns

Over a number of years the Municipality of Copenhagen has arranged various activities aimed at getting more people to cycle: Large posters



Jesper Skibby
Vinder af 9. etape, Spanien Rundt.

Det er hårdt at cykle Spanien rundt.



Og sundt at cykle året rundt.

PHOTO: Municipality of Copenhagen

STYR PÅ CYKLEN og sundheden



COMPUTER
PÅ CYKLEN

Vær med i Dansk Cyklist Forbunds
konkurrence i august.
Tilmelding på biblioteket.

computer if they managed to cycle 250 km in the month of August. 864 people took part and 825 achieved the necessary number of kilometres and could get their deposit back. Participants cycled over 300,000 km, and there was considerable media coverage.

The annual nation-wide “We cycle to work” campaign is arranged by the Danish Cyclists Federation in collaboration with the Danish Federation of Company Sport and local authorities. Participants must enter in teams of at least four people and report on their travel patterns on special forms. In return they can win prizes in nation-wide and local competitions by cycling to and from work over a 3-week period. There is considerable media coverage. One cyclist in 10 has not cycled prior to the campaign and 75% state that they cycle more in the campaign period than usual.

A spin-off effect of successful campaigns for the promotion of cycling may be an increased interest in conditions for cyclists. Experience has shown that when such campaigns are arranged, there is a rise in the number of approaches from the public concerning travel behaviour and physical conditions. A follow-up on improving the conditions that are pointed out will strengthen the credibility of the campaign.

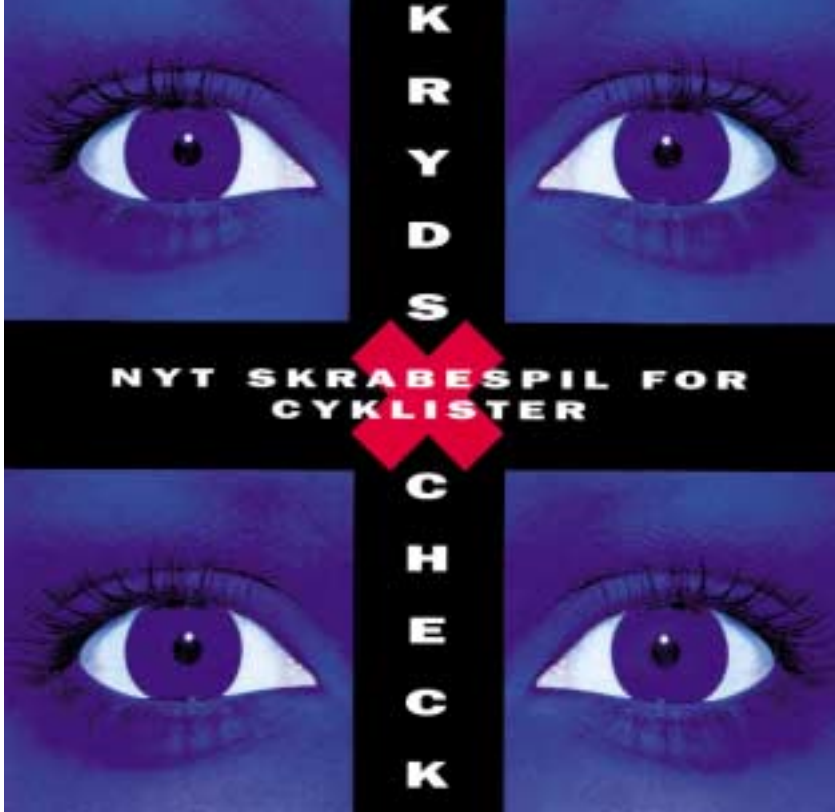
Campaigns for improved road safety

Many people see a conflict between promoting cycling and improving road safety. The conflict derives from the fact that the risk when cycling one kilometre is considerably higher than the corresponding risk when covering the same distance by car, bus or train. However, there is much to indicate that in

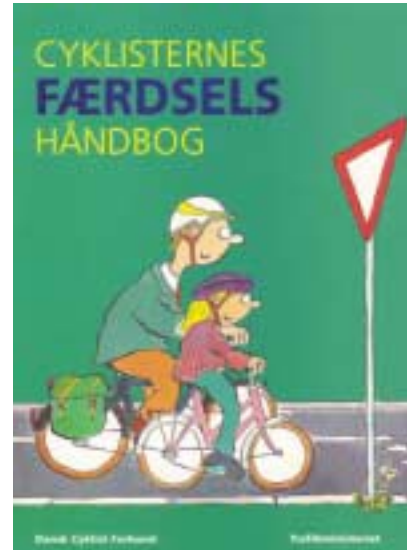
Mounting of a bicycle computer.



PHOTO: Tove Jørgensen



“CrossCrossroadsCarefully”.



The cyclists' instruction book.

practice this conflict is without importance. Thus, Danish children are the safest road users of all groups despite the fact that they cycle more than any other age group. Cyclist safety is best in towns where people cycle most. In other words, more cycling and safer cycling can be achieved at the same time, and this has already been exemplified a number of times ^{52, 130}.

While nearly all cycle promotion campaigns are of recent date, there is a long tradition of road safety campaigns. These have been both nation-wide campaigns, which have been given a certain degree of local colouring, and also purely local campaigns.

In road safety campaigns it is important to make it clear what kinds of behaviour are to be changed and how. This is simple in the case of car speeds, but rather more difficult when it is a matter of cyclist behaviour at junctions.

In contrast to mode choice, road safety is subject to legislation, which can be followed up with firm enforcement and penalties. A combination of information and

enforcement has proved to be effective. A good example of this is drunk driving. Here many years of combining enforcement with campaigns has led to a situation in which not only do far fewer people drive when drunk, but also to a situation in which it is no longer socially acceptable to do so.

Experience, consideration and an understanding of other road users'

Leaflet about reflectors..



behaviour are the central components of safe cycling. The Ministry of Transport and the Danish Cyclists Federation have published a book, which gives a thorough presentation of appropriate cycling behaviour ⁸². Unfortunately it has not yet proved possible to identify just as simple messages designed to improve cyclist safety as was the case with, eg the prevention of drunk driving.

