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SADDLE RAGE SWEEPS THE NATION

- Public call for greater pedal patrols and proficiency tests

to tame lycra louts -

As cycling continues to grow in popularity, one in two Brits are calling for compulsory proficiency tests, as reports of 'bike rage' and widespread law-breaking by cyclists emerge, new research out today reveals.

The poll of 2,058 road users is the first in-depth survey of cyclists' behaviour on British roads, commissioned by classifieds site Gumtree.com after it recorded a 325% increase in the number of bikes being sold on the site since April this year - a sign that more people are taking the road on two wheels.

The research reveals that nine out of ten (91%) pedestrians and motorists have caught cyclists red-handed riding on footpaths, with 74% of British road users catching cyclists riding dangerously through red lights.

Cyclists 'blatant disregard for the highway code' is the biggest grievance of fellow road users, including pedestrians, motorists and even fellow cyclists.

Greater police patrol, stiffer penalty fines and compulsory proficiency testing are considered key to tackle the rise in 'bike rage' - almost half (49%) of Brits have called for compulsory testing, with 48% calling for greater police enforcement of cyclists who break the rules, and the laws! One in four (26%) demand higher on-the-spot fines, and think it should be compulsory to carry a cycling licence (25%).

More cycle lanes are another solution called for, with over half (55%) of road-users thinking this was the easiest solution.

The research reveals a 'cycling hall of shame' featuring the top ten crimes committed by cyclists on British roads:

1. 91% of road users have caught cyclists riding on the footpath/pavement
2. 76% regularly see cyclists riding without lights on in the dark
3. 74% have witnessed cyclists passing through a red traffic light
4. 68% have seen cyclists failing to signal when turning left or right

5. 50% have seen cyclists heading the wrong way down a one-way road
6. Cyclists driving through pedestrian crossing (44%)
7. Cyclists shouting at car and motorbike drivers (38%)
8. Shouting at pedestrians (27%)
9. Causing an accident (18%)
10. Cyclists not having insurance which means they can't compensate other people involved in the accident (9%)

And it's not just pedestrians and motorists who are being subjected to saddle rage - other cyclists say they have increasingly suffered, with one in ten (11%) admitting they've been verbally insulted, intimidated and yelled at by fellow cyclists.

Recent wet weather conditions clearly haven't dampened cyclists' spirits with sales of bikes increasing steadily, despite the inclement weather. Of the 803 cyclist's polled, 84% get on a bike to keep fit, with over a quarter (28%) cycling exclusively to do their 'cleaner, greener' bit for the environment.

Sophy Silver from Gumtree says: "While those who buy bikes should be commended for doing their bit for the environment and keeping fit, it's clear that road users are starting to see red with lycra louts and pedal pests. Not all cyclists are sinners, but it's clear that many cyclists need to gear-up on their high-way code knowledge and cycle within the rules of the road to keep the peace."

Other research highlights:

- Road users in Wales (46%) are most fed up with cyclists who think they are a law above the highway code, and so ignore it!
- Cyclists in London are more likely to be caught going through a red light (83%). They are also more liable to be the cause of an accident (24% Vs national average of 18%)
- More Scots think the best solution the 'bike rage' is to add more cycle lanes (63%)
- Almost one in three Londoners insist that cyclists should have to carry cycling licenses like motorists do (31%)

- 1% of road users take offence at cyclists who wear Lycra!

Victim of saddle rage case study:

London-based Creative Director, Ben Dutton, 30 says: "As a pedestrian and a driver I have never ever suffered road rage from anyone behind a steering wheel.

"It's a completely different story with cyclists. While they should be commended for being greener than motorists they do not own the road and should not feel that they can make and break the rules. I've nearly been knocked over when the lights are on red by many cyclists who don't think the Highway Code applies to them.

"I think that the green stance has gone to so many cyclists' heads that their rage against cars, buses and lorries has quickly extended to anything that doesn't move on two wheels."

Cyclist defender: Brid Costello, Beauty Editor, 30

"It's not just cyclists who are guilty of breaking the rules - I've had pedestrians walk onto cycle lanes and nearly wipe me out, and motorists who think that bike lanes are clever ways to skip traffic. Everyone, not just those riding bikes, need to show respect and take greater care on our roads as they get busier."

Law-abiding cyclist case study:

Mike Ward, cyclist, over 40 says: "Cycling is the perfect all round way for me to get to work. It's good cardio exercise, it costs me nothing and it's the fastest way to commute. Above all, I love it. There's little excuse for cyclists not to keep to the rules - you can buy a bike cheap enough on Gumtree, along with safety accessories like lights, day-glo jackets and don't forget, the rules of the road are free to all - pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. It's not just cyclists who are to blame. I follow the rules of the road but there are those who break it that cycle, drive and even walk, unfortunately. I'm personally embarrassed by fellow cyclists who break the law and I'm not too shy to shout at them."

- Ends -

For more information or case studies please contact the Gumtree press office at Lexis Public Relations on 020 7908 6589 or email gumtree@lexispr.com

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