

# DIVERSITY IN CYCLING

SECOND EDITION



**ANDY EDWARDS**

**FOREWORD BY ANEELA MCKENNA**

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FAROOQ CHAUDHRY, NAOMI RUMBLE, FOZIA NASEEM,  
NASIMA SIDDIQUI, RICHARD LISTON  
AND SAM RUDDOCK**

**"THE UCI ARE TRYING TO MAKE CYCLING A MORE GLOBAL SPORT; BUT TO BE MORE GLOBAL THE SPORT HAS TO BE MORE OPEN AND DIVERSE."**

**MAURICE BURTON - OWNER OF DE VER CYCLES AND FORMER PROFESSIONAL CYCLIST.**

For Harry Edwards (Dad)  
Duncan Horsfall - Nelson Wheelers CC  
Stephen Horsfall - Nelson Wheelers CC  
Darren Ridehalgh - VC Bradford  
Dave Briand - Leek Cyclists' Club  
Kev Sharrock - Leek Cyclists' Club  
Maria Thompson - Kingston Wheelers CC  
Rachel Hillier - cyclist and friend to so many  
... gone but not forgotten, grateful for the journey

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Diversity In Cycling – second edition. First published in 2019. This edition published in 2022. Andy Edwards

Foreword by Aneela McKenna. Commentary by Shirla Poole, Ronn Fraser, Farooq Chaudhry, Naomi Rumble, Fozia Naseem, Nasima Siddiqui, Richard Liston and Sam Ruddock.

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# FOREWORD

## ANEELA MCKENNA

Never has there been a more exciting time to celebrate diversity in cycling.

It took a tragic event, the death of George Floyd to get the world to wake up. Cycling opened its eyes to the lack of diversity in our sport and recognised that we need to do more. There is a fundamental problem why people of colour are not equally represented in the sport and we need to ask ourselves why?

If we truly want to be a cycling nation then we must reflect all of the UK's diverse communities and enable everyone to access the benefits that cycling bestows. Cycling brings us good mental health, self-confidence, keeps us fit, and builds a strong community spirit. It gives us a sense of belonging in life. Inclusive spaces are what we need to create and only when they are established can we truly say we are 'welcoming to all'. Everyone must feel they belong.

Since the first edition was published we have come a long way. There's a growing movement for change in the UK - we are hearing voices that are saying enough is enough. We're talking about the impact of racism in our communities. Cycling is part of this conversation too. We are sharing our stories and lived experiences to highlight the barriers in cycling but we must also challenge the traditions, behaviours, and attitudes that continue to reinforce the exclusivity of cycling.

This is an exciting but challenging time for us all. We must grab the opportunity to keep up the momentum, push on, working together with our allies, and learning from others that are being bold and saying no to racism.

I'm delighted to see the second edition come together. Andy Edwards has been campaigning hard for many years to diversify our sport.

Diversity In Cycling was a catalyst for change for British Cycling to elevate its position on this vital subject and make a strong and long-term commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. In 2021 they launched their first-ever Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy and we hope this will bring the change we want to see - moving the conversation into real, tangible, and effective action.

Thank you to everyone who has shared their stories. It is incredibly brave for all of you to step up and share your experiences but the impact of this is so powerful, thank you. We can only learn if we continue to call it out, to break the traditions of what has gone before.

*Aneela McKenna is a partner, MTB guide and coach for Go Where Scotland, founder of Mòr Diversity, and Chair of British Cycling Diversity and Inclusion External Advisory Group.*



# PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Diversity In Cycling grew from an observation that more Black and Asian people were riding bikes, but cycling club membership, cycling brands, or the media did not reflect this. First published in 2019, the outcomes were revealing and the initial reactions encouraging.

The murder of George Floyd in 2020, during the global Covid-19 lockdown, forced the whole world to confront racism. Pro cycling teams and governing bodies, including British Cycling (who supported this project), failed to engage. The whiteness of cycling was exposed.

The Covid-19-related lockdowns prompted a massive increase in participation, especially amongst women and people of colour, both on the road and virtual Zwift rides that enabled a broader cross-section of people to connect with cycling and the cycling community around the world. While those at the top of the sport remained silent, grassroots cycling spoke loudly and demanded change. British Cycling subsequently announced its Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy. USA Cycling is taking a similar approach, and pro teams and brands are beginning to do likewise.

This second edition builds on the work and content of the original publication with new commentaries and some amendments and refinements.

## NO-BAME

The first edition introduced the term BAME, an acronym for Black and Minority Ethnic. It has never been an ideal term, but it did offer a starting point for such a white sport. The term lacks nuance and generalises too many varied lived experiences; othering people of colour, where white is the norm and non-white is the exception. The term minority is also considered problematic because it has negative connotations by making ethnic groups appear lesser. Sporting Equals explain more [here](#).

Cycling is now learning how to become more inclusive, and part of any learning process is discarding that which no longer serves a purpose. Like removing stabilisers when learning to ride a bike, **the time has now come to remove the term BAME.**

What do we use instead? Specific language. We either use Black, Asian and other diverse communities in place of BAME or whatever description is most relevant, such as Black, Asian, South Asian, and East Asian. Terms such as “ethnically diverse”, “diverse groups” or “under-represented groups” also have a place.

## NATIONAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXT

The first edition focused on London because even in a diverse city such as London, it was clear that cycling has a diversity problem. The core themes and recommendations had broader relevance across the UK, around the world, and across all branches of cycling, not just road cycling. This second edition reflects this broader context.





While many themes are universal, there are local variations. In a British context, Asian often means South Asian, but in North America typically means East Asian. The previously used BAME is a British term, while Americans tend to use BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour), where Indigenous refers to Native Americans. There are significant differences in how race and racism play out in the UK and USA, but when it comes to cycling, there are many similarities and a shared sense of purpose. When American pro cyclist Justin Williams visited London, he received a warm welcome from the cycling community.

## ANTIRACISM

The first edition did not reveal much overt racism, but there were many examples of microaggressions and othering. Racism within cycling has become more visible, but racism has always been there. As cycling becomes more diverse, it is also important to understand and practice antiracism. Racism has many forms, sometimes direct and sometimes far more subtle. The Further Reading section provides some helpful references, but keep searching for books and videos, especially on YouTube, to gain understanding.

## INCLUSIVE GROUPS, INTERSECTIONALITY, MUSLIM WOMEN

The first edition focused on a small number of cycling groups as examples, but most were at a formative stage in their development. More groups have emerged in London, across the UK, and globally. Cycling clubs have always ebbed and flowed. Some split, some merge, some fall by the wayside; this is an ongoing dynamic within cycling. The more enlightened groups help each other along the way, collaborative competition.

The growth of cycling groups catering specifically to women or with women in leadership positions is especially pleasing. This second edition reflects this trend, with more commentaries from some exceptional women and a gender-balanced approach to the pictures and narrative. Muslim women are featured more prominently.



## MORE DIVERSITY

Diversity and inclusion go beyond race, gender, and religion to encompass disability (including neurodiversity), age, sexual orientation, and gender identity amongst other factors. Building an inclusive ethos requires a sustained, multifaceted approach. The outcome must always be equality and justice for all.

This second edition retains a focus on race, gender, and religion (Islam) but also acknowledges diversity in a broader sense. However, other protected characteristics are touched on only lightly because otherwise, this document would lose focus. Readers are encouraged to explore as widely as possible or undertake their own additional work.

Since the first edition, I have been diagnosed with ADHD and Autism (two protected characteristics), which means I am neurodiverse. It has taken a lifetime for me to comprehend my own difference, and that goes some way towards explaining why a white guy would think to undertake a project like this in the first place. Better understanding ourselves goes hand-in-hand with appreciating the different lived experiences of those around us. If one thing drives this document, it is a desire that all of us who call ourselves cyclists, whatever our background, feel the same sense of belonging cycling has always given me.

Finally, the wonderful Chidi Onuoha, who had the most consequential impact of any individual in bringing the first edition to life, has collaborated in fine-tuning this second edition. As a seasoned sports communications professional and British Nigerian woman, we need more Chidi Onuohas in cycling. Please read the acknowledgments for a complete list of everyone who helped make this second edition a reality. I take responsibility for this project, but everyone who contributed deserves credit for helping bring it to life.



# BLACK WOMEN TO THE FRONT

## SHIRLA POOLE

I bought my first road bike in 2015 and started riding with my gym instructor and a couple of gym members, all black guys. The guys were too fast for me, so I looked for a local club, only to find pictures of white, middle-aged guys with no other person of colour and no other ladies. I persevered until I discovered Islington CC. They had a large ladies' group, one out of two wasn't bad (black and/ or ladies!), so I decided to join.

After I had joined ICC, I also joined LIV Camden, a ladies' cycling club, on an overseas trip to Amsterdam. I felt immediately comfortable and was pleased to see a diverse mix within the club, not just women of colour but also different nationalities.

My cycling progressed, I would ride most days, but I needed to train. Coach Watto's weekly training sessions for women in Regent's Park helped me progress. Watto invited me to take part in CC London's training camp in Calpe, Spain. It was my very first training camp. We rode on many of the same roads used by pro riders, and the climbs, especially, really tested me. The whole experience was awesome, and I made some great friends. On my return, I joined CC London.

Alongside being a member of Islington CC, LIV Camden, and CC London, I am also a member of RideFest, a group of likeminded black riders.

I first met RideFest on a trip to the Isle of Wight, taking part in a Randonee. RideFest openly welcomed me into the fold. This group was started in 2016 by a collective of black skiers and friends, who had a ski group called SkiFest. They came together to form a positive black cycling community. The group is quite chilled - easy on the testosterone, so we have a mix of 50/50 men and women, which is unusual in cycling. I have been a member since 2017. Cycling YouTuber Francis Cade featured us in one of his videos which you can watch [here](#).

Someone told me it is unusual in cycling for one person to be in so many clubs at the same time, but I would say I take what I need from the different groups to progress. My journey has involved a range of activities and experiences, and I have made many new friends along the way. It is important to be open.





# GETTING STARTED

## RONN FRASER

Andy and I are members of Kingston Wheelers, and he first contacted me about Diversity In Cycling at a very early stage. There had been a discussion in a committee meeting about the lack of diversity within the club, and it was agreed that Andy would go and look into the issues more thoroughly.



I must admit that I was surprised that there was an approach; it always appeared to me that Kingston Wheelers was a friendly and open club. It never dawned on me that someone would reach out and ask probing questions on diversity. I had intended to respond, excited by the prospect of someone taking up the mantle to inspire change. But then I stopped.

I had met Andy at club events, but I didn't really know him. I was taken aback by a white guy I didn't know, albeit a very cool white guy, asking me to participate in a subject that could be deemed highly charged by our, on the surface, somewhat conservative club. This is a subject that runs deep and is part of my lived experience.

He followed up a few times. I didn't respond. I didn't want to appear as a maverick, and deep down I still don't. Should I voice my thoughts in a public arena and risk standing out as 'that guy' in the club? Who was I to rock the boat in the quaint, traditional atmosphere of beautiful downtown Kingston?

What won me over was Andy's persistence. He just got his head down and did the work. He saw something in me that I needed to get out and he never gave up. Reading it; shockingly honest, and seeing how much of himself Andy had given to a cause that could easily have bitten him. And, the surprising openness of the contributors, some of whom I knew personally.

The launch event at Look Mum No Hands blew me away; so many like-minded, rainbow-coloured bike riders in one room with the same belief. The last time I saw anywhere near that many people, who looked like me and were into bikes, I was fourteen and riding with my brother and our mates in Shepherds Bush. What was this? I couldn't stop smiling. I left the event absolutely buzzing!

My advice to clubs is, do not to be afraid to reach out to your members and the community to understand if the club reflects the diversity of the local community. I would advise that if deep down you know that change has to be made, then the hardest part is the first revolution, like pedalling. Prepare for a journey; change takes time, but the rewards are immense.

To people of colour, I would remind them of the fun we had as kids riding our bikes. It was our means of transport, a source of entertainment, and a uniting force without us knowing. It was our competition in riding the fastest and wheelieing the furthest. Swing a leg over a top tube (formally a crossbar), and we are there!

Diversity In Cycling is a must read. It is easy to digest and insightful.

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A variety of approaches are needed to encourage greater diversity in cycling. The recommendations below are not exhaustive, but offer practical suggestions.

## PROMOTE VISIBILITY (BUT BE AUTHENTIC)

If your club has members from under-represented backgrounds, with their permission, include those members in any visual representation of club membership. This creates visibility; consider deploying ambassadors as a point of contact. Do not try to be something that you are not, but do promote your values: if you are open to all newcomers regardless of race and gender say so. We all have to start somewhere, but let's make a start.

## PROMOTE ACCESSIBILITY

Mix up rides and start times. Not everyone can make 9am on a Sunday morning. Promote a range of options, from training rides to social rides to t-shirt rides. Provide context to cycling club culture, what it means to be in a club, to ride in a group and general dos and don'ts.

## BE INCLUSIVE

**Inclusion is essential to diversity.** Make sure riders of all backgrounds feel included and visible, and that everyone feels part of one community with shared values. Work with other groups and the broader community to share knowledge and promote pathways.

## BE INTERSECTIONAL

Prioritise race and gender together, and pay particular attention to how the two interact. Intersectionality sits at the heart of diversity and inclusion work. Women's membership of cycling organisations sits at roughly 15-20%, yet Black Unity Bike Ride were proactive and boosted women's participation from 20-25% in the first year to 46% in the second year.

## TELL MORE THAN ONE STORY

Get to know riders from different backgrounds and promote many different stories. Go deeper and beyond the performative; social media likes and follows only take you so far.

Naomi Rumble tells us Black women come in all shapes and sizes, be sure to reflect that.

## RAISE YOUR OWN RACIAL AWARENESS

Many white people are uncomfortable talking about race. That is because most of us are not equipped to have the conversation. Read, listen and learn. If one person stands out in a

group, be aware they may feel an extra level of intimidation than any other newcomer. Be sure that person feels welcome without overdoing it. **Don't stare, smile and say hello!**

**CHANGE DISCOURSE:** Be willing to challenge how your members talk about race and gender; this impacts how comfortable new members will feel.

## BE ANTIRACIST

Educate yourself about what racism is, how to recognise it, and how to dismantle it. Start with the reading list, then find more references, then do the work.

## CHALLENGE ALL FORMS OF PREJUDICE

Racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and disablism have no place in cycling. Be consistent while being inclusive. Diversity is not either / or. If confronting individuals, do so in a reasonable and proportionate manner. Try and offer solutions and a pathway for growth, but also know when to cut your losses.

## MONITOR PROGRESS

Quantify your membership through capturing ethnicity data on joining/ renewal forms. Monitor progress over time. Larger clubs and organisations should certainly do this.





# METHODOLOGY

The first edition of Diversity In Cycling considered the experiences of cyclists from Black, Asian, and other diverse communities who are engaging with the sport on a meaningful level and are prospective cycling club members. “Meaningful level” means riding with a degree of sporting intent, including keeping fit, riding sportives, or racing.

Most contributors to the original questionnaire were of Black African, Black Caribbean, or South Asian heritage. Many Muslim riders also contributed. A significant number of contributors were of mixed heritage. Riders of East Asian, Arabic, and Persian backgrounds were less represented, although it is important to stress that riders from these backgrounds also experience racism and discrimination.

A combination of one-to-one meetings and an online survey of ten open-ended questions enabled contributors to share their experiences in their own words. More than sixty men and women contributed to a survey conducted between November 2018 and January 2019. This second edition draws on responses to an additional survey conducted in January 2020. Further one-to-ones between September 2021 and March 2022.

There is a range of experiences amongst respondents, and there will be experiences and perspectives not captured here. Nevertheless, with the help of contributors, great care has been taken to ensure the themes and recommendations are credible and robust. This project aims to help inform a conversation and serve as an agent for change.





## QUESTIONNAIRE – SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

There were over 60 responses to the questionnaire in addition to face-to-face meetings, providing a good qualitative overview of the issues<sup>1</sup>. As follows:

**Q1 When you are out on your bike, would you say there are more or less riders from Black and minority backgrounds in Lycra than there were 5 years ago?**

The majority of respondents noticed more riders from Black, Asian or ethnic minority backgrounds on the roads than five years ago. Asking specifically about riders in “Lyrca” helps distinguish those riding with some sporting intent, i.e. prospective cycling club members, but this distinction can be problematic.

**Q2** If your answer to Q1 is yes, why do you think these numbers are increasing?

### Q3 What motivated you to start riding seriously?

There are a variety of responses, centred on two core themes.

**VISIBILITY:** this came up a lot and is incredibly important, it speaks to a core need of belonging and seeing “people who look like me” in the sport of cycling.





**“People like myself encouraging more people of colour to ride with me if I see them at any event i.e. sportive/charity rides. Also, when I see others on commutes or in bicycle shops.”**

**“Being exposed to other Black riders who are in the scene invites them to the sport while being comfortable.”**

**“I think that more of us are gaining confidence in getting out and actually being able to ride equally to the white majority.”**

One respondent stated in answer to question 3:

**“Another Black female cyclist.”**

Another dynamic is the growing prominence of Black riders at pro level,

**“Perhaps it is due to an improvement in cycling infrastructure and social media and maybe some notable performances by riders like Daniel Teklehaimanot wearing polka dot Jersey in the TdF. In terms of social media, I think riders like Justin Williams has done a great job. I know a lot of Black riders who follow him.”**

Social media, and Instagram specifically, is a key factor. US pro Justin Williams has a strong social media following, as does Ayesha McGowan, Taniel Campbell, Kye Whyte, Shanaze Reade and a growing number of riders from under-represented backgrounds.

1. The original questionnaire did not use the term BAME, but it was used as an abbreviation in the first edition for reasons of brevity. A few respondents chose to use BAME, but these responses are not included for reasons of consistency with the No-BAME ethos, while taking care to retain the overarching substance of the issues raised. The term minority was used in the original questionnaire and responses. For this reason, the term is retained in this section of the second edition.



**ACCESSIBILITY:** many respondents felt cycling is becoming more accessible. By making cycling more accessible, not only are more people attracted to the sport but there is also an increase in the diversity of those taking up the sport for the first time. Examples include charity rides, sportives, ride-to-work policies, corporate challenges and so on. This was a common thread:

“Completing my first London to Brighton.”

“A charity bike ride and my white step dad.”

“Finding a club of like-minded people who shared my goals! Other clubs I was in did not cater to me as a female cyclist wanting to race, so it was very hard to ride ‘seriously’ until I left for a different club.”

“Commuting and then triathlon because there was a race series near where I lived. Inspired by people I knew (boyfriend at uni).”

“Started from commuting to work then got more interested and got a road bike so I can go out and enjoy more than just commuting.”

“My workmates and wanting to experience see more of the outdoors. Cheaper than public transport.”

“Charity ride sparked the interest.”

“I learnt how to ride by an inspirational woman. It gave me freedom, confidence, and benefitted my health too.”



**Q4 Once you started riding, did you consider joining a club? If so please describe the experience of approaching a club and going on a club run for the first time.**

Many respondents had joined a cycling club, and most found the experience broadly positive. Some of these respondents had mixed experiences with unfriendly and unwelcoming clubs before finding the right one.

A recurring theme is that cycling clubs can be “intimidating”, even where the club is friendly and welcoming, it is a big step for any newcomer. The extent to which clubs are “intimidating” is heightened when people do not feel represented in the club they are joining, whether that is gender or ethnicity, in other words, a lack of **“people like me.”**

Everyone’s first club run feels like boot camp. The rider next to you saying “your saddle’s too low”, “change gear”, “spin the legs”, “relax the arms,” when the group rotates, the next person says the same thing. Trying to help a newcomer become a better rider, coupled with the stares and the curious looks, can be overwhelming.

Some respondents referenced prominent Black riders/ bike shop owners as reasons for joining a particular club. A sizable number of respondents have never joined a cycling club. Of those who did join a club, many had good experiences, but there were negative experiences also:

**“I had a Black owned bike shop on the road I was living on when I moved to Penge. Told the owner I did 40-50 miles daily just commuting. Was asked to come on a club/shop ride.,,”**

**“No I didn’t initially but later on I did. The experience was welcoming in most clubs apart from one.,,”**

**“I did consider it but I had no idea how to go about picking one. In the end I was approached by a club who invited me to join them so I did. I didn’t go on a club run for ages for a variety of reasons (scared, work commitments) but they did also put on weekly skills sessions that I attended instead.,,”**

**“I’d ride for a while and decided the next step would be to join a club and gain more experience. I went to my local club straight away, but was rejected as I didn’t have enough experience and they were not interested in teaching/ developing riders which was fine. A few months later I went on a group ride with London Dynamo and joined their group of juniors a few weeks later. They accepted me with open arms and taught me most of what I know, hand signals, road rules etc. My first club run with them went great too, they looked after me, made sure I didn’t get dropped and even bought me a Fanta for doing so well.,,”**

“I rode for a year or two then joined my uni club. I then moved down South and rode for about a year before joining Kingston Wheelers. You’re obviously a bit nervous joining a club run for the first time, but I found everyone at Kingston Wheelers super welcoming and was keen to join immediately after my first ride.”

“I wanted to join a club pretty quickly! It was hard to find the right fit.”

“I created my own club with a poster asking if anyone wanted to ride with me because I didn’t know of any other cyclists who were as slow as me.”

“I did join a club group ride. Didn’t feel welcomed as being the only Asian guy with a beard on bike. Hence why I never went back cycling with them and don’t go with any clubs because of the remarks passed around. I think to me riding solo is same as in the group because of the reason I mentioned and it gets awkward.”

“I’ve not formally joined a club but have ridden with numerous clubs, the joy of using Regents Park as a stomping ground. Every club I have ridden with has been nothing but welcoming and very social.”

“I was looking for cyclists that I could feel comfortable with that had a similar background, culture and viewpoint on life. I found Brothers on Bikes on Strava and on the first ride knew I had found what I was looking for.”





**Q5** Do you feel club cycling is for you and do you ride with a club regularly?

**Q6** If the answer to Q5 is no, why are clubs cycling not for you?

**Q7** If the answer to Q5 is yes, why do you enjoy club cycling?

The majority of respondents who had joined a cycling club had a broadly positive experience, but some respondents had a negative experience. There were very few responses to question 6, which is pleasing but those that did respond cited “lack of diversity” as a reason. There were two core themes central to joining a cycling club:

**SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE:** riders acknowledged that joining a club helped them develop new skills, learn the sport, get fitter and push themselves alongside stronger riders. Several noted that, although they were initially intimidated, they soon realised that they could engage with the sport on a meaningful level.



**SOCIAL LIFE:** riders enjoyed the social aspects of club riding, meeting new people from varied backgrounds, coffee stops and the camaraderie.

Responses include:

**“Club cycling is for anyone in need of a real push and some guidance into the world of cycling. I try to get out with mine every weekend or represent in a race.”**

**“I couldn’t have done any of the things I achieved this year without the support of my club.”**

**“Cycling clubs are a great way to socialise, improve your cycling ability and techniques. I ride on weekends and join in club rides where possible.”**



“Camaraderie and advice. In my club which is mainly people of colour there’s an “ancestral” bond.,,

“I like riding in a club as there are always other riders that you can learn from to enhance one’s experience.,,

“It’s the whole experience of riding with like minded women.,,

“Social aspects, it pushes you more when riding with stronger riders. You learn tips, tricks and routes.,,

“Being part of club has made me achieve things I probably wouldn’t have otherwise (or not as quickly) and has meant I’ve met some pretty inspiring people too as a result.,,

“I like club cycling as you can build a good network with like minded people. You can make new friends and learn new things from each other.,,

“It’s amazingly motivating to ride with people who share some of your goals. We build each other up, encourage each other and inspire each other to be the best we can be.,,

“Sharing experience of kit and routes plus drafting :),,

“It’s a good way to socialise whilst also doing something you enjoy. Riding in a club means safety in numbers and some big days or weekends out which I wouldn’t necessarily enjoy or be comfortable doing on my own.,,

**“Because it is sociable and I made new friends and it helps improve your cycling in a peloton. Share cycling ideas and also do sportives together.”**

A number of respondents noted the lack of diversity and not only in clubs but at cycling events in general. One respondent described a visit to an event at Lee Valley Velodrome:

**“My daughter noted the absence of any non-white people inside the technical area in the centre. There was only one Black rider competing.”**

Some responses implied a lack of knowledge about etiquette for club runs and training rides on the part of the rider, but also a lack of communication from more experienced riders within the group. Rules and etiquette are a fundamental part of club cycling, especially for those wanting to race or ride in bigger groups such as in a grand fondo. Communicating expectations before and after such rides in a friendly manner are critical elements towards achieving inclusion.

### **Q8 What are cycling clubs doing well in appealing to riders from Black and minority backgrounds?**

The majority of answers to question 8 were pretty blunt:

**“Nothing that I can see.”**

**“I don’t know of anything they are doing....”**

**“I don’t think they are.”**

**“Not Much as far as I can see.”**

**“Not doing anything at all to appeal to Black or minority groups.”**

**“I don’t think they are doing anything specifically.”**

**“As far as I’m aware nothing.”**

**“I wouldn’t say anyone is doing well - to be honest, I’ve not come across any club that actively promotes/appeals to minorities except for Brothers on Bikes CC.”**

**“Not much to be honest, no clubs make an effort to get involved.”**

**“Nothing, I don’t think they do generally.”**

**“Nothing that I can see or have come across.”**

**“Nothing. The ethos hasn’t really changed. The only thing we are really a difference in gender based.”**



One respondent summed up the subtleties of Black riders joining a cycling club and whether or not clubs are encouraging more diverse membership as follows:

**“They are opening themselves to all kinds of riders and not discriminating against anyone. Depending on the club, you may feel like this isn’t the type of place where a Black man or woman, should actually be, as if, that quality of riding or service, isn’t for us. But there are clubs that are more casual about the fact that everyone wants to ride, rather than their image. There’s only 3 Black riders in my club that I know (that includes myself) out of 100+ members, so there’s not a lot going for us there, but I don’t ever think about it when I’m at the club because it’s not an aspect that I feel matters at the time. Which is good, because more Black riders can feel at ease about joining and not worry about feeling bad.”**

It would seem that while most cycling clubs are doing very little to encourage greater diversity, the experience of joining a cycling club for Black riders in many cases is a positive one. The challenge, it seems, is that not enough Black riders know this.



**Q9** How can cycling clubs better appeal to riders from Black and minority backgrounds?

**Q10** Do you have any further thoughts or comments on cycling, club-level cycling and the participation of riders from Black and minority backgrounds?

The majority of responses centred on visibility and engagement. This includes:

- Finding and supporting Black, Asian or ethnic minority ambassadors within clubs
- Engaging with riders on the road in an open and welcoming manner
- Demystifying club culture for those new to the sport, regardless of background
- Sharing knowledge between clubs
- Accessibility to a certain degree was also a factor. Signposting rides that start at different times and on different days other than 9am on a Sunday is helpful.

These responses are worth highlighting:

**“Using marketing and imaging that’s more reflective of the diverse culture we live in. I feel put off sometimes by not seeing ‘someone like me.’”**

**“As I am an example of a keen cyclist, I would love to be the face of any cycle club that would be willing to include more diverse members.”**

**“Make sure it doesn’t seem complicated, elitist, overly male or reserved for the Dura Ace crew. ...Try to find ambassadors. And push visibility .... If they see it, they will come.”**

**“Change the perception of it being an elitist sport. It is very white middle class for sure.”**

**“More ethnic minorities represented in club advertising/website/etc.”**

**“Reach out to ethnic communities and ensure that any members don’t feel isolated.”**

**“The difficult is that cycling clubs are predominantly an activity primarily of white middle class men. Through no fault of the clubs this alone tends to serve as a barrier for Black and minority cyclists to join clubs. Despite cycle club members being the most friendly and welcoming of human beings. The difficulty is that the appeal has to really come from within the minority communities to really kick start things and from there I feel it can snowball.”**

**“I think it will take clubs like Brothers on Bikes and other BEM clubs to really help make a significant impact so that we can feel confident enough to join ‘regular’ clubs without feeling that we are outsiders to the sport.”**



“Word of mouth, using marketing and imaging that’s more reflective of the diverse culture we live in. I feel put off sometimes by not seeing ‘someone like me’.”

“Being more open. Not casting judgement whenever they see a cycling of a smaller minority. They should embrace their will to learn and develop, rather than belittle them for their quality of kit, current skills or ability. Clubs should always be out to help as many cyclists as they can, showing them the crucial skills they need to ride safely and develop.”

“If white cycling groups / clubs behave unconsciously in a way to make other ethnic groups feel unaccepted this behaviour is no different to why you see some Black and white only pubs in a Black neighbourhood. When you find the cause, fix it for the good of the sport.”

“The more diverse cycling is, the better the experience will be for everyone.”

“Club level cycling generally caters for a certain demographic in the absence of societal change there will be no significant developments in participation in black and minority riders who do not fit in within the current demographics. This is more acutely felt by participation of non-white women more so than men.”







## MUSLIM CYCLISTS – SPECIFIC FEEDBACK

Amongst Muslim cyclists, experiences were mostly consistent with cyclists from Black, Asian and other diverse backgrounds, with some important additional points:

### WEARING LYCRA

Wearing Lycra, which is functional for cycling and part of fitting in as a “serious” cyclist, is problematic on a religious level where Islam teaches modesty. A majority of Muslim riders surveyed prefer to wear some form of loose shorts over their Lycra shorts, but this can attract negative comments from other cyclists:

**“Some of us wear loose bottoms over Lycra shorts as modesty is a big part of our religion (Islam). This can sometimes attract negative comments. Being open to stuff like this can make a big difference.”**

**“Don’t look at us in a weird way when we don’t wear Lycra, I mean we wear Lycra but we also wear shorts on top to cover our aura.”**

Clearly, a lot of education is needed to convey this important issue. The first question was framed on the premise that “serious” cyclists wear Lycra. This is huge.

### PUBS AND BACON

There were a few negative experiences where there is a heavy emphasis on social club rides stopping at the pub. Greasy spoon cafés with bacon and similar menu items are problematic for Muslim riders. This requires a respectful but pragmatic approach.

**“Less of a drinking culture and identify riders from ethnic backgrounds at local events to encourage them to join.”**

**“Don’t think the issue is cycling specific, its a cultural difference issue I think especially with the Asian population. A lot of cycling clubs base their social side around beer and pub visits.,,”**

**“Understanding constraints of minority groups such as in the field of diet etc. Some ethnic faith groups might have prayer timings and constraints, being aware of this shows understanding and in turn a sense of inclusivity.,,”**

## **TIMING**

Offering different rides on different days with different start times helps improve diversity overall but specifically addresses prayer requirements for Muslim riders.

**“I once did a tour and nearly missed my prayer because the route did not pass any public places except a pub.,,”**

## **CULTURAL AND GENERATIONAL CHANGES**

One factor, especially noticeable amongst Muslim respondents, is a generational change. While parents or grandparents focused on establishing themselves and building careers in the UK, this generation is paying more attention to lifestyle and fitness. Cycling is appealing to this generation in a way it did not to previous generations.

**“The minority community are a few years behind with regards to embracing cycling. Many of the current cyclists are second, maybe third generation migrants of parents who have come from a country where only those in poverty cycle. They have come to this country to seek a better life for their children where the idea of success is to have a detached home with a Range Rover parked outside and having plenty to eat. Only in the past few years have ethnic minority groups in general started to consider health as a metric of quality of life. There are wider social dynamics at play that have a bearing on cycling participation within ethnic minority groups.,,”**

As with any religion, some individuals are more observant than others and not every Muslim rider will hold these views, but a significant proportion of those surveyed do.





# BROTHERS IN BRISTOL ON BIKES

## FAROOQ CHAUDHRY

Brothers on Bikes is a national club run as a network with 'chapters' in major cities throughout the UK. It has hubs in London, the Midlands, the North, and here in the southwest in Bristol. It sets out to introduce and open up cycling to those who have either not had the fortune of doing so and want to or help novice riders progress in skills and capability. Moreover, it promotes community and brotherhood and the need to help others through the power and beauty of cycling.

Our local initiative to support Muslims to cycle was devised by a few like-minded individuals who met up for Sunday club runs under the banner of a now-defunct Barakah Bike Club. We saw the forward steps that BoB had made in becoming a British Cycling recognised club with structure and vision, and it was clear that joining forces as a small but quickly growing group in Bristol would be beneficial.

BoB fits in nicely with the vibrant and diverse cycling scene here in Bristol, with riders being welcomed and participating in local events ranging from Hill Climb races and Audax rides to pacy training rides and sportives. Bath CC, a long-established local club, reached out to us after seeing a few of our riders in BoB kit on the Mendip hills near the iconic Cheddar Gorge climb. We collaborated with them initially with an offer of free bike box usage for cycling trips abroad and then a number of skills and bike handling workshops at their local circuit at Odd Down which were a big success. This sense of being part of the wider mainstream cycling scene is an important step that I am very passionate about. We are Muslims who ride bikes, but we are just normal people, like anyone else, who ride bikes. Our mission is to open the eyes of those in our community to the delights of cycling while ensuring we challenge and break down barriers that may be out there.

Breaking these barriers includes cultural and gender barriers, and we collaborate with clubs focused on supporting Muslim women. It is fantastic to see so many groups nationally supporting this drive to open cycling up and challenge the perceptions of a woman wearing a scarf or apparel other than bib shorts while they cycle.

Associating with BoB has given us greater exposure to other Muslim cyclists within our network and beyond. Junaid Ibrahim, Co-founder of BoB, has been a great aid in setting up our chapter and a role model for our younger riders with his awesome achievements on and off the bike. His recent BC Cycling Scholar programme internship and racing successes (now cat 3) are inspiring for us all.

I am hopeful that we can continue our recent success and collaboration in Bristol, which has a rich heritage and cycling scene, to establish ourselves with that community. Ensuring we are able to access the mainstream opportunities and services while also helping non-Muslims and people outside our communities appreciate that we are all the same and part of one big cycling family who like and share the same things.





# SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY ETHNICITY

### Gross weekly income bands by ethnicity

| Ethnic group                          | < £600 | 600-1200 | £1,200+ |
|---------------------------------------|--------|----------|---------|
| All households                        | 45%    | 33%      | 21%     |
| Mixed/Multiple ethnic group           | 42%    | 35%      | 23%     |
| Asian/Asian British                   | 39%    | 36%      | 24%     |
| Indian                                | 32%    | 35%      | 32%     |
| Pakistani                             | 49%    | 34%      | 17%     |
| Bangladeshi                           | 46%    | 42%      | 9%      |
| Chinese                               | 45%    | 29%      | 28%     |
| Any other Asian background            | 37%    | 36%      | 27%     |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British | 54%    | 32%      | 15%     |
| Other ethnic group                    | 44%    | 26%      | 29%     |
| White                                 | 45%    | 33%      | 21%     |

\* Source DWP Family Resources Survey (average of 2018/19, 2019/20, and 2020/21; figures are rounded percentages)

While income inequality in the UK is a huge issue, and although there are significant disparities in income by ethnicity, there is a sufficiently large enough pool of people across all ethnic groups with the means to take up cycling as a sport.

Neither income nor expense was cited as a significant barrier to entry by anyone who completed the original survey, but many people perceive cycling as an elitist middle-class sport. That said, riders quickly discover a means of purchasing kit that works for their budget.

Since the pandemic, and as cycling has grown in appeal amongst under-represented communities, new entrants have brought some innovative approaches to the table. Ride any bike you like: hybrid, folding, mountain, road bike. Don't have a bike? Ride a hire bike. More options, more stories, more flexibility, and more fun enable more people from all backgrounds to experience cycling - this approach helps remove the stigma of feeling that you do not have the right equipment or do not feel fit enough.

Socio-economic issues are a factor, but they are not an excuse for the lack of diversity in cycling. There have been many reasons for the lack of diversity. With the emergence of the Black Unity Bike Ride and more support from brands since the first edition, there is a strong business case for diversity, and that argument forms part of the solution.

## SOCIAL CLASS AND INCOME INEQUALITY

The perceived middle-class nature of cycling is a very recent phenomenon. Club-level cycling in the 1980s and 1990s was very niche and skewed heavily towards rural and less

privileged communities. No one I knew in cycling had gone to private school, and I knew a lot of in the sport. Cyclists tended to be the sons and daughters of the skilled working class and lower middle class: plumbers, engineers, small business owners, and so on. This experience is consistent with many of my contemporaries from across the UK. Other commentators such as writer Matt Seaton have made the same point.

Cycling participation has grown enormously, especially since the 2008 Olympics, the emergence of Team Sky, and the London Olympics in 2012. Cycling has become visible to riders from all backgrounds, and more is accessible than ever before. The media often depicts cycling as a middle-class, middle-aged sport - “the new golf”. It is a perception that does not reflect the history of cycling and the reality of club-level cycling, even in London.

The elitist tag is problematic because it implies a lack of inclusion and “whiteness”, it reinforces the perception to people of colour that cycling is not for “people who look like me”, therefore, overcoming the “elitist” perception, especially in London, is an important step forward. We have to move beyond the elitist tag. In part, that means reconnecting with the roots of the sport (social advancement and advocacy) while looking forward beyond the whiteness to an inclusive, antiracist global sport.

## SOCIAL ADVOCACY IN CYCLING

Social advocacy in cycling is as old as the Grand Tours and Monuments. Cycling played an integral role in the socialist and suffragette movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was a time when women and the working class were denied the vote in many countries around the world. Bicycles gave agency to working men and women fighting for the right to vote.

The Clarion clubs in the UK, many of which are still in existence today, are deeply rooted in the socialist worker movement. These clubs played a central role in the evolution of cycling culture for over a century, often collaborating with other local clubs across the UK, even if they were not Clarion clubs, to work towards the greater good. This movement provided the foundations for the world-class success seen today.

You do not have to be political to be a cyclist, but cycling has always been political.





# INTERSECTIONALITY

**Women of colour feature throughout this document, including personal commentaries, and questionnaire responses. This section focuses specifically on intersectionality, including comments from women of colour that speak to this point.**

Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the theory of intersectionality in the 1980s because neither social activism nor the law properly recognised Black women. *DeGraffenreid v. General Motors* (1976) is a good example. General Motors employed Black men in its factories and white women in its offices, yet Black women were excluded from both spaces. The law only considered racial discrimination and sexual discrimination separately, not a combination of the two. As such, the plight of Black women was ignored by the court.

The essence of intersectionality is to understand that multiple forms of inequality sometimes compound themselves. When considering race and gender, the issue is not just about race, and it is not just about gender, and, when combined, there is a magnification of constraints and challenges.

In practice, intersectionality is about not putting people in boxes. It is about being open-minded and flexible to people who are more than one identity, including: gender, race, religion, and social class there is also sexual orientation and disability (including neurodiversity). This report considers intersectionality primarily in terms of gender, race, and religion.





Cycling is an overwhelmingly white male sport. Women's participation is around 15%, and riders from ethnically diverse backgrounds represent a much lower proportion. There are many specific challenges that women of colour and Muslim women experience. This includes:

## BELONGING

Belonging is a core theme elsewhere in this report and includes examples from Black women who sometimes felt especially scrutinised because of their race and gender. Providing spaces in cycling that include women while being antiracist is essential.

**“Being patronised by men, subtly excluded by white women cyclists and stared at by both are microaggressions that have sometimes eaten away at my enjoyment in cycling.”**

**“I identify as a woman colour and sometimes I feel it takes a while to feel a sense of belonging with a cycling group because of the different backgrounds.”**

**“I’m both LGBTQ and Black but race is the biggest factor in my cycling experience. Cycling is still seen as very white and male and people consistently act like you don’t belong if you are Black. To me it compounds the gender issues in the extreme.”**

**“I feel a sense of belonging with my group of friends, and partner as they make up my safe space and I never feel judged in their presence. However as a female of colour on the more plump side, it has taken me a long time to feel that belonging in a wider sense and that I am not just ‘playing’ at being a mountain biker. I put this down to how typical mountain bikers are portrayed and I very rarely see people that looks like me portrayed within the mountain bike media.”**





**“I am blessed to be part of the Cotic bikes ambassador team. Their non-judgemental support and inclusion of me as a mountain biker has truly been a positive experience and helped me become more confident seeing myself within the wider mountain bike community.”**

**“There are definitely differences in experiences cycling as an intersectional woman. I am a woman of colour and mostly cycle with female friends that are not women of colour. There have been several occasions, especially abroad, where our experiences in the same scenario have been different for me in comparison for them and they recognise this also.”**

The quote above clearly illustrates intersectionality. A woman of colour experiences the same situation as her white female friends in a very different way. A crucial element in this woman's description is that her friends also recognised the issue and, hopefully, they gave this woman the necessary support that she needed in those moments. Understanding that such a situation can occur is a key step in developing an inclusive environment.

**“As a Black woman in cycling I enjoy being in control of my destination. It's about being a role model and I love the looks that I get when cycling with a group of women. It gives such visibility in a area which has always been known to be white male dominated. Cycling as a woman is very empowering, it makes others see that it's something that is achievable.”**





## SEXISM AND MISOGYNY

Sexism and misogyny are compounded by race, meaning that women of colour often face more barriers or more intense experiences than white women. Often these experiences are loaded with assumptions based on a combination of race and gender.

**“Bike shops are in general horrible for me. They always act like I’m stealing or I don’t belong there. They are very much a white boys club. This is strange to me because I actually spend a ton of money on cycling but now mostly just buy online to avoid the racist and sexist hassles.”**

**“I feel like the moment you mention that you are affiliated with a cycling club or a bigger cycling organisation, the interaction between myself and the staff in the bike shop is different. Without mentioning anything, the assumption is that you don’t know anything.”**

**“There’s a constant pressure to be the best or to show off. I think people forget that some just want to enjoy mountain biking as a form of exercise, not everyone wants to win the UCI Downhill Cup. Group rides are especially difficult as a female rider because all the “bros” shoot off fuelled by their pure testosterone and you’re just hanging out at the back.”**

Sexism is prevalent across all aspects of cycling, especially on the competitive side of the sport. Women’s racing has often been side-lined in favour of men’s racing with fewer races and less prize money, coupled with a lack of diversity within cycling, this can make racing a daunting experience for women of colour.





More women experience off-road riding, with the boom in gravel bike sales that can offer a safer alternative away from motorised traffic. More women are also experiencing mountain biking and mountain bike trails, an area of the sport that can be especially problematic for women because of its culture.

Mountain biking has a “bro” culture, which is both overwhelmingly white and overwhelmingly male, which can be off-putting for women and even more so for women of colour. Trails often have “bro” names, such as “Barry Knows Best” or references to 90’s guitar bands such as “I Should Coco”, while some trail names are known to be truly horrific.

Trailblazers such as Aneela McKenna and Sharn Mahoney, as women of colour in the mountain bike community, are crucial. Outdated attitudes in the mountain biking world especially must be challenged. The number of Black women competing in South Africa’s Cape Epic has increased significantly in recent years and continues to rise.

## BLACK WOMEN ARE NOT ANGRY

One of the most debilitating stereotypes experienced by women of colour is the “angry Black woman” trope, which characterises Black women as aggressive, or intimidating rather than assertive or passionate. It is a label that is never applied to white men in the same context; it speaks to the compounding effect of race and gender where Black women are routinely marginalised and silenced.

**“It is important for conversations to be had on diversity and intersectionality but people need to be willing to listen with an open mind. Where some people disagree with a sentiment they will frame someone’s passion for a subject into that of aggression. This is done way too often, in an array of spaces to try to belittle people, especially Black women, and disregard their argument - it is a broken record. Sometimes this can even come from those who present themselves as allies. People need to do more than just hear what is being said and actually listen even if they disagree. This will hopefully help them gain a better understanding of a different viewpoint.”**

To overcome these situations, focus on the content of what is said, not how someone expresses themselves. The point itself should be addressed rather than your perception of the person who is saying it. There should be a willingness to learn no matter who the messenger may be or how challenging it may be to one’s own views.

## PERSONAL SAFETY

Personal safety is a serious concern for all women, but women of colour and Muslim women especially. Group riding, whether in single-sex groups or mixed groups, or riding with a friend, is important to boosting participation. It makes cycling safer and more accessible for women of colour, especially in the countryside.

**“Cycling in the countryside, as a Black woman, can be problematic as some white folks act like we are a strange species or have criminal intent. Brexit has given rise to untoward behaviours, so personal safety is more of a concern when cycling outside of London.”**

**“I feel less safe off road than on road within my local demographic due to the high number of bike thefts that occur. When riding alone I will always ensure someone knows my journey route and expected time it takes. I carry a phone and have a watch that has a fall alarm that calls my emergency number should it receive a knock.”**



The reference to Brexit requires some context. Supporting Brexit does not make someone racist, but the Brexit vote and its aftermath has fuelled anti-immigrant and racist sentiment and this is referred to in [Home Office statistics](#). Other factors that have contributed to the rise in hate crime, but Brexit is a factor. Brexit has exacerbated differences between London and rural England, and Black and Asian communities have tended to settle in major cities such as London and not rural areas.



## MUSLIM WOMEN

Many Muslim women face challenges on top of gender and often race (some white women are also visibly identifiable as Muslim). The heightened experience is evident in some of the responses.

**“I can’t wear anything tight-fitting, which means Lycra is a no-no. I also wear hijab and am cautious about what I wear when I ride and at what time. For instance, I wouldn’t always ride on my own outside of major cities but I would love to ride in the countryside.”**

**“I enjoy riding with a group for the safety and company. As a visibly Black Muslim, I have had experiences on and off the bike that have made me reconsider even cycle commuting as I feel unsafe. Riding in a group without Lycra is a real plus for me.”**

Many observant Muslims do not ride in mixed male/ female company, so women’s only groups play an essential role in providing a safe space for many Muslim women. Clothing is important, and is a choice for any Muslim woman, such as whether or not to wear the Hijab. Muslim women are finding ways to ride bikes, while adapting their clothing accordingly.

The cycling community must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate people for who they are. This helps Muslim women to observe their faith however they choose while also feeling welcomed within the cycling community.



## INTERSECTIONALITY SINCE COVID

During the Covid-related lockdowns, there was an explosion in the popularity of cycling. More people of colour have taken up cycling, more women have taken up cycling, and more women of colour and Muslim women have taken up cycling.

The growth of home trainers and online communities such as Zwift has supported this growth. Given the experiences detailed above, the benefits of home trainers and Zwift are clear. Women can ride in their own homes and connect with other like-minded women anywhere in the world.

Off-road riding, including gravel, cyclo-cross, and mountain biking, is becoming more popular. Trails and gravel paths are away from motorised traffic, which improves safety. Many women have been quick to embrace off-road.

On the road, more groups are making road cycling more accessible and welcoming for people of colour, and women especially. Many groups run skills sessions, and this helps build confidence.

Not so long ago, it felt like Jools Walker (aka Lady Velo, aka Auntie Jools) was one of the few intersectional voices in cycling. There are now many more voices, amazing women taking the lead, creating change, and inspiring more women to get involved. Jools Walker is still doing her thing, but thanks to her advocacy and the advocacy of many other women, the list of inspirational women of colour in cycling grows ever longer. The names in this report are just a selection.







# THICKER THAN YOUR AVERAGE

## NAOMI RUMBLE

Visual representation is so important. People of colour have to constantly navigate spaces that do not represent them and often mould themselves to appease others. It is harder to feel comfortable in spaces where people do not look like you or come from the same background you do. Whilst those in 'traditionally white spaces' may say they are welcoming and that there is not a need for 'Black-focused' spaces, they do not navigate the world through our eyes, they do not see what we see. These spaces are not about segregation but instead about belonging and empowerment. If we want to encourage the participation of people of colour, especially women of colour in the sport, we need to see ourselves. We need to feel that it is a space for us and that we do belong.

This is not only based on skin colour but also size and shape. There is an unhealthy obsession with weight in cycling. All the media seem to portray is the skinny cyclist, not to mention repetitive discussions in groups about weight. The 'ideal' cyclist is further reinforced when you look at cycling clothing and the sizing most brands choose to adopt. There is also a lack of visualisation of women with curves, which goes beyond weight, it's the natural shape of our bodies – these hips are here to stay. It can be quite disheartening if you do not meet the 'ideal' body type and quite frankly, never will. As a Black woman, I am constantly told how I should adapt my look to fit into 'societal' standards and this is no different. However, people need to realise that they do not need to have a very slim build to accomplish amazing things – many inspirational women such as Donna McConnell (Ironwoman triathlete and cyclist) have showcased that.

I have come across women and men who do not have 'the look' but are ridiculously fast and will leave their lighter counterparts for dust. Whilst I might get stares and laughs, and people underestimating my cycling ability, I just have to block this out and continue to do the sport I have grown to love. I know I need to be the change I want to see and break free from the limits others may put on me and sometimes I put on myself. As the great Maya Angelou wrote, 'I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size, but when I start to tell them, they think I'm telling lies.'

We as a cycling community need to reflect on how we look to those outside of the cycling space. As a newbie cyclist, the 'Lycra/club kit look' was not something I thought I would ever adopt but it was a natural transition. I received a comment from a friend about feeling intimidated after looking at a TWR women's group picture. She did not feel she would be capable of joining a ride based on her perception of us. How could that be? Most of us in the picture were fairly new to cycling ourselves. I was resistant to her comment but upon reflection, I could understand her perspective. At TWR, we have people cycle in whatever they feel comfortable, within reason. To increase diversity, we need to ensure that people do not feel like they need to have 'the look' to enter this space. Black Women On Wheels is a club where I can see the appeal for women who are beginner/casual riders. It is not a one size fits all and with the growth of varying cycling groups, there is more opportunity for women of colour to find a space where they feel a sense of belonging.



On the whole, it is about exposing people to those who look like them, those they can relate to. With that will come more diversity and engagement within the sport. We need to continue to break down boundaries. 'And as we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same' – Marianne Williamson.

*Naomi Rumble is a Director of Together We Ride (TWR) CIC which encompasses the cycling group. She is a road cyclist exploring the realms of track and combines a love of cycling with a career in market research.*



# INTERSECTIONAL CYCLING GROUPS

Since the first edition, the most impactful change in the inclusive cycling community is the significant increase in the number of cycling groups putting intersectionality in practice, and getting more women of colour on bikes. Some groups are women only, some groups are mixed, and all offer welcoming pathways for women of colour and Muslim women. Crucially, many newly formed mixed groups are co-founded and led by women and men who take an inclusive, intersectional approach from day one. They are also great fun.

**“It can be hard enough being a woman but also being black and cycling comes with its challenges sometimes, from cycle shops to your fellow cyclists people tend to think you are less knowledgeable and can sometimes be very patronising. Choosing the right group to cycle with however changes this a great deal.”**

[Black Women On Wheels](#) (previously Black Girls Do Bike London), has brought a US-originated concept to the UK with flair and imagination. They classify their rides as: “Bold & Beautiful” or “Short & Sassy”. Not to be outdone, [Black Girls Ride 2](#) is just as creative and engaging, making cycling fun and accessible for newcomers. [Lymore Ladies](#) is yet another option for women of colour who want to connect with other women and ride their bikes.

[Team De Ver Cycling Club](#) was already well established and RideFest, founded in 2016, was something of a best-kept secret. Fifty percent of RideFest’s members are women, which attracted the attention of Francis Cade, who featured [RideFest on his YouTube channel](#). Experienced riders from Team De Ver and RideFest have supported several emerging groups, advising on coaching, skills, and group riding.

[No Limit Cycling Club](#) was formed in 2021 and has grown rapidly. The club is affiliated with British Cycling and has a gender-balanced committee that runs the club, with a range of both mixed and women-only rides, skills, and training sessions. [Together We Ride](#) (TWR) takes a fun, accessible, and gender-balanced approach. TWR is led by Wayne Francis (founder) and Naomi Rumble. They have their own kit and an active presence through regular social rides, documented on social media.





The beautifully titled [Joyful Bellas and Fellas](#) offer engaging pathways for men and women of all backgrounds. The group was founded in Birmingham by Joy Anibaba, a Black woman who only learned how to ride a bike in mid-life.

The first edition did not feature any Muslim women's groups, a major omission. Thanks to Carolyn Axtell, this was corrected in an [online feature](#). Carolyn highlighted the work of [Cycle Sisters](#), founded by Sarah Javaid, and [Joyriders](#), which Carolyn founded, operates across London, Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester, and Bristol. In Birmingham, [Nuhiha CC](#) and [Sāhēlī Cycling Club](#) offer similar pathways. In Bradford, three Muslim women came together to form [HopOn Bikes](#). This group provides an inclusive pathway for local women, including one-to-one coaching. [Women on Wheels](#) run a similar operation in Glasgow, a community cycling hub led by women for women and with a particular emphasis on women of colour, and several members also belong to another local group, the Hijabi Riders.

In Harrow, [Evolve Cycling Network](#) has moved quickly to organise the first sportive specifically for Muslim women, obtaining British Cycling affiliation and training some of its members as coaches. In the East Midlands, [Leicestershire Women's Velo](#) attracts women of all backgrounds and is especially welcoming for women of colour and Muslim women. One of LWV's co-founders, Maryam Amatullah, subsequently founded [Ride on Sistas](#), also in Leicestershire.

These groups focus heavily on encouraging Muslim women to participate in cycling for the first time. Some Muslim women are going further and participating on a sporting level. Numerous Muslim women across the UK and around the world are discovering cycling. Many are helping one another and sharing their stories. Change is happening.

“Since taking up regular cycling, I’ve noticed that, along with the expected stares and double takes, I’ve also experienced positive encouragement from the rider community along with onlookers in general.

For example, when I ride to work with my music playing on my bassbox, hardly a journey passes without a random pedestrian bopping their head and giving me a thumbs up on my playlist selection.

Other times, serious cyclists (you know the type, white, male, fully kitted out, carbon road riders) have often given me the approving nod at traffic lights, seemingly acknowledging me as a member of their community asking me questions about my travels.

Yes, I still occasionally get the snootiness from time to time as if I don’t belong, however I would say there is just as much encouragement and feel that the more of people of colour that take up regular cycling, the more it will be accepted.”

Thanks to all this activity and more, cycling is becoming more fun, multidimensional and inclusive.

# MUSLIM WOMEN HOPON IN BRADFORD

## FOZIA NASEEM

Hop On is a not-for-profit social enterprise based in Bradford founded by three Muslim women, Shahida Kishver, Najma Khan, and myself. We are all qualified life coaches, cycling coaches, and ride leaders. We take a body and mind approach to cycling.

There are plenty of barriers to cycling for Muslim women. These barriers include home and family responsibilities, and religious commitments; days are filled with routines to serve the family, from managing the school run to preparing their children to go to mosque for two hours after school; the demands multiply for those who also hold down a job.

There is little realisation that cycling can be a better way to get from A to B, not only for time but also for headspace and the health benefits of cycling. Muslim women may not understand that cycling can help improve health and fitness. They may feel guilty about taking time to care for themselves, but by staying active, they become more conscious of what they eat and drink and create healthier habits without realising.





If the desire to ride is there, the next barrier is affordability, especially for those on very low incomes. Muslim women are also distanced from cycling due to a lack of culturally accessible facilities. This includes low levels of bicycle ownership, limited places to store a bike, and issues around having to transport a bike to a location to ride if commuting is an issue. Some local cycling groups enable women to borrow a bike to access cycle training, but bicycle storage units are often the target of theft, which I know all too well.

Many women don't ride as some husbands would not like their wives to cycle because of what the community would say. This perception is slowly changing, but it is still there. I have worked with many women who love to ride with our groups, but the moment I suggest starting their own cycling group in their local area, they freeze at the thought of what the local elders would think. Creating more groups and clubs that are culturally appropriate will help get more Muslim women to ride bikes.



Once they have made that journey towards riding a bike confidently, the next barrier is personal safety and traffic. Muslim women often do not feel safe riding or commuting alone because of negative attention from (male) car drivers who do not seem to be able to comprehend the notion of a Muslim woman riding a bike.

### **So, what is the way forward?**

Role models are key to raising awareness and encouraging the community to be more active. Hop On has succeeded in getting over 3,000 members of the local community cycling with a by women for women approach appealing to women across all backgrounds.

Cycling in a controlled group is usually the best way forward for Muslim women as they feel safer, which builds confidence. Family sessions encourage children to ride while promoting a better relationship with their parents by spending quality time with each other while staying active. Hopefully, this encourages more respect for cyclists too.

As the barriers and motivations to cycling are very personal, there is no 'one size fits all'

approach to encouraging cycling even within a specific ethnic group. The only way to achieve greater cycling participation is to work with local communities and for them to be involved in the design and running of the projects that suit their needs, rather than a group delivering what they think they need. Hop On projects are born from the community. We listen to their needs and wants and design training based on that. Once that journey starts, we encourage and inspire them to keep setting bigger goals. Hop On is now run by women who first came along to learn to ride.

Groups like Hop On need support to help us grow. I sometimes wonder about big funders and local authorities that make a lot of noise about sports being more diverse; are they just paying lip service? Are they doing it to be seen to be doing the right thing, or are they truly committing to it from a place of knowing why it should be a priority? I want to see everyone uniting and working together. In a city like Bradford, we can be a force to be reckoned with to transform our communities, where Muslim women riding bikes, wherever and whenever they please, becomes a regular thing. Let's hope one day that can be achieved.





# MUSLIM WOMEN RIDE TOO

## NASIMA SIDDIQUI

When visual representation is so important, I often struggle with my racial identity fitting in with what is termed 'women of colour'. I am the daughter of an Anglo-Irish-Jewish freckle-skinned mother and a British-Indian-Iranian-Muhajir brown-skinned father. I have lived and grown up in both Saudi Arabia and England. With so much intermixing going on, where do I fit in? I have learned that how we view our identity is deeply personal to us - it's dynamic and can even evolve with age. Being multiracial, I don't ever like to feel boxed in and contribute to this report as someone who dabbles in many cultures: Asian, Arabic, English, Muslim, and Catholic. I feel lucky and at ease as someone who doesn't fully belong anywhere but does everywhere.

My journey in cycling began in 2001, taking in some road racing, achieving a second cat licence, later branching out into gravel riding in 2016. I am co-founder of WyndyMilla (famed for our bright pink kit), The Fit Cycle, and the newly launched Zephyr Cycling Club.



I have seen cycling change and grow. Cycling is no longer a niche sport. It makes me really happy to see Muslim women's cycling groups forming in all parts of the country. Cycling hasn't exploded ... yet ... for Muslim women. It is not the norm. More is happening at the beginner's level, and I hope, with experience, riders will cross over into mainstream clubs. I see Muslim women going for walks together, but not bike rides, unless with the family or an organised ride with a ride leader.

Cycling has exploded in the Middle East. In January 2020, I got to ride with a cycling club in Saudi Arabia. I was the first woman to ever ride with the club, and since then, other women have joined. Yes, mixed genders in the birthplace of Islam! The approach to racing is inclusive, with races organised for novices up to regular competitive club riders and up to elite level. There are not many sportives, but there are races on closed roads. Participation in sport and exercise in Saudi Arabia is low, but this is changing rapidly, with a big push from the government in line with Vision 2030.

Western media focuses so much on those who wear hijab, they can forget the diversity of thought and custom amongst Muslim women. Wearing hijab is a choice, and I have chosen not to wear the hijab. In Pakistan, women like my aunts and cousins don't wear hijab. Instead, they choose to wear a dupatta that probably matches their shalwar kameez, loosely around their neck and shoulders. In Saudi Arabia, wearing hijab and an abaya is now optional rather than a legal obligation. I love wearing a headscarf on certain days, like when I go to the Mosque or practice reading the Holy Quran. For me, Islam is about our behaviour towards one another and should not only be measured by what we wear. The hijab is a wonderful way to practice the Islamic faith but not the only way.

Thinking about diversity and inclusion in the UK, it feels like there is potential for many subgroups, and I would like to know where it ends? A couple of years ago I come across a local Muslim club near where I live. I asked to join, and they said no because I was a woman. Fast forward a couple of years, and I run into the Imam from this group who happened to be a cyclist. I told him I was turned away from his club, so I invited him to ride with us. He came along and started riding regularly with our club. He is now organising an event where the two clubs ride together, regardless of gender and religious beliefs.

The final point I am making here is, for me it's about people and the joy of riding with others who we may have commonality with or not, but one thing's for sure, a bike ride has united us. If someone asks to join my club, I will not be turning them away because of their gender or religious views. I would say that sport is the best way to bring people together, putting aside differences of colour and creed.



# THE CULTURE OF CYCLING

## RAISING RACIAL AWARENESS

The essence of racial awareness is understanding that identity plays a significant role in how individuals experience the world. A white man with a British name will have a very different lived experience than a Black woman with an African name. A key element to this report is the series of direct quotes from respondents so that readers experience the authentic voices of respondents without fear or awkwardness. Acting upon this report requires a long-term commitment and an appreciation of the complexity of human existence. In this respect, this report merely offers a starting point with signposts for continued work and development.

Although much has changed since the first edition, it is still the case that many traditional cycling clubs, even in London, are still overwhelmingly white. For those clubs with larger memberships running into the hundreds, change will undoubtedly take longer when compared to a relatively new club with a smaller membership. Change is often incremental.

A critical factor for making cycling more inclusive is not only improving the numbers of people from under-represented backgrounds in the sport but ensuring everyone is seen, heard, and understood. There will be microaggressions and unconscious bias. Allies within the cycling community have a part to play. We all have a responsibility to call out these situations and encourage education and growth amongst our peers with kindness and respect for everyone.





## ETIQUETTE

There is a lot of etiquette in cycling. Some of it is cosmetic, some of it is rooted in practicality, but fundamentally it is about feeling safe and secure in a bunch of riders where your safety, to a large degree, is dependent upon the competence of those around you.

Etiquette is also about demonstrating your right to belong in a group. Whether riding in a club run with 10+ riders or a race with 80+ riders, crashes are painful and costly. Etiquette can be a form of shorthand to indicate competence. Etiquette begins at club-level, goes up a notch with experience, and ever upwards through the racing categories to World Tour level, hence the obsession with “riding like a pro,” whether it is wise for an amateur to do so or not.

Cosmetic etiquette includes whether or not adult males shave their legs. Social etiquette could be acknowledging another rider on the road (a simple nod will do). Riding etiquette includes not engaging in half-wheeling (racing the person next to you), making sure you point out potholes, riding neatly and close together, or riding smoothly in a rotating pace-line.

Etiquette can be daunting for any new rider, regardless of background, but especially for riders from under-represented backgrounds. Placing feedback in context goes a long way towards overcoming barriers, encouraging newcomers and especially those who may not feel represented in the group.





## TRAILBLAZERS: TEAM DE VER C.C.

The majority of the contributors to this report have taken up cycling over the past five to ten years, and they offer a fresh perspective on the world of cycling and cycling clubs.

For Maurice Burton, none of this is new. In the 1970s and early 1980s, he was the only Black professional cyclist in Great Britain. Having experienced blatant racism and discrimination at home, he went to Belgium and built a thriving career on the tough six-day circuit. On retiring from racing, he acquired De Ver Cycles in south London and later formed Team De Ver C.C., a cycling club founded on inclusive principles. The club's website says:

“Maurice wanted to change the sport which he loved and which meant so much to him. At that time, it was a sport in which only a very narrow section of society participated and was bedevilled with bigotry and discrimination.

Maurice's vision was to increase the accessibility of the sport to all sections of the community irrespective of race, gender or background, and encourage a wide and diverse group of people into cycling and enjoy the sheer pleasure of riding a bike.”

Maurice Burton proved long ago what is possible. A few key themes are worth noting:

### **LEADERSHIP:**

De Ver's success is not just because Maurice is a powerful and visible role model, but because he took responsibility as an agent for change. Any cycling organisation can lead by example, as Science In Sport has done, led by Stephen Moon (a white man). If you hold a position of responsibility, you can affect change. If you do not hold a position of responsibility, you can lobby those who do to affect change. Just be sure you always work hand-in-hand with those you are looking to include if you are assuming the role of an ally.



### **ETHICS:**

De Ver Cycles is a business. Team De Ver CC is a club. It has its own committee and chairperson (not Maurice) and acts as a non-profit organisation like any other club. A key aspect of leadership is knowing when to empower others and take a step back.

### **FAMILY:**

Clubs can be like families. In the case of De Ver, it is literally so. Maurice's wife Mia is central to the running of the shop and the club. His son, Germain, is himself a proven champion and world-class rider. Team De Ver is racially diverse, and it has a healthy gender balance. The club has over 60 members, of which approximately half are from Black, Asian, and ethnically diverse backgrounds, and one-third are women. The profile of Team De Ver C.C. is far more diverse than the average cycling club. Not every club will achieve that level of diversity, but all clubs can improve their diversity and gender balance.

Maurice Burton is a unique individual. Not every club will have a Maurice Burton, but by embracing diversity, more Maurice Burtons will emerge to help shape the future of our sport for the better.



# INCLUSIVE CYCLING KEEPS GROWING

The number of inclusive cycling groups in London has exploded. [The Black Unity Bike Ride Alliance](#) lists twenty-one groups and counting, all committed to increasing pathways for riders from Black, Asian, and other diverse communities.

Often, the group's founders are relatively new to cycling themselves. By embracing the community, they have tapped experienced riders for support. RideFest associated coaches have been especially active in helping other groups within the community.

Muslim cycling has grown significantly too. [Brothers on Bikes](#) (BoB) is a nationwide network of over 600 members, and there are numerous Muslim women's groups across the UK. [Sikh Cycling Network](#) (SCN) is an example of a cycling group encouraging participation from the Sikh community.

Other inclusive groups not already mentioned include [Bristol Wheelerzzz Cycling Club](#) and [BRSTL Cycling Movement](#) in the South West. The Midlands is another hotspot, with a number of groups such as [No Limits to Health CIC](#), which offers ride leader training and other events. In Glasgow, [SoulRiders](#) (not to be confused with the London group of the same name) is a community led organisation to encourage people from all walks of life to experience cycling. More groups and more nationwide networks will help improve diversity across the UK. The [Colour Collective](#) is one example of an inclusive approach in mountain biking, with members across the UK. As off-road riding grows in popularity, this will be an increasingly important area for diversity and inclusion work.





**Freedom50** was founded to mark 50 years of Bangladesh's independence. It has grown rapidly, embracing riders from the wider African and Asian diaspora, with members located in Birmingham, Manchester, and London. Freedom50 has organised charity bike rides such as London to Amsterdam and has a mission to raise awareness about climate action.

Inclusive groups have grown by moving quickly and being flexible. Many embraced Zwift rides during lockdown and then translated that momentum into real-life engagement once restrictions lifted. Offering different days at different times, including night rides to landmarks, themed rides for Valentine's Day, Christmas, and other public holidays, then sharing those moments on Instagram to attract more riders.

Community is key. The **Black Unity Bike Ride** (BUBR) is a great example. It began in 2020 as a ride of 1,500 people from predominantly Black backgrounds through London on Black Pound Day, many of whom were infrequent or new cyclists. The following year, 2021, the weather was biblical, but the vibes were tropical. It felt like Notting Hill Carnival on wheels. BUBR has evolved into a series of events throughout the year, including group riding skills, track sessions, and connecting newcomers to groups within the BUBR Alliance to provide pathways while celebrating Black power and Black liberation.





The events of 2020 inspired a global movement that energised community cycling groups and activists around the world. The Black Unity Bike Ride has proven to be a coalescing force for the inclusive London cycling scene in the UK. In the USA, [Ride For Black Lives](#) and [Ride For Breonna](#) are amongst those standing up for their communities and civil rights while encouraging people to ride their bikes.

Cycling was born out of social activism, and this movement reconnects cycling back to its roots while expanding its horizons. Social activism is laying the groundwork for the next generation of cyclists and will be a change for the better, transforming cycling into a truly global and inclusive sport.





# ALL AROUND THE WORLD

The [Major Taylor Cycling Club Network](#) and [Black Girls Do Bike](#) are well established in the USA, with chapters across the States and beyond. Newer groups such as New Jersey's [Trendsetta Cycling Clique](#) are injecting a lot of fun into club cycling. Talent pathways such as [Level Up Cycling Movement](#) and university cycling group [SAU Cycling Club](#) offer more options for riders from ethnically diverse backgrounds. [Bicycling Magazine](#) has been especially active, amplifying many of these stories. All this helps influence up to pro teams, sponsors, and governing body, USA Cycling.

Africa is buzzing with potential. Cycling is already well established in Rwanda, Eritrea, and South Africa, and the sport is growing across the continent. There are many examples across the continent, including: [Pitstop Lagos](#) and [Cycology CC](#) in Nigeria, [Galeshewe Cycling Club](#) in South Africa, [Africa Connect Cycling Club](#) in Ghana, [Kansanshi Pro Cycling](#) in Zambia, [Flames Cycling Club](#) and [Lunsar Cycling Team](#) in Sierra Leone, and [Safari Simbaz](#) in Kenya, whose founder, David Kinjah, has influenced the very highest reaches of the sport as Chris Froome's first coach and mentor. The challenges are enormous, but so is the potential.





As Nasima noted, cycling is growing across the middle east, but also across south and east Asia. Cycling is becoming more global, but that in itself does not make it a more inclusive sport.

European nations, including traditional cycling nations such as France, Belgium, Italy, Spain, and Holland, have work to do. Outdated colonialist attitudes exist across Europe (including the UK) and are especially prevalent in the European cycling scene. The World Cycling Centre is a wonderful resource for riders from under-represented countries. However, European national governing bodies must do much more to encourage pathways for riders from under-represented communities in their own backyards and to embrace a committed antiracist approach. Some individuals and groups in Brussels, Berlin, and elsewhere are taking formative steps, but governing bodies and the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) must step up and show leadership.





## WORLD CLASS TALENT

More names from under-represented backgrounds are coming to prominence. Teniel Campbell on the road and Ceylin del Carmen Alvarado in cyclocross. Justin and Cory Williams light up the US pro cycling scene with their [Legion](#) team. Biniam Girmay makes impressive stride in the men's World Tour. Emirati Safiya Al Sayegh is the first hijabi in the women's World Tour. Canadian Anita Naidu is shredding the pro-mountain biking scene. Kadeena Cox and Kye Whyte rode to Paralympian and Olympic success, respectively. British rider Red Walters is forging his path into Continental racing. The [KC Academy](#) is a UK-based talent programme developing promising talents, including Rhianna Parris-Smith, Sam Ruddock, and Ashley Facey. Junior riders such as UK National Hill Climb Champion Sannah Zaman, US National Junior Champion Maize Wimbush, and French Junior World Champion Marie-Divine Kouamé Taky are names for the future. Even in retirement, riders such as Shanaze Reade and Kevin Reza continue to influence.



When interviewed for the first edition, Maurice Burton said, “There are a lot of youngsters out there who don’t even know they can ride ...you need youngsters, and you need heroes and role models.”

More role models are emerging. While it is important not to put too much pressure on any single rider, especially Youth and Junior riders, momentum will grow. The talent pathway from grassroots to world-class will be critical to making cycling fully diverse and inclusive.

## DIVERSITY IN CYCLING ON INSTAGRAM

There are many groups and individuals namechecked in this report, but this only scratches the surface. It is impossible to include everyone, but please follow the Diversity In Cycling Instagram and Twitter accounts, which are all about celebrating and connecting people who do great work. Get in touch if you want to share your story.

Website: [www.diversityincycling.com](http://www.diversityincycling.com)

Twitter: [twitter.com/diversecycling](https://twitter.com/diversecycling)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/diversityincycling/](https://www.instagram.com/diversityincycling/)



# COACHING AND PATHWAYS

## RICHARD LISTON

Athletics had a problem. When I stopped competing as a sprinter and became a coach in the 1980s, you could count the number of black coaches on one hand. Only John Isaacs and Juno Fields, my own coach, come to mind. I took up coaching because these two men normalised the idea that I, too, could become a coach. Today, the landscape looks very different, and the former sprinter, Christian Malcolm, is the Head Coach of the British Athletics Olympic Programme, the first black person to hold that position. Athletics has got its house in order.



Cycling has a problem. Until very recently, you would have to search around to count the number of black British Cycling coaches qualified at Level 2 or higher. I have been a BC qualified coach for many years, coaching for GS Avanti, my first claim club, and Islington CC, for whom I am the Head Youth Coach. I have built up the youth section from scratch to the point that the club now has a number of promising youngsters eager and able to mix it with the best in their age group.

When I started RideFest with my fellow cyclist, Enitan Shonibare, in 2016, we envisaged a level playing field where you could jump on your bike and cycle - regardless of what shape you were, how much you weighed, how much your bike costs, and how often you shaved your legs. RideFest is unique in its collective camaraderie and is known for its 50:50 gender split; women do not feel intimidated by the Lycra-clad, testosterone-fuelled machismo found in plentiful supply in nearly every cycling club up and down the country.

RideFest is blessed to be able to call on the experience of four coaches, two men and two women, in addition to myself. We all work together both as RideFest and with other groups within the community to develop more riders and create more pathways.

The longevity and success of RideFest have not happened by accident. Its members are a collection of like-minded individuals, who look out for each other, who support each other, and encourage every pedal turn whether it is the first nervous wobble on the bike or pushing those who want to complete their first century or their first sportive. The success of RideFest has happened, too, through a shared understanding of diversity and inclusion and a voracious drive to change the landscape of what it means to be a black cyclist in an unapologetically white landscape.



All my fellow coaches work with multiple groups within the cycling community, and many are focused on coaching young riders. This is an essential ingredient in transforming our sport. For that reason, I am also part of the British Cycling Youth Talent Development Pathway coaching team. If we are to diversify talent pathways, we must diversify coaching. For any young person coming into cycling who sees a coach who looks like them, that connection is priceless. Look at what was achieved in athletics, and you will see what can be achieved in cycling.

*Richard Liston coaches British Cycling's Youth Development Pathway programme and is co-founder of RideFest. He is a lecturer and journalist and has written for The Observer and The Sunday Times, including covering professional cycling.*





# FROM GRASS ROOTS TO WORLD CLASS

A principal mantra in diversity is: “Talent is everywhere opportunity is not.” Opportunity, or the lack of it, is not just about cost and income. It is also about visibility, awareness, and reaching places not previously exposed to the message. Echoing Maurice Burton, several respondents in the first edition emphasised youth development.

“You need clubs for children, accessible from schools.,,”

“Go to the schools and catch them whilst they’re young.,,”

“Approach schools and grow interest from a young age, especially schools in areas with minorities.,,”

British Cycling Talent Team previously went into schools to test the athletic potential of pupils, a strategy that spotted one of the most iconic names in cycling. Lizzie Deignan did not discover cycling; cycling discovered Lizzie Deignan. She had no connection to the sport, but the Talent Team identified her potential. The first edition recommended that British Cycling repeat this strategy, focusing on under-represented groups, and this is now happening.



## CITY ACADEMIES

In 2021, British Cycling announced a partnership with the Rapha Foundation to create [The City Academies](#). This initiative is part of the Rapha Foundation's \$1.5 million annual investment in supporting programmes that aim to boost cycling participation amongst under-represented communities around the world.

The first City Academy Hub, located in East London, will focus on entry-level skills sessions for children aged 10-14. The concept will expand across the UK.

The second phase of this plan, The City Academy Clubs and Talent Centres, will support those who want to compete and aim for elite-level achievement in cycling. These pathways apply established methods in a manner that resonates with local communities.

## KC ACADEMY

Another initiative is the [KC Academy](#), launched by Paralympic and world champion Kadeena Cox and supported by the Rapha Foundation. The KC Academy launched with four riders Sam Ruddock, Rhianna Parris-Smith, and Ashley Facey, in addition to Kadeena herself. As Sam Ruddock explains in his commentary, the KC Academy aims to find and develop more talented riders from under represented backgrounds with the potential to develop their cycling.

KC Academy is utilising similar talent scouting techniques to the one that discovered Lizzie Deignan to build more talent pathways by holding testing days to assess riders' potential. The KC Academy also holds Zwift rides and talks that help broaden engagement and provide a community for people interested in the academy's work.

The City Academies and KC Academy can work alongside the Dave Rayner and Braveheart funds and British Cycling's talent programmes, which also need to diversify.

Flexibility is critical because no two riders are the same. For Simon Yates, the BC Academy was his pathway to the top. His twin brother, Adam Yates, did not fit the Academy and opted for the Dave Rayner fund, racing for French team CC Etupes. Their starting point was the same amateur club (Bury Clarion), and their destination was the same pro team (Orica-GreenEDGE in 2014). If twin brothers needed entirely different pathways to reach their shared goal in the same timeframe, there is a strong case for a flexible approach as cycling aims to be more diverse and inclusive. This ethos has not always been present in elite pathways, where some coaches and team directors take a "my way or the highway" approach.



# ELITE PERFORMANCE

## SAM RUDDOCK

I transitioned from athletics to cycling in 2019. My first impression of cycling was that it is similar to athletics in structure and operations, so I could easily fit into that, but getting to know the equipment was a steeper learning curve. I had not been a recreational or club rider, going straight into a para-cycling talent programme in 2019 and competing in my first World Championships in January 2020 in Canada.

Given that athletics has a diverse pool of talent, the lack of diversity in cycling did not make sense to me. Without Paralympic champion Kadeena Cox, I would be the only Black person in the environment. That struck me.

There were a few awkward moments, and as a thirty-two year old man, I can brush that off, but a younger athlete might not. In some cases, we need to restart the conversation and think about how we work together as a team.

As for my own riding, I live in Leicestershire, and while Leicester is diverse, I do not see many people of colour on bikes. I spent a lot of my time training solo, getting out on the road. I will see another Black rider on the road from time to time. I feel comfortable on the bike now, and I always acknowledge other riders on the road and feel welcomed within the cycling community.

I am part of the KC Academy, which Kadeena founded. There are a lot of Black cycling groups, but Kadeena's approach is to find young talent to get more riders from ethnically diverse backgrounds into performance pathways. We are open to whether riders are focused on endurance, sprint, track, road, or mountain bike.

For national and pro teams to be more inclusive will mean understanding that the motivations and experiences of individual riders will differ. Kadeena and I came to cycling from athletics. I enjoy cycling, but it has not always been my thing. Riders coming through may not be aware of the culture, the names, or the way cycling works. Levels of experience and learning processes will differ, which is perfectly okay.

There are rites of passage in any sport. There are many ways and routes to make it to a certain level, so just because someone did not meet some criteria does not mean they stand a lesser chance than someone who has taken a more traditional path. We all need to be aware of differing backgrounds and cultures.

Cost is a critical barrier. Even if you buy a cheap bike to get started, cycling is incredibly expensive to complete if you don't have the finances to sustain it. Athletics is not that costly in comparison. You can spend £250 per year, but that won't get you far in cycling. Financial assistance plays a part.

With any movement that redresses the balance, remember that it is not about existing riders losing out but creating more space. No one is getting a free pass. Talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not.

I agree with Richard Liston that we can learn from athletics, diversifying not only the riders but logistics, leadership, and coaching from club to elite level. Having more coaches from ethnically diverse backgrounds will make a big difference. When you see others who look like you, you know there is a place for you in this sport.

*Sam Ruddock is a Paralympian, with Cerebral Palsy, on the World Class Performance Programme for British Cycling. Sam is also a founding member of Kadeena Cox's KC Academy and is an athlete mentor for the Youth Sports Trust.*





# WHAT DID WE LEARN? WHAT NEXT?

## CHANGE IS HAPPENING

Cycling is changing from the grassroots level upwards. More inclusive cycling groups are emerging, and collaboration is fuelling this growth with groups helping one another.

Flexibility helps diversify pathways into the sport: Zwift rides, social rides, hire bike rides, on-road, off-road, all create different ways for more people from different backgrounds to ride bikes. Wear Lycra, don't wear Lycra. Wear what you like. Ride your bike.

Have fun. The Black Unity Bike Ride is the Notting Hill Carnival on wheels, but every bike ride is a celebration, and when riding in a group, you can create your own carnival.

## MORE CHANGE IS NEEDED

Traditional clubs are changing more slowly, but change is often incremental. By way of example, in London, CC Hackney, Islington CC, and Kingston Wheelers are amongst those clubs embracing change. CC Hackney takes an inclusive approach to attract young riders. Islington CC has strong links to many of the groups listed in this report. Kingston Wheelers hosts guest rides to draw in new riders from under-represented groups. Many more clubs and groups in the UK and internationally have acted upon this report, doing their own great work.

A flexible approach to club membership is helpful. As Shirla Poole points out, she benefits from riding with several clubs and groups that helped develop her riding in different ways. British Cycling and its affiliated clubs should evolve membership options beyond the traditional first claim/ second claim.

Newer groups and traditional clubs could work together more closely. Average speeds for inclusive group riders tend to be 12-14 mph, whereas traditional club runs are mostly 15mph+. Inclusive cycling groups are creating more pathways into the sport. Traditional cycling clubs can offer options to new riders without competing with inclusive groups.

## TALENT PATHWAYS ARE CRITICAL

More riders from under-represented backgrounds competing at the top of the sport (and across all disciplines) will broaden the appeal of cycling on a global level.

The pathway to World Tour success is unrelenting. Professional cyclists and those on that pathway live their lives in a bubble. The murder of George Floyd provided a wake-up call to a community that was often out of touch with the outside world. Cycling will change for the better, as more riders from under-represented backgrounds make an impact at the highest levels of the sport, but there will be bumpy moments.



Even when a rider has world-class potential, there are many reasons for quitting the sport: racism and other forms of prejudice, education, family, injury, or just taking another direction. Placing too much pressure on any young rider is a mistake. Kindness is key. Young riders who quit often turn to other branches of the sport, coach others or return years later with more life experience.

Riders from under-represented backgrounds on elite pathways have been small in number. Some have quit the sport, and others continue. While such riders generate excitement and hope, those cheering from the side-lines should be mindful of the pressures, be patient and recognise that time spent pursuing elite sport is never wasted.

## VALUES

Equality and justice are underpinned by honesty and integrity, and actions always speak louder than words. It means not only doing the work but upholding the values that underpin the work - respecting ourselves and respecting one another. Paying attention to our discourse is critical, especially when discussing uncomfortable topics or where we disagree.

An uncomfortable topic that has prompted much disagreement is the inclusion of trans and non-binary riders in women's competitive sports.



## THE TRUTH ABOUT TRANS

Public support for the trans community is higher than is often portrayed, particularly among women. Polling by [Public First](#) for [More In Common](#) shows that 48% of women across all age groups and 56% of 18-44-year-olds (male and female) agree with the statement “trans women are women”, while only 28% of women and 29% of 18-44 year-olds disagree.

Although positive feelings toward the trans community are widespread, the same research indicates lower levels of support for including trans women in women’s sport. Only 21% of women across all age groups agree, and 28% don’t know, while 31% of 18-44-year-olds (male and female) agree, and 25% don’t know.

Sport is a far more contentious issue, and a lack of sport-specific evidence about the impacts of transition on performance does not help matters. There are legitimate fears that sport is being used as a lightning rod to undermine support for the trans community. Feelings are heightened further by the fact that women’s racing has lagged men’s racing by a very significant margin in every respect for decades. This adds even more friction to an already toxic debate. All women (cis and trans) must play a central role in determining the outcome, and winning hearts and minds will be critical.

Grassroots organisers are finding solutions. A good example is the all-day Criterium Extravaganza at Herne Hill, centred on a crit circuit that makes use of both the velodrome and the inner track to produce a challenging, technical crit circuit. The day incorporates the fixed gear Thundercrit, which uses non-gendered categories to include trans and non-binary riders. Immediately following this, are road bike crits held under British Cycling rules (currently run according to the suspension of the transgender and non-binary policy). The event promotes equal prize money and is a lot of fun with a party-like atmosphere. Many cis women choose to race with trans women, even though other options are available.

Thundercrit supports the trans and non-binary community in cycling by enabling them to race according to how they identify. This includes opportunities for all women to race together, alongside options for cis-women only. We can all learn a great deal from this approach.

Both sides of the debate must keep an open mind and engage with one another in good faith as more research and evidence come to light; this means acknowledging legitimate concerns about sporting fairness while removing transphobia from the debate.

## DIVERSITY IS BROAD, BUT FOCUS

All protected characteristics are important, but it is necessary to prioritise and focus because time, resources and people’s attention are always in short supply.

Gender and race have a lot of focus, but that focus is required to create meaningful and sustainable change. This report focuses on race and intersectionality for that same reason.

Nevertheless, the LGBTQ+, disabled, and neurodivergent communities must be included in diversity and inclusion work. Mental health cuts across pretty much everything. Each protected characteristic, and mental health especially, are report topics in themselves; it would be impossible to do justice to the full breadth of experiences in a single piece of work such as this, but there are plenty of other resources out there.

The calendar includes Pride Month, Disability History Month, ADHD Month, Autism Awareness Day, International Women's Day, Black History Month, and many other events. All this activity helps focus attention, but doing the work beyond that is more difficult, and each protected characteristic comes with its own nuances. The key is to have the right people in the room to play an active and purposeful role in helping steer this work.

Paralympian riders such as Kadeena Cox and Sam Ruddock have raised the profile of disability, so have [Wheels For Wellbeing](#), and amateur riders such as my Kingston Wheelers clubmate James Turner (IG: [@james Ride2be better](#)). The LGBTQ+ cycling community is becoming more vocal thanks to groups such as Stonewall. ASCND, founded by Nick Frendo, and Science In Sport CEO Stephen Moon have championed mental health and wellbeing. Specialized, whose founder and CEO Mike Sinyard has ADHD, launched [Outride ADHD](#), and, under the leadership of Simon Mottram, Rapha supports the [Ambitious About Autism](#) charity with an annual charity ride from Manchester to London.

Beyond the name checks listed here, there are more resources to study and voices to hear, so keep looking.

## DIVERSITY BRINGS CYCLING BACK TO ITS ROOTS

Social activism in cycling is as old as the Monuments and Grand Tours. Cycling played an integral role in the socialist and suffragette movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This movement influenced cycling culture for over a century, culminating in the world-class sport we see today.

The groups and communities described in this report bring cycling back to its roots while marking the beginning of the next chapter in a rich and varied history.

Black people have succeeded in cycling from the beginning. Major Taylor and Kittie Knox blazed a trail at the turn of the last century. Both riders battled racism during their



lifetimes, and racist attitudes kept their achievements, and many Black riders since then, hidden for years. Today, we celebrate Major Taylor and Kittie Knox as icons of the sport.

Whenever anyone pushes back against change and diversity and inclusion specifically, remind them of the rich history of cycling and, especially, its beginnings.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

A variety of approaches are needed to encourage greater diversity in cycling. The recommendations below are not exhaustive, but offer practical suggestions for cycling clubs, race teams, bike shops, brands, the media and cycling organisations.

## PROMOTE VISIBILITY (BUT BE AUTHENTIC)

**DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICIES:** develop a policy for your club and include it on your website. If you are unsure how to go about this, ask for help from clubs and groups already doing the work. Most importantly, put the policy into action.

**PROMOTE AMBASSADORS:** these should be existing members from under represented backgrounds. Not everyone will want to take on this role and that should be respected, but try and make a start. It need not be a formal arrangement, but visibility is key.

**WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA:** if your club has members from under-represented backgrounds, with their permission, include those members in any visual representation of club membership. This helps make participation visible to others.

**BE HONEST:** most cycling clubs are not diverse, if you do not have many members or even no members at all from under-represented backgrounds, do not try to be something that you are not, **but do promote your values:** if you are open to all newcomers regardless of race and gender then say so. We all have to start somewhere, so long as we make a start.

## PROMOTE ACCESSIBILITY

**MIX-UP RIDES AND START TIMES:** multiple rides and start times on different days, not just 9am on a Sunday. Be sure these rides are signposted and promoted for new and existing members whether they are training rides, social rides, virtual rides or skills-based.

**DEMYSTIFY ETIQUETTE:** provide context to cycling club culture, what it means to be in a club and ride in a group. Cycling clubs are intimidating and this is true across the board, but can be especially so for riders from under-represented backgrounds.

**LYCRA ISN'T THE ONLY FABRIC:** it has become integral to club cycling, but Lycra is not for everyone or every occasion. With an increasing variety in riding, especially off-road, clothing options are becoming more flexible. Embrace that. T-shirt rides are fun.

## BE INCLUSIVE

**INCLUSION IS ESSENTIAL TO DIVERSITY:** make sure riders of all backgrounds feel included and visible, and that everyone feels part of one community with shared values.

**SHARE KNOWLEDGE:** work with groups who are already doing the work to help your club make a start. Build relationships with inclusive cycling groups. Help one another.





**PROMOTE PATHWAYS:** inclusive groups act as pathways into the sport. Riders coming through these groups have the opportunity to develop their riding, and some may wish to go further by riding with a more traditional club.

**REACH OUT TO SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES:** especially if your focus is developing Youth and Junior riders. Where possible, use role models. Coaching is critical, so coaches from under-represented backgrounds are especially valuable.

## BE INTERSECTIONAL

**UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES:** read Kimberlé Crenshaw, Reni Eddo-Lodge and other references. Watch them on YouTube and TED to gain more context. Listen and learn.

**INCLUDE WOMEN:** lead by example, make your committee more gender balanced than its membership, this shows intent. Avoid tokenism. If the only woman on your club's committee is the women's officer, then you are not doing enough.

**AIM HIGH:** Black Unity Bike Ride increased women's participation from 20-25% in the first year to 46% of registrations in the second year. The average in cycling is 15%. Do better.

**CHANGE THE DISCOURSE:** Challenge the way you talk about race and gender. Consider the direct impact this has on the people you hope to attract and how they may feel.

## TELL MORE THAN ONE STORY

**CHALLENGE MEDIA AND BRANDS:** cycling media and brands are improving, but they must not rely on the same names. Go deeper and beyond the performative.

**PAY ATTENTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA:** many cyclists from under-represented backgrounds are active on social media, especially Instagram. However, consider the work done in real life, and be aware some exceptional individuals are not on social media at all.

**CHALLENGE WHAT CYCLISTS SHOULD "LOOK" LIKE:** Cyclists come in all shapes and sizes, so reflect that. If you want to represent Black women in cycling, be true to the vast majority of Black women who ride bikes and spend money with you. Black women are not all skinny, but they can be just as strong and fast.

**AGE AIN'T NUTHIN' BUT A NUMBER:** Youth pathways are important, but when it comes to Black and Asian representation, older generations are influential in creating change; many are parents encouraging their children to ride. Tell their stories too.

## RAISE YOUR OWN RACIAL AWARENESS

**RECOGNISE THE CHALLENGE:** if one person stands out in a group, be aware they may feel an extra level of intimidation than any other newcomer. Be sure that person feels welcome without overdoing it. Most of all, **don't stare, smile and say hello!**

**IT IS OK TO BE CHALLENGED AND UNCOMFORTABLE:** white people are often uncomfortable talking about race. That is because white people are not equipped to have the conversation. This is true of other protected characteristics too, keep doing the work.

**READ, LISTEN AND LEARN:** start with the reading list, then check out Google and YouTube, keep searching for references and keep learning.

**CHANGE DISCOURSE:** Be willing to challenge how your members talk about race and gender; this impacts how comfortable new members will feel.

## BE ANTIRACIST

**EDUCATE YOURSELF:** about what racism is, how to recognise it, and how to dismantle it. Again, start with the reading list, then keep going.

**CHALLENGE RACISM:** if you see any form of racism, challenge it and help dismantle it. If you are white, don't leave it to a Black friend to call out a racist incident.

**CHALLENGE ALL FORMS OF PREJUDICE:** Racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and disablism have no place in cycling. Be consistent while being inclusive. Diversity is not either/ or. If confronting individuals, do so in a reasonable and proportionate manner. Try and offer solutions and a pathway for growth, but also know when to cut your losses.

## MONITOR PROGRESS

**QUANTIFY** your membership through joining renewal forms, or standalone questionnaires. Asking about race and ethnicity need not be awkward and is welcomed as part of the process of making progress. Data collection is important as progress can be monitored. This is especially important for large organisations and governing bodies. Use national government statistics guidelines or the best practice advice most appropriate to where you are located, but also be mindful of GDPR and data protection regulations. For the UK, the ONS publishes guidance [here](#).





# FURTHER READING

## RACE, IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY

There are many stories and references, here are just a few – cycling and non-cycling.

**Back in the Frame: How to get back on your bike, whatever life throws at you** by Jools Walker.  
*A touching memoir about a love of cycling, wellbeing and identity.*

**The Fastest Bicycle Rider in the World** by Marshall W. “Major” Taylor.  
*Published in 1928, Major Taylor wrote his autobiography “to solicit simple justice, equal rights, and a square deal for the posterity of my down-trodden but brave people.”*

**Why I am No Longer Talking to White People About Race** by Reni Eddo Lodge.  
*The bible. This global best seller is a challenging read that will make you think.*

**On Intersectionality: Essential Writings** by Kimberlé Crenshaw.  
*A collection of essays and articles that have defined the concept of intersectionality.*

**Black and British: A Forgotten History** by David Olusoga.  
*Accompanied by a four-part BBC television series of the same name (available on the iPlayer).*

**Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain** by Peter Fryer.  
*Published in 1984, this book inspired David Olusoga. The opening sentence reads: “There were Africans in Britain before the English came here.”*

**Black People in the British Empire** by Peter Fryer. Foreword by Stella Dadzie.  
*In this book Fryer details how racist ideology was constructed to justify slavery and the oppression of millions of Black and Brown people across the British Empire.*

**There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack** by Paul Gilroy.  
*This book caused an immediate sensation when first published in 1987. In many respects, it still feels current. Over thirty-five years since it was published, it remains a must-read classic.*

**Brit(ish)** by Afua Hirsch.  
*A beautifully written personal account describing her life as a mixed race woman in Britain, who often does not feel entirely British.*

**Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire** by Akala.  
*This memoir connects Akala’s experience with broader structural and societal issues of racism.*

**Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement** by Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Garry Peller, Kendall Thomas, Cornel West.  
*As titled.*

**The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colourblindness** by Michelle Alexander.  
*This book shines a light on the crisis of mass incarceration in the USA.*

**What White People Can Do Next - From Allyship To Coalition** by Emma Dabiri.  
*Author and academic Emma Dabiri examines social activism and advocates moving past superficial allyship toward solidarity, meaningful coalition, and structural change.*

# AFTERWORD: NEURODIVERSITY

## WHY A WHITE GUY WROTE ABOUT DIVERSITY

There were several reasons, but one was a lifetime of struggling with my own difference. A difference I could not put a name to, even though I knew it was there.

Writing the first edition of Diversity In Cycling was emotional. My father died, and I was diagnosed with ADHD a month after publication. The psychiatrist who diagnosed me told me there was a good chance I was Autistic, and eighteen months later, this was confirmed.

The ADHD part of my brain is restless. I can be scatty and forgetful. I often run late. My brain can be in multiple different places at once, and people sometimes think I am not always present, but I can also be highly focused and sometimes a bit intense. Medication is often prescribed (Ritalin-type substances), but cardio sports such as cycling can be just as good. Riding is my Ritalin. When I ride my brain is calmer, and life is better.

The Autism part of my brain often misreads social clues. People can be cruel, including so-called progressive people, I have been called a “weirdo” and worse, but often the impact is more insidious. I have learned to be sociable. I enjoy socialising but trying to interpret tone, sub-text, and facial expressions can be draining and leave me feeling anxious. I get immersed in subjects that interest me and obsess about details - gear ratios, tyre pressures, power meters, and marginal gains. I try not to look at cycling forums too much because I get sucked into long, drawn-out discussions that feel more competitive than any race. I like my routines and get stressed when things change, which can work well for training and racing but can sometimes leave me in a bubble. I can push myself beyond pain and exhaustion, which can be good and bad in competitive sport.

Not everyone is on the spectrum. Suggesting otherwise diminishes the lived experiences of those who meet the diagnostic criteria. The spectrum is not a linear more/ less autistic thing, but a circular spectrum of varied symptoms. Less than five percent of the population has ADHD, and less than two percent are Autistic. In my case, co-occurring conditions add further layers and nuances, which can complement or compound certain traits.

Neurodiversity covers not only ADHD and Autism but other conditions such as Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, and Tourette Syndrome; it cuts across race and gender, but people of colour and women, especially, often go undiagnosed. Meeting the diagnostic criteria for any neurological condition is a big deal. If it applies to you, getting diagnosed will change your life for the better. You realise that your brain works differently from ninety-five percent of the population. Once you understand what that means, you can develop strategies that help you better navigate the outside world while being your true self. You learn to avoid the pitfalls and promote your strengths. But people around you must do the work too and accommodate your uniqueness. If they cannot do that, they are not worth having in your life.



It seems a disproportionate number of people in music and the creative industries are neurodiverse. Anecdotally, I believe the same could be true of cycling. Three-time Tour de France winner Greg LeMond has ADHD, and ex-pro and World Tour team boss Jonathan Vaughters is Autistic. Both men, like me, were diagnosed late in life. A number of cycling friends, including several ex-elite riders, have asked how they can obtain an Autism diagnosis. Neurodiversity is not getting much coverage in the cycling space (yet), but sooner or later, it will be the next diversity frontier. That could help join the dots with other protected characteristics and take the diversity and inclusion conversation deeper into the cycling community.

You can read more about my diagnostic journey here [ADHD](#) and here [Autism](#).





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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Edwards started cycling in the early 1980s in North West England. He rode as a teenager for Nelson Wheelers, Leek CC and the West Midlands Centre of Excellence squad, competing in road racing, track and time trials. He returned to the sport in 2009, racing for Kingston Wheelers and Sigma Sports, mixing Masters, second category and elite level road racing, including racing alongside Geraint Thomas, Tao Geoghegan Hart, Simon Yates and other World Tour pros in the Elite Men's National Road Race Championships as a fortysomething amateur because it was cheaper than riding the sportive.

Alongside racing, Andy coached YouTuber Francis Cade from 2nd category to Elite, led the Kingston Wheelers Skills day and hosted interviews with the likes of Rod Ellingworth, Yanto Barker, Alice Barnes, Matthew Stephens and Daniel Lloyd.

Andy has spent his career in the music business, working with artists across all genres of music from grassroots to global superstars. His diversity and inclusion work in music paved the way to writing the first edition of Diversity In Cycling in 2019, and joining the British Cycling Diversity and Inclusion advisory group in 2021.

Shortly after publishing the first edition, Andy was clinically diagnosed with two protected characteristics [ADHD](#) and [Autism](#), meaning he is neurodiverse, another form of diversity. He has also taken up gravel riding and XC mountain biking after many years of being a roadie.

You can follow Andy on Twitter [@andyedwardsster](#)



# PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

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