

Introduction

This short Question and Answer guide has been written to support the National Standard Cycle Training (Bikeability) being run by Pedal Power Training on behalf of Portsmouth City Council's Road Safety and Sustainable Travel Team.

What is National Standard Cycle Training?

A range of cycling and road safety organisations has joined together with central Government to create a new National Standard for Cycle Training. This is gradually being rolled out across England and Wales. The overall aim of the scheme is to get **more people cycling more often and more safely**. The training is designed both for adults and children.

Many of us will remember doing the Cycling Proficiency Test in years gone by. The National Standards (now branded Bikeability) is the Cycling Proficiency Test for the 21st century and are designed to give the next generation the skills and confidence to ride their bikes on today's roads.

How does it work?

One of the principal differences from the Cycling Proficiency Test of old is that the training takes place largely on-road so that trainees, whether children or adults, learn how to interact safely with other road-users. Through the development of their skills and understanding trainees will then be able to make journeys safely to school, to work or for leisure, on quiet roads.

The combined Level 1 and Level 2 training takes place normally over 5 consecutive days. On day 1, an instructor will work with a group of up to 9 children on the playground for 2 hours. We teach the children to do a bike check to ensure their bike is roadworthy. We then carry out a range of fun exercises to check and develop their bike control skills. These skills are the Level 1 skills as laid out in the National Standards (see below). Children must pass Level 1 in order to start the Level 2 training on the following day.

On days 2 and 3 an instructor will work with groups of up to 6 children for an hour and a half, initially using a quiet road, only moving on to busier junctions when all the trainees are ready. Training on days 2 and 3 is normally run on roads with a 20 mph limit. Very occasionally it may encompass a road with a 30/40 mph limit. The Level 2 manoeuvres are taught and demonstrated and then the children practise these, under close supervision. The Instructor positions themselves so that the children are always in view and the trainer can both shout a warning and physically intervene, if a potentially hazardous situation is developing.

On day 4, and subject to the skills and confidence of the children we take them out for a ride where each child takes a turn at the front and practises the full range of skills and manoeuvres they have previously been taught.

On day 5 an assessment will take place on each child of the skills and manoeuvres they have learnt during the course.

What will my child(ren) learn and do?

There are three levels of training within the National Standards, **Level 1**, **Level 2** and **Level 3**.

Level 1 normally takes place off-road e.g. on a playground and is designed to develop the basic control skills and understanding fundamental to being able to ride on the road. These skills include getting on and off the bike, starting, stopping, pedalling, riding in a straight line, looking behind and signalling without wobbling.

Level 2 normally takes place on-road, starting off with quiet junctions and roads but progressively moving to busier junctions and roads as the trainees' skills, understanding and confidence develop. The list of manoeuvres and skills that trainees learn to carry out is quite long and includes turning right and left from a minor road to a major road and vice versa, passing parked vehicles, passing side roads, understanding where to position themselves on the road and being able to explain decisions made whilst riding and thereby demonstrating an understanding of safe riding strategy.

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Level 3 is for those who want to cycle further a field using busier roads and more complex road features such as (bigger) roundabouts, traffic lights and multi-lane roads. This training is increasingly being combined with Level 1 and 2 training for secondary school pupils.

Level 3 training will be hopefully offered to Secondary Schools in the near future, if and when central funding becomes available.

More details on the National Standard for Cycle Training and the three levels can be found at www.ctc.org.uk or www.bikeability.org.uk.

Portsmouth City Council are also able to offer the following training sessions;

- Adult cycle training for those returning to cycling and those who have never cycled.
- Family cycle training in school holidays (for adults and younger children)
- Themed guided rides throughout the year.
- Portsmouth cycle map, themed cycle leisure route maps and route planning/sustainable travel advice.
- Cost price cycle products including locks and child's Hi – Vis vests, which can be purchased from the civic offices or via the school.

Please call 023 9268 8262 or email roadsafety@portsmouthcc.gov.uk for more information, or to add your details to the guided rides mailing list.

Will they be safe?

The course is all about giving the children the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be able to ride safely on the road. During the training process we ensure trainee safety through:

- Moving progressively to more demanding cycling situations, i.e. from classroom to road riding with the need to demonstrate satisfactory competence at each level before being allowed to move forward.
- Undertaking a bike check, and teaching the children how to do this, so that they will always cycle on a roadworthy bike.
- Careful selection of junctions and roads used for training. Instructors position themselves so that they always have the trainees in view and more generally have good visibility of the area so that potential hazards can be spotted, in case the trainees themselves haven't spotted them.
- Using instructors accredited to the National Standard.
- All children wear high visibility jackets/waistcoats and helmets when training.

A full risk assessment of the cycle training activity including the roads to be used for training is always carried out. Instructors themselves have had a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) check and are First Aid Trained.

Who does the training?

The training is being run by a company called Pedal Power Training. We have been selected by Portsmouth City Council to carry out this work.

Pedal Power Training Instructors are all accredited to train to the National Standard Bikeability courses.