



DIVERSITY IN THE CYCLING INDUSTRY



**INVESTORS
IN CYCLING**

**DIVERSITY
IN CYCLING**

Diversity in Cycling is a project created by the Bicycle Association. It aims to unite and align the cycling industry behind a shared commitment to creating a diverse, equitable, inclusive industry, unlocking more value for all.

Founding supporters

The following organisations support our commitment to creating a diverse, equitable, inclusive industry, and have made their own strategic commitments to improving diversity, equity and inclusion in their workplace.



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Image: Cycle Sisters

Foreword



There's no doubt that cycling is beginning to be recognised by government as a crucial mode of transport, strategically important to deliver UK climate and public health goals and a valuable tool for creating better places to live, work and play.

This brings with it welcome policy

priority and increasing levels of public investment, to make cycling easier and safer, in turn attracting a wider audience for the kind of everyday cycling that might be undertaken by everybody, for leisure, exercise, health, social, travel to shops, work or school.

We can assume that as these policies and investments are delivered, cycling will grow. The potential is very significant.

But to achieve this growth, cycling must also break out from its predominantly male, white and often 'cycling enthusiast' niche. This group has arguably reached its natural limit. Certainly, UK bike sales over the last few decades have stayed at roughly the same size. Cycling has a diversity problem and to exploit the significant potential that now exists for growth, it must become much more diverse than it is today.

Here, the cycling industry has a role to play. Just as cycling has a lack of diversity, so too does the cycling industry. There are many reasons but the biggest may well be that it's an industry full of cycling enthusiasts. Often a strength, but which here also means that an industry workforce of over 60,000 has roughly the same diversity as its enthusiast consumer base. Our workforce is the 'frontline' of cycling, the consumer face. We sell cycling to would-be cyclists on a daily basis.

As an industry, one of the most important things we can do therefore is to take action so we better reflect our target market. Success will not only mean more people enjoying the fun and benefits of cycling, but will also mean growth in cycling sales, expansion and creation of cycling businesses, and more people in cycling jobs.

As the national body representing the UK cycling industry, the Bicycle Association has a useful role to play in helping the industry collaborate and coordinate on big issues like diversity. There's a lot to do, but working together, the prize is great.

Steve Garidis
Executive Director, Bicycle Association



Executive summary

Today, women make up 49% of the UK workforce¹. Yet in the UK cycling industry, just 8% of workshop-based roles, and 19% of customer-facing roles, are occupied by women². Women hold 40% of the industry's administrative roles³, but only a small handful have progressed to senior leadership positions. Though no official data for the cycling industry exists, we also know anecdotally that there are not enough Black, Asian and ethnic minority people; too few individuals with disabilities or from low socio-economic backgrounds; and a lack of LGBTQ+ people joining or leading our industry today.

Research on equity in the workplace points to multiple causative factors, including difficulty finding a work-life balance; lack of appropriate working environment; lack of training and life-long learning opportunities or inadequate targeted recruitment; persistence of stereotypes; harassment; and bullying⁴. Other studies highlight discrimination, lack of supportive policies and facilities, and lack of role models as key barriers. Nine in ten women working in sport report facing barriers when entering the industry, and half believe they are paid less than men for the same work⁵. The World Economic Forum estimates it will take another 151 years to close the global economic gender gap (the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the rate of progress), while data is still too patchy even to estimate gaps for racial equity and LGBTQ+ and disability inclusion⁶.

Achieving balanced representation in the workforce is important not just out of a moral imperative to better reflect the society in which we all live and allow everyone to be their whole and most authentic selves at work, but also because not to do so will hold back our future growth, sustainability and competitiveness. To meet the UK's net zero target by 2030, we need to make fewer car trips, and more short journeys by bike⁷. To achieve this, we must cast our net more widely, attracting a new, diverse group of customers into cycling and inspiring people from a wide range of backgrounds to enter, innovate and lead our industry into the future. The potential growth opportunity is huge: hitting net zero is estimated to deliver an additional £2-3 billion per year for the cycling industry⁸.

Global research shows that more diverse organisations are more successful: growing sales and reaching out to new, diverse customer audiences; improving profitability through increased innovation and better decision making; and recruiting and retaining better talent:

- Research by Accenture found that 41% of shoppers removed at least 10% of their business from a retailer for their lack of focus on diversity, equity and inclusion⁹
- Inclusive business cultures lead to 38% better assessment of consumer demand¹⁰
- Companies with ethnically diverse teams are 36% more likely to have above-average profitability¹¹
- The top 25% of companies in male-dominated industries that have the most gender-diverse executive leadership teams are 47% more profitable than those in the bottom 25%¹²
- Companies with a gender inclusive business culture have a 59% probability of achieving more creativity, innovation and openness¹³
- More inclusive teams improve employee engagement¹⁴ and satisfaction and reduce employee turnover and absenteeism¹⁵

Attracting, developing and retaining more bright, ambitious women¹⁶ and people from underrepresented groups both supports and protects the BA's core purpose of achieving industry growth, offering the cycling industry a way to turbo-charge every aspect of its industrial growth strategy, addressing supply-side skills shortages while increasing consumer demand and loyalty and unlocking improved performance and additional value. Looking ahead with ambition, the industry has the chance to become inclusivity leaders, taking pride in its efforts and achievements and inspiring others to follow its model.

The potential is clear – yet the challenges are significant. The lack of diversity in cycling is a systemic issue: only 11% of women cycle regularly, compared with 23% of men¹⁷, who make twice as many trips and cycle more than two times further than women¹⁸. Just 14% of ethnic minority groups, 12% of disabled people and 19% of LGBQ+ people cycle regularly¹⁹. This underrepresentation in participation inevitably impacts upon the desirability of a career in the cycling industry for these groups today. In addition, low levels of awareness within the industry perpetuate the status quo: just 21% of the industry considered women as a growth customer segment in the BA's 2021 census, while 72% did not identify any underrepresented demographics in their customer base²⁰. Only 9% of census respondents ran classes targeting people from diverse ethnic backgrounds²¹. To overcome this systemic inequity, it is vital that the many organisations working to achieve diversity, equity and inclusion across the cycling ecosystem align and support each other to achieve our common goal.

To achieve real change, we must first accept the enormity of the challenge and be open to 'lifting the lid' on the reality of our workplace cultures for all, and to examining the unconscious biases that we all hold. At times, this may feel deeply challenging – but the rewards are many, and the BA is uniquely positioned to lead an industry-wide culture of inclusivity. Building on the BA's success bringing the industry together to co-create the Market Data Service, this project offers a new platform for collaborating and sharing ideas, learning from the experiences of other industry sectors, and creatively overcoming challenges and celebrating successes together.

The World Economic Forum and McKinsey's new 'DEI Lighthouses 2023' reviews sets out five success factors for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) projects²². Following this model, the Diversity in Cycling project initially needs to focus on building a deep fact base, in order to identify the root causes, define meaningful 'success', and prioritise future activity. The project can then support the industry in leading desired change in a way that is sustainable, sharing best practice, building supportive networks, highlighting gaps and measuring our collective progress over time.

In summary, through its Diversity in Cycling project, the BA seeks to unite the industry behind a shared commitment to creating a diverse, inclusive workplace culture where everyone feels respected, supported and empowered to build a sustainable, resilient, competitive cycling industry, unlocking more value for us all.



Image: CycleChic

Key statistics

The cycling industry

Women represent **49%** of the UK workforce²³. However, in the cycling industry today, women occupy:



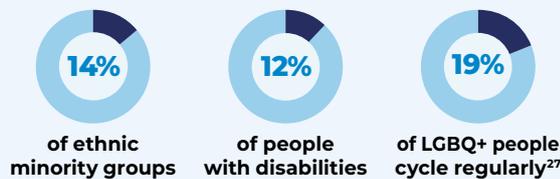
Just **21%** of BA members considered women as a growth customer segment, while **72%** did not identify any underrepresented demographics in their customer base.

Only **9%** of BA census respondents run classes targeting people from diverse ethnic backgrounds.²⁴

Participation in cycling

Men make **2x** as many cycle trips as women, cycling more than **2x** further²⁵

73% of women living in cities never ride a bike²⁶



Key barriers are safety²⁸, lack of time and different travel patterns²⁹

Young Black, Asian, and mixed ethnicity women are **'strong targets'** to encourage into cycling³⁰

Key barriers for women and marginalised groups



Multiple research reports^{32, 33} highlight:

Difficulty finding work-life balance
Inappropriate working environment
Lack of training
Inadequate targeted recruitment
Persistence of stereotypes

Harassment
Bullying
Discrimination
Lack of supportive policies and facilities
Lack of representative role models

The business case for diversity, equity and inclusion



Growing sales and loyalty:

- Women and underrepresented groups are an untapped growth market for the cycling industry: young Black, Asian, and mixed ethnicity women are 'strong targets' to encourage into cycling³⁴ and in general, women's attitude to cycling remains positive despite the barriers, with **72%** of women in major UK cities saying things would be better if people in general cycled more³⁵
- Research by Accenture found that **41%** of shoppers removed at least **10%** of their business from a retailer for their lack of focus on diversity, equity and inclusion³⁶
- Inclusive business cultures lead to **38%** better assessment of consumer demand³⁷

Boosting productivity and business performance:

- The top **25%** of companies in male-dominated industries that have the most gender-diverse executive leadership teams are **47%** more profitable than those in the bottom **25%**³⁸
- Companies with ethnically diverse teams are **36%** more likely to have above-average profitability³⁹
- Inclusive business cultures lead to a **59%** increase in creativity, innovation, and openness⁴⁰

Recruiting and retaining better talent:

- **More diversity** in the talent pipeline, particularly for industry-specific, technical roles like cycle mechanics, engineers and product designers, enables us to recruit and retain the best talent and address skills shortages - for example, to support forecast e-bike growth
- **More inclusive** teams improve employee engagement⁴¹ and satisfaction and reduce employee turnover and absenteeism⁴²
- Aligning with the government's **net zero** commitments and positioning a career in the cycling industry as a 'green job', opens up a key opportunity to attract a more **diverse group** of talented young people into the cycling industry



“ I have experienced **gender discrimination** in my career in the bike industry. It's frustrating - you feel powerless. When you are the only woman in a Board meeting, it can feel like a bro club. I've had to learn not to be intimidated. ”
Female leader, cycling industry

Part I - Where are we now?

The Bicycle Association and its membership

As the trade organisation for the cycling industry, the Bicycle Association's (BA's) core purpose is to grow the UK cycling market, an industry worth £1.9 billion in 2022⁴³.

To meet the UK's net zero commitments by 2030 will require a reduction in car journeys; and significant expansion of cycling, and of the industry⁴⁴. The potential growth opportunity is huge: hitting net zero is estimated to deliver an additional £2-3 billion per year for the cycling industry⁴⁵. To enable industry growth, the BA supports, champions and shapes the cycling industry to be more sustainable, resilient and competitive. The BA's 150 member companies, and its cohort of over 1000 Investors in Cycling organisations, encompass retail, supply, manufacturing, logistics and service sectors, from start-ups to global corporations, and represent all UK regions.

“ It would be great to **see a wider representation of women** and the role they play in the Industry... For me there should be no barriers for anyone wanting to get involved in the cycling Industry, whether that's as a career or as a hobby. ”

Alex Feechan, Founder, FINDRA Clothing⁴⁶

In one sense, then, the BA is already a highly diverse organisation, representing all sectors and sizes of the UK cycling industry today. Yet examined through a different lens, we see a striking lack of diversity within member organisations, with significant under-representation of women across the entire industry: despite making up 49% of the UK workforce⁴⁷, a 2021 BA industry census revealed that just 8% of workshop-based roles and 19% of customer-facing roles are occupied by women.

“ **There are so many opportunities** in the cycling industry for women... I want to challenge the industry to be more inclusive and increase the number of women working in diverse roles within this sector. ”

Dr Lesley Ingram-Sills, Lecturer and former World Cup cross country mountain bike racer⁴⁸

The absence of women in the UK cycling industry is not unique. European data reveals similar female under-representation, with an estimated 25% of positions in the EU cycling industry⁴⁹, and 22% in the transport sector⁵⁰, held by women. For other marginalised groups, no official industry data yet exists, but we know anecdotally that there are too few Black, Asian or minority ethnic people; and not enough people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ people, or individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds represented among our industry members today. The global data echoes this picture: the World Economic Forum estimates it will take another 151 years to close the global economic gender gap (the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the rate of progress), while data is still too sparse to systematically estimate global gaps for racial equity and LGBTQ+ and disability inclusion⁵¹

The overall numbers are only part of the story. Relative seniority and the lived experiences in the industry of women and other marginalised groups are also important measures of diversity, equity and inclusion. So, despite women holding 40% of administrative roles⁵², only a small handful have progressed to senior leadership positions. In the BA's Leadership Group of 12, all identify as white and just one is a woman.

Retail sector data is equally bleak: 6% of Board members are women, and 4.5% are from an ethnic minority background (compared to 12.5% of the UK population). More than one in five retailers has no women at all on their Boards, and 69% have an all-male CEO, CFO and Chair⁵³.

The wider retail sector data is similarly bleak: 9.6% of Board members are from an ethnic minority background (although this has increased from 4.5% in 2021)⁵⁴ and in 2021, more than one in five retailers had no women at all on their Boards, and 69% had an all-male CEO, CFO and Chair.⁵⁵

Why the lack of diversity?

Why do so few women and people from underrepresented groups choose a career in the cycling industry?

Again there is very little industry-specific data, although a 2023 report into labour, employment and wellbeing in London's cargo bike sector provides relevant insights into workplace culture and the real challenges faced by employers, finding that although cargo bike delivery companies clearly aspire to a sense of social responsibility towards their riders, and have implemented various mechanisms to try and create more equitable and ethical employment, nonetheless a "narrow conception of wellbeing, coupled with implicit requirements that riders should have grit and determination, or be tough, create an unwelcoming environment, especially for female and non-binary riders, and riders of colour. The absence of transparent opportunities and processes for progression and professional development within companies make rider retention difficult."⁵⁶

Another relevant dataset comes from a 2021 European study of women working in transport. This report cites several factors explaining the lack of women in the workforce, including difficulty finding a work-life balance; lack of appropriate working environment; lack of training and life-long learning opportunities or inadequate targeted recruitment; persistence of stereotypes; harassment; and bullying⁵⁷. Other similar studies highlight gender discrimination, lack of supportive policies and facilities and female role models as key barriers for women⁵⁸. A 2022 report on British female entrepreneurs additionally highlighted access to finance, discrimination and self-doubt, unequal sharing of chores/childcare and a lack of female role models and professional networks as significant barriers faced by female founders, compared with their male counterparts⁵⁹.

“ I found out I was being paid 50% less than a man doing the same job as me. ”

Female manager, cycling industry

A 2023 Sporting Insights survey into women working in sport backs up these findings: nine in ten women report facing barriers when entering the industry, and half believe they are paid less than men for the same work. 37% of women agreed that male gatekeepers restrict their career progression and women experienced gender inequalities in comparison to their male colleagues, such as fewer promotion opportunities, fewer personal development opportunities, and poorer connections in the sports industry⁶⁰.

Business in the Community (BITC) summarises all these factors into three themes: inflexible expectations, biased attitudes and poor working cultures. Their research revealed that women under the age of 35 are most likely to experience non-inclusive behaviour at work, with 67% being subject to this in the last three years – impacting confidence, engagement and satisfaction⁶¹.

“ As an industry, I think logistics is not most welcoming to women. And it's a mentality that we've got to kind of break, but I don't know how we get to . . . Where to begin and how to encourage more women to do it and make them feel safe. ”

Cargo bike delivery company manager⁶²

A 2023 international survey of women by DEI consultancy WORK180 reveals the intersectional nature of these barriers: almost 30% of respondents said they had never felt able to bring their whole selves to work, with this figure increasing significantly for those who do not identify as 'White only', and increasing again for those aged over 56⁶³.

With 80% of female job seekers researching what a prospective employer is actually doing to create a diverse and inclusive workplace (with women in leadership positions and paid leave entitlements cited as the most important elements)⁶⁴, and with 75% of women valuing flexible working over a top-of-market salary, it is vital that our industry addresses these multiple barriers existing for women and other marginalised groups, in order to unlock all the additional potential that a diverse, inclusive workforce can bring.

“ We need to challenge the old-school industry set up [in cycle workshops], where you're supposed to know everything, and if you don't know, you're not good enough. This is an intimidating space for those with no prior experience of the industry, or even those who have been around for a while, whereas a mechanic's actual skills are around problem solving, engineering, creativity, managing expectations... And in any case, it's so important to speak up, be honest and ask questions if you don't know. When you build that open, inclusive culture, then it becomes a learning experience - either someone else knows, or we all learn together. ”

Jenni Gwiazdowski, Director, London Bike Kitchen



Image: Cycle Sisters

COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis - impacts and opportunities

While the impact of COVID-19 is still being understood, and there is no specific data available for the cycling industry, emerging macroeconomic data suggests women - in particular Black, Asian and ethnic minority women, women with low incomes and women with disabilities - have borne the brunt of many of the economic measures.

In its 2021 Gender Equality Route Map Report, BITC reported: *While there had been some positive progress around gender equality at work pre-pandemic (a record number of women in paid work for example, and a slow, gradual shift towards closing the gender pay gap), the overall picture as COVID-19 emerged remained one of inequality. Women still typically earn less,¹ are less likely to hold senior positions,² more likely to work in jobs that are less secure or stable and face a much greater risk of gender-based harassment and discrimination at work. These 'imbalances' are particularly acute for some demographics; for example, Black women face a larger pay gap than White women; Black, Asian and ethnic minority women are twice as likely as White women to work in insecure jobs. This not only undermines women's ability to prosper – at work and at home – it means business is not effectively accessing the talents and experiences women, who comprise just over half the population, have to offer⁶⁵.*

“ 72% of women in major UK cities say things would be better if people in general cycled more ”

Sustrans, 2018⁶⁶

“ ...but only 21% of the industry target women as a growth segment ”

BA Census, 2021⁶⁷

Its 2022 report stated:

The cost of living crisis, with inflation reaching its highest recorded level in April 2022, has seen 87% of UK adults impacted by rising energy, food and fuel prices. This “double bounce” from the pandemic to the cost of living crisis has seen women described as the “shock absorbers of poverty.” They have been disproportionately impacted by higher living costs due to lower-income, savings and earnings levels (the gender pay gap), a higher likelihood of working in lower-paid or insecure work and more dependency on state support which is often reduced. Women from certain ethnic minority groups are more likely to be living in poverty. Disabled women, single parents and victims/survivors of domestic abuse are the worst affected⁶⁸.

Although many of the changes prompted by COVID-19 have intensified inequalities, others, such as the increase in flexible and remote working, have offered up new opportunities to accelerate the progress of diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace. The actions individual employers take can make a real difference.



Overcoming systemic barriers



of women cycle regularly



of men cycle regularly

The lack of diversity in cycling is a systemic issue: only 11% of women cycle regularly, compared with 23% of men⁷¹, who make twice as many trips and cycle more than two times further than women⁷². Just 14% of ethnic minority groups, 12% of disabled people and 19% of LGBTQ+ people cycle regularly⁷³. In major UK cities, men are twice as likely to use a bicycle for travel on a regular basis than women; only 12% of women cycle once a week (compared with 24% of men); 73% of women (vs. 55% of men) never ride a bicycle; and only 27% of women think cycling safety in their city is good⁷⁴.

In cycling sport, while we can celebrate progress made in recent years to tackle the gender gap, we have yet to reach true equity in competitive cycling, and British Cycling's own Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy recognises that “those currently involved in the sport and activity of cycling do not represent all of the communities we serve”⁷⁵.

The lack of diversity in cycling participation is due to various reasons. For low-income groups (and in particular, for older women and/or those with disabilities), bicycle (and related equipment) access/ownership and parking/storage are the principal challenges⁷⁶; for women and Black, Asian and ethnic minority people, perceptions of road and personal safety predominate⁷⁷, while lack of time and different travel patterns are further significant barriers for women⁷⁸. People with disabilities also cite concerns around fitness and a lack of role models⁷⁹. Perceptions of safety (or lack of) are influenced by socio-cultural and infrastructure factors - for example, women's participation in transport cycling is relatively high in countries with a well-developed cycling culture⁸⁰.

“ I would like the industry to be more culturally aware - for example, when I was delivering Bikeability training to kids with Afro hair and braids, the small/medium kids’ helmets provided didn’t fit. Fitting a helmet is your first contact with that child, or with a new customer in your shop - it’s your chance to build trust, but already you’re on the back foot. You’ve put a barrier there. ”

Belinda Everett, Bee Pedal Ready

This points to a need to improve the cycling environment to attract more diverse groups of people to cycle, which requires providing relatively high-quality, segregated, inclusive cycle infrastructure, for example to facilitate trip-chaining, cycling with children⁸¹ and the use of adapted cycles for those with disabilities. Furthermore, since gender inequalities in household responsibilities also mean women are more likely to travel with children or with heavy objects and undertake more household tasks^{82,83}, and also because emerging usage data shows that women use cycling infrastructure differently from men, preferring smoother commutes on well-surfaced roads and taking bigger detours to stay on segregated paths⁸⁴, it is also desirable to include more women in the design of bicycles and cycling infrastructure⁸⁵. There is some evidence that new cycle infrastructure attracts a wider range of people (specifically, women and Black, Asian and minority ethnic people) to take up cycling⁸⁶. Indeed, despite all the barriers cited, these same groups remain positive about cycling, with 72% of women in major UK cities saying things would be better if people in general cycled more⁸⁷ and young Black, Asian, and mixed ethnicity women representing ‘strong targets’ to encourage into cycling⁸⁸.

The underrepresentation in cycling participation inevitably impacts upon the desirability of a career in the cycling industry for women and other marginalised groups today. In addition, low levels of awareness within the industry perpetuate the status quo, so that we are not fully exploiting the potential that greater diversity brings, whether in expanding our customer base or our talent pipeline. For example, despite almost two thirds of city-dwelling women saying things would be better if people in general cycled more⁸⁹, only 21% of the cycling industry target women as a growth segment⁹⁰. Meanwhile, just 9% of the industry run classes targeting people from diverse ethnic backgrounds⁹¹, despite these people representing ‘strong targets’ to encourage into cycling⁹².

“ When I was training to be a bike mechanic, on the journey I did sometimes feel low. If others don’t look like you, you can get demotivated and just think about doing something else instead. I had to actively seek out other people like me, to keep me going, but it wasn’t easy. ”

Lily-Mae Giordan, Cycle mechanic, Balfe’s Bikes

To overcome systemic inequity, it is vital that the many organisations working with passion, energy and commitment to achieve greater diversity, equity and inclusion across the cycling ecosystem align and support each other to achieve our common goal. A key objective of this project, then, will be to connect with partner organisations and intersectional cycling groups, to share stories of projects that successfully break down barriers to participation and promote a deeper collective understanding of the barriers and opportunities that exist, and driving real change.

One example of this work is British Cycling’s Limitless, a game-changing new programme supporting more disabled people to cycle. Another is Andy Edwards’ *Diversity in Cycling*⁹³, now in its second edition, a revealing and beautifully-written study of grassroots cycling, as experienced by people from marginalised groups. Its findings and practical recommendations, aimed at cycling clubs, bike shops and brands, serve as an important reminder that a variety of approaches is needed, and that educating ourselves about what prejudice is, and how to recognise it, are the first steps to dismantling it, in ourselves and in our society. Signposting to other reports and writings can be found in the ‘Further Reading’ section.

“ Having more diverse cargo bike delivery riders contributes to more diversity in city cycling, challenging the normative middle-class, white, male cyclist ”

Couve et al, 2023⁹⁴



Image: Joolze Dymond/Cycling UK

“ **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 hassle. ”

Contributor to the second edition of Diversity in Cycling⁹⁵

“ **We would like to train more Muslim women as bike mechanics** - this is part of our strategy. But there aren't many opportunities out there! There needs to be more training that is flexible, so women can fit it in around other commitments, delivered by women in a non-intimidating environment. The thought of joining a 'typical' bike mechanic course would be overwhelming for most of the women in our network. ”

Sarah Javaid, Founder, Cycle Sisters



Image: Joolze Dymond/Hop On Bike

“ I've been fortunate to see the **representation of women's cycling transform** in the 25 years working for the Giant Group. The introduction of Liv Cycling and the remarkable ambassadors is an inspiration and reminder of the importance of our community and why we ride. We will continue to tell our stories, share our rider's experiences, offer tips and create products that empower women worldwide to ride, **smile and inspire one another.** ”

Collette Clensy, Marketing Manager, Giant Group



Image: Giant Group

Part II - Where do we want to be?

Is building the business case for diversity a good idea?

The business case for diversity is nothing new. In fact, there's an increasing belief that a company's "need" for a business case on what should be first and foremost a moral issue suggests failure from the start. And as discussed by thought leaders like Dr. Sarah Kaplan, the consequential failure to meet the expectations set by such cases can contribute to a dangerous disbelief in the benefits of a diverse workforce. In short, leading with a business case could do more harm than good⁹⁶.

However, the negative moral and economic implications of not investing in diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace are unavoidable - so what are organisations to do? The cost of doing nothing is damaging, and the cost of getting it wrong can be devastating. The only solution is to dedicate time and effort into investing in DEI properly. For those companies that get it right, by adopting an authentic, actionable plan to improve the workplace for all, the benefits can be huge, unlocking additional value in three important ways.

“ We're proud to have recruited and championed female mechanics, and we'd love to recruit more diversely - **we'll never know the talent we haven't had, or the sales or loyalty we've lost,** by not having a more representative cross-section of people working in our company. ”

Richard Balfe, Founder, Balfe's Bikes

“ Women do convert better on our website. The difference isn't massive, but it's enough! All the female categories bar one performed better conversion wise. Perhaps this will encourage the industry to put **more of a focus on women's cycling** as a whole. ”

Queenie Waterman, Marketing Manager, Balfe's Bikes

Unlocking increased sales, customer satisfaction and loyalty

A survey by Accenture revealed that 41% of shoppers removed at least 10% of their business from a retailer for their lack of focus on diversity, equity and inclusion⁹⁷.

Other studies have shown that inclusive business cultures lead to 38% better assessment of consumer demand⁹⁸. Meanwhile, the same studies that show a lack of female participation today also point to women's positive attitude to cycling: 72% of women in major UK cities say things would be better if people in general cycled more; 68% say their city would be a better place to live and work if more people cycled; and 71% generally think positively about people riding bikes⁹⁹.

Coupled with the opportunity for e-bikes to increase access to cycling and physical activity for women, older people and those with physical and other health constraints^{100,101}, the potential for reaching out to a new, more diverse group of customers seems significant. Online retailers have also discovered that female

visitors, though typically much fewer in number, convert significantly better than men, and have achieved success with online campaigns targeted specifically at female cohorts. Other bike shops have attracted loyal female customers through organising led rides and product or maintenance evenings for women - and some of these women have subsequently joined their teams, becoming loyal employees.

Given this evident potential to increase sales and loyalty, the lack of awareness of this opportunity within the industry is concerning and demonstrates the 'invisible', systemic challenges we face: just 21% of the overwhelmingly male respondents of the BA's 2021 census considered women as a growth customer segment, while 72% did not identify any under-represented demographics in their customer base¹⁰². To overcome this systemic lack of diversity and promote greater mutual understanding and inclusivity, the BA can play an important role in connecting the industry with the many organisations working to achieve diversity, equity and inclusion in cycling.

“ We're proud to have supported an Off-Road Trails Academy to spread the joy of cycling to underrepresented youth aged 11-16 in southeast London; empowering them to develop new skills, learn more about the sport and cycling industry in a fun and safe environment.

Kirsty Woodcock, Head of Marketing, Specialized ”



“ The best business decision I ever made was to employ Alexandra. Before, we were breaking even, now we are cash positive. And this is almost all down to Alex.

Adam, Co-Founder, Cloud9 Cycles ”

Unlocking better business performance and profit

Multiple studies have shown that more diverse teams bring new perspectives and better decision making.

In 2020 the Gender Equity Insight Report empirically proved a causal relationship between women in leadership and increased profitability¹⁰³. The most diverse companies are now more likely than ever to outperform less diverse peers on profitability. 2019 analysis by McKinsey found that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 25% more likely to have above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile—up from 21% in 2017 and 15% in 2014¹⁰⁴. A 2020 report for the US Agency for International Development reported even more striking findings: companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on leadership teams in male-dominated industries are 47% more profitable than those in the bottom quartile¹⁰⁵. Companies with ethnically diverse teams are 36% more likely to have above-average profitability¹⁰⁶.

In 2015, a McKinsey Global Institute report, 'Diversity Matters', showed that women accounted for half the world's working-age population, but for only 37% of GDP. According to the report, that discrepancy robs the global economy of \$12 trillion in wealth we could share if each country improved gender equality as quickly as the fastest-improving country in its region did. The same report estimated that achieving true gender equality everywhere would raise global GDP by up to \$28 trillion¹⁰⁷. The UK currently lags behind the EU average in terms of gender equality¹⁰⁸.

“ The cycling industry is very male-dominated. In a lot of the discussions I have, I bring a different perspective, style and approach. I really think the diverse thinking and skillset makes our business more successful.

Irene McAleese, Co-Founder, See.Sense ”

Other research has demonstrated that more inclusive teams improve employee engagement¹⁰⁹ and satisfaction and reduce employee turnover and absenteeism¹¹⁰. International studies show that companies with a gender inclusive business culture have a 59% probability of achieving more creativity, innovation and openness¹¹¹. According to a transport sector study, employing more women also led to enhanced organisational reputation and the ability to attract talent and retain employees¹¹².

Diversity also builds resilient workplaces and national economies that can withstand shocks. Companies with diverse boards outperform those with no diversity during times of crisis, while organisations with strong gender inclusion have improved employee satisfaction and reduced employee turnover and absenteeism¹¹³.

“ We’ve conducted surveys, focus groups and interviews across our teams to establish where we stand on diversity, equality and inclusivity. This valuable feedback highlights areas where we need to work harder and actions we’ve already taken are really starting to have a positive impact.”

Nikki Hawyes, Country Leader, Cannondale

In its 2020 report, Diversity wins: How inclusion matters, McKinsey warned of the dangers for organisations that fail to engage strategically with diversity, equity and inclusion: “In 2019, fourth-quartile companies for gender diversity on executive teams were 19 percent more likely than companies in the other three quartiles to underperform on profitability — up from 15 percent in 2017 and 9 percent in 2015. At companies in the fourth quartile for both gender and ethnic diversity, the penalty was even steeper in 2019: they were 27 percent more likely to underperform on profitability than all other companies in our data set.”¹¹⁴

Unlocking additional value in recruitment and retention

The cycling industry will not have been immune to the ‘Great Resignation’, which has seen the highest number of UK employees quit their jobs since 2009, as staff recontract and reconsider their work life¹¹⁵.

With record job vacancies in the UK and beyond, talent shortages were a significant issue in the second half of 2021. The ability to attract and retain employees continues to be a key challenge for businesses and has been compounded by Brexit, leading to further skills shortages in sectors dependent on unskilled or semi-skilled foreign labour and disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. These include agriculture, construction, hospitality, healthcare, and - directly relevant to the bicycle industry - retail and logistics¹¹⁶.

Encouraging more diverse groups of people to apply for roles across the industry, particularly those where skills shortages exist, would therefore be a clear route to unlocking more value. In some areas, these skills gaps are predicted to rise further, increasing the urgency of taking action. Getting more women and people from marginalised groups onto training schemes is one way to fix the widening skills gap - for example, training more female mechanics would address the shortage of trained mechanics, for electric bikes in particular. E-bikes today account for only an estimated 5% of all bicycles purchased in the UK, but growth is forecast to be large and although there are no direct estimates for the cycling industry, the Institute of the Motor Industry estimates that 90,000 automotive technicians will be required to service electric cars by 2030¹¹⁷.

“ Having a supportive boss has been hugely influential in advancing my career, and those of other women working in my organisation. He and I have worked together, investing time, support and mentoring in boosting other women, making sure their hard work was fairly rewarded.”

Female director, cycling industry

“ I would absolutely love a skills-sharing session with other female mechanics. I don’t know a single other female mechanic - I’m the only one in my store. It would be so great to talk to someone who gets it, who’s gone through the same battle as you.”

Lile-Mae Giordan, Cycle mechanic, Balfe’s Bikes

“ Women considering applying for a technical job in the bike industry are **put off at every stage**. For every 50 job applications, we would receive one from a woman. But we were strategic and really thorough, so we could address every element that was off-putting. In fact, we completely changed our recruitment practices, including where we promote vacancies, the wording of job ads, selection criteria and the interview process, to make them more inclusive. Over four years, this worked particularly well with female representation; going from **3% to 48%** of employees identifying as women, including a gender-balanced team of cycle mechanics. ”

Tim Goodall, Managing Director, Islabikes



Image: Richard Bowater

Likewise, aligning with the government's net zero commitments and tapping into the potential of the emerging green economy may represent an important opportunity to inspire a new generation of young people from diverse backgrounds to discover fulfilling careers and feel empowered to help shape the cycling industry of the future.

It is clear from speaking with employers that many are eager to recruit more diversely, but report a lack of diversity in applicants for job vacancies, particularly for technical or industry-specific roles. Yet within our industry there are pockets of success - companies that have been tenacious, attacking the talent pool challenge from multiple angles and re-working their whole recruitment and retention process, while working systematically to make their workplace culture inclusive. Over time, these companies have succeeded in moving the dial: like Islabikes, who have increased female representation in their workforce from 3% to 48% over four years.

Companies who succeed in creating diverse teams report a virtuous circle of benefits, helping them to attract and retain high-calibre talent, while enhancing their organisational reputation¹¹⁶.

Ultimately, since women make up 49% of the UK workforce today¹¹⁹, it is clear that women with potential are out there - but right now, they are being recruited by other employers. Though we don't yet have the data to demonstrate it, this is almost certainly the case with other underrepresented groups, too. In order to really move the dial - not only to attract more diverse groups of people, but also to build the welcoming, inclusive culture that supports them to remain and to advance in our industry - we need to come together, share our challenges openly and honestly and come up with creative solutions that work for us all.

“ Our **fair and transparent hiring processes empower people of all backgrounds and experiences to apply and know they will be genuinely considered.** ”
Nigel Roberts, Managing Director, Trek UK

“ **Cycling is an activity for everyone, and it is through greater inclusion at all levels of cycling – our membership, workforce, decision-making governance structures – and listening and engaging with our communities in the right way that will bring about sustained and meaningful change.** ”

British Cycling, 2021¹²⁰

Can we afford not to do this?

Attracting, developing and retaining more bright, ambitious people from diverse backgrounds offers the cycling industry a way to 'turbo-charge' every aspect of our industrial growth strategy for cycling, addressing supply-side skills shortages while increasing consumer demand and loyalty and unlocking improved performance and additional value. Looking ahead, if we are ambitious we have the chance to become inclusivity leaders, taking pride in our efforts and achievements and inspiring others to follow our model.

With its Diversity in Cycling project, the Bicycle Association, working alongside key partners, has a unique opportunity to harness the collective power of these overlapping organisations, shining a light on the disproportionate benefits of diversity, equity and inclusion in cycling and driving lasting change that will enhance the cycling sector's role in the future economy and wellbeing of British society.

Quite simply, it is an opportunity we cannot and must not ignore.



“ We offer flexible working arrangements to all of our people, normalising flexibility and helping every employee overcome workplace barriers and thrive. ”

Julian Scriven, Managing Director,
Brompton Bike Hire

“ We have carried out salary benchmarking to check that there was no gender bias in our recruitment or promotion tracks. ”

Shelley Lawson, Co-Founder, Frog Bikes

“ We have supported significant career progression for women through our team, including certified training and paid study leave. ”

Dave Taylor, Managing Director, Schwalbe

“ A shift in diversity won't happen without time and financial investment. **There is no magic spell to fix the issues...**, but by taking steps internally and externally, we can expect an impact in what the...teams and leaders of tomorrow look like — and ultimately, a healthier bottom line.

Sheree Atcheson, Global DEI Leader & Advisory Board Member at Women Who Code²¹

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Image: Frog bikes

Part III - How do we get there?

Accepting the challenge

As we have seen, the lack of diversity, equity and inclusion in the cycling industry is part of a wider systemic issue existing across and beyond the cycling sector.

A growing body of research and reports has highlighted institutionalised discrimination in key British institutions, including policing, criminal justice, media, politics and education²². Against this backdrop, we should be under no illusion: achieving real change will be extremely hard. It may feel overwhelming, uncomfortable and deeply challenging, as we examine our unconscious beliefs and biases. It will certainly require a sustained, strategic effort, across all organisational levels and areas.

“ It's really hard, even when you are working at it strategically. **You can't, in an individual organisation, tackle gender equity with just a single approach.** Even with all our strategic efforts, led by a strong female leadership team, progress often felt slow and we learned how difficult it can be to even see, let alone overcome, the deep subconscious biases that both men and women hold. However, the hard work did pay off over time. I learned so much from the process and I'm proud that our efforts eventually achieved our goal of gender balance across the organisation.

Isla Rowntree, founder, Islabikes

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“ If businesses are to **achieve gender equality** at work, they need to 'lift the lid' on the reality of their workplace cultures for all women within their organisation – to actively listen, respond and address gender-based microaggressions and non-inclusive behaviour

Business in the Community, 2021²³

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Learning from others

Notwithstanding these challenges, there exist pockets of good practice and success, of ambition, creativity and tenacity, both within and beyond cycling.

Launching in 2023, we have the opportunity both to learn from, and collaborate with, the many existing DEI initiatives across transport and other sectors, sharing learnings and successes while reducing costs.



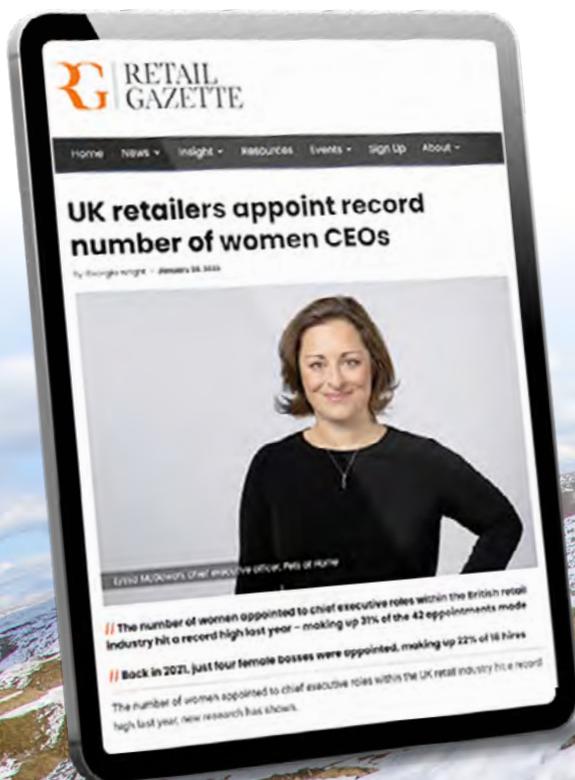
Existing DEI initiatives in the transport sector.

Image: Innovate UK

“ Our core belief is that by helping employers to know better, they will be able to **do better**. ”

WORK180

For example, the British Retail Consortium made a strategic commitment in 2016 to retail being a leader in diversity and inclusion, and is now seeing real progress in representative leadership, with a record number of women CEOs appointed in 2022, making up 31% of the 41 appointments made, compared with 22% in 2021²⁴.



Source: World Economic Forum and McKinsey & Company²⁵

“ Tasking leaders with specific DE&I goals is key to **driving results**. Despite this, just under a third of European organisations have adopted this practice (30%) and fewer are tracking progress or holding leaders accountable for meeting goals.¹²⁶ ”

PwC European DE&I Benchmarking Survey 2022

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Snapshot of 2023 DEI Lighthouse cases		
Organization	Description	Impact snapshot
	Inclusive recruiting processes and working environments for neurodivergent candidates and employees through upskilling and process redesign.	Neuro-Diverse Centers of Excellence launched across 19 cities in eight countries, with a 92% retention rate for neurodivergent employees hired through the programme.
	Gender parity in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professions, for women and girls in Türkiye and Kuwait, through upskilling and opportunity creation.	53,000+ high school and university students and 275 teachers across 125 schools in 34 cities participated in the high school programme; ~82% of graduates from the university programme secured full-time engineering roles.
	Social mobility for individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds in the United Kingdom through advocacy, community development, upskilling and inclusive workplace hiring practices.	18k+ students from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas received workplace skills training; 400+ students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds completed paid work experience, 600+ hired on Tech Degree Apprenticeships and 600+ social enterprises upskilled by programmes. PwC office opened in a social mobility "cold spot" (area with comparatively fewer educational and economic opportunities), creating 200+ jobs.
	Economic empowerment for at-risk women in the United States through upskilling and opportunity creation.	1,000 at-risk women enrolled in programme, with 95% of apprenticeship graduates advancing into long-term job opportunities.
	Pay equity across all offices, in over 100 countries, with a global-local compensation framework, supported by a robust governance and automated analytics.	By 2020, 99.6% of workforce covered by programme.
	Accelerating gender parity, at board and executive-management levels, for women employees in the Japan office and business community, through inclusive work policies, upskilling and community impact.	24% increase in the ratio of women leaders; 91% of programme participants felt motivated to work towards a promotion (vs. 50% prior to the programme).
	Advancing intersectional gender diversity for employees and students through inclusive work policies and recruiting processes, upskilling and sponsorship.	8.6% increase in percentage of women-identifying managers, 95% increase in applications received for the women-in-engineering scholarship programme, first transgender hiring programme in India.
	Social mobility for associates (employees) in the United States through free, career-enhancing education and upskilling.	89,000+ associates have participated and 15,000+ associates have graduated from the programme; hourly associates who participated in the programme were promoted at a 2x higher rate and retained at a 20% higher rate than non-participants.

Source: World Economic Forum and McKinsey & Company¹²⁷

Turning from industry to sport, alongside the progress made in addressing gender equity in elite cycling¹²⁸, it is also worth noting that a growing number of women's sports are building a model of equity and inclusion for others to follow, and showing that this can drive performance and reward (both sporting and financial) and fan engagement: for example, the average viewer watched 8 hours 44 minutes of women's sport in 2022, compared to 3 hours 47 minutes in 2021 - and 1.8 million people watched the UEFA Women's Euro 2022 who didn't watch the men's FIFA World Cup. In women's cricket, England's Nat Sciver-Brunt achieved £320,000 in the player auctions for the women's IPL 3-week event - just short of Indian batter Smriti Mandhana's auction value of £340,000. In basketball, the Seattle Storm have been valued at \$151 million, a record for a US women's sports team and 15 times higher than previous sales prices for WNBA teams¹²⁹. According to a PwC report, over 70% of sports executives believe women's sports revenue will grow by more than 15% in the next 3-5

years¹³⁰ - although it is important to put this into perspective, given that in 2022, just two of the 50 highest-paid athletes in the world were women (Naomi Osaka and Serena Williams)¹³¹. The same report shows clearly that as with the wider business sector, the sporting industry are under increasing scrutiny to make major sporting events more sustainable, with "Optimising diversity and inclusion at teams, organisations and governing bodies" featuring as a top-three response for over one third of respondents, when asked which measures they believe will have the biggest impact on sustainability¹³². However, in cycling as in wider sport, we must ensure that these strides forward for the women's game are translated into more gender equity for those working in the industry, with Sporting Insights' recent report a wake-up call for the sports industry: the average score given by women working in sport for gender equality in the industry was only 4.63 out of 10, while nine in ten faced barriers when entering the industry and blockers in their career development¹³³.

Making it happen

BA members and Investors in Cycling already have a track record of collaborating and pooling data and resources for the collective benefit of the industry, for example with the BA's Market Data Service.

As the trade organisation for the industry, the Bicycle Association is uniquely positioned to unite and support members of all sizes from across the industry to improve diversity, equity and inclusion in their organisations, helping them overcome the barriers that prevent more women and marginalised groups from entering and advancing to leadership roles in the bicycle trade, and creating an industry-wide culture where everyone feels respected, valued and supported. The Diversity in Cycling project offers the BA, the industry and the wider cycling sector a new platform for collaborating and sharing ideas, creatively overcoming challenges and celebrating successes together.

“ The simple truth is that what gets measured, gets done. ”

Nikki Hawyes, Country Leader, Cannondale

“ Driving sustainable change requires effective monitoring efforts³⁴ ”

PwC European DE&I Benchmarking Survey 2022

A vital part of achieving this vision is ensuring from the outset that all employers feel included, able to sign the diversity pledge (below) and to support the Diversity in Cycling project, whether this is their first step on the journey to becoming more inclusive employers, or whether DEI is fully embedded in all decision-making processes. While the industry undeniably has a long way to go, by focusing on progress, offering positive encouragement and sharing best practice, the BA can patiently and effectively build the collective confidence and momentum that is needed for lasting change to take place.

As an industry, it is time to accept the challenge, to share and champion 'what good looks like', to be open about our knowledge gaps and biases, and to challenge non-inclusive behaviours and practices. Let's build from our small pockets of success to achieve impact at scale, creating the collective sense of purpose, energy and momentum to drive real industry-wide change that creates a diverse, equitable, inclusive industry, where everyone feels respected, supported and empowered to build a sustainable, resilient, competitive cycling industry, unlocking more value for us all.



Image: Joolze Dymond/Islabikes

Key recommendations and priorities for 2023-24

The following eleven recommendations seek to improve diversity, equity and inclusion in the cycling industry, by aligning the industry around a shared strategic commitment to balanced representation at all levels, and to creating a culture of inclusivity where everyone feels respected, supported and empowered to play their part in building a sustainable, resilient, competitive cycling industry. Since we can all play a part in driving change, the recommendations are aimed at everybody in the industry, including employers, employees, individuals from underrepresented groups and the BA itself.

Following the World Economic Forum and McKinsey’s ‘five success factors’ model for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) projects³⁵, detailed earlier in this report, the Diversity in Cycling project initially needs to focus on building a deep fact base, collecting data and insights from both employers and underrepresented groups in our industry, to identify the root causes, define meaningfully what ‘success’ will look like, and prioritise future activity. The project can then support the industry in leading desired change in a way that is sustainable, sharing best practice, building supportive networks, highlighting gaps and measuring our collective progress over time.

Key recommendations for 2023-24 are as follows; further detail is provided on the following pages.

DEI Lighthouses success factor	Diversity in Cycling project recommendation
<p>Nuanced understanding of root causes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Conduct an employers’ equity audit and index, enabling employers to confidentially benchmark against global equity standards, and the BA to collect anonymised aggregated data for the industry. 2 Carry out a perception survey of people working in the cycling industry, focusing in particular on women and underrepresented groups, to better understand their experiences and needs. 3 Build connections with other cycling bodies and intersectional cycling groups, to promote mutual understanding and improve DEI across the wider cycling sector.
<p>Meaningful definition of success</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4 Informed by the equity audit and perception survey, publish a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) strategy for the industry.
<p>Accountable and invested business leaders</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Align BA members and Investors in Cycling behind a Diversity in Cycling pledge - a shared strategic commitment to improve diversity, equity and inclusion across the industry.
<p>Solution designed for context</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6 Share a DEI action plan for employers, adapted to the cycling industry, to guide BA members and Investors in Cycling in improving DEI in their own organisations. 7 Offer a range of resources, case studies and campaigns to share best DEI practice and offer inspiration and practical guidance to BA members and Investors in Cycling. 8 Create a supportive professional network for women and other marginalised groups in the industry, to advance careers and enable more diverse voices to be heard by policymakers and at industry events. 9 Promote diverse stories and role models to inspire a more representative cross-section of ambitious young people to enter and reach leadership positions in the cycling trade.
<p>Rigorous tracking and course correction</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Form a Diversity in Cycling advisory board to track progress with our DEI strategy, engage in advocacy work and advise the BA’s governance group on DEI in its wider strategy. 11 Repeat equity audit/index and perception survey annually, and conduct regular polls.

Recommendations

More detail and initial progress

Proposed diversity in Cycling pledge

To unite and align the industry behind a simple, shared commitment to improve diversity, equity and inclusion.

Proposed pledge wording:

“ We are committed to creating a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace culture, with balanced representation at all levels. We will create an environment where everyone feels respected, supported and empowered to build a sustainable, resilient, competitive cycling industry, unlocking more value for us all. ”

The ambition is for all BA members and Investors in Cycling to sign the diversity pledge. For some, this may represent their first step on the journey to becoming more inclusive employers; for others, it may sit alongside long-standing strategic commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion.

A company can sign the pledge via a simple online form on the BA website; there is no cost to sign. Upon signing the pledge, the company's logo will appear on the Diversity in Cycling project webpage; they will also receive a Diversity in Cycling logo to use in their marketing and recruitment.

At time of print, we are delighted that the following organisations have already committed to signing the Diversity in Cycling pledge:

Leadership Group Pledge Signatories

At time of print, we are delighted that the following Bicycle Association Leadership Group companies have already committed to signing the Diversity in Cycling pledge:

BROMPTON

cannondale



GIANT

halfords

ISLABIKES

Liv

RALEIGH



SPECIALIZED

TREK

Sign the pledge at: www.bicycleassociation.org.uk/diversity-in-cycling

Proposed Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) action plan

Aligned with WORK180's global workplace equity and inclusion standards, this DEI action plan is specifically tailored for the cycling industry. It is designed to be used by all organisation types and sizes, including as a cross-referencing tool for those with pre-existing DEI strategies.

1 We have inclusive hiring processes

We commit to fair and transparent hiring processes that empower people of all backgrounds and experiences to apply and know they will be genuinely considered.

2 We champion representative leadership

We recognise that achieving balanced, representative leadership is vital to achieving diversity in our organisation and across the industry.

3 We embrace flexible working

We help every employee overcome workplace barriers and thrive, by normalising flexibility.

4 We are transparent and equitable about pay

We work towards true pay equity, promoting transparency and benchmarking to track, measure and prove progress.

5 We help everybody care

We promote shared responsibility of unpaid care, regardless of gender, to enable everybody to thrive in the workplace.

6 We listen and are data led

We measure our progress and create a listening culture that empowers all employees to share their experiences, learning from them to make lasting change.

7 We support career development for all

We nurture and retain our employees through career development support that builds confidence, skills, networks and direction.

8 We commit to an inclusive culture for everyone

We champion inclusive and anti-discriminatory cultures among employees and customers, in which a wide range of people can come together and thrive, recognising that inclusive organisations are better for all.

9 We offer safety and support services to all employees

We recognise the important role employers play in the removal of systemic barriers faced by women and marginalised groups (e.g., harassment, domestic violence) and offer robust support for those impacted.

10 We make strategic commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion

We lead from the top, making a formalised commitment to building and maintaining a diverse, equitable, inclusive organisation.

Download the DEI action plan at: www.bicycleassociation.org.uk/diversity-in-cycling

Equity Audit and Index

An independently-validated audit, enabling employers to confidentially benchmark against global equity and inclusion standards, and the BA to collect anonymised industry-level data to track, measure and celebrate our collective progress.

To support and champion employers, the BA is collaborating with Women in Transport and WORK180 to launch a groundbreaking annual, cross-sectoral Employers' Equity Audit and Index. Via a secure, independently-validated online audit, BA members and Investors in Cycling will confidentially benchmark against their industry peers on key DEI standards, identifying specific areas of success, and gaps to address. On completion, employers can access key resources from the WORK180's knowledge base portal, to support them in implementing their own DEI action plan. Example resources include an inclusive guide to hiring; a gender-neutral parental leave policy template; and a ten-step list of recommended policies and guides for small businesses.

From year two, it is envisaged that an annual awards ceremony will celebrate and champion the top-five employers and inspire more members to follow suit.

To complement the annual Equity Audit and Index, the BA also plans to conduct regular member polls, to surface emerging issues and trends in diversity, equity and inclusion.

Find out more at: www.bicycleassociation.org.uk/diversity-in-cycling

Perception survey

An anonymous international survey, in collaboration with Cycling Industries Europe, to capture the perceptions, experiences and needs of those working in the cycling industry, regarding diversity, equity and inclusion.

In parallel with the launch of the Employers' Equity Audit, the BA will launch a perception survey of those working in the cycling industry, to better understand their perceptions, experiences and needs around DEI. Everyone is invited to take part; we particularly encourage women and those from marginalised groups to complete the survey and make their voice heard. The survey is secure and anonymous; results will be analysed to produce an insight report, shared with the BA's and CIE's membership, and with industry and general media. Insights will also be used to inform the development of the women's professional network (see below) and the creation of ad hoc campaigns to promote good DEI practice.

Professional network for women and other marginalised groups

Targeted actions aimed at advancing the careers of women and other underrepresented groups in the cycling industry, and at making the industry more attractive to more diverse groups.

Alongside its support for employers, the BA also plans to offer direct support to women and people from underrepresented groups working in the cycling industry, to help advance their careers, enable more diverse voices to be heard by policymakers and at industry events, and inspire more ambitious young people from diverse backgrounds to enter - and one day lead - the cycling trade. While the final details will be informed by the results of the perception survey, initial feedback from 43 people identifying as being in an underrepresented group³⁶ interviewed during the scoping phase of this project was overwhelmingly positive, with 100% agreeing with the need for proactive action to improve DEI in the industry - an even stronger endorsement than the 2020 survey of women carried out by Cycling Industries Europe as it launched its gender equity programme, Women in Cycling, in which 85% of respondents agreed with the need for an initiative like Women in Cycling³⁷. Based on this initial feedback, the BA is already exploring options in the following areas:

- Creating a supportive professional network for women in the industry, a 'safe space' to promote networking, skills sharing, mentoring and increased wellbeing and confidence
- Launching a women's mentoring scheme, in collaboration with Women in Transport, to support more women at middle-management level to advance to senior industry roles
- Building an international women's expertise portal, in collaboration with Cycling Industries Europe, to share and shine a light on women's skills, promote peer-to-peer skills sharing and provide a ready directory of women to speak at industry events
- Advocating for gender-balanced, diverse panels and speakers at industry events
- Inspiring a diverse, representative cross-section of young people to discover fulfilling careers in the cycling industry and wider active travel sector, focusing on the potential offered by green jobs and our net zero commitments
- Sharing best practice resources, to enable more people from marginalised groups to access career development programmes, coaching and mentoring, education and training, return to work initiatives, growth and succession planning, funding, etc.

Diversity in Cycling Advisory Board

An independent panel of industry experts, advising and guiding the BA in the implementation of its strategy.

With broad representation and operating as an independent external body of the BA's governance structure, the Diversity in Cycling advisory board's main objective will be to track progress with implementing the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) action plan, offering relevant perspectives and schools of thought in response to the challenges and barriers for implementation. The Board will also engage in advocacy work and is invited to make recommendations to the BA's governance group on DEI in the context of its wider strategy. The outputs of the Board should aim to inspire and amplify Diversity in Cycling's goals and enable the BA to be more effective in implementing its strategy.

Find out more at: www.bicyclessociety.org.uk/diversity-in-cycling

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- 135 World Economic Forum and McKinsey & Company (2023) [Global Parity Alliance: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lighthouses 2023](#) [Accessed 13/02/23]
- 136 Including women, non-binary people, people from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, LGBTQ+ people and people with different religious beliefs
- 137 Cycling Industries Europe (2020)

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all those who have contributed their stories and experiences to this report, and to those who have given time and support to the Diversity in Cycling project.



About the author

Sally Middlemiss is founder of the Diversity in Cycling project and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead at the Bicycle Association. Prior to this she was a company director at a large independent cycling retailer, leading ecommerce, marketing and store design and championing inclusive recruitment and branding. Before that she worked in the public and financial tech sectors in the UK and USA. Sally is also a qualified teacher and level 2 ride leader.

Further reading

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but rather a place to start. Many of these publications have their own reading lists to explore.

On diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace

- McKinsey & Company (2020) [Diversity wins: How Inclusion matters](#)
- World Economic Forum and McKinsey & Company (2023) [Global Parity Alliance: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lighthouses 2023](#)
- PwC (2022) [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarking Survey - European Data Sheet](#)
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- PwC (2023) [Bouncing Back - PwC's Global Sports Survey](#)
- Sporting Insights (2023) [Tackling inequality: The voice of women working in sport](#)

On diversity, cycling and sport

- British Cycling (2021) [Our Ride - An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for British Cycling](#)
- Edwards, A. (2022) [Diversity in Cycling: 2nd Edition, by Andy Edwards](#)
- People for Bikes (2021) [Where Do We Go From Here? Breaking Down Barriers to Bicycling in the U.S.](#)
- Sustrans (2018) [Reducing the gender gap](#)
- Transport for London (2021) [Cycling potential in London's diverse communities](#)
- Wheels for Wellbeing (2019) [A Guide to Inclusive Cycling: 2nd Edition](#)
- Back in the Frame: How to get back on your bike, whatever life throws at you, by Jools Walker
- Black Unity Bike Ride 2022 - [full film](#)
- The Unstoppable Rise of Women's Sport, by Sue Anstiss

Exploring race, equality and intersectionality

- Fix the System, not the Women, by Laura Bates
- Positively Purple: Build an Inclusive World Where People with Disabilities Can Flourish, by Kate Nash
- Black and British: A Forgotten History, by David Olusoga
- Why I am No Longer Talking to White People About Race, by Reni Eddo Lodge
- Pride: The Story of the LGBTQ Equality Movement, by Matthew Todd

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0203 857 4411



www.bicycleassociation.org.uk



info@bicycleassociation.org.uk



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