

# ***News from the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG)***

## ***MAG demands that TfL investigate the reasons for higher risks for London motorcyclists.***

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***The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) has revealed its own analysis into the “safety in numbers” concept and, in the process, uncovered some uncomfortable truths.***

The Motorcycle Action Group has been working on analysis of motorcycle casualty statistics in England. The purpose of the analysis was to establish evidence for the widely accepted belief that there is a safety in numbers effect applicable to motorcyclists as much as cyclists. The theory is that higher numbers of cyclists or motorcyclists on the road actually results in reduced risk of collisions due to increased awareness of the vulnerable road users by other road users.

MAG’s Director of Campaigns & Political Engagement, Colin Brown explains:

“We analysed at a regional and local authority level the proportion of total casualties in comparison with the prevalence of the two vulnerable road user groups in the transport mix, looking at varying levels of modal share in varying locations as well as changes in casualty share as modal share has changed over time.

The most startling revelation from the research turned out not to be in the safety in numbers results, which can be seen, but actually in the stark contrasts between trends in London compared to other regions. It is clear that over time the prevalence of motorcycles and pedal cycles has been very similar in all areas except London where the prevalence of pedal cycles is increasing at a faster rate than for motorcycles. The shocking thing, however, is that the proportion of casualties is similar and generally converging throughout the country except - again - for London where the proportions are very clearly diverging, with cycling becoming safer while motorcycling is becoming less safe.”

Reacting to the revelations, MAG’s Director of Communications & Public Affairs, Lembit Opik, said “Transport for London have adopted a Vision Zero aspiration to eliminate all road deaths, but this evidence shows that there is a clear imbalance between these two transport modes... and it’s getting worse. It cannot be right to continually improve safety for one road user group whilst ignoring or, as we are now seeing, increasing the risks for another group. TfL claim to want to reduce all road casualties, so why are we not seeing improvements in the statistics for motorcyclists? We need TfL to investigate and to take action to reverse this trend immediately.”

These revelations follow similar findings from widely reported analysis by Swinton Insurance, which showed that London is the most dangerous region for motorcyclists in the UK.

Colin Brown remarked “The Swinton analysis shows a 5% decline in the number of collisions involving motorbikes nationally between 2016 and 2017, but an 8% rise in London. We would caution against adopting the standard approach of suggesting that it is the behaviour of London’s riders that causes this anomaly. It would seem inconceivable that if all London riders did a month long exchange visit to the West Midlands and vice versa, that the statistics would

dramatically change for that month. The riding environment being created in the capital is, undeniably, very different to that in other parts of the country. I believe that this environmental difference is the most obvious place to start looking for explanations, and would like to see TfL making this a top priority.”

Vice Chair of MAG, Andy Carrott, stated “We welcome improvements in cycle safety but fear that the impact of some policies, introduced to achieve these gains for cyclists, has not been fully considered. Other vulnerable road users, motorcyclists in particular, may have been placed at increased risk. We request that TfL provide evidence that the two trends in casualties are not causally linked but, more importantly, we urge TfL to take steps to reverse the trend in PTW casualties without restricting their use.”

Contact MAG at 01926 844 064 or [central-office@mag-uk.org](mailto:central-office@mag-uk.org)

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### **Notes for Editors**

MAG’s full report “Safety in Numbers“, can be found here: [https://wiki.mag-uk.org/images/a/ad/Safety in Numbers Report Final 2019 06 17.pdf](https://wiki.mag-uk.org/images/a/ad/Safety_in_Numbers_Report_Final_2019_06_17.pdf)

Swinton Insurance analysis can be found here: <https://www.swinton.co.uk/motorbike-insurance/guides/dangerous-roads-motorbike-riders/>