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THE INVISIBLE CYCLIST: ONE IN FIVE CYCLISTS UNSEEN BY MOTORISTS

- **22 per cent of cyclists are not seen by motorists compared to just 4 per cent of jaywalkers**
- **15 per cent of motorcyclists are invisible to drivers**
- **Female drivers fail to see 26 per cent of cyclists on the road and younger drivers miss 31 per cent**
- **Issue most prominent in London where 30 per cent of cyclists are 'invisible'**
- **Revolutionary eye tracking experiment reveals undisputedly the 'real' driving behaviours on our roads**

A new study from Direct Line¹ Car Insurance proves it is safer to be a jaywalker than a cyclist. Using revolutionary eye tracking technology to monitor actual driver behaviour, the study found that drivers failed to notice 22 per cent of cyclists on the road, despite being in clear view of their vehicle.

The corresponding figures for motorcyclists were equally as alarming, with 15 per cent completely unseen by motorists. By contrast, drivers spotted all but 4 per cent of jaywalkers who stepped into the road without using a crossing.

The study also highlighted that motorists who use sat nav devices are less likely to spot a cyclist than those who do not. A shocking 24 per cent of cyclists are 'invisible' to drivers who use a sat nav, compared to 19 per cent for those who do not.

Female drivers who took part in the study spotted fewer cyclists than their male counterparts, with 26 per cent of cyclists unseen by women and 17 per cent unseen by men. The same applies to younger drivers, with 31 per cent of cyclists missed by motorists aged 20 – 29, compared to 21 per cent for those aged 50 – 59.

The issue was particularly prominent in London, where 30 per cent of cyclists in Direct Line's study were invisible to motorists. In Oxford, the percentage decreases to 20 per cent and lowers again to 15 per cent in Sheffield.

With high profile British success in Olympic cycling and the Tour de France driving fierce demand for the sport, and more people than ever cycling as part of their daily commute, cyclist safety is a growing concern.

Vicky Bristow, spokesperson for Direct Line car insurance commented: "For the first time we know exactly where people focus their eyes when driving and the results are frightening. UK roads are busy and congested and as a result millions of cyclists are going unseen. Blaming motorists seems like an easy option, but this issue can only be really addressed if both motorists and cyclists accept responsibility.

"Encouraging all road users to be extra vigilant will certainly improve road safety but tackling an issue of this scale really requires top-down change. Successive governments have encouraged local authorities to adopt policies to make cycling safer in the past but our research highlights that this issue is still widespread."

Direct Line Car Insurance commissioned a revolutionary eye tracking experiment to establish where motorists' eyes are really focussed. The experiment saw participants wearing specialist glasses that pinpoint the exact focus of the eye by tracking microscopic movements in the cornea. This innovative experiment captured on film, enabled researchers to establish exactly where drivers focus their vision, which was often at clouds, buildings and passers-by.

From 2011-2012, 2,660 cyclists were seriously injured on the roads;

the highest number this century², highlighting that this is indeed, a major problem.

Drivers	% that failed to spot cyclists
Sat nav drivers	23.7 %
Non-sat nav drivers	19.0 %
Female drivers	25.6 %
Male drivers	17.1 %
Drivers aged 20 - 29	31.1 %
Drivers aged 30 - 39	20.7 %
Drivers aged 40 - 49	21.6 %
Drivers aged 50 - 59	20.9 %
All drivers	22.0 %

Source: Direct Line Motor Insurance

Videos from this innovative eye tracking experiment are available, which demonstrate such dangerous behaviours as changing sat nav while driving and driving using a hand held mobile phone to navigate.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1 Bunnyfoot, psychologists & human-computer interface experts, conducted research of behalf of Direct Line Car Insurance amongst a representative sample of 100 UK drivers in locations including London, Sheffield and Oxford in August 2012.

2 <http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN06224>