Pre-Course Bike Check – Resources

To take part in **National Standard Cycle Training**, all trainees must have a bicycle that is **road-worthy and an appropriate size**.

To help ensure your child can use their own bike safely, we ask that you carry out the simple checks below before training begins. You are not expected to be a bike mechanic — these basic checks will greatly improve safety and the likelihood that your child can take part.

Tyre Condition and Pressure

- **Check tyre tread:**
  Look for sufficient tread on both tyres. If there are severe bald patches (often caused by skidding), there is an increased risk of a blow-out.
  Solution: Replace the tyres.
- **Check tyre pressure:**
  Squeeze each tyre. They should feel firm. If they feel soft or "squidgy," they may be flat or punctured.
  Solution: Inflate using a bike pump. If the tyre will not hold air, the puncture will need repairing.

Brakes

- **Brake operation:**
  Apply each brake in turn and then release it. Brakes should move easily and return to their starting position straight away.
  If the brake feels stiff or slow to return, corrosion in the brake cable is likely.
  Solution: Have the brake cables replaced.
- **Brake effectiveness:**
  - Push the bike forwards and apply the **front brake (right-hand lever)** — the bike should stop immediately.
  - Pull the bike backwards and apply the **rear brake (left-hand lever)** — the bike should stop immediately.
    If the bike does not stop, there may be a brake set-up issue.
- **Brake cables:**
  Check cable ends for fraying, as these can cause painful cuts.
  Solution: Replace the cables.

Chain

- **Check for rust:**
  Look along the full length of the chain.
  Solution: Apply a suitable chain lubricant.

Handlebars and Saddle

- **Handlebars:**
  Hold the front wheel firmly between your knees and try to turn the handlebars. If they move independently, the stem is loose.
  Solution: Tighten the stem bolt.
- **Saddle:**
  Hold the saddle firmly and try to twist it. If it moves, either the seat post or the saddle clamp is loose.
  Solution: Tighten the relevant bolt.
- **Insertion limits:**
  Check that "Minimum Insertion" markings on the handlebar stem and seat post are **not visible** above the frame.

Correct Bike Size

- **Standing over the bike:**
  When standing astride the frame, the rider should have a few centimetres of clearance over the crossbar, with both feet flat on the ground.
- **When seated:**
  - The rider should be able to touch the ground with the **balls of both feet**.
    Solution: Lower the saddle (do not exceed the minimum insertion limit).
  - The rider should **not** be able to place both feet completely flat on the ground while seated.
    Solution: Raise the saddle slightly (within insertion limits).

Important Safety Advice

For your child's safety, we strongly recommend that any repairs or adjustments are carried out by a **qualified bicycle mechanic**.

Our Service

All **BikeAbility** instructors are trained to carry out full bicycle checks to recognised standards and can make minor adjustments where appropriate. Our checks may identify additional faults.

While we will do everything possible to make a bike safe and rideable within the time limits of the course, **providing a road-worthy bicycle remains the responsibility of the parent or guardian**.

We reserve the right to decide that a bicycle is not suitable for training. Any repairs required are undertaken at our discretion