

AINA CASE STUDY

THE WAY FORWARD

Safer towpaths in London



Reducing potential towpath conflict allows everyone to safely enjoy London's canals

A Code of Conduct and a special campaign reduce conflict on London's waterways

London's canal towpaths have seen a significant increase in use by pedestrians, cyclists and visitors to the capital. This increases the potential for conflict between different users and concerns have been expressed relating to both the numbers and speed of cyclists.

In order to improve safety for towpath users, British Waterways London has worked in partnership with Transport for London to make routes safer and more accessible to the thousands of people who use them every day for walking, cycling, jogging and in association with boating. Following advice from independent experts and liaison with local user groups, a series of physical improvements were carried out and a new Code of Conduct has been publicised.

The improvements include:

- a trial of chicanes to slow cyclists on the towpath
- rumble strips with 'Give Way' notices at some bridges with poor sightlines
- rumble strips with 'Slow' written on the towpath at blind corners and slopes
- towpath refurbishment at a number of key locations
- Code of Conduct signs displayed at entrances onto the towpath
- improved directional signs at some access points
- new shared use path signs erected along the towpath

A complimentary 'Two Tings' campaign is part of an ongoing London-wide programme to make canalsides safer and more accessible, and the confined nature of many towpaths means that it is essential that cyclists ring a bell to announce their passage. Such behaviour encourages all users to consider others and reminds cyclists and pedestrians of the need to abide by the Code of Conduct. The campaign covers the whole of the London Canal network including the River Lee navigation, Grand Union Paddington Branch and the Grand Union mainline, as well as the Regent's Canal.

Regular events to promote important messages are hosted by the towpath managers with volunteer help from the London Cycle Campaign, Sustrans, Living Streets, Safer Neighbourhoods Teams and officers from the London Boroughs. All work together to promote the safe use of the towpath, and information about 'Two Tings' is also available from a Facebook page and a central phone number.

A spokesperson at Transport for London said: "The programme of safety improvements is part of our ongoing drive to encourage non-polluting forms of travel which will help to improve air quality and reduce harmful emissions responsible for climate change."