

## Practitioner Questionnaire

As part of a wider Department for Transport project to consider updates to the *Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces* document (first published in 1998), this questionnaire has been prepared to enable practitioners to contribute their perspectives. The project is being undertaken by TRL with partners Urban Movement and Philip Barham Freelance Consulting Ltd; this survey is managed by Urban Movement. Please view here for the GDPR privacy notice <https://trl.co.uk/privacy-notice>

Responses will be anonymised to encourage frank answers; although employer type and job title is requested to understand respondents' roles and the context in which they are involved in the built environment and any local policy issues. Please complete in as much detail as you feel necessary to answer each question. Many thanks in advance.

Please email your responses to Amy Priestley: [a.priestley@urbanmovement.co.uk](mailto:a.priestley@urbanmovement.co.uk). If you require assistance completing the questionnaire, please contact Amy on 020 3567 0710. Please also contact Amy if you have any questions regarding this questionnaire, or the wider project.

Note that the survey closes for responses on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

### 1. Personal Information

Employer type (e.g. local authority, design company, construction etc.):	Cycle campaign group
Job title:	Lead organiser

### 2. How do your role and responsibilities relate to the provision of tactile paving in the public realm?

We are concerned to encourage infrastructure which helps people to get about by bike and to do so in comfort and safety. We see much feedback on infrastructure issues from people who already cycle. In recent years 'tramline' and 'ladder' tactiles have proliferated on offroad cyclerooutes in Edinburgh, and we have had many reports of people skidding, particularly, but not exclusively, in the wet and/or during leaf-fall. I myself have skidded several times and am now very cautious when approaching these tactiles. Most seriously we are aware of 3 tactile-related crashes (all within Edinburgh) which involved injuries requiring hospital attention, some with long-term consequences. These 3 crashes resulted in, respectively..

1. losing consciousness, elbow fracture, severe bruising
2. two broken arms
3. shoulder injury requiring physio over an extended period.

#### It must surely be the case that the DfT, TRL and yourselves are aware of these dangers ???

Assuming that is the case, we find it remarkable that whilst organisations representing visually impaired people have rightly been consulted, there has apparently been no consultation with cycling interests. We have therefore attempted to publicise the consultation – but we are only a local organisation and urge that you undertake such consultation if the revised Guidance is to have credibility with all those that it affects.

### 3. Considering your experience as a user of the current Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces (GUTPS):

a. How often do you refer to it, and why/when?	Not surprisingly, we were unaware of the Guidance until the tramline tactiles started proliferating on cyclerooutes a few years ago, and we started getting reports of the dangers. Via google we eventually found the Guidance.
b. Which chapters do you tend to consult most often?	The only section we have consulted is that concerning the above.
c. What format(s) of GUTPS guidance do you generally use? (Tick any that apply)	(i) Hardcopy (original or self-printed)
	(ii) Electronic copy (e.g. pdf on your own computer)
	(iii) Online copy (e.g. pdf hosted on DfT website)    x

**4. GUTPS covers seven different types of tactile paving surface, listed below. Please comment on each in turn, concerning your familiarity with their purpose, your experience with their use, and any generic problems or other issues that you have encountered (or are aware of) with their deployment in the real world.**

a. Blister surface	N/A
b. Corduroy hazard warning surface	N/A
c. Platform edge (off-street) warning surface	N/A
d. Platform edge (on-street) warning surface	N/A
e. Segregated shared cycle track/footway surface ('ladder and tramline') and central delineator strip	<p>We have had many reports of people skidding, particularly, but not exclusively, in the wet and/or after leaf-fall. I myself have skidded several times and am now very cautious when approaching these tactiles. I use a Brompton small-wheeled folding bike but most reports of skidding and crashes are with standard bikes.</p> <p>Most seriously we are aware of 3 tactile-related crashes which involved injuries requiring hospital attention, some with long-term consequences. These 3 crashes resulted in, respectively...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. losing consciousness, elbow fracture, severe bruising</li> <li>2. two broken arms</li> <li>3. shoulder injury requiring physio over an extended period.</li> </ol> <p>We have email addresses for 2 of these victims, who would be happy to supply written confirmation and any further useful information.</p>
f. Guidance path surface	N/A
g. Information surface	N/A

**5. Discussions with practitioners to date have revealed the following specific issues to be of concern:**

- The importance of tonal contrast compared with colour contrast
- The justification for the depth of tactile paving that GUTPS specifies for certain layouts (e.g. minimum 800mm blister at crossings on corner radii; 1200mm for blister paving stems; and 2400mm for ladder/tramline)
- The use of blister paving for stems, bearing in mind both the stated core purpose of blister paving for edge definition and the availability of the guidance path surface as an obvious alternative.

If you have any detailed comments on these issues, or others, and if you have not already mentioned these in your response to Question 4, please provide them here.

**6. The first Key Design Principle set out within GUTPS is that "Layouts of all pedestrian areas should be simple, logical and consistent". Do you have any suggestions – general or specific – as to how updated guidance might better enable the delivery of this principle in practice?**

**7. Does your local authority have any adopted policies, guidance or practice that covers the provision of tactile paving? If so, please provide details/links. To your knowledge, do or might these local policies/approaches lead to non-compliance with GUTPS in practice?**

Our local authority, City of Edinburgh Council, to their credit, is experimenting with two possible solutions to prevent or, more likely, reduce the dangers of bikes skidding.

1. using higher friction tactiles [we wonder if they will be effective during leaf-fall]
2. installing only 2 rows of tactiles rather than the 4-5 normally used [initial very informal feedback on social media looks positive]

However the experimentation seems rather informal and it in any case seems ridiculous, indeed shocking, given that safety is concerned, that individual councils should have to do this rather than having effective and evidence-based guidance from DfT/TRL.

Also, there may of course be other potential solutions or ameliorations.

**8. Other than conflicting local guidance, what do you consider to be the main reasons why tactile paving provision in the real world is often non-compliant with GUTPS?**

The problem which concerns us is that the installations on Edinburgh cyclist routes often **are compliant** – and are therefore causing injuries because the Guidance itself is so defective - not even recognising the problem, let alone providing useful and evidence-based advice.

**9. A review of international guidance reveals that, in keeping with ISO 23599, many other countries use just two tactile paving surfaces: blister and guidance path. Do you consider that there could be benefits in reducing the number of surfaces used in the UK? Please describe your thoughts, providing whatever detail you think helpful.**

If the tramline tactiles were replaced by another design which entirely eliminated the risk of skidding and crashing that would be absolutely wonderful. Of course we fully appreciate the need to make life as safe as possible for visually impaired people, but it must surely be possible to identify a design which is safe for all.

**10. Please provide any further comments on what you consider to be the key strengths or weaknesses of the existing GUTPS and/or anything else you think may be helpful in respect of the proposed update.**

As stated in Q8, the problem which concerns us is that the installations on Edinburgh cyclist routes often **are compliant** – and are therefore causing injuries **because the Guidance itself is so defective** - not even recognising the problem, let alone providing useful and evidence-based advice. We suggest the following..

1. Adoption of a different form of tactile for use on the cycling side of dual-use paths. The design should eliminate all risk of cyclists skidding and should also be easily identifiable as the 'cycle side' by people with visually impairments.
2. Whether (1) is achieved, or the existing design unfortunately retained, TRL/DfT must (a) conduct thorough experiments to identify how to maximise safety (e.g see Q7 above) and (b) formally consult cycling interests.
3. The Guidance itself must then advise explicitly and fully on these issues. Evidence-based advice must be given on the type of tactiles, the patterns in which they are laid, and so on, making explicit that this is to ensure safety for all – including people on bikes as well as people who are visually impaired (and indeed both, as we don't want blind tandemists injuring themselves either!)

**11. Do you think formal training for practitioners in the design and implementation of tactile surfaces would be beneficial? If yes, would it be beneficial to include visually impaired users in delivering such training?**

If training is given it needs to cover all aspects, including the above.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Please email it to [a.priestley@urbanmovement.co.uk](mailto:a.priestley@urbanmovement.co.uk)