

Charging the e-bike revolution

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Rapid increase in the popularity of e-bikes is a sign of the benefit for their users. Employers and venues welcoming e-bike riders can also capitalise, not least through a contribution to their sustainability commitments. This is a key factor behind the government's support for electric bikes, and now that easy charging infrastructure is available, the barriers to optimal e-bike take up are being removed.

Spelsberg UK's Managing Director and keen cyclist, Chris Lloyd, explains.

This year, 165,000 e-bikes are likely to be sold in the UK and that figure is expected to rise fast. With a forecasted growth rate of over 10.5%, the UK e-bike market value in 2027 is set to reach nearly £400m. While the Covid lockdown saw a stimulus in exercise and cycling take up, the Department for Transport's (DfT) figures says the general increase in cycling is continuing. In fact, Cycling UK, the cyclists' touring club charity, reports in figures from January to July this year that weekday cycling is up by 47% and weekend riding by 27%.

Multiple factors are driving the increase. Fuel costs have risen, and with 71% of all car journeys in the UK under five miles, cycling is a viable alternative to save significant cost. While riding a bike can be an extremely enjoyable way to travel, electric power can enhance this further. E-bikes delivering from 250 Watts and upwards can enable speeds far in excess of 20mph, making cycling inherently

easier - especially up hill. There's also rider choice over how much assisted power to draw on, meaning that e-bikes can also provide vital exercise.

Government support

The government is actively encouraging cycling and e-bike use in particular to reduce emissions and contribute to net zero, as well as lowering congestion and improving public health. This ambition has been met with a £2Bn funding package, including initiatives such as the DfT's National e-cycle programme, launched this year as a pilot scheme to provide short- and long-term loans of electric bikes . Plans like these have also been deployed regionally, such as Islington's 500 e-bikes , half a million pounds investment in Bristol , and more than a million pounds spent by the Welsh government .

The private sector too has good incentive to encourage cycling and e-bikes as a viable commuting option. Firstly, reducing car journeys and CO2e footprint contributes to a business' own sustainability agenda, including employee wellbeing. Secondly, this endeavour carries significant government funding, as e-bikes are included in the government-assisted cycle to work scheme. Employers recoup the full cost of the bike purchased by an employee, plus up to 15% of the value on top . As employees save up to 40% on a bike purchase, it's not a surprise that over one million people have taken up the scheme.

Installing charging points is simple

Enabling this transition is also a matter of infrastructure. Just like electric cars, e-bikes require charging, and a battery charge can take the rider between 25 and 100 miles, depending on its capacity and how it's used. Charging points need to be in

place, whether that's places of work, municipal areas or locations such as shops, gyms, hotels, and restaurants, to optimise e-bike take up.

Fortunately, the infrastructure required for e-bike charging is relatively low cost to install, easy and universal to use, and requires just a relatively small footprint. Spelsberg's e-bike charging station comes with a choice of all the major charging systems, including four charging points and with cables provided so riders don't have to carry their own. Including a safety switch-off function and high-level protection, each station is encased in a durable enclosure that prevents ingress from dust and water.

Inevitable transition

The transition to e-bikes sounds encouraging, but at outset, some building owners or facilities managers don't know where to begin regarding establishing a supply, and where and how to install it. While in many respects the process is similar to providing electric car charging points, our engineering team takes a building manager through each step in sequence, providing assistance from planning through to installation and onward management. These insights have also proved valuable for facilities managers experienced in electric car charging point installation.

Even while electricity costs rise, to charge a typical 500W e-bike battery we're still talking a matter of pence and a value far lower than using a car or public transport. The transition to increased e-bike use is already taking place. However, a lack of charging points shouldn't be the factor that puts the brakes on e-bike take up.

¹<https://cyclingindustry.news/uk-bike-sales-cargo-bike-growth/#:~:text=In%20total%2C%20165%2C000%20eBikes%20will,a%20par%20with%20recent%20years>

²<https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/united-kingdom-e-bike-market>

³<https://cyclingindustry.news/department-for-transport-data-shows-2022-cycling-rates-rising-sharply/#:~:text=Department%20for%20Transport%20data%20shows%202022%20cycling%20rates%20rising%20sharply,-Wednesday%2C%203%20August&text=Data%20published%20by%20the%20Department,prior%20winter%20to%20spring%20periods>

⁴<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-e-cycle-pilot-programme-competition/national-e-cycle-programme-competition>

⁵<https://fleetworld.co.uk/london-borough-of-islington-deploys-500-e-bikes/>

⁶<https://bristolcityfunds.co.uk/big-issue-ebikes-scheme-launched-in-bristol/>

⁷<https://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/wales-million-pound-e-bike-investment-to-make-cycling-more-accessible-for-all/>

⁸<https://www.cyclescheme.co.uk/the-rules-of-cycle-to-work#Rule-2>

Image captions:



Image 1: Spelsberg e-bike charging station, encased in a durable enclosure that prevents ingress from dust and water.

Image 2: The Spelsberg e-bike charging station includes wired charging points, so cyclists don't have to bring their own.

Image 3: Modular E-Bike charging station made by Spelsberg.

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About Spelsberg

Spelsberg is one of the largest manufacturers of electrical enclosures in the world. With over 4,000 enclosures available as standard and further customisation possible, it offers solutions for almost any application.

With the largest supply of non-metallic enclosures, ex-stock in the UK, its products are often available for delivery within 24 hours; customisation is possible on any product, including bespoke entries, engraved corporate logos or fitted terminals, within 48 hours. Products can be ordered direct from Spelsberg or from most leading supply specialists including RS, Rapid, Farnell and CPC.

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