



Public Bike Share Accreditation Criteria

Version 2.5 (September 2017)

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Introduction

Bikeplus, the UK representative body for bike share has created an accreditation scheme to promote good practise in the sector. This new tool is designed to help city authorities manage how schemes are designed and operated in their area regardless of whether the operator has been granted public funding or just access to public space.

Accreditation has been developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. It will ensure a collectively agree set of standards is upheld across the industry to maintain the reputation that bike share has gained as a valuable component of sustainable city transportation. The criteria have been carefully chosen to provide a robust framework whilst not stifling innovation.

The accreditation scheme has been designed for the UK but we welcome discussion about its use by cities in the rest of Europe and further afield.

Why be accredited?

Bike share operators and suppliers benefit from obtaining Accreditation by having a shortcut badge to demonstrating their credentials to local authorities and other partners. By supporting the scheme operators are ensuring industry standards are maintained whilst also providing key data to support the development of bike share.

Section 1. Developing Accreditation for a changing market

Bikeplus reserves the right to update the Accreditation criteria and application forms to reflect changes in the public bike share market and new models of bike sharing that are emerging. Any updated versions will be published on the Bikeplus website (www.bikeplus.org.uk) and circulated to all accredited operators.

There are two standards of Accreditation available; full and provisional.

1.1 Full Accreditation

Full Accreditation applies to operators who are already established and have at least one scheme in operation. Full Accreditation requires operators to meet all the requirements set out in the full Accreditation application form (see below)

Some bike share operators who are new to the market may wish to work towards full Accreditation as their operations move past the launch phase. In these circumstances, provisional Accreditation may be appropriate.

1.2 Provisional Accreditation

Local authorities entering contractual agreements with operators need to have assurances that they can deliver what they claim, but at the same time, new entrants to the industry may wish to apply for tenders prior to having all operational elements in place. It is difficult for Bikeplus to give the necessary assurances without the applicant actually being operational and proving what they can deliver.

Provisional Accreditation will only be awarded on the basis that the operator provides Bikeplus with written details of a set of milestones leading up to a launch date and evidence at each stage achieved. If significant and repeated delays occur, provisional status will be revoked until the launch programme is back on track.

Section 2. Accreditation Scheme

The criteria for the provisional and full Accreditation are split into four sections; each section contains the requirements needed and a brief explanation of what is included. The four sections are:

- **2.1 Business requirements**
- **2.2 Service provision requirements**
- **2.3 Maintenance and safety requirements**
- **2.4 Data collection requirements**

To be awarded Accreditation, each operator will need to complete the appropriate application form and provide the appropriate supporting documentation outlined in the application form.

To be awarded full Accreditation it will be necessary for an operator to achieve all of the requirements in full. The Accreditation process will require operators to renew their Accreditation on an annual basis.

A charge will be levied each year by Bikeplus to cover the cost of administering the scheme. A penalty charge of £100 may be made if substantial information is missing on an application and a second appraisal is required. Price rises may be applied each year. Each renewal year runs April to April regardless of when a scheme is approved and operators will be notified at least one month in advance of any price rises. Pro-rata charges will be applied when an operator applies for Accreditation part way through a year.

All materials supporting the application will be provided in English.

Payment structure from 1st March 2017 (prices exclude VAT)

- £750 membership plus a bike levy of:
 - £1.00 per bike for first 1000 bikes

- £0.65 per bike for 1000-5000 bikes
- £0.25 per bike over 5000 bikes

based on the number of bikes at 1st March each year.

A flat membership fee of £250 is applicable to any bike share with less than 50 bikes, the bike levy is only applicable to bike schemes with more than 50 bikes.

2.1. Business Requirements

2.11 The operator must have a formal constitution and/or be a limited or public liability company

Bike share operators will be required to show that they have a formal organisational structure in place. Limited companies must produce foundation documents and demonstrate that they have a formal management structure in place, such as a board of directors.

Other operators such as community groups will have, as a minimum, a formally adopted, written constitution. These groups also have an elected body that form an operational committee; these will include a Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer as a minimum.

2.12 The operator must submit an annual report on application, unless they are not yet operational in which case they must submit a similar publicly available statement of how the scheme will be operated

In all cases the report must include details of the current number of bikes, stations, members, pricing structures, location(s) of operation and operational methods. It will also include a statement on company procedures should the operator cease to operate in a particular area, close operations or be taken over. Published audited accounts or management accounts for the previous year must also be submitted.

On renewal, it is the duty of the operator to make Bikeplus aware of any new documentation or changes to operating conditions that have a material impact on their Accreditation status (for example new operational locations that are to be included in the Accreditation). Bikeplus reserves the right to request updated documents on renewal of Accreditation (such as published accounts for the most recent year) or if it believes that substantial organisational changes has occurred (eg merger or acquisition).

2.13 The operator must meet the following ethical, social and environmental standards

To ensure high environmental standards are maintained the operator will have either:

- ISO14001 Accreditation, or
- An Environmental Policy and Environmental Impact statement to be approved by Bikeplus.

To ensure operators demonstrate fair work practices, operators will demonstrate that they:

- Support the living wage by guaranteeing a minimum standard of income for all employees.
- Have a wide range of staff training and development opportunities.
- Support flexible working and flexi time through the provision of relevant policy.
- Have trade union recognition or alternative arrangements to give staff a voice.
- Have a strong commitment to Modern Apprenticeships or similar training opportunities
- Minimise the use of zero hours contracts.

2.2 Service Provision Requirements

2.21 The operator must offer a self-service bike share service

To be accredited the bike share operator must provide a service that conforms to ALL of the criteria listed below.

The bike share must have:

- Bikes which are accessible at the time of the hire commencing without assistance from a member of staff using one or more recognised access systems (e.g. credit card, smart card, or App, code provided by telephone) accessible to all customers,
- The scheme will be accessible to single use “walk-up” customers, and not require membership.
- Prices allow customers to use the bikes and pay for short trips rather than or as well as whole day hires, which may include a range of tariffs suitable for the differing user requirements; commuting, leisure and utility,
- Customers pay according to a clear price structure,
- Pricing must be available to customers at the time of booking and include any excess fees for over running any free of charge period of time,
- Bikes will be available to customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days. This rule allows for block bookings of a proportion bikes by corporate members,

- Bikes will be available in convenient locations where there is customer demand eg residential or commercial areas,
- The scheme will allow for one way trips,
- Have defined docking stations, geo-fenced stations with wireless return detection or marked / agreed public stands,
- Or where dock-less systems are employed to allow parking away from stations, the operator must demonstrate that tools including geo-fenced restrictions, penalties, incentives and rebalancing are deployed to:
 - ensure bikes can be returned to preferred identifiable locations as defined by the local authority partner,
 - ensure bikes aren't allowed to cause an obstruction,
 - ensure bike are not allowed to become excessively untidy,
 - ensure parking is not allowed in locations local authorities have identified as no-go parking areas.

Operators would be expected to proactively push information about the rules for parking in their terms and conditions to their users through all communication channels.

2.22 Minimum specification of bikes

The bike specification should meet the countries legal requirements. For UK bike share bikes this is:

- the ISO 4210:2014 standards for bicycles
- Front and back lights including a steady light feature (ie. lights stay on for a period after the bicycle has stopped, for safety at junctions)
- Each bike to be identifiable e.g.: numbered

Local authority may also require specific features such as:

- Be suitable for all riders over the age of 16 with minimum seat height of 85 cm or less from floor to the top of the seat, and a maximum seat height of 95 cm or more from floor to the top of the seat
- Be suitable for bike share use: including being durable, easy to clean, scratch resistant, graffiti resistant, corrosion/salt resistant, rust proof construction
- Bike lights with a minimum of 100 lumens
- Have anti-tamper nuts and bolts
- Have puncture resistant tyres
- Be able to carry small items of luggage
- Have a kick stand or equivalent
- Have a bell
- Have a comfortable and adjustable seat suitable for a wide range of users.

2.23 The number of bikes deployed should be appropriate to the demand in the city

Operators should always be within the legal regulations set by the local authorities. Operators should agree to give local authorities at least one month notice of significant change to the quantity of bikes.

2.24 The operator will have a rebalancing system in place to ensure customer demand is met and bikes are not allowed to build up and cause obstructions

The operator must submit details of their operational plans to ensure stations or geo fenced stations are not left full or empty and customer demands for collection and drop off are met. In systems without docking stations, the bikes must be rebalanced to geo fenced areas and not allowed to build up in an untidy and unsafe manner in popular areas. Systems must be in place to ensure that hot spot areas where parking is prohibited are kept clear at all times. Dynamic pricing and user incentives are acceptable tools as part of the operational plan. Specifics of service level agreements will be agreed with each local authority or contractor.

Where possible efforts should be made to reduce use of petrol or diesel vans for redistribution.

2.25 Operators must be easily contactable

In order to deal with members' problems, operators must be easily contactable by telephone or other means such as text or online chat. This should cover core business hours supplemented with a tried and tested system to deal with out of hours queries as soon as possible.

In order to reduce the number of out-of-hours queries, systems will be put in place to deal with non-serious matters. Customers must be able to access information on the procedure in the case of:

- No docking station space being available at the time of drop off (where relevant)
- Not being able to access the bike
- A bike being returned late (where relevant)
- Damage being discovered on the bike before riding
- A bike developing a fault or being involved in an accident.

2.26 All operators must provide user information with terms and conditions on their website

To ensure that members are aware of how to access and return the bikes and how to deal with emergencies and breakdowns, a set of “frequently asked questions” or handbook must be available on the operator’s website. This will include all telephone numbers that may be needed should any problem arise from using the bike including a simple procedure for reporting faulty bikes.

2.27 Operators should adopt ethical pricing strategies

Operators are expected to adopt sustainable long-term pricing strategies which are based on sustainable rates not designed to undercut and eliminate competitors with a view to later implementing significant increases. (eg: defined as a members trip rising by no more than 100% in one year). This doesn’t preclude special offers and rates designed to help specific low-income user groups

2.28 Deposits, authorisations on payment cards and charges for damage taken by the operators must be set at a reasonable level

To protect the operators from cost of damage, theft or unpaid charges, it may be necessary to request a deposit or card authorisation from the customer. In all cases the deposit must not be more than the cost price of replacing or repairing the bike. Members will be made aware of what charge will be payable in the event of all scenarios.

All deposits must be returned to the customer within 10 days of termination of the service contract, any deductions must be itemised and supporting documentation and/or receipts provided. Credit card authorisations should not last longer than 48 hours after the end of the hire period.

2.29 All operators must have a complaints policy

Operators will have a procedure with which members can raise complaints which will be made available to members on commencement of hire. The procedure should provide contact details of Bikeplus if members are dissatisfied with treatment by the operator.

2.30 In the event of a withdrawal of operations, operators must have an appropriate procedure in place

In the event of there being a temporary closure of a docking station, operators will where possible provide prior notice at the station and via electronic communications.

In the event that an operator ceases operations or withdraws services from a specific area, operators will to give their customer two months' notice if this is practicable. Where the decision is the operators to close the scheme, they will also consider offering customers the option to transfer to another bike share scheme if available for a nil or nominal charge. We request that operators advise Bikeplus of their intention to withdraw services or close as early as possible. Operators may also seek advice from Bikeplus on an appropriate closing down procedure.

2.31 All operators must be working toward offering integrate with other local services

In 2018 Bikeplus accreditation will expect operators to offer the ability to create APIs (Application Program Interface) to enable integration with public transport or other third party aggregators by use of the same app, smart card or similar system. All operators have to comply with data security legislation.

2.3 Maintenance and safety requirements

2.31 All schemes must have adequate insurance.

All schemes must be covered by the necessary insurance to meet the legal requirements of the country in order to protect the safety of other road users, property and bikes and to protect the operator. For those using the accreditation within the UK the details please provide evidence for the cover outlined below. Please note some cities in the UK may require £10 million public liability cover.

Employer's Liability:

The operator must take out and maintain throughout the annual period of Accreditation - Employer's Liability insurance to the value of a minimum TEN MILLION (£10,000,000) POUNDS STERLING in respect of any one claim and unlimited in the period.

Public and Product Liability:

The operator must take out and maintain throughout the annual period of Accreditation -Public Liability insurance to the value of a minimum of FIVE MILLION (£5,000,000) POUNDS STERLING in respect of any one claim and unlimited in the period.

Product Liability insurance to the value of a minimum of FIVE MILLION (£5,000,000) POUNDS STERLING in respect of any one claim and in the aggregate.

All insurance certificates and details of cover should be submitted with applications as well as being available to customers within three working days of the request being received. The above insurances must be with an insurance company registered with Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) in the UK, or equivalent body for other EU member states by the council and any operator must not sub-let or sub-contract any part of the commission unless the sub-contractor is similarly insured, unless Bikeplus agrees otherwise. It is the express responsibility of the lead operator to ensure this is the case.

2.32 All bikes available for hire must be roadworthy and regularly serviced and maintained

To protect the customer's health and safety all bikes offered for hire must comply with all national legislation regarding roadworthiness.

- Manufacturer's service requirements must be adhered to in full
- Regular maintenance checks will be undertaken by the operator to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and the Highway Code.
- All maintenance checks will be recorded and any repairs or adjustments recorded.
- All bikes will be fully serviced at least once a year as a minimum.
- Operators should supply their mechanic staff training policy. All servicing carried out will be supervised by a mechanic qualified to Cytech 2 or equivalent. Details of the certification should be provided on application.

2.33 Reactive maintenance

The operator must clearly set out a simple procedure to users for returning, exchanging and reporting faulty bikes.

- Mechanical, technical and vandalism repairs to bikes must be addressed to make safe or unavailable to the public within 24 hours.
- 90% of bikes on the street must be serviceable to avoid faulty bikes being left on the street.
- The operator must develop a system of locating and collecting bikes that have been abandoned or not been returned within 48 hours.
- Mechanical, technical and vandalism repairs to bike share stations must be addressed to make safe to the public within 12 hours

2.34 Bikes and bike docking stations will be kept clean at all times

To protect the image of bike schemes as a professional service, as seen by potential and actual customers the operator will have a defined cleaning procedure to ensure all bikes and docking stations are kept clean and in good order. As part of the application for Accreditation, operators must outline their checking procedures which will include responding to complaints within 24 hours

2.4. Data Collection

The criteria outlined below are those agreed with all operators and local authority representatives for those with full Accreditation status.

One of the aims of this process is to avoid having different reporting requirements in different local authorities. This does not mean that local and combined authorities cannot make additional requirements in their tenders. Some aspects may be particularly commercially sensitive and hence may need to be disclosed directly without being included in this process. Secondly it should be noted that the data criteria will have to be reviewed annually and there will be an opportunity for revisions and additions at this point.

Operators will commit to meeting the quarterly and annual reporting deadlines agreed and data should be free of charge to Bikeplus and relevant authorities.

The data will be collated into the following reports:

1. **The Bikeplus Annual Bike Share User Survey** - an annual survey of casual users and members that collates information on bike share membership, usage and customer satisfaction. It also measures the impact of bike schemes on travel behaviour, corporate policy and the environment. There is a slightly modified version of the survey issued to private bike share members who have joined a bike share within the three months prior to the survey. This captures information about their joining experiences and the early impacts that bike share membership has had on their travel habits which can be different to those of more established members. The corporate surveys are tailored to gather relevant information on bike schemes in a business context.

Operators are required to distribute web links to the various surveys to the appropriate target members on our behalf. The data is analysed by an independent consultant.

The survey will run between May and July annually. The results are published in the Bikeplus Annual Survey reports in the autumn each year.

2. **Operators Survey** – this runs concurrently with the annual survey of bike share users and the results are anonymised and reported. It asks operators to provide information on suppliers, delivery and funding partners, profile of their users together with a review of marketing and operational practices.

3. **Quarterly report** template submitted with:
 - a. city / town locations
 - b. number of bikes per location
 - c. number of casual users per location
 - d. number of members per location
 - e. trips per bike per day by location
 - f. average trip length by time

4. **Open source real time data feeds**

Bikeplus is supporting PEBSS' work to create a global standard for real time data feeds, in addition to access to historical data for mobility analysis, amongst shared bicycle mobility operators, be those public or fleet-oriented, based upon the NABSA General Bikeshare Feed Specification, known as GBFS. This new or improved standard makes real-time data feeds publicly available in a uniform, confidential anonymised format so that journey-planning, mapping and transport-oriented apps can easily incorporate this data into their service platforms. There is an expectation that the feed will pick up live data on position and bike numbers from bikeshare stations or geo fenced areas but may not include movements of bikes in between. Bikeplus Accreditation will require operators to align to this emerging standard within twelve (12) months of its industry adoption.

To view a sample copy of the Bikeplus Annual Survey, please see:

http://www.carplus.org.uk/project_page/pbs-users-survey-2016/

All information held by Bikeplus as a result of applying for Accreditation or participating in the Bikeplus Annual Survey and other data collection exercises is subject to the Data Protection Act and no company sensitive information will be disclosed to any other operator or third party. Where data is reported publicly as part of the Bikeplus Annual Survey or in monthly reports to our funding partners, the data will be presented anonymously.

Section 3. Maintaining Standards

Principally, the standard of operators will be checked through a renewal of the Accreditation status each year. Bikeplus reserves the right to randomly check the

quality of service being provided by each operator. If operators do not maintain standards throughout the year then a process has been put in place to review their continued eligibility for Accreditation as outlined below:

1. Bikeplus will write to the operator detailing the areas which are thought to need improvement, and also notify the relevant local and combined authorities.
2. The operator has one month to challenge the claims and / or make necessary improvements.
3. If the standards are still not met after this time, Bikeplus in conjunction with the relevant local authority or other key partners will look to remove the Accreditation status.
4. If an operator has not paid the renewal fee due for the whole of the fleet by the 60th day after the renewal invoice is dated, the Accreditation will be revoked.

Please note that Bikeplus reserves the right to withdraw an operator's Accreditation if they consistently refuse to cooperate with requests for the data outlined in this document.