



# How Danish cyclists were convinced to use bicycle helmets – without a law

Pernille Sølund Ehlers  
The Danish Road Safety Council

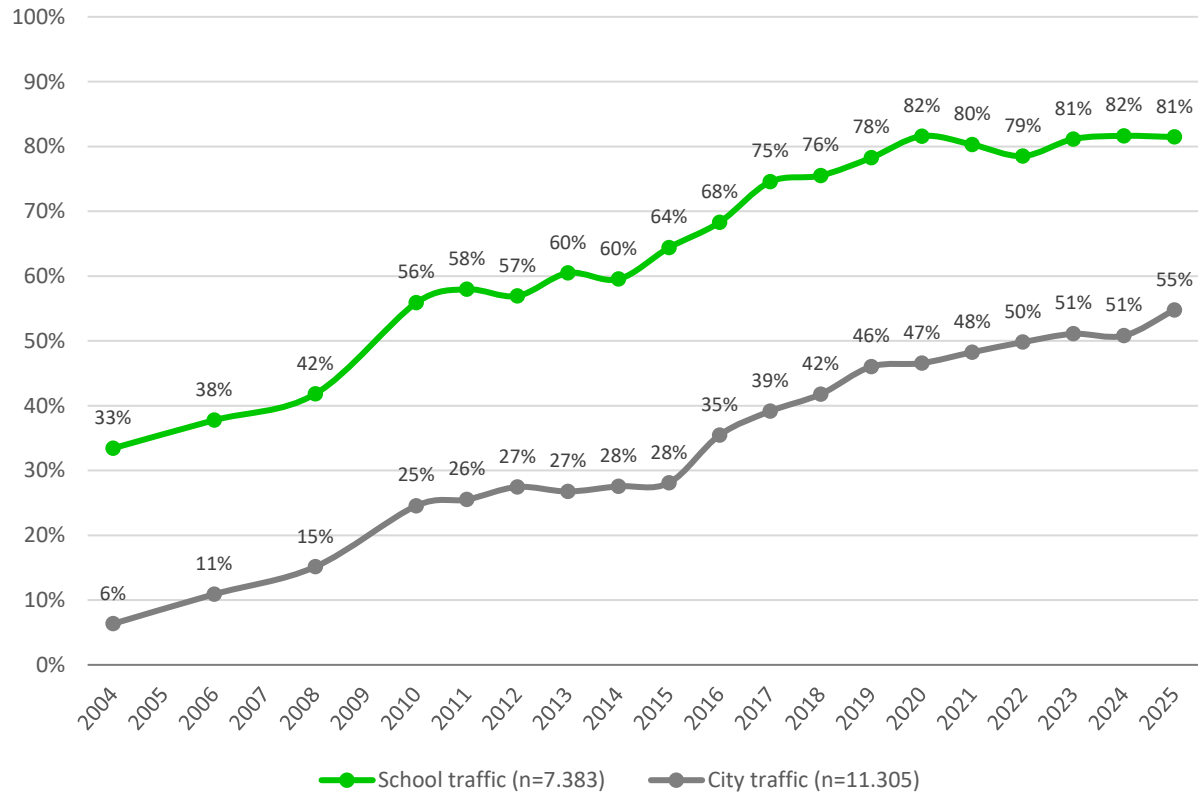
# Denmark



- Population: 6 million
- 7 out of 10 Danes own a bike
- Average daily distance travelled pr. cyclist: 9 km
- Bicycling is a key part of culture and daily transportation
- “Second best” cycling country in the world
- Excellent bicycle infrastructure
- Number of killed cyclists in 2024: 20
- **No legislation on the use of bicycle helmets**

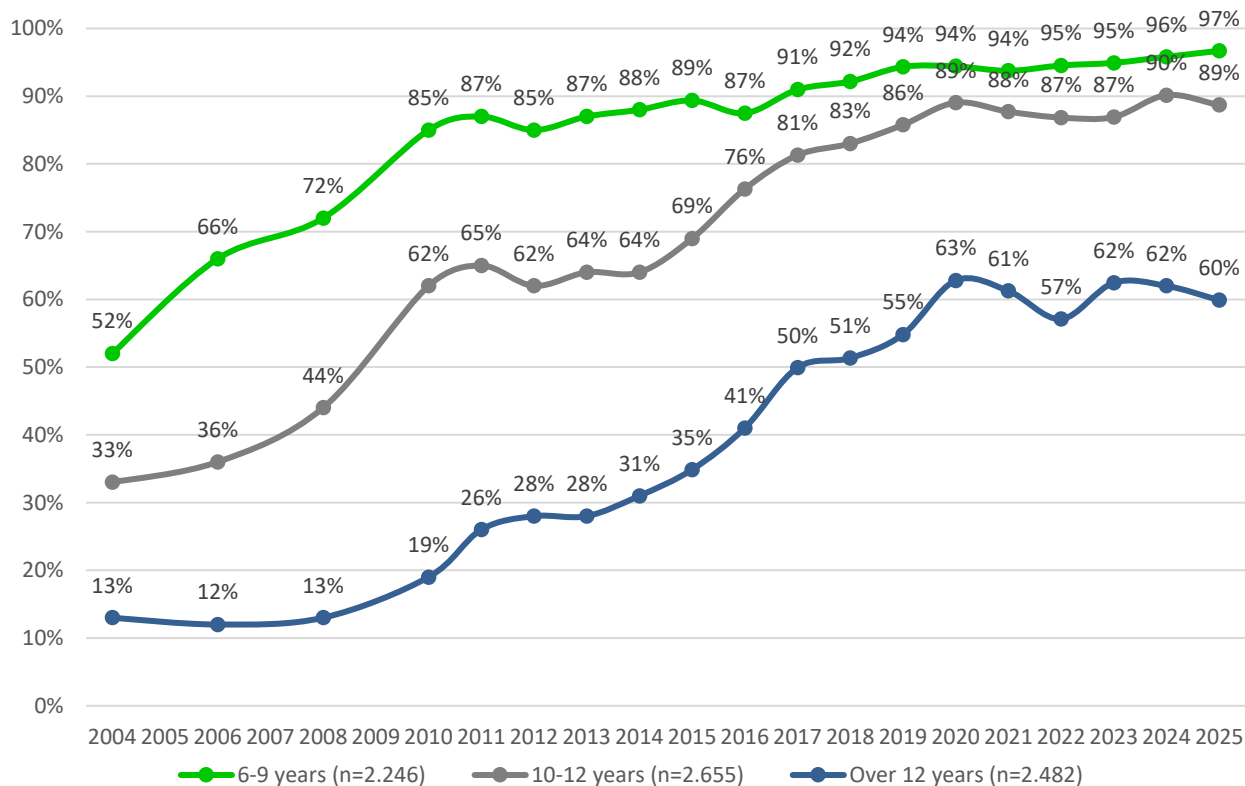


# Use of bicycle helmet in Denmark 2004-2025 – all ages



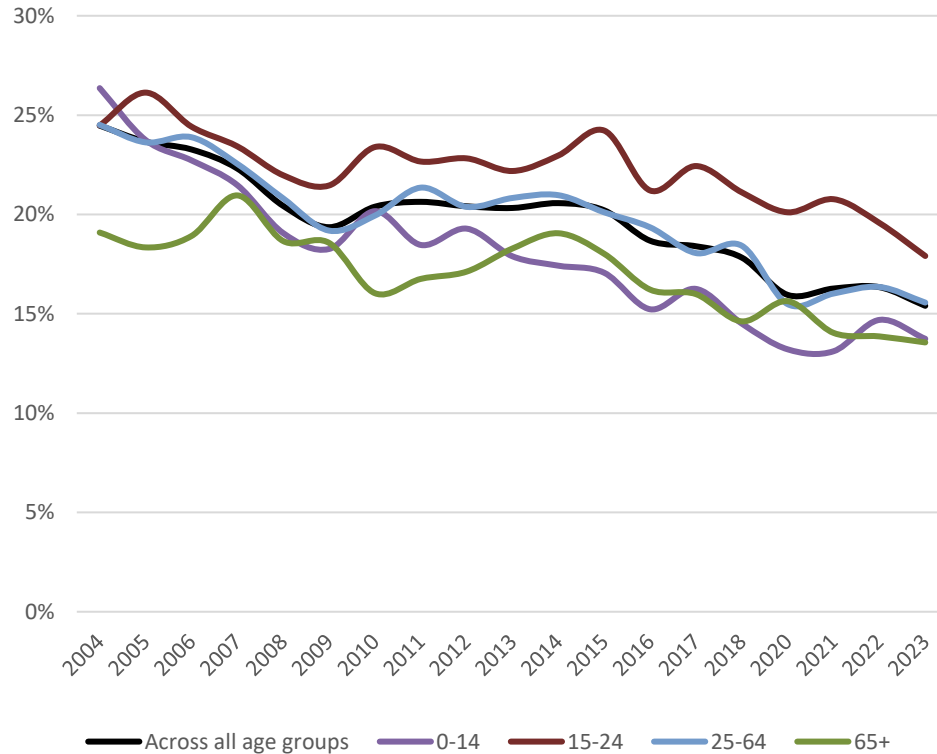
Source: The Danish Road Safety Council: Bicycle helmet Report 2026

# Use of bicycle helmet in school traffic 2004-2025 – by age



Source: The Danish Road Safety Council: Bicycle helmet Report 2026

## Proportion of head and neck injuries among injured cyclists in Denmark (registered by hospitals or police)



Source: Statistics Denmark

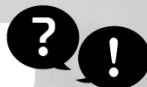


**Availability**

**Awareness**

**Attractiveness**

Monitoring cyclists' motivations and barriers



Annual count of bicycle helmets to measure effect



Development supported by improved helmet design



# Availability

5 NETTO avis - Danmarks mest læste

Begrænset parti

Designet cykelhjelm  
Cycelhjelm til børn og voksne med design af Molo kids, Katvig, Mads Nørgaard eller Jørgen Simonsen, str. XS-L, pr. stk

199.-

Kun i NETTO

Projektet støttes af Rådet for Større Færdselssikkerhed og Trygfonden.

STØT-50Kr.  
50 kroner pr. solgt hjelm går ubeskåret til hjerneskadeforeningen og hjernesagen.

SIKKER HJE M!

MADS NØRGAARD CONCEPTS

Katvig

PLEASE DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE

MADS NØRGAARD CONCEPTS

STØT-50Kr.  
50 kroner pr. solgt hjelm går ubeskåret til hjerneskadeforeningen og hjernesagen.

*Helmets should be accessible, cheap, and well designed*

- Pilot project in 2009
- 4 Danish artists designed the helmets
- Sold in Netto supermarkets
- Price: €25
- Profit from sale donated to the Brain Injury Society
- The helmets sold out very quickly, so we repeated the campaign!

# Availability



Students in survey:

**"I would wear a helmet if my friends did too, and helmets were cheaper"**

**Solution: Pop up shops at University Campuses**

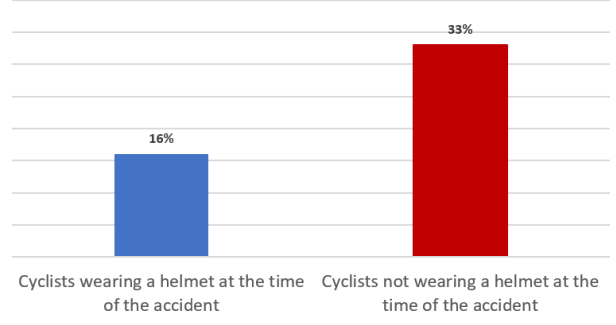


Kristoffer er 18 år. Han er lige blevet student.

# Awareness



Proportion of head injuries among seriously injured cyclist



Source: The Danish Road Directorate, 2015-2019

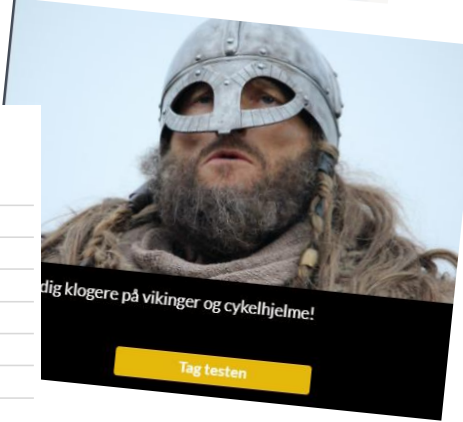
The use of bicycle helmets is found to reduce head injury by 48%, serious head injury by 60%, traumatic brain injury by 53%, face injury by 23%, and the total number of killed or seriously injured cyclists by 34%.

Source: Bicycle helmets - To wear or not to wear? A meta-analysis of the effects of bicycle helmets on injury  
Alena Høye Accident Analysis & Prevention Volume 117, August 2018

Vild udvikling: Vi spænder hjelmene som aldrig før



En stadig større del af de cyklister, der ender på OUH efter et





Bicycle test 6th grade

# Attractiveness



"Design your own helmet" 2009



"Find one error!" 2012  
Parents as role models



"Safe on your bicycle – throughout your life" Elderly cyclists 2019-2026

Today bicycle helmets are widely accepted and normal.

Main barriers among adult non-users today:

*I want to buy one, I just haven't got round to it yet.*

*My hair gets ruined.*

*I look silly.*

*I forget to take it with me.*

*It's awkward to carry around.*

*It's only a short trip.*

*I'm not used to it.*



Copenhell, annual heavy metal festival:  
"Wear a helmet when you cycle like hell"



Students in June: "Take good care of your  
smart brains, congratulations with the cap"



Adult cyclists: The King Campaign 2026  
"A helmet has always been a bright idea"

# Thank you

**Pernille Sølund Ehlers**  
pe@sikkertrafik.dk