

POLICY BRIEFING – SINGLE/DOUBLE SUMMERTIME

Summary

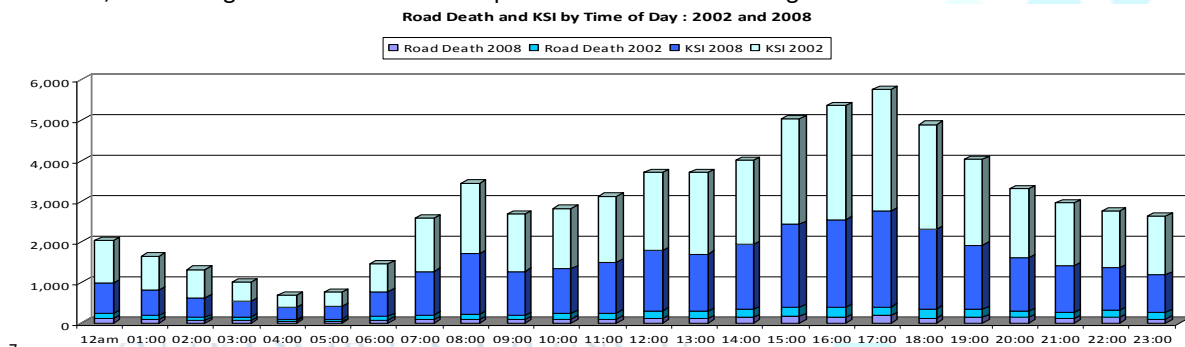
In the UK, clocks are set to Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) from October to March and British Summer Time (BST), which is GMT + 1, from March to October. Most European Countries follow Central European Time (CET) which is GMT + 1 in winter and GMT + 2 in summer.

Research shows that a change in Britain's timekeeping to fall in line with CET, a move often referred to as 'Single/Double Summertime', would bring about significant economic, social, environmental and health benefits. One of the major public health outcomes of such a change would be a reduction in the number of people killed and injured on our roads during the winter months.^{1, 2}

In addition to the road safety benefits of Single/Double Summertime, evidence shows that carbon emissions could be reduced, local economies³ could be improved and wicked issues⁴ such as obesity and climate change⁵ could be tackled more effectively.

Benefits

The combination of the sun setting and high numbers of road users results in a significant increase in the numbers of road deaths and in the total number of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) between 3pm and 6pm. The higher number of injury crashes in the evenings is linked to the compounding effects of darkness, driver fatigue and the increased exposure of children returning from school.⁶



¹ Department for Transport, "A Safer Way: Consultation on Making Britain's Roads the Safest in the World": 2009.

² Broughton, J and Stone, M. 1998. A New Assessment of the Likely Effects on Road Accidents of Adopting SDST. TRL Report TRL368. TRL: Crowthorne, Berkshire.

³ <http://www.trl.co.uk/800/reports.asp?url=368.htm>

⁴ Hillman, M: "The Likely Impact on Tourist Activity in the UK of the Adoption of Daylight Saving", Policy Studies Institute: 2008 (p.11)

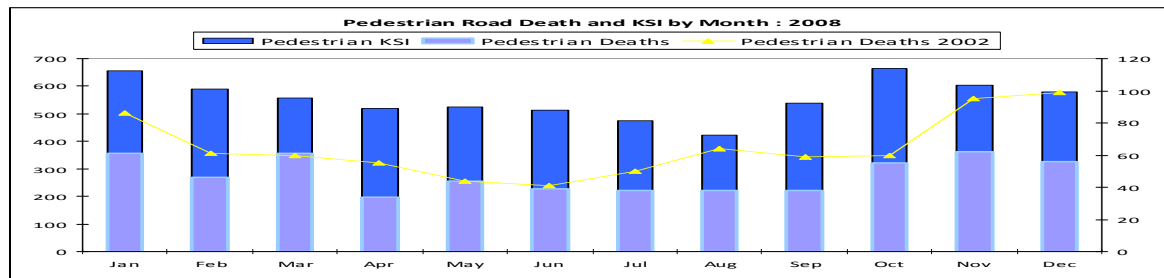
⁵ Rittel, Horst, and Melvin Webber; "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," pp. 155-169, Policy Sciences, Vol. 4, Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company, Inc., Amsterdam, 1973. [Reprinted in N. Cross (ed.), Developments in Design Methodology, J. Wiley & Sons, Chichester, 1984, pp. 135-144.],

⁶ <http://www.lighterlater.org/>

⁷ In the mornings, children tend to travel directly to school. The return home involves higher levels of digression and therefore increased exposure.

⁸ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/casualtiesgbar/>

When clocks are put back to GMT in October and this 'rush-hour' period becomes darker, KSI increases. This rise is particularly observed by the more vulnerable road users. In 2008, pedestrian road deaths rose from 38 in August and 38 in September to 55 in October and 62 in November.



Research conducted by TRL in 1998⁹ estimated that the adoption of Single/Double Summertime in the UK would result in a reduction in road user KSI of around 450. Normalised by average casualty reductions since then, the reduction is more likely to be around 270 fewer KSI casualties of which a reduction in deaths of between 74 and 98.¹⁰

The TRL research confirmed earlier research which looked into the effects of the 1968/71 experiment when BST (GMT + 1) was employed all year. Although the experiment did result in a higher number of casualties during the darker mornings, these were outweighed by the overall reduction of around 2,500 KSI for each year of the trial.

Costs

In *A Safer Way*, the DfT confirmed that the cost benefit case in road safety terms is clear, projecting a net present value of implementation of £2,451.71 million over 20 years. It is estimated that the implementation cost would be around £5 million. The Lighter Later campaign highlights a range of other benefits which Single/Double Summertime could bring about including positive impacts on health, crime reduction, emissions reductions, quality of life and the economy.

Over the course of the last decade, parliamentary interest in Single/Double Summertime has included Private Members Bills from Tim Yeo and Nigel Beard and a number of Parliamentary Questions.^{11, 12} Opposition to the move has continually been related to traditional opposition which existed among agricultural workers, construction workers and postal workers who preferred light at earlier times of day.

Timekeeping Trial

In 2004, PACTS and RoSPA produced a position paper¹³ on Single/Double Summertime which called for a new trial, similar in length to that held in 1968/71. A trial of this nature, using modern evaluation methods and effective data recording, would provide the evidence with which government could make a decision about the overall benefits to society of Single/Double Summertime.

⁸ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/casualtiesgbar/>

⁹ Broughton J. and Stone M. (1998) 'A New Assessment of the Likely Effects on Road Accidents of Adopting SDST', TRL, Crowthorne

¹⁰ This figure is based on the assumption that road user KSI has fallen by 40 per cent since 1994/98 baseline and road death has fallen by 29 per cent.

¹¹ http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/pabills/200607/energy_saving_daylight.htm

¹² http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety/info/summertime_paper2006v2.pdf

¹³ <http://www.pacts.org.uk/news.php?id=84>