

PACTS' CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES FOR ROAD SAFETY¹

Unless the Government acts, a third of a million people will be killed or seriously injured on the roads in Great Britain over the two decades ending 2030, representing a loss to society valued at approximately £110 billion. Despite a downward trend there will still be approximately 1,000 road deaths per year in 2030 unless concerted action is taken.² PACTS therefore calls on the UK Government, the devolved administrations, their agencies and local government to:

Take the following strategic initiatives:

1. Adopt a long-term vision for a safe transport system free from death and serious injury

A widely adopted vision is for a transport system which is eventually free from death and serious injury. The aim is to galvanise all relevant parties to take shared responsibility for safety results, especially on the roads, where most death and injury in transport occurs. Safety goals should be aligned with sustainable development goals to secure social, economic, environmental and health benefits alongside safety benefits.

2. Set challenging national quantitative targets for road safety

Set time-limited quantitative targets - an international success story in which Britain has been a leader – to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries in road collisions, including rate-based targets for reducing pedestrian, cyclist and motorcyclist casualties. Measure and set targets for related intermediate outcomes such as the safety quality of the network and vehicle fleet, reductions in mean speeds, decreases in drink-driving, increases in use of protective equipment and effective emergency medical treatment of the injured.

3. Lead by example with in-house safe travel policies and safe transport procurement policies

Promote use of the safest forms of transport. Where this is road transport fast-track uptake of the safest available vehicles and the adoption of a range of safer practices in government itself and by road haulage, bus, taxi and other companies. This should be done by mandating required EuroNCAP star ratings for all vehicles operated by or for government as well as compliance with ISO 39001 by all levels of government and by any company undertaking any government contract.

4. Adopt the Safe System approach in road safety management

Safe System is the term used internationally for an approach which

- recognises that, despite preventive efforts, road users are fallible and collisions continue to happen on the roads;
- places responsibility upon providers of the transport system for the safety of the system and responsibility upon users of the system for complying with its rules and constraints;
- aligns safety management goals with wider sustainability goals including social, economic, environmental and health goals; and
- seeks out and shapes actions to reduce death and serious injury with the vision in mind.

These actions will proactively and coherently address shortcomings in the road system, in vehicles, in user behaviour and in the care of people injured in collisions.

¹ PACTS intends to state separately its priorities for rail and aviation safety.

² C G B Mitchell and R E Allsop, *Projections of road casualties in Great Britain to 2030*, March 2014, published by PACTS.

These initiatives will represent a substantial reorientation of road safety policy and practice. Incoming Ministers wishing to achieve this may find independent outside advice helpful. For this purpose they are recommended to

5. Commission an independent Road Safety Management Capacity Review (RSMCR)

RSMCR has been developed internationally as a valuable tool to deploy when it is timely for a country to embark on a new phase in the longstanding effort to make use of the roads safer for all. It provides a fresh basis for affirming national ambition, leadership, accountability and management capacity for key functions across government and its partners to deliver best practice in the form of results-focused strategies, programmes and projects.

Act with others in systematic pursuit of the vision:

6. Improve knowledge and understanding of collisions and casualties in UK road transport

- Improve the **reporting of transport-related casualties by hospitals** in order to fill gaps resulting from the incomplete coverage provided by police reports (based on STATS19) of road traffic accidents and to include for the first time the deaths and injuries resulting from walking and cycling incidents that are not road traffic accidents covered by STATS19. In particular, arrange for hospitals to record the numbers of pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicle users they treat as a result of collisions or falls on footways, cycle paths and carriageways so that this information can be combined with that provided by the police to enable a larger proportion of the resulting deaths and serious injuries to be counted in the national statistics for reported road casualties.
- Introduce a more **systematic and comprehensive system of investigation** of fatal and serious road collisions, focused on learning and dissemination of results, as already happens in rail and aviation.
- Improve the **presentation of collision and casualty data** through better integration with exposure data and involvement factors.

7. Improve road network safety

In order to protect people against exposure to forces leading to death or serious injury in collisions, **upgrade the strategic and local road network on Safe System principles** targeting sections and areas of highest risk. To this end, network design should seek to separate on-coming traffic on high-volume, high-speed roads to prevent head-on collisions; provide crash protective roadsides to address run-off-road collisions; achieve safe speeds at intersections to reduce the incidence and severity of side impacts; separate motor traffic from unprotected users except where speeds are low; achieve safe speeds to provide freedom for all responsible users wherever motor vehicles mix with other users of the street or space; and improve highway surfaces, particularly on busy footways and those parts of the carriageway used by crossing pedestrians and cyclists.

8. Adopt Single/Double Summer Time

Create safer conditions for the use of the network by adopting Single/Double Summer Time. Analysis indicates this would save about 50 lives annually because reductions in numbers of collisions in the hours made lighter would outweigh increases in the hours made darker.

9. Improve vehicle safety

- Support EU legislation for mandatory fitment of proven vehicle safety technologies including intelligent speed assistance/adaptation, seat belt reminders for all seating positions, autonomous emergency braking and alcolocks (for commercial transport and repeat offenders).

- Participate fully in the ongoing European New Car Assessment Programme, use its safety ratings in national road safety strategy, target setting and fleet safety quality assessment and encourage demand for safer vehicles.
- Promote regulatory change at European level to introduce large/heavy vehicle designs which present less threat to pedestrians and cyclists by means of underrun guards, elimination of blind spots and other measures.

10. Improve road user standards

- Reduce the exposure to risk of **young drivers** in their first years of driving by measures which include the introduction of an effective graduated driver licensing scheme. On the basis of many studies of experience in other countries and analysis of collision data for GB, TRL estimate that at least about 30 lives per year could be saved in collisions involving 17-19 year-old drivers, with further savings among those learning to drive at later ages.
- Evaluate the safety impacts of **telematics** and similar technologies for young drivers, business and commercial drivers. Disseminate the results and publicise best practice.
- Reduce the general **drink-drive blood alcohol limit** to 50mg /100ml. This could save at least about 40 lives each year, and improve the efficiency of enforcement;
- Follow up the new **drug driving legislation** with effective and practicable initiatives, including enforcement and publicity measures, to reduce drug driving.
- Reduce risks due to **driver fatigue**. Fatigue can impair drivers to at least the same extent as is seen at the legal alcohol limit for driving. The problem must be reviewed with a view to identifying effective incentives for drivers, their employers and the governing bodies so that effective education and monitoring will be carried out and to promote risk-reducing changes in behaviour.
- Improve **compliance with key road safety rules** and improved risk awareness through enhanced and combined police enforcement, technology, publicity and education initiatives. This would include measures to reduce road user distraction.
- Publicise best practice guidance on **effective training for drivers, motorcyclists, pedal cyclists and young pedestrians** and monitor outcomes.

11. Review emergency medical response to collisions and enhanced trauma care

Studies in other countries show that many more people involved in collisions, especially those in remote places, would probably have survived and avoided long term disability if they had reached hospital sooner and received even more appropriate care. The scope in different parts of the UK for more rapid emergency response to collisions and best use of enhanced trauma care to reduce deaths and the consequences of serious injuries should be reviewed and the findings acted upon.

Looking beyond the UK, the government should, with the help of the UK road safety community,

12. Support road traffic injury prevention in international development work

Road traffic injury is a major global public health problem. Rapid motorisation in developing countries is often accompanied by poor safety quality of road traffic systems and the lack of institutional capacity for managing outcomes. These combine to create a growing and costly humanitarian crisis. Without urgent action, it is forecast that road traffic injury will be the 7th leading cause of death for all worldwide by 2030. In support of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety, international development assistance should be provided to low and middle-income countries to build capacity for road safety management.

Conclusion

Successful and sustained action of these kinds requires for each activity the targeting of results; coordinated action; secure and sustainable funding; legislation, where appropriate to meet the task; high-level promotion of the shared responsibility for delivery; arrangements for ongoing research and development and knowledge transfer and, not least, transparent and regular monitoring, evaluation and reporting of results.

Safer transport for all

The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) is an All-Party Parliamentary Group and a registered charity. Its charitable objective is "To protect human life through the promotion of transport safety for the public benefit". Its aim is to advise and inform members of the House of Commons and of the House of Lords on air, rail and road safety issues. It brings together safety professionals and legislators to identify research-based solutions to transport safety problems having regard to cost, effectiveness, achievability and acceptability. In recent years it has paid increasing attention to the links between transport safety, sustainability and public health.

PACTS is a founder member of the European Transport Safety Council and a supporter of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020.

For further information about PACTS see <http://www.pacts.org.uk/>

