



Transport Safety Commission

Road Safety GB Submission of Evidence, April 2014

Introduction

This submission is made by Road Safety GB, the national charity and organisation representing its members who deliver road safety education, training, publicity and behavioural change programmes throughout the country. Currently corporate members are primarily drawn from Local Authorities although other organisations are now seeking to join. The Road Safety GB Academy was established in 2013 with the endorsement and active support of the Department for Transport. The Academy's main aims are to develop and Quality Assure the professional career path, training courses and professional development for Road Safety Practitioners and those who deliver road safety education and training as part of their work. Individual members of the Road Safety GB Academy include Road Safety Professionals in local authority, individual consultancy, Driving Instructors and other public services. Membership is open to all who meet the technical requirements for membership and subject to the approval of a membership committee of Academy Officers.

Executive Summary

Our evidence outlines that we propose the following responsibilities and actions to promote and improve road user safety in the United Kingdom:

1. The establishment of a new **National Road Safety Strategy** by the Secretary of State for Transport, to be endorsed as policy by central government
2. **Road User education should be adopted within core education** by central government through:
 - An agreed outcomes framework for children to achieve at each Key Stage of education
 - Road Safety Outcomes to be built into core curriculum subjects throughout a child's education
3. Central government should adopt a system of **Graduated Driver Licensing** for new learner and novice drivers
4. We believe that we, as the Road Safety profession, have a responsibility **to train the profession** and that our profession has a responsibility **to train the trainers** and to provide a robust, nationally recognised and trusted **Quality Assurance** scheme for training courses and for Road Safety materials and resources.
5. We recommend that Public Health England work with us and other professions to develop an **Older Driver Referral Framework** with evidence-based national guidance to support and inform older drivers, the medical profession, course providers, the police and the courts.

6. We believe the Home Office and the Police have a responsibility to ensure the reinvestment of any surplus funds from Driver Education Courses into Road Safety Education and casualty prevention measures – **The Road Safety Dividend** – at a local level to provide local Road Safety education.

7. We want to see Central Government requiring formal **linkage between Public Health Outcomes with other decision making** to ensure policies and decisions have to consider and support the achievement of health outcomes along with road user safety and making budget reductions.

Most, though not all, of our recommendations place responsibilities with Central Government. One might argue that responsibility for transport safety lies with us all as providers, users or whatever role we play. No doubt this is true. However, we as Road Safety Professionals have given careful thought to what changes need to be made by key people at the critical points that will make a step change. This will enable us and other professions to enact those changes to prevent premature and avoidable deaths and injuries on our roads. We have no wish to further centralise government and decision making except where it is necessary. The Road Safety Minister himself has warned against complacency in the pursuit of reducing casualties and making our roads ever safer. We seek leadership and the setting of requirements and guidelines by Central Government, who alone are in a position to provide the framework within which local delivery can be undertaken. This may be by public services, private or third sector providers but whatever the mix, the framework and the requirement can only come from Central Government – only they can bring these changes about to enable us all to get on with the next stages of making our roads safer and ensuring they stay safer for our parents and our children and grandchildren to use.

We should define who is responsible for what to make our roads safer and strive to find new ways to achieve these aims. We must not allow all the gains and experience of recent years to be lost. If we do that, we will be re-learning the same lessons over again in 5 or 10 years time and at the expense of people's lives and well-being. And we will all have been responsible for allowing that to happen.

Evidence

We propose that the Secretary of State for Transport has a responsibility to establish a new National Road Safety Strategy, to be endorsed as policy by central government

The National Road Safety Strategy launched by government in 2000; "2010 Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone" proved an effective means of focussing a variety of resources, agencies, effort and funding into a single cause: casualty reduction. It was highly successful by achieving and exceeding not only the ambitious targets originally set but also a number of stretched targets as well. Until that time, the various agencies and disciplines that contribute to making roads and road users safer were disparate and disconnected, each seeking to fulfil their own remit but with little collaborative or "cross-border" working. The 10 year strategy changed this and broke through many silos to bring agencies together. This worked extraordinarily well, particularly through local partnership working, whether formalised or less structured; it enabled design, engineering, education, enforcement and emergency agencies to pool their resources and identify and use their relative strengths to a common goal, that of reducing casualties and collisions to make travel on the

roads of the United Kingdom safer than it has ever been. This aim was achieved and made Great Britain a world leader in the field with many other countries and the EU following our example.

It is at best disappointing to see that legacy dwindling with the cessation of both funding and policy focus on the successful model developed under the national strategy. Casualty reduction, like education, does not simply happen; it has to be made to happen. The role of government is to lead and direct activities to achieve those matters that the community sees as a priority. Numerous local and national surveys repeatedly demonstrate that being able to use the roads in safety is a high priority for the majority of people in this country. This applies to all means of travel but with particular emphasis on the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, the young, the elderly – indeed all those more vulnerable to injury and harm.

Progress and maintenance of the downward trajectory of road casualties appears to be faltering. Whilst some of this plateau effect may be the result of the beginnings of an economic recovery, there is a real danger that the achievements of the past decade and more will reverse. Current and continuing severe pressure on local government and public service funding is such that all areas of public service delivery are now at risk. Inevitably, those where the effects of cuts are less immediately visible are at greatest risk as difficult choices are made. We have reached the point at which whole service cuts have to be made e.g. choosing between reducing home care visits to vulnerable people who depend on those visits to get up in the morning and to eat, and the provision of School Crossing Patrols and Road Safety Education programmes; it is clear which service is more likely to be reduced or even stopped. However, this is exactly the same scenario that led to year upon year of under funding for highway maintenance and repair work – until two severe winters and the wettest summer in decades literally opened the cracks in this policy. Our roads are now in an appallingly bad condition – which in itself is a safety issue as potholes, cracks, surface damage and even catastrophic failures renders our network in many areas simply not fit for purpose. We urge government not to make the same mistake with Road Safety Education and Casualty Reduction work. This can be avoided by the simple expedient of a new National Strategy. It will also be less costly than waiting until a road casualty crisis point is reached.

We propose that Central Government, supported by Exam Boards, Teachers and Road Safety Professionals are responsible for ensuring that every child undertakes Road User education.

Use of the road network is something that everyone has to do throughout their life. The complexities of our road network, with signs, markings, rules and regulations, vehicle technology, and a myriad of other tasks and distractions such as mobile phones, apps, have made the road network the most challenging and complex of environments. The roads are used by all sorts of people of all ages by a variety of means and for very different purposes, in all sorts of powerful motorised vehicles and all at the same time. Yet we expect that anyone for at least the first 16 years old of their life should be able to use and traverse this complicated system safely, without any formal tuition whatsoever. We consider this to be an untenable situation. We need a fundamental change in road user education within our education system that will equip our children and future generations with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need at each stage of their education. Evidence demonstrates that positive human behaviours need to be taught and learned from the earliest stages of childhood, in order to achieve the fundamental aims of:

- *giving every child the best start in life*
- *enabling all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives*
- *ensuring a healthy standard of living for all*
- *creating and developing sustainable places and communities*
- *strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention.*

from “Fair Society – Healthy Lives”, The Marmot Review, 2010

This can be achieved by two measures:

- The development of an agreed outcomes framework for children to achieve at each Key Stage of education.

This will define what children should know and be able to do with regards to using the roads before they go to school and by the ages of 7, 11, 14 and when they leave school at 18. This would guide teachers who are not road safety specialists but who can teach many of the skills and the knowledge required if they are given the necessary information and guidance. Even more importantly it would provide parents with a guide as to what to expect of their children and what they should teach them as they grow up. In our considerable experience parents are confused and unclear as to what to teach and when. They are deeply concerned for their children’s safety and see roads and traffic as one of the main dangers their children face. Parents’ powerful protective instincts lead them to protect their children – often by taking them to school, clubs and social activities by car rather than allow them to walk or cycle. They do not learn or practice the skills they need. This has led to an inactive and unhealthy generation for whom physical activity has become exclusively a leisure based event not an everyday means of travel. This is having catastrophic effects on the health of this and future generations.

- Road Safety Outcomes to be built into core curriculum subjects throughout a child’s education

Basic road user education should be integral within the core curriculum, appropriate to each age group and stage of development. Thus employers, driving instructors, teachers and, most importantly, parents, will know what we expect a young person to know and have been taught about using the roads when they reach the age of 7, 11, 14 or 17. Not just as PSHE subjects but incorporated within Science, Maths, Spanish and Geography, English and almost every core subject. This would take no more curriculum time than now, just some content adjustments within the lessons and exams. We have the content already – through Scotland, the DfT Think website and other areas such as North Yorkshire. We just need to incorporate it.

The curriculum should include Pedestrian training followed later by Bikeability as core within the primary and secondary school curriculum so that every child has the opportunity to learn to cycle and, thus, how to use the road. They need to know what road signs and markings mean and what to expect other road users and vehicles will do. This is where specific expertise is needed to deliver this practical training in all schools. This will also provide them with the key to adopting the physical activities of cycling and walking as routine and something everyone does with all the health benefits those activities provide. It also provides an affordable means of travel to education and, later, to work that provides health and environmental benefits too.

These cannot be taught effectively by ticking a “Road Safety” visit box with a visit once or twice a year. We need to mainstream use of the roads and healthy living as a central part of education for life. We all use the roads every day in our millions, it is one of the very few things that we all have in common, so there should be a core learning content within the curriculum that includes those vital skills and information.

We consider that Central Government should take responsibility for young driver safety by introducing Graduated Driver Licensing for new learner and novice drivers

Developmental factors - there is good evidence from a number of countries that supports the use of a longer pre-and post test training period for young drivers with a graduated driver license to link our young people’s development as drivers with their cognitive development so that they can gain experience within some appropriate limitations. We do this in many industries and other driving related disciplines e.g. pilots, train drivers, lorry drivers, motorcycling.

Evidence from a number of first world countries that have adopted Graduated Driver Licensing shows that it is effective in reducing collisions, deaths and injuries among young, novice drivers. Whilst each of those countries has developed a version of graduated licensing that suits their particular circumstances, it is high time that the United Kingdom developed a version that suits this country and enacts it without further delay. The body of evidence is strong and public support is also evident. We and other bodies are offering to help to define appropriate parameters so that a change in the law can be brought in within 12 months or less.

We believe that we, as the Road Safety profession, have a responsibility to train the profession and that our profession has a responsibility to train the trainers and to provide a robust Quality Assurance scheme for training courses and for road safety materials and resources.

The Road Safety GB Academy has been established to define the professional requirements, career progression, training courses and professional standards for those who work to deliver Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity and behavioural change in road users.

The Academy has been endorsed by the Road Safety Minister Robert Goodwill MP, who has also provided practical support in the form of funding.

This started with the launch last year of the new **Road Safety Foundation Course** designed for anyone entering the road safety education and training field. The path will continue through more advanced and subject specific training courses designed to meet general and specialist needs e.g. motorcycling safety, driver and rider post test training, and accreditation of training courses from all the providers in the field, right through to degree level.

We are looking to extend membership and training accreditation to other agencies and professions who are also delivering road safety interventions such as Police and Fire Officers, Driving Instructors and Highways Engineers. This will include ensuring the provision of accreditation for appropriate training for trainers who may not work full time in road safety but who seek a level of knowledge

and skills that will inform and support their work. This will enable the high level of knowledge, expertise and good practice from within our small profession to be shared through a much wider means of delivery, including through the teaching profession.

Employers, schools and organisations will be able to see at a glance what they can expect of a road safety professional at whichever level of accreditation they have achieved; just as you do in many other professions including engineering, public health and so on.

Anyone attending an accredited course or event or paying for people to do so will be confident that they will receive professionally assessed, properly delivered, relevant and sound course content. We have strong support and a mandate from the private and third sector professional training providers in this.

Currently there is no means of assessing whether the many materials sold as Road Safety Interventions actually work. Few packages are properly evidenced so how can anyone know if their money is being well spent or not? Producers of teaching resources and publicity and other campaign materials who provide robust evaluation to demonstrate that their products work will be able to obtain accreditation from Road Safety GB through a peer review process that will assess and, if it proves robust and effective, will Quality Assure their product.

Those within or joining the profession will have a clear understanding of what the profession involves and expects of them if they want to join with the delivery of the many aspects of casualty reduction, human factors in road use and planning, behavioural change, information campaigns that the profession is charged to deliver for Local Authorities.

We believe that the Home Office should work with the Department for Transport and make the Police responsible for the Reinvestment of all surplus funds from Driver Education Courses into Road Safety Education programmes – The Road Safety Dividend

Courses are now being introduced to address and improve a number of driving behaviours beyond just exceeding the speed limit. Two new national NDORS courses are 'What's Driving Us?' and 'Driving 4 Change' addressing the issues arising from, for example, seatbelt non-use, mobile phone misuse and why they matter. We look forward to seeing how effective these courses are once they are up and running – they have been carefully constructed with professional design and content. Quality control of delivery is crucial so that people know what they are paying for and that it works.

Where there are surplus funds accrued from the fees paid by those attending these education courses, which there often are, as with any variable supply and demand service, we believe that those surplus fees should be reinvested directly back into road safety education programmes that benefit road users and local communities. This would fulfill the purpose for which the fees have been paid by motorists. There is currently no guarantee about the use of this money. It should be defined as the **Road Safety Dividend** providing a further positive outcome from these more constructive alternatives to prosecuting motorists.

We think that the Public Health England should take responsibility for the development of an older driver referral service with evidence-based national guidance to support and inform older drivers, the medical profession, the police and the courts.

We've heard numerous calls in recent months and years about whether there should be a further driving test on reaching, say 70 years. The rationale for this has not really been explained in any convincing way. With a growing proportion of society being people over 60 years, the needs and rights of older drivers must be properly considered.

Older drivers do not cause more collisions than younger drivers.

Older drivers especially those over 70-75 years do suffer more if they are involved in a collision

How can we help keep older drivers independently mobile but protected from harm and life changing injury? Well, not by inflicting additional tests and hurdles based on their having reached an arbitrary age. We want to see more respect for older drivers – whom we all hope to join in time.

It makes sense to provide older drivers with up to date information and advice and perhaps the option of a driving review, with a suitably trained and qualified local driving instructor who knows their local area – in the context of helping them to keep driving and feel comfortable to do so

It would also make sense to provide a referral service for GPs and hospitals to be able to send a patient to for a local driving assessment if they have reducing mobility, medications or other health issues to deal with so that they can be helped to adjust their driving to cope. If these difficulties mean that stopping driving is the appropriate option, this advice will have come from a suitable professional assessor and not from their GP with whom their ongoing confidence may become increasingly important.

It is especially important that retired people keep driving to keep up their skills – if one partner does all the driving, the other will become deskilled but they may subsequently find themselves their partners carer and then have to deal with the double challenge of their partner being unwell AND having to start driving again (often long distances or in heavy traffic) for hospital appointments and visits. Individual circumstances and local geography can mean that the needs of older drivers and those with medical factors that may affect their driving vary greatly. We propose that a set of National Guidelines be developed with expert medical, driving instructor/assessor and professional road safety help and advice that will provide the framework for an accredited Driver Assessment Service.

We believe that Central Government has a responsibility to ensure formal linkage between Planning, Highways Design and Maintenance, Local Transport and Public Health Outcomes to ensure complimentary rather than conflicting design guidance and decision making

What the national Road Safety strategy and its accompanying funding showed clearly was that if you get different agencies and disciplines to work together towards a common aim, you surely can make a difference. There was a step change in the reduction of casualties.

Now, with ring fenced road safety funding consigned to history and greatly reduced funding ahead, we have seen some partnerships fracture and output to make our roads safer has reduced. The overall effects vary from area to area but there are real strains and pressures now on all agencies and partnerships.

But there are other opportunities opening up – there is significant shared and complimentary ground between casualty reduction aims and Public Health. Bringing the Public Health service back into local authorities has already made it so much easier for the right people to talk to each other and work together.

There is also potential for the one to cut across the other – e.g. a reduction in funding or service in one area may make the achievement of public health outcomes more difficult to achieve. Shared funding and collaboration is one way to achieve this and the barriers between departments and funding regulations and restrictions need to be further removed to enable this to happen. This needs to be a national requirement.

Recommendations:

We recommend:

1. The establishment of a new National Road Safety Strategy by the Secretary of State for Transport, to be endorsed as policy by central government
2. That Road User education should be adopted as core by central government:
 - An agreed outcomes framework for children to achieve at each Key Stage of education
 - Road Safety Outcomes to be built into core curriculum subjects throughout a child's education
3. Central government should adopt a system of Graduated Driver Licensing for new learner and novice drivers
4. That we, as the Road Safety profession, have a responsibility to train the profession and that our profession has a responsibility to train the trainers and to provide a robust, nationally recognised and trusted Quality Assurance scheme for training courses and for Road Safety materials and resources.
5. An Older Driver Referral Service with evidence-based national guidance to support and inform older drivers, the medical profession, the police and the courts.
6. Reinvestment of any surplus funds from Driver Education Courses into local Road Safety Education and casualty prevention measures – The Road Safety Dividend.
7. Formal linkage with Public Health Outcomes to ensure policies and decisions have to consider and support and not inhibit the achievement of health outcomes along with road user safety and making budget reductions.

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