

# Road Safety: An Elected Member's Guide

**ROSPA**  
*The Royal Society for the  
Prevention of Accidents*

**LABOUR**



**THE DEPARTMENT  
OF TRANSPORT &  
INFRASTRUCTURE**



**SCOTTISH ROAD  
SAFETY CAMPAIGN**



**Road Safety**

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# Road Safety for Elected Members

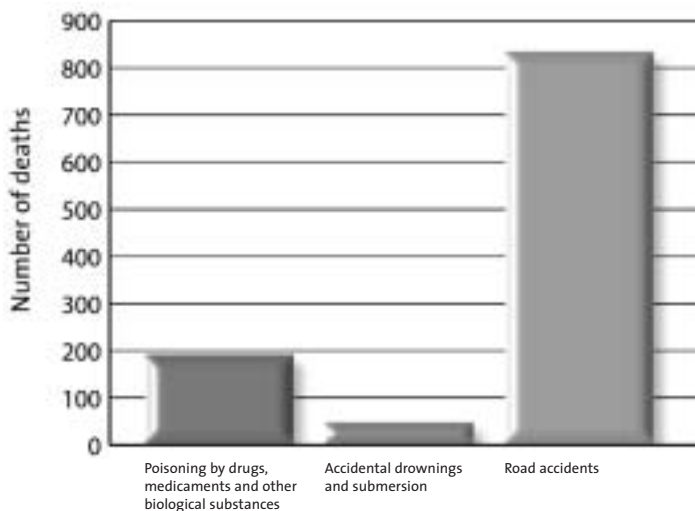
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## What Is The Problem?

Road safety directly involves all of us as road users whether on a bike, on foot, or by car. Roads are the most dangerous environment in which most people will ever operate, yet they feel fairly safe and society accepts a higher casualty rate than for other forms of transport or environment.

Road traffic accidents do not have a single cause. They result from a number of contributory factors that combine in a way that leads to a road user failing to cope in a particular situation. Human error is a contributory factor in 95% of road collisions. Road safety practice tries to identify the factors that lead to road accidents, understand how they affect each other and how they can be changed, to produce a safer environment and safer road users.

## Main causes of accidental death for 0 to 24 year olds 2002



**FACT:** One third of all collisions occur on wet roads.

## The National Strategy

In 2000, the Government published 'Tomorrows Roads – Safer for Everyone' a national Road Safety Strategy incorporating casualty reduction targets.

These have been built into English and Welsh local authorities' five-year Local Transport Plans, Scottish Local Transport Strategies, Police Authority annual policing plans and the Road Safety Strategy for Wales<sup>1</sup>. The Strategy encourages all Highway Authorities to adopt their own local targets, publish their plans, carry out casualty reduction schemes and education, training and publicity, monitor action, evaluate progress and publish outcomes. A review of the Strategy, looking at progress towards the casualty reduction targets was published last year. Best practice and value for money are core elements in road accident casualty reduction and prevention.

## National Targets

The targets adopted in 2000 by the Government encourages a multi-disciplinary approach and for all sections of the community to work together to fulfil the road safety strategy.

The targets to be achieved in the year 2010, based on the average for the years 1994-98 are:

- A 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents
- A 50% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured
- A 10% reduction in the slight casualty rate, expressed as the number of people slightly injured per 100 million vehicle kilometres.

The European Union has also set a casualty reduction target of 50% for killed and seriously injured (KSI) by 2010.

## Local Targets

**Question:** What are the casualty reduction targets set by your council?

### Local Public Service Agreements

**Question:** As well as local targets Councils may have agreed Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs), has yours?

These PSAs are a partnership agreement between individual local authorities and the Government. They are intended to improve key outcomes more quickly and/or to a higher level than would otherwise be the case, for people living in the authority's area. According to Road Casualties Great Britain<sup>2</sup> (RCGB), most collisions occur because of a combination of factors.

**Question:** Do you know your local road casualty statistics and whether your authority is on track to meet its target?

**FACT:** Over half of recorded deaths and serious injuries are amongst car occupants.

<sup>1</sup> Road Safety Strategy for Wales Welsh Assembly Government 2003

<sup>2</sup> Road Casualties Great Britain: The Casualty Report. Annual Publication by HMSO providing national information on road traffic casualties.

# What You Can Do

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You can help ensure your local Road Safety strategy makes an effective contribution to meeting the authority's casualty reduction targets. As a representative of your community, you can inform the decision-making processes working through a Cabinet or Committee structure. Some Members also sit on other committees such as the Police or Health Authorities and can raise the profile of road safety on the agendas of these organisations.

Elected Members are often faced with making tough decisions about allocating finite resources between competing priorities; this may affect the resources available for road safety activity. This is why it is important that you are familiar with the value of road safety to your community.

The interaction between human factors and road features has important implications for safety engineering and road user education, and highlights the need for engineers, road safety officers and roads police to work closely together. Elected Members have the opportunity to enhance this partnership and to become actively involved in making their roads safer through:

## Advocacy

Elected Members have an important role in spreading the road safety message to their constituents but also in making officers aware of their constituent's road safety needs. It is important that Elected Members act as a conduit for this two-way process.

## Inward

An Elected Member can become aware of a problem because of complaints from constituents before it is reflected in the accident statistics, and can bring this information to the notice of officers for further investigation.

## Outward

An Elected Member can also make constituents aware of road safety initiatives that are about to take place. Often constituents complain that there is an "accident waiting to happen" at a location in which they have a particular interest. Elected Members can respond with the accident information, which can show that drivers behave better on roads that they perceive as dangerous, and the road that looks dangerous may have fewer casualties than the road that appears safe.

### **FACT:**

**Two-thirds of killed and seriously injured (KSI) accident casualties occur in built-up areas.**

## Policy

Road safety policy is seldom static. Circumstances change (traffic volume and type, demographics, travel patterns, accident patterns), and policies and practices must keep pace with such changes to remain effective. It is vital that council policy considers both the national and local picture to ensure that they reflect the changing needs of road users in the area. Road safety also needs to be considered as part of other policy areas.

## Financial Considerations

Although the annual cost of road collisions is enormous, these costs are to a great extent borne by the individuals involved, their families and employers, and by services that are provided on a national scale, such as medical treatment. Thus the proportion of the costs falling to individual local authorities may be relatively small in terms of damage to the road infrastructure or the cost of social welfare services resulting from road crashes. However, it is important that local authorities ensure that the hidden nature of accident costs do not result in a reduction in the resources needed for road safety work. These should have high priority and be adequate for the work, which can be undertaken most effectively locally.

The extent and nature of road safety programmes will depend on the availability of finance, staff, facilities and time. Limited budgets may place limits on the programmes the council are able to carry out, despite careful planning, unexpected opportunities or demands that may occur during the year. To respond to such an occurrence it may be necessary to delay implementing planned activity in favour of a new opportunity.

## Scrutiny

Where sites are being selected for a local programme of engineering measures, there must be robust documentation for the decision making and prioritisation process, taking into account their history and other factors. Such a process should be open to scrutiny. Any resulting re-programming or re-prioritisation should be equally robust and open.

Road safety activities need to conform to the requirements as set out in the Citizens Charter and if road safety work requires collecting information from individuals then the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 must be met.

**FACT:** One quarter of all crashes occur in the dark, as do over a third of fatal accidents.

## What Your Council Can Do

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Local Councils have an important role in ensuring the road safety in their local area. If they are a Highway Authority they have specific responsibilities to provide services. They also provide a superb hub for partnerships both internally and externally and they also have a *Statutory Responsibility* (see page 14).

### Highway Authority For Local Roads

Unitary, Metropolitan and County Councils are the Highway Authority (Roads Authority in Scotland). They are responsible for highway maintenance, transport strategy and policy development, road safety, Local Transport Plan project development, accident investigation and prevention, public transport subsidy and the development and promotion of the use of more sustainable forms of transport.

### Local Transport Plan (LTP)

Local Authorities in England and Wales produce Local Transport Plans on a five-yearly basis. In England, they are used to apply for Government funding for their local transport needs. These documents should include the authorities targets for casualty reduction and state how these savings are to be achieved both internally and through partnership working. Road safety managers should lead the process and co-ordinate the production and dissemination of the road safety part of the document. Road safety activity should not, though, be seen as a stand-alone activity. Every opportunity should be taken to deliver road safety benefits through, for example; maintenance and traffic management schemes.

Local Transport Plans are important and many Authorities use the process of their production as an opportunity to consult more widely with their communities. This also offers opportunities for other organisations to contribute to the plan. Annual Progress Reports on the LTP are required and guidance on how these should be produced is available on the DfT website<sup>3</sup>.

The document should include all road safety activity in engineering, education, enforcement and encouragement planned for the next five years, including involvement with other agencies. It should also review the effectiveness of the measures employed in the previous five-year plan. Some authorities produce a separate Road Safety Plan and Annual Review as a 'daughter document' to their LTP.

#### **FACT:**

**Between 800 and 1000 people are being killed annually in work related road traffic accidents.**

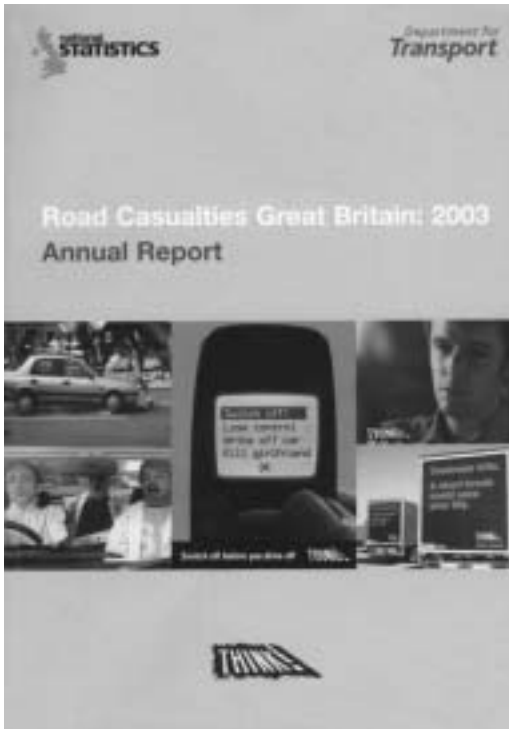
<sup>3</sup> <http://www.local-transport.dft.gov.uk/ltp03/pdf/edition03.pdf>

In London, each local authority produces a Local Implementation Plan (LIP) setting out how it will meet the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy. In Scotland, Local Transport Plans are not a statutory duty although many authorities produce similar documents called Local Transport Strategies, but these are not the basis for funding applications.

## Information Management

### Accident Data

Before remedial road safety programmes, whether engineering, education, training and publicity (ETP) or enforcement based, can be planned, it is essential to identify what problems need to be tackled. It is impossible to work effectively without reference to basic collision information.



Police Officers collect casualty data, which is held by the local authority or an organisation contracted to the local authority.

### Other Information

Subjective information may be obtained through consultation with local residents or community groups but should be treated cautiously.

### National Data

Casualty records from around the country are compiled into a national report, 'Road Casualties Great Britain', which is published annually by the Department for Transport. A separate publication 'Road Accidents Scotland' is published by the Scottish Executive.

#### **FACT:**

Approximately 6% of all road casualties and 16% of road deaths happened when someone was driving while over the legal alcohol limit.

## Research and Evaluation

All road safety work should be based upon research. Evaluation is needed:

- To determine whether a programme has had any effect, and the extent, nature and cost of that effect
- To discover whether the materials and activities used have had an impact among the target group or area
- To provide information for use as a guide to future policy and to fix the resources which should be made available
- To provide guidance on the desirability, effectiveness and cost of future programmes.

## Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity (ETP)

In general terms, these are defined as follows:

**Education** is a broad based activity, which deals with ideas and concepts such as hazard perception and management of personal risk in the road environment, and the development of coping strategies. It also includes the encouraging of an individual's understanding of their responsibilities to other road users. It is a gradual process, which takes place over a number of years.

**Training** is mostly concerned with creating or developing practical skills, is short term in duration and includes activities such as pedestrian training, cycle training, pre/advanced/refresher/driver training and motorcycle training.

**Publicity** is designed to provide information, raise awareness and give advice on appropriate behaviour; it can also reinforce positive attitudes.

All three activities alter or influence the behaviour of all road users. Education seeks to foster a positive attitude, which will contribute to a safer environment for all.



### FACT:

**Pedestrians make up almost a quarter of road user fatalities. One in seven of those killed in road collisions are children or adolescents.**

## Road Engineering

In undertaking their duties, road safety engineers will generally seek to achieve a road environment that:

<b>WARNS</b>	road users of any unexpected features or those requiring special attention
<b>INFORMS</b>	road users about what is likely to be expected
<b>GUIDES</b>	road users
<b>CONTROLS</b>	road users as far as possible where conflicts may exist
<b>FORGIVES</b>	driver errors or inappropriate behaviour.

Elected Members decide on their local spending priorities and some contributions may be made available from the private sector. Local safety schemes represent good value for money in places with existing accident problems.



## Maintenance

Road maintenance is an important factor in ensuring a road remains safe. Road environment factors such as road alignment, surface condition, drainage, signs, road markings and traffic signals can reduce the chance of a crash.

**FACT:** Half of fatal collisions occur on non-built up roads.



### **School Crossing Patrol Service (SCP or SXP)**

School Crossing Patrols are a road crossing facility. The decision on where to put SCP's is part of an Authority's overall provision of safe crossing facilities and has to meet the required criteria. Although Patrols are closely associated with individual schools, their function is one of road safety rather than education. It must also be remembered that it is a parent's responsibility to ensure that their child gets safely to school.

### **School Travel Plans**

School communities (children, parents, teachers and governors) are writing travel plans, guided by School Travel Advisors. The process, ideally, results in safer, healthier children, improved walking and cycling routes, cycling and pedestrian training and a commitment to review and monitor the process annually. Ongoing road safety education and training are an integral part of any travel plan, which will (ideally) contribute to a reduction in congestion and accidents on the way to and from school.

#### **FACT:**

**Child pedestrian casualty risk is higher for children living in socially deprived areas and who are from ethnic minority communities.**

## Hub For Partnerships

Councils and Elected Members are in an outstanding position to act as hubs for partnerships which can improve the road safety of their constituents. Already within your authority there are partnerships between departments such as the Road Safety Unit, Accident Investigation Unit, and Road Maintenance and Planning. Working closely with these departments can help to achieve results and these results can be enhanced by working in partnership with outside organisations such as:

### Health Authorities, Trusts, etc.

In the light of the contribution they need to make to casualty reduction as part of their role in promoting public health and preventing accidental injury, health initiatives often provide an opportunity to promote road safety issues. Examples of health schemes which councils can successfully use to get road safety messages across are:

- Healthy Schools Programme
- Sure Start
- Active Primary School.

### Community Safety Partnerships

Road safety is a theme often identified in local authority community safety strategies.

### Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act established partnerships between the police, local authorities, probation service, health authorities, the voluntary sector, and local residents and businesses. These partnerships are working to reduce crime and disorder in their areas.

### Crime and Disorder Audits

The Crime and Disorder Act requires the 'responsible authorities' i.e. the Unitary Local Authority, or the county and district/borough/city and the corresponding area police force, to co-operate and collaborate with a range of organisations to develop a local strategy to tackle the problems of crime and disorder.

### Local Safety Camera Partnerships

Safety Camera Partnerships operate across the country based around police force areas. Generally, the partnerships are made up of Police, Highway Authorities' and the Magistrates' Courts. Many have other partners such as the Health Authority and other emergency services. The main aim of the Safety Camera Partnerships is to reduce the number of casualties on the roads due to speed, and help local authorities in achieving their casualty reduction targets.

**FACT:** Drivers who use a mobile phone (hand held or hands-free) are four times more likely to crash.

## Development Control

Where a Local Authority is the local planning authority, it is responsible for regulating and controlling new development within its boundaries. Officers and Elected Members decide whether proposals for new development are acceptable or not. The Council must process and determine applications for planning permission, and regulate the schemes and development, which may be granted planning permission. This presents an opportunity for extra road safety measures.

## Enforcement

Enforcement of the road traffic laws is the duty of the police but some areas, such as parking enforcement, have been decriminalised and are now the responsibility of the local authorities.

In 2005, the Department for Transport, the Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) published the 'Roads Policing Strategy' to ensure that roads policing is given its rightful priority within overall police work. The Strategy is supported by the Home Office's National Policing Plan which sets the national framework and key priorities for policing, including roads policing.

The Association of Chief Police Officers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (ACPO) has a roads policing policy, entitled 'Modern Road Policing: A Manifesto for the Future'<sup>4</sup>.

The Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) has produced a National Road Policing Strategy 2001-2006 entitled 'Safer Roads in Scotland'.

These documents provide a policy for road safety enforcement.

### **FACT:**

**Excessive speed is the most frequently cited contributory factor to fatal accidents.**

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.acpo.police.uk/policies/ba\\_brunstrom\\_manifesto2.pdf](http://www.acpo.police.uk/policies/ba_brunstrom_manifesto2.pdf)

## Statutory Duties

The 1988 Road Traffic Act, Section 39, puts a Statutory Duty on the local authority to undertake studies into road accidents, and to take steps both to reduce and prevent accidents. The wording of the Act is:

- 39. (1)** *“The Secretary of State may, with the approval of the Treasury, provide for promoting road safety by disseminating information or advice relating to the use of roads.”*
- 39. (2)** *“Each local authority must prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety and may make contributions towards the cost of measures for promoting road safety taken by other authorities or bodies.”*
- 39. (3)** *“Each local authority –*
- [a]** *must carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads or part of roads, other than trunk roads, within their area,*
  - [b]** *must, in the light of those studies, take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents, including the dissemination of information and advice relating to the use of the roads, the giving of practical training to road users or any class or description of road users, the construction, improvement, maintenance or repair of roads for which they are the highway authority (in Scotland, local roads authority) and other measures taken in the exercise of their powers for controlling, protecting or assisting the movement of traffic on roads, and*
  - [c]** *in constructing new roads, must take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to reduce the possibilities of such accidents when the roads come into use.”*

### FACT:

The risk of becoming a casualty in urban areas is highest for riders of powered two-wheeled vehicles and pedal cyclists.

# Jargon-buster

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## **Accident**

The traditional term for an incident on the road leading to damage to vehicles and/or injury to road users. Used as a technical term by roads engineers. The terms 'crash' or 'collision' are now often used as alternatives by road safety professionals. The term 'accident' can be seen as implying that no-one is to blame, however, it is the term that members of the public understand. This document uses the terms 'crash', 'collision' and 'accident' interchangeably.

## **ACPO**

Association of Chief Police Officers was set up to formulate co-ordinated policing policies for the 44 forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. ACPO is not a staff association and works on behalf of the service, rather than its Members.

## **ACPOS**

Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland fulfils a similar role as ACPO for the police forces in Scotland.

## **AIP/ARP/RSE**

Accident Investigation and Prevention/Accident Reduction and Prevention/Road Safety Engineering. The study of accidents with a view to finding treatable factors. The treatment usually involves road engineering and the development of suitable measures aimed at reducing their frequency.

## **CDRP**

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships involve the police, local authorities, probation service, health authorities, the voluntary sector, and local residents and

businesses. These partnerships work to reduce crime and disorder in their areas.

## **Child Safety Audits**

The concept of child safety audits was introduced in the Road Safety Strategy, Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone. These audits are expected to identify the child road safety problems within the area, implement strategies to deal with them and evaluate the success of the strategy.

## **DDA**

Disability Discrimination Act aims to stop discrimination against disabled customers – people who buy goods, or use facilities or services. It seeks to give deaf or disabled people equal and enforceable rights and access to goods, facilities or services. The DDA says that service providers are not allowed to treat disabled people less favourably because of their disability.

## **ETP**

Education, Training and Publicity. Usually done by road safety professionals in the local authority. Education is aimed at all categories of road user, not only pre-school and school children. Road Safety Education is a life long activity. Training encompasses all aspects of road safety progressing from pedestrian training through cycle training, perhaps motorcycle training to driver training and beyond. It includes encouraging refresher training, advanced training and workplace training. Publicity is materials and advertising used to promote positive road safety messages either to the general public or particular user groups. It should 'hook into' information already gained through education and training.

## **HA**

The Highways Agency is the Government Agency responsible for England's motorways and trunk roads.

## **KSI**

KSI is short for 'Killed and Seriously Injured'. It refers to people who have been killed or seriously injured in a road accident. For a long time the number of KSI has been falling, but in recent years while the number of people seriously injured has continued to fall, the number of people killed has not. It is unclear why fatalities are no longer reducing at the same rate as serious injuries. KSIs should not be confused with personal injury accidents (PIAs).

## **LPSA's**

Local Public Service Agreements are a partnership agreement between individual local authorities and the Government. They are intended to improve key outcomes more quickly and/or to a higher level than would otherwise be the case, for people living in the authority's area.

## **LTP**

Local Transport Plans are produced by Local Authorities in England and Wales on a five yearly basis. In England they are used to apply for government funding for their local transport needs. These documents should include the authorities targets for casualty reduction and how these savings are to be achieved both internally and through partnership working. In Scotland, Local Transport Plans are not a statutory duty although many authorities produce similar documents called Local Transport Strategies, but these are not the basis for funding applications.

## **MORR/WRRS**

Managing Occupational Road Risk/Work Related Road Risk. Employers have a statutory responsibility to ensure the safety of their staff. This includes the safety of staff using the road as part of their employment. Employers can manage the risks involved by creating and implementing policies covering issues such as; mobile phones, fatigue, choosing the most suitable vehicles, checking driver's licences and ensuring drivers have any extra training they need to drive safely.

## **NDIS**

The National Driver Improvement Scheme is available throughout England, Scotland and Wales. It is run by Local Authorities or private companies who act as service providers to their Police Authority. Where a driver has been involved in a collision and the police have evidence that he/she has been 'Driving Without Due Care and Attention or Reasonable Consideration to Other Road Users' contrary to Section 3 of the 1988 Road Traffic Act, the driver may be offered a driver improvement course as an alternative to prosecution. A course lasts for one and a half days and is delivered by Department for Transport Approved Driving Instructors and Road Safety Officers. The course involves a mixture of driving theory and practical on-road driver training.

## **PIAs**

Personal Injury Accidents. Accidents involving injury recorded by the police using the Department for Transport's Stats 19 form, and reported to central government.

### **Rate Of Return**

Rate of Return is a method of calculating how quickly the investment in a safety scheme will be recouped through accident savings. For example, Junction A experiences 6 slight Personal Injury Accidents (PIAs) per year. A proposed scheme to improve the junction will cost £100,000 and is estimated to reduce accidents by 50%, i.e. will save 3 PIAs per year. A slight injury accident costs £17,540 (2003 figs), so the proposed scheme will save £52,620 (3 x £17,540) per year. Therefore, the scheme will cost £100,000 and produce a saving of £52,620 in the first year, giving it a 52.6% Rate of Return. The scheme will cover its costs in the first 2 years after opening. (If the Rate of Return was 100% it would cover costs in the first year).

### **Remedial Action**

By focusing remedial action on sites and areas with poor accident records, highway/road safety engineers concentrate their efforts on sites where there is a known risk, rather than a perceived risk. At some locations, reducing perceived risk can increase the number of accidents. Safety engineers will usually have an even greater impact on accident reduction by undertaking area-wide safety schemes rather than focusing only on selected individual sites.

### **Road Safety Audit**

An engineering audit undertaken to highlight any safety problems on a new road or in remedial measures planned to reduce collisions. Safety audit is relevant at different stages of a scheme: feasibility/initial design; on completion of draft plans or preliminary design; during or on completion of detailed design; and immediately before opening. Monitoring

should also be carried out at fixed periods (usually 12 months and 3 years) after the scheme is completed to ensure traffic is using the scheme correctly and safely. Standard checklists can assist a well-defined auditing procedure.

### **RSM**

Rural Safety Management is a structured approach to crash prevention and casualty reduction on rural roads.

### **RSO**

Road Safety Officer is responsible for providing road safety education, training and publicity for all road users.

### **RTA/RTC**

Road Traffic Accident/Road Traffic Collision. Terms used by the police for a road accident.

### **SCP**

Safety Camera Partnerships operate across the country based around police force areas. The main aim of the Safety Camera Partnerships is to reduce the number of casualties on the roads due to speed, and assist local authorities in achieving their casualty reduction targets. Automatic enforcement is used as a last resort, in a situation where safety engineers are unable to provide an alternative.

### **SCP or SXP**

School Crossing Patrols are a road crossing facility. The decision on where to put SCP's is part of an Authority's overall provision of safe crossing facilities and has to meet the required criteria. Although Patrols are closely associated with individual schools their function is one of road safety rather than education. It must also be remembered that it is a parent's responsibility to ensure that their child gets safely to school.

**SID/VAS**

A Speed Indication Device is a laser gun linked to a sign, which notes the speed of an approaching vehicle. It will then either display the speed of the vehicle, the speed limit or a warning to slow down. The system is not designed to detect speeding motorists for prosecution, but is used to educate the public on their speed. SID is often used on roads of community concern, where local people feel there is a problem with speeding vehicles, but which do not meet the strict criteria for safety cameras. SIDs are a type of Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS). Other types of vehicle activated sign warn drivers of bends, junctions and other hazards.

**SRTS**

Safer Routes to School use education, training and engineering to provide children with the means to walk or cycle to school safely. May operate as part of School Travel Plans.

**STP**

School Travel Plans allow school communities (children, parents, teachers and governors) to write travel plans, guided by Local Authority Officers. The process ideally results in safer, healthier children, improved walking and cycling routes, cycling and pedestrian training and a commitment to review and monitor the process yearly. Road safety education is an integral part of any travel plan, which will (ideally) contribute to a reduction in congestion and casualties on the way to and from school.

**USM**

Urban Safety Management is a structured approach to accident prevention and casualty reduction on urban roads. It allows national, regional and local targets for accident reduction to be reflected in specific safety initiatives; which are related to wider policies for a local area. It also allows for consistent local safety objectives to be developed for each part of the local area.



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