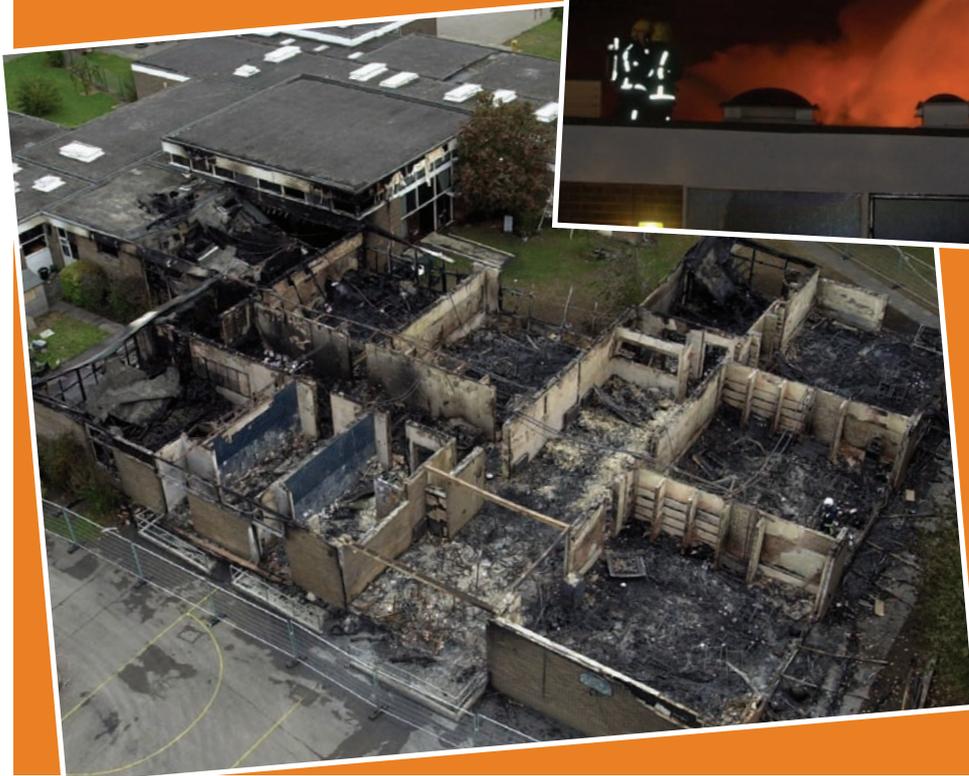


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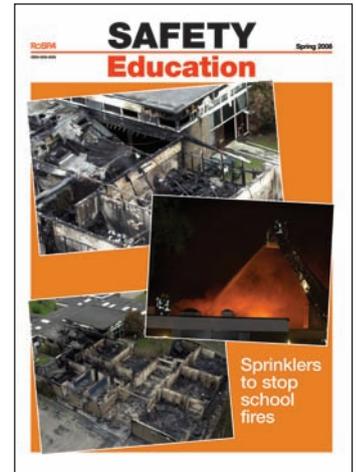
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Managing Editor
Janice Cave

Editorial Consultant
Jim Barrow

Occupational Safety Adviser
Roger Bibbings

Risk Education Adviser
Jenny McWhirter

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The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents,
Edgbaston Park,
353 Bristol Road,
Birmingham B5 7ST.

Telephone: 0121 248 2000

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Judith sends a clear message

Judith Hackitt, chair of the Health and Safety Commission has sent out a clear message to those who hide behind so called health and safety rules to stop children from enjoying a normal childhood.

The new HSC chair said, "Life is not risk free, we know that. Our children encounter risks every day and learning to manage risks is an essential part of growing up. Through educational activities and play we want children to enjoy themselves while staying safe."

"All too often 'health and safety' is blamed for imposing unjustifiable bureaucracy on teachers. I do not want to see bureaucratic actions taken in the name of health and safety. As the regulator, the HSC wants to see risks managed sensibly and responsibly, not eliminated. Most education authorities are extremely sensible on issues like this, but it is important every authority continues to adopt a sensible approach."

Sensible risk management is NOT about:

- Creating a totally risk free society

- Generating useless paper-work mountains
 - Scaring people by exaggerating or publicising trivial risks
 - Stopping important recreational and learning activities for individuals where the risks are managed
 - Reducing protection of people from risks that cause real harm and suffering.
- Sensible risk management IS about
- Ensuring that workers and the public are properly protected
 - Providing overall benefit to society by balancing benefits and risks, with a focus on reducing real risks - both those which arise more often and those with serious consequences
 - Enabling innovation and learning, not stifling them
 - Ensuring that those who create risks manage them responsibly and understand that failure to manage real risks responsibly is likely to lead to robust action
 - Enabling individuals to understand that as well as the right to protection, they also have to exercise responsibility

These principles on sensible risk management build on HSE's initiatives to cut red tape and work with organisations representing employers, workers, insurers, lawyers, volunteers, health and safety professionals to make a real difference to people's lives.

These principles reiterate the message that health and safety is not about long forms, back-covering, or stifling initiative. It's about keeping people safe - not stopping their lives.



Winter walks are safer in Cheshire

A group of Cheshire children are safer on their winter walk to school thanks to the Driver and Fleet Solutions department at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

The department has provided high visibility vests for youngsters from the Before-School Happy Days Club in Holmes Chapel to wear on the daily half-mile journey to their local primary school.

The bright yellow jackets make their "walking bus" much more conspicuous to drivers and help the children understand that being seen easily keeps them safer on the road.

Simon Protano, head of

RoSPA driver and fleet solutions, said: "As a charity dedicated to saving lives and reducing injuries we are delighted to play a part in this project."

"Profits from our driver and fleet solutions operations go back into supporting safety initiatives throughout the UK, and lessons learned at an early age can keep people safe throughout their lives."

Dorothy Currie, partner in Happy Days, said: "We are really pleased with the jackets. They have been a big hit with the children and parents and make sure the 'walking bus' can be seen much more clearly by motorists when we cross a busy road."

Angel of Chaos take Welsh title

The second Gwent road safety music challenge took place in November at The Congress Theatre, Cwmbran. It was an evening full of nerves, adrenaline and high spirits. However, above all this merriment came a serious message about the risks of drink driving.

Eleven bands from schools across Gwent met the challenge. Each band had composed a piece of music on an anti-drink drive theme, often as part of their school work. Their songs were performed in front of a panel of four judges, each an expert from the field of music or road safety.

A wide variety of music genres were demonstrated and all were performed with individual style, talent and tremendous enthusiasm. The judges had a difficult task deciding the winners but eventually the results were as follows:-

First, Angel of Chaos from Ebbw Vale Comprehensive with Just Stop. Second, Abersychan School Band with Please Stop This. Third, Diminuendo from Tredegar Comprehensive with Crisis.

Chief Inspector John Pavett of Gwent Police awarded the prizes which were £250 each for the winning band and their school. Second and third placed bands and their schools received £150 and £100 each respectively. Additional gifts and mementos were donated by ASDA stores at Brynmawr, Duffryn, Blackwood and Caerphilly.

Everyone in the theatre was affected by the strong message which was so evident. Clearly the students had thought deeply about the subject matter and the emotional fallout that follows drink related traffic collisions. Dave Powell of Gwent Music (one of the judges) said in his summing up, "The lyrics were so well thought out and very apt, especially the line from the West Mon School band, '...how can one drink



Angel of Chaos with their musical tutor Bob Richards

crush 20 people's lives?' I hope the impact of tonight's message is long lasting."

All girl band Angel of Chaos were delighted with their win and have been invited to play

at the Wales Drink Drive Christmas Campaign launch in Cardiff in December.

Parents urged 'set example'

Parents are being reminded: kids do as you do, not as you say, as part of a new THINK! road safety campaign aimed at driving down child road casualties, launched by Road Safety Minister Jim Fitzpatrick.

The new campaign, called "CopyCat", is the first THINK! campaign designed to speak specifically to parents. The campaign reminds parents that kids copy their behaviour and educates them about the dangers that children face on the roads.

Jim Fitzpatrick said: "Last year around 11,500 children aged 4-11 years were killed or injured on Britain's roads. Child casualties have dropped markedly in recent years,

but still too many children are being killed or hurt on our roads.

"We can all fall into bad habits, but it's important parents realise it's no good teaching kids good road safety techniques if you don't follow them. If parents are crossing the road when the red man is showing, or not using seatbelts, then their children will copy them."

As part of the campaign, child psychologist Ruth Coppard was on hand at a special training day to explain to parents how their behaviour influences that of their children. The training day will help parents understand the dangers that their children face on the roads

and parents will also be invited to see the road from a child's point of view by using a 'giant' version of a zebra crossing, surrounded by oversized cars and amplified street noise.

Ruth Coppard said: "Children learn a lot through imitation so it is critical that what parents do reinforces what they are saying. We have all heard small children who swear because they have heard their parents swear; in the same way, teenagers love to say to us 'but you do it like that!'"

"Consistency is key when teaching children any new skill or lesson, especially something as important as road safety."

Norfolk school wins award

A British primary school has been awarded top prize in a Europe-wide competition to encourage innovative sustainable mobility projects. Millfield Primary School in North Walsham, Norfolk, is winner of the Environment and Innovation Project, hosted by Toyota Motor Europe and the Foundation for Environmental Education's International Eco-Schools Programme.

The school's winning entry, Stamp Stanley – Walk to Millfield Project, aims to reduce traffic congestion by creating a long-term incentive for children to walk to and from school. Millfield installed per-

manent checkpoint machines along school routes, from which students can collect a stamp for each 'green journey' made. Stamps are saved up and exchanged at school for a wide range of rewards.

In the first four weeks of the scheme, the proportion of 'green journeys' made by pupils rose to more than 80 per cent of the total, bringing about a sharp decrease in vehicle traffic during the normal morning and afternoon school run period.

The ingenious project, devised and implemented with help from pupils, was among more than 100 entries in the competition from across Eur-

ope. Twenty-five finalists received grants totalling €75,000 (approximately £52,500) to put their plans into action, involving about 25,000 students in total. An awards ceremony took place at the school for the hand-over of its prize of €4,000 (approximately £2,800).

Graham Smith, senior vice-president TME and chairman of the Toyota Fund for Europe, said: "TME, via the Toyota Fund for Europe, has been delighted to partner and sponsor the Environment and Innovation Project.

"Each school's project, in some way, has helped to reduce our environmental footprint by tackling local issues in a very concrete and practical way. We congratulate every student whose creativity and perseverance have made a real difference."

Millfield won from four shortlisted national winners from the UK, Spain, Germany and Italy. Ideas included a road safety education programme (Germany), new software to encourage car pooling and alternative modes of travel (Italy) and a bicycle promotion programme (Spain).

Jan Eriksen, president of the Foundation for Environmental Education said: "We are really impressed by the way children and teachers have collaborated with local business and authorities and applied creativity and ingenuity to tackle shared community problems. Once again, Eco-Schools from several countries implemented innovative projects which bring positive benefits, not only for the school, but also for the families and communities."

The Toyota Fund for Europe and the Eco-Schools programme have been working together since 2005. The Environment and Innovation Project was launched as a pilot programme to promote innovative thinking and environmental education in schools across Europe.

New road scheme launched

A new scheme to teach young children about road safety has been launched by Transport for London. A theatre roadshow set up and funded by TfL will visit 4,000 nurseries and early year establishments across the capital.

The roadshows are part of TfL's Children's Traffic Club, which helps parents teach their three and four year olds about how to keep safe when out walking, playing, and travelling in cars and buses. The club is free to all three year olds in the City and is supported by a series of six books with stories and activities.

Each performance is a fun-packed, interactive session involving characters from the books, such as Handy Hold, who reminds children to hold hands when outside, and Rhonda Red who reminds children to always stop when pedestrian lights are on red.

The number of children killed or seriously injured in London has fallen by 58 per cent compared with the mid to late nineties.

Chris Lines, head of London road safety unit at Transport for London said: "It is important to teach young children the road safety habits which will last them a lifetime. The theatre roadshows are a great way of getting three and four year olds involved in road safety and helping to reinforce the basic messages such as holding hands and stopping at the kerb."

Jenny Jones, the Mayor's green transport advisor, said: "This training is a vivid way to teach safe road manners to children, but also reinforces road safety awareness for parents as well. If we are to make all of London's roads safe for all Londoners, then everyone has to do their bit.

Fined for death

The Health and Safety Executive is urging those responsible for the care of young children to ensure sufficient levels of supervision are in place, after the proprietor of a North Wales school was sentenced for an offence under health and safety law.

James Porter, proprietor of Hillgrove School in Ffriddoedd Road, Bangor, Gwynedd, was fined £12,500 and ordered to pay £7,500 costs at Mold Crown Court. He had been found guilty by a jury of breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, after a trial in late July.

Three-year-old Kian Williams, from Bethesda, died in hospital just over a month after falling down steps at the school in July 2004.

HSE's investigation into Kian's death identified shortfalls in the levels of supervision for pre-school aged children at the school, which resulted in her being able to enter an area which was off limits.

HSE principal inspector Steve Scott said: "Play is absolutely essential to children's development, and

they should benefit from the opportunities which exposure to well-managed risks present. Such opportunities help them learn important life skills, including how to manage risks for themselves, but a balance does need to be struck between the risks and benefits. Very small children should not be left effectively unsupervised.

"This case is not about restricting play for children at school, nor should head teachers be concerned that it means they will face enforcement action as a result of everyday incidents which often happen to children.

"On the day of the incident there was one member of staff supervising 59 pupils with an age range of three to 11. This was well out of line with accepted ratios found elsewhere. It was not possible for the teacher on duty that day to see all parts of the split-level playground. Some areas were simply out of sight."

Porter was prosecuted because, as proprietor of the school, he was also the employer and as such had primary responsibility for health and safety matters.

Parents fear road danger the most

A study reveals that seven out of 10 parents cite road safety as the top concern they have for their children. The second and third most common worries are bullying and children talking to strangers, followed by issues ranging from safety in the home to sex education.

The study, commissioned by TOTAL, suggests parents' fears are well founded with one in five admitting that their children have been involved in road incidents which gave them "cause for concern". It is estimated that those incidents affected up to 1.7 million children aged 11 and under.

Despite concerns about road safety, only one in four parents surveyed said that their children will wear high visibility clothing as they navigate the dangers of darker evenings this winter. As a result, as many as 6.2 million children aged 11 and under (74 per cent) may be at risk due to poor visibility to cars.

Wearing high visibility clothing significantly reduces the risks children face on the roads during winter months. Children wearing high visibility clothing are visible from up to 160 metres away, compared with 30 metres for those not wearing it. This extra visibility makes a huge difference when compared with driver braking distances. For instance a driver travelling at 40 miles per hour will travel around 36 metres before coming to a halt, putting children without high visibility clothing at significantly higher risk.

In response, TOTAL has joined forces with the Local Authority Road Safety Officers' Association to launch the Brighten Up Little Learners road safety campaign. Together, TOTAL and LARSOA are urging parents and teachers to make sure young children (aged six and under) are taught basic road safety skills and wear high visibility, reflective clothing this winter.



Malcolm Jones, managing director, TOTAL UK said: "It is very sad that so many young children are hurt and killed on our roads, especially when simple steps like teaching good road safety practice and wearing high visibility clothing can make such a huge difference. We are committed to making roads safer for this vulnerable age group, which is why we want even more parents and teachers to use our free Little Learners resources."

"In addition, to help parents protect their children during the winter months, we are making affordable high visibility clothing for children available across our forecourt network."

The importance of wearing high visibility clothing is further highlighted by official road safety figures from the Department for Transport. During 2006, 5,717 children aged six and under were injured in road accidents, of which 40 were tragically killed and a further 642 seriously injured. Crucially, it is estimated that between October and December around half of road accidents involving children occur between 3pm and 6pm when visibility

is likely to be poor.

In order to help parents and teachers work together to teach children the skills they need to remain safe on the roads, TOTAL is making its Little Learners creative classroom pack available to even more schools, and providing parents with access to similar teaching tools via a dedicated website www.totallittlelearners.co.uk.

Malcolm Burns, chair of LARSOA, says "In 2006 there was an increase in the number of child pedestrians killed on the roads. Seventy one child pedestrians (aged 0-15) died and the combined number of those killed or seriously injured was 2,025 – that is equal to six child pedestrians killed or seriously injured every day of the year.

"It is vital at this time of year when it begins to get dark as early as three in the afternoon that parents and children are aware of how essential it is to be visible to other road users. Initiatives which continue to highlight this safety issue are important in communicating this message."

The resource packs, which feature children's TV charac-

ter BRUM produced by Ragdoll, support the Department for Transport's THINK! national road safety campaign and have been produced specifically for children aged six and under, in line with the National Curriculum. The kits are already being used by around 2,000 schools across the UK and have met positive responses from teachers and pupils alike.

The TOTAL Little Learners pack activities use Brum to teach important road safety lessons, concentrating on four key areas:

- Safety on the pavement
- Crossing the road safely (including the Green Cross Code)
- Safe places to cross (including zebra, pelican and school crossings)
- Safety in the car

TOTAL has also created pages on the TOTAL Little Learners website – www.totallittlelearners.co.uk - where parents can download the activities. In addition, the company has made affordable high visibility clothing for children (£3.99) and FREE BRUM adventure storybooks with stickers available across its forecourt network.

Teach the boys to save th

Everyone in road safety talks about the three E's – education, enforcement and engineering and there is no doubt that, together, they have made a huge impact on child road casualties. The contribution each has made is debatable of course, and even within the E of engineering there is a debate about whether in car-safety, vehicle engineering or road engineering has made the biggest contribution.

We all recognise the importance of enforcement – when the majority of us don't follow sensible advice about seatbelts, mobile phones or speeding, a change in law can ensure we conform or pay the penalty.

We may be reaching a limit with what can be achieved through enforcement, and engineering solutions can take a long time to develop and implement, so do we need to look more closely at education – and can we learn lessons from road safety edu-

cation which can be applied to other aspects of safety and risk education?

Two conferences in 2007 have focused on the importance of education – both the RoSPA Road Safety Congress and the Welsh Road Safety

“The leading cause of death for young women in this country is young male drivers”

Conference included evidence of effectiveness of road safety education for children and young people.

The conferences coincided, however, with the publication of a report by the Department for Transport which revealed a 20 per cent rise in the numbers of young people killed on the roads in Great Britain in 2006 [<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/casualties>

[mr/rcgbmainresults2006](http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/casualties)]. Although the overall trend is down from the baseline in 1994-1998, and the recorded rise may be a blip in that trend, any death or serious injury is a tragedy for the individual, family and friends.

This year RoSPA received funding from the DfT Challenge Fund to develop a resource about road safety for healthy schools. In England the National Healthy Schools Programme sets out specific criteria with respect to road safety:

NHSP Criterion 3.7 says a healthy school.....encourages children/young people, parents/carers and staff to walk or cycle to school under safe

conditions, utilising the school travel plan.

At the heart of all healthy or health promoting school programmes is a need to work with the whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, and staff, to develop healthier choices and to make those choices the easy choices. For all this to work effectively we need another E – engagement.

Engagement can be one of the biggest challenges in any aspect of public health, since it requires us to share power, sometimes with groups who are greedy for power, but more often with those who are, or feel, powerless. In schools, pupils are unused to having real power although increasingly young people are demonstrating they can exercise power thoughtfully and with great ability.

It is not uncommon for pupils to be part of panels appointing senior staff and to have a real impact on school policy through school councils. So how can we engage young people in road safety?

While developing the healthy schools resource we worked with a young drama teacher at a school in Solihull. She was shocked by a story in the Times newspaper that “the leading cause of death for young women in this country is young male drivers.” http://driving.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/driving/article2204067.ece Aug 6 2007 and decided to explore this with her A level theatre studies group.

As well as the statistics quoted in the newspaper, RoSPA provided a fictional newspaper account of the death of a young female passenger in circumstances which reflected the statistics.



e girls

The lesson plans, which will be published in the resource, used these stimulus materials and techniques from drama such as character development through improvisation and still images.

At first the group, including boys and girls aged 17 and 18, challenged the statistics, but as the discussion continued they were more able to relate the bare facts to their own experience.

One group acknowledged that boys' driving behaviour was different to girls and another said that although boys were quicker to pass their driving tests than girls, more of their male friends had speeding tickets or had had minor accidents while driving.

After dividing into smaller groups, the students improvised scenes involving the two main characters in the newspaper story: a girl aged 17 and her older boyfriend. We "saw" them at home with their families and out drinking with friends in a pub.

Drawing on their own experiences and observations familiar tensions were depicted.



ed. Parents, wanting the best for their teenage daughter, appeared to nag or overprotect, with the younger characters pushing against the rules and boundaries. In the pub scene, fault lines emerged in what appeared to be a steady relationship and there was a hint of a break up.

The students were then given the full text of the

newspaper article to read aloud, which described the scene of an accident and the reactions of friends and families to the death of the girl, in a car driven by her boyfriend.

Their comments after this part of the lesson were most revealing – "we really got to know these people and now she's dead." "He'll never be the same again – how can he live with himself after what he's done". The statistics worked at an intellectual level, but it was the gradual identification with the characters and their lives, through drama, which engaged the students' feelings.

In the lessons which followed, the students developed their response: a theatre in education performance for other students of their own age group to pass on the message about the risks young drivers face from overconfidence, lack of experience and alcohol.

This example shows how it is possible to share responsibility for educating young people by engaging their in-

terest and emotions.

In the next year RoSPA wants to extend the way it engages with young people across a wide range of projects. We are hoping to develop relationships with organisations which work directly with young people and through them to develop a network of young people who can help us in our work to help them to stay safe.

We have made a small beginning, working in schools in the Midlands and East Anglia to consult young people about 'Staying Safe' the consultation for the Department for Children, Schools and Families. But we know we have to do much more if we are to engage with the more vulnerable and harder to reach groups of young people.

If you have experience of this kind of work with young people – where they have helped to identify the issues, suggested solutions and perhaps been involved in the implementation of those solutions, then please let us know. We'd like to learn from your experiences! Contact jmcwhirter@rospa.com



Preparing children for life

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents is calling for a massive expansion in schemes which allow children to experience risk so that they will be better prepared for situations they face in later life.

Currently only about six per cent of primary school children visit a LASER scheme.

Errol Taylor, deputy chief executive of RoSPA, said: "This is far too low. It means thousands of children miss the opportunity to learn how to face challenges successfully and lead more enjoyable lives."

There are about 200 safety schemes across the UK which fall under the general LASER banner. Some are permanent centres and others are annual events. RoSPA worked with scheme providers to publish a set of LASER good practice guidelines and was then commissioned by the Department of Health to establish an accreditation service for safety projects across England.

Centres and schemes use realistic settings – such as road, garden, railway and building site scenes – to stress the importance of children taking more personal re-

sponsibility for their own safety and the safety of others, understanding risks; and learning how to cope when faced with dangerous or difficult circumstances.



Errol Taylor (above) spoke about "LASER and its contribution to risk literacy" at the recent launch of a paper on "Risk and Childhood" by Nicola Madge and John Barker at the RSA.

He welcomed the report which said that children needed to understand risk and how to cope with it if we want to develop enterprise and strengthen our economy. It said that often children were not provided with the opportu-

nities to take risks and so did not learn the necessary skills for successful risk-taking.

"RoSPA agrees with the recommendation that ways are found to give children the chance to make their own decisions about risk-taking as soon as they are competent and confident enough to do so," he said.

"LASER has an important role to play in this, but currently the majority of primary school children do not have

the chance to experience this way of learning through calculated risk-taking.

"We need Government, local authorities and all groups with an interest in children's education to help with funding and play their part in ensuring a greater provision of RoSPA-LASER-accredited schemes throughout the UK."

For more information about LASER schemes, see www.lasersafety.org.uk

Rangers get b

West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Safety Rangers scheme has received accreditation from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

The Leeds-based partnership scheme received the prestigious accreditation when RoSPA held its National LASER Forum at West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Birkenshaw headquarters in December.

More than 60 delegates from fire services, local authorities, the NHS, police, and

national government attended the event to celebrate the success of Safety Rangers.

Safety Rangers is a Leeds-

Year Five pupils receive certificate emblazoned with sheriff-style badge to certify they are a Safety Ranger

based multi-agency partnership scheme led by West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. Primary school children attend Stanningley, Gipton, Hunslet and Moortown fire stations, where they take part in activities such as calculating stopping distances when travelling in a car, escaping from a bedroom fire scenario, dialling 999 and talking about weapon awareness.

The courses also involve West Yorkshire Police, Leeds City Council, NHS, West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Initiative, British Transport Police, Asda and East North East Homes Leeds.

On completion of the course the Year Five pupils receive a certificate embla-





Stockport sets a first

Stockport's 'Crucial Crew' for children is the first annual safety event in the UK to be recognised nationally by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

Stockport's popular and long running annual event for 10-11 year olds will receive 'LASER' accreditation from RoSPA after it had met national quality standards covering partnership, programme management and evaluation.

Badges

zoned with a sheriff-style badge to confirm they are a Safety Ranger.

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West Yorkshire community fire safety officer and Safety Rangers co-ordinator, Shivdev Singh, said: "Safety Rangers is an ideal opportunity for all the agencies involved to have a lasting impact on the children in encouraging them to be safe in all aspects of their lives."

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Craig McIntosh, director of fire safety and community relations, said: "This is an enormously successful scheme because we are able to communicate important messages while the children are having fun. It is also an example of the excellent relationship we have with other emergency services and statutory bodies."

Tom Mullarkey presenting the certificate to Councillor Dave Goddard

Crucial Crew is aimed at children transferring to secondary schools and who are becoming more independent and experiencing new situations in life. More than 22,000 Stockport children have experienced the event since 1995.

Children learn to:

- React correctly to dangerous and threatening situations
- Avoid becoming the victim of an accident or crime
- Understand the role of the emergency services, and how and when to contact them
- Be aware of the consequences of their own actions on the safety of others
- Understand the importance of being a responsible member of society.

Issues covered include street robbery and personal safety, how to escape from a fire, basic first aid, dangers around railways, cycling safely, the effects of alcohol and smoking, age-restricted goods, and being aware of domestic violence and abuse.

Agencies involved include Greater Manchester Police, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust, British Transport Police, Stockport Primary Care NHS Trust, Stockport Women's Aid, as well as the council's road safety, trading standards, and children's and young people's directorate.

Dave Goddard, leader of Stockport Council, said: "We are delighted that Crucial Crew, is the first in the UK to be recognised in this way.

"Since 1995, more than 20,000 Stockport children have learnt crucial messages through interactive scenarios. It gives children an opportunity to develop confidence in their ability to deal with the threats and dangers they may come across. It also links in with the national curriculum, the Safer Communities programme and the Government's 'Every Child Matters' agenda."

Tom Mullarkey, chief executive of RoSPA said: "I am pleased and proud to be able to present Stockport with the UK's first LASER annual event accreditation. This is excellent news for Stockport. It will make children safer and parents more confident about their safety. It also says much for the excellent planning and commitment of the council, to whom we offer our congratulations."

There are around 200 safety schemes throughout England under the general LASER banner, and RoSPA was commissioned by the Department of Health to establish an accreditation service.

Accredited schemes can use the RoSPA/ LASER accreditation logo as a symbol of trustworthiness and quality.

For more information on the event visit www.stockport.gov.uk/crucialcrew and for more information on LASER schemes visit the website www.lasersafety.org.uk



Eight days in Telford

Eight days of interactive activities brought important safety messages alive for 1,000 children.

The Crucial Crew event, organised by Telford and Wrekin Safer Communities Partnership and sponsored by energy company E.ON, used a range of scenarios to increase the children's awareness of their own safety.

Home, road and leisure safety and personal security were covered in sessions led by various groups including West Mercia Constabulary, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service and HM Coastguard.

As current sponsor of the FA Cup, E.ON, which hosted the event in the grounds of Buildwas Abbey opposite Ironbridge Power Station, also made sure the famous trophy was on hand for photographs.

More than 15,000 young people have taken part in Telford and Wrekin's Crucial Crew event over the last 14 years.

Dee Murphy, children and



young people's development officer at Telford and Wrekin Council, who co-ordinates the event, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for young people to learn valuable safe-

ty skills in a completely interactive and participative way. Its continued success is due entirely to the commitment and enthusiasm of all of the volunteers, staff and partner

agencies involved."

Richard Pennells, plant manager at Ironbridge Power Station, said: "We're really proud to be involved with the Crucial Crew event. The programme is a real credit to the dedication and hard work of all those involved and it's great that, as a company, E.ON can use its resources and expertise to teach children life skills and vital messages which will help to keep them safe in the future."

Telford and Wrekin's annual Crucial Crew event is an example of a LASER (Learning About Safety by Experiencing Risk) scheme.

John Vallender, LASER programme manager at RoSPA, said: "Congratulations to everyone involved for another excellent event which once again demonstrated all the key elements of a good scheme, including positive partnership and support from local services and businesses, efficient programme management and effective learning by doing."



Flashpoint award marks 10 years of raising issues

Flashpoint Lifeskills Centre, based in Bodmin, has earned LASER accreditation from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, only the second centre in the country to do so.

The award is to recognise and assure educational excellence at the centre. In order to qualify for accredited status Flashpoint had to show good practice in the areas of partnerships, programme management and evaluation.

Flashpoint was set up by North Cornwall District Council 10 years ago and is one of only 11 permanent centres in Britain. It aims to reduce accidents by educating and raising awareness about safety issues in children, young people and adults who are taught safety skills through interaction and role play.

It operates in partnership principally with the county council, police and Environment Agency. Val Cox, chair of trustees and Mike East, who is director of technical services with North Cornwall District Council and also a



Ellen McConnell of Flashpoint, Cllr. Arwen Folkes of North Cornwall District Council, Peter Cornell, RoSPA head of leisure safety, and John Vallender, LASER programme manager at RoSPA.

trustee, are delighted with the centre's success and the recognition of the importance of the work done there.

Mike says: "It is a fantastic achievement for the Flashpoint centre to be given this award. My thanks go to the staff and volunteers

who are invaluable in the day to day running of the centre.

Visiting groups are given a hands on approach to understanding the dangers of every day life

"Last year we had more than 2,000 visitors, all of whom benefited from the experiences and information available at the centre."

Visiting groups are given a hands on approach to understanding the dangers of every day life through 12 interactive, life sized stage sets covering road, beach and fire safety, drugs and alcohol awareness, railways, flooding, personal protection, internet safety, crime prevention and making emergency calls.

The centre caters for a broad range of groups from

school children in Key Stage 2, to further education students, adults with learning difficulties, groups of elderly people, Beaver Scouts, Brownies and a host of others. New specialist courses

are currently being developed for secondary school students in the areas of flooding and personal safety.

The award was presented at a ceremony at the Centre in Bodmin in November.

Councillor Terry Lello, Cornwall County Council's lead member for children, young people and families said: "The Flashpoint Lifeskills Centre is a wonderful resource for Cornwall and its pioneering work has helped prevent thousands of accidents. Its work fits with the Staying Safe strand of the Government's Every Child Matters initiative and I hope that we can now all work together to ensure that it can continue to prevent accidents and save lives "



Police youth intervention officer Dave Buckland, Cllr Arwen Folkes, and John Vallender.

Challenging success

“Tension is rising in the auditorium as the score is displayed on the big screen. The six team final has gone to a tiebreaker with two teams on 39 points. Eight players strain their ears for the last but crucial question which will decide the winners. Cheers break out, especially from the winning team of four and their supporters in the audience.”

What kind of contest was this?

By Colin Morris

It was the national final of the Consumer Challenge Quiz 2006 for young people with learning difficulties. The highlights were filmed and edited by Mike Gutowski of Birmingham Trading Standards. This record has now become a regular feature of a highly successful venture to supply consumer knowledge to students who need it as a life

skill in today's fast-moving and highly commercial world.

From a humble beginning in 1998 with just three teams from Birmingham, word has spread and 27 local authorities entered in 2006. This increased to 35 in 2007 as more local authorities were keen to take part. Teachers and trading standards officers saw the value of introducing this

vital information in an exciting and very positive atmosphere.

Each year, organising the competition has become more complex. “We are victims of our own success,” said Mike, ruefully. “It’s a good problem but does demand a lot of time and effort to bring up to 200 young people with their teachers and learning assistants to a UK venue for a day full of competition.”





The competition has even attracted the support of a national celebrity, Liz Barclay from Radio 4's "You and Yours", who provides her services each year as the impartial inquisitor.

Birmingham Trading Standards had already established the Young Consumers of the Year Competition within mainstream schools. Following a conversation between their chairman and her friend who happened to be a special needs teacher, Birmingham trading standards responded to the request for a suitable competition for children with learning disabilities by devising the Consumer Challenge Quiz. It has now developed a refined process in which children experience achievement in a competitive atmosphere

and extend their knowledge of consumer rights and responsibilities.

The quiz is activity based with a high visual content recognizing the short attention span of the participants. There is no time limit for answering questions. Teams are allowed as long as they need. All the teams display their answer together – this means that each team can score

The quiz is activity based with a high visual content recognizing the short attention span of the participants

points on every question.

The questions and activities are designed to help young people to become better consumers through greater awareness of their rights and responsibilities as consumers.

Other benefits to the

youngsters have been the development of self-esteem and confidence. Solitary individuals have developed the ability to work in a team. Some of them have used the experience in presentations and job interviews. One school let spectators find their own way to the venue by bus thus providing another learning opportunity about independent travel.

Teachers were impressed with the huge amount their students had learned about consumer rights and the increase in confidence when making consumer decisions. Students gained much enjoyment from the whole day and appreciated the experience of genuine competition. "The quiz was really good, a bit tricky but good," said one.

New rules welcomed

After a decade of lobbying the UK's leading education insurer and risk manager, Zurich Municipal has welcomed new guidance launched by Schools Minister Jim Knight on the installation of sprinkler systems in schools.

In its guidance, "Design for Fire Safety in Schools", the Department for Children, Schools and Families states that all new schools will have sprinklers fitted as standard and that any exceptions to this will have to be justified by demonstrating that a school is low risk and the use of sprinklers will not be good value for money.

Zurich has been campaigning for this move in conjunction with the Chief Fire Officers Association, the Fire Protection Association and other industry bodies. Their representatives have been involved with the two DCSF working groups looking at the risk assessment tool and the cost benefit analysis.

In addition, Zurich Municipal has been working with educational advisors to de-

velop plans for preventing fire to try to educate young people in the dangers and consequences of arson. It also played a key role in generating the early day motion tabled by John Penrose MP earlier this year which was signed by more than 100 MPs.

It may be some time until the majority of schools are fitted with sprinklers

Currently around 2,000 schools in the UK are damaged by fire every year, of which 75 per cent are believed to have been caused by arson. Sprinklers are 99 per cent effective in controlling fires, so over the next 10-15 years as more schools are rebuilt or substantially refurbished there should be a significant reduction in the number and extent of school fires.

Larry Stokes, underwriting manager at Zurich Municipal and chair of the Arson Prevention Bureau's schools working group said: 'We wholeheartedly welcome this

move which we believe will significantly reduce the cost and ensuing disruption of fires in schools, ensuring that students will be safer and better protected than ever before.

'It may be some time until the majority of schools are fitted with sprinklers, so for its

part Zurich will be working with other stakeholders to tackle the grassroots problem of school fire by educating school-aged children about the dangers of deliberate fire setting.

'With new academies springing up across the country, and every school being rebuilt or refurbished under the Building Schools for the Future programme, this is the ideal time to start fitting schools with sprinklers. In recognition of the difference a sprinkler system can make, Zurich will be supporting all new schools and

academies fitted with sprinklers by offering significant reductions on their fire insurance premiums."

Figures released earlier this year by Zurich Municipal show that school fires cost the UK an estimated £74 million in 2006: an increase of £7 million since 2005. In the USA, where there are five times as many schools and where sprinkler systems are widespread, fire costs totalled just £50 million. Currently in the UK only one per cent of schools is fitted with a sprinkler system.

Toolkit I

Following increased fire safety awareness in schools and colleges an interactive toolkit has been launched to enable head teachers and the responsible person to comply with the new legislation.

Many schools and colleges are still unaware of the new legislation or do not understand their requirements. The Regulatory Reform Order 2005 now requires that the responsible person i.e. the head teacher or premises manager conducts and takes responsibility for fire safety requirements within the premises.

Regular inspections are carried out by the fire service to ensure requirements such as fire safety training and safety signs are in place. Fire certificates are no longer valid, and in fact, all previous fire safety legislation has now been replaced with the new order.

The new toolkit enables schools and colleges to conform to requirements without high costs and enables staff to be trained internally.

The toolkit comprises of a CD and DVD package to enable the head teacher or premises manager to comply



Cutting the toll



Pictures from Cambridge News

Every year there are between 1,400 and 1,800 fires in our primary and secondary schools, and the Arson Control Forum estimates that 43 per cent of schools in England and Wales suffered a fire in the last three years.

Organisations such as fire services, local authorities and the British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association have long been aware of the major long-term impact of a fire on a school and its local community.

New research undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research, and commissioned by the Local Government Association and BAFSA as part of its Wise up to Fire campaign highlights the extent and severity of these impacts.

The research involved in-depth interviews with school staff, pupils and their parents, and fire services from four schools in different parts of the country which had suffered fires in the last three years.

It explored how they felt the immediate and longer-term disruption had affected them emotionally and in their lives and learning opportunities; and what they thought about fire prevention and control measures which could be taken in the future. It also included a review of previous research and statistics to bring these together for the first time.

The review found that, while the measurable cost of arson attacks on schools in 2001 stood at £65 million, the real cost was nearer to £115 million; that nearly a third of all school fires start in school time, and that the education of around 90,000 children is affected by fire every year, with those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds suffering disproportionately.

Most importantly, the report has been able to measure for the first time the pre-



viously anecdotal evidence about the direct and indirect effects on the people involved.

Seventeen per cent of schools which had experienced a fire said it had led to a drop in staff morale; six per cent to reduced morale among pupils, and seven per cent had received negative publicity. There was also evidence of measurable damage to exam results, of lost school days, and irreplaceable pupil work.

The research also considered the factors which can reduce the cost of fire and specifically, at evidence relating to sprinkler systems and other preventative measures.

It found that there were a number of negative perceptions around the cost, reliability and damage caused by such systems, and that these were unsupported by any facts.

In reality, the cost of fitting a sprinkler system in a new school is a maximum of three per cent of total build (seven per cent if retro-fitted), and this can be recovered within five years through reduced insurance premiums. Losses in sprinklered buildings are 10 per cent of those in unprotected buildings; they never give false alarms; and only one in 14 million will discharge due to any defect.

However, the research

team also found that, once a school has been affected by fire and has experienced the destruction arising, it puts protection plans for the future as a top priority, and many schools would welcome more guidance and visits from the fire service.

Stewart Kidd, secretary general of BAFSA, welcomed the findings as being very significant both in adding to knowledge, and in alerting people to the dangers and solutions. "The conventional view that school fires only happen during holidays is shown to be dangerously incorrect, and we must take note of the serious possibility of casualties in the future," he said. "At last we have conclusive evidence of measurable impacts such as disruption to education, lowered exam results, poor morale, and effects on the local community as well as the school itself."

"BAFSA is concerned to note there are still myths about how sprinklers operate and their cost, and we will continue working with the fire service, Government and insurers to dispel these. This new research should prove a very effective weapon in the fight against fire, and against the misunderstandings about fire prevention which are still prevalent."

aunch

with all new requirements.

The toolkit also contains web links to the Disability Right's Commission's advice on fire evacuation; a link giving evacuation plan advice, plus a link to Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service's website – the lead authority for providing advice on the new legislation.

Additionally there are links to Teachernet and the document 'Managing School Environments'

The DVD enables training to take place without the requirement of a computer, not only can this protect data but enable new staff to be trained quickly and easily without disrupting other daily duties.

The toolkit has been purchased in bulk by numerous councils to implement within their schools and colleges including Bournemouth Borough Council who were so impressed they commissioned the toolkit for Fire Safety in Places of Assembly.

For further information or to purchase the toolkit visit www.means-of-escape.com or email georgie.knight@means-of-escape.com

Taking the right steps

An innovative new road safety training programme, entitled "A step in the right direction" is helping people with learning difficulties to lead fuller and more rewarding lives within the community.

The training programme, devised by the Somerset Road Safety Partnership, provides them with the road safety skills to travel inde-

pendently and safely to their place of employment, college, training centre or leisure venues.

These skills are developed, in a safe environment, through the use of multimedia learning with video and computer interactivity, with students gaining "en route" certificates – at bronze, silver and gold levels.

Dick Bowen, the manager of the Somerset Road safety partnership, said: "It is a comprehensive road safety training package which takes account of all the needs of people with learning difficulties.

"The students' success can be measured and their carers



can feel confident in supporting people to be more independent.

"Lack of road skills is no longer a barrier to employment and, more importantly, trainees are safer than before when accessing facilities within their local community."

The need for the specialised training programme was recognised after a number of calls from social workers around Somerset asking about the availability of road safety training for people with learning difficulties.

The past two decades have seen the integration of people with learning difficulties into the community following the closure of many hospitals and specialised units.

Research showed that most of the available road safety training material was not suitable. WS Atkins Consultants Ltd (Somerset road safety) worked with staff in the learning disability field to produce a training package with a pilot project being run at the Frome Enterprise Centre. The interactive elements of the programme were developed by students and staff at the material production unit at Somerset College in Taunton.

Nothing like "A step in the right direction" has existed before despite the obvious need. The programme is not area-specific and could be used by trainers anywhere in the country.

It is a valuable life skills resource which will assist not only those involved with the care of clients with learning disabilities but will also be useful to teachers following the National Curriculum at Key Stages One and Two as well as Special Educational Needs Provision.

Car seat is a design winner

A design for an automatic child car booster seat won three Loughborough students a place in the final of an international competition.

The second Student Safety Technology Design Competition was hosted by the 20th International Technical Conference on the Enhanced Safety of Vehicles. Young scholars from North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific have an opportunity to design, build, and demonstrate a cost

effective conceptual scale model of a vehicle safety technology.

To enter the contest students had to come up with a design which focuses on a real-world vehicle safety problem, and one which aims to reduce the number of crashes and/or mitigating the resulting injuries and preventing fatalities caused by vehicle collisions.

The design by Pinar Boyraz, a PhD student in mechatronics, and mechanical engineer-

ing undergraduates Joanna Styles and Jonathan Bennett was for an automated car child restraint system.

The system forms part of a regular car seat, which automatically transforms into a booster seat when a child is placed on it. Sensors are used to detect the child occupant and make the necessary seat changes to safely restrain it, including seat height adjustment and side protection cushions.

The mechanism is completely retractable so an adult can also use the seat at any time. Speaking about their design the Loughborough team said: "In September 2006 the law regarding child restraint in vehicles changed. The new laws enforce the use of restraints or booster seats for children until they reach the age of 12. We believe that our design would make using a booster seat easier for parents and fun for children."

Dr Memis Acar, who supervised the students' entry in the competition said: "All the team members worked hard to design and build the automatic child restraint system which I proposed to them, and duly deserved their place in the international finals. The concept that they have demonstrated in this design should help to reduce injuries and fatalities among child passengers. Before long we will see this concept used in cars."

Farm's award

An innovative scheme to promote farm safety in Northumberland's rural communities has been nominated for a prestigious national award that aims to improve the lives of children and young people in the United Kingdom.

Northumberland's Fire and Rescue Service teamed up with Berwick upon Tweed Borough Council, SureStart, Northumbria Police and the National Farmer's Union earlier in 2007 to form a Farm Safety Working Group. The group aim to raise awareness of the risks and dangers on farms so that it can help reduce accidental injury and death in the rural setting.

Last summer, the group produced a series of special farm safety advice booklets. Each booklet has a specific

theme covering farm fire safety, children's farm safety and general farm safety.

More than 500 farms and more than 400 holiday properties in rural north Northumberland have now received the booklets, and soon leaflets will also be distributed in the Tyne Valley. Now the farm safety advice booklets have been short-listed in The Stay Safe category of the National Children and Young People's Services Awards.

Mark McCarty, station manager at Berwick Fire Station explains the importance of the scheme: "We know that farms can be dangerous places whether you are a child or an adult. Each year firefighters are called to around 60 incidents on farms in Northumberland."



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