

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	CSC/24/17
MEETING	COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	13 DECEMBER 2024
SUBJECT OF REPORT	PREVENTION ROAD SAFETY ACTIVITY
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Director of Service Delivery
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted by the Committee.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This paper explains activity delivered by the Community Risk Road Safety Team at local, regional and national level
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	As referred to in section 4.
BACKGROUND PAPERS	None.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service ('the Service') prevention activity is designed to help mitigate risk to communities and to operational crews by reducing the number of emergency incidents and the severity of these incidents through various interventions.
- 1.2 The Service attend around 850 Road traffic collisions (RTCs) per year. Unfortunately, this includes incidents where people have sustained serious and sometimes fatal injuries, 50% of these incidents include a requirement for people to be extricated from vehicles.
- 1.3 This report outlines the current activity being carried out by the Community Safety Road Safety Team and advocates.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2023 (latest figures available) 1,789 people were killed in road traffic collisions in Great Britain. In addition to the loss of life, 25,892 serious road traffic collisions were reported to the police and 128,209 casualties of all severities in the same year. The overwhelming majority of these incidents were preventable.
- 2.2 Keeping road users safe is a huge challenge in our area. Devon and Somerset have one of the largest road networks in the UK which is used by thousands of visitors every year alongside our resident communities.
- 2.3 In Devon and Somerset over a period of 4 years, from 2018 to 2022 (most recently available data), the police reported 3,387 road users had sustained a serious injury (many life-changing) and 252 people being tragically killed.
- 2.4 There is a very strong economic argument for reducing RTCs, the latest government estimates suggest that a fatal RTC costs society over £2.5 million per collision. This includes, but is not limited to, the costs for emergency services to respond, cost of road closures and highways traffic management, ongoing family liaison support, collision investigation, and ongoing health support for those involved.

Notable RTC insights

- 2.5 There is often an assumption that many RTCs in our service area are due to the influx of tourists who are attracted to our counties. In fact, analysis of the data reveals that the overwhelmingly majority of collisions involve local people close to their home. Recent data from Vision Zero South West found that over ninety percent of resident casualties are injured locally on the peninsula's roads, a much higher rate than most other parts of Britain. Furthermore, 75% of all injury car collisions take place within 9 miles of a person's home. The fact that so many RTC's involve local people on local roads means that we are well placed to 'reach' this target audience with our important safety messages.

- 2.6 RTCs are a leading cause of deaths for younger people. Compared to the population at large, car occupant fatality rates per million population are particularly high for 17 to 24 year olds. Between 2018 and 2021 (most recent data available at time of publication), the number of young people aged between 17 and 24 killed in reported in RTCs was 1,031, with over 106,000 young casualties of all severities reported by Police in the UK.

3. WHO DO WE TARGET

- 3.1 In line with the Prevention Fire Standard, we work with partners to identify and target our prevention activities in an inclusive way to those who are most at risk, and, where our activity will therefore have the greatest impact on the safety and wellbeing of our communities.
- 3.2 The Service have historically, and continue to, concentrate on two of these groups, motorcyclists and younger drivers and their passengers. National and regional data show that both groups are overrepresented in RTCs. Risk reduction activity for other at-risk road groups including older drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, people who drive for work etc. are led by other road safety partners e.g. Local Authorities, Police etc.
- 3.3 The Services road safety team have developed significant knowledge and expertise in designing and delivering interventions aimed at these two target groups. In recognition of this, the Service currently holds the position of Young Driver thematic lead for both the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) , and Vision Zero South West. The team are also representing Powered Two Wheelers at a national level.

4. WHAT DO THE ROAD SAFETY TEAM DO

Leading the way

- 4.1 The Service Road Safety Team are recognised as ‘experts’ in the field of road safety prevention. Our Team currently holds the following positions: NFCC National Lead for Young Drivers (16–24-year-olds) Road Safety; NFCC Regional Road safety lead for the Southwest, Vision Zero South West (Young driver thematic lead), NFCC National Road Safety Board member; National Drive Fit steering group board member, National Young Rider Forum Board member.

Local work

- 4.2 The team work closely with our road safety partners to target risk reduction activities in local communities. This can involve working alongside other blue light services to deliver education to road users or working with local community groups to reduce road risk in their communities.

Regional work

- 4.3 The Service are a Vision Zero South West Road Safety Partner. We work collaboratively with Somerset Road Safety and Avon and Somerset Police to deliver road risk reduction activity throughout the Service area.

National work

- 4.4 The Service have led and delivered several national road safety projects including Survive the Drive (Military intervention), and MyRedThumb. As the current Young Driver lead for the NFCC, Annabelle Priest has worked with industry experts from across the country to develop and deliver a national toolkit which is accessible to all FRS's and other blue light services.

5. AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- 5.1 The Road Safety team were nominated for two National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) awards in 2024 for Road Safety. The DSFRS Road Safety Team were finalists, but the winner of the prestigious award went to Annabelle Priest (DSFRS Road Safety Officer) for her national work in developing a national toolkit for all Fire and Rescue Services across the UK. This toolkit model is now being expanded to other road user groups e.g. motorcyclists.
- 5.2 The Road Safety Team were asked to join Dr Elizabeth Box (Leading Road Safety Academic, RAC Foundation) in June where she received the Prince Michael of Kent award for her Pre-driver Education research. DSFRS were integral to the delivery of this piece of work being one of two Fire and Rescue Services across the country who involved in the project.
- 5.3 The Road Safety Team were recently recognised at the Services People Awards. Including being Highly Commended in the 'Working together' Category. James Warner, one of the road safety officers, was the winner of the 'Unsung hero' award.
- **Award winning interventions** – the list below describes some of the risk reduction interventions delivered by DSFRS Road Safety Team.
 - **Learn2Live** – Since 2008 DSFRS have been instrumental in developing and delivering an award winning Learn2Live education programme targeted at sixth form students across the service area. The programme is aimed specifically at young people/new drivers and passengers of new drivers. This programme of delivery is constantly evolving in light of new and emerging research that informs the best way of increasing the efficacy of this intervention. To date Learn2Live has been delivered to over 200,000 young people locally.
 - **Survive the Drive** Building on the success and expertise from delivering Learn2Live DSFRS were approached by the Ministry of Defence to collaborate on the development of an effective road safety education programme aimed at military personnel. Survive the Drive was developed by DSFRS working in collaboration with Dorset and Wiltshire FRS and Ministry of Defence. Since its development, Survive the Drive has been rolled out to thousands of military staff locally, nationally and internationally by the MOD.

- **Biker Down** - DSFRS have worked hard to develop an effective and trusted relationship amongst the biker community over the past 8 years through delivery of the national Biker Down programme. DSFRS have a small Bike advocate team who deliver these free workshops to motorcyclists throughout Devon and Somerset designed to teach life-saving skills to keep them and other road users safe. DSFRS Biker Down has been recognised nationally as delivering best practice and have hosted other services to our events to demonstrate what and how we deliver. We have provided support to the London Fire Brigade (LFB), as well as Avon Fire & Rescue, Cornwall FRS, Somerset Road Safety, Gloucester FRS, and others to launch their Biker Down activity. Since 2015 DSFRS have delivered Biker Down workshops to 2,000 motorcyclists throughout the service area
- **Route based interventions** – DSFRS work with partners to deliver engagement interventions targeting motorists who are travelling on high-risk routes. During this intervention we deliver education with the aim of raising risk awareness of the local road network, encouraging positive rider behaviour, and teaching risk reduction strategies.

6. **WORKING WITH PARTNERS**

- 6.1 **Vision Zero South West (VZSW).** DSFRS are a strategic partner with Vision Zero South West (VZSW) – working with organisations across Devon and Cornwall towards a shared approach towards RTC reduction. VZSW have evidence-based approach at the heart of everything they do. VZSW have a goal of reducing fatal RTC's by 50% by 2030, and elimination of death on the roads by 2040.
- 6.2 **West of England Road Safety Partnership (Avon and Somerset Police area).** Like Vision Zero South West there is a drive to establish a formalised road safety partnership that includes all stakeholders within the Avon and Somerset Police force area. To date this formal partnership has not been fully established. However, DSFRS work closely with Somerset Road Safety Team (Somerset County Council), and Avon and Somerset Police to share data and intelligence, and to deliver collaborative risk reduction activity.

7. **FINANCE**

- 7.1 There is a very strong economic argument for investing resources into reducing RTCs.
- 7.2 The latest government estimates suggest that a fatal RTCs cost society well over £2.5 million per collision. This includes, but is not limited to, the costs for emergency services to respond, cost of road closures and highways traffic management, ongoing family liaison support, collision investigation, and ongoing health support for those involved.
- 7.3 Through successful funding bids to VZSW DSFRS have secured over £150K in the past 4 years to fund road safety activity. This includes significant funding of

the Learn2Live road safety campaign, and the recent acquisition of a new Ford Mustang GT electric engagement vehicles. We are in the process of bidding for further funds to enhance our delivery for 2025/26.

8. EVALUATION

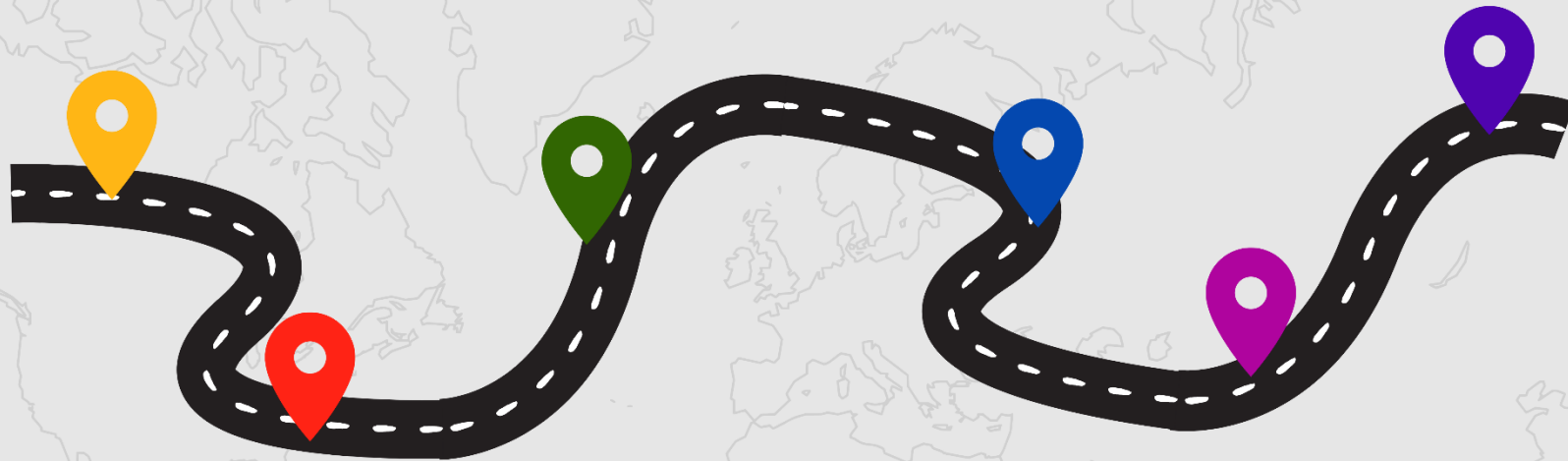
- 8.1 As part of the Safe Systems approach, we aim to reduce the number of serious and fatal RTC's on our local road networks through the design and delivery of our road safety interventions. [Safe System - PACTS](#)
- 8.2 Like most prevention activities the impact of our work is often difficult to quantify since we are trying to stop events from happening in the first place - it is difficult to measure something that has not happened. We are unlikely to be able to directly attribute cause and effect to our interventions at this level. We can however demonstrate our use of evidence based best practice delivered to our target audiences. We place a high importance of being able to evaluate our interventions and have a strong history of working closely with academics and researchers to understand the impact of what we deliver.
- 8.3 The Service are currently working on several evaluation projects with industry experts:
- Biker Down – 2-year evaluation being conducted by Agilysis – Spring 2025
 - Learn2Live Theatre style intervention being conducted by e-Driving Solutions Ltd – Winter 2024.
 - Learn2Live Crash car investigation being conducted by e-Driving Solutions Ltd – Winter 2024.

9. THE FUTURE OF ROAD SAFETY

- 9.1 A roadmap outlining the future of road safety is provided at Appendix A of this report.

DCFO GERALD TAYLOR
Director of Service Delivery

THE FUTURE OF DSFRS ROAD SAFETY



COLLABORATION

Working with the Prevention department, DSFRS teams, partner organisations, academics and our communities

EVALUATION

Ensuring we plan our activity using a strategic approach that is evidence based, data driven, and evaluated

DELIVERY

Delivering interventions to our communities where the risk is greatest

FUNDING

Proactively seeking funding from outside of DSFRS to support our road safety activity

INNOVATION

Seeking innovative and creative methods to achieve our goals

LEADERSHIP

Leading the road safety sector from national positions such as the NFCC.