



DORSET POLICE & CRIME PANEL – 29 SEPTEMBER 2022

ROAD SAFETY

PURPOSE

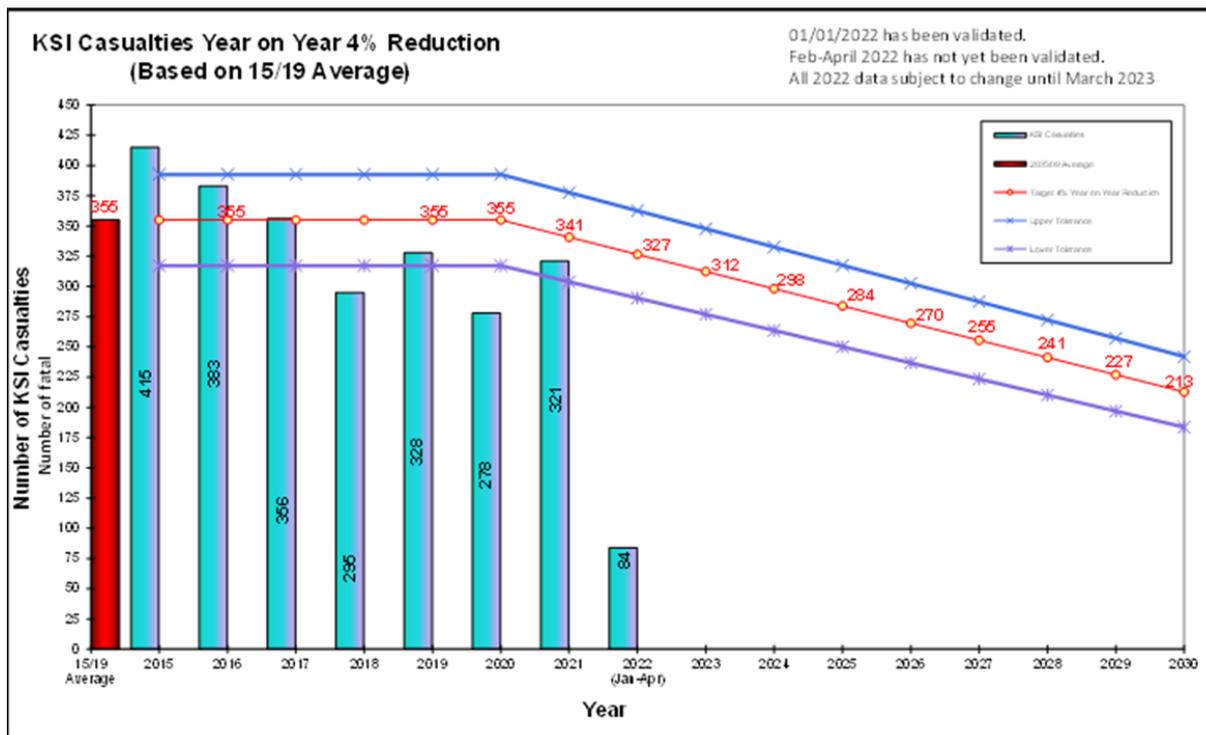
This paper updates members on the Police and Crime Commissioner's work on road safety.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The PCC is committed to reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on Dorset's roads, and road safety is a key theme in the Police and Crime Plan 2021-29. The PCC works closely with Dorset Police and Dorset Road Safe (DRS) and is a member of the Dorset Strategic Road Safety Partnership (DSRSP). The PCC has undertaken a considerable level of engagement with road safety and residents' groups, as well as town and parish councils, regarding road safety since taking office.
- 1.2 Road safety casualty reduction is high on the agenda and the DRS partners aim to reduce the number of KSIs on the county's roads by a further 40% compared to the baseline. DRS has a vision of zero KSIs by 2050.
- 1.3 Road safety is a complex, demanding and constantly changing area of business. Advances in technology and changes in driver behaviour challenge existing processes and safety on our roads, and it is for this reason that road safety needs constant vigilance and enhancement.
- 1.4 The Police and Crime Panel last received an update on road safety in July 2021, and that paper provided an overview on road safety and casualty reduction. The paper explained the approach to road safety using the 4Es: engagement, education, engineering, and enforcement. This paper provides an update.

2. PERFORMANCE

- 2.1 The number of road casualties in Dorset continues to be broadly stable, while other areas in the country are seeing an increase. Dorset has a proactive and efficient road safety partnership, and it is through partnership working that the casualty reduction benefits can be seen.
- 2.2 The graph below shows the number of KSI casualties by year. The target, from 2020 onwards, is a 4% year-on-year reduction, based on a five-year average from 2015 to 2019 (shown by the red line in the graph below). The target for the number of KSIs for both 2020 and 2021 was achieved, but it is recognised that there were periods of COVID-19 restriction which will have limited roads use. The blue line shows the upper tolerance, and the purple line (lower line) shows the lower tolerance.



- 2.3 Driver education is a key function of casualty reduction, and the successful Driver Awareness Scheme (DAS) course continues to re-educate drivers. During COVID-19 restrictions, the DAS course was delivered online, Dorset being the first in the country to do this. Post COVID-19 restrictions, the DAS course is available in both online and classroom formats, which vastly improves accessibility of the course, especially for non-Dorset residents.
- 2.4 From January to December 2021, 24,939 people attended the DAS course. Attendees during 2022 so far, are on par with the 2021 figure and the number of attendees by the end of the year are likely to increase.
- 2.5 The PCC continues to support the summer and winter drink/drug drive campaigns. This year's summer campaign focused on 'planning to end your night out safely'. As the PCC has set out a vision for Dorset to be the safest county, the message from the PCC was focused on encouraging people to plan ahead and get home safe, as well as a reminder of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act which meant tougher sentences for dangerous driving. The OPCC Communications Team shared Dorset Police's tips, advice and information about road safety on social media, and encouraged people to follow the campaign through the hashtag #WhosGonnaDriveYouHome.
- 2.6 The focus on drink/drug driving continues throughout the year and from January to December 2021, there were 656 drink drive related arrests, 43 arrests for drivers failing to provide a breath sample and 280 drug driving related arrests.
- 2.7 The PCC continues to fully support DRS and actively engages on the various DRS initiatives and campaigns. This includes: drink/driving, e-scooters, STEPs (Safe Training Education for Pedestrians, which teaches primary school children how to cross the road safely), Project Edward (Every Day Without A Road Death), Bike Safe, Doc Bike (motorcycle safety), No excuse, Op Dragoon (the Force's operational response to prolific offenders who pose a risk on the road), and the DAS course. No Excuse and Roads Policing is strongly supported by the PCC and the PCC has recently had the opportunity to join both teams on their operations.

3. LOCAL UPDATES AND CHALLENGES

Funding

- 3.1 Road Safety enforcement is extremely resource intensive. As has been well documented, from 2010, local authority funding into Dorset Road Safe reduced year on year and, for several years now, no local authority funding has been provided to Dorset Road Safe. This reduction in investment resulted in significant spending cuts within the partnership – with the result being a significantly reduced capability for public communications and detailed intelligence and analysis work.
- 3.2 Nevertheless, Dorset Road Safe is a very strong road safety partnership. Considerable effort has been invested over the years to ensure the continuation of the partnership, with a focus on the individual expertise each individual partner can bring to the table. Dorset has a partnership that can deliver a range of interventions to contribute to the aim of safer roads in Dorset. The trend in road traffic collisions continues with a downward trajectory which results in a reduction in the number of people injured on our roads.
- 3.3 The PCC liaises with the local authority road safety portfolio leads, and relevant agencies, to manage road safety issues that are raised by members of the public. The local authority portfolio leads are also invited to attend the DSRSP meetings that are held bi-annually.
- 3.4 Naturally, the PCC continues to work with the Force and partners to explore ways in which additional resourcing can be made available, so that additional investment can be made available for this critical area of business and so that the Vision Zero initiative can be met.

Community Speed Watch

- 3.5 Community Speed Watch (CSW) enables trained members of the public to address speeding issues by using speed detection equipment to monitor speeds from safe locations. CSW is supported by TRUCam which is enforcement carried out by the DRS camera team and results in Notice of Intended Prosecutions (speeding fines).
- 3.6 During the COVID-19 restrictions, CSW ceased in-line with government advice on isolation and social distancing rules. CSW resumed after the restrictions were lifted, but has faced challenges, as many of the volunteers are classed as medically vulnerable, which resulted in some caution and reluctance to carry on as they had done prior to the advent of the pandemic.

Both the PCC and the CSW lead have been actively encouraging volunteering for CSW by attending promotional events over the year, local community fetes, PCC events and parish council events in order to engage with our communities at a local level to encourage CSW volunteering.

- 3.7 The OPCC has been working with the CSW Lead to increase the numbers of volunteers and CSW groups by promoting CSW through our social media channels and suggesting new and innovative ways to engage with social groups in Dorset to recruit volunteers. CSW is regaining traction and Dorset currently has 86 teams and this continues to increase.
- 3.8 In 2021, between April and July, 531 CSW visits to the roadside took place (155,531 vehicles monitored; 3,704 first letters; 87 second letters; and 2 third letters issued), in 2022 between April and July, this figure increased to 623 roadside visits (188,207 vehicles monitored; 4,463 first letters; 220 second letters; and 18 third letters issued). This is fantastic work carried out by the CSW volunteers and helps support the overall objective to reduce collisions and casualties on Dorset's roads.

E-Scooter Safety

- 3.9 The Government e-scooter trial is currently active across 30 areas in England, including in the BCP council area. The trial started in July 2020 and was scheduled to end on 30 November 2022. In July 2022, the Department for Transport (DfT) extended the e-Scooter trial end date to May 2024. DfT will also allow areas to end schemes after November if they choose to do so.
- 3.10 In January 2021, the Beryl BCP scheme expanded to include the hire of e-scooters and after several incidents being reported involving e-scooters, the PCC contacted the Beryl scheme lead, raising concerns of e-scooter safety and governance. In particular, the PCC raised the point that the original complaints process did not appear to be especially clear or accessible to the public. The Beryl scheme lead provided a comprehensive response to the PCC outlining the procedures in place, safety of e-scooter operations and management of the Beryl scheme. A complaints phone number was subsequently publicised. Good governance is in place and there are proactive links with Dorset Police and stakeholders to monitor safety. The Beryl response addressed many of the PCC's concerns, although he believes that it should be easier to identify the individual vehicles.
- 3.11 As seen in other areas across the country, Dorset continues to see the illegal use of e-scooters, which raises concerns for the safety of all road users, including the e-scooter rider. In the last 12 months, the PCC has robustly issued messaging around the use of e-scooters and has discussed this issue in depth with the Chief Constable. The PCC fully supports the Dorset Police publicity, engagement and enforcement of illegal e-scooter use. Dorset Police issue regular stark warnings to e-scooter riders via media channels to ensure that people are aware of when and where they can use e-scooters.
- 3.12 The Queen's Speech on 10 May 2022 announced the Government's intention to introduce legislation on the future of transport. One aim of the anticipated Transport Bill will be to create a new regime for regulating 'micromobility'. The DfT anticipate using the powers within the Bill to subsequently create regulations that will legalise e-scooters, but under new rules. These rules would include robust technical requirements and, most likely, a set of directions for users.

4. NATIONAL UPDATES AND CHALLENGES

Substance Misuse and Drug Driving

- 4.1 As Co-Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioner's Addiction and Substance Misuse Portfolio, the PCC has continued to raise awareness around the dangers of illegal substance abuse – both for the user and the wider public. This has included the issue of drug driving.
- 4.2 Following the publication of the Government's From Harm to Hope Strategy, a white paper ('Swift, Certain, Tough: New Consequences for Drug Possession') and accompanying consultation was issued in July. This white paper sets out a proposed new approach to tackling adult drug possession offences by casual users through an escalatory system of sanctions. This system would operate at scale to reach more users and is intended to help police officers and courts to bring to bear relevant and tough sanctions which aim to change behaviour and make drug misuse less acceptable.
- 4.3 In response to the Home Office's publication of the white paper, the Addictions and Substance Misuse Portfolio and the Criminal Justice Portfolio distributed a smaller set of consultation questions to collect feedback from PCCs on how these new consequences could affect policing in their areas. This will assist the portfolio areas in understanding the full range of views about the proposals.
- 4.4 One of consequences being consulted upon under this proposed system is the confiscation of offenders' driving licences. The PCC has responded to support this particular proposal as part of a wider set of sanctions.

National Collision Investigation Branch

- 4.5 In June 2022, the Government launched the country's first ever investigation branch focused on road safety. The decision to establish a new branch followed a public consultation, which showed overwhelming support for the creation of such a branch, as well as for its powers and responsibilities. The OPCC provided a consultation response in support of the Road Safety Investigation Branch (RSIB).
- 4.6 The RSIB will consist of a specialised team of inspectors (similar to rail, air and maritime investigation branches) and will make independent safety recommendations and shape future road safety policy by investigating incidents on the country's roads. The specialised unit will also provide vital insight into safety trends related to new and evolving technologies, which could include self-driving vehicles, e-scooters and electric vehicles, to ensure the country maintains some of the highest road safety standards in the world and exciting new technology is deployed safely.
- 4.7 The RSIB will not identify blame or liability and so does not replace a local police investigation. The RSIB will be working nationally drawing on all the available local evidence to make recommendations to improve road safety and mitigate or prevent similar incidents in the future.
- 4.8 The RSIB is funded by Department for Transport and currently local data and evidence is collated from around the country using in-depth study programmes, forensic collision investigation reports, Prevention of Future Death reports and the Collision Reporting and Sharing System. The Government expects the RSIB to use this data alongside that from insurance companies, vehicle manufacturers, the emergency services and the NHS to deepen the body of evidence on incident causes and improve road safety interventions even further nationwide.
- 4.9 The PCC welcomes this development and looks forward to seeing the benefits that the RSIB will hopefully bring to road safety.

5. SUMMARY

- 5.1 The PCC is committed to reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on Dorset's roads and good progress has been made throughout the last year in this area. The PCC and his office will continue to work with the Force and partners to ensure that further successes are realised.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the report.

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