



POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 9 OCTOBER 2025

ROAD SAFETY UPDATE: OPERATION SNAP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on Operation Snap (Op Snap), Dorset Police's initiative enabling the public to submit video or photographic evidence of dangerous or careless driving. Managed by Dorset Road Safe (DRS), Op Snap supports the wider work of improving road safety and reducing deaths and serious injuries on Dorset's roads.

Since its launch, submissions to Op Snap have risen significantly year on year, from 647 in 2020 to 2,764 in 2024, reflecting both increased public awareness and wider use of dashcams and helmet cameras. Enforcement outcomes have also improved: the proportion of submissions leading to positive action – such as prosecution, fixed penalties, or driver education – rose from 27% in 2020 to 43% in 2024. Overall, 3,715 road users have faced consequences ranging from warning letters to court prosecution, contributing to deterrence and behaviour change.

Road safety efforts focus on tackling the “Fatal Five” causes of serious collisions: drink and drug driving, speeding, seatbelt non-use, mobile phone distraction, and careless or inconsiderate driving. Evidence from Op Snap complements enforcement by Roads Policing and the “No Excuse” team, while also empowering communities to play a proactive role in road safety. Educational measures, such as driver awareness courses offer drivers opportunities to improve behaviour.

Despite its successes, Op Snap faces key challenges. Processing submissions is resource-intensive, yet there is no dedicated team; staff from the Central Ticket Office and Driver Awareness Scheme carry out this work alongside core duties, with occasional support from specialist officers. High volumes of submissions cannot always be processed promptly, and evidential thresholds – particularly in “close pass” incidents involving cyclists – can be difficult to meet. Furthermore, Dorset Police cannot routinely update every submitter on outcomes, sometimes leading to frustration among the public.

Financial and staffing constraints remain significant. Without additional investment, Dorset Police must continue prioritising resources based on the greatest risks, which limits Op Snap's capacity. However, opportunities may exist to improve efficiency through automation and artificial intelligence, alongside clearer public guidance to reduce low-quality submissions.

Looking ahead, the forthcoming Strategic Assessment of Dorset's collisions and casualties will inform the revision of the Road Safety Delivery Plan, prioritising the most pressing risks and aligning with the Vision Zero ambition.

In conclusion, Op Snap is a valuable, community-driven initiative that has grown substantially in volume. While resourcing challenges persist, the scheme makes a meaningful contribution to improving driver behaviour, holding offenders accountable, and supporting Dorset's wider road safety objectives.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This paper provides an update on the work of Operation Snap within Dorset Police. This paper also seeks to address the following five Key Lines of Enquiry:

- I. What resources (staff, training, digital tools) are dedicated to Operation Snap, and does the PCC believe that the current model is sustainable given increasing public submissions and expectations?*
- II. How accessible and user-friendly is the Operation Snap reporting process for members of the public, and what steps has the Force and PCC taken to promote awareness and participation across all communities in Dorset?*
- III. What proportion of Operation Snap submissions result in enforcement action, and how does the Force balance activity against other road safety demands?*
- IV. What measurable impact has Operation Snap had on improving road safety and driver behaviour in Dorset since its implementation? How does this fit into the broader road safety strategy and the PCC's Police and Crime Plan?*
- V. How are results communicated to the public and what challenges and opportunities for the service has the PCC identified?*

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Operation Snap (Op Snap) is an initiative delivered by several police forces, providing a dedicated channel for members of the public to submit video or photographic evidence of dangerous or poor driving behaviour. Such footage may be captured by members of the public using dashcams, helmet cameras, mobile phones, or similar recording devices.
- 2.2 The purpose of Op Snap is to gather evidence of driving offences, to hold those who put others at risk legally accountable, and to protect vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists, who are at greater risk of serious injury.
- 2.3 Op Snap aims to positively influence future driving behaviour. For less serious offences, drivers may be offered an educational course as an alternative to a fine and penalty points. Through educational courses, drivers are given the opportunity to learn why their behaviour was dangerous, helping them improve their driving skills and attitudes. It further aims to empower members of the public to report driving offences they witness, acting as extra eyes and ears for the police. Op Snap complements all other road safety activity in Dorset by acting against dangerous or bad drivers.
- 2.4 In Dorset, the Op Snap scheme is managed by Dorset Police's Dorset Road Safe (DRS) department. Performance is driven by the commitment and effort of staff across DRS and Dorset Police Roads Policing teams. The administration of Op Snap is not a designated role within the Force establishment. During 2024/25, Op Snap processing was undertaken by Driver Awareness Scheme (DAS) Tutors and Central Ticket Office (CTO) staff outside of their normal core enforcement processing or education remit. Additional support is provided from No Excuse officers at times of particularly high demand.
- 2.5 This paper will outline the current use of Op Snap by Dorset Police and how it complements the wider road safety partnership effort – while also addressing the above-mentioned Key Lines of Enquiry.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Op Snap is just one of many tools and initiatives helping to make Dorset's roads safer.

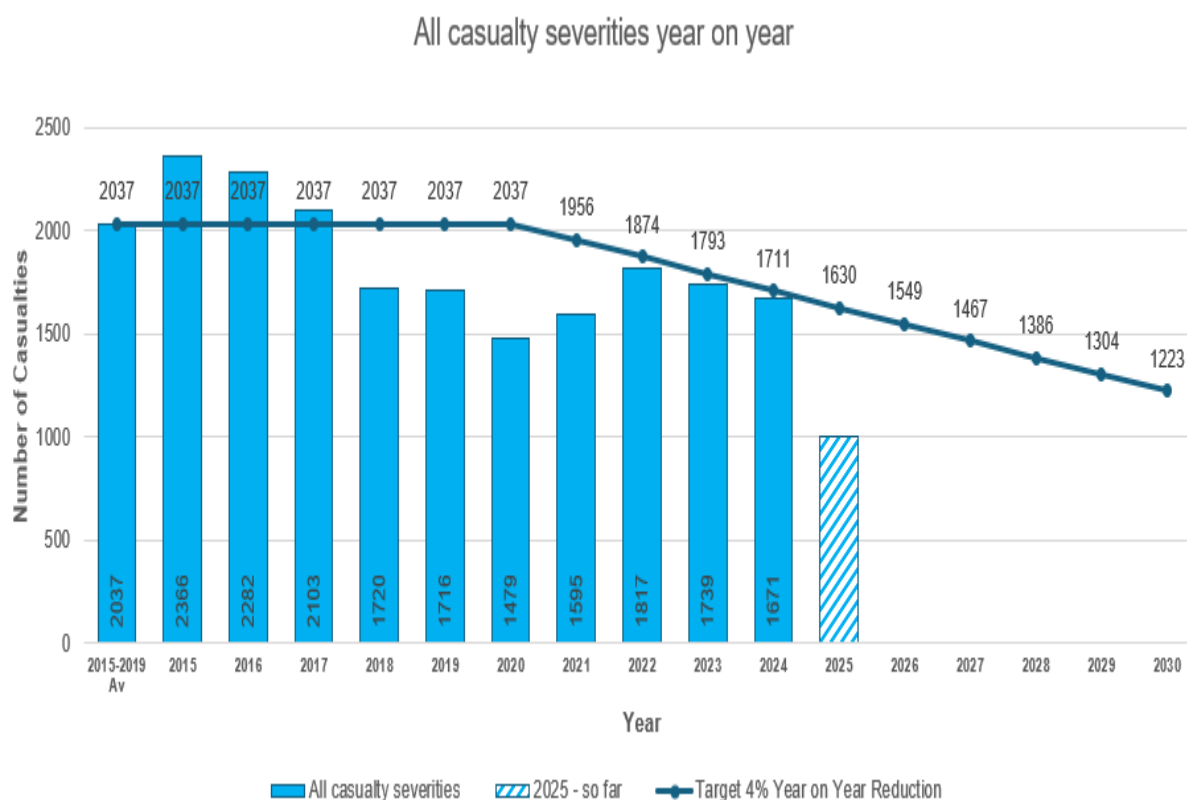
- 3.2 The Police and Crime Panel receives quarterly updates on key road safety developments, alongside headline performance figures for those killed or seriously injured (KSIs) at each Panel meeting. The Panel has also received more detailed reports on road safety in September 2022 and July 2021. These papers explained several of the core concepts underpinning the approach to road safety (such as the 4Es: engagement, education, engineering, and enforcement), as well as outlining many of the tools and initiatives in place.

Dorset Police and Crime Plan 2021-29

- 3.3 The PCC is committed to reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSIs) on Dorset's roads, and road safety is a key theme in the Police and Crime Plan 2021-29. The theme of Road Safety sits under the priority to Cut Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour and contains several commitments relevant to Op Snap, including to 'continue with proactive safety and awareness raising...', 'ensure Dorset Police uses the tools and powers at their disposal to protect all of Dorset's road users' and to 'support and promote educational and diversionary road safety schemes'.
- 3.4 Alongside these direct commitments, the Police and Crime Plan clearly articulates the PCC's philosophy to collaborate with partner organisations and public to ensure that all agencies and communities work together to make Dorset a safer place. Initiatives such as Op Snap – in which members of the public step forward to report wrongdoing and submit evidence to the police – is very much in keeping with that philosophy.
- 3.5 The PCC works closely with Dorset Police and DRS and is a member of the Dorset Strategic Road Safety Partnership (DSRSP). Since taking office in 2021, 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. He continues to regularly communicate about road safety matters, including Op Snap, and has championed many road safety campaigns.

Local Strategy and Context

- 3.6 The DSRSP Road Safety Strategy sets out the aims and priorities to reduce KSIs in Dorset through collaborative efforts from partners. This uses a risk-based approach, employing engineering, engagement, education, and enforcement to create safer road systems. It involves a continuous assessment, utilising data and intelligence to inform decision-making and focuses resources on high-risk areas, ultimately striving to meet specific casualty reduction targets. The DSRSP is committed to achieve this through the delivery of a coordinated, prioritised and evidence-based approach. To date, the partnership has made an ongoing reduction in collisions through its coordinated approach and this trend is set to continue this year, as shown in the following graph:



- 3.7 Road safety efforts focus on tackling the most harmful behaviours on the road, in line with the strategic assessment of risk, mainly focused towards the “Fatal Five” causes of serious collisions: drink or drug driving, not wearing a seatbelt, speeding, driver distractions such as mobile phone use, and careless or inconsiderate driving. The No Excuse Team targets these behaviours using both marked and unmarked vehicles, while wider communication campaigns aim to raise awareness and encourage safer driving choices. Human behaviour remains the main contributory factor in collisions, with the ongoing risk of people driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol a particular concern.
- 3.8 In May 2025, Assistant Chief Constable Steve Lyne, the Chair of DSRSP, commissioned a Strategic Assessment of Dorset’s collisions and casualties to assist in identifying causations and pertaining factors to give the Partnership the best chance of continuing to contribute to casualty reduction. The Strategic Assessment will feed into the revision of the DRS delivery plan and will:
- Prioritise activity to tackle the greatest threats to road users in Dorset;
 - Reflect the findings of the Strategic Assessment taking into account Local Transport Plan 4 (the fourth Statutory Transport Plan);
 - Support the ambition of [Vision Zero](#); and
 - Acknowledge the Safe System Ten Steps (developed by the Global Road Safety Partnership)
- 3.9 Op Snap is just one of many road safety initiatives aimed at road safety education and enforcement in Dorset. Within challenging financial circumstances, there is an ever-pressing need for all DRS partners to increase co-operation and sharing of resources, and to ensure any interventions are designed and prioritised based on clear evidence and effectiveness. This has meant that resources have been, and will likely continue to be, diverted to the highest threats identified within the strategy, limiting Op Snap’s capacity.

4 OP SNAP SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND CRITERIA

- 4.1 Dorset Police has a dedicated [webpage](#) for Op Snap where members of the public can submit poor or dangerous driving behaviour footage. The webpage provides information on what footage is appropriate for Op Snap, how to upload footage and details the process. The webpage advises that Dorset Police are not able to notify or update every person who has submitted video or images; this is due to the high number of submissions Dorset Police receive. Dorset Police will, however, make contact with the person who submitted the footage if further information or evidence is required or if the person submitting the footage is required to attend court to support their submission.
- 4.2 Alongside the information published on the website, Op Snap has been the focus of communication activity from Dorset Police and the PCC since it was launched five years ago. This has included information on the [Force website](#), updates from the PCC in blogs, media interviews and his [annual reports](#), as well as information provided at face-to-face engagement events each year, to name just a few examples.
- 4.3 Not all offences are appropriate for Op Snap. General parking complaints more likely need to be reported to the relevant local authority, although parking on zig zag lines or parking that is placing pedestrians at risk will be actioned.
- 4.4 Offences typically considered under Op Snap include:
- Dangerous, careless, or inattentive driving;
 - Driving without due care and attention, careless driving;
 - Overtaking on solid white lines;
 - Not in proper control of the vehicle;
 - Traffic light contravention;
 - Driving whilst using a mobile phone; and
 - Any other road traffic offence that is clearly shown in the footage.
- 4.5 To be admissible to court, footage must be original, unedited, and supported by reliable metadata such as time and location.
- 4.6 Establishing exact road widths, traffic conditions, and whether the driver's actions were below the standard of a competent driver can be complex and the threshold for prosecution is high. Police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) must prove beyond reasonable doubt that the behaviour or close pass was careless or dangerous. Where footage is ambiguous or does not capture the full context of the manoeuvre, evidential sufficiency and prosecution can be difficult to achieve.
- 4.7 "Close pass" incidents, where drivers overtake cyclists or horses too closely, are among the most common submissions to Op Snap. However, proving these offences presents distinct evidential challenges. The quality and perspective of footage is critical. Helmet and handlebar cameras often use wide-angle lenses that distort distances, making a pass look closer than it actually was. Unless the footage clearly shows the vehicle's position relative to the cyclist or horse rider, it may not meet the standard required for prosecution by the CPS.
- 4.8 The Highway Code (Rule 163) states that road users should "overtake only when it is safe and legal to do so". Drivers should:
- Leave at least 1.5 metres when overtaking cyclists at speeds of up to 30mph, and give them more space when overtaking at higher speeds.
 - Pass horse riders and horse-drawn vehicles at speeds under 10 mph and allow at least two metres of space.

- Allow at least two metres of space and keep to a low speed when passing a pedestrian who is walking in the road (for example, where there is no pavement).

The Highway Code (Rule 213) states:

- Cyclists are also advised to ride at least a door's width or one metre from parked cars for their own safety.

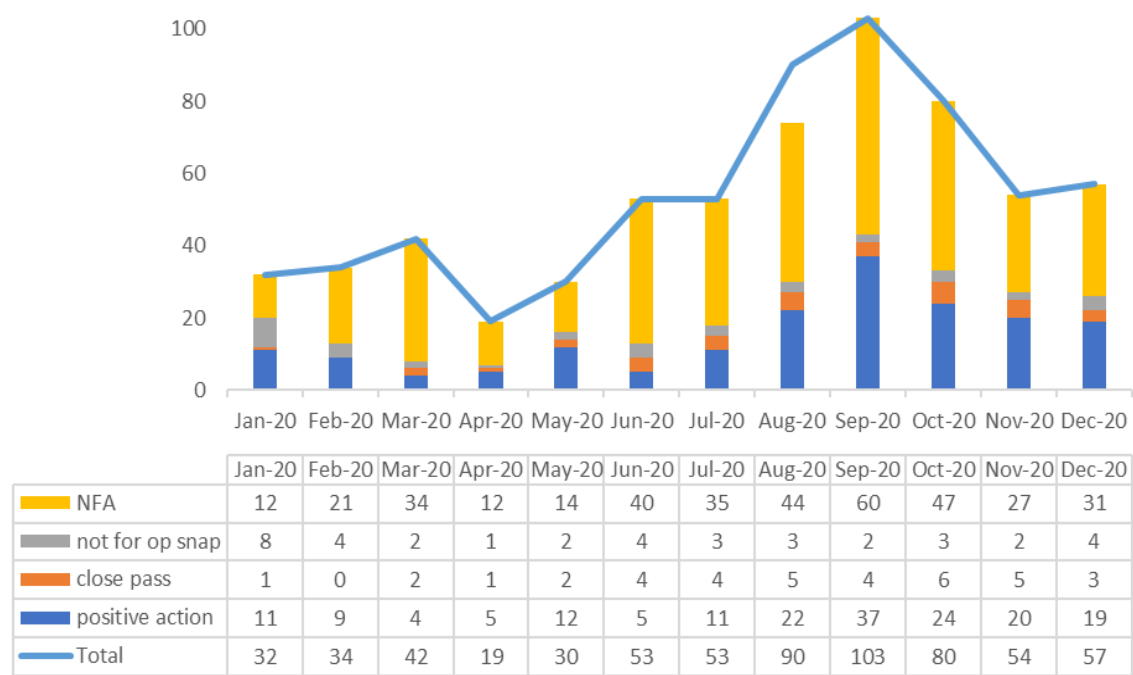
It should be noted, however, that in some cases, due to the lack of physical road markings, street furniture, camera angles and challenges with driver/rider perspectives, an assessment of the distance between cyclist and vehicle can be difficult to prove for prosecution purposes.

- 4.9 Where submitted footage is of sufficient quality, clearly identifies and evidences an offence, Dorset Police will consider the appropriate course of action and/or prosecution. All submissions are proactively reviewed to support the reduction of risky behaviours and poor driving on the county's roads.
- 4.10 For a submission to be valid, members of the public must provide:
- Vehicle details (registration, make, colour)
 - Contextual information (date, time, location)
 - A signed Witness Statement, acknowledging the possibility of being called to court.
- 4.11 If the video is of insufficient quality, the offence does not meet the criteria, or no offence is identified and evidenced, no further action (NFA) will be taken. The CPS is responsible for prosecuting criminal cases, including traffic offences. The CPS review footage submitted as part of the case file and use the evidence to support legal proceedings.
- 4.12 Following a review of the Op Snap digital evidence/footage by trained staff within DRS, possible outcomes may include:
- Warning letter sent to the driver;
 - Driver education referral;
 - Fixed Penalty Notice (fines and penalty points);
 - Court prosecution.

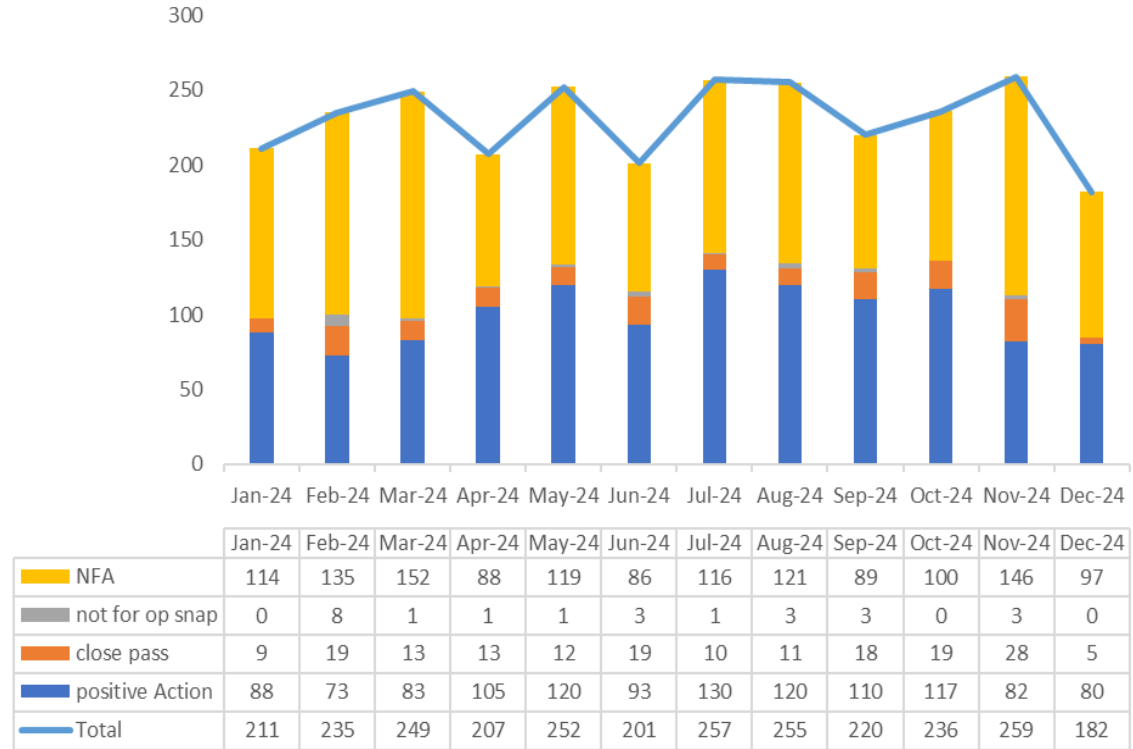
5 PERFORMANCE AND OUTCOMES

- 5.1 In Dorset, Op Snap commenced in July 2019. The number of submissions per month has increased significantly year on year. In 2020 (the first complete Op Snap year) the total number of submissions was 647 compared to 2764 in 2024 (the most recent complete year). This over four-fold increase can be attributed to the awareness of Op Snap, a general increase in the number of dash cams being used and the user-friendly ability to upload footage of poor driver behaviour to police. Of course, it is also noted that Covid restrictions were in place during the first year of operation.
- 5.2 The following charts for 2020 and 2024 show the total number of Op Snap submissions split by the resolution outcomes, as follows:
- Positive action (educational and prosecutions)
 - NFA / No Further Action (due to insufficient quality, evidence or information)
 - Close pass resolutions
 - Not for OP Snap (submissions which fall outside of the Op Snap criteria)

Dorset Op Snap Submission Volume and Resolution by Month in 2020

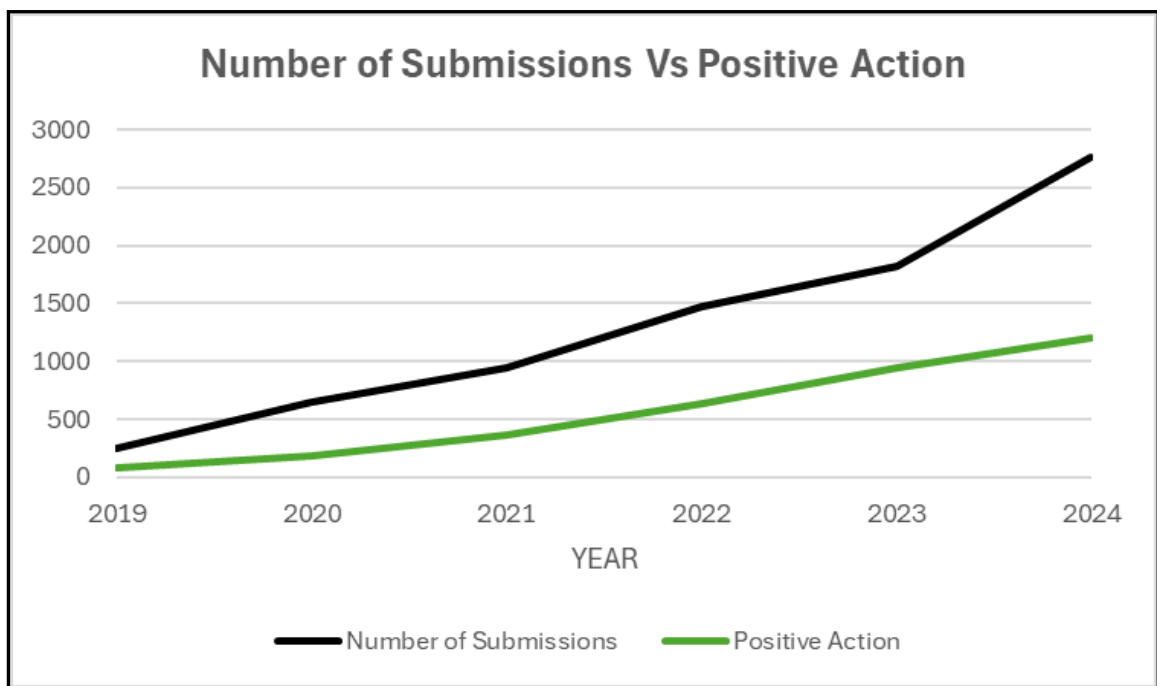


Dorset Op Snap Submission Volume and Resolution by Month in 2024



- 5.3 A comparison of 2020 and 2024 shows that Dorset Police is seeing more recorded events overall, suggesting stronger reporting of road user behaviour and an increased awareness of Op Snap among communities. Since 2020, the number of Op Snap submissions per month has increased significantly year on year.
- 5.4 Importantly, the proportion of positive actions has grown significantly, from 27% in 2020 to 43% in 2024. This points toward a better safety culture, improved communication/advice and proactive measures.

- 5.5 At the same time, the proportion of submissions that were marked for NFA and were not for Op Snap show a smaller share of the total (e.g. NFAs were 58% of the total in 2020, compared to 49% of the total in 2024). This points to enhanced public information on the website and awareness raising improving the quality of submissions from the public.
- 5.6 The chart below compares the total number of submissions with the number that resulted in positive action. The data shows a steady upward trend in submissions, with a significant increase observed in 2024. One of the key reasons for this is that there has been an increased number of submissions from frequent cyclists. However, while submission rates are rising, this does not automatically translate into a proportional increase in positive outcomes. Each submission must still meet the Op Snap criteria, be of sufficient quality, and clearly demonstrate with clear evidence that an offence has occurred.



- 5.7 Besides the numbers of people prosecuted through court, who receive a Fixed Penalty or are provided with road safety advice, Op Snap delivers around £30k per year to the Driver Awareness Course through educational courses attended.
- 5.8 The performance of Op Snap is reported at various forums, including the DSRSP, which is attended by both the PCC and the OPCC road safety lead.

6 MEASURABLE IMPACT

- 6.1 Since 2019, 3715 road users have either been sent a warning letter, have received a driver education referral, have received a Fixed Penalty Notice (fines and penalty points) or have been prosecuted through Court (a breakdown of figures for each disposal method is not currently available). Each one of these would have had a varying impact on the offender but would have hopefully helped them consider their future driving/riding behaviour.
- 6.2 The impact of Op Snap can be assessed through a consideration of the enforcement outcomes provided in section 5 (specifically, the proportion of submissions leading to positive action, and the number of offenders prosecuted or diverted to education).
- 6.3 However, wider effects, such as deterrence, impact on the individual driver/rider are harder to evaluate. Measuring road safety outcomes is challenging as road safety initiatives and casualty reductions are influenced by many factors and long-term behaviour change is

difficult to attribute solely to Op Snap. A mixed-methods approach to road safety as defined in the DSRSP Strategy and the combined approach is key to reducing the numbers of people injured on Dorset's roads.

- 6.4 Each disposal method listed above offers distinct benefits. The warning letter and driver awareness course serve an educational purpose – giving road users the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour, gain information they may not have known and understand the wider impact of their actions on other road users. These approaches are more likely to encourage changes in behaviour.
- 6.5 In contrast, the Fixed Penalty Notice and court proceedings take a more punitive approach, with consequences that are largely financial. Offenders must pay a fine and will also receive points on their licence, which can increase the cost of annual insurance. This may act as a deterrent for poor driver behaviour, as it has a direct financial impact.

7 CHALLENGES

- 7.1 The process of reviewing the digital footage submitted to Op Snap requires a significant amount of staff time. However, as outlined at 2.4, there is no dedicated resource in Dorset Police for the processing of Op Snap digital footage. All processing is carried out in addition to the core demands of road safety enforcement and education. On rare occasions of excessive road safety enforcement and activity demand, not all submissions to Op Snap can be processed in a timely fashion.
- 7.2 The process of submitting footage to Op Snap would principally be undertaken in good faith, and the public submit evidence that they believe captures poor driver behaviour or where they believe an offence has been committed. However, as explained in sections 4.2 - 4.6, it is not unusual that the material submitted does not provide enough evidence or context to support an educational or prosecution response. This outcome can prove disappointing for those who have uploaded material – especially those individuals who upload a significant number of submissions.
- 7.3 Due to the high volume of submissions and the resources available to DRS, Dorset Police is not able to notify every submitter about the outcome of their case and tends not to enter prolonged conversations relating to evidential thresholds. As a result, some individuals may feel that no action has been taken in response to their footage submitted, even if considerable time has, in fact, been spent reviewing it. Ideally, there would be continual communication with the public throughout the process. Unfortunately, this level of engagement is not possible due to the resourcing issues that Members are well aware of.
- 7.4 Additional allocation of resource would enable Dorset Police to enhance the user experience of the Op Snap website by incorporating illustrative examples of poor driving behaviour and provide supplementary guidance. These improvements may further reduce the proportion of submissions that result in an NFA outcome. Further, it is possible that future developments in robotic process automation and artificial intelligence may allow for an enhanced service to be developed locally.
- 7.5 Of course, it is an inescapable fact that Dorset Police and other key road safety partner agencies are facing budgetary challenges. As outlined at 3.9, this of course means that partners need to increase their co-operation and sharing of resources to ensure that they operate as efficiently as possible.
- 7.6 The PCC and OPCC will continue to scrutinise the Force's efficiency and encourage the use of innovation and technology, recognising the competing demands and the ongoing requirement to focus on those areas of highest priority. At the same time, the PCC fully recognises the importance of all partner agencies continuing to ensure that road safety resource is prioritised based on clear evidence and effectiveness. In the absence of

additional funding for Dorset Police there will, therefore, continue to be a limit on Op Snap's capacity.

8 NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 As outlined, the Strategic Assessment will feed into the revision of the Road Safety delivery plan and will prioritise activity to tackle the greatest threats to Dorset's road users and support the ambition of Vision Zero.
- 8.2 Alongside this, DRS will continue to explore ways to ensure that the administration of Op Snap is as efficient as possible, while also working to manage the expectations of users. Affordable opportunities for automation and/or artificial intelligence will continue to be explored.
- 8.3 Meanwhile, the PCC and his team will continue to monitor the Force's use of Op Snap, alongside the wider road safety portfolio. Key updates will be reported to the Police and Crime Panel in the usual fashion.

9 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 Members are recommended to note the Op Snap update.

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