

ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY

For Northern Ireland

2010-20

Consultation Report

2020 VISION: Driving Forward Road Safety

September 2010

Consultation Report on preparing a ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY for Northern Ireland 2010-2020

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¹ Annexes B to F are not attached to this document but can be accessed through the following link [DN: to be provided later]

- Annex A – Summary of pre-consultation proposals
- Annex B – Summary of responses - on-line questionnaire (individuals)
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Road Safety Strategy 2010 – 2020

20/20 Vision: Driving Forward Road Safety

Executive Summary

Introduction

The consultation on preparing a new road safety strategy invited views on the key challenges to be addressed over the next ten years and included new casualty reduction targets to be achieved by 2020, a new vision and 174 proposed measures with the potential to help make that vision a reality.

The consultation resulted in:

- 1,132 on-line questionnaire responses (323 people provided additional 'free-text' information);
- 39 written responses by mail (7 of which were nil responses);
- 36 written responses received as Word files or PDF questionnaires;
- 803 questionnaires completed by children and young people;
- 30 responses to DOE during the informal consultation;
- 12 meetings with children and young people with 205 attendees; and
- 10 meetings with 12 other groups.

The Department is grateful to all those who responded and participated in the consultation.

Targets and Vision

There was broad agreement with the vision “to make a journey on Northern Ireland’s roads as safe for all road users as anywhere in the world”. It was suggested by some respondents that we might seek to be even more ambitious and strengthen our aspiration to place Northern Ireland at least equal to and perhaps even better than the best performing countries.

The majority of respondents also agreed with and supported the proposed targets for fatalities and serious injuries. The proposed target for children under the age of 16 years of age was considered to be the most challenging. In offering cautious support, some respondents commented that such ambition is warranted given early achievement of the previous target set for 2012.

Perception of Road Safety

The predominating concerns for respondents were about how road space is shared, the differing needs of each type of road user and a perception of the incompatibility of those needs with the current infrastructure. The sense of how safe or exposed to risk road users felt depended on the road user group with which they most identified with, for example, cyclists feeling more at risk than drivers.

What are the most important road safety problems?

There was consensus among respondents that the key challenges, as presented in the consultation document, were correct and should be addressed in the new strategy. Of particular concern to all groups of respondents were poor road user attitudes leading to careless and dangerous behaviours, especially among drivers; excessive speed, particularly on rural roads; general road maintenance; a general lack of compliance with the Highway Code and road traffic laws; and inadequate enforcement to respond to these problems.

Delivery

The overarching strategic delivery partnership between the statutory road safety partners was supported although a significant number of respondents offered no view or a 'don't know' response to this question. It was believed that this partnership would further benefit from intelligence coming from issue-

specific forums composed of representatives from elsewhere in the public and private sectors, interest groups and the voluntary and community sector.

General strategic direction

The consultation results indicate that respondents were broadly content with the substance of the proposals. However, more information will be required on the outworking of specific proposals when they are planned for implementation. Regular reviews, transparency, flexibility and an inherent ability to adapt to changing circumstances should be fundamental to the approach to the new strategy.

Background

In July 2007 the Minister of the Environment asked for a review of the current Road Safety Strategy to be carried out and subsequently announced that a new road safety strategy would be brought forward for launch in 2010, two years ahead of the end of the existing strategy. The project to prepare a new road safety strategy for Northern Ireland was initiated in August 2008 and began with research to identify and assess the nature of the road safety problems to be addressed.

Consultation with stakeholders on preparing a new strategy first began in March 2009. Formal consultation on a paper identifying a range of proposals, including a vision, targets, performance indicators and 174 action measures, ran from March to July 2010.

Throughout this process, the Department of the Environment (the Department) has taken the views of almost 2,500 consultees, including members of the public, political parties and representatives, road safety partners, stakeholder groups, children and young people.

This report presents the statistical headlines from the analysis of responses and includes comments received from consultees to highlight points made but also to challenge consensus attitudes. While most respondents broadly concurred on most aspects of road safety, the Department is seeking to provide a flavour of the debate that prevailed throughout the consultation. Statistics presented in isolation would not fully reflect the important element of discussion that is key to arriving at good, as well as agreed, solutions and policies.

The report includes a brief summary of the feedback received prior to the development of the consultation paper as well as responses to the proposals contained in that paper.

The Department is grateful to everyone who took the time to meet us or reply to the consultation. All views and comments are being considered carefully, with our road safety partners, as part of the next stage in the development of a new Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy.

Phase 1 – Pre-Consultation Phase (March 2009 – February 2010)

The Department recognised that early engagement in constructive dialogue with stakeholders would help identify key issues and draft solutions and ensure the project was responsive to the concerns of those who are affected by road safety policies as well as those with responsibility for delivering and enforcing them.

In order to benefit fully from the experience everyone has as road users, it was clear that maximum benefit would be gained by consulting as early as possible with all key stakeholders and maintaining open channels of communication throughout the project.

How we consulted

[Road Safety Practitioners](#)

The Department began by seeking initial views from those involved in delivering road safety through education, advertising, policy development and legislation. A workshop, involving the Department's road safety staff, was held in March 2009 and examined the Northern Ireland specific road safety problems, discussed how these might be addressed and began a process of developing a way ahead.

A series of workshops were held in May and June 2009 for statutory road safety partners and others within government, focusing on safer roads, safer vehicles and safer road users. Presentations and discussions at these events reflected on past achievements in delivering the current strategy, and took stock of the position in relation to safety on our roads, developments and proposals in GB, RoI and beyond, and began to look at developing new and complimentary road safety measures.

Stakeholders

The Department then wrote to those on its stakeholder lists (500+) presenting a research-based paper that identified road safety problems in Northern Ireland and inviting their initial views on what could be done to improve the safety of road users. In particular we asked for proposals for new measures and examples of best practice that might be considered for inclusion in the formal consultation.

Given that young people are over-represented in road traffic collisions, the Department also published an article in the Approved Driving Instructor's Newsletter seeking views on what could be done to improve the safety of road users, particularly focusing on new and novice drivers, many of whom are aged 17 to 24.

Children and Young People

Consulting with children and young people was seen as crucial in the development of a new road safety strategy. The Department posted proposals to engage on Participation Network's website, which resulted in a number of events being held across Northern Ireland involving participants aged between 5 and 21 years of age. While most events were held between August and October 2009, some were held in December 2009 and January 2010.

Responses

Some 30 substantive written responses were received from key stakeholders. A number of other respondents expressed an interest in road safety generally and indicated that they would welcome the opportunity to participate more fully during the formal consultation.

A series of meetings was held between June and October 2009 which included road user interest groups and political parties. These resulted in the refinement of proposals and the development of further measures for inclusion in the formal consultation process.

Through Participation Network, 18 groups of and/or representing children and young people expressed an interest in facilitating discussions on road safety. These contacts lead to 12 events involving over 200 children and young people. The participants ranged in age from around 5 to 21 but most were in the 14-18 age range. These events provided an insight into the road safety concerns of young people from both urban and rural backgrounds. As well as expressing views on a number of proposals, the children and young people put forward their ideas to improve their safety as road users. During these workshops a questionnaire, for issue during the formal consultation period, was developed to allow children and young people to offer their views on the issues that most concerned them.

Outcomes

Views on many road safety issues were consistent across the various stakeholder groups and respondents and a number of ideas were replicated. Perhaps not unexpectedly, many proposals sought to address bad driving behaviour, improve how people learn to drive, raise compliance with road traffic laws and encourage the use of engineering interventions on roads. The opportunities presented by new and emerging technologies were recognised and their use encouraged, including advances in in-car safety, enforcement and promotion of road safety messages.

Rural issues have been consistently identified throughout all our consultations. Concerns about collisions along the border continue to be raised, particularly the involvement of drivers from the Republic of Ireland (ROI). While research does not seem to specifically support the view that incidents are more prevalent in border areas than in other similar rural areas,

anecdotal evidence would certainly seem to suggest that there would be value in gathering data to establish if there are issues to be addressed.

The reported attitudes and behaviours of children and young people in rural areas would also appear to differ from their urban counterparts. During conversations with young people, anecdotal information was provided that would suggest that a higher proportion of young people in rural areas are open to risk-taking behaviour. This would seem to be encouraged, in part, by their perception of a lack of effective enforcement in rural areas combined with a belief that rural people know their local roads and that most collisions are caused by drivers from urban areas and foreign nationals, unaccustomed to these roads.

Sharing the roads with other types of road users was an ongoing theme that included issues around balancing the requirements of all road users, whether as pedestrians, cyclists, drivers or riders. In particular, drivers' appreciation of the road environment and ability to adapt their driving accordingly, both to keep themselves and other road users safe, was seen as a key element in the success of a new strategy. It was believed that this could be achieved primarily by focussing on driver training and preparation and greater enforcement of, and compliance with, road traffic laws.

While the safety of road users and safe behaviours were recurring themes throughout the responses, many identified the need for continuing and more innovative methods of engagement and education, particularly with the highest risk group, young people aged 16 to 24.

The need to better understand local road safety problems was recognised. Research, better information, on-going monitoring and reporting were seen as important elements of a new strategy.

A sample of the proposals and comments received over the pre-consultation period is at **Annex A**.

The measures proposed in the formal consultation document were developed during the pre-consultation period, taking into account the ideas, views, proposals and experiences of contributors to the workshops, meetings and who those corresponded. The Department is grateful for all the contributions received.

Phase 2 - Formal Consultation Phase (16 March – 9 July 2010)

Engagement with stakeholders was formalised with the publication of a paper on developing a new road safety strategy for Northern Ireland on 16 March 2010. While many stakeholders had already contributed to the development of the consultation document, very significant numbers engaged further, with the vast majority, not unsurprisingly, choosing the on-line questionnaire to offer views on specific issues.

How we consulted

The Minister of the Environment, Edwin Poots, announced the launch of the formal consultation through a statement in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 15 March 2010 and in the media on 15 and 16 March. Departmental News Releases on road safety also referenced the on-going consultation throughout the consultation period.

The Minister subsequently attended a meeting of the Environment Committee to discuss the proposals for a new strategy. The Minister also made a presentation on the document to a workshop hosted with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association.

The consultation document offered various ways for consultees to respond, these included:

- Meetings;
- Written responses;
- A questionnaire that directed consultees through the key areas of the consultation document - these were available in MS Word and PDF versions; and
- A shorter on-line questionnaire. Mindful that many people are increasingly used to and favour responding on-line, this version, that took

[Road Safety Partners](#)

In an effort to ensure that the opportunity to see the documents and respond was as widespread as possible, a link to the consultation documents was placed on the NI Direct website as well as on the sites of all road safety partners. Visitors to the following websites were presented with links to the documents and encouraged to respond: DOE Road Safety Division; Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA); DRD Road Service; the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI); the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS); and the NI Ambulance Service.

[Stakeholders](#)

The Department wrote to all those on its road safety, transport and equality stakeholder lists (500+), providing an electronic link to the documents and inviting views on the proposals.

The consultation documents also issued electronically to those involved in road safety related activities. An e-mail to NICS staff also drew attention to the consultation document and response options.

A reminder issued to stakeholders at the beginning of June 2010 alerting them to the closing date of the consultation and encouraging responses from those who had not yet replied. Key stakeholders were also offered a final opportunity to meet.

[Children and Young People](#)

Those groups who took part in the pre-consultation phase were provided with a record of the discussions and a list of their proposals that were being

considered for inclusion in the consultation paper. Groups were invited to provide further comments on the content of the paper and suggest any additional potential solutions.

A consultation questionnaire addressing road safety issues identified as relevant by children and young people as part of the informal consultation was circulated to a representative sample of schools across Northern Ireland in urban, rural and socially deprived areas. Issues identified included road safety education, pedestrian skills, learning to drive, the restricted ('R') driver scheme, seat belt wearing and drink and drugs driving. Some 2,100 questionnaires were issued and 803 were completed and returned presenting children and young people's views and further suggestions about road safety issues.

The Department is grateful to the Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) and Belfast City Council's Youth Action Forum (YAF) for hosting the consultation documents on their websites and pro-actively encouraging young people to get involved in road safety issues.

Responses

Responses were received through each option provided, with an overwhelming preference for the on-line questionnaire:

- 1,132 on-line questionnaire responses (323 people provided additional 'free-text' information). Reports summarising these findings broken down by individuals and organisations are in Annexes B and C;
- 36 written responses received as Word files or PDF questionnaires. A report summarising these is in Annex D;
- 803 questionnaires completed by children and young people. A report summarising these is in Annex E; and
- 39 written responses by mail (7 of which were nil responses). A table of all written comments is provided in Annex F.

The Department was invited to deliver presentations to 4 stakeholder groups.

The Department responded positively to the one request received for the consultation document to be provided in an alternative format.

Outcomes

This section of the report seeks to summarise views and comments offered by just over 1,200 respondents. As well as giving highlights from the statistical report of the 1,132 responses to the on-line questionnaire, it also reflects the associated 323 written comments and the views from the 75 respondents who chose to use the PDF and Word versions of the questionnaire or provided responses by mail.

Road Safety Priorities, Vision and Targets

[Road Safety Priorities](#)

The majority of on-line respondents felt that the consultation paper identified and addressed the key road safety priorities (54% and 50% respectively with 9% and 8% disagreeing). If we remove the 'Don't Knows' (37% and 42%), it indicates that 86% and 85%, respectively, of those who had a view felt that the consultation paper identified and addressed the key road safety priorities. Some felt that particular groups such as cyclists, older road users, drivers, pedestrians and horse riders should be given greater prominence. Some respondents believed that specific bad road user behaviours such as mobile phone usage, tailgating and road rage should be addressed individually and in greater detail.

[Vision](#)

Around three quarters of on-line respondents (74%) who commented on the proposed vision agreed with the wording. A number who disagreed

suggested that the vision should be stronger and several proposals were presented including “to make a journey on Northern Ireland’s roads **safer** for all road users **than** anywhere in the world”. There was also broad approval (75%) of having a ten year strategy with regular reviews; however a minority believed that five years was sufficient time to plan and implement measures to improve road safety.

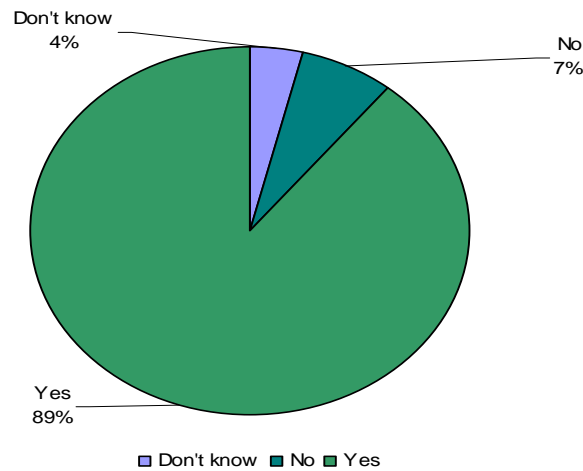
Respondents who provided written comments also agreed with what was generally believed to be a challenging vision. As with on-line consultees, some thought that the aspiration might be more powerful and sought a vision of no deaths on the roads. It would also appear from some of the comments that not everyone interprets the phrase ‘all road users’ to include them, or the groups with which they identify. All respondents were keen to fulfil their role in realising the vision.

“The Red Cross welcomes this long term vision and offers its assistance in making this long term vision a reality, by working in partnership with the DOE and other statutory agencies in Northern Ireland.” (The Red Cross)

Targets

The majority of on-line respondents (89%) agreed with the proposed targets. A small minority felt that the targets should be brought forward to 2015. Again, one on-line respondent suggested that we should “*plan to eradicate all fatalities and serious injuries*”.

Our first proposed target is to reduce deaths on our roads by at least 40% by 2020 compared with the 2004-2008 average. Do you agree?



The targets to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road collisions were welcomed in the written responses. However, as with other targets, while it was understood that they should be based on seeking to reduce the number of people killed or injured on our roads, there was concern that action measures should not solely focus on achieving targets. The Department was asked to ensure that, if, during the lifetime of the new strategy, the targets are either achieved or exceeded ahead of schedule, it should be flexible enough to re-set the targets to achieve more ambitious results. It was important to some respondents that, as new issues arise over the life of the strategy actions are taken to address them.

Alternative approaches to targets based on exposure to risk (for example, reduced casualty rates per mile travelled) instead of reductions in casualty numbers were suggested as reliance on casualty reduction alone was viewed as having the potential to make roads more dangerous for vulnerable road users.

There was some consensus in written responses that we should ultimately seek to remove risk to life or fear of injury due to travelling on our roads. Targets were recognised as an important element in setting priorities,

monitoring progress and giving a focus for the long-term strategic goals to reduce casualties on our roads.

*“If the strategy is going to be effective at reducing the number of road deaths and serious injuries on the roads of Northern Ireland it will be important to monitor and report on actual progress against targets on a regular basis.”
(The Red Cross)*

Some respondents were also concerned about the availability of resources and the financial commitment needed to implement proposals and thereby achieve the targets. Some respondents sought additional information on the funds that could be made available to deliver the strategy and the cost to the economy of not reducing deaths and serious injuries.

“The consultation seems to be lacking in terms of where the funding will come from to help achieve the tough targets which have been set.” (British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association)

The target to reduce the number of children (aged 0 to 15) killed or seriously injured in road collisions by at least 55% by 2020 was thought by some to be both very challenging and by others, not challenging enough. One respondent, representing the interests of children, thought that, given the achievements against the current child casualty reduction target, it should be possible over the next ten years to achieve an even more ambitious target than 55%.

The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People felt that a target should not include young people aged 16 and 17 along with adults up to and including 24 years old. NICCY said that the Department may wish to gather comparative data on set age groups given that young people tend to be overrepresented in road deaths and in terms of responsibility for collisions. However, it believed that 16 and 17 year olds should be classed as ‘children’ in keeping with Government’s obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and that road safety policies should recognise 16 and 17

year olds as young people, distinct from adults, as their opportunities are much more restricted than for those over 18. NICCY recommended that the Department publish and compare data for all children and young people, ensuring that it is able to break down the figures for 16 and 17 year old young people, as distinct from adults.

[Performance Indicators](#)

Around two thirds of on-line respondents (65%) agreed with the proposed performance indicators. None of the written comments opposed any of the proposed performance indicators. Where comments were offered, these were supportive.

There were requests for additional performance indicators to monitor various road user groups including children, particularly those living in rural and deprived areas and children travelling to or from school. It was also suggested that the rate of horse riders killed or seriously injured be included. RoSPA recommended several additional performance indicators covering wide ranging topics including alcohol, drugs and driving for work.

Safer Road Users

Around 95% of on-line respondents agreed that poor road user behaviours such as drink-driving, drug-driving, careless driving and dangerous driving need to be addressed. Around nine in ten on-line respondents believed that seatbelt wearing (88%), speeding (89%) and pedestrian carelessness (91%) need to be addressed.

Consultees who provided written responses also highlighted unacceptable driving behaviours such as road rage, tailgating, texting and risk taking as major causes of concern. Many took the view that all poor driving behaviours had to be addressed if safety on the roads was to improve. It was also believed that having identified vulnerable road users as at-risk groups, the strategy should include more measures to improve their safety.

Sharing the roads/footpaths was a significant issue for all respondents. The ability of all road users to be aware not only of their own behaviour, but to recognise the needs of other road users, was a common theme throughout the written responses. Each road user group looked to others to be more considerate. Some respondents felt that in the case of a collision, the larger and heavier vehicle should always be assumed to be at fault, or in the case of pedestrians, either the fault of the cyclist or driver who struck them.

It was clear that many respondents would wish to see greater modal separation rather than less. Accepting that this might not always be possible or practical, some groups asked that awareness of their needs as road users be covered in training opportunities: such as cyclists' awareness of pedestrians, particularly those who are disabled; and car and HGV drivers' awareness of cyclists. It was further suggested that greater awareness of the various activities of many who use rural roads such as farmers moving livestock or driving agricultural machinery and horse riders, would lead to better understanding of how the road is used, what the risks are to different road users and how better to share road space.

“In order to be addressed the problem must be better understood...The two sides of the problem need to be dealt with by awareness training.” (Freight Transport Association)

Several responses made reference to the Highway Code and the desire to see more people abiding by its rules and, indeed, having to demonstrate their knowledge by undertaking a test at regular, perhaps 10-year, intervals.

“The Highway Code should include a specific section on sharing the roads with large commercial vehicles which would be testable at both theory and practical driving tests for car drivers and motorcyclists.” (Freight Transport Association through evidence presented to the Environment Committee)

More generally, it was recommended that the phrase ‘new citizen’ used within the consultation might be changed to more broadly encompass all road users of Northern Ireland’s roads whether or not they have citizenship as *“... the term “citizen” may in practice restrict the road safety vision to citizens of NI only, when in fact, many, if not most, newcomers will not, or may not wish to, acquire British or Irish citizenship.” (NICCY)*

Education and Enforcement

Proposals to make greater use of educational interventions for errant road users, including behaviours such as speeding, drink driving and carelessness were met with interest and enthusiasm by respondents. There was broad agreement that such educational courses should be introduced and are a good example of the ‘carrot’ approach to positively changing behaviours. There were also suggestions that anyone involved in a road traffic collision or caught speeding should be compelled to undertake driver re-training or education.

“Any driver who has participated in the Course for Drink Drive Offenders in Northern Ireland is almost four times less likely to re-offend than someone

*who hasn't. This clearly demonstrates the impact that education can have.”
(Wine and Spirit Trade Association)*

Most respondents welcomed the commitment in the consultation document to enhance the effectiveness of police enforcement through intelligence led policing strategies and technologies and the focus on high risk behaviours and groups. However, in both written and on-line comments, police were urged not to unduly target young people when implementing these proposals.

The broader implications of proposed penalty and enforcement measures raised some concerns in relation to the potential burden this might place on the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service.

While it was believed that police visibility and involvement in providing advice and education was necessary, there was concern that their presence at locations not known for high numbers of collisions or risky behaviour could be detracting from public support for their actions.

Respondents accepted the principles underpinning proposals for fixed penalties to be graduated according to the seriousness of the offence and the Department was encouraged by some respondents to introduce such provisions. Although initially applying principally to drivers' hours and overloading offences, it was considered necessary to improve road traffic regulation compliance rates across the board within the road haulage industry. It was suggested that legislation should also include provisions to allow fixed penalties to be graduated according to the seriousness of vehicle roadworthiness defects. However, other respondents thought that such a scheme might be unworkable as freight drivers could quickly reach the maximum permitted penalty points. If such a system was to operate, it was suggested, there would need to be either an extension to the number of permitted penalty points or introduction of two scales of points, one for driving offences and one for other road traffic offences.

The Department was asked to progress subordinate legislation from the Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Act, as a priority to ensure that standards within the sector were improved.

Most respondents who provided comments on penalty and enforcement proposals would welcome the opportunity for further consultation and discussion as these policies are developed further.

One respondent said that penalties for having no insurance should be higher than those for speeding offences. Another went further, saying that the fine regime for driving uninsured was not tough enough and recommended a minimum £2,000 fine and a custodial sentence for persistent offenders. It was believed that too many drivers do not buy insurance and prefer to *'run the risk of an occasional fine'*. (*British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association*)

The Freight Transport Association would welcome and support work between the governments of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to agree and apply common standards throughout both jurisdictions. They believe that this would make it easier for road users to comply with traffic laws as well as simplifying enforcement. It was further suggested that all enforcement bodies should establish and share a comprehensive database of non-compliant operators in the commercial HGV and passenger carrying vehicle sectors.

[Road Safety Campaigns](#)

The use of road safety campaigns to educate and influence road user behaviours drew some mixed comments. These ranged from those who could not see any benefits, to those who believed that, when supported by police enforcement, such campaigns played a major role in shifting cultural attitudes in road safety.

A number of responses stated that, in proposing to provide accessible advice and information, the needs of all disabled people were not considered as effectively as those who were deaf, for example. A broader range of

disabilities should be considered and taken into account when developing new initiatives.

There were requests for campaigns to specifically address the following issues:

- Drivers' awareness of more vulnerable road users;
- Road safety specific first aid education with particular focus on vulnerable groups such as school children, young people, pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders; and
- Basic driving manoeuvres such as approaching a roundabout, turning right at a junction safe overtaking etc

It was also suggested that the Department's Road Safety website could be better utilised to disseminate information and raise awareness of road safety issues and that there should be a much broader range of promotional and informational material available covering the needs of all road user groups. More and better use of social networking sites would be welcomed to help convey road safety messages to a young audience.

It was suggested that more road safety campaigns be developed in partnership with sports organisations. The 'Live to Play' campaign developed by the GAA was cited as a good example of how such campaigns could work in educating young people.

There were few comments made about post collision measures. One respondent, the British Red Cross, encouraged the Department to include road safety specific first aid education in future road safety campaigns. While it was pleased to see an increase in the first aid content of the driving theory test it advocated strongly for more first aid education and believed that early application of first aid could prevent an injury deteriorating and causing lasting harm or death. The British Red Cross highlighted that a common cause of road fatalities was lack of oxygen caused by a blocked airway. In these

situations, it is often the case that bystanders and those already at the scene of a collision are best placed to prevent some deaths from occurring.

One respondent wished to recognise and commend the Ambulance and Fire and Rescue Services on their work noting that early and skilled medical intervention saved lives and urged government to continue to develop and resource post collision measures.

The proposal to review response times to collisions and benchmark nationally with other fire and rescue services was welcomed and it was hoped that this would result in an enhanced and balanced distribution of emergency services in rurally isolated areas. The need for a separate proposal to develop a memorandum of understanding between all those attending a collision to set out responsibilities and procedures was not understood as it was thought that the procedures already in operation should be sufficient.

[Seat Belts](#)

There were no concerns expressed about the use of seat belts. However, while the current high compliance rate was welcomed, it was thought necessary to continue with enforcement activity to ensure optimum rates continue.

[Drivers](#)

Most respondents (91%) agreed that the way drivers are trained needs to be examined and revised. Around four-fifths (79%) of on-line respondents agreed that the effectiveness of the 'R' driver scheme in Northern Ireland needs to be examined.

[Graduated Driver Licensing and Learning to Drive](#)

There was general support from on-line respondents for the introduction of Graduated Driver Licensing and the Learning to Drive programme (66%),

However, written responses were more cautious, some observing that the proposals in the consultation document set out only the broad principles and the fundamental elements of these initiatives. It was noted that more detailed proposals would be issued for consultation later in 2010. Some respondents indicated that they would like to reserve judgement and give further consideration to the issues at that time. Based, however, on the available information, respondents identified some initial concerns with such initiatives.

The broader implications of graduated driving licensing and learning to drive on young people living and working in rural areas were highlighted. It was noted that for many people living in rural areas the private car is the only feasible transport option. Several respondents agreed with the Department's assessment that raising the age for provisional or full licences and the introduction of night curfews or limits on passenger numbers would have a disproportionate impact on young drivers living in rural areas and their ability to access education, employment or social activities. The lack of motorway or dual carriageway infrastructure in parts of Northern Ireland was also seen as a disadvantage to learner drivers in rural areas as they would have to travel much further before a lesson in motorway driving could begin. Many respondents felt that elements of both graduated driving licensing and the Learning to Drive programme were impractical and unenforceable.

The impact of possible changes to driver training, testing and licensing on the actual cost of learning to drive was also seen as a potential difficulty for young people, particularly in rural areas. It was suggested that these costs might be off-set if driver education could be provided free of charge through school or training colleges or if having additional driver education or training resulted in reduced insurance costs.

Recognising both the potential negative and positive impacts of graduated driving licensing on young people, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People recommended that the forthcoming consultation process for GDL includes appropriate and meaningful engagement with this key age group. Young people might be positively influenced by a better

understanding of why it is believed that they are more likely to take risks as drivers. Research which indicates that a person's sense of danger is not fully developed until they reach their mid-twenties is particularly relevant to young drivers and it was suggested that this information is better publicised in order to encourage younger drivers to take more care on the roads.

"It will be crucial that the Department engage seriously with young people to achieve buy-in on any proposals." (NICCY)

Driver Training

It was suggested that, given the problem of drink/drug driving in Northern Ireland, proposals for driver training and testing should include alcohol and drug awareness programmes as part of passing the driving test.

There was a belief among some written respondents that learning to drive should include awareness training about the needs of other, particularly more vulnerable road users and how to behave if driving in an area where there would be a lot of such road users. The British Horse Society's 'Riding and Road Safety Test' and associated knowledge and information could be used to develop the education of drivers, whether they are learners or established drivers.

"Driver training must reflect the importance of safe attitudes and reconnect drivers to the risks and outcomes arising from improper and antisocial driving behaviour". (CTC)

More generally, one respondent referred to anecdotal evidence that drivers who have undertaken third level on-road cycle training make better progress when learning to drive and become safer drivers. It was felt that the value of cycle training for bus and lorry drivers should be explored.

It was suggested that any new safe road user qualification as part of the Learning to Drive programme should include sections on road safety specific

first aid incorporating incident management, care of unconscious casualties and management of blood loss. Highlighting that young people often respond best to peers, the British Red Cross believed that more emphasis should be placed on recruiting young people from high-risk communities across Northern Ireland to be trained in first aid and to deliver road safety messages to other young people.

“In order to make sure that we can reduce the number of road deaths and serious injury we must consider reviewing the way drivers are trained to ensure that they are better equipped to drive safely on NI roads.” (British Red Cross)

Overall, although there were concerns about some of the elements of measures planned or under consideration, respondents agreed that the way in which people currently learn to drive needs to change. Also, allowing new drivers to gradually build up driving skills and experience under a range of conditions was judged to improve their safety and that of other road users.

Driving Instructors and Continuous Learning

The important role of driving instructors in providing driver training was also noted and it was suggested that their training should be reviewed to ensure that it is as robust as possible.

Concerns were reported among some driving instructors about a perceived increase in the number of probationary driving instructors who were failing to acquire the final stage teaching qualification but were providing and charging for tuition as though fully qualified. It was believed that this was not being challenged by the Department. It was recommended that the Department undertake an urgent review of driving instructor licensing with a view to introducing regulations to improve training of instructors; provision of better information about choosing an instructor for learners and introducing better enforcement. There was also some concern about information and promotion of driving instruction as a career. As a short term measure it was

suggested that the Department stop automatic re-issuing of probationary driving instructor licences and withdraw all existing PDI licences.

Some on-line respondents commented that they believed that the Department should consider introducing continuous driver testing, and re-training/re-testing of experienced and older drivers. This was also raised in some written responses.

Some respondents suggested that the Department should work with insurance companies to try to devise incentives for good driving and the completion of further training through, for example, a reduction in insurance premiums if certain courses are completed, such as night-time driving.

“An overall strategy should be designed to encourage all drivers to work for advanced drivers tests and regular up-dating tests - perhaps insurance companies could be encouraged to fund this by way of reducing premiums for those that are successful.” (Member of the public)

Refreshing drivers' knowledge of the content of the Highway Code was widely viewed as a necessary part of keeping up to date with developments in road user skills. This was also reflected in some written responses.

The use of technology to better monitor driver behaviour and thereby provide opportunities to reduce insurance costs for drivers, particularly young drivers, would be welcomed by some respondents. Comments included those of a company that was supportive of a pilot scheme in Northern Ireland to give new drivers the opportunity to try out new technology. There was some opposition to the proposal to encourage government agencies and private companies with fleets greater than five vehicles, to fit in-vehicle data recorders because of the high costs for companies.

[Review of Effectiveness of 'R' Driver Scheme and Post Licence Testing](#)

Around four fifths (79%) of on-line respondents agreed that an examination into the effectiveness of the 'R' driver scheme was required. Responses were a mix of supportive and critical views on the scheme, with many believing that while it was well intentioned, without rigorous enforcement, it had fallen short of expectations.

Some of those who supported the scheme proposed extending the restricted driving period to two years followed by a further assessment or exit test at the end of the 'R' period. Those who expressed concerns about the scheme particularly highlighted the dangers of travelling at no more than 45mph on motorways and dual carriageways.

On balance, the perception was that the 'R' scheme could still positively contribute to road safety in Northern Ireland if revised to reflect the views presented.

[Driver Distraction and Carelessness](#)

Driver distraction was identified by respondents as an issue that needs to be urgently addressed. This covered distractions from people, objects or events outside the vehicle or inside distractions from passengers, in-car entertainment or information systems, eating, smoking and mobile phones.

There was support for the continuing use of hands free kits rather than an outright ban on mobile use in vehicles and it was recommended that manufacturers be encouraged to introduce hands free technology into all new cars. It was recognised that this could best be done through liaising with the Department for Transport in GB.

It was observed that drivers were very poor judges of how much their driving is affected by such distractions. It was also believed that drivers do not

properly understand how carelessness, whether caused by distraction or by other poor driving behaviours, can actually affect their driving.

Safer Speeds

Proposed measures to address excessive and inappropriate speed attracted many comments. It was suggested that, at present, the public was not sufficiently convinced that they would be caught to change their behaviour. Some responses sought stricter enforcement of existing limits including zero tolerance of any speeding offence and, in general, a greater police presence was called for on our roads. One respondent suggested a system of 'naming and shaming' road traffic offenders. It was also believed that community service in lieu of other sanctions or penalties could prove a useful deterrent. Reallocation of resources from more minor offences to tackling speeding was also suggested. There was some concern about measures that encouraged the public to report areas where speeding regularly occurs. It was believed that most of these reports would originate from pedestrians or other slower moving road users whose perception and ability to effectively judge the speed of cars might misdirect police activity.

There was support for the wider use of SPECs (average speed camera) technology as a means of reducing speed, particularly if it led to a redeployment of police officers onto rural roads. The location of safety cameras needs to be supported by strong evidence.

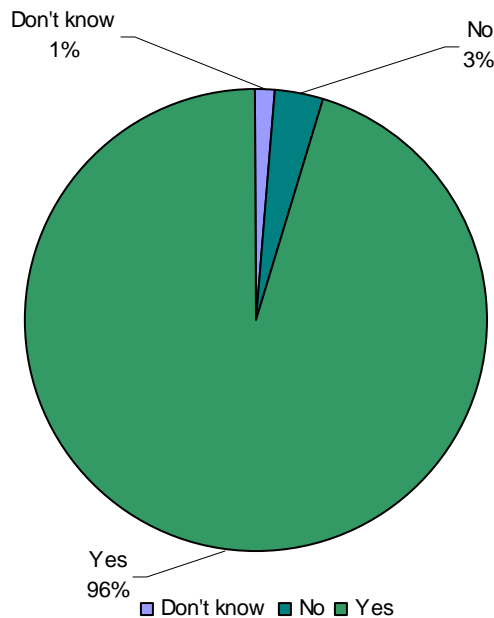
It was thought that technology could be better used to encourage compliance with speed limits rather than punitive measures to punish non-compliance. With this in mind, there was support for proposals to explore the feasibility and potential impact of emerging technologies that monitor driving behaviour and provide feedback to inform pedestrian protection systems and speed adaptation systems. There was also support for the use of on-road digital display equipment to make drivers aware of their speed.

“The department may wish to consider further work and trials on intelligent speed adaptations used on a non-mandatory basis to help with speed limit compliance.” (British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association)

Drink/Drug Driving

Ninety-five percent (95%) of on-line respondents agreed that drink driving still needs to be addressed as part of a new strategy.

Drink Driving - Research shows this poor road user behaviour needs to be addressed. Do you agree?



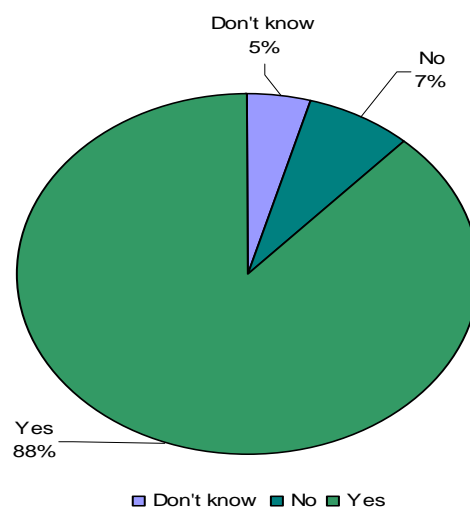
In written responses, drink or drug driving were widely recognised as contributory factors in road traffic collisions. Government was encouraged to move towards reductions in the drink drive limit and to introduce random breath testing to deter drink driving by increasing the perceived risk of detection. However, there were some concerns over the accuracy of equipment currently used by PSNI in detecting at proposed lower limits and suggestion that the blood test be retained until such times as the accuracy of the equipment was proven. It was noted that any blood test on a driver or rider should be carried out within a specified time limit to ensure accuracy. It

was hoped that when random breath testing is being introduced the police are aware of and sensitive to the need to build confidence among some sections of the community.

“BMA has repeatedly called for a reduction to 50mg/100ml and recommends that the legal BAC limit should be reduced from 80mg/100ml to 50mg/100ml and that legislation should be introduced permitting the use of random roadside breath testing without the need for prior suspicion of intoxication.”
(British Medical Association, Northern Ireland)

While there was consensus among those providing written responses for a reduction in the drink-drive limit, these respondents also considered it essential to introduce other measures to deter such behaviour. It was believed that improved rural transport would make it easier for people to comply with the law. Some respondents also believed that there was a role for pub owners, particularly in rural areas, to run schemes whereby their patrons, if necessary, could be brought home safely. It was hoped that the Department would work with pub owners and others in implementing such legislative changes.

Drug Driving - Research shows this poor road user behaviour needs to be addressed. Do you agree?



It was believed that many drivers may not be aware of drug driving legislation and that some drivers ignored anti-drug driving campaigns. One respondent noted that he did not believe that cannabis, in particular, impairs driving behaviour. As such it was suggested that there was a need for further education to raise awareness of the risks of drug driving, including the side effects of certain prescribed drugs which can also affect driving.

The proposal to investigate new technologies and legislative powers to better detect and collect evidence from drivers suspected of being impaired through drugs was welcomed. It was also recommended that research to develop devices to detect impairing drugs should be a priority and that until such technology is available, an interim offence of driving with illegal drugs in the body should be introduced.

[Driving For Work](#)

The consultation paper highlighted GB research that indicated that significant numbers of collisions involve and are caused by people driving for work and that more people are killed or seriously injured in “at work” road collisions than in all other occupational accidents together. Some respondents welcomed the proposal to encourage all employers to adopt management of road risk policies and for the Department to work with partners to provide information and advice on how this might be approached for both professional drivers and people who occasionally drive for work.

It was reported that a number of councils had held a breakfast seminar for local businesses to raise awareness of this issue. This attracted positive interest and feedback and it was suggested that similar events could be rolled out, at relative little cost to councils, across Northern Ireland.

One respondent representing the road haulage industry indicated that many responsible operators had already embraced a duty of care towards their employees, as well as other road users and were operating policies to deter drink/drug driving through random breathalysing and drug tests of driving staff.

This was considered particularly important in addressing the 'morning after' effects of alcohol. It was also noted that some smaller operators are perhaps ignorant of the importance of driving for work policies, through lack of guidance or advice. It was suggested that government should recognise the role of the commercial fleet operators in policing drink/drug driving compliance and support a non-statutory line of self-enforcement.

It was also requested that further advice and guidance be provided for fleet operators and of drivers who work in the agricultural sector. There was some concern that measures to encourage all employers to adopt management of road risk policies might overly bureaucratic for small businesses whose employees may only drive for work occasionally.

Although perhaps more relevant to new drivers, disappointment was expressed by one respondent that the consultation did not include a specific proposal to improve training and education for professional car and van drivers. It was suggested that a vocational qualification for such drivers would provide a set of standards and a regular review cycle. It would also provide a standard for employers to require their drivers to achieve. Alternatively, support was offered for the development of a voluntary learning initiative for van drivers to include the correct procedures for securing loads and information on the legal requirements for the carriage of passengers in vans.

It was also thought to be too easy to set up in business as a trainer of professional drivers. It was believed to be an important area and that government should consider setting standards for and licensing of training organisations.

It was believed that the impact of driver fatigue on road traffic collisions was not fully understood and this was suggested as a potential area for research.

Government was encouraged to amend the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations to include the provision of audio-visual information for buses to achieve parity with the accessibility regulations for rail travellers.

Although there was general support for the measure, the Ulster Farmers' Union thought that there was no need for a review of legislation surrounding agricultural vehicles, quad bikes and other vehicles not usually used on the public road. The development of measures to educate retailers, owners and users on the legal and safety requirements of using such vehicles was proposed as an alternative. The Ulster Farmers' Union further highlighted a need for more public information on agricultural operations so that road users could better anticipate the hazards of travelling on rural roads and be more considerate to those operating agricultural vehicles.

“We would however suggest, more public education...e.g. during May there will be a lot of tractors and silage trailers on the road requiring a wide swing into field entrances.” (Ulster Farmers' Union)

Motorcyclists

Sixty-four percent (64%) of on-line respondents agreed that the development of a multi-disciplinary motorcycling forum would help contribute towards a reduction in biker deaths and serious injuries.

The proposal to develop a motorcycling safety strategy for Northern Ireland was also welcomed, particularly if it could lead to motorcycling becoming better integrated with other road safety policies.

It was suggested that a motorcycling forum could work to identify priorities within a framework of vehicle safety and security, integration and traffic management, environmental and fiscal issues, statistics and research. Some respondents were concerned however that without clear objectives, leadership and political support, the forum would become unproductive and the motorcycling strategy undeliverable. There was, overall, strong consensus for both the motorcycling forum and strategy and high expectations of what it could achieve.

“Any [motorcycling] strategy should have action points a time frame for implementing actions and should be overseen by the stakeholders involved in any motorcycle forum. Participants in any motorcycle forum must also be prepared to deliver any motorcycle strategy.” (Right to Ride)

Compulsory Basic Training of motorcyclists was supported in the written comments, as it was believed to have worked well elsewhere. It was thought important to ensure that new riders are offered cost-beneficial training and instruction which should be the very best possible at this crucial early stage in a rider’s progress. Early publicity to raise awareness of the introduction of CBT was recommended.

It was suggested that a proposal to consider amending the licensing system to prohibit provisional driving licence holders from riding motorcycles unaccompanied seem to run counter to the introduction of CBT. It was believed that it would, in effect, require all riders to gain a license by accompanied learning. Experience was seen as the key to improving motorcyclists’ safety and it was suggested that the removal of unaccompanied provisional learning would lead to fewer people riding legally and fewer motorcyclists on the roads and prevent new riders from gaining valuable experience.

“This action measure would appear to be redundant as we understand this will be implemented through action measure 169 above regarding the introduction of CBT.” (Right to Ride)

The introduction of an Approved Motorcycle Instructor Register was thought to be a good idea as it would not only improve the quality of the training but the way it is perceived.

On-line respondents further suggested that motorcyclists’ safety could be improved if biker awareness training was included as part of basic driver training. Again, some written responses concurred with this point of view saying that better training of drivers to be aware of the presence of

motorcyclists, as well as other vulnerable road users, on the roads was fundamental to motorcyclists' safety. It was further recommended that this awareness should be demonstrated during driver testing.

The proposal to assess the potential for introducing different speed limits for motorcyclists' was strongly opposed. It was thought that there would be greater potential for collisions if motorcyclists were forced to travel more slowly than the surrounding traffic and greater frustration to other road users.

While it was recognised that visibility of motorcyclists' to other drivers was important, the addition of florescent strips to motorcyclists' clothing and helmets was not thought to be effective. One respondent representing the interest of motorcyclists also advised that many riders already undertake measures to improve their visibility with clothing and helmets that either have bright coloured or fluorescent strips or are wholly fluorescent. It was further suggested that there is no reliable evidence to demonstrate that high visibility jackets or fluorescent strips make any difference in reducing motorcycle crashes. There was also concern that this proposal was actually considering measures that would mean mandatory fluorescent strips, and, as this was given as an example only, that other measures would be considered. It was believed that decisions on issues such as this should be progressed with the motorcycling forum.

It was suggested that the use of Day Time Running Lights, also known as Dedicated Running Lights or DRL, be included in the wider debate about rider conspicuity. The fact that the majority of motorcycles produced since 2003 have "Automatic Headlights On" systems fitted and drivers still fail to see motorcyclists was of concern.

Respondents welcomed the proposal to promote the use of high standard motorcycle protective wear although it was thought that most of the motorcycling community in Northern Ireland was already safety conscious and that the majority of riders recognised the importance of personal protective equipment in reducing fatal or serious injuries.

RoSPA recommended that *“the Department should support and publicise SHARP (the Safety Helmet Assessment and Ratings Programme) which provides motorcyclists with information about the safety performance of different motorcycle helmets.”*

There was support, in principle, for the objective of improving safety for motorcyclists through improved technology in order to create more reliable and functional motorcycles and more generally, for any research that would improve the safety of motorcyclists. However, it was thought that there were still gains to be realised from improved training and improving the attitude of the motorcyclist in general.

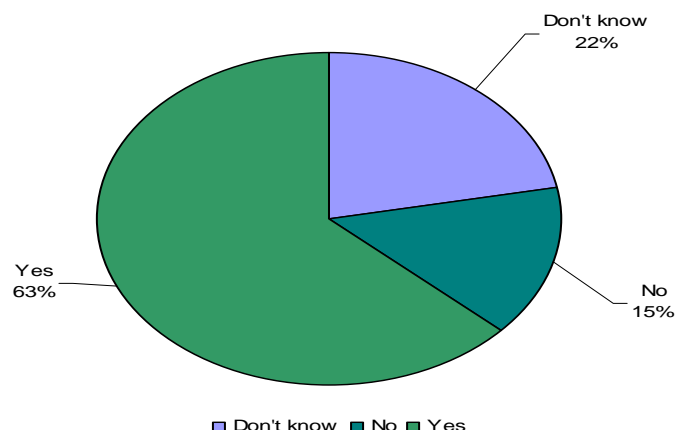
Additional research focusing on hazards and hazard awareness for motorcyclists as well as unintentional blindness of car drivers would also be welcomed.

Right to Ride strongly objected to proposals contained within the 3rd EC Driving Licence Directive and called on the Department to review Northern Ireland’s motorcycle testing and training regime to consider whether or not all manoeuvres required to be taught and demonstrated could safely be conducted in the on-road test. It further asked that the review consider other related motorcycle testing and training issues, including the options for training and testing for progressive access to more powerful motorcycles proposed under the 3rd Driving Licence Directive and how any changes might relate to wider proposals to improve motorcycle training and testing.

[Pedestrians](#)

Eight-one percent (81%) of on-line respondents agreed with the proposed measures to address pedestrian safety with 55% approving the introduction of the Active Travel Forum.

Do you agree with the measures proposed for improving the safety of pedestrians?



Some on-line respondents strongly felt that pedestrians must be encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety. Strong views were also expressed about the lack of and need for enforcement of pedestrian offences.

Pedestrians expressed concern at sharing footpaths with cyclists and an increasing number of parked cars, with particular fears for the safety of older people and children. Once again the need for driver education to contain a component on the rights of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users group was highlighted.

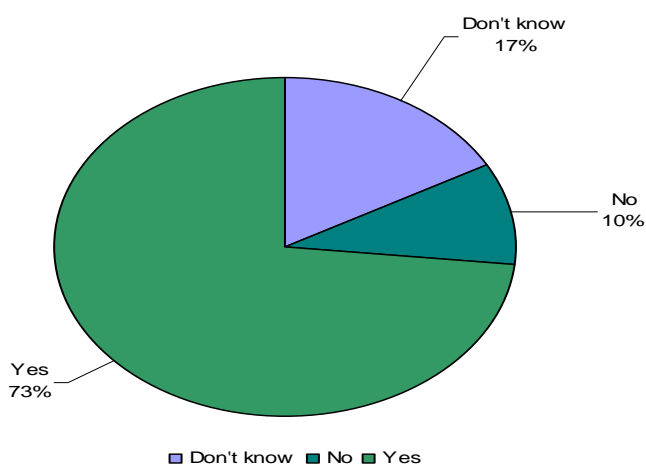
While welcoming proposals around producing a possible new public information campaign on the safety of pedestrians, taking into account the needs of people who are deaf, there was a request for the needs of other disabled people to be also addressed.

The proposal on possible information campaigns addressing the risks associated with being a pedestrian and the need to wear reflective clothing was considered particularly relevant for users of unlit rural roads. It was also suggested that any such campaigns include cyclists and horse riders as well as pedestrians.

Cyclists

Seventy-three (73%) of on-line respondents felt that more could be done to improve the safety of cyclists. Perhaps more than any in other debate on road safety, when it came to safe cycling, there was polarity of opinion between the views of the actual road user group i.e. cyclists and those of other road users.

Do agree with the measures proposed for improving the safety of cyclists?



Cyclists who responded on-line believe that there are insufficient properly designed cycle lanes. They suggested that the revised driver training process should include learning respect for other vulnerable road users and teaching drivers how to “share the road”.

On the other side of the debate, those who responded on-line and identified themselves as pedestrians, drivers and bikers offered strong views that cyclists should have compulsory training and testing and should be required to have at least third party insurance primarily because of damage some cyclists have allegedly caused to cars and the potential risk they pose to pedestrians.

There were some supporting comments made on-line about the need to ensure all cyclists wear helmets. The British Medical Association, the Joint Road Safety Forum and the Public Health Agency (NI) all called for the introduction of compulsory wearing of helmets for all cyclists. It was stated

that evidence indicates that wearing a helmet is protective, for some wearers in particular, especially children. There is, however, some dispute as to whether there is reliable evidence for or against such measures. Other respondents equally cite opposing evidence which would suggest that making the wearing of helmets compulsory would reduce the likelihood of people cycling, leading to greater health problems.

“IPH would support a thorough and objective review of the evidence both for and against legislation in relation to cycle helmets.” (Institute of Public Health in Ireland)

It was suggested in one response that cycle manufacturers and retailers should consider supplying a free cycle helmet or helmet voucher, with every bike sold and that costs should be reduced substantially. It was also considered necessary for advertising standards officials to ensure that the public are protected against misleading safety claims from manufacturers.

Some of the written comments reflected disappointment that the cycling infrastructure in Northern Ireland was not better and was not of sufficient standard to promote cycling as a safe, healthy and sustainable mode of transport. There was a call for the creation of a more widespread safer cycling environment.

“We would seek reassurance that all available measures are put in place to enhance safety for cyclist road users including extended provision of dedicated or shared cycle lanes.” (Belfast City Council)

One respondent thought it likely that decreases in cyclist and pedestrian casualties could be attributed to risk aversion rather than improved safety. It was suggested that a ‘safety in numbers’ effect, associated with more cyclists being on the roads would lead to an improvement in cycling casualty rates.

Written responses also reflected a desire to see cyclists comply with the rules of the Highway Code and in particular, to cycle on the roads rather than the pavement.

Although there were many concerns about the safety of cyclists, only a few comments were offered about specific proposals put forward in the consultation document and those that did generally approved of measures to improve cyclists' safety.

[Children and Young People](#)

Eighty-six (86%) of on-line respondents agree with the measures proposed for improving the safety of children and young people.

Written responses also indicated strong support for the measures to improve the safety of child road users. One respondent noted a need to focus primarily on the behaviour of other road users rather than on the child. However, it was recognised that children should understand the importance of road safety from pre-school onwards and initiatives that supported this awareness were strongly welcomed. As such a proposal to undertake an audit of the Road Safety Education Officer Service was welcomed. It was thought necessary to ensure that the Department of Education was included in the exercise and that there should be a closer partnership between the departments to incorporate road safety into the curriculum.

“The UFU welcome the commitment to audit road safety educational services if it helps create a more reflective and effective educational service.” (Ulster Farmers’ Union)

North Down and Ards Road Safety Committee voiced concern that the proposed audit of the education officer service would be limited to compliance with existing procedures and that it would not consider wider issues regarding the delivery of road safety education. It also called for a review of what road

safety education was actually needed, who should deliver it and where such services should be located (i.e. who should be responsible).

“The Strategy plans to Audit the Road Safety Education Service but that seems to suggest checking compliance with existing procedures. We feel that a full review should be undertaken of the existing arrangements.” (Road Safety Committee - North Down and Ards)

While many proposed measures would have a positive impact on all road users, it was recommended that children be specifically considered within all new policies. For example, it should be ensured that any new measures to address pedestrian safety should be tested to ensure they equally benefit children. It was suggested that measures to address road safety in rural and border areas and the safety of people coming to Northern Ireland for the first time also be assessed for their impact on children. It was believed that children in these groups would be at greater risk.

The safety of child pedestrians in deprived areas was highlighted as a major concern following the findings of the Department’s research into deprivation and child pedestrian casualties. The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People asked that the Department clearly state what action it will take, in light of the research findings, to reduce the likelihood of child pedestrians in deprived areas becoming involved in traffic collisions. It was further believed that the scale and intensity of measures to be adopted need to be proportionate to the level of disadvantage. It was thought that a number of measures proposed in the consultation paper could be adapted to place a greater emphasis on targeting disadvantaged groups and/or areas with higher deprivation.

“It is recommended that measures linked to areas of deprivation are referenced within the Strategy, as often if not identified at this stage they do not receive further attention and funding.” (Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council)

The safety of children travelling to and from schools and school bus safety was raised by some respondents. It was proposed that more robust measures are put in place to improve school bus safety such as flashing lights and passing restrictions, and that escorts are provided for children disembarking from buses across busy roads.

It was thought necessary to provide cycle training for all children and that this should be part of the curriculum. It was also suggested that the current Cycling Proficiency Scheme in schools, was outdated. It was recommended that the scheme should be reviewed as a matter of urgency with suggestions such as its replacement by a scheme such as the Bikeability initiative, currently operating in England.

As well as learning how to ride a bike, it was thought that proficiency training should also include bike maintenance, safety precautions such as use of lights and wearing reflective clothing and information on the health benefits of cycling. The importance of wearing a cycle helmet was also recognised by some respondents and it was expected that cycle proficiency training already encourages children to wear a safety helmet.

The need to broaden the educational settings in which the Department works to include the non-formal and community youth education provision was highlighted in responses. The Department was urged to extend its educational work beyond schools and to engage with youth services and other non-formal education providers. As such, the proposal to collaborate with the private and voluntary sector to identify, accredit and promote effective training initiatives aimed at learner and novice drivers was welcomed.

Road safety education and advertising, with a particular focus on child road safety, were regularly raised as areas where government resources should to be directed. Respondents felt that gaps existed in the current education system particularly in second and third level education. Road safety advertising raised some very strong views, some very supportive, others questioning the style or indeed the need for such advertising at all.

Older Road Users

Eight-five percent (85%) of on-line respondents supported a proposal to carry out research to better understand the causes of collisions involving older people. It was recommended that such findings should be communicated to drivers to help them understand changes in their abilities and perhaps consider whether there might be a point at which they might believe that continuing to drive would be unsafe.

Many on-line respondents felt strongly that older drivers should have their driving skills retested on a regular basis and that medical tests, particularly eye tests, should form part of a retesting process. This was also reflected in written comments.

One respondent thought it worth highlighting that the most common eye condition causing sight loss is age-related macular degeneration which predominantly affects older people. The Department was also asked to bear in mind that many older people whose mobility is affected because of changes in their sight may not be registered as blind or partially sighted nor have a visible indicator that other road users would notice such as a cane or guide dog.

“Local government would support the introduction of 10 yearly eye-sight tests and theory tests to ensure that drivers and riders have adequate vision and knowledge of the Highway Code.” (NILGA)

There were few written comments received specifically about proposals to improve the safety of older people but those who did comment were supportive.

Horse Riders

It was believed that horse riders would benefit from education on how to dress for safety on the roads and how best to negotiate the dangers of riding on

busy roads. It was suggested that it should be made compulsory for all horse riders to wear riding hats of an approved safety standard and high visibility clothing when riding on the roads. It was also suggested that the Department might do more to educate other road users about how to behave around animals.

Safer Roads

The consultation document recognised the many long established engineering measures that have improved safety on our roads, both in urban and rural areas, and that these will continue into the future. Maintenance and improvement were high on the list of priority topics that respondents wished to discuss, along with speed and road user interaction. There was, as would be expected, a diversity of opinions on how Roads Service do and should prioritise different categories of road users and control, or remove the controls on, the interactions between them. Respondents who provided written comments in this area included representatives of local government, the business sector, rural interest groups such as farmers and young people living in rural areas, and groups representing road users such as British Motorcycling Federation, Right to Ride and British Horse Society. There were also a significant number of written comments from members of the public.

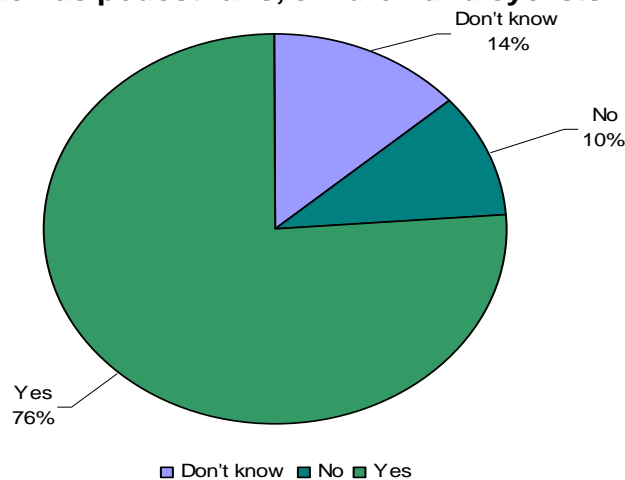
While many focused on safety on rural roads, concerns also related to the whole network. Road design, maintenance and signage featured prominently in the on-line comments. Issues were cited about the narrowness of some roads, perceived poor levels of maintenance, both of the carriageway itself but also of the road sides. Signage issues were also raised as were concerns about speed limits that apply across the network.

Road users are still significantly more at risk of fatal or serious injury on rural roads and these roads continue to present very different and, some argue, more complex safety challenges. Significant numbers of respondents held strong views about maintenance of rural roads, in particular, believing that poor maintenance was a major contributory factor to the large number of road casualties in rural areas. Some respondents highlighted their personal experiences of 'near misses', caused, in their view, by pot holes, hedge overgrowth, silage spillage, poor drainage and lack of gritting.

20mph Zones

Specific proposals such as 20mph zones in residential areas were welcomed with 76% of on-line respondents supporting this proposal. However many drivers asked that consideration be given to alternative traffic calming measures other than speed humps, as these cause damage and wear and tear on cars.

Do you agree with the proposal to develop a programme of 20mph zones and limits in residential and other areas where there is a high presence of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, children and cyclists?



Although many written responses supported proposals to develop a programme of 20mph speed limits at rural schools where the national speed limit applies and the wider introduction of 20mph limits in urban areas, there were also a number of comments opposing such measures for economic and traffic flow reasons. Of those respondents who did support the principles of 20mph limits, many wished to see the proposals extended to include all schools, to all rural towns and villages and to more urban areas. The absence of traffic calming engineering measures from some 20mph schemes was particularly welcomed both in the general comments received and in comments specific to rural areas. It was suggested that the use of such measures in rural areas failed to consider the size of modern agricultural and heavy goods vehicles and indicated the difficulties caused as a result. Other

respondents however, disagreed suggesting that traffic calming measures were effective in changing driver behaviours.

It was noted that 20mph limits would encourage walking and cycling activities and this was to be welcomed. It was further suggested that the concept might be broadened to incorporate Home Zones, an initiative where roads and streets are physically altered to balance the needs of all road users. A policy that encouraged traffic in residential areas to move at speeds more appropriate to sharing the space with pedestrians was welcomed.

Some respondents gave a more cautious welcome to 20mph limits and suggested that such limits only be applied to locations where specific need had been identified rather than adopting it as a standard operational policy. If this were to be the case, one respondent, representing the freight and haulage sector, indicated their strong objection.

There was also some debate about the difference between areas with 20mph zones or limits and whether they would be more effective as 'advisory' or 'enforceable' limits in residential and other urban areas where they are applied. Better signage when approaching restricted speed areas would be welcomed. A proposal also requested more off-road parking facilities at schools and more right turn lanes at the entrance to schools.

Some respondents were concerned that the introduction of 20mph limits might conflict with other government commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality. In particular, Belfast City Council asked that appropriate environmental assessments be carried out to assess the impact of lower speeds and associated increases in vehicle emissions.

On the issue of speeding, respondents identified differentials in speeds between vehicles travelling on the same stretch of road as an issue and suggested that where such differences are typical, more over-taking lanes are provided. The Ulster Farmers' Union was concerned about the potential negative impact of a proposal to close cross-over points and reduce access

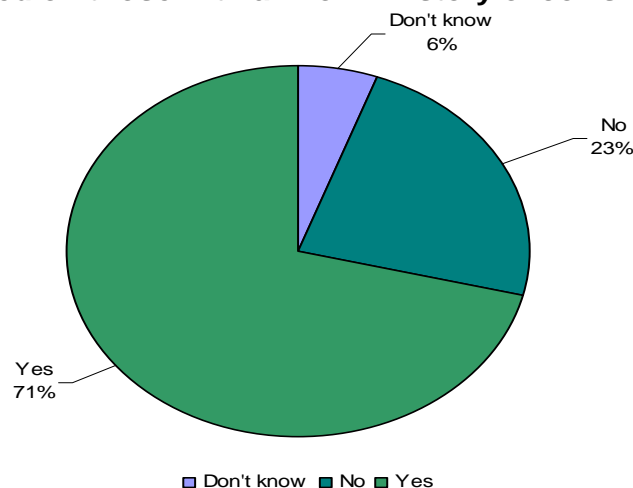
points to upgrade some lower standard parts of the dual carriageway network. It was thought that this might prevent farmers from accessing land at opposite ends of busy roads and simply force slow moving agricultural vehicles to travel further on faster moving routes. It was suggested that sufficient room be made for longer vehicles turning right to wait safely in the central reservation area or that under or over passes be provided.

The North Down and Ards Road Safety Committee welcomed proposals to address the lack of understanding between street lighting and 30 mph speed limits.

[Review of Speed Limits on Major Rural Roads](#)

Seventy-nine percent (79%) of on-line respondents agreed with this proposal. Other comments indicate that the minority who do not support this measure believe that sufficient targeted enforcement of current limits and the laws on careless and dangerous driving would remove the need for such a review.

Do you agree with the proposal to review the speed limits of major rural roads within five years, with priority placed on those with a known history of collisions?



Measures proposed to address excessive speeding attracted most comments among those consultees providing written responses on safer roads. In general there was broad agreement that speed limits should be reviewed and

action measures relating to the review of the limits on upper tier rural roads with the potential to lower the national speed limit on rural single carriageway roads to 50mph attracted positive support. Among respondents who would welcome a reduction in the speed limit on rural roads, some suggested limits ranging from 40mph to 55mph with lower limits for minor rural roads. Government should move towards adopting the principles of the Quiet Lanes initiative which seeks to make selected country roads more attractive to non-vehicular road users such as walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

However, while others are supportive of reviewing limits on a road by road basis, they would support fewer general changes and would wish to see greater policing and enforcement of the existing limits. Some respondents were not clear whether a general reduction to 50mph would have an impact on casualty reductions and it was thought that investment to address causes at specific locations would be a better option. Before new speed limits were set, Roads Service was asked to conduct trials and these might lead to better understanding before considering wider implementation. Such comments would suggest support for consideration of development of route treatment strategies for trunk roads where interventions may be introduced at specific sites on the route or through a mass action programme covering the whole route.

More specifically, the benefit of current restrictions on goods vehicles over 7.5 tonnes to 40mph on single-carriageway roads was also raised. Trials to investigate an increase in the permitted speed to 50mph were requested. There was also a call to increase the speed limit on motorways to 75mph.

There was some variance in comments relating to the physical separation of cyclists from vehicular traffic and the development and maintenance of more cycling infrastructure to increase usage and safety. One respondent, representing predominately rural road users, remarked strongly that priority must be given to motor vehicles and that cycle lanes must not restrict or reduce motor vehicle driving space. There were also comments supporting cyclists' separation from other traffic and it was believed that opportunities are

being missed within the planning process and regeneration schemes to provide better facilities for cyclists.

“Cyclists, if not a priority, should be given at least equal priority along with vehicle drivers, pedestrians and public transport users.” (Member of the public)

It was also believed that the planning process was failing to provide safe play areas for children resulting in unnecessary risk to their safety. A proposal for closer working with Planning Service to ensure that road safety is included as early as possible in the planning process was welcomed. Local councils also sought closer working relationships with the Department for Regional Development's Roads Service and would be keen to have more ability to implement changes, for example, in the siting of speed limit signs and pedestrian crossings, to improve road safety.

There was broad consensus that safer roads could be achieved through good road design, modernising and upgrading standards on rural roads and timely maintenance of both roads and road signs. There was support for measures proposed to improve road treatments, markings and lighting. Some respondents however thought that removal of central lines and moving edge lines inwards could potentially further reduce already narrow roads resulting in increased risk. Noting that this measure might effectively change some roads to single tracks, some consultees expressed concerns about who would have right of way. Road-side erosion was seen as a further difficulty as was the fact that farm machinery had increased in size over the years, was typically slow and other road users were still likely to drive at inappropriate speeds on rural roads.

It was proposed that the widening of minor roads through better verge maintenance would be a very effective road safety measure. Suggestions included dissuading property and land owners from growing garden hedges that were high or too close to the road edge and from erecting kerbs and boulders at property entrances. These were considered to present particular

dangers to road users. This would suggest support for the proposal to extend verges at sides of roads and at junctions in rural areas to reduce severity of run-off collisions and improve the likelihood of avoiding a potential collision. One respondent, however, said that this should be given lower priority than improving general road conditions as widening of edge and centre lines on rural roads was thought not to have significant road safety benefits and resources should be directed to more regular replacement of markings.

In relation to maintenance and signage, it was further suggested that research into road signage in other jurisdictions be undertaken to help improve road signs in Northern Ireland and provide ideas for new signs here. It was also asserted that it is not clear on many cross-border roads that a driver has crossed into the other jurisdiction. This causes problems for drivers as signs and speed limits are metricated in the Republic of Ireland. It was thought that this would be a particular problem for visitors and tourists to border areas.

The Ulster Farmers' Union noted that signs were also not placed sufficiently high enough for drivers of modern tractors to see clearly. The development of signing systems to warn of the possible presence of motorcyclists was cautiously welcomed. Respondents commented that these signs should not overburden drivers or riders with unnecessary information and so become a hazard in themselves.

Other comments regarding safer roads reflected the need for road engineering measures to offer greater protection to individual road users so that they could easily and with greater safety make a journey and share that space with other road users.

“Overall the proposals demonstrate a desire to move road engineering from a reactive to a proactive role to accept that road users will make mistakes and engineering measures can make the difference between a crash and a serious injury or death.” (Road Safety Committee, North Down and Ards)

More specifically, although there were few concerns about measures to improve safety of pedestrians, the proposal to remove, where appropriate, pedestrian guard railings received mixed responses. While some respondents supported the measure, representatives of disabled people raised concerns about a potential increase in pavement parking.

There was broad support for engineering measures to improve the safety of motorcyclists as they had proven useful elsewhere. However, to further protect motorcyclists in the event of a collision and lessen the severity of possible injuries, Roads Service was asked to consider the use of crash cushions on road side objects such as lampposts or telegraph poles. However, it was thought that any site identified for such action should first be considered for modification to remove the danger altogether.

“Standards need to be revised and developed to reflect the needs of motorcyclists, by encouraging motorcycle-friendly design, construction and maintenance procedures.” (Right to Ride)

There was strong support for provision of additional rest areas on motorways and the trunk road network and a desire to see such areas extended to provide appropriate facilities such as secure overnight truck stops. It was believed that drivers would avail of such facilities and support drivers' and operators obligations under drivers' hours' regulations.

One respondent was disappointed that the consultation paper did not emphasise, in particular, the benefits of good street lighting and suggested that provision of appropriate lighting across the road network would not only reduce the number of night time collisions but also lessen their severity.

It was thought that the safety of pedestrians, particularly children, could be improved through the provision of more crossing points and additional traffic calming measures. The lack of footways in rural areas was identified as an issue, particularly for children travelling to or from school and getting to and

from school transport. It was also requested that bus stops are provided at locations that provide for maximum safety of pedestrians.

In general, proposals to improve the roads environment were welcomed and supported and many respondents indicated their desire to develop closer working relationships with government partners to ensure that engineering solutions can deliver improved safety on the roads.

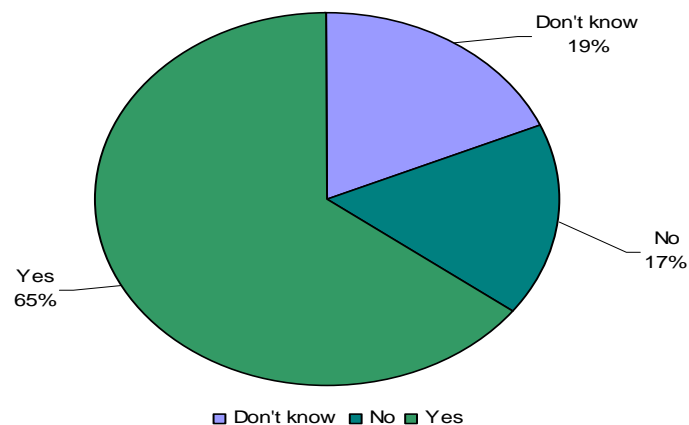
“The commitment to undertake investigations into the nature of collisions on rural roads is also to be welcomed but we feel this should be strengthened to ensure that engineering based solutions are not just considered but carried out if they are believed to mitigate future risk.” (Young Farmers’ Clubs of Ulster)

Safer Vehicles

Improving Vehicle Safety

Sixty-five percent (65%) of on-line respondents believed that more could be done to improve vehicle safety. Support was given for the current motor testing system. One respondent suggested consideration be given to an 'all-island' approach for vehicle testing and standards.

Do you think that there is more that can be done within Northern Ireland to improve vehicle safety?



It was suggested that government should attempt to influence car manufacturers to improve in-car technology to aid safety and to persuade them not to target 'young' drivers with obviously 'fast' cars. One respondent in particular indicated that car companies should be prevented from offering free or reduced car insurance to young people as this only encouraged young, inexperienced, drivers to purchase high performance cars thus adding to speeding and casualties.

The proposals to improve vehicle safety were broadly agreed by consultees providing written responses but several respondents noted reservations about how some of the measures might be implemented.

“The UFU accept these proposals but would warn that any enforcement procedures must be applied consistently throughout Northern Ireland.” (Ulster Farmers’ Union)

For some respondents, the concept of safer vehicles also encompassed equipment that might be carried in a vehicle to enhance safety in the event of a collision. This included hazard triangles, fire extinguishers and first aid kits.

The safety of school buses was a concern for some respondents. It was suggested that increased impact fortification or rear strengthening for greater protection in the event of a crash, would improve safety and prevent casualties.

The proposal to introduce a statutory requirement for vehicles over testable age to hold a valid test certificate at all times, unless excused under limited exemptions, was not clearly understood by some respondents.

Proposals on introducing type approval for all new vehicles to have electronic stability control were queried by one respondent as to how this could be applied to tractors.

It was thought that regulations should be brought forward to limit maximum speeds and that all vehicles should be fitted with speed limiters to prevent drivers from exceeding the maximum speed limit of 70mph.

One written response suggested that consideration should be given to transferring vehicle testing to the private sector. It was believed that such a move would improve waiting times. The ability of private garages to carry out any necessary repairs identified during the MOT without the need to remove the vehicle from the site was considered an additional benefit by the respondent.

In contrast, another respondent praised the work of the DVA and believed that any move towards privatisation *“could only lead to a drop in standards and should be avoided at all costs.”* (Individual on-line respondent)

The proposal to deliver safer vehicles by raising consumer awareness as well as through regulations was supported by some respondents. Current delivery of information on vehicles was considered to be poor and regulations inconsistently enforced.

“In an effort to improve understanding, the UFU took the initiative to publish a booklet detailing regulations relating to agricultural vehicles on the road.” (Ulster Farmers’ Union)

While accepting the importance of tachographs for long distance lorry drivers, one respondent, representing the views of people working in agriculture, thought that Northern Ireland was too small to need many tachographs fitted to vehicles that travelled within the region. Improved training of police officers to improve related enforcement activity should not therefore be a priority within the new strategy. This proposal did, however, receive support from the freight and haulage industry representatives.

There was cautious support for proposals to continue to seize untaxed and uninsured vehicles and the introduction of a new power to seize vehicles driven without a valid MOT certificate (where one is required). It was suggested that this would be supported provided that it was enforced pragmatically, for example, where the MOT certificate was significantly out of date.

It was thought that references to extensions to freight operator licensing systems were somewhat premature as the system itself had yet to be introduced. It was further suggested by those representing people working in agriculture, that, if enforced, it could have significant, negative impact on small businesses. A contrasting view was expressed by the Freight Haulage Association who expressed very serious concerns about the lack of

improvement in goods vehicles compliance in recent years despite a wide range of education and enforcement activity. It urged government to introduce and apply the powers contained in the Goods Vehicle (Licensing of Operators) Transport Bill as soon as practicable.

“Strong support for proposed measure 65 to extend freight operator licensing to all vehicles over 3.5 tonnes and measure 66 to extend the ‘O’ licensing system to all freight operators.” (Road Haulage Association through evidence provided to the Environment Committee)

One respondent believed that in order to invest in vehicle technology, whether for road safety reasons or reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, people, particularly operators of commercial fleets, must have sufficient funds to do so. The current economic conditions are such, however, to negatively impact on investment in new vehicles. In effect, any new or emerging safety technologies may take longer than anticipated to make a meaningful contribution to road traffic casualties. Government was asked to acknowledge the negative impact on investment in safety technologies that results from increasing operating costs associated with higher fuel duties and increasing enforcement agency fees.

“Government policies which have the effect of reducing cash available to companies to invest – either through increases in fuel duty by the treasury or ongoing fee increase – will have a similar effect of stunting the roll-out of existing safety technologies into the working fleet.” (Freight Transport Association)

It was suggested that vehicle safety among fleet vehicles could be improved if the Department and the Driver Vehicle Agency introduced the Operator Compliance Risk Score system (OCRS) as operated by DfT in GB. OCRS, is used to calculate the likelihood of an operator being compliant or non-compliant. It was considered to be transparent and as examiners could have remote access to the database would enable them to identify which vehicles should be checked either at the roadside or at business premises. It was

believed that this measure, if implemented, would encourage operators to carry out continuous vehicle maintenance.

Some respondents believed that the new strategy should include measures supporting the use of new vehicle technologies and proposals to promote the use of electric powered vehicles.

One respondent suggested that the lack of regulations setting minimum safety standards for trailers and towing caravans was presenting a risk to road safety. The respondent believed that trailers, caravans and other towed vehicles should be registered and subject to MOT checks similar to those for other vehicles. It was suggested that the current wiring system that activates a breaker in the event of a trailer separation from the towing vehicle while in transit was not a sufficiently effective safety measure and that linkage could be improved by the use of stronger connecting chains.

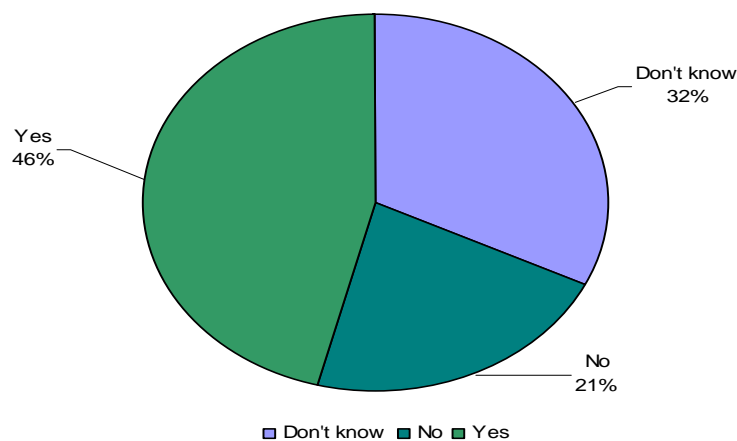
In summary, most respondents who provided comments on measures to improve vehicle safety accepted the general principles proposed and were supportive of the measures proposed to contribute to road casualty reductions. However, some concerns were expressed about the timing, costs and fairness of implementing some measures, particularly those that would introduce new regulations and costs, to commercial fleets.

Delivery of Road Safety Strategy

How Road Safety is Currently Delivered

Forty-six percent (46%) of those who responded to the on-line questionnaire believe that the current existing partnership between various departments, agencies with an interest in road safety works well with 22% disagreeing. If we remove the sizeable proportion of 'Don't Knows' (32%), it indicates that 68% of those who had a view on the issue believed that the existing partnership works well. This view was also reflected in the written responses. The increasing involvement of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, the Ambulance Service and the Department of Education was particularly welcomed.

Do you think that the existing partnership between the various departments and agencies with an interest in road safety, as mentioned above, works well?



There were suggestions that road safety should become the sole responsibility of one government department - either DOE or DRD - working with partners in other agencies. Others suggested a Department of Transport similar to DfT in GB. Some respondents felt that district councils should have a more proactive role in road safety in particular with reference to road maintenance, signage and road safety education. However, if local authorities

are to be expected to play a role in delivering and implementing the new road safety strategy at a local level, NILGA stressed that it would be important to provide local authorities with a statutory basis for doing so. Other respondents believed that control and responsibility for the road structure, signage, speed limits and transport consultations must remain centralised within DRD.

“It should be noted that without the power of "wellbeing" (to be given to councils as part of the RPA process) there is no legal vires for councils to incur expenditure on road safety.” (Belfast City Council)

The establishment of a Joint Road Safety Forum to co-ordinate delivery of key road safety messages throughout the Dungannon, Cookstown, Omagh and Fermanagh area was put forward as a good example of how statutory organisations could work together to maximise resources and minimise any duplication of effort. Partners in the Forum include the Fire and Rescue Service, PSNI, District Policing Partnerships and the departments of Education, Regional Development and the Environment. The Forum’s action plan for the area has included delivery of road safety awareness through themed DPP discussion forums and meetings with organisations such as the Vintners Association. Education programmes such as ‘Bike Safe’ for motorcyclists, ‘Roadsafe Roadshow’ for sixth form students and a Christmas anti drink-driving campaign have also been delivered through the Forum’s action plan.

[Role for Society Including Voluntary and Community Sector](#)

The consultation set out government’s commitment to work with others to build capacity to reduce casualties at local level, identify local road safety issues and objectives and determine how we can work together to address local needs and priorities. This partnership approach was strongly welcomed by many respondents. However, it was pointed out that success would require clear leadership and accountability for delivery.

Eight-two percent (82%) of on-line respondents agreed that the Department should work increasingly with other stakeholders and around 77% think that there is more that could be done by local authorities to improve road safety.

While the establishment of stakeholder forums were broadly welcomed there were also concerns that in an attempt to be inclusive, these forums could become too large and unfocused or that lobbyists with a marginal interest could skew the direction of new or revised policies.

“Our suggestion would be a highly focused team of directly affected parties, i.e. motorcycle groups, police and civil servants for example.” (British Motorcycle Federation)

Although some forums had yet to be established it was encouraging to note in many responses the commitment of many stakeholders to offer support and participate. It was suggested that children and young people should also be encouraged to participate in forums.

Such comments were not restricted to participation in forums. Several responses demonstrated the willingness of many respondents to engage with the problems presented by road safety and to work with government to develop and implement solutions. A number of respondents offered to assist in other ways such as providing input to campaigns and other education and information programmes, including road shows, demonstrations and workshops in schools and other places of education. This commitment by such a wide range of stakeholders has been very encouraging. Many respondents hoped that such engagement would be beneficial in addressing specific local and community circumstances.

One respondent believed that properly managed and resourced road safety committees, established within district councils, could have a role in delivering road safety at a local level. There should be some type of overarching body providing support for these committees and the Northern Ireland Assembly’s

Environment Committee suggested that RoSPA might provide this in the future.

“Disability Action will be pleased to assist the Department with any of these [pedestrian safety] campaigns to ensure the needs of all people with disabilities are represented.” (Disability Action)

“As a regional voluntary youth organisation we are keen to lend our support to ensure the safety our members and rural young people generally.” (Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster)

“MASS has a particular interest in engaging with the relevant statutory bodies and other organisations to take appropriate measures to try and alleviate the difficulties that young male drivers cause to society.” (Motor Accident Solicitors Society)

Monitoring and Reporting

The Department was encouraged to produce action plans to support and provide a focus for the delivery and implementation of the strategy and provide additional information on actions to be undertaken.

Respondents would welcome more information on certain reporting requirements, such as ‘at work’ road collisions. It was noted that some interesting work was being conducted by the International Road Assessment Programme which looks at saving lives in developing countries by promoting safer road design and that they had produced templates setting out reporting requirements.

One respondent believed that the Department needed to consider how it would monitor or evaluate measures within the strategy that gave a commitment to “consider” or “monitor” issues. It was suggested that the strategy should include monitoring and evaluation mechanisms designed to examine the impact of proposed road safety measures on health inequalities.

Research

As well as supporting the use of performance indicators to monitor progress towards the casualty reduction targets, the use of data and research more generally to develop and evaluate road safety policies was encouraged.

One respondent representing those living and working in rural areas, believed that many collisions on rural roads are not reported. If road safety policies for rural roads are to be improved, people should be encouraged to report all crashes.

There were several comments welcoming the research identifying and assessing the nature of the road safety issues to be addressed over the life of the new strategy.

Proposals for greater data sharing between road safety partners were welcomed. Data sharing between the driver licensing agencies in Northern Ireland and GB would also be welcomed by those representing the freight transport and haulage sector so that GB enforcement agencies can readily view data recorded for visiting Northern Ireland drivers. It was reported that Northern Ireland commercial vehicle drivers are currently subject to uncertain delays when stopped at roadside checks in GB.

In the interest of improving interaction with cyclists, the Freight Transport Association called for research to investigate the causes of cyclist deaths involving commercial vehicles and for its findings to be acted upon.

It was suggested that existing research conducted through the Northern Ireland Road Safety Monitor survey include questions to measure and monitor changes over time in the extent of fear of traffic, both real and perceived.

Integration with Other Policies

Some respondents suggested that revenue collected from road traffic enforcement activity should be used to fund road safety initiatives.

The establishment of an Active Travel Forum was welcomed not only to give focus to actions needed to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists' but to encourage increased physical activity, improving health outcomes, decrease greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to combating climate change and support a sustainable transport system. References in the consultation paper to measures that would contribute to carbon reductions were welcomed.

Links between the Road Safety Strategy and the Regional Transportation Strategy were noted and welcomed and the need for a specific rural transportation strategy to be developed was stated.

The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People highlighted government obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and urged the Department of the Environment and its road safety partners to benchmark proposals that relate to children against four of the general principles of the UNCRC, namely: -

- Article 2: children shall not be discriminated against in exercising any of their rights under the UNCRC;
- Article 3: all decisions taken which affect children's lives should be taken in the child's best interests;
- Article 6: all children have the right to life and to the fullest level of development; and
- Article 12: children have the right to have their voices heard in all matters concerning them.

It was recommended that road safety proposals link, as appropriate, with Government's Child Poverty Action Plan.

[Resources and Funding](#)

While it was understood that implementation of some proposals may have to be delayed because of financial constraints, government was urged to secure the necessary funding to address areas of wilful non-compliance with basic road safety procedures. These included current business plans and requests for additional staff and systems to effectively deal with the commercial vehicle sector.

Views of Children and Young People

This section of the report provides an overview of the analysis of the responses and comments offered by 803 children and young people. The questionnaire they used to respond was developed with children and young people during the informal consultation. It addressed road safety issues they identified and 2,100 questionnaires were circulated to a representative sample of schools across Northern Ireland in urban and rural areas and taking account of socially deprivation.

[Seat Belt Wearing](#)

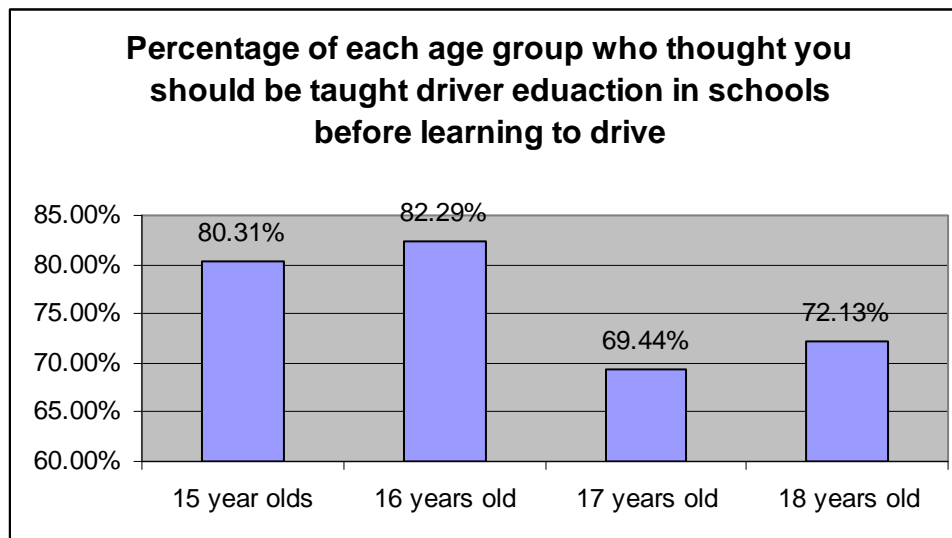
Of the 803 children and young people surveyed, 96% said that they always wore a seat belt.

Their proposals for encouraging other young people to wear seat belts included advertising and information campaigns, persuading car manufacturers to design and provide more comfortable seat belts, more enforcement by police but also by parents and drivers. Further development of in-car technology to warn the driver if someone was not wearing a belt was also seen as important.

[Driver Education](#)

Driver education in schools - 77% of the children and young people surveyed thought that young people should be taught driver education in schools before learning to drive. Comments to support this view by these respondents demonstrated that they believed that this form of education in schools would *“give them a head start in learning to drive”* and *“make them better and safer drivers”*. However, 19% of respondents did not favour this approach with some respondents saying that *“driver education was better taught when learning to drive”* and *“driving is not an academic subject.”*

The chart below indicates the percentage age breakdown of young people who supported the idea of driver education in schools.

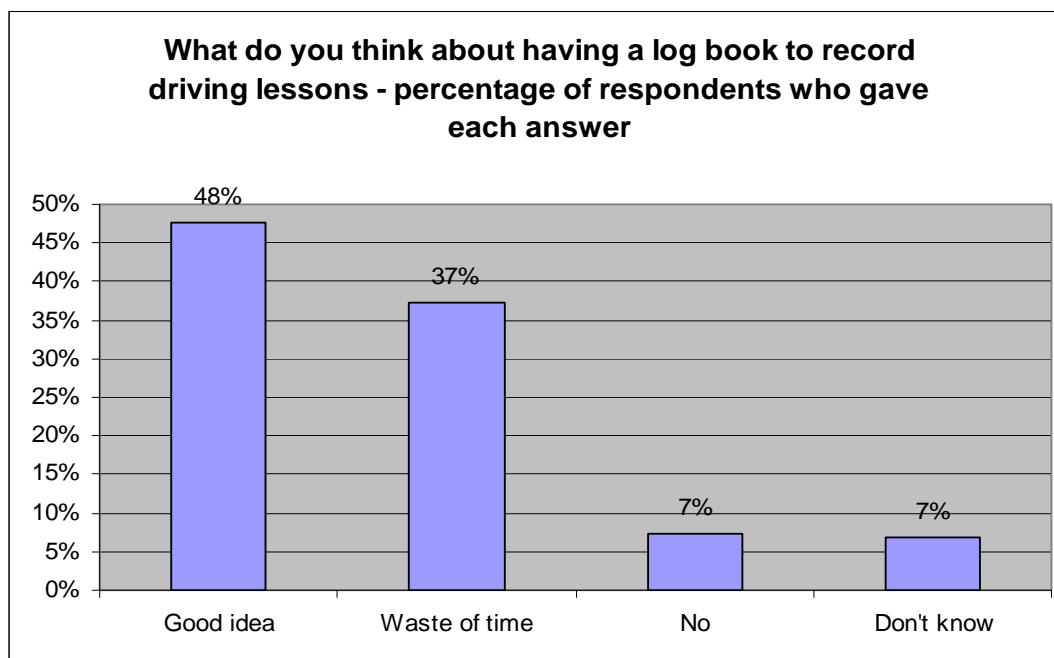


Being tested on elements of the Highway Code before you learn to drive - 74% of the children and young people surveyed felt that they should be tested on elements of the Highway Code before learning to drive. This figure was consistent across urban and rural respondents and those in deprived and non-deprived areas. The reasons given included that this would *“help them pass their driving test”* and make them *“safer drivers whilst learning to drive”*.

Receiving advice on how to get professional lessons and choose an approved instructor – 65% of survey respondents felt that this type of advice was a good idea. However 20% felt that it was not required as parents and family could provide this information.

Use of log book to record number of hours practice – 48% of survey respondents broadly agreed with the view that having a log book to record driving lesson progress was a good idea and would help monitor and assess progress. However 37% of those who responded thought a log book would be *“a waste of time”*. The general views of this group of young people could be summaries in the statement of one respondent who believed that *“it would be*

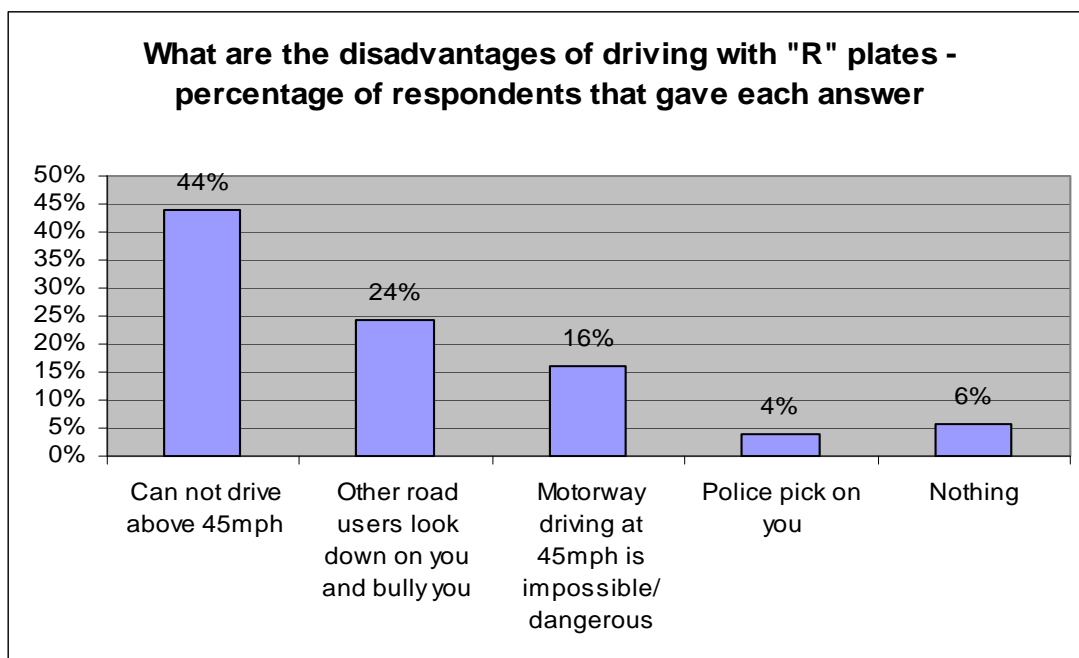
open to fraud, would not be completed and would increase the cost of lessons.”



Include motorway driving, driving at night and in adverse weather conditions as part of driver education/training – 86% of children and young people surveyed believed that this was a good idea. One respondent commented that *“everyone would drive on a motorway and in adverse weather conditions at some stage in their lives”* and another felt that *“it was stupid not to be trained on how to handle these situations”*. Just over one tenth of respondents (11%) expressed the view that it should not be included, with one respondent stating that *“motorway driving and driving at night and in adverse weather conditions was dangerous and best left until after you had passed your test.”*

‘R’ driver scheme – 44% of young people felt the 45mph restriction was a disadvantage of this scheme and among the reasons given were that this was too slow for modern traffic flow, and caused tailbacks and road rage. Sixteen percent (16%) felt that motorway driving at this restricted speed was dangerous and one young person said *“[you] became a mobile hazard”*. Only 6% of respondents believed that the scheme had no disadvantages.

Just under half (47%) of survey respondents believed that the 'R' scheme also has some advantages: for example, by making *“other road users aware that you were an inexperienced driver”* and as a result they would be *“more forgiving of your lower speed”* and *“potentially poorer driving ability”* and *“less likely to bully you”*. Eighteen percent (18%) believed there were *“no advantages to displaying an 'R' plate”*.



Fifty-four percent (54%) of young people surveyed felt that displaying an 'R' plate prevented them from developing experience of driving above 45mph and 28% believed that the speed restriction meant that they could not develop proper motorway skills such as overtaking and changing lanes.

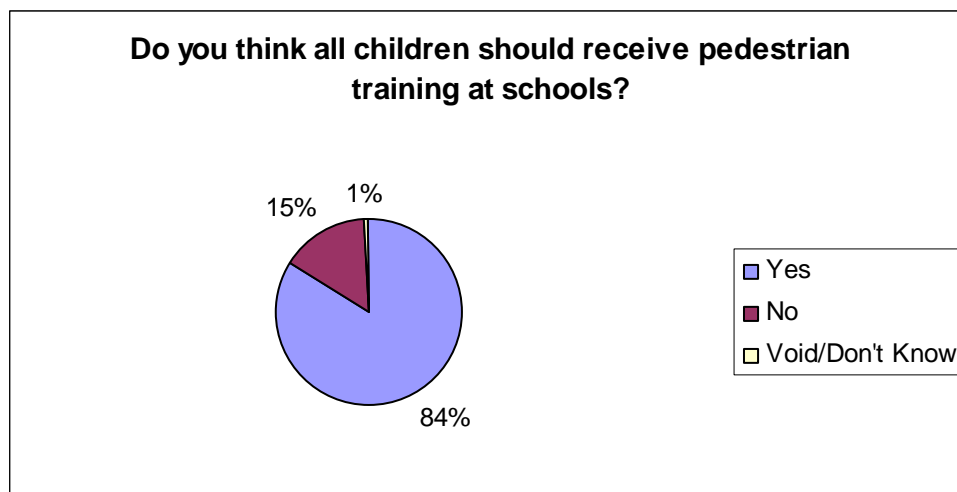
[Drink Driving](#)

Slightly more than half (51%) of survey respondents reported that they would not take even one drink and drive. A further 19% said that they could take one drink and 12% felt that they could cope with two drinks and still drive safely.

A minority (37%) of the young people surveyed believed that police should not have the power to randomly stop any driver and test them for alcohol.

Pedestrians

Eighty-four percent (84%) of the children and young people surveyed thought that all children should receive practical pedestrian training as part of primary school education.



Proposals for improving safety for children and young people included more pedestrian crossings, use of high visibility or reflective clothing, more crossing attendants, more road safety education, more footpaths, safety railings and more/better street lighting.

Next Steps

The Department is, along with road safety partners, continuing to carefully consider the views, comments and suggestions of those who responded to the consultation.

The Department plans to finalise a draft strategy in October 2010 for the Minister's approval. Once it is approved, it is planned to launch the strategy in December 2010.

Annex A

Responses to Pre-consultation: Sample of comments and suggestions received

The following are typical of the proposals and comments received during the pre-consultation stages of the project. They are not presented in any particular order.

Safer Roads

- There should be a shift to road design that uses user-centred design principles (functionality of the roads; relative speed of the road users; making roads self-explanatory);
- Increase in traffic calming measures, particularly around schools;
- Greater speed management, particularly outside schools including prohibiting parking around school gates;
- Urban design should adopt a user hierarchy wherein needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users are considered, in that order, before those of the private car;
- Increase use of road safety audits;
- Pedestrians should be able to move around safely, free of hazards such as unnecessary, or badly positioned and unmarked poles; vehicles parked on footways, shop displays; overgrowing hedges, fouled paths;
- Cycle lanes should be fit for purpose;
- At junctions from main roads to side roads use special turning lanes with decent length;
- Altering the modal mix can be seen as a means of improving safety - reallocation of road space to sustainable modes;
- More SPEC systems and greater use of speed cameras in rural areas;
- Change timings on pedestrian crossings to favour pedestrians.

Safer Road User Groups

- Enforcement measures should be specifically targeted at young male drivers;
- Information and education are needed to raise awareness of the effects a medical condition can have on a person's ability to drive safely;
- Cycling proficiency training to be extended to secondary schools;
- Encourage and promote advanced driving test that would lead to lower insurance premiums for successful candidates; and
- Government should establish an accurate and consistent picture of cross border driving in order to measure the risk that this represents and therefore take proportionate action.

Safer Road User Behaviours

- Increase in police enforcement to ensure compliance with mobile phone regulations;
- DE should ensure that road safety continues to be included in the curriculum for both primary and post-primary schools;
- More needs to be done to improve the general standard of driving;
- More priority given to the enforcement of road traffic laws, with more cases brought to court;
- The definitions and sentences for core bad driving offence (dangerous and careless driving) should be reviewed;
- Better educate all road users on how to stay safe on the roads;
- Introduce programme of continuous learning for drivers;
- Drivers to re-sit a driving test after a certain period of time - e.g. 15 years;
- More effective police presence on the roads to stop and caution bad drivers;
- More engagement by DOE officials/police or road safety organisations with young adults starting to drive;

- Bus, LGV and HGV drivers should have a greater emphasis on vulnerable road users in their training;
- Consideration should be given to driving test requirements - day and night driving, longer examination test covering different driving skills and abilities; and
- Attention should be given to providing advanced driving skills.

Safer Vehicles

- Improve DOE enforcement powers to increase compliance by freight operators;
- Use of intelligent speed adaptation including feedback to driver on road conditions and speed limits;
- All options in terms of technology should be considered but there should be caution that technology such as crash avoidance systems, do not remove driver responsibility or encourage unsafe driving or complacency; and
- Rear seat sensors fitted to all cars to remind passengers to engage seat belt.

Other Measures

- Consider further work and trials on intelligent speed adaptations used on a non-mandatory basis to help with speed limit compliance;
- Focus on development of local road safety plans for each county;
- Scope during planning process in design of urban space, road and footpath network to ensure best design adhering to safety practices;
- Support for greater role of local authorities in delivery of road safety, particularly post RPA;
- Introduce minimum driver trainer standards and licence [regulate] driver training providers, including those training professional drivers; and
- Consideration should be given to developing more 'driver improvement courses' as part of sentencing options. To include innovative educational

