



Department
for Transport

Roads Policing Review Call for Evidence

Moving Britain Ahead



July 2020

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Foreword



Great Britain has some of the safest roads in the world but there is no room for complacency and this government is committed to making our roads even safer.

Whether we examine the causes of road casualties from the perspective of a safe systems approach or the more traditional examination of education, engineering and enforcement, road user behaviour is a key factor affecting road safety.

Since 2010 we have seen a plateauing in the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads after years of steadily declining numbers. The government is determined to improve the current situation. For this reason, the Department for Transport (DfT) has instituted a roads policing review working with the [Home Office](#), the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) and other agencies. As part of this wide-ranging review we are exploring how we can better use intelligence to target dangerous behaviours, how technology can assist in enforcing road traffic law now and in the future and also how to better understand the value of enforcement in influencing road user behaviour and the current enforcement capability.

This call for evidence seeks to identify what makes a difference and how the capability and capacity of enforcement services can be enhanced. This call for evidence is part of a wider review which includes a thematic inspection of roads policing conducted by [Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services \(HMICFRS\)](#) commissioned by the department. This thematic inspection has looked at how roads policing is currently delivered and make recommendations for the future.

Safety is our focus but it is recognised that other problems also arise when people do not obey traffic laws. This non-compliance can lead to incidents such as breakdowns and collisions which result in roads being closed or traffic flow being restricted. The consequences of such incidents are delay and disruption as well as an increase in pollution.

I encourage everyone to respond so that we can build the fairest and most operationally effective enforcement capability in police and other agencies to deliver the best outcome for the safety of all road users.

Baroness Vere of Norbiton

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Introduction

This call for evidence is part of a response to evidence the department has compiled. Prior to 2010 the UK had year on year reductions in the numbers of people killed and seriously injured on our roads. Since then the numbers of casualties have plateaued and further reductions have not been achieved. In addition, the environment in which we have sought to continue to reduce casualties has changed – road use and type of users have changed and we need to adapt to respond to the challenges those present.

Another major environmental change has come about because of developments in technology. Vehicles have become inherently safer with more warning systems alerting the driver to maintenance issues and growing safety focused automation and driver assistance systems. At the same time advances in car infotainment systems and mobile phone technology mean that there are increasing sources of potential distraction for drivers.

All this is set against a background of increasing traffic volumes leading to the economic and environmental threats posed by the ever-present threat of increasing congestion.

Scope of call for evidence

This call for evidence seeks to open the door to new thinking as well as a better understanding and utilisation of established options. In this context we are seeking to identify how the use of existing enforcement capabilities, and any enhancement of these, will deliver the biggest impact for road user safety primarily but also congestion management and the environment.

This call for evidence sets out some of the current challenges facing our road network and the people and businesses using it. It seeks evidence of the impact of enforcement on road user behaviour, what that enforcement should look like and whether the current legislative framework is fit for purpose.

Crucially, we would welcome evidence supporting what the future of enforcement might look like: the who, the how and the governance of enforcement.

How to respond

This call for evidence was issued on 13 July 2020 and will run until 5 October 2020. Ensure that your response reaches us before the closing date.

When responding, state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of a larger organisation:

- make it clear who the organisation represents
- how the views of members were assembled

To respond you can either:

- download the response form and email us

or

- send responses directly to RPCallforEvidence@dft.gov.uk, email responses should be a maximum of 10 pages with links to supporting evidence

We do not expect you to submit evidence or views in response to every question listed, if not applicable. Responses should be limited to 500 words per question.

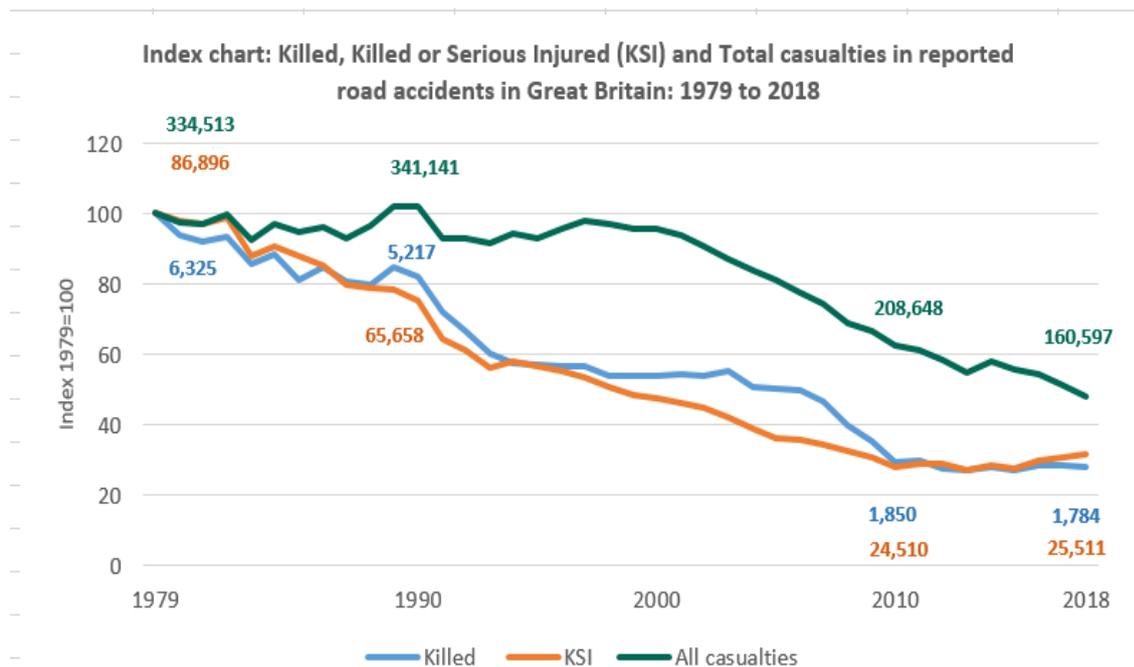
If you need alternative formats (Braille, audio CD) you should email us at RPCallforEvidence@dft.gov.uk.

1. Current context

Road Casualty Statistics

- 1.1 Currently we have an average of 5 fatalities and 68 serious injuries every day on Britain's Roads. Since 2010 this has remained relatively constant.
- 1.2 The department is engaged in work to understand better what lies behind the plateauing of casualty figures and how the current trends can be addressed to deliver reductions in casualties on Britain's roads.
- 1.3 The current GB road casualty picture and its historical context are illustrated by the figure 1 graph:

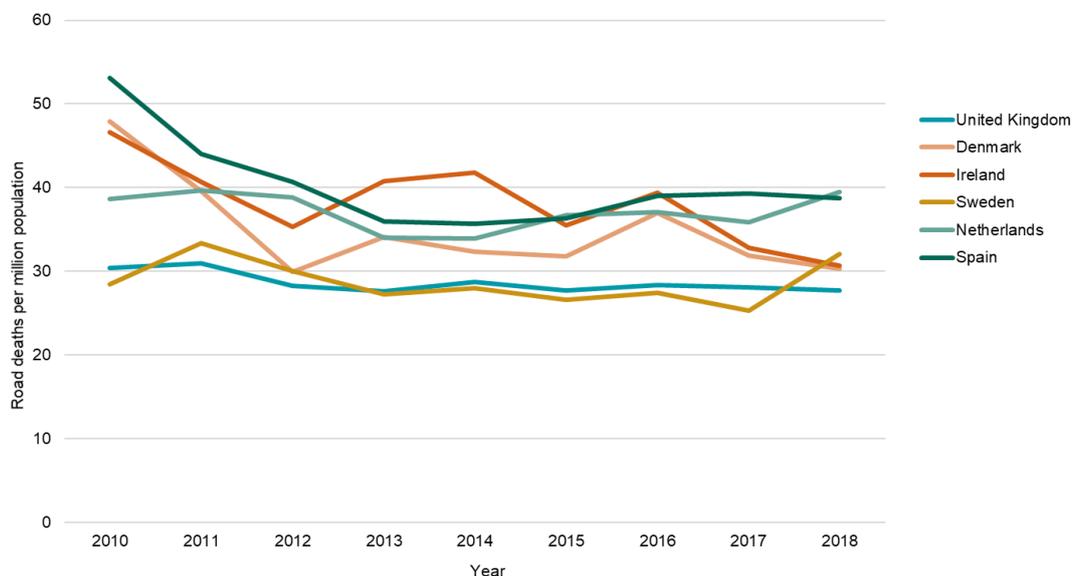
Figure 1: Trends in killed, killed or seriously injured (KSI) and casualties in reported road accidents in Great Britain between 1979 and 2018 (index chart)



Source: DfT Reported road casualties in Great Britain - 2018 annual report

- 1.4 These trends are not unique to Great Britain. While fatal road casualties in the European Union overall have also plateaued since 2013 some countries continue to make reductions. Figure 2 shows how road casualty trends in the 5 countries in Europe with the best road safety records compare with the UK.

Figure 2: Road Deaths per Million Population 2010 to 2018 (Provisional)^{1,2}



1. United Kingdom compared with the top 5 EU countries.
 2. Excludes Malta which has a population of less than 500,000 people.
 Source of road deaths: International Road Traffic and Accident Database (OECD), ETSC, EUROSTAT and CARE (EU road accidents database), DfT STATS19.
 Source of population: Eurostat population statistics and ONS midyear population statistics

1.5 As well as the loss of life, serious injury and distress these casualty figures also have an economic value. The cost to the British economy is estimated to be in the region of £36 billion a year. The table below shows the average value of prevention by casualty/ collision type.

Table 1: Average value of prevention¹ of per reported casualty per reported road accident², GB 2018

Accident/casualty type	Cost per casualty	£ (2018 prices)
		Cost per accident
Fatal	1,958,303	2,196,534
Serious	220,058	251,458
Slight	16,964	26,087
Average for all severities	70,791	98,232
Damage only	-	2,344

1 The costs were based on 2018 prices and values

Source: STATS19, Transport Analysis Guidance - WebTAG

2 The number of reported road accidents were based on 2018 data

The figures in this table are National Statistics

Last updated: 26 September 2019

Next update: September 2020

Telephone: 020 7944 6595

Email: roadacc.stats@df.gov.uk

[Notes & Definitions](#)

For further information on Transport Analysis Guidance - [WebTAG](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tag-data-book), see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tag-data-book>

For more information on the accident and casualty analysis, see the chapter in the 2012 Annual Report:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/244913/rrcgb2012-02.pdf

- 1.6 A reduction in accidents also brings economic benefits through the avoidance of their consequential costs, the avoidance of possible traffic delays and road disruption.

Current offending behaviour

- 1.7 The United Kingdom has a well-developed statute law framework designed to reinforce sensible behaviours by road users. It creates offences punishable in the criminal courts for actions which are dangerous or potentially dangerous or where vehicles are poorly maintained with the same potential outcome. These laws do not stand alone. They are underpinned by the Highway Code which is a comprehensive source of guidance to all road users. Furthermore, there is a comprehensive driver training and testing regime which seeks to prepare drivers for the challenges associated with driving on our roads.
- 1.8 These very tangible controls are supported by a wealth of educational material and initiatives intended to raise the awareness of road users about specific dangers and the consequences of certain actions such as drink driving. Some of these campaigns have run over decades and the “Think!” brand is widely recognised.
- 1.9 Despite this, the RAC report on motoring 2019 states that the single most widespread concern among respondents was hand held mobile phone use by other drivers. It also reported that over half the drivers surveyed admitted to exceeding the speed limit. DfT speed compliance statistics provide further evidence that speeding is a common behaviour. At the same time there is evidence of public disquiet about levels of enforcement. Examples include the National Travel Attitudes Survey 2019 where three quarters of respondents felt that mobile phone laws were not properly enforced. In wave 2 of the same survey 63% of respondents felt the laws around driving under the influence of drugs are not being properly enforced. This survey also provides evidence of the impact of public support for the law in respect of drink and drug driving with 81% of respondents saying that someone who has had any alcohol should not drive any distance and 91% of respondents saying the same for anyone who had taken illegal drugs.
- 1.10 Yet against this background there are still those who persist in practising these behaviours.

Question 1

Why do you think road casualties have remained fairly constant since 2010?

Question 2

What does the evidence suggest has the most impact on reducing deaths on the road?

Question 3

What evidence led initiatives demonstrate what could be done to help reduce road traffic casualties?

Question 4

Can you provide examples or empirical evidence demonstrating a relationship between road traffic law enforcement and compliance with road traffic law?

2. The current enforcement picture

- 2.1 The police are the primary enforcement agency but the wider policing landscape has become much more complex in the last ten years. Roads policing in England and Wales is provided by the 43 geographically based police forces each led by a Chief Constable and answerable to a locally elected Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). Roads policing is shaped and targeted according to local priorities.
- 2.2 Some police forces have worked as collaborations, sharing a roads policing resource between them. Others have maintained independent roads policing functions or have done away with roads policing as a separate function all together. It also involves working with other agencies. Enforcement of laws and regulations regarding the use of the roads is variously the responsibility of the [Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency \(DVSA\)](#) and the [Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency \(DVLA\)](#) as well as the police. Local authorities have also adopted a role in enforcement which, rather than safety, primarily relates to managing traffic flow through enforcement of bus lanes, parking and box junctions. [Traffic Commissioners](#) are regulatory tribunals responsible for oversight of commercial vehicle operator standards and vocational drivers.
- 2.3 There are various areas in which the police or other agencies and similar enforce road traffic law and regulate standards. As part of this call for evidence, we are looking for examples and evidence of the effectiveness of enforcement in each of those areas.

Links to other criminality

- 2.4 An efficient road network is essential to a thriving economy. [Nearly 80% of domestic freight in the UK is transported by road¹](#). Unfortunately, what works for commerce also works for criminals. Whether it is the illegal trafficking of people, drugs or other contraband, the road network will be used by criminals in the furtherance of their socially damaging enterprises. Offenders will use the road network to facilitate the commission of crimes including smuggling and cargo theft, county lines exploitation, facilitating burglary and crimes of violence.
- 2.5 Local police forces, the [National Crime Agency](#), [Border force](#) and other enforcement agencies are focused on detecting and prosecuting these offenders.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-freight-domestic-and-international-statistics>

Question 5

Can you provide any examples or empirical evidence identifying a causal relationship between enforcement and road collision casualty numbers?

Question 6

Can you provide any evidence or examples that road traffic enforcement can disrupt or detect other (non-motoring) criminality?

Question 7

What else alongside enforcement (such as education or examples of use of technology and signage) has been evidenced to increase compliance?

Question 8

How have improvements in design and technology of vehicles (such as collision avoidance systems) impacted upon road safety?

Commercial Vehicles

- 2.6 Other offending behaviours can have commercial drivers. Where a company fails to comply with drivers' hours regulations or maintain their vehicles, or it deliberately overloads them, those operators, drivers and vehicles present a danger on our roads. They also potentially derive an economic which may put compliant operators at a disadvantage.

Question 9

In respect of commercial vehicles can you provide any evidence or examples that current levels of enforcement by police and/ or DVSA and the sanctions that follow are an effective deterrent to encourage compliance?

Question 10

If not, can you provide any evidence or examples of how enforcement or sanctions could be changed to achieve improved compliance?

Congestion Management

- 2.7 A reduction in serious injury casualties and fatalities would mean roads were closed for fewer investigations increasing traffic flow and journey reliability. In 2012 the Department for Transport [estimated the cost of congestion arising from collisions on the Strategic Road Network alone to be approximately £750 million²](#). As industry becomes increasingly reliant on the “just in time” delivery model, the impact of congestion, particularly non-regular congestion arising from unplanned incidents, has the potential to become more damaging to the economy.
- 2.8 Congestion can also result in increased pollution and as public awareness of environmental factors grows road traffic measures are being used to tackle air quality. Examples include the introduction of speed restrictions on the M4 near Port Talbot, The A470 at Upper Boat, the A483 in Wrexham and the A494 in Deeside.

Question 11

Can you provide evidence or examples of where enforcement of road traffic law can benefit congestion management and air quality?

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/clear-up-initiative-saving-economy-millions-by-reopening-roads-quicker>

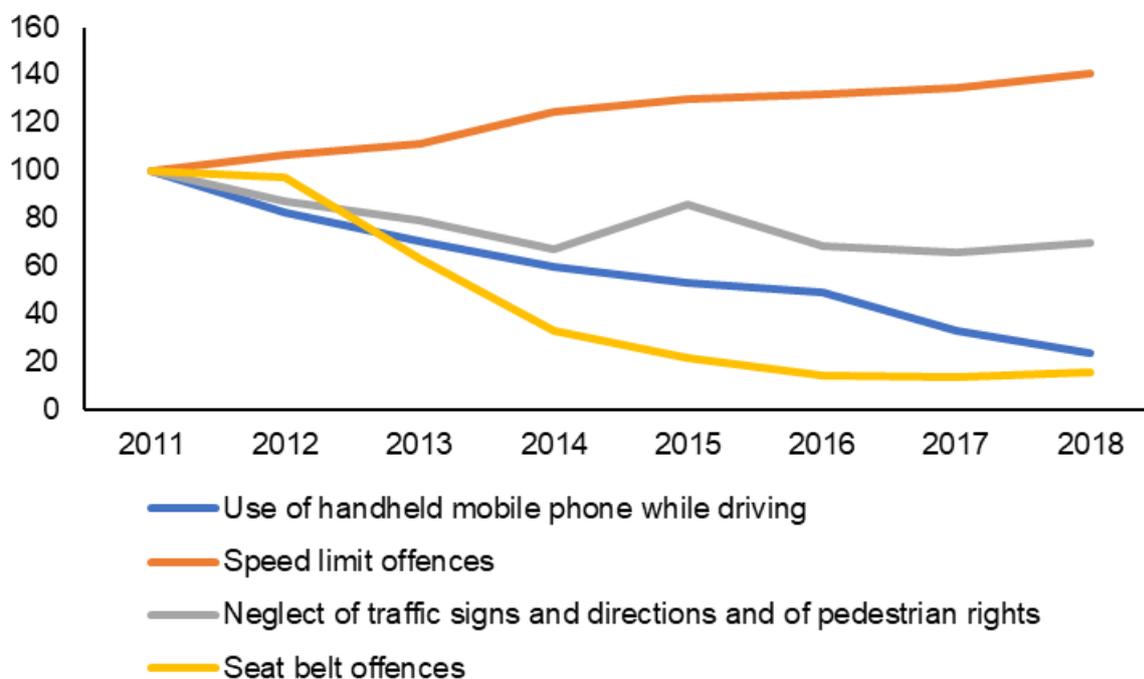
3. Improving the effectiveness of prosecution

- 3.1 It is essential that law enforcement is suitably equipped with the right capabilities to meet demand and deliver against the challenges ahead. To be able to enforce the more difficult to detect traffic offences the police need to be trained in specific ways of working and given additional equipment not only to do the work required of them but to do it safely in specific environments. Increasingly technology is being used to enforce road traffic laws and there may be other technologies available or emerging that would support enforcement.
- 3.2 The rise of technology led enforcement raises the question of the role of human led interventions. The [RAC Foundation published research highlighting differences in both the levels of technology-led speed enforcement as a proportion of overall traffic enforcement](#)³ which perhaps masks the much lower levels of enforcement which require human interaction to detect. There are some offences that remain a factor in the levels of death on our roads but where enforcement has fallen sharply. For example, not wearing a seat belt was a contributory factor in 27 % of fatal collisions in 2017 as evidenced in '[Seat Belts the Forgotten Priority](#)'⁴.
- 3.3 Aside from automated enforcement the instances of offences being detected is falling when we look at a national snapshot like that illustrated in Figure 3.

³ https://www.racfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/Speeding_offences_detected_2018-19_Snow_Lam.pdf

⁴ <http://www.pacts.org.uk/2019/04/pacts-launches-new-report-seat-belts-the-forgotten-road-safety-priority/>

Figure 3: Motoring offences resulting in fixed penalty notices, driver retraining or court action by offence type, indexed to 100



Source: [Police powers and procedures, England and Wales year ending 31 March 2019⁵](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2019)

- 3.4 There is currently no statutory duty on the police to reduce road traffic collisions over and above their general duty to prevent crime. Despite this many police forces do participate in local and national initiatives to reduce casualties resulting from road traffic collisions.

Question 12

Is there evidence to show how prosecutions contribute to road safety?

Question 13

Can you provide evidence or examples (in particular the use of technology) of what could be done to better enable and equip those charged with enforcing traffic laws?

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2019>

4. The future shape of roads policing

- 4.1 The UK road network transcends the local geographical boundaries of police forces facilitating the movement of people and goods throughout the United Kingdom. It enables people in vehicles to travel hundreds of miles and cross numerous local authority and police area boundaries in a short space of time. Unfortunately, that which is good for the public and business is also advantageous to criminals who use the road network to move between police forces committing crime. Conversely incidents which cause major disruption on the Strategic Road Network, such as fatal collisions, can cause consequent disruption across a number of counties and police force areas requiring a response to be co-ordinated across numerous police forces.
- 4.2 Different countries approach policing in a wide variety of ways. The system of policing in England and Wales is based on 43 geographically based independent police forces each providing the policing services for their area.
- 4.3 In Belgium individual administrative areas have their own local policing service leading to over 180 police forces. These are supported by a federal police force which includes roads policing. The Dutch have amalgamated regional police forces into one national police service. Germany is different again with policing, including roads policing, being provided by independent police forces in each of the 16 provinces similar to the current approach in England and Wales.
- 4.4 With so many different international approaches we would like to understand if our current roads policing structure is still the most effective approach.

Question 14

Can you provide evidence of existing approaches to enforcement or available technologies that could inform the future shape of road traffic enforcement by police and other agencies?

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 This call for evidence is part of a wider review of roads policing in England and Wales. Replies will be collated and a summary of responses will be published late in 2020.
- 5.2 As responses are received they will be fed into the roads policing review which will be considering information from a variety of sources including:
 - a report by HMICFRS who have recently completed the field work for a thematic inspection of roads policing in 7 police forces
 - information collected through interviews with key people in all the police forces not subject to the HMICFRS inspection and some partner agencies
 - responses to a survey of police officers and staff launched at the Police Federation of England and Wales National Roads Policing Conference in January 2020. This will provide key data from operational people about the amount of time actually spent on roads policing
- 5.3 Together these sources will form a basis for understanding the current position in respect of roads policing, identifying areas for further examination. This and start to shape recommendations about the future shape and governance of road traffic law enforcement.
- 5.4 In parallel with this, work is being progressed with police and partner agencies seeking to identify how better cooperation can be facilitated in order to enhance capability and capacity in the enforcement of road traffic laws.
- 5.5 The intention is to deliver recommendations in the Spring of 2021.

Annex A: Full list of consultation questions

A.1 Please note that we do not expect you to submit evidence or views in response to every question listed if not applicable.

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