

Car Seat and In-car safety R&E12-13

Project Narrative / Description

Road safety is a key issue affecting all segments of our society. Whilst good progress has been made in reducing the number of injury related road crashes this field still requires continued efforts in order to improve safety and reduce the ongoing burden of resources required by partner agencies (including NHS) in “picking up the pieces”.

This project originally involved both Wirral’s Trading Standards and Road Safety & Teams, engaging directly with adults regarding road safety issues relating to in car safety (especially for children). Part way through the project, due to staffing issues colleagues in Trading Standards were unable to continue with their element of the joint project and therefore the bid was re-framed in order to continue/expand its contribution towards the Public Health Outcome Framework indicators relating to road safety outlined in the original bid.

From experience road safety officers are aware that that parents / carers are more willing to engage with the road safety team and take on board advice regarding key safety issues if we talk to them about their children’s safety initially then taking the discussion further to raise awareness of other key road safety issues with adults. Using the theme of child car seats has proven to be an effective method of broaching engagement with parents.

The revised project covered two complementary strands:

- Education (through engagement and information)
- Targeted Police enforcement activity targeting in car safety issue (seatbelts, mobile phones etc.)

Section 3.12 of the Department for Transport’s (DfT) Strategic Framework for Road Safety highlights that *‘other local public services, including the health service and the three emergency services are influential in improving road safety and also have statutory responsibilities. Enforcing road traffic offences is particularly important. The research shows that the fear of being caught offending is generally the most effective means of changing behaviour, e.g. for drink driving, when combined with education and marketing.’*

- The Department for Transport recognise that road user behaviour is responsible for, or is a major factor in 95% of all road collisions where people have been injured.
- In 2014, a total of 601 people were Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) on the roads of Merseyside. Sadly, 27 people lost their lives.
- In 2014 on Wirral alone there were 140 KSIs, a 17% increase on the previous year and 40% above our own milestone target.

In addition to important information for the correct fitting of car-seats, key topics for engaging with adults included: distraction, mobile phone use, fatigue, speeding, drink & drugs (legal and illegal) seatbelts, careless or inconsiderate driving.

What went well:

Training of members of both Trading Standards & Road Safety teams: Team members undertook additional training and passed the Institute of Occupational Safety & Health (IOSH) **Accreditation in Child Seat Safety Awareness**. This accreditation developed and broadened the awareness the teams already had relating to child car seats. In practice this is a complex area of legislation and standards with most car seats fitted within vehicles in need of some improvement.

Literature was produced to raise awareness of the potential dangers of second hand car seats, safe disposal of used and/or unwanted car seats – importantly including information to raise awareness of the potential issues affecting seats which (may) have been in a collision. This information is also made available on the Council Website.

A checklist was produced that could be utilised by our Trading Standards colleagues in order to carry our visits to local retailers. This would recognise good practice of those retailers and assess quality of advice given. *(this element of the project involving Trading Standards, remains an aspiration to re-engage with local retailers).*

Engagement / enforcement days were undertaken with Merseyside Police and the nationally recognised 'Child Car Safety Ltd'. At these events, parents and carers were invited to attend and engage with the teams for advice and guidance on in-car related issues.



During our events, 65 car seats were checked, 29 (45%) were fitted incorrectly and 3 were completely incompatible.

A social media campaign promoting car seat safety was undertaken. The Car Seat Check events were advertised and promoted using twitter and facebook, following results:

- *A post relating to child seat safety event in Bromborough reached 6112 recipients with 27 shares.*
- *A post relating to child seat safety event in Birkenhead reached 2994 with 22 shares, with 3 positive feedback comments saying how useful and friendly the event was.*



Retail checks were undertaken at a number of local stores to assess the quality of child car seat advice and the quality of assistance provided at stores in the local area. Full report is attached.

Key Points:

- *Variety of messages are being provided by retailers in the borough, some are providing good service with the right attitude to child car seats and usage whilst others had good but limited knowledge. Whilst acceptable, this needs to be broadened so that all consumers can feel confident in the quality of car seat safety advice and service they receive.*
- *Sadly some retailers, were unable to give correct advice and also authenticated their comments with incorrect facts, but whilst they all spoke with confidence this could lead a consumer to believe that they were correct and an expert in this field.*

The Road Safety Team are now planning to follow up this important issue with our local retailers to try and ensure that they have good knowledge and also encourage them to contact our Team should they have any further issues/enquiries.

In addition to the road shows and car seat checks we undertook a number of seminars and sessions at a variety of events and children’s centres.

We saw and provided in-car road safety advice to a total of 452 parents/carers and colleagues across Wirral at 29 separate events

The final element to the scheme was increased Police Enforcement ‘raising driving standards to reduce casualties’. Achieved by introducing a high-profile roads policing presence on the main commuter routes at core times, influencing and controlling the way in which drivers and other road users use the roads of Wirral.

Over a period of 5 weeks, *Operation Parkstone* ran within Wirral. The operation and a number of key safety messages were widely publicised. This was covered on a variety of news media, including radio, the Globe <http://bit.ly/1chH7Dg> and the Echo: <http://bit.ly/1R9Gagi> helping spread the message of zero tolerance roads policing for road safety reasons to a much wider audience.

During this period, there were a total of 303 interactions with drivers and Officers from Merseyside Police. The Operation focused on a zero-tolerance approach to the enforcement of those offences that cause / contribute to road traffic collisions or have the potential to do so. The results are on the following page.

There is a 'ripple effect' for each of these police interaction / engagements where a motorists going into work and informing colleagues that they had just been stopped by the Police for seatbelt; phone, speeding or for a breathalyser or impairment test would have made their colleagues and the wider community think about their actions. The thought of the 'fear of being caught' mentioned within page 1, Department for Transport. This initiative has also assisted the raising of drivers awareness around the time taken to process (metabolise) alcohol and the potential issue of normally law abiding drivers inadvertently driving above the permitted limits the 'morning after' drinking, for which many people are unaware.

We do not yet have the data for number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in February 2015 although we intend to run a comparison across previous years to see if it is possible to find proof of any correlation of enforcement, education and a reduction of and numbers of KSIs.

Offence	Number of Engagements	Offence Detail
Officer Seen Conditional Offer (OSCO)	15	Mobile Phone Use
	25	Seat Belt
	2	Red Light Jumping
	95	Excess Speed
	23	8 included no insurance / license, vehicle seizures, construction & use, no test certificates
Other	98	Breathalysed
	8	Impairment Tests
	7	Other
Fixed Penalty Notices	16	Obstruction / Parking (difficulty for pedestrians)
	8	Other
Arrests	5	2 warrants, 1 theft, 2 disqualified drivers
	303	Total Police interactions

 <p style="text-align: center;">Wirral Road Safety Campaign</p> <p>In 2014, there were 601 people killed or seriously injured on the roads of Merseyside. 125 of these occurred in Wirral.</p> <p>This police operation aims to reduce that number by targeting those offences that can cause and contribute to road traffic collisions.</p> 	<p>You're reading this leaflet because:</p> <p>You were using your mobile whilst driving – using your mobile phone whilst driving means you are 4 times more likely to crash.</p> <p>You were not wearing your seatbelt – not wearing your seatbelt means you are twice as likely to die in a collision.</p> <p>You were suspected of drink or drug driving – Any amount of alcohol or drugs can affect your ability to drive.</p> <p>You were speeding – The faster you are travelling, the longer it takes you to stop e.g. if something unexpected happens. At 40mph, it takes a further 3 car lengths to stop than if driving at 30mph.</p> <p>You were parked on a pavement causing an obstruction – This can cause vulnerable road users to walk on the road which puts them at an increased risk. It can also reduce visibility for traffic and pedestrians, contributing to collisions and casualties.</p> <p>You were driving in a manner which could or may cause or contribute to a road traffic collision e.g. considered failing to conform to a red traffic light signal or inconsiderate driving.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For more information: http://think.direct.gov.uk/index.html http://www.morning-after.org.uk/drink-driving.html</p> <p style="text-align: center;">There are no compromises when it comes to road safety!</p>
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This leaflet was handed out to motorists who were stopped; It provides further information as to the risks that can be caused by certain actions and behaviours whilst driving.

Areas for improvement:

The Road Safety Team feel that the overall project was successful, there were a few issues relating to staff resources with Trading Standards not being able to supply staff for their originally agreed elements as the Council restructure was taking place at the time, etc and the lead within my team had been involved in a low impact car collision and was unable to deliver on the project.

Do you think the PHOF funding has made a difference?

We consider that this was a highly successful campaign. Whilst Merseyside Police are keen to support road safety education/awareness raising initiative, they acknowledge that due to the breadth of their responsibilities, this focus on road safety on Wirral would not have been possible to this extent without additional funding. We feel we engaged with and educated a wide group of people (parents and other drivers) and if the funding had not been available this type of engagement would have been particularly difficult.

Rhian Hughes
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