



**January 2017
Network**

A networking tool for Activists and other interested parties

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EDITORIAL

Firstly, wishing you all happiness and good healthy for the forthcoming year.

In this edition you'll find a link to a Consultation on the future of motorcycle training/testing and its well worth having your input before consultation ends in February.

Also included is something disturbing called the 'Vnuk Judgment' courtesy of the EU – a stupid piece of legislation which could ultimately mean the end of motor sport of all kinds not to mention the SORN choice on taxation and the box of bits in your garage. And, in case anyone thinks brexit makes any difference, that hasn't been implemented yet and if this comes in before GB exits the EU it could be extremely difficult to reverse.

All in all looks like we have our work cut out and I'm writing this editorial on only the 2nd day of 2017!

Happy days.

Ride free, AG.

[Acknowledgments:- George Legg, Selina Lavendar, Leon & Lembit, Andy Carrot, Tony Cox and anyone else I've forgotten]

Copy for the February edition to me by 25th Jan: aine@mag-uk.org subject heading Network

Network Policy & Campaigns report by Leon & Lembit

This version: 2016 12 20

1 Motorcycle crime has become a big issue and there are signs of some vigilantism as a result of frustration regarding the ease with which thieves seem able to operate. In response, MAG is seeking formal contact with senior police representatives. We're also working with the Motorcycle Crime Reduction Group to find solutions with the industry.

2 In order to support our objection to motorcycles being treated as cars in a large amount of consultations that we are working on, we are doing some work of our own. We are analysing the true impact of motorcycles versus cars and bicycles from cradle to grave in respect of their impact on the environment. We expect this to be completed in February 2017. This will be tremendously important in much of our lobbying work.

3 Our campaign work continues in regard to plans to introduce charges for motorcycles at the proposed Silvertown Thames crossing. We have had representation at the various sessions of which there are more on the way in January 2017. This is a very challenging issue as it could lead to the introduction of charges for riders everywhere. The Motor Cycle Industry Association (MCIA) has endorsed MAG's campaign on this, which is helpful as it adds weight to our argument. We'll keep you posted, but the final decision won't be made for many months. For updates on the process go to this site, which is kept up to date and is very comprehensive:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/london/silvertown-tunnel/>

4 Armadillos and Orcas: Leon has been developing our network of potentially supportive people and organisations, who share our concerns about the adverse impacts of 'Light Segregation' on riders – and who are in good positions to add weight to our campaign to stop the spread of this rot. Recent progress includes talks with the Road Safety Manager for England of a national safety charity. Leon has also just been told about the removal of a major Armadillo scheme in the Bradford area of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority region. No details have been supplied by his source on this yet.

The installation of these potentially lethal Trip Hazards gets no media coverage as such – and the removal of such schemes due to evidence that they are too dangerous gets little or no news coverage either. So, if you see or hear anything at all about the installation or removal of cycle segregation schemes, PLEASE tell us via Central Office –don't leave it to someone else, when rather have 10 calls than none!

5 Martyn Boyd in Northern Ireland is organising information sites and, at time of writing, a presence in a forthcoming show in Northern Ireland. Lembit met with Martyn in Belfast in Mid-December, and it is expected that the President, IanMutch, will be visiting in early February.

6 Leon had a very encouraging meeting with the lead strategy officer in the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA). This was in support of the highly successful work of MAG in the region being driven by Stevie B, Manny and Ian Whitaker. The latest news being that more and more of MAG's Pathways for Progress are being embedded in the short and long term strategy for WYCA, and TfL's Urban Motorcycle Design Handbook is being proposed as an officially recognised reference document for all highway engineers and designers.

<http://content.tfl.gov.uk/tfl-urban-motorcycle-design-handbook.pdf>

7 Autonomous transport technology continues to be a big story, with trials of a human carrying device commencing in early 2017 in the Greenwich area. We have to keep an eye on this, as it could have far-reaching consequences for all other road users, including regarding liability in the event of an accident - and also personal liberty.

8 Please keep us informed of events and activity in your area. We can always turn them into media stories and help you get them distributed. A good example is Steve Mallett's on-going campaign against careless and illegal mobile phone use in the South East. He's had a lot of reaction, and the debate it has generated is excellent for biking and our profile. Call MAG Central, 01926 844 064, or send an email, starting with the letters 'PR.'

9 As the old year ends and a new one begins, Leon & Lembit wish you all a Happy New Year! And, thanks for making 2016 one of the most productive periods in the movement's history. It's been our honour to play our part, and we'll both do our best for MAG in the year ahead.

MAG PRESS RELEASES

MAG fuming about Emissions Zone charges

This version: 2016 12 01

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK's leading voice for riders' rights, has raised major concerns about a ridiculous new 'tax on biking' in the county's capital city.

An 'Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ),' will impose the same daily tax of £12.50 on riders of non-compliant PTWs as on car drivers.

Dr Leon Mannings, MAG's Policy and Campaigns Adviser, has been in extensive talks with the ULEZ team leaders in Transport for London (TfL). However, and despite explaining that all types of PTW are a vital element in solving London's congestion and pollution problems, the current plan is to impose new taxes on motorcycles as if journeys by PTWs cause as much pollution as the cars and vans that are often stationary in jammed traffic.

'What the authorities fail to recognise,' explains Leon, 'is that taxing motorcycles is counterproductive and in MAG's view is totally unjustified. As TfL's own study of PTW emissions in 2011 clearly showed, trips by all types of motorcycle produce far less CO2 and NOx compared to cars when emissions from the same real-time journeys are compared. PTWs do not cause congestion whereas cars and vans do – no matter how energy-efficient they are claimed to be.'

MAG is conducting a comprehensive analysis of the environmental footprint of various vehicles, including electric cars, to establish the truth behind the claims made for various modes of transport. The findings should be released by Spring, 2017.

MAG seeks 'common sense' approach to failed injunction schemes

This version: 2016 12 14

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK's leading voice for riders' rights, is approaching the National Police Chiefs' Council to request a review of the rowdy events which were widely reported on Halloween night. MAG challenges the claim that order can be restored through restrictions on the liberties of law-abiding citizens.

The Motorcycle Action Group is seeking a summit with representatives of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) to gauge their willingness to find more effective ways of addressing the crime which caused fear and inconvenience to the public during Halloween 2016.

Chair of MAG, Selina Lavender, said 'the police rightly pointed out that the yobbish behaviour which took place in various cities on 31st October was nothing to do with legitimate motorcycling. This same message was shared by MAG on social media and also

on the national news. However, the problem still persists, despite the introduction of some very harsh injunctions in many of the areas where the lawless behaviour took place.

'MAG has long argued that the introduction of such restrictive rules makes a mockery of existing laws. What's the benefit of banning two or more motorbikes from riding together, or of outlawing the use of a vehicle horn? It's not logical and could even compromise safety. Nor did it prevent the anti-social behaviour in any measurable way.'

Selina hopes the discussions with the police will lead to a serious review of these poorly-worded injunctions, with advice from the NPCC to replace the injunctions with more sensible measures. 'We're on-side with the authorities regarding tackling the anti-social behaviour. We just think it's better to approach the whole matter with enforceable, reasonable measures; not ones which turn vast numbers of law-abiding riders into criminals, whilst doing nothing to prevent the small number of idiots from doing what they like.'

Politics! Don't you just love it. Trump v Clinton, Brexit, Ukip, NHS, benefits, migration, trade unions, or even the parish council arguing over what colour to paint the village hall. Hmm, perhaps not then. One thing for sure is it's nearly impossible to avoid it as the TV, radio and for those still who like print, the papers, are full of it. Not that there's anything wrong with print, he said to avoid the Editors wrath. As a rider you may think politics has nothing to do with me. You are probably right in respect to party politics as it doesn't really make much difference who is in Downing Street, but it's what the people in power think is best for those of us that use the roads where politics does start to impact on riding.

Head north, really north, no not Dartford, but proper near the top of the map north, and you find yourself in the great city of Edinburgh on the Firth of the Forth, and like Dartford, it has important crossings over a major tidal channel. "You can have a new bridge" they said, "Hooch" said the Scots (as opposed to "Hurrah" because that's not what traditional Scotsmen say, although that said they could have been ordering a drink). "It will be to motorway standard" they said, "er, hang on a mo..... learner riders cannot use either the old bridge or the new one and will have a 2 hour round trip to get from one side to the other" said a canny Scotsman. And there commenced a tale of much discussion and little progress on allowing learners to use the bridge.

Enter stage left the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), or more specifically MAG's Chairman, Selina Lavender and Lembit Öpik, MAG's Director of Communications and Public Affairs. It just so happened that they found themselves in a bar in the Houses of Parliament talking to Alex Salmond. They explained the somewhat bonkers scenario developing in Edinburgh and he agreed that something needed to be done. That conversation made it happen. Learners do not have to take a massive detour.

And that my fellow riders is sometimes how politics works but we only got a satisfactory result because we have MAG. There's so much more work to do though. Getting bikes in all bus lanes, addressing the disparity of investment in protecting vulnerable road users (many millions are spent on improving cycle safety with next to nothing on motorcycles despite similar representation in accident stats – make it safer for cyclists yes, but let us have a fair dip in the funding pot too), improving the testing regime, getting powered two wheelers into local transport plans, the list goes on and on. With no rider's rights lobby there is no one

sticking up for riders (of whatever two or three wheeled device takes your fancy). You need MAG, and MAG needs you.

The Motorcycle Action Group is the country's leading rider's rights group. You can support the group simply by joining to help fund its campaign activities or if you want to get more involved attend a local branch. To join call 01926 844064, single membership costs £27, joint and club affiliated membership also available.

Andy Carrott, MAG Vice Chairman.

'MAG's world went better than the rest of the world'

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK's leading voice for riders' rights, has had a year characterised by results. The biking world is in better shape at the end of the year than it was at the beginning.

MAG was founded at a time when civil liberties were being compromised and the international situation looked very unstable. While history may be repeating itself in some respects on the world stage, the Motorcycle Action Group has had one of the most productive periods in its 43-year existence.

MAG's Chair, Selina Lavender, is impressed with the level of output: '2016 has seen MAG change gear to become the clear voice of riders in a hugely credible way. We've established lasting relationships with decision-makers at local and national level. Our work with the motorcycle industry has become strategic. We're helping to spearhead the campaign to deal with motorcycle-related crime. We've challenged insane cycle-lane schemes which have harmed all powered traffic for little benefit to the economy, environment or society. We've submitted a significant number of responses to local and national Government consultations; possibly more than at any time in our history. And we're being taken seriously in debates about the future of transport, in terms of autonomous vehicles, the strategic roads network and the environmental agenda. I'd say we've had a pretty good year.'

MAG's focus for 2017 is more of the same. Selina adds: 'a lot of the work we do is not glamorous, dramatic or newsworthy. Meeting local authority officers is very much a desk job, as is the submission of serious comments to Government consultations. That's how we make progress. It's hardly surprising we now have a growing network, with new groups in London, Northern Ireland and elsewhere. We can take nothing for granted; these achievements have been earned and the more we do the more we are taken seriously. It's high-octane stuff – and the results prove that riders are now being taken seriously in a way which was desperately needed. I want to thank everyone – activists and professional staff alike – for a tremendous year of progress. While the world has had its fair share of shocks and disappointments, most of what's happened in MAG's world has been enormously positive. Let's keep that momentum going – and let's keep delivering results in the interests of liberty and riding.'

DVSA sets out proposals to improve motorcycle training

From: Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency and Department for Transport

First published: 30 December 2016

Part of: Motorcycles, Motorcycle instructors and Road safety

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has launched a consultation asking for views on proposals to improve motorcycle training.

Compulsory basic training

Motorcyclists are among the most vulnerable road users. They account for around 1% of traffic on Great Britain's roads, but 21% of deaths or serious injuries.

The proposed changes aim to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured by making sure new riders are better prepared for the realities of riding on modern roads.

Improving training to help you through a lifetime of safe riding

Compulsory basic training (CBT) is a course you usually have to take before you ride a moped or motorcycle on the road. It makes sure you can ride safely on your own while you practise for your full moped or motorcycle test.

The course is provided by instructors who have either been assessed by DVSA, or have been trained directly by another DVSA-assessed instructor.

Improving motorcycle training

- 'Progressive access' training option
- 6 penalty points ends CBT certificate
- CBT on an auto restricts you to riding an auto
- Taking a theory test before CBT
- Changing the CBT syllabus to 4 parts
- Improving the instructor qualification
- Improving quality assurance
- Earned recognition for training schools
- Making the system digital

9 proposals on improving motorcycle training

Improving how the system works for riders

Some of the proposed changes include:

- taking away (revoking) CBT certificates from riders who get 6 penalty points - it would stop them from riding with L plates after getting points for offences including careless or dangerous riding
- considering whether learner riders should need to either pass a theory test before they take a CBT course, or as part of their course
- restricting riders who take their CBT course on an automatic motorcycle to only riding automatics

It's also proposed that the CBT course syllabus is changed from 5 parts to 4, focussing on:

- aims of CBT and the importance of equipment
- on-site training
- motorcycling theory
- on-road practical riding

Training courses to upgrade motorcycle licences

DVSA also wants your views on a proposal to introduce a training course that existing riders can take to upgrade their motorcycle licence, rather than having to take extra tests. Improved instructors and training schools

DVSA is considering making changes to:

- improve the way that instructors qualify to provide motorcycle training
- increase the range of checks that DVSA carries out on motorcycle training schools
- introduce a system for motorcycle training schools to be given recognition for consistently high standards

Another proposal looks at options for replacing the existing paper-based training system with a digital service. This will improve the quality of records of those who have taken CBT, and make the system more efficient.

Have your say on the proposals by 17 February 2017:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-moped-and-motorcycle-training>

Skills and knowledge to ride safely

DVSA Chief Executive, Gareth Llewellyn, said:

“DVSA’s first priority is helping everyone stay safe on Great Britain’s roads.

“Our roads are among the safest in the world, but we’re determined to do more to improve safety for all road users, including newly-qualified motorcyclists.

“ We want to modernise motorcycle training so that novice riders gain the skills and experience they need to help them and everyone else to stay safe on our roads.

Karen Cole, Director of Safety and Training for the Motorcycle Industry Association, said:

“We’re delighted to see DVSA has launched this consultation.

“ We believe that the introduction of a new training course is positive and will encourage more riders to use the progressive licence route. We’re also supportive of the proposals to update the qualification arrangements for motorcycle instructors as these will help the training industry.

“We’d urge anyone interested in motorcycle training to respond.”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dvsa-sets-out-proposals-to-improve-motorcycle-training>

EU ‘Vnuk Judgment’ could mean an end to motorsport in Europe, SORN’ed vehicles etc –“I despair, AG”

Extremely worrying is the following as this could affect the box of bits in your garage. Though motorsport is not within MAG’s remit per se many riders are motorsport enthusiasts and the thought of no motorsport just because of a stupid, extremely ill thought out piece of unnecessary legislation. As Tony Cox points out:- “this has far wider implications to anyone who owns a currently SORN'ed vehicle. UK legislation **will have to change** in light if the Vnuk judgement whilst we are a member of the EU, the UK will have no choice!

This is very worrying and I would suggest that we do need to dedicate resource to this otherwise we may lose the SORN option that MAG originally battled for on the taxation front but now also covers the insurance aspect.”

So, take a look at this: - Plus the link to the MCI A press release.

“If implemented the ruling means all motorised transport must have 3rd party insurance including riders in motorsport (e.g. racing, moto cross, trials, etc) but the UK insurance industry say those risks are uninsurable (see the MCI A link for more details).

Motor insurance: consideration of the 'Vnuk judgment'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/motor-insurance-consideration-of-the-vnuk-judgment>

<http://www.mcia.co.uk/Press-and-Statistics/Press-Releases/Article/British-motorsport-could-end-due-to-EU-ruling.aspx>

The ruling makes it compulsory for anyone using any form of motorised transport to have third party damage and injury insurance. This will affect all participants in all forms of motorsport.

The insurance industry has made it clear to government that third party risks for motorsport activities are uninsurable, not least because of the sheer number of potential vehicle damage claims that would arise. Therefore, if implemented, the Vnuk judgment would wipe out all legal motor and motorcycle sport activity.”

FEMA

‘Knowledge About Fuel Consumption Is Crucial When You Buy A New Motorcycle’.

Wednesday 21 December FEMA and [FIM Europe](http://www.fim-europe.com/met) <http://www.fim-europe.com/met> with [ACEM](http://www.acem.eu/), the organization of European motorcycle manufacturers <http://www.acem.eu/>.

On the agenda was the wish of the riders’ organizations to have motorcyclists better informed about fuel consumption and exhaust emissions. In FEMA’s and FIM Europe’s view this will help the buyer of a motorcycle to make a better informed and balanced choice which will probably lead to cleaner and less fuel consuming motorcycles.

Although the industry already has made enormous steps towards cleaner and less fuel consuming motorcycles in the last 15 years, buying cleaner bikes by the consumer also helps. The purpose of all this is to keep riding possible with growing environmental demands. ACEM and the riders’ organizations have a shared interest in this and will work together to come to better information to the consumer and authorities.

FEMA general secretary Dolf Willigers: “I’m very happy that the industry recognises the need for good consumer information and that ACEM is willing to work with us on this. Knowledge about fuel consumption and exhaust emissions is crucial for a balanced and well informed choice when you buy a new motorcycle. Still, motorcycles are always the more economic and cleaner choice compared to cars.”

FEMA Represent Motorcyclists In The TIMON Project

Wednesday 21 December 2016 FEMA General Secretary Dolf Willigers and [CORTE](http://www.acem.eu/) (<http://www.acem.eu/>) Chief Executive Officer Rémy Russotto met in the CORTE Office to discuss the [TIMON project](http://www.timon-project.eu/http://www.timon-project.eu/) (<http://www.timon-project.eu/http://www.timon-project.eu/>) and to handover the Letter of Intent.

FEMA is now part of the End Users Board of TIMON. In this position it represents the motorcyclists and expresses their needs in enhanced real time services for optimized multimodal mobility. During the meeting some of these needs were already discussed and also the specific characteristics of motorcycles and other one-track vehicles compared to cars and trucks.

The TIMON project was launched in June 2015. The ultimate aim of the project is to provide services and applications to all transport ecosystem users that would help improve road transport safety, sustainability, flexibility and efficiency.

The TIMON project believes that the persisting problems related to congestion, traffic safety and environmental challenges could be solved, if people, vehicles, infrastructure and businesses were connected into a cooperative ecosystem.

AROUND GB

Hertfordshire:

Mobile campaign asks drivers to 'put it away'

The Hertfordshire Road Safety Partnership has launched a new campaign in an effort to encourage drivers to put away their mobile phones at the start of a journey.

'Put It Away' has been developed on the back of an internal survey in which a quarter of respondents admitted to using their handheld mobile phones behind the wheel in the last six months.

It is being officially launched today through Thunderclap, a crowdspeaking platform. To date, the campaign has more than 100 supporters, equating to a social reach of more than 225,000 social media users.

Each supporter will send an automated tweet/status at the time of the launch, reading: "Answering a call is never worth somebody else's life. You don't need your phone while you're driving. Put It Away."

Hertfordshire Road Safety Partnership says in the average time it takes to read a text on the motorway, a driver will have travelled the length of a football pitch without looking at the road. The campaign also reminds motorists that whether they are driving or stopped in traffic, using a handheld mobile phone is against the law.

Terry Douris, Hertfordshire County Council, said: "Despite the evidence that mobile phones are extremely distracting to drivers, many continue to check texts, answer calls, and browse social media.

"Through the Put it Away campaign, we will work together with our partners to ensure that Hertfordshire drivers are clear on the law and aware of the consequences of driving while distracted.

"The problem is not necessarily with new drivers – our research shows that men aged between 45 and 64 are the most likely to believe they're safe using a mobile phone behind the wheel.

David Lloyd, police and crime commissioner for Hertfordshire, said: "There have been recent high profile cases of drivers killing fellow motorists by doing something as basic as changing the music on their phone.

“There is no excuse for this sort of behaviour and the use of a mobile phone at the wheel should be seen in the same light as drink driving – it is simply unacceptable behaviour.”
- See more at: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/5468.html#sthash.jiNRnGGE.dpuf>
Thunderclap: <https://www.thunderclap.it/projects/50749-put-it-away>

Bristol MAG.....

.....Is keeping an eye on developments towards a pollution charge for vehicles entering the city centre and to use its influence to prevent bikes being included. We have an excellent Political Officer for the Region in Geoff Mills – better known as the Judge - who, together with our current Bristol rep, Joe Thomas will be watching things closely. Watch this space.

Read more at <http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/high-pollution-motorists-will-be-charged-to-drive-in-bristol-city-centre-under-clean-air-plan/story-29971435-detail/story.html#gYXY72mUEY5XQslv.99>

Greater Manchester

GMP launches ‘crackdown’ on drivers who disregard safety

Police in Manchester have launched a ‘major operation’ to catch motorists who disregard the safety of other road users by using a mobile phone.

The operation, which falls under the Force’s #wrongfortheroad campaign, has seen officers targeting the main routes around Greater Manchester to enforce the law and educate drivers on the dangers of using a mobile while behind the wheel.

Chief constable Ian Hopkins from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) says using a mobile phone while driving ‘is as bad as drink driving’.

Officers have been using undercover and marked police vehicles in an operation which is set continue up to Christmas.

In the first week, 142 people were stopped for using a phone and a further four reprimanded for not being in proper control of a vehicle. This included one driver who was eating cereal while driving along Manchester Road in Hyde.

Superintendent Craig Thompson said: “Last week was just the beginning of our focus on these offences, and sends a clear message to anyone using a mobile phone while driving – it will absolutely not be tolerated here in Greater Manchester and it must stop.

“As Chief Constable Hopkins said last week, it is time for drivers to take personal responsibility for what they do when in charge of a vehicle. You wouldn’t drink and drive so why is it OK to use a phone when in control of a vehicle? We can all make a difference by urging people to think about their actions.”

More than 5,000 drivers in Greater Manchester have been given fixed penalty notices or sent on a mobile phone awareness course in the past two years, and traffic officers believe those numbers are just the tip of the iceberg.

GMP will also be raising awareness of the issue through social media by using the hashtag #wrongfortheroad and is calling on drivers to consider what they are doing.

- See more at: GMP:

<http://www.gmp.police.uk/live/Nhoodv3.nsf/WebsitePages/37FA4B70C5F7884080258074002FEA94?OpenDocument>

And, interestingly, this has come my way:-

Police lack powers to probe mobile phones crashes

A new study has found that police officers are worried they lack the right powers and resources to properly investigate whether a mobile phone was being used by a driver at the time of a crash.

The University of the West of England (UWE Bristol) study into the reporting and recording of mobile phone involvement in accidents, published today (23 Nov), surveyed 134 road traffic collision investigation officers.

80% of respondents indicated mobile phone involvement in non-fatal accidents is under-reported, with half agreeing the role of phones is even overlooked in fatal crashes.

75% were unable to report the full proportion of collisions in their force area linked with mobile phone use each year. A similar percentage indicated that better mechanisms to quickly analyse and investigate phone usage would be most likely to improve data collection.

The research was led by Dr Paul Pilkington, a senior lecturer in public health at UWE Bristol, working with the National Roads Policing Intelligence Forum.

For his research, Dr Pilkington asked officers across the UK about the procedure they follow in the aftermath of a collision. He was told phones are only routinely seized and analysed in fatal and life-changing injury crashes.

Responses from officers included:

“Due to the costs and timeliness of such enquiries this is an area that, in my view, is under-investigated...if properly investigated each and every time, the proportion of RCTs where phone use was contributory would increase significantly.”

“We take persons to court where we have seen them on their mobile phones and it gets thrown out. That is with a police witness, so it wouldn't go through on 3rd party evidence.”

Dr Pilkington says the survey findings raise serious questions about investigation tactics, and describes the under-reporting of mobile phone use in collisions as a 'massive problem'.

He said: “Police officers recognise that using mobile phones while driving is an important risk factor for being involved in a road traffic crash. This is consistent with global estimates of the burden of road traffic related deaths and injuries caused by using a phone while driving.

“But officers in our survey consistently registered concerns about having enough power or resources to investigate whether a mobile phone was being used at the time of a road traffic crash.

“Because of resource and legal considerations, only in fatal and life-changing injury crashes are phones seized and analysed. In all other crash types, including those involving serious injuries, use of mobile phones is usually not investigated.

“To me, this is a massive problem. If the police can't detect the full extent of this behaviour then we are missing an important part of collision investigation.

“It leaves a significant gap not only in terms of enforcement, but also monitoring of the role of phones in crashes. The result is significant under-reporting of the role of mobile phones in road traffic crashes, as well as inadequate justice for the victims of those affected by the actions of drivers using their phones behind the wheel.”

- See more at: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/5432.html#sthash.f5bYTOtl.dpuf>
UWE Bristol: <http://info.uwe.ac.uk/news/UWENews/news.aspx?id=3516>

20mph limits and re-designing speed bumps key to reducing transport pollution: NICE

Health experts are calling on local authorities to introduce more 20mph speed limits in congested residential areas in an attempt to reduce air pollution.

Published today (1 Dec), new draft guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) also calls for speed bumps to be redesigned, to stop cars speeding up and then slowing down between them.

The RAC has welcomed the guidelines, saying there is plenty in the draft that is worthy of ‘serious consideration’.

NICE says that being exposed to short-term and long-term air pollution caused by human activities can have a significant health impact, with harmful emissions and the environmental risks associated with pollution linked to around 25,000 deaths a year in England. It also says that air pollution and its health impact costs the UK up to £18.6bn annually.

NICE estimates that road traffic causes more than 64% of air pollution in urban areas, and as a result it is urging local authorities to do more to tackle the problem.

Other recommendations laid out by NICE include:

- Restrictions on engine idling during short stops such as outside schools and hospitals
- More charging points for electric cars in residential areas
- Placing the most commonly-used rooms in new houses away from polluting roads

NICE is also calling on businesses and transport services to educate their transport staff in more efficient ‘smooth’ driving skills, such as avoiding hard accelerations or decelerations and turning off the engine when at a standstill.

Professor Paul Lincoln, chief executive of UK health forum and NICE guideline committee chair, said: “Traffic-related air pollution is a major risk to public health and contributes to health inequalities.

“The NICE guidance sets out a strategic range of evidence-based practical measures to encourage low or zero emissions transport. This is very timely given the imperative to meet EU and national air quality standards.”

Nick Lyes, RAC roads policy spokesman, said: “While only in draft form at this stage, there is a lot in NICE’s guidelines that is worthy of serious consideration when it comes to tackling air quality.

“No idling zones, and the suggestion that local authorities should think again about speed humps which cause motorists to brake and then accelerate again, are eminently sensible suggestions and both have the potential to improve the quality of air locally.”

NICE’s draft recommendations on tackling air pollution are out for public consultation until 25 January 2017.

- See more at: NICE: <https://www.nice.org.uk/news/article/drive-smoothly-to-reduce-harmful-effects-of-air-pollution-says-nice>

RAC: <http://www.rac.co.uk/press-centre#/news/rac-comments-on-draft-air-quality-guidance-from-nice-202977>

NICE Consultation: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/indevelopment/gid-phg92>

New partnership aims to increase focus on motorcyclists’ safety

A new partnership is calling for motorcycles and scooters to be included in mainstream transport policy and for rider safety to be consistently factored into national road design.

The partnership, formed of Highways England, the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) and the Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA), made the call in a jointly authored whitepaper: ‘Realising the Motorcycling Opportunity: A Motorcycle Safety and Transport Policy Framework’.

The framework identifies seven key areas which ‘would make roads safer for riders’, along with practical actions as to how this can be achieved. These include: safer infrastructure, expanding road user education and increasing awareness and training.

It incorporates the ‘safe system approach’ which, the partners say, is now ‘widely accepted’ as a guiding principle among road safety professionals. This is underpinned by the understanding that humans are fallible and will make mistakes, which can be mitigated through ‘forgiving’ design.

The first edition of the framework was launched by the NPCC and MCIA in 2014, following acknowledgement from police and motorcycle road safety experts that the only way to reduce vulnerability of riders was to properly incorporate their use and needs into mainstream transport planning.

With congestion continuing to rise, the partnership says it is likely many more people will opt for two wheel transport - therefore with new partner Highways England, it has produced an updated version of the framework.

The new framework also advocates unlocking the benefits of motorcycles and demonstrating exactly how they offer a practical solution to congestion, as well as improving personal mobility for people without access to other forms of transport.

Mike Wilson, Highways England’s chief highways engineer, said: “Safety is our top priority and we believe no one should be harmed when travelling or working on our road network.

“We are committed to reducing the number of motorcycle incidents and casualties on our roads and to improving the experience motorcyclists have on those roads; this influential partnership with the industry and police supports that commitment.”

Deputy chief constable, Tim Madgwick, national motorcycle lead for the NPCC, said: “The police service is on the front line, dealing with the devastation that is caused to families and the greater community by road traffic collisions.

“The opportunity to work with Highways England and the MCIA gives us far greater scope to make our roads a safer place, not only for those who use powered two wheelers, but for all road users.”

Karen Cole, MCIA director of safety and training, said: “Highways England brings significant resource to this ambitious project; financially and in terms of influence, expertise and evidence-based decision making; add this to police backing and we have an unprecedented opportunity to make a huge difference to riders.

“For too long, motorcyclists have been at the bottom of the pecking order in terms of priority for traffic management and road planners.

“Often ‘safety advice’ is a thinly veiled attempt to keep people off motorbikes and scooters, rather than a genuine attempt to reduce their vulnerability. It is important to recognise the transport choice of riders and address their needs appropriately. Ignoring motorcyclists increases their vulnerability.”

- See more at: MCI: <http://www.mcia.co.uk/Press-and-Statistics/Press-Releases/Article/Roads-to-become-safer-for-motorcyclists-through-new-partnership.aspx>
RS GB: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/4067.html>

Killer drivers to face life sentences

From: Ministry of Justice: 4 December 2016

Part of: Sentencing reform, Road safety and Criminal justice reform

Dangerous drivers who kill are set to face life sentences, under plans put forward by ministers.

- Government acts to introduce life sentences for causing death by dangerous driving
- Life sentences for careless drivers who kill whilst under the influence of drink or drug
- New, 3 year jail terms for careless drivers causing serious injury

Dangerous drivers who kill are set to face life sentences, under plans put forward by ministers.

Dangerous drivers causing death by speeding, street racing or while on a mobile phone are among those now facing the same sentences as those charged with manslaughter.

Offenders who cause death by careless driving whilst under the influence of drink or drugs could also be handed life sentences - an increase on the current 14 year upper limit.

New plans come as ministers seek to deter dangerous, criminal behaviour on our roads, and make sure killer drivers face the toughest penalties.

Justice Minister Sam Gyimah said:

“Killer drivers ruin lives. Their actions cause immeasurable pain to families, who must endure tragic, unnecessary losses.

“While impossible to compensate for the death of a loved one, we are determined to make sure the punishment fits the crime. “My message is clear – if you drive dangerously and kill on our roads, you could face a life sentence.

A consultation seeks views on whether the current maximum penalties available to the courts should be increased. Proposals include:

- increasing the maximum sentence for causing death by dangerous driving from 14 years to life
- increasing the maximum sentence for causing death by careless driving whilst under the influence of drink or drugs from 14 years to life
- creating a new offence of causing serious injury by careless driving, with a maximum sentence of 3 years
- increasing minimum driving bans for those convicted of causing death

Today’s announcement delivers on the government’s pledge to consider the sentencing powers available to the courts for the most serious driving offences.

In 2015, 122 people were sentenced for causing death by dangerous driving, with a further 21 convicted of causing death by careless driving whilst under the influence.

It is hoped the measures will see custodial sentences for causing death by careless or dangerous driving increase – from an average of 45.8 months in 2015.

Notes to editors

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- *The UK has one of the best road safety records in the world – but deaths and serious injuries cause devastation to victims and their families.*
- *The consultation deals with the most serious road offences. It does not cover other driving or regulatory offences such as speeding, the setting of drink drive limits, the basic offences of careless or dangerous driving and driving whilst using a mobile phone.*
- *This follows further action in 2015, when the government increased the maximum custodial sentence for causing death whilst driving when disqualified from 2 to 10 years. A new offence of causing serious injury when driving whilst disqualified was also created, with a maximum penalty of 4 years imprisonment. It also brought into force the statutory requirement to extend a driving ban to take account of any time spent in custody.*
- *The Department for Transport is separately introducing legislation increasing the penalties for using a hand held mobile phone whilst driving from 3 to 6 penalty points and from £100 to £200 when a driver is issued with a fixed penalty.*
- *Sentencing remains a matter for independent judges, with decisions made based on the full facts of the case.*

The consultation, which runs until 1 February 2017, will be published on Monday on GOV.UK.

For more information call the MOJ press office on 020 3334 3503 or 020 3334 3529

Government unveils plans to allow learners to have lessons on motorways

The RAC and RAC Foundation, RoSPA, MCIA and IAM RoadSmart have all welcomed plans unveiled today by the DVSA (30 Dec) to improve driver and motorcycle training.

The first of two separate announcements includes plans to allow learner drivers to have driving lessons on motorways, with a driving instructor and in a car fitted with dual controls.

Motorways lessons will be voluntary and it will be up to the driving instructor to decide when the learner driver is sufficiently competent to have a motorway lesson.

The changes are designed to give learner drivers broader driving experience before taking their driving test, and training on how to join and leave the motorway, overtake and use lanes correctly.

Announcing the proposals, Andrew Jones, transport minister, said: “These changes will equip learners with a wider range of experience and greater skill set which will improve safety levels on our roads.”

Steve Gooding, director of the RAC Foundation, said: “The casualty statistics tell us that motorways are our safest roads, but they can feel anything but safe to a newly qualified driver heading down the slip road for the first time to join a fast moving, often heavy, flow of traffic.

“Many are so intimidated by the motorway environment that they choose instead to use statistically more dangerous roads, so we welcome this move which will help new drivers get the training they need to use motorways safely.”

Simon Williams, RAC spokesman, added: “RAC research shows that a quarter of motorists feel uncomfortable driving on the motorway but hopefully by allowing learners to gain valuable experience prior to getting their full licences this will change and the overall level of confidence about driving on the motorway will improve.”

A spokesman for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) said: “Anything that will provide young drivers with more realistic training to prepare them for when they become independent drivers is good. We would also be in favour of measures that included a minimum number of hours of training.”

- See more at: Gov.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/plans-to-let-learner-drivers-have-motorway-driving-lessons-revealed>

Consultation: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/allowing-learner-drivers-to-have-driving-lessons-on-motorways>

RAC: <http://www.rac.co.uk/press-centre#/news/rac-welcomes-proposal-to-allow-learner-drivers-to-have-motorway-lessons-210170>

IAM: <https://www.iamroadsmart.com/media-and-policy/newsroom/news-details/2016/12/30/major-overhaul-in-driver-and-motorcycle-training-by-government-welcomed-by-iam-roadsmart>

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