

Summary of the 3 sections of the Road Safety request

Section 1: Drug Driving Testing Mechanisms used globally

- In the UK, there is currently no device being used at the roadside which can detect drug use via saliva, urine, blood sample.
- Saliva testing devices are currently being used in Victoria, Australia
- Unlike the relative simplicity of alcohol testing, it can be very difficult to test for the toxicity of drug use, particularly if a number of drugs, whether legal or illegal, are used.
- Evidence from the Republic of Ireland suggests that drug driving is particularly a male problem.
- Although blood samples may be more accurate for testing for drug driving, saliva screening offers practical advantages over other types of screening for cannabis, however further evaluation studies of oral fluid screening devices are needed.
- There has been criticism in recent years that drug driving is rarely prosecuted compared to drink driving.
- Some European countries prosecute for impaired driving whilst on drugs, while other European countries take a zero-tolerance approach.
- Prosecution will only take place after the result is tested as positive from a laboratory.
- The *Department for Transport* (DfT) estimates that one in five drivers or riders killed in road accidents may have an impairing drug – legal or illegal – in their system.

Section 2: Enforcement of speeding on Rural Roads in UK and Europe

UK

- The Government's road safety strategy "Tomorrows roads: safer for everyone" (DETR 2000a) has a key component which focuses on the management of speed, particularly in rural areas.
- Under current legislation (**Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984**, and Highway Code (DETR, 1999)), speed limits (for cars and motorcycles) on the rural road

network are 60 mph on single carriageway roads (from major inter-urban routes to quiet country lanes) and 70 mph on dual carriageways.

- Speed limits in villages are 30mph, in Home zones or Quiet Lanes, speeds are below 20mph. **Transport Act 2000** enables a local traffic authority to designate any road for which they are the traffic authority, as a Quiet Lane or a Home Zone.
- Use orders and speed orders can be issued by traffic authorities under the Transport Act
- The introduction of a Rural Roads Hierarchy to keep speed limits consistent and appropriate to the function of the road is discussed in the *Guidelines for Rural Safety Management* (IHT, 1999)¹.
- Hierarchy consists of 2 Tiers: Tier1 one for A roads, Tier 2 for B roads and Tier 3 for all other. Roads are grouped under a tier according to appropriate speed for them.
- Local police conduct the enforcement of speeding limits, and drivers caught breaking speed limits by the cameras are committing an offence. Most speeding offences are dealt with through the fixed penalty system where a driver/motorist has three points added to their licence².
- It has been suggested by the Governments **Speed Review (DETR,2000b³)** that speed limits on their own have little effect on vehicle speed (**pg19**) and that additional traffic calming is required to reduce drivers speeds.
- Slower Speeds Initiative by the Countryside Agency found schemes using physical measures and high impact marking and signs slowed drivers by an average of 8% and reduced casualties by nearly 50%

Europe

- In April 2009, the traffic police across Europe conducted a week-long operation with 22 countries taking part, which saw more than 636,038 drivers being detected for breaking speed limits⁴.

¹ IHT. (1999). *Guidelines for Rural Safety Management*. Institution of Highways and Transportation, London.

² [DfT, Managing speed on our roads](#)

³ DETR (2000b) *New Directions in Speed Management - A Review of Policy*. DETR, London

⁴ Motoring Offences Team Blake Laphorn Solicitors

http://www.bllaw.co.uk/services_for_individuals/motoring_offences/news_and_updates/speeding_in_europe.aspx

- In France, it has been proposed that automatic confiscation of vehicles can be carried out on motorists who exceed the speed limit by over 50 kmh
- According to the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)⁵, up to 50% of photographs from speed cameras in Germany are unusable. Many speeding offences will go undetected as the owner is under no obligation at all to name the driver unless detected on the camera.
- Optimised enforcement would be a major contribution to reducing traffic deaths and injuries in Europe (EU 15). In particular in the case of speeding, 5,800 deaths could be prevented every year⁶.
- New automated methods can be used to compliment traditional methods, in order to deal with large number of violations. France has been very successful at implementing automated speed enforcement.
- An example of the principles governing safe infrastructure design can be found in the Dutch 'Sustainable Safety' approach, according to which a road network should integrate the core principles of traffic calming⁷
- European Parliament finally adopted an EU Directive that aims to improve the road network by introducing an EU harmonised system of road safety inspection, management of high risk sites, road safety audits and safety impact assessment on the Trans-European Road Networks.
- Introduction of Section Control which is a method of speed enforcement which involves a series of cameras installed over a stretch of road so as to calculate the average speed. In the Netherlands on a section of the A13 motorway, only 0.5% of vehicles were detected speeding after section speed control was put in use in 2002.
- Some of the front running EU countries in speed enforcement are: the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and Norway.
- Table 1 shows that out of the countries listed, Belgium has the highest percentage of speed violations on rural roads, while GB has the lowest. This shows that while Belgium displays one of the best levels of speed enforcement, violations are still high, therefore other factors must considered.

⁵ ETSC <http://www.etsc.eu/home.php>

⁶ [ETSC, Managing Speed: Towards Safe and Sustainable Road Transport](#)

⁷ [SWOV \(2006\). The principles of Sustainable Safety.](#)

Section 3: Road Deaths and Age Group of Deaths in other countries worldwide

Road Deaths

- In 2008 Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have the largest rate of road deaths per 100,000 compared to other parts of the United Kingdom. All parts of the UK and ROI have shown a decrease in the number of deaths from 2004 to 2008 (Table 1).
- For each year from 2004 to 2008, 16-24 year olds have the highest number of road deaths in NI (Table 2) and GB as a whole (Table 3).
- The highest number of deaths in the ROI has been in the 15-24 age category each year from 2005 to 2007 (Table 4).
- At international level, Poland has the highest number of road deaths per 100,000 in 2008, and the Netherlands has the lowest number (Figure 1).
- Table 5 shows that for the worldwide countries displayed, the age group with the highest level of road deaths is 25-64 years. (this table uses wider age brackets than the tables for NI, GB and ROI).

Enforcement

- Using the data from Figure 1 it is evident that the Netherlands have the lowest number of deaths per 100,000 of the population compared to the rest of the countries displayed
- The Netherlands have tightened their enforcement measures by clamping down on speed limits, introducing the concept 'the more dangerous the concept, the higher the sanction', increased enforcement pressure with more inspections etc.

Attitude and learning

- The level and efficiency of enforcement in a country may have affect on the attitudes of road users. Increased enforcement could result in increased subjective risk of being caught
- Looking at Figure 1, GB has the second lowest level of road deaths after the Netherlands. Paul Smith, the founder of the Safe Speed Road Safety Campaign⁸ relates to the 'sound principles of the UK driving culture, which involve individual responsibility, attitude etc.

⁸ [Safe Speed Road Safety Campaign](#)

- Smith highlights the importance of individual responsibility in producing safe driving, and suggests that over regulation and enforcement erodes driver's individual responsibility, and can encourage drivers to act out against regulations. For example in Belgium where enforcement is high but speed violations are also high.
- Attitudes to speed can include: doing it for the thrill and copying media adverts etc, having a false perception of their ability.

Seat belt wearing

- Looking at Figure 1 a number of the Central European (CE) countries (Poland, Slovenia, Czech Republic and Hungary) have some of the highest values for road deaths per 100,000.
- They also have high levels of cars without seat belts, crashes involving passengers without seat belts and a general belief that seat belts are not needed when driving carefully.

Young and inexperienced drivers

- Reasons for high death rates among young drivers is a mixture of attitude towards speed, carrying passengers, wearing seat belts, and inexperience. All this mixed with being over confident, feeling invincible, taking risks and poor assessment of them, leaves them vulnerable to the perils of the road.
- Possible introduction of a Graduated Driving Licence (GDL) as applied in New Zealand, California and Australia, might help to combat such high percentages of young road deaths in the UK and NI.