

## Police Scotland: Annual Police Plan 2018/19

### Road safety and road crime

Serious collisions on our roads have a significant impact on Scotland's communities, both in terms of fatalities and personal injury, as well as the disruption caused by road closures. In addition, much criminal activity involves use of the road network and the illegal use of vehicles.

Keeping people safe on our roads and tackling road crime is a national priority for Police Scotland and we are committed to promoting road safety, improving driver behaviour and enforcing road traffic legislation in support of the Scottish Government Road Safety Framework to 2020.

In 2018/19 we will:

- Modify driver behaviour and **reduce injury** on Scotland's roads through engagement and proportionate enforcement of legislation.
- Detect and deter all types of **criminality on our roads** through efficient use of intelligence and analytical products.
- Develop and deliver a national road safety and road crime **calendar of activity**, which will be aligned to 'priority focus areas', as identified during the mid-term review of the Scottish Government's Road Safety Framework to 2020.

### **Q5. The approach to dealing with the threat of 'injury on our roads and road crime' meets my expectation:**

Please circle your preferred response:

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / **Disagree** / Strongly Disagree

If you would like to provide further comment, please do so here:

This consultation response is from Brake, the road safety charity. Since its establishment in 1995, Brake has been working to end the needless loss of life and suffering of injury on our roads and has provided vital support to people left bereaved and injured. Brake runs an accredited, expert helpline and provides support literature to help road crash victims cope with their grief, deal with practical matters and access the help they need. Brake's helpline supports more than 500 families a year across the UK and our support packs are handed to families by police following every UK road death. Brake also coordinates national Road Safety Week every November and campaigns for essential road safety policies across the UK.

### **Road Safety in Scotland**

Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2020<sup>1</sup> is stated to be influenced by "Vision Zero", an approach that is welcomed by Brake as every death and serious injury on the road is horrific, unacceptable and preventable, tearing apart families and destroying lives. Brake is also supportive of the Scottish Government's formal adoption of a safe systems approach to road safety, detailed in the recently published Mid-term Review<sup>2</sup> of the Framework. However, recent statistics illustrate that whilst progress has been made towards the targets set by the Scottish Government, 2016 saw a deeply concerning reversal of this trend and a significant deterioration of road safety in Scotland:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/286643/0087268.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/1416/ts-road-safety-framework-mid-term-review-march-2016.pdf>

### **2016 Scottish road casualty statistics<sup>3</sup>:**

- 191 road deaths, up 14% on 2015 and against a 2020 target of 175 (8% reduction still required to meet target)
- 12 children killed on roads, up 200% on 2015 and against a 2020 target of 8 (33% reduction still required to meet target)
- 1,694 serious injuries, up 6% on 2015 and against a 2020 target of 1,172 (31% reduction still required to meet target)
- 167 children seriously injured, up 20% on 2015 and against a 2020 target of 114 (32% reduction still required to meet target)
- 35 road deaths per million population, up 17% on 2015 and against a UK average of 27 road deaths per million population

It is clear from this data that significant progress is required to reach the Scottish Government's own 2020 road safety targets, with more than 30% improvement required in 3 of 4 indicators. This is why, in response to Q5 of this consultation document, Brake has stated that we “**disagree** that the approach to dealing with the threat of ‘injury on our roads and road crime’ meets my expectation.” The Annual Police Plan provides a timely and appropriate platform for delivering the required step-change in road safety outcomes and this, therefore, must be reflected in both the language and the programme of activity detailed in the stated commitments.

### **Annual Police Plan 2018/19**

The 2018/19 commitments for road safety and road crime, detailed in the consultation, are fundamentally the same as those stated in the 2017/18 plan<sup>4</sup>. This is concerning and indicates that the deterioration in Scottish road safety in 2016 has not been recognised and that the required step-change in progress will not be implemented.

### **Minimising deaths and injury**

The first commitment detailed in the Annual Police Plan must ensure a focus on reversing the decline in road safety shown in the 2016 data. Police Scotland must also commit to minimising the number of deaths as well as injuries on Scotland's roads, and focus on proven interventions, increased enforcement and engagement which delivers safe driving behaviours.

Speed, motorcyclists, pre-drivers, young and older drivers, cyclists and pedestrians, were identified as priority areas for focused activity in the mid-term review of the Scottish Government's Road Safety Framework to 2020. Brake supports these areas of focus but would like Police Scotland to provide more detail about how they plan to deliver activities in these areas and what tangible results they expect to see.

It is evident that the primary way in which the police can deliver road safety benefits is via enforcement - although education efforts do have a significant role to play (see below). Brake recognises the spending restraints placed upon public services across the UK but urges road policing to be made an investment priority in Scotland. The UK Department for Transport estimates the “average value of prevention” of each death on the road at more than £1.8 million, and each serious injury at more than £200,000<sup>5</sup>. Using these conservative estimates, the total cost of deaths and serious injuries on Scottish roads in 2016 is estimated at £682.6 million. This figure starkly illustrates the economic cost of road crashes and provides a clear rationale for increased investment.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2016>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.scotland.police.uk/assets/pdf/392813/annual-police-plan-2017-18?view=Standard>

<sup>5</sup> Reported Road Casualties Great Britain annual report, 2016

Beyond investment, one area which can deliver significant road safety improvements is the nature of speed enforcement. Speed is a factor in all road crashes; the speed a vehicle is travelling determines both its stopping distance and its force of impact, and drivers who exceed speed limits significantly increase the risk of crashes on our roads. Brake supports the strict enforcement of speed limits through the removal of the speed limit buffer (known colloquially as '10% plus 2'<sup>6</sup>), as raised by Chief Constable Anthony Bangham at the Police Federation Roads Policing Conference, on 30 January 2018. The prevalence of speeding on our roads indicates some drivers still believe that they can "get away with it" and this can likely be attributed to a combination of lack of clarity in the law and inconsistency in enforcement. A speed limit is the top speed at which it is deemed safe to travel on a particular road; however, some drivers treat speed limits as targets and, collectively, they increase the risk of a road crash that could cause death or serious injury. Stricter enforcement of the law sends a clear message that speeding is dangerous and will not be tolerated and would deliver safer roads in Scotland and across the wider UK.

Regarding the role of Police Scotland in educating both road-users and non-road users on road safety, it is important that educational interventions are rigorously monitored and evaluated and follow international and academic best practice, as identified in Brake's *Inspire, Inform, Engage* report<sup>7</sup>. This report, quoting Shinar<sup>8</sup>, highlights that "...of the three major traffic components – the driver, the vehicle and the road – the driver is the most difficult to change or improve..." and that, therefore, a safe systems approach should take precedence over educational efforts. This approach recognises that education and communication have an important role to play in raising awareness and spreading knowledge, but that these efforts should not primarily be about behaviour change – as this rarely delivers effective, long-term results.

### **Campaigns and communication**

The third commitment in the plan focuses on the development and delivery of a national road safety and road crime calendar of activity. We support this commitment but urge Police Scotland to liaise and coordinate with us on any such programme of activity. Brake has an established history in leading UK road safety campaigns, including the national Road Safety Week<sup>9</sup> every November. We work with a large network of engaged volunteers and stakeholders across communities in the UK, and we also have an extensive portfolio of road safety resources. We would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with Police Scotland to ensure the most effective delivery of road safety campaigns and achievement of shared goals.

### **Victim support**

The increase in road deaths and injuries in 2016 in Scotland, noted above, highlights the need for comprehensive victim support services for those affected by death and injury on Scottish roads. Since 2007, Brake has received Scottish Government funding to produce a pack of essential practical and procedural information to help bereaved families, which is distributed by the police after every road death. Brake has issued some 12,000 packs and 'coping with grief' booklets across Scotland. Our bereavement packs are regularly updated, and we receive very positive feedback from police officers across Scotland who are supporting families bereaved by road death. Officers tell us that the packs are 'invaluable to their role as a family liaison officer, in supporting families bereaved in the most sudden, violent and tragic of circumstances.'

Confirmed funding for these packs in Scotland, and for Brake's helpline (a quality accredited, Freephone, confidential support service, providing information and advocacy, emotional support and

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/road-traffic-offences-guidance-fixed-penalty-notice>

<sup>7</sup> [http://brake.org/assets/docs/Inspire-inform-engage-report\\_FINAL-Apr2017.pdf](http://brake.org/assets/docs/Inspire-inform-engage-report_FINAL-Apr2017.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Shinar, D (1978) Psychology on the road: The human factor in traffic safety, p126

<sup>9</sup> <http://roadsafetyweek.org.uk/>

a listening ear) is critical to ensure that those affected by road injury and death continue to get the long-term support they need.

Brake provides support for *all* families bereaved in road traffic crashes in Scotland; however, this commitment to support everyone means that we are no longer eligible to receive funding from the Scottish Government under Section 111 of the Criminal Justice Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010, as this funding can only be used to support cases where an offence has been committed. Funding from the Scottish Government is, therefore, now granted through Section 97 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. We welcome the continuation of funding but would support an explicitly stated, long-term commitment to fund our victim support services in Scotland in the Annual Police Plan. Such a commitment would provide reassurance to those already using Brake's victim support services and would secure the future delivery of these services.