



accidents don't have to happen

# Road Safety: A Guide for Councillors in England



Produced with the support of  
the Department for Transport

February 2019

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## Executive Summary

Roads are essential to our everyday lives and economic prosperity and we all use them by driving, riding, walking or travelling as a passenger. Unfortunately, people are killed and injured when using the road, but a comprehensive road safety strategy can reduce the number of deaths and injuries despite increasing traffic levels.

The long term trend in road casualties in reported road accidents was broadly level between 1979 and 1998, allowing for natural variation in the number of casualties. Between 1998 and 2010 the general trend in road casualties was downward.

However, the number of road deaths has levelled out since 2010. Since then, most of the annual changes are explained by one-off causes (for instance, the snow in 2010) or natural variation. The number of road deaths in 2017 (1,793) was almost the same as in 2016 (1,792) and had not changed compared to the 2010-14 average (1,799).

Central government sets the regulatory framework for roads, vehicles and road users, and the country's national road safety strategy. It:

- Provides funding and resources to local government and others to deliver road safety
- Commissions research into the nature, causes of, and potential solutions to, road casualties
- Collects and publishes road casualty data
- Conducts education and publicity campaigns
- Sets standards for road design, construction and maintenance
- Sets requirements for driver licensing, training and testing
- Sets standards for vehicles and requirements for vehicle licensing
- Sets road use laws, including offences and penalties, and guidance on safe road use, such as the Highway Code.

Local government is the main delivery agent of road safety. Local authorities have a statutory duty under section 39 of the [1988 Road Traffic Act](#) to “take steps both to reduce and prevent accidents”.

Upper Tier Local Authorities (such as County Councils, Metropolitan District Councils and Unitary Authorities) have legal responsibilities for highways and transportation in their area. Lower Tier Authorities (such as District Councils) do not, but do help to deliver road safety services.

[Transport for London \(TfL\)](#) manages the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN), London's traffic lights, and transport services. The rest of London's road network is managed by London Borough Councils and the Common Council of the City of London, each of which is a Unitary Authority.

A range of officers are involved in creating safer road environments, including road engineers, planners and urban designers in close consultation with local communities to create a safer road environment.

Town and parish councils may also play an important role in road safety, for example by funding speed indication devices, traffic calming or community schemes. Many highway authorities have established forums to allow



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parish councils to request lower speed limits or improvements to road design. These represent important routes through which the wishes of local communities can be heard.

The police enforce road traffic laws, although some areas, such as parking enforcement, are the responsibility of local authorities. The police also co-operate with other agencies, such as the DVLA, DVSA, Highways England and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), to enforce specific traffic laws and investigate serious work-related road accidents.

Roads policing supports and complements road safety education and engineering, and is an essential part of road safety. It:

- Deters illegal, dangerous and careless behaviour on the road
- Identifies offenders
- Identifies the causes of crashes
- Helps to educate, and change the attitudes of, road users
- Prevents other forms of crime
- Identifies and removes dangerous vehicles.

Fire and Rescue Services have duties to respond to road traffic accidents under the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#).

In addition to their core role of providing an emergency response service to road traffic collisions and extricating victims who are trapped in vehicles, most fire and rescue services are also active in local multi-agency partnerships in their area and many support or deliver road safety education programmes to help prevent accidents happening in the first place.

Employers play an important role in assessing and managing the risks faced and created by their staff when using the road for work. HSE [Driving at Work](#) Guidelines state that *“health and safety law applies to on-the-road work activities and the risks should be effectively managed within a health and safety system.”*

Every local authority needs to:

- Complete a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- Establish a Health and Wellbeing Strategy and investment plan
- Prepare to commission public health services.

Local government should:

- Appoint a cabinet lead for road safety, to ensure that road safety remains high priority for local authority activity, and to improve accountability for legal duties.
- Adopt the Safe System approach and a long-term goal towards the ultimate prevention of death and serious injuries in road safety strategies and plans.
- Set measurable local targets to reduce the numbers of deaths and serious injuries with supporting road safety performance objectives that support the current Road Safety Statement and the four key road safety priority groups: young people, rural road users, motorcyclists and older vulnerable road users.



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### Police should:

- Increase levels of enforcement of key road safety rules related to the prevention of death and serious injury.
- Support improved crash investigation and encourage and facilitate the adoption of the CRASH reporting system by all police forces.

### Business and civil Society should:

- Engage with and support the national drive to work towards the ultimate prevention of deaths and serious injuries and related objectives.

As an elected councillor, you can help to ensure that your local authority has a comprehensive local road safety strategy that is effective in reducing road accidents and casualties. In particular, you can:

- Influence decision and policy making
- Ensure road safety services are evidenced-based and evaluated
- Ensure services are co-ordinated
- Champion road safety for all road users
- Support your council's scrutiny committee
- Ensure your council manages its occupational road risk.



## Introduction

Roads are essential to our everyday lives and economic prosperity. We all use them in some way, by driving, riding, walking or travelling as a passenger, or depending on them to obtain goods and services. Unfortunately, people are killed and injured when using the road, but a comprehensive road safety strategy can reduce the number of people killed or injured on the road, despite increasing traffic levels.

Reported road deaths have reduced from about 5,500 a year in the mid 1980s to fewer than 2,000 a year now. Over the same period, road casualties have decreased from 240,000 (including 75,000 serious injuries) to under 200,000 (including 24,000 serious injuries). Despite these improvements, 35 people die and 450 are seriously injured on our roads every week.<sup>i</sup>

These are road casualties reported to the police and do not include tens of thousands of people who are injured in unreported crashes every year. Although virtually all fatal road crashes are reported, a considerable proportion of non-fatal casualties are not, even when those involved require medical or hospital treatment. The real number of road casualties in Great Britain every year is estimated to be about 670,000 (but possibly as high as 760,000), including an estimated 60,000 seriously injured people.

Apart from the human cost, road accidents cost billions of pounds and so preventing them saves billions as well as saving lives and reducing the number of injuries. Reported road accidents, including damage-only ones, cost around £5 billion a year. If unreported injury accidents are included, this increases to about £36 billion.<sup>1</sup> Congestion causes about 25% of road collisions and costs about £22 billion a year.<sup>ii</sup>

There has also been a reduction in road safety provision. The National Audit Office estimated that in real terms, there was a 37% reduction in government funding between 2010/11 and 2015/16<sup>iii</sup>. There has also been a 23% reduction in the number of full-time equivalent traffic police officers. However, not all forces have been affected by cuts equally, cuts range from 1% in Cheshire to 76% in Devon and Cornwall<sup>iv</sup>.

Despite these challenges, local authorities help to keep their people alive and healthy by delivering road safety services that are evidence-informed, co-ordinated with other public services, designed and delivered in partnership and evaluated to ensure effectiveness

This guide was originally produced in 2004 and updated in 2013 by a working Group comprising:

- RoSPA, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents [www.rospace.com](http://www.rospace.com)
- Road Safety Great Britain [www.roadafetygb.org.uk](http://www.roadafetygb.org.uk)
- PACTS, the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety [www.pacts.org.uk](http://www.pacts.org.uk)
- AIRSO [www.airso.org.uk](http://www.airso.org.uk)
- ACPO, the Association of Chief Police Officers [www.acpo.police.uk](http://www.acpo.police.uk)
- Living Streets [www.livingstreets.org.uk](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk)
- CTC [www.ctc.org.uk](http://www.ctc.org.uk)
- RoSPA's National Road Safety Committee [www.rospace.com](http://www.rospace.com)

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## Reported Road Casualties 2017

The long term trend in road casualties in reported road accidents was broadly level between 1979 and 1998, allowing for natural variation in the number of casualties. Between 1998 and 2010 the general trend in road casualties was downward.

However, the number of road deaths fatalities has levelled out since 2010. Most of the annual changes are explained by one-off causes (for instance, the snow in 2010) or natural variation. The number of road deaths in 2017 (1,793) was almost the same as in 2016 (1,792) and had not changed compared to the 2010-14 average (1,799).

Since 2015, there have been changes to the police reporting systems, almost half of the forces in England have adopted a computer-based road collision and injury reporting system. This system known as CRASH has inbuilt validation systems to make it more accurate than the previous STATS19 system. As CRASH provides a more accurate method of assessing injury severity, a higher proportion of casualties are now being classed as 'serious' rather than 'slight'. The DfT issued a warning in 2017 that the data should be interpreted with caution due to changes in severity reporting. London has introduced its own reporting system, COPA (Case Overview Preparation Application) which has also led to a substantial increase in the levels of serious injury reporting.

In 2017, there were 24,831 seriously injured casualties in road traffic accidents reported to the police. However, assuming all police forces were using injury-based severity reporting systems, it is estimated that there were 27,288 serious injuries and 29,081 people killed or seriously injured in 2017.

In 2017, there were 144,369 slightly injured casualties in reported road traffic accidents, but assuming that all police forces were using injury-based severity reporting systems, it is estimated that there were 141,912 slightly injured casualties.

**Figure 1: Reported road casualties by severity and road user type, 2017**

Road user group	Killed	Serious	Slight	All
Car Occupants	787	8,894	90,401	100,082
Pedestrians	470	5,594	17,741	23,805
Motorcyclists	349	5,592	12,101	18,042
Pedal Cyclists	101	3,698	14,522	18,321
Other Road Users	86	1,053	9,604	10,743
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,793</b>	<b>24,831</b>	<b>144,369</b>	<b>170,993</b>



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### High Risk Groups

Some road users are at higher risk than others, including young drivers, older drivers, at-work drivers, motorcyclists, pedestrians, pedal cyclists and children. When planning road safety activities and priorities, the links between road accidents and deprivation should be considered to ensure that inequalities are addressed.

Children in deprived areas are at much greater risk of being involved in an accident than those living in affluent areas. In fact, among pedestrians in the five to nine years age group, the risk of serious and fatal injuries to children living in the 20% most deprived areas is six times higher than those living in the 20% least deprived areas and among 10-14 year olds.

As a Councillor, you should be aware of the high risk groups in your authority, to help inform decisions about prioritising road safety resources.

### Children

3% of road deaths were children in 2017. There were 48 child deaths, a 30% decrease from 2016. However, child fatalities have fluctuated between 48 and 69 a year between 2010 and 2017 with no clear trend. There were 15,721 child road casualties in 2017, the lowest year on record and a 2% decrease from 2016. It was 11% lower than the 2010-14 average.

Most child fatalities are pedestrians (22 in 2017) and car occupants (20 fatalities) because these are the main ways in which children travel on the road.

### Young Adult Road Users

The number of 17 to 24 year olds killed in reported road traffic accidents decreased from 299 in 2016 to 279 in 2017, following a general downward trend. This was due to fewer young car occupants killed (166 in 2017 against 179 in 2016), fewer motorcyclists (53 in 2017 against 61 in 2016) and fewer pedestrians (35 in 2017 against 42 in 2016) killed in 2017.

Casualties involving younger drivers has reduced based on the 2010-14 average, however, young drivers aged 17-24 are still over represented as they make up only 7 per cent of UK full driving licence holders yet are involved in just over 20 per cent of fatal or serious collisions in which they were the driver.

### Older Road Users (aged 60 years and over)

The number of fatalities aged 60 and over in reported road traffic accidents increased from 533 in 2016 to 559 in 2017. This was due to an increase in older pedestrian deaths in 2017 (186 deaths in 2016 and 216 in 2017) and older motorcyclist deaths (36 in 2016 and 47 in 2017).

There were 22,375 older casualties of all severities in 2017, a 4% decrease from 2016.

### Vulnerable Road Users

The above road users together with pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders are categorised as vulnerable road users. As a councillor find out what groups are at risk in your area, and whether these groups are overrepresented when compared to similar areas. Knowing whether the total number of casualties is rising or falling is important but knowing how the figures are broken down is equally so. For example, in London 80% of those killed or seriously injured in 2016 were pedestrians, cyclists or motorcyclists.





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### The Main Causes

Almost all road crashes involve human error, ranging from simple mistakes to deliberately dangerous, illegal behaviour. There are usually a number of contributory factors, the most common of which are basic errors, such as failing to look properly, losing control of a vehicle, inappropriate speed and impairment or distraction. However, this does not mean that road users are solely responsible for preventing road casualties.

### Poor Driving

Some road accidents are caused by poor driving, such as a driver or rider disobeying road signals and markings, following the vehicle in front too closely or driving aggressively, recklessly or in a hurry.

In 2017, 102 people were killed (7% of all road fatalities) and 3,326 injured (4% of all injury accidents) in an accident where a driver or rider had been driving aggressively. 249 people were killed (17% of all road fatalities) and 13,532 were injured (15% of all injury accidents) in an accident where the driver or rider involved was described as 'careless, reckless or in a hurry'<sup>v</sup>.

### Inappropriate Speed

Inappropriate speed contributes to around 11% of all injury collisions reported to the police, 14% of crashes resulting in a serious injury and 24% of collisions that result in a death<sup>vi</sup>. This includes both 'excessive speed', when the speed limit is exceeded but also driving or riding within the speed limit when this is too fast for the conditions at the time (for example, in poor weather, poor visibility or high pedestrian activity).

In 2017, 203 people were killed in crashes involving someone exceeding the speed limit and a further 136 people died when someone was travelling too fast for the conditions<sup>vii</sup>.

### Not Wearing a Seatbelt

Seatbelts are designed to retain people in their seats, and so prevent or reduce injuries suffered in a crash. They ensure that as little contact is made between the occupant and vehicle interior as possible and significantly reduce the risk of being thrown from a vehicle.

Seatbelts are designed to work as the key part of wider injury prevention measures and safety systems, such as airbags and head restraints, which will not be as effective in reducing the risk of injury if an occupant is not wearing a seatbelt.

Car occupants form almost 60% of all road casualties. In 2017, 100,082 people were killed or injured while travelling in cars, of these 68,290 (68%) were drivers.

### Alcohol

In 2016, figures show that 230 people were killed and there were over 9,000 casualties in total in drink drive accidents<sup>viii</sup>. Although the level of drinking and driving has dropped dramatically over the last three decades, over 200 people are still killed in drink drive accidents every year. Despite over 30 years of drink drive education and enforcement, over 40,000 people are still caught drink driving annually.

Often it is an innocent person who suffers, not the driver who is over the drink drive limit. In 2016, 100 pedestrians were killed or seriously injured by drink drivers, as were 390 car passengers. 40 children were killed or seriously injured by drink drivers that year<sup>ix</sup>.



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In 2017, 325,887 roadside breath tests were carried out by the police, of which 44,893 drivers or riders (14% of those tested) failed or refused to take the test.<sup>x</sup>

Embedding a Safe System approach is evident in the Department for Transport's [British Road Safety Statement](#) (and its [2018 Progress Report](#)), [Road Safety Management Capacity Review](#), [Highways England's safety performance framework](#) and [Transport for London \(TfL\) Vision Zero for London](#) and [Vision Zero Action Plan](#).

A recent report recommended that the Government adopts performance indicators to help understand the processes that lead to crashes and recommended a set of performance indicators to measure progress.

### Public Health England

Public Health England also recognises the importance of the safe system approach as a proactive way of addressing road safety issues.<sup>xi</sup> It recommends key prevention opportunities for reducing child road casualties:

1. Improve safety for children travelling to and from school
2. Introduce 20mph limits in priority areas as part of a safe system approach to road safety
3. Action to prevent traffic injury and improve health works best when it is coordinated.

This approach is echoed in the [Wales Road Safety Framework](#).



## Who Delivers Road Safety?

Central government sets the regulatory framework for roads, vehicles and road users, and the country's national road safety strategy. It:

- Provides funding and resources to local government and others to deliver road safety
- Commissions research into the nature, causes of, and potential solutions to, road casualties
- Collects and publishes road casualty data
- conducts education and publicity campaigns
- Sets standards for road design, construction and maintenance
- Sets requirements for driver licensing, training and testing
- Sets standards for vehicles and requirements for vehicle licensing
- Sets road use laws, including offences and penalties, and guidance on safe road use, such as the Highway Code.

## Local Authorities

Local government is the main delivery agent of road safety. Local authorities have a statutory duty under section 39 of the [1988 Road Traffic Act](#) to “take steps both to reduce and prevent accidents”.

39 (1) The Secretary of State may, with the approval of the Treasury, provide for promoting road safety by disseminating information or advice relating to the use of roads.

39 (2) Each local authority must prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety and may make contributions towards the cost of measures for promoting road safety taken by other authorities or bodies.

39 (3) Each local authority –

[a] must carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads or part of roads, other than trunk roads, within their area,

[b] must, in the light of those studies, take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents, including the dissemination of information and advice relating to the use of the roads, the giving of practical training to road users or any class or description of road users, the construction, improvement, maintenance or repair of roads for which they are the highway authority (in Scotland, local roads authority) and other measures taken in the exercise of their powers for controlling, protecting or assisting the movement of traffic on roads, and

[c] in constructing new roads, must take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to reduce the possibilities of such accidents when the roads come into use.



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Upper Tier Local Authorities (such as County Councils, Metropolitan District Councils and Unitary Authorities) have legal responsibilities for highways and transportation in their area. Lower Tier Authorities (such as District Councils) do not, but do help to deliver road safety services.

[Transport for London \(TfL\)](#) manages the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN), London's traffic lights, and transport services. It has adopted a [Vision Zero for London](#) and a [Vision Zero Action Plan](#). The rest of London's road network is managed by London Borough Councils and the Common Council of London, each of which is a Unitary Authority.

The [London Road Safety Council \(LRSC\)](#) comprises elected councillors and professional road safety officers from the London boroughs, Transport for London, the Metropolitan Police and City of London Police and others. It aims to reduce needless casualties by producing and promoting resources and publicity materials and providing a forum to discuss road safety issues.

Most local authorities have a road safety team or at least a road safety officer. They provide professional expertise to identify the causes of problems and to help to identify, develop and deliver solutions to these problems. They do so through educational programmes, skills training e.g. cyclist and young driver training, and publicity campaigns and programmes to inform, raise awareness and to encourage positive and discourage negative behaviours by road users. Local Highways Authorities also have road safety engineering teams who identify and implement road design and engineering solutions to road casualty problems in their areas. The road safety education and engineering teams should work together, as well as in co-operation with other agencies, such as the Police, Fire and Rescue Service and others.

Local Authority officers also share knowledge and experience with each other across the country, in many ways, including through Road Safety GB, the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) and the [Road Safety Knowledge Centre](#).

Many local authorities are introducing 20mph limit areas to reduce road risk, and encourage active travel, increase walking and cycling and improve air quality. They encourage and help drivers to keep to safe speeds as well as contribute towards healthier environments. 20mph limits and zones and the safe system approach can be embedded in strategic documents such as the local transport plan (LTP), joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) or road safety plan.

It is important that drivers understand and comply with the lower speed limits. They need to be supported by a co-ordinated strategy to make sure that road users know which roads have 20mph speed limits, why, when they apply and that they are legal limits with which drivers should comply.

In 2014, the Department for Transport (DfT) commissioned engineering consultancy firm Atkins to conduct an evaluation into signed-only 20mph limits without physical traffic calming measures based on 12 case study schemes in England and various comparable areas with a 30mph speed limit in place.

The study explored the enablers and barriers to implementing a successful 20mph speed limit scheme and found that early engagement and buy-in from relevant stakeholders, clear articulation of the scheme's rationale, objectives and outcomes and tailoring of schemes to the local circumstances are crucial to a scheme being accepted by the public. It had long been thought that most residents and drivers support 20mph schemes, and this study confirmed it.



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However, there was a concern amongst members of the public regarding a lack of enforcement of 20mph limits and a view that the chance of being caught exceeding the speed limit is very small.

Overall, the introduction of 20mph limits led to a small reduction in median speed (0.7mph in residential areas and 0.9mph in cities), but vehicles travelling at higher speeds before the change of speed limit reduced their speed more than those already travelling at lower speeds.

There is no evidence yet to conclude that in residential areas the introduction of 20mph limit had led to a significant change in casualty and collision rates, but more data may yet become available. However, there was a small but statistically significant rise in reported levels of cycling and walking. 5% of residents were walking more and 2% were cycling more since the introduction of 20mph limits.

Benefits of the schemes included an improvement in quality of life, community benefits and encouragement of healthier travel modes such as cycling and walking.

The findings of the study support the advice set out in the DfT's Setting Local Speed Limits. The guidance states that traffic authorities have the power to introduce 20mph limits (signed only) and 20mph zones (with physical traffic calming measures) on major streets where there are or could be significant numbers of journeys on foot and on bike and on residential streets.

However, consideration should be given to encouraging traffic authorities to work with relevant partners from the police, health, environment, urban planning, education, and the local community to deliver 20mph limits as part of an integrated approach to addressing transport, community, environment and health objectives.

RoSPA's guide to 20mph limits outlines the pros and cons of 20mph speed limits and zones, presents the research that has been conducted on the effectiveness of limits and zones and provides advice on when they may be most appropriate.

RoSPA's view is that to be effective 20mph speed limits need to be supported by street design that indicates that a lower speed is appropriate and that gives a clear message about the type of street they are driving on. They also need to be supported by measures, including publicity campaigns to promote 20mph limits and the importance of driving at safe speeds. These schemes also support, and benefit from, other activities, including:

### Road Safety Education Training and Publicity (ETP)

**Education** deals with ideas and concepts such as hazard perception and managing personal risk in the road environment, developing coping strategies and understanding our personal responsibilities to other road users. It is a gradual process, which takes place over a number of years.

**Training** is mostly concerned with creating or developing practical skills, such as pedestrian training, cycle training, post-test driver training and motorcycle training. Central government funding is available for some activities, such as, the [Bikeability](#) cyclist training course.

**Publicity** is designed to provide information, raise awareness, give advice on appropriate behaviour and reinforce positive attitudes.

All aim to influence the behaviour of road users to reduce the risk of being involved in a road crash.



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### Road Safety Engineering

A range of officers are involved in creating safer road environments, including road engineers, planners and urban designers in close consultation with local communities to create a safer road environment that:

<b>WARNS</b>	road users of any unexpected features or those requiring special attention
<b>INFORMS</b>	road users about what is expected
<b>GUIDES</b>	road users, making appropriate behaviour an easy choice
<b>CONTROLS</b>	road users as far as possible where conflicts may exist
<b>FORGIVES</b>	error or inappropriate behaviour.

Road safety engineers and urban designers use a wide range of measures to improve the safety of the road environment for all road users and to encourage increased use of streets as places that meet the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, and not just motor vehicles, as outlined in Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2.

These measures can range from road surface improvements, junction re-design, traffic calming schemes, 20mph limits and zones, improved walking or cycling facilities to major road improvements. Some local authorities have also introduced shared space. Local Transport Note 1/11<sup>xii</sup> defines shared space as 'A street or place designed to improve pedestrian movement and comfort by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles and enabling all users to share the space rather than follow the clearly defined rules implied by more conventional design'.

However, the Department for Transport have recommended that local authorities pause the development of shared space schemes while they review and update guidance. Local Transport Note 1/11: Shared Space has also been temporarily withdrawn<sup>xiii</sup> (July 2018).

Local safety schemes provide excellent value for money. They often have a greater impact on casualty reduction by undertaking area-wide or route-based safety schemes rather than focusing only on selected individual sites.

### Planning and Development Control

Planning authorities regulate and control new developments. This presents opportunities to anticipate and avoid potential road hazards, and to make walking, cycling and the road environment safer at the design stage. It ensures that new road safety risks are not created and can provide extra road safety measures to reduce the effects of increased traffic and changes in routes resulting from residential or commercial developments.

### Local Authorities Duty to Manage their Road Network

Local authorities also have a duty to manage and maintain their road networks under section 16 of the [Traffic Management Act 2004](#).



## 16 The network management duty

(1) It is the duty of a local traffic authority to manage their road network with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to their other obligations, policies and objectives, the following objectives—

(a) securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network;

and

(b) facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority.

(2) The action which the authority may take in performing that duty includes, in particular, any action which they consider will contribute to securing—

(a) the more efficient use of their road network; or

(b) the avoidance, elimination or reduction of road congestion or other disruption to the movement of traffic on their road network or a road network for which another authority is the traffic authority

### Parish Councils

Town and parish councils may also play an important role in road safety, for example by funding speed indication devices, traffic calming or community schemes. Many highway authorities have established forums to allow parish councils to request lower speed limits or improvements to road design. These represent important routes through which the wishes of local communities can be heard.

Town and parish councils represent the first tier of local government. While they do not have statutory highways responsibilities, they often act as a key route through which residents' views can be expressed. Improvements to transport are likely to be central elements in Neighbourhood Plans as they are developed at this level.



## Other Local Road Safety Stakeholders

### The Police

The police enforce road traffic laws, although some areas, such as parking enforcement, are the responsibility of local authorities. The police also co-operate with other agencies, such as the DVLA, DVSA, Highways England and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), to enforce specific traffic laws and investigate serious work-related road accidents.

Roads policing supports and complements road safety education and engineering, and is an essential part of road safety. It:

- Deters illegal, dangerous and careless behaviour on the road
- Identifies offenders
- Identifies the causes of crashes
- Helps to educate, and change the attitudes of, road users
- Prevents other forms of crime
- Identifies and removes dangerous vehicles.

Police and Crime Commissioners are accountable for how crime is tackled, and the delivery and performance of the Police service, in each Police force area in England and Wales. Police and Crime Panels scrutinise the work of each Commissioner and make sure information is publically available. The Panels include a Councillor from every Local Authority in the Police force area.

The Local Government Association (LGA) publish Guides for Councils, such as: "[Police and crime panels: A Guide for Councils](#)", "[Police and Crime Panels: Guidance on Role and Composition](#)" and "[Police and Crime Panels: Guidance on Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure](#)".

In London, Transport for London and the London Local Authorities have the power, under the [Traffic Management Act 2004](#) and the [London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2003](#), to take responsibility for the civil enforcement of a range of non-endorsable moving traffic offences.

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) sets roads policing as one of its key objectives in its [Delivery Plan 2016/17](#).





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### Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

Fire and Rescue Services have duties to respond to road traffic accidents under the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#).

<p><b>8 Road traffic accidents</b></p> <p>(1) A fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of —</p> <p>(a) rescuing people in the event of road traffic accidents in its area;</p> <p>(b) protecting people from serious harm, to the extent that it considers it reasonable to do so, in the event of road traffic accidents in its area.</p> <p>(2) In making provision under subsection (1) a fire and rescue authority must in particular—</p> <p>(a) secure the provision of the personnel, services and equipment necessary efficiently to meet all normal requirements;</p> <p>(b) secure the provision of training for personnel;</p> <p>(c) make arrangements for dealing with calls for help and for summoning personnel;</p> <p>(d) make arrangements for obtaining information needed for the purpose mentioned in subsection (1);</p> <p>(e) make arrangements for ensuring that reasonable steps are taken to prevent or limit damage to property resulting from action taken for the purpose mentioned in subsection (1).</p>
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In addition to their core role of providing an emergency response service to road traffic collisions and extricating victims who are trapped in vehicles, most fire and rescue services are also active in local multi-agency road safety partnerships in their area and many support or deliver road safety education programmes to help prevent accidents happening in the first place.

### Employers

Employers play an important role in assessing and managing the risks faced and created by their staff when using the road for work. HSE [Driving at Work](#) Guidelines state that *“health and safety law applies to on-the-road work activities and the risks should be effectively managed within a health and safety system.”*

A high proportion of road journeys are work-related (for example, delivering goods and driving to appointments), and it is estimated that between a quarter and a third of road crashes involve someone using the road for work. Action on work-related road risk could bring major benefits for local authorities and employers in their area.

Driving is the most dangerous work activity that most people do, and very few organisations operate without using motor vehicles. Millions of people use the road in order to do their job, and in doing so, they both face, and create, risks. UK law requires employers to treat driving, riding or otherwise using the road for work, the same as any other health and safety risk. They must conduct suitable risk assessments and take all "reasonably practicable measures" to manage the risks. There are a range of advice services and help for employers,



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including from the [Occupational Road Safety Alliance \(ORSA\)](#), [Driving for better Business \(DfBB\)](#) and the [Scottish Occupational Road Safety Alliance \(ScORSA\)](#)

Employers have duties under health and safety law to assess and manage their work-related road risks and some road traffic laws have 'cause or permit' offences which can apply to employers. Local authorities have many staff who drive, ride or walk on the road as part of their job, and your local authority should have policies and measures to manage its own work-related road safety risks. It is also well placed to help local employers to improve how they manage their occupational road risks. RoSPA has free resources to help employers: <https://www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/>.

## Health Service

Since 1 April 2013, local authorities have taken responsibility for public health. They receive a ring-fenced public health grant, and are able to measure their success against the [Public Health Outcomes Framework](#) which includes indicators on unintentional injury prevention.

Indicator 1.10 is 'Killed and seriously injured casualties on England's roads'. Some of the other indicators (for example, 'alcohol-related admissions to hospitals') are also very relevant to road safety.

Every year over 12,000 people die from accidents and over 700,000 are seriously injured in England. Over a lifetime a third of the population will have their lives diminished by an accident. Accidents are the leading cause of preventable death up to the age of 39 years and are the leading cause of preventable years of life lost (PrYLL) up to the age of 65 years.<sup>xiv</sup>

The [Delivering Accident Prevention at a Local Level](#) Handbook was produced by RoSPA with funding from the Department of Health, and in consultation with the Department, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence and others. The Handbook sets out the context and background to this key public health issue, including new research into the scale of the problem, and provides practical advice on prevention through case studies and evidence of best practice. It also supports the work to address these indicators as well as influencing many other areas of the public health agenda.

The Handbook is intended to demonstrate the importance of accidents to public health and to the wider health and social care system. It links to resources and tools, including NICE guidance.

Part 1 of the Handbook explains the context and background of accidents and Part 2 takes a more detailed look at accident prevention in practice, highlighting key areas of home, road, water and leisure safety, with key messages, and case studies for each area as well as practical advice on how to evaluate accident prevention programmes.

Public Health England have also launched the [Fingertips Tool](#), which enables road safety professionals to benchmark road accident indicators in their area against the rest of the country and demographically similar regions. Profiles within the tool have been designed to support Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JNSA) and commissioning to improve health and wellbeing, and reduce inequalities.

The [total value of prevention of road accidents in 2017](#) was estimated to be £35.3 billion (based on medical and non-medical accident-related costs, lost output of the injured person and human costs associated with pain, grief and suffering). Overall, unintentional injuries account for 13% of emergency hospital admissions and costs



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UK society an estimated £150 billion every year. It contributes to inequalities with children from poorer backgrounds being five times more likely to die as a result of an accident than children from better off families.

Injury prevention complements other areas of public health, including reducing pressure on social care budgets and introducing 20mph speed limits.

Every local authority needs to:

- Complete a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- Establish a Health and Wellbeing Strategy and investment plan
- Prepare to commission public health services.

### Others

A wide range of other agencies help to deliver road safety services, for example, national and local charities and associations (such as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and the other organisations who helped to produce this guide).

Driver and motorcyclist trainers play a significant role in helping people become safer drivers and riders and in providing refresher and advanced training.

Youth organisations, e.g., Scouts, Brownies and others, often provide road safety courses and achievement awards and many other groups help to improve road safety in their local communities.

### Other organisations involved in the delivery of road safety

[Highways England](#) is a government organisation that operates, maintains and improves England's motorways and major A roads, which represent 2% (4,300 miles) of roads in England, carrying a third of all traffic by mileage and two thirds of all heavy goods traffic. Highways England operates a uniformed Traffic Officer Service who patrol the network, supported by the National Traffic Information Service. Highways England's aims to ensure England's major roads are dependable, durable and safe, support economic growth, reduce delays, create jobs and help business

[Transport Scotland](#) manages Scottish roads, the [Welsh Assembly](#) manages Welsh roads and [Transport for London](#) manages London roads. Local roads are managed by the relevant local authority.

The [Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency \(DVSA\)](#) is an executive agency of the Department for Transport. It conducts theory tests and driving tests for people who want to drive cars, motorcycles, lorries, buses and coaches, and for MOT tests. It conducts driving tests for lorries and buses, carries out roadside checks on commercial drivers and vehicles, and monitors recalls of vehicles, parts and accessories. It also approves training courses for lorry, bus and coach drivers, and drink-drive rehabilitation courses and supports the Traffic Commissioners and the Northern Ireland transport regulator to license and monitor companies who operate lorries, buses and coaches, and register local bus services. It employs driving test examiners, vehicle standards assessors, vehicle examiners, traffic examiners, registration and licensing officers.

The [Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency \(DVLA\)](#) is an executive agency of the Department for Transport (DfT). It registers and licenses drivers and motorcyclists in Great Britain. It issues driving licences and vehicle registration certificates, records licence endorsements, disqualifications and medical conditions, takes enforcement action against vehicle tax evaders, registers and issues tachograph cards and helps the police and intelligence



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authorities deal with crime. It collects and enforces Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) and maintains the records of over 48 million drivers and over 40 million vehicles.

In 2018, the [Road Safety Management Capacity Review \(RSMCR\)](#) was published to understand the institutional delivery of road safety in Britain and to identify practical opportunities to strengthen joint working, innovation and efficiency nationally and locally.



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## Complementary Road Safety and Public Health Strategies

### Clean Air Strategies

The Government's [Clean Air Strategy](#) is increasingly encouraging local authorities to introduce clean air zones. These can support 20mph limits and vice versa.

### Active Travel

The public health benefits of increasing the amount of walking and cycling are well established and many local authorities have cycling and walking strategies and plans.

### Helping safer school travel

Local authorities provide School Crossing Patrols (SCPs) to help children walk to and from school safely. Road Safety Great Britain publish "[Guidelines for the Management of the School Crossing Patrol Service](#)" to help local authorities to provide their School Crossing Patrol Service in the most cost-effective manner possible.

### School Travel Plans

[Transport for London STARS](#), [Modeshift STARS](#) and [Kerbcraft](#), are good examples of schemes that support schools to teach road safety and encourage journeys by foot, bicycle or scooter, help to reduce congestion, increase physical activity and provide a safer and cleaner environment. [Transport for London's Youth Travel Ambassadors scheme](#), which is a peer-led behaviour change programme for secondary schools, also encourages walking and cycling.

### Promoting safer vehicles and vehicle technology

Many new vehicle technologies, such as intelligent speed adaptation (ISA) and autonomous braking systems, help drivers to drive more safely. Local authorities should monitor the types of vehicles that have higher crash risk, such as large goods vehicles, and are more likely to be involved, or to cause more serious injuries, in crashes, with pedestrians and cyclists.

An example is Transport for London's Direct Vision Standard for HGVs weighing over 12 tonnes, which is a star rating system based on how much the driver can see through the windows in relation to other road users. This should be in operation by October 2020. All zero star vehicles will be banned from operating in London unless they can prove they can comply with safe system requirements.

### Securing driver understanding of and compliance with speed limits

Safety cameras, especially average speed cameras, are an effective way of encouraging drivers to comply with the relevant speed limit. It's important to discuss enforcement measures with the local police force and the safety camera partnership if there is one in your area. It is important that local authorities discuss and agree with them how and where they will be able to undertake enforcement activities. The local Fire and Rescue Service may be able to support safe speed messages and campaigns.



## Getting the Most Out of Limited Road Safety Resources

Making effective use of road safety resources means ensuring that they are targeted at the council's most pressing road safety needs. These should be identified through analysis of the council's road casualty data and trends, demographic data, and analysis of local, national and international research. It should also include an assessment of the likely effectiveness of road safety measures and programmes in addressing the road safety problems. This will help to inform the design of planned road safety programmes.

### Road Safety Data

Good road casualty data is essential to ensure that limited resources are targeted at the right groups, areas and issues, in the right priority order and in the most effective way. It is essential to identify the problems that need to be tackled and the most appropriate ways of doing so, otherwise there is the very real risk of spending those resources ineffectively.

The police collect data from reported road accidents, which is held by the local authority or an organisation contracted to the local authority. Your Council's road safety department will constantly monitor its database of accidents and casualties on the authority's roads to understand what types are occurring, where, when and how, who is involved, and the likely causes. This enables them to identify priority problem areas, roads and/or groups (e.g., young drivers) and to plan road safety programmes to reduce the likelihood and severity of these accidents recurring. If no action is taken, they will continue to occur.

Road casualty records from around the country are compiled into a national report, [Reported Road Casualties Great Britain](#), published annually by the Department for Transport.

Accidents are rarely caused by a single contributory factor. For example, accidents involving children are linked to a wide range of factors including child development, the road environment, knowledge and behaviour of parents and other carers, overcrowding or homelessness, availability of safety equipment, levels of supervision, access to safe play spaces and the proximity of housing to busy roads. Poverty influences many of these factors.

Accidental injuries disproportionately affect children from low-income families. For example, children in the 10 per cent most deprived wards in England are four times more likely to be hit by a car than children in the 10 per cent least deprived wards<sup>xv</sup>. Road deaths, especially among pedestrians and cyclists, are particularly high among children of parents classified as never having worked or as long-term unemployed<sup>xvi</sup>. Children of parents who are long-term unemployed, or who have never worked, are 13 times more likely to die as a result of accidental injury and 37 times more likely to die from exposure to "smoke, fire or flames" than children of parents in higher managerial or professional occupations<sup>xvii</sup>.

The [Marmot Review](#) into health inequalities proposed an evidence-based strategy to address the social determinants of health. It asserted that universal action was needed to reduce the steepness of the social gradient of health inequalities (rather than focusing on just the bottom 10 per cent), but with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage. Aligning interventions with Marmot's recommendations would make an important contribution to reducing both accidents and health inequalities. [A study of road accident data](#) showed that there would be around 810 fewer serious or fatal injuries to pedestrians annually, and 100 fewer serious or fatal injuries to cyclists, if all children and young people had a risk of injury as low as those in the least deprived areas.



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### Sources of Research Evidence

Some local authorities produce or commission reviews of their casualty situation or of particular groups of road users.

Useful online tools that provide access to a wide range of road safety research and good practice include:

- [Road Safety Evaluation](#)
- [Reported Road Casualties Great Britain](#)
- [Road Safety Observatory](#)
- [Road Safety Knowledge Centre](#)
- [Safety Cube Project](#)
- [Transport Advice Portal](#)
- [Public Health England Fingertips Tool](#)
- [Marmot Review](#)

There is a considerable evidence of the effectiveness of accident prevention programmes, in injury reduction and saving costs to health care. Many interventions are low cost, and investment can be recouped if relatively few injuries are prevented.

### Evaluation

It is important to assess whether and how road safety programmes have achieved their aims (and if not, why not) so that future road safety programmes can be improved.

Publishing the results of evaluations also helps to share any lessons learned. Evaluation results become part of the evidence base for road safety.

Help and guidance on how to plan and conduct evaluations of road safety programmes is available at [www.roadsafetyevaluation.com](http://www.roadsafetyevaluation.com), which contains an interactive road safety evaluation toolkit called E-valu-it to help road safety practitioners plan, carry out and report the results of road safety evaluations.

### Partnership

A multi-agency, partnership approach allows resources to be shared and maximised and widens the pool of expertise available to all the partners. Councils are in an ideal position to act as hubs for partnerships which can improve the road safety of their constituents, and have considerable experience of working in this way.

### Road Safety Partnerships

Road Safety Partnerships operate across the country based around police force areas; many are called Casualty Reduction Partnerships.

Road safety often features in local authority community safety partnerships. Their main aim is to work together in a co-ordinated approach to reduce the number of casualties on the roads in the Partnership's area, and make the best use of their combined efforts and resources. Public health is an increasingly important partner for local authorities.



## What You Can Do As an Elected Councillor

As an elected councillor, you can help to ensure that your local authority has a comprehensive local road safety strategy that is effective in monitoring and reducing road accidents and casualties. In particular, you can:

### Influence Decision and Policy Making

Road safety affects everyone; communities are very sensitive to road safety issues such as speeding, heavy vehicles and so on. You will be faced with tough decisions about allocating finite resources between competing priorities, which may affect the resources available for road safety. Therefore, it is important that you are familiar with the value of road safety to your community and the links with other policies. You can inform and influence decisions through your cabinet or committee structure to ensure that road safety resources are used to the best effect, that opportunities to improve road safety are not missed and possible adverse effects are fully understood. If you sit on other Council committees you can raise road safety on their agendas. If you also sit on other bodies (such as a school governing body or a Health and Well-Being Board), this is also an opportunity to encourage joint working.

Many councils operate some form of area committee system, which is often a perfect arena for considering local road safety issues with other councillors and the public. Area committees can allow comparisons between schemes at a more local level in a transparent way.

### Ensure Road Safety Services are Evidenced-based and Evaluated

Road safety priorities and programmes should be based on casualty data and road safety research, and be evaluated, to ensure that the authority's limited resources are used in the most effective way in response to the most pressing road safety needs. This evidence supports and underpins why and how decisions are made and demonstrates that the approach is both objective and fair. Your responsibility is to check the data is accurate and to help present it to the public.

### Ensure Services are Co-ordinated

The interaction between human factors and road features has important implications for road use, and highlights the need for engineers, road safety officers, roads police officers and others to work closely together. These disciplines can only work effectively if they are linked, so that engineers understand how people use and interact with the road network, road signs and so on and so road safety officers and the police can report back to engineers to outline their experiences of how things work. Councillors are in a unique position to enhance this partnership and to make sure that officers are working closely with colleagues and other agencies.

### Champion Road Safety for All Road Users

Councillors often receive complaints from constituents before they are reflected in the casualty statistics. You can bring this information to the attention of officers for further investigation, and make constituents aware of the authority's response. A challenge is how to respond to constituents' calls for action to prevent what they believe is an "accident waiting to happen" at a particular location. With limited resources, it is even more important to target road safety at actual rather than perceived road safety problems. There is a real challenge when balancing requests from residents with the need to allocate resources across the whole of your council's area.

Local residents will campaign for action on their own street and will expect your support. You have to balance your role as local champion against that as a councillor with responsibility for your whole area. Road Safety Officers will be able to present the evidence, but if it shows that a perceived problem is not an actual road safety





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problem, this can be a difficult to convey. A perceived problem may be a barrier to people choosing to walk and cycle, and so may justify action as part of the council's overall sustainable travel strategy.

### Support Your Council's Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny is a key part of local authority structure and practice. Scrutiny Committees help to ensure the council's policies, plans, decisions and actions are made in the community's best interest. They give councillors, officers and members of the public an opportunity to consider new ideas and challenge existing policies. It can be a great way of challenging evidence and assumptions, as well as bringing partners together and looking at new ideas for reducing accidents and casualties on your roads.

Scrutiny Committees consider a council's road safety policies (for example, whether to adopt a 20mph limit policy or a clean air zone), so it is essential that the committee has reliable and comprehensive evidence on which to base its decisions. As a scrutineer, you will want to see the evidence for what your council is doing or plans to do. Consider speaking to other key partners as well as your own officers and cabinet members.

Many other scrutiny committees across the country have looked at various aspects of road safety. Check the [Centre for Public Scrutiny](#) or go to the library for copies of reports which provide useful information.

### Co-ordination with Other Policy Areas

Road safety services can complement, and be mutually supportive of, many of your council's other service areas, and vice versa. For example:

- Wider transport strategy
- Trading standards
- Environmental health
- Economic development
- Health
- Education
- Land use
- Community cohesion
- Social services
- Planning
- Regeneration
- Environment



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