

Roads Ahead

Police Federation Roads Policing Newsletter

Volume 6

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Welcome

Alan Jones - Police Federation Lead on Roads Policing

Welcome to sixth edition of Roads Ahead which focuses on some of the key issues discussed at our annual roads policing conference earlier this year. I'd like to thank everyone who attended - our speakers, sponsors, exhibitors and colleagues, at ACPO, the Superintendents' Association, and the Police Federation of England and Wales. Your contribution was invaluable and has set an exceptionally high standard for next year's event. I make a special thanks to DCC Adam Briggs for facilitating both days.

The theme this year was '2010 and beyond' and sessions were built around considerations for the future in a number of key areas within the roads policing portfolio.

Chief Constable Mick Giannasi, ACPO's roads policing lead and Paul McKeever, Chairman, Police Federation of England and Wales, opened the joint roads policing conference. Addressing an audience of approx 250 delegates, CC Giannasi said he was delighted to be associated with so many people who had such energy and commitment and this is exemplified through the effective delivery of roads policing. CC Giannasi spoke of the many achievements over the last twelve months and of the significant progress made in reducing criminal activity on the roads. At a time where budgets are being challenged, he



stressed that we must continue the momentum on the positive work being done.

Paul McKeever was equally supportive in his comments about the superb work roads policing officers do. He acknowledged the risks officers take when responding to incidents and the need for the law to continue taking into account the specialist skills of officers who provide this essential service. All too often, this hugely important role is not given the recognition it deserves. The value of effective roads policing cannot be underestimated. To put it into perspective, on average, seven people are killed per day on Britain's roads. There is no room for complacency.

Post election politics will unquestionably put pressure on frontline operations. Whatever happens, we must ensure that policing the roads receives the priority it warrants in order to deliver a high quality public service.

ROADS POLICING CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Driving Standards in Relation to Medical Fitness

A number of traffic officers had commented that driving standards relating to aspects of medical fitness would be a very interesting area for discussion. Conference heard from a number of different speakers on the issues.

Edmund King, President of the AA spoke about their recent research through their populous pole, which indicated the following:

AA Populous Panel

- Do you know anyone who has driven when suffering from a medical condition when they knew they should not have driven?

Yes 19% No 75% Don't know 5%

Populous interviewed 20,109 AA members online between 12 -15 January 2010

- Have you ever driven when suffering from a medical condition when you knew you should not have driven?

Yes 2% (males 3% females 2%) No 97% Don't know 1%

In terms of professional medical advice, specifically whether to drive or not, Mr King referred to a study undertaken by the University of Warwick. The study, considered the attitudes of health professionals to giving advice on fitness to drive (DfT road safety report no. 91, 13 January 2010).

The report highlights problems linked to:

- Poor training in medical fitness to drive for new doctors
- Poor knowledge of application of standards to specific conditions
- Uncertainty as to responsibility for advice

Only 1/3 of patients got necessary driving advice without asking. 3/4 of patients were not advised correctly regarding the DVLA rules for

their medical condition.

The report also highlighted the need for better information for both GPs and drivers.

Mr King said that there are DVLA rules on certain conditions, which may, when taken in isolation, not be sufficient to bar a driver from driving. However, there are no rules in place on how to handle a driver with combinations of conditions.



Edmund King
President, AA

Driver behaviour

Dr Lisa Dorn, a well known specialist in driver behavioural research, from Cranfield University, discussed the physiological links to brain development, especially in younger drivers, explaining why some, particularly male drivers, have a limited capacity to understand hazard perception without first experiencing or being exposed to the risks. She said a near miss experience would be sufficient to trigger an emotional reaction to the dangers, but often these near miss experiences go beyond that and can result in tragedy.



Dr Lisa Dorn
Cranfield University

Roadside eyesight tests

Sergeant Ivan Stafford of Leicestershire's collision investigation team questioned the current system of roadside eyesight testing, saying that we now need a more scientific approach. He suggested introducing a vision defect scheme,



Sergeant Ivan Stafford

whereby officers could refer a driver to an optician when there is sufficient reason to believe their eyesight was questionable.

OSA

Dr David Dawson, consultant anaesthetist, at Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, spoke about a condition known as obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA). Putting things into context, he indicated that a middle aged obese person, with hypertension, and who snores, is likely to be a sufferer of OSA. He told conference that in 2008, 11.4% of males and 4.7% of females would fit this category. The worry is that this trend is rising annually.

So what are the symptoms? Snoring can indicate sleep fragmentation, which can lead to excessive daytime sleepiness, resulting in

impaired concentration, poor performance and increased sickness, which collectively amounts to an increased accident risk.

There is a common medical condition that causes sufferers to fall asleep at the wheel. Thin people get it as well. Not all sleepy drivers are rogues. Individuals facing criminal charges for falling asleep at the wheel should be formally assessed for OSA.



Dr David Dawson
Bradford Teaching
Hospitals NHS
Foundation Trust

Uninsured Driving

Title sponsor of this year’s conference were the Motor Insurers Bureau (MIB), and their Chief Executive, Ashton West, spoke of the battle to win against uninsured driving. Although there is still significant cause for concern, he said, recent statistics are encouraging.



Ashton West
Chief Executive, MIB

- Uninsured driving represents a £500 million cost to the UK
- Uninsured / untraced drivers injure 23,000 and kill 160 every year
- 4% of vehicles on UK roads are not insured

MIB research identified:

- One in ten 18 to 24 year olds are not aware you need insurance to drive legally in the UK
- Three in five drivers think they will get caught if they drive without insurance
- Only one in fourteen drivers are aware of all the consequences of being caught driving without insurance

Crucial to keeping on top of the problems is:

- Underpinning police support and setting priorities by engaging police authorities and local councils
- Introduction of the Continuous Insurance Enforcement scheme which is fully supported by the industry
- Maintaining awareness through MIB’s ‘Stay Insured’ campaign, designed to target drivers who may be wavering when it comes to renewing their insurance policies due to increased financial pressures

Uninsured vehicles seized:

2005:	45,000
2006:	78,000
2007:	150,000
2008:	185,000
2009:	180,000

Drug Testing

Conference heard from Chief Supt Jerry Moore, DfT Police Liaison Officer, who spoke in relation to progress and developments linked to drug testing. He acknowledged the present difficulties officers experience in road side testing and explained how a screening device would benefit the procedure. There was no clear timeline given as to when this could possibly be achieved, with Jerry indicating a number of technical and assessment trials that have to be conducted. It seems the first obstacle to overcome is the nature of what specification would be suitable to meet the screening device capabilities. After all the trial work, it would then require

Home Office approval, so although work is in progress, there are no quick solutions.

Although the Federation understands the mechanics involved in developing a roadside testing device, we think this is taking more time to develop than necessary and we urge a speedier approach to implementing a solution.



Chief Superintendent
Jerry Moore

Roadside Field Impairment Testing

Speaking from a practical and operational perspective, PC Jon Lansley from Hampshire roads policing drug unit, told conference about the rather complex nature of roadside drug testing which requires a level of expertise and experience that is getting difficult to maintain in relation to the skills required to competently carry out a roadside field impairment test. Although the test is relatively easy to conduct, officers require a good deal of confidence, by means of training, experience and exposure to regular testing. The practitioner training requirements are necessary but difficult to achieve because of

other duty demands. There had been a 13% result in 2009 which provided sufficient evidence for arrest under drug driving legislation. PC Lansley did add that it would be useful to improve the awareness of the CPS and force medical officers in order to improve the success rate of prosecutions.



PC Jon Lansley

Dealing with Trauma

PC Jeff Goodwright, who is on secondment to the NPIA, dealing with the family liaison portfolio, gave conference an update on the issues being faced by forces in maintaining a strong relationship between victims and the police. Unfortunately there is still too much disparity between forces in the deployment and use of Family Liaison Officers. PC Goodwright questioned whether forces are taking officer welfare seriously enough in terms of dealing with the consequences of

traumatic incidents. He called for a more robust process of managing the FLO role, with consistent procedures, which together with a wider acknowledgement of this significant role would enhance overall service delivery.



PC Jeff Goodwright

Making Progress

Chief Inspector Mick Hunter, area commander for the Yorkshire and Humberside strategic roads policing team gave conference a summary of the excellent progress made since the unit was established two years ago. He spoke of their focus on reducing criminal activity within the region's roads network and highlighted the amount of planning and preparation involved in operations that are making a significant impact on deterring

criminals' use of the roads. The team are making a significant difference within communities, facilitated by the crucial day-to-day support from the regional ACPO ranks.



Chief Inspector
Mick Hunter

Moving in the Right Direction

Alan Campbell, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, spoke of the close collaboration between the Home Office and the Department for Transport on road safety and future strategy. A major focus is to improve cross-border enforcement and road safety legislation.

Mr Campbell emphasised the value of effective roads policing and rightly said that the contribution of those that police the roads cannot be underestimated.

Priorities remain to reduce and detect crime, enforce law and increase safety. The good news was that we met the goals for 2010 early. This is something to be proud of as it goes a long way to maintain public confidence and reassurance.

During conference, figures were released on public confidence – these were reassuring and we are definitely heading in the right direction.

There are savings through efficiency and

mention was made of the recent policing white paper which proposed a national standard for police vehicles. Mr Campbell also spoke in encouraging terms regarding the single platform solution to amalgamate on-board vehicle technology.

He greatly favours mutually supportive working, highlighting that Highways Agency officers free up approximately 800 police officers, allowing them to focus on other policing demands.

In short, Mr Campbell spoke of the necessity to have a strong roads policing presence, not least to enhance public confidence and assurance that the roads are being policed effectively.



Alan Campbell, MP

Roads Policing at Annual Conference 2010
Tregonwell Hall, BIC, Bournemouth
19th May 2010, 5.15pm

Striving for the Same Goal

Paul Clark, MP, Road Safety Minister, addressed conference on Thursday afternoon, during which he recognised our event as being an established and pivotal part of the road safety calendar. It was encouraging to hear Mr Clark give appreciation for the work that we do and that we are all striving for the same goal, including those in the wider roads policing community.

Despite the fact that there are more than six million vehicles on the road since 1997, Britain's roads are amongst the safest in the world. However, there are still on average seven deaths per day on Britain's roads and there is no room for complacency.

In order to address this, the government launched a consultation last year which laid out a range of initiatives. The primary goal, to reduce deaths and serious injuries by one third; and to reduce road deaths and serious injuries to children and young people by at least half by 2020.

In order for this to be achievable, we must target those that contribute most to the toll of casualties. We need to continue getting better at enforcing the rules of the road, better at changing driver behaviour and better at preventing collisions. Developments in technology will help achieve this.

Mr Clark said the biggest challenge is to target irresponsible motorists - those who ignore the alcohol limit, speed limits and those who drug-drive.

A second phase of the recent THINK!

Campaign is planned, in collaboration with Boots, which will focus on the effects of prescription drugs.

Mr Clark talked of introducing a new offence to tackle drug driving, in order to clamp down on those driving with an illicit substance in the body that is proven to impair physical response.

In order for such proposals to be practical, extensive consultation is ongoing with forces throughout the UK.



Paul Clark, MP

North Review

A new road safety strategy cannot be finalised until a thorough review of drink and drug driving laws has been completed. Independent expert, Sir Peter North, has been commissioned to do this, the results of which will be presented this year.

Once a full consultation has taken place on Sir Peter's findings, a final ten-year road safety strategy will be published.

We need to continue the good work we do as a team and step up efforts to target the minority. The task of Mr Clark's department, he said, is to equip us with the right tools and legislation to continue to do the job effectively.

Helping our Heroes

Delegates, sponsors and exhibitors all gave generously to the raffle, which was in aid of Help for Heroes. We managed to raise £1,495 for this very worthwhile charity. A cheque was presented by Alan Jones to James Burns of the charity at Leatherhead. Well done and thanks to everybody who contributed.



James Burns, Alan Jones and Federation Chairman, Paul McKeever.

Inaugural Meeting

The first meeting of the ACPO lead police vehicle procurement group was held on the 4th March at Ryton, chaired by ACC Nick Croft (South Wales). This meeting brought together key personnel who can influence and manage a national standard vehicle procurement programme to ensure future consistency to all police vehicles and equipment.

This is the culmination of five years of work by the Federation to address the many variations that are understandably creating problems in terms of operational requirements.

It is anticipated that there will have been vehicle needs assessments undertaken throughout forces in England and Wales by

the end of 2010. This will address various requirements, such as PSU and cell vans to beat, traffic and firearms vehicles. We can then hopefully quickly progress to working with vehicle manufacturers to produce vehicles which are fit for purpose.



Drink and Drug Driving Campaign ... Update

At conference, Chief Constable Giannasi revealed the results of the 2009 drink and drug driving campaign, which although showed a marked variation in test rates between forces, there was an impressive total of 223,423 tests carried out.

For example, Inspector Lee Ford reported a significant test rate record in Gwent, as a result of a very encouraging level of public support. Gwent Police took the opportunity to encourage positive public engagement by introducing a number of highly visible, voluntary check points. Information was distributed on the campaign and the check points, together with the Policing Pledge. The result was more tests and less testing positive.

The public in Gwent were incredibly supportive of the volume testing – such positive action resulted in safer roads over the period.



What are your thoughts and views?
email: roadspolicing@polfed.org

Roads Policing Conference 2010



Regional Traffic Representatives – please use them!!

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Our sincere thanks go to our designated event photographer, Paul Taylor, Roads Policing Staff Officer, South Yorkshire.