

The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) representation to the road policing: call for evidence.



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CIHT is a charity, learned society and membership body with over 14,000 members spread across 12 UK regions and four international groups. We represent and qualify professionals who plan, design, build, manage and operate transport and infrastructure networks. Our vision is for world-class transportation infrastructure and services. Our values are to be Professional, Inclusive, Collaborative and Progressive.

Road Policing: call for evidence

Road safety is of paramount concern to the highways and transportation sector and every user of UK road network. Some 1,800 people die on UK roads each year and a further 25,000+ people are seriously injured. Many of these casualties result from a failure to comply with traffic laws – knowingly or otherwise¹. Therefore, roads policing and increasing traffic law compliance is a powerful tool increasing road safety on UK roads.

CIHT calls for the government to develop a long-term strategy for significantly reducing the number of people killed and injured on our roads. This will require re-introducing casualty reduction targets to drive policy and behaviour change. As more emphasis is placed on sharing road space there is a need to focus how this can be achieved more safely. The contributions that DVSA and DVLA make in enforcement and road safety, especially in terms of driver qualifications (particularly HGV and PSV drivers) and vehicle safety, are often forgotten about. CIHT highlights the importance of these bodies in ensuring a safe environment for road users.

- 1) Why do you think road casualties have remained fairly constant?**
- 1) What does the evidence suggest has the most impact on reducing deaths on the road?**
- 2) What evidence led initiatives demonstrate what could be done to help reduce road traffic casualties?**

The PACTS report ‘Roads policing and its contribution to road safety’² (June 2020) investigates links between roads policing, compliance with traffic laws and road casualties; it summarises the policy and responsibility framework for policing in the UK and identifies trends in enforcement, compliance and casualties relating to the “fatal four” offences (speeding, drink and drug driving, non-wearing of seat belts, and mobile phone use). It summarises the evidence on the effectiveness of general and specific enforcement techniques; and it identifies opportunities to improve roads policing and road safety.

¹ <https://www.pacts.org.uk/2020/06/roads-policing-and-its-contribution-to-road-safety-report-from-pacts/>

² <https://www.pacts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Roads-Policing-Report-FinalV1-merged-1.pdf>

CIHT supports the following summarised recommendations made in the PACTS report:

1. Roads policing should be included in the Strategic Policing Requirement.
2. Police and Crime Commissioners should prioritise roads policing and road safety within Police and Crime Plans.
3. The number of roads policing officers should be increased.
4. NPCC roads policing strategy should be revised.
5. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services should include roads policing in its annual assessment.
6. Collaboration and partnerships should be widened. Greater intelligence sharing between police forces and other agencies (e.g. DVLA, Highways England, Motor Insurance Bureau) is needed to encourage focused action.
7. Intelligence should be enhanced and more widely shared.
8. Greater use should be made of roadside and between vehicle technology.
9. The support and participation of the public should be encouraged.
10. Safe system indicators should be used to monitor road safety.
11. Research and evaluation should be enhanced.

3) Can you provide examples or empirical evidence demonstrating a relationship between road traffic law enforcement and compliance with road traffic law?

Education of police officers in recording collision information and how this information is utilised is of high importance as there is low level of understanding of what the data is used for and therefore the quality of the information suffers. It is vital that information on fatal and life changing injury incidents is captured – and that this information is shared in an investigation board³. The findings can then be collated and trends, patterns and scope for mitigation identified. The Transport Safety Commission investigation into road injury in the UK identified much good practice but poor co-ordination and sharing of findings⁴.

Less policing does not always mean more offending, as it's the perceived chance of detection that underpins deterrence. The public are not fully aware of the number of roads policing personnel and what tasks they are carrying out, as roads policing personnel are not visible on the highway network. However, this does not mean that road policing is not an effective method since highly publicised detection can have the deterrent effect. Roads policing duties that are not very visible probably has little deterrent effect but making the same level of effort highly visible can have a benefit.

4) Can you provide any examples or empirical evidence identifying a causal relationship between enforcement and road collision casualty numbers?

³ <https://www.racfoundation.org/collaborations/road-collision-investigation-project>

⁴ <https://www.pacts.org.uk/transport-safety-commission/>

- 5) **Can you provide any evidence or examples that road traffic enforcement can disrupt or detect other (non-motoring) criminality?**
- 6) **What else alongside enforcement (such as education or examples of use of technology and signage) has been evidenced to increase compliance?**

CIHT calls for increased road safety campaigns at a national level to ensure consistent messaging is shared nationwide. Enforcement alone is not always enough to shift behaviour change. RAC research showed that the change in penalties for illegal phone use while driving has, on its own, not shifted behaviour as much as expected⁵. This shows that enforcement must be supported by education campaigns.

- 7) **How have improvements in design and technology of vehicles (such as collision avoidance systems) impacted upon road safety?**
- 8) **In respect of commercial vehicles can you provide any evidence or examples that current levels of enforcement by police and/or DVSA and the sanctions that follow are an effective deterrent to encourage compliance?**
- 9) **If not, can you provide any evidence or examples of how enforcement or sanctions could be changed to achieve improved compliance?**
- 10) **Can you provide evidence or examples of where enforcement of road traffic law can benefit congestion management and air quality?**

CIHT fully supports enforcement of road traffic law to improve air quality. Motor vehicle transport is the main contributor of NO_x in the UK and is also a significant source of airborne particulate matter at the roadside.

Long-term exposure to air pollution can lead to worsening asthma, other respiratory diseases, impaired lung function, heart disease: the ultimate effect of air pollution on public health is to bring about premature death.

In the UK alone, long-term exposure to man-made air pollution has an annual effect equivalent to between 28,000 and 40,000 deaths (the number of people killed in road fatalities was 1,792 people in 2017). According to the World Health Organisation the estimated annual death toll is 7 million people globally. The Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health estimate the cost of air pollution to the UK to be more than £20bn a year.

Highways England are currently trialling 60mph speed limits on short sections of our network⁶ where action needs to be taken to reduce emissions and improve air quality. It is expected there will be a reduction in NO₂ when traffic

⁵ <https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/news/motoring-news/dangerous-phone-use-at-the-wheel/>

⁶ <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/our-work/air-quality/air-quality-speed-limit-trials/>

speed is reduced from 70 to 60mph in these locations. The 60mph speed limits will be clearly displayed on roadside signs. The speed limits will be operational 24 hours a day. Emissions are measured on annual mean figures and so the restrictions will be in place around the clock in order to improve air quality and bring down emissions levels at these locations.

Enforcement is a matter for the police but any speed limit that is displayed in a red roundel are enforceable as they are a legal limit and the onus is on drivers to comply.

11) Is there evidence to show how prosecutions contribute to road safety?

12) Can you provide evidence or examples (in particular the use of technology) of what could be done better enable and equip those charged with enforcing traffic laws?

13) Can you provide evidence of existing approaches to enforcement or available technologies that could inform the future shape of road traffic enforcement by police and other agencies?