



THE CHARTERED
INSTITUTION OF HIGHWAYS
& TRANSPORTATION

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

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Dear Enda

Written response by the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation – Northern Ireland Branch to the Consultation on Draft Regulations for Signs and Warning Lights on School Buses

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) is a learned society concerned specifically with the planning, design, construction, maintenance and operation of land-based transport systems and infrastructure. It serves the transport profession for the benefit of society and its members.

With over 12,000 members, working across a wide range of disciplines, CIHT aims to promote the exchange of knowledge, improve policy formulation, stimulate debate on transportation issues, recognise individual competence and encourage best practice in the industry.

2.0 DRAFT REGULATIONS FOR SIGNS AND WARNING LIGHTS ON SCHOOL BUSES CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

CIHT (NI Branch) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the consultation and hopes that our comments will be of assistance.

Northern Ireland is a diverse region comprised of urban and rural communities many of which depend on a range of public and community transport services. Without these services, many individual communities would not be viable. Transport is an essential element contributing to education activity. Sustainable and safe transport is a desirable aim and policy frameworks for all transport provision should have these as key tenets. The development of a safe network of schools transport services can contribute to a reduction in travel by private car user.

With current signing of buses it is not always clear to the general motorist when these are providing a service for school children and therefore motorists may not make sufficient allowance for the unpredictable behaviour that may occur. We welcome the proposal that clear signing with warning lights is to be provided and that these are to be illuminated when the bus is in use on school services. The illumination of the flashing warning lights when a bus is stopped and children are boarding or leaving the bus, and for a period thereafter, is important. This must be a clear element of driver training and any subsequent monitoring and enforcement. Implementation of these proposals is to be welcomed.

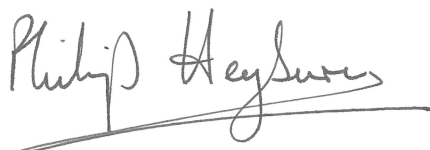
The proposed advertising campaign targeting motorists will be an important element of this safety initiative. It must reach as many drivers as possible. We would suggest that a focus on radio during peak travel times when school bus services are operating could raise awareness in that section of the motoring public who will most encounter school bus traffic.

We would also support an awareness campaign among school children. It must be made clear that the additional warning signs and lights are not to be seen as providing opportunity to cross roads behind or in front of the stationary bus.

We have concern at this time of economic restraint that the transport industry is being required to invest additional capital (around £4.5m) in the bus fleet. However we welcome the overall initiative as one which should contribute to improved road safety in Northern Ireland.

I trust you find these comments useful.

Yours sincerely



PP /
P A ROBINSON
Immediate Past Chairman
CIHT – Northern Ireland Branch