Road Safety Statement 2019: A Lifetime of Road Safety

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The Department for Transport has published an update to its 2015 Road Safety Statement; with increased penalties for failing to wear a seatbelt being one of seventy-four measures being considered to improve road safety for people at every stage of life, from birth to old age.

Under the new plans, failure to wear a seatbelt could result in penalty points as well as fines, to reduce the number of deaths on UK roads.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said, "The UK has some of the safest roads in the world, but we are not complacent and continue to look at how we can make them safer.

"Today's action plan is a key milestone in our road safety work and sets out the important steps we are taking to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads.

"The Department for Transport is also considering the report from the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) on seatbelt use. This report analyses which drivers and passengers are least likely to wear seatbelts, what prompts their behaviour and which interventions would be best to reduce the number of casualties."

The action plan builds on a number of projects in the Road Safety Statement, published in 2015, which saw increased enforcement for drug driving, and doubling penalties for using a handheld mobile phone at the wheel.

The Statement, which can be read here, brings a particular focus on the needs of four vulnerable road user groups:

- **young road users**
- **rural road users**
- **motorcyclists**
- **older road users**

Right Place. Right Time. Right Reason.

GoSafe recently announced details of its new deployment strategy. GoSafe places cameras where road users have been killed or injured, where excessive speeds have been recorded, for special operations such as enforcing not wearing a seatbelt or using a mobile phone, or at sites of community concern.

GoSafe will be visible anywhere, at anytime and for the right reason and sites will be selected according to collision risk and in order to maximise the compliance with the speed limit across the whole of Wales.

This deployment strategy could mean that one enforcement site is present on a route to enforce speed, while a second enforcement site nearby focuses on mobile phone use.

Vans are highly liveried to be visible and cameras are not hidden to catch drivers out or placed where they will record the most speeding offences. GoSafe's deployment strategy aims to make motorists think about their manner of driving and to drive safely and legally along their entire route.

Teresa Ciano, GoSafe Partnership Manager said, “There is a perception among some motorists that cameras cannot enforce without the presence of speed camera sign. This is untrue and we encourage all motorists to assume that where they see a speed limit sign or in an area with street lighting, there could also be an enforcement camera. Where we enforce, there is greater compliance with the speed limit which we would like to see across the road network as a whole, not just at a small number of locations."

“We know that where there are mobile cameras present motorists comply with the speed limits and with our cameras being present on only 2% of the road network of Wales we strongly believe that our cameras should be able to extend their effectiveness across a larger section of the road network.

There is never a need or an excuse for speeding and this new strategy is aimed at improving the compliance of the speed limits by motorists across the roads of Wales for the safety of all.”

More information can be found at www.gosafe.org.uk

Driver Distraction and Hands-free Mobile Phones

Among the presenters at this year's Road Safety Wales conference, held in Llandrindod Wells on 10th July, were Dr Helen Wells of Keele University and Dr Gemma Briggs of the Open University, both champions for reducing the use of hand held and hands-free mobile phones while driving.

The *Mobile:Engaged* project, funded by Road Safety Support and lead by Dr Wells, a specialist criminological researcher in the area of roads policing, has recently published a 160 page 'compendium' of suggestions, ideas and case studies for designing, implementing and evaluating projects that are aimed at preventing mobile phone use by drivers.

The compendium can be accessed for free here.

An explanation, by Dr Briggs of the driver distraction caused by hands-free mobile phones, can be viewed here.

In a new report published by the Transport Committee a group of MPs are calling for an overhaul of mobile phone laws along with stricter enforcement.

Top Driving Test Faults in the First Year of the New Driving Test

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has revealed top driving test faults made in the first year of the new test. Failing to look properly at junctions and not using mirrors effectively are the top reasons people failed following changes made to the driving test in 2017.

As a result the DVSA is encouraging learner drivers to spend more time practising their driving skills and techniques in these areas, using a variety of different roads, such as country roads and dual carriageways.

The DVSA also wants learners to spend more time practising driving in different road conditions, such as driving in rain and driving in the dark to better prepare them for a lifetime of safe driving.

Insufficient observation at junctions and not using mirrors effectively when changing direction accounted for 368,047 test failures in 12 months. Further advice from the DVSA can be found here.

Motorcycles in Bus Lanes Trial for the Vale

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is to trial allowing motorcycles to use bus lanes along two routes in the county. Under the scheme, they would be able to travel within the lanes for several hundred metres on Port Road, between Barry and Culverhouse Cross, and a section of Cardiff Road, from Eastbrook in Dinas Powys to the Merrie Harrier junction.

The move comes after representations from motorcyclists and motorcycling groups including the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) and the successful introduction of similar measures in other parts of the country. It is designed to improve safety for motorcyclists and can also help combat congestion.

Initially, mopeds and motorcycles would be able to use the selected bus lanes on a trial basis for 12 months, during which time the public will be able to express their views on the matter. If the pilot is positive, the policy would be made permanent and could be extended to future bus lanes.

Councillor Neil Moore, Leader of the Vale of Glamorgan Council said: "There is significant evidence to support the benefits of allowing motorbikes and mopeds to use bus lanes from similar experiments in other parts of the country.

"Not only does such a move improve safety for motorcyclists, it can also raise air quality. I'm sure this venture will be a success and may even reduce congestion. This will also add a degree of consistency through Welsh Unitary Council areas."

Helping Learner Drivers Improve Motorcyclist Awareness

The DVSA has launched thought-provoking and realistic computer-generated (CGI) videos to encourage learner drivers to be more aware of motorcyclists.

The videos will become part of DVSA's official learning materials and will help to improve the safety of motorcyclists, by encouraging learner drivers to be more observant of them when driving.

Ria Brisland, a road safety campaigner and keen biker, whose 19-year-old son, Nick, died in 2015 after being involved in a collision with a car while riding his motorcycle, has played a key role in the development of the resources. Ria said, "Getting everyone to be aware of their fellow road users at all times is essential if we are to prevent collisions and the devastating consequences they can have on families.

"These new clips are thought-provoking and will make a difference to the way people look for bikers. They may prove the difference between life and death."

Mark Winn, DVSA's Chief Driving Examiner, added, "DVSA's priority is to help everyone through a lifetime of safe driving. These important new clips, created with Ria, will aid driver and rider training and protect vulnerable motorcyclists. We'll be using them in our educational products and on social media to help drivers keep a lookout for motorcyclists."
Watch an example video.