

The Liaison Group on Road Accident Statistics

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7th June 2010

in Conference Room 7, Victoria Quay

1.1 Attendees

Police Forces and Councils:

Andrea Hayes (Grampian Police)
Chief Inspector Alexander Bowman (Tayside Police)
Margaret Laing (Tayside Police)
Geoffrey Balshaw (Fife Police)
Steven Sellars (Fife Council)
Inspector Simon Bradshaw (Lothian & Borders Police)
Alan Murphy (Lothian & Borders Police)
Gary Patton (Edinburgh City Council)
Valerie Arbuckle (Strathclyde Police)#
Christopher Cooper (Strathclyde Police)
Inspector Neil Hewitson (Dumfries & Galloway Police)

Users of the data:

Andy Duff (Moray Council; rep. COSLA and Soc. of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland)
Andrew Fraser (Senior Accident Investigation Officer, Falkirk council)
Hugh Logan (Highland Council)
Kathleen Braidwood (ROSPA)
Paul Middleton (WDM)
George Henry (Transport Scotland)

Scottish Government (SG):

Carol Ann Munn, Transport Statistician (Chairman)
Andrew Knight, Transport Statistics branch (Secretary)
Charlie Lewis, Transport Statistics branch
Fran Warren, Social Research
Glen Deakin, Scottish Safety Camera Programme
Michelle Campbell, Road Safety Policy)
Michael McDonnell, Road Safety Scotland

Department for Transport:

Pat Kilbey, Road Accident Statistician

1.2 Apologies for Absence :

Steven Dick (Grampian Police)
Gary Spark (Grampian Police representing ACPOS)
Andrew Mather (Central Scotland Police)
John Santarossa (Strathclyde Police)
Leslie Harrold (Grampian Police representing IRSO)
Dr Emma Fossey (HM Inspectorate of Constabulary)
Jill Mulholland (SG Road Safety Policy)
Graeme Paterson (WDM - represented by Paul Middleton)

(NB: * = attended only part of meeting; # = accompanying a member)

Introduction & previous minutes

1.3 **Carol Ann Munn** welcomed everyone to the meeting. She then asked all delegates to introduce themselves and explain their role.

1.4 The Group agreed the minutes of the previous meeting, as distributed on 23 April 2009 and that the action points from that meeting had been resolved.

2. GB review of "STATS 19" collection

2.1 **Pat Kilbey** explained that the review had been challenging especially when taken together with the UK Statistics Authority assessment. The DfT has received 130 responses, half from local government and a quarter from police (including 2 aggregate responses from Scottish police forces) and 8 Scottish councils. The objective had been to make minimal changes with no increase in the overall burden for data suppliers. The Review Working Group had met at the end of 2009 and agreed the proposals. It was hoped that the full report would be available at the end of June and this would provide further detail of the recommendations made in February's summary report.

www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/

2.2 There were 4 new variables which were associated with the CRASH system and as Scotland had no immediate plans to implement the system, these would directly impact on England and Wales. There were also 3 new STATS 19 variables. There would be no immediate changes to the severity classification as research into this was still ongoing. The CRASH system will have a drop down list of severity injury codes and there may be scope to refine this in future years. There will be a rolling implementation program and data suppliers can start to submit new data any time from 1 January 2011. All data suppliers must have changed their system to accommodate the changes by 1 January 2013.

Discussion

2.3 **Chris Cooper** asked whether there would be a single date for all Scottish police forces to make the changes. **Carol Ann Munn** said that the SG was keen to minimise the burden on police forces and the SG would arrange for their system to be updated to enable data with the review changes to be tested. The SG could then accept data in both formats from January 2011. She then asked members if they'd prefer a set date for implementation across Scotland.

2.4 **Chief Inspector Bowman** suggested that a co-ordinated proposal for the implementation date be fed into the ACPOS platform project as the absence of the rollout of the CRASH system in Scotland would mean that each police force change their systems individually. A Scottish wide centrally co-ordinated date would be a sensible approach. **Andrea Hayes** said that the ACPOS Common Performance Management Platform system had not been built yet and that each force would have to be contacted to check their road accident data requirements. **Valerie Arbuckle** said that the information management system would possibly be available by 2015, however this would miss the DfT deadline of 2013.

2.5 **Alan Murphy** mentioned that the first phase of the platform project was due in 2012 (although this would not cover road casualties). He would submit a request to the SPSA, which is due to meet this week, for a common date for implementation of the changes to individual police force systems.. **Andy Duff** asked that LGRAS be kept informed of developments and Carol Ann Munn agreed to let members know the outcome.

2.6 **Carol Ann Munn** then asked members if there was any problem in providing the data for the CRASH variables. **Chris Cooper** explained that his force did not hold the clear language description in digital format. **Inspector Bradshaw** said that the first three variables were already sent to the local authorities. **Carol Ann Munn** said that an e-mail would be sent out to forces to find out what was collected. **Pat Kilbey** said that the variables were just for the CRASH system and didn't necessarily need to be supplied to the DfT. **Paul Middleton** asked if it would be possible for data suppliers to provide plain text descriptions for the accidents. **Inspector Bradshaw** reiterated that his force already supply this data to the LAs. **Paul Middleton** said that the data were not passed to WDM. **Chief Inspector Bowman** said that Tayside also collect the data and suggested that all that was needed was for WDM to be copied into the e-mail that was sent. **Carol Ann Munn** outlined that (a longer term plan was that) the SG system could be changed to accept clear language description which could then be passed on.

Action 1: *Alan Murphy to submit a request to the SPSA for agreement on a Scotland wide implementation date and feed back to LGRAS members.*

Action 2: *Police forces to include WDM in emails to LAs containing the clear language descriptions of accidents.*

Action 3: *SG to consider including the clear language description within the SG system so police forces can include this in their data submission.*

3. Overview of the CRASH system (PowerPoint presentation 1)

3.1 **Pat Kilbey** said that the system was intended to collect all data for accidents and was funded by the Home Office. The advantages of the system included its linkage to other systems, the avoidance of data input duplication, increased location accuracy due to built-in GPS and improved auto checks (e.g. on names, addresses and vehicle details). As the central database was located in Henden, any amendments to the software meant that only one system needed to be updated. The data was also sent automatically to DfT and local authorities and there was a clear audit trail outlining changes to data. The system was scheduled to be tested in the Spring of 2011 and would then be rolled out in mid 2011. Another benefit was that DfT would know how many accidents were still outstanding.

Discussion

3.2 **Inspector Bradshaw** asked if she knew what savings were likely to be made. **Pat Kilbey** said that it would depend on the circumstances within each force, but generally since the current system is paper based, it will save having to look for forms. She also said that it may be possible to put the system on to a Blackberry. A demonstration of the system is now available and Gerry Moore may be available to present on this. **Valerie Arbuckle** asked about the annual running costs of the system. **Pat Kilbey** said that although the setting up of the system in England and Wales had already been funded, there would be an annual maintenance cost.

Action 4: *LGRAS Members to consider whether a demonstration from Gerry Moore would be useful and feed back to the SG.*

4. UK Statistics Authority assessment of GB and Scottish STATS 19 (Paper 1)

4.1 **Carol Ann Munn** gave an overview of the UK Statistics Authority assessment process, and the need for SG to provide evidence of the way that the statistics were collected, quality tested, disseminated and the level of user engagement in the process. The UKSA are currently considering the evidence that Transport Statistics has submitted and will then make recommendations which need to be met in order to retain National Statistics status. For example, one of the recommendations that was made in their assessment of GB stats19 was that an estimate should be made of the number of non-reported accidents; this is something that may be suggested for Scotland.

Discussion

4.2 **Andrew Fraser** suggested that the UKSA would be better focussing on the quality of such data as are collected rather than on preparing another estimate of the “under-reporting” of accidents, of which practitioners are perfectly well aware. He pointed out that those involved in road traffic accidents cannot be forced to **report** them if they do not wish to, and so the collectors (police) cannot **record** them. He was concerned that “under-reporting” may be seen as a criticism of the collectors, whereas it was actually a failure of the victims. **Pat Kilbey** said that the public might feel that they are being misled if we are underestimating the level of accident/casualties. **Kathleen Braidwood** asked if there were differences between the STATS 19 accidents and those collected by the NHS. **Pat Kilbey** confirmed that there were (differences can arise due to different admin procedures) and **Carol Ann Munn** said that this is discussed within Reported Road Casualties Scotland.

4.3 **Andy Duff** asked if it was within the remit of the UK Statistics Authority to tell the police to improve the quality of their data. **Pat Kilbey** explained that some forces were not familiar with the instructions in STATS 20 and that there was room for improvement. **Andy Duff** asked if other sources for the statistics would be looked at and checked. **Pat Kilbey** said that there is an article in Reported Road Casualties GB about additional sources with comments. Improvements were still being made to the quality of the data. **Carol Ann Munn** said that the UK Statistics Authority report would be available at the end of the Summer and that members would be informed of the outcome..

4.4 **Carol Ann Munn** said the SG would consider using the National Travel Survey or Scottish Household Survey to estimate the number of non-reported casualties but await the recommendations

of the UKSA assessment to see if it was required. **Glen Deakin** said that statistics for recorded crime had the same problem. **Gary Patton** said that there would be a different levels of under-reporting depending on the severity the casualty. **Pat Kilbey** said that all fatalities would be reported. **Gary Patton** then said that not everyone was sure whether accidents should be reported or not e.g. pedal cyclists. **Andy Duff** said that if changes were to be made, they would affect the continuity of the data. **Pat Kilbey** gave the example of the CRASH system having drop down menus.

Action 5: *Carol Ann Munn to keep members informed of the outcome of the UK Statistics authority recommendations when they become available and consider whether an estimation of under-reporting is required.*

5. Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2009: Format and Content

5.1 **Carol Ann Munn** asked members for their views on the publication. **Andrew Fraser** said that he was happy that he was able to download the tables from the web site. **Kathleen Braidwood** asked whether it would be possible to publish the publication at the same time as DfT publish their one. **Carol Ann Munn** explained that Transport Statistics publish a number of other publications with limited staff resources and she would have to look at the timetable to see if it could be published earlier. **Kathleen Braidwood** and **Michael McDonnell** also asked if the statistics for killed and serious could be separated out in-line with the new Scottish 2020 targets. **Michelle Campbell** wondered if a breakdown for drivers aged 17 - 25 could be included. **Andy Duff** mentioned that 16 year olds were able to ride mopeds. **Pat Kilbey** wanted to know what the baseline for the Scottish targets was. **Michael McDonnell** said that it was 2004-08. **Andy Duff** said that local authorities within Grampian were using 2007-09 as the data was not consistent due to their recent review. **Carol Ann Munn** asked members if they preferred 17-22 or 17-25? **Michael McDonnell** said that he preferred 17-25 and **Andrew Fraser** said that it was not essential to publish any particular group. **Andy Duff** asked what England and Wales use and **Pat Kilbey** said that it was 17-24.

Action 6: *Carol Ann Munn to look at the timetable for publishing Reported Road Casualties Scotland to see if there was scope for publishing it earlier.*

Action 7: *Carol Ann Munn to consider the suggestions for changes to the published age group and separation of killed and serious casualties.*

6. Road Safety Research Projects

6.1 **Fran Warren** gave an overview of recent research projects covering Seatbelt Use, Review of Crash Magnets and the Review of Evaluations into Young Driver Interventions. This was part of a three pronged approach being taken by the Road Skills Working Groups and co-ordinated by Road Safety Scotland – the other two components being an online mapping exercise of interventions in Scotland currently available on the Road safety Scotland website and a think piece by Professor Frank McKenna on the public health benefits for teenagers on such interventions yet to be published. **Michael McDonnell** said that if anyone needed a copy of Crash Magnets they should contact him. She welcomed any suggestions for further research work.

Action 8: *Michael McDonnell to provide copies of Crash Magnets if required.*

7. Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2020

7.1 **Michelle Campbell** reiterated the Scottish road safety targets for casualty reductions which would start from 1 January 2011 after the end of the current GB targets and progress on the Framework since it was published in June 2009. She said that a Strategic Partnership Board and a supporting Operational Partnership Group had been set up as well as a Communication Network representative of all partners to deal with strategic road safety messages which influence local delivery. An interim annual report to the end of 2009 was available on the SG website. A number of local delivery plans have been influenced by the Framework and by the high profile road safety campaigns being undertaken by key delivery partners such as the vehicle forfeiture scheme and year long focus on seatbelts. She said that next steps were to have a national young drivers debate starting early Summer 2010 and the new early years educational resource will be in schools from end

August 2010. The Road Safety Team were also considering the SG position on non-seatbelt wearing, drug driving and speed limits

Discussion

7.2 **Simon Bradshaw** asked how the GB targets fitted in with the Scottish ones. **Pat Kilbey** said that although there were some draft targets DfT had not finalised them yet. She said that the Peter North Review into Drink and Drug Driving law who was due to publish his recommendations shortly may affect the new targets and publication of the GB Road Safety Strategy from 2010. There was also an issue with the baseline for the targets and this would be reviewed once they have more data. **Carol Ann Munn** said that users should look to the Scottish targets in the meantime and as these are quite challenging it is expected that any contribution to these will contribute to any GB targets.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 **Pat Kilbey** said that DfT were planning to put road casualty statistics online based on tables already published. However, it would be possible to extract more detailed information. Data for 2008 will be published later this month and 2009 data will be put on in the Autumn. It will be done using MAST, similar to pivot tables and there will be no charge.

9. Date of Next Meeting

9.1 Members were happy with annual meeting and **Carol Ann Munn** agreed to organise another meeting in 12 months time.

Scottish Government
Transport Statistics branch
June 2010