

Transport Research Summary

2013

Review of Your Call

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Your Call is a road safety education resource designed specifically for use with 11 to 14 year olds in S1 to S3. Research¹ has indicated that this group are 'at risk' from pedestrian as well as passenger accidents. Your Call was launched in April 2009 and local Road Safety Units were tasked with distributing at least one copy to secondary schools in Scotland. Four years after the launch, Transport Scotland and Road Safety Scotland commissioned ODS Consulting to explore how Your Call was being used in schools and what pupils and teachers thought of it.

This research examined how this resource was being used in ten schools, in nine different local authority areas to allow comparisons between schools and areas. In-depth interviews were conducted with Road Safety Officers, teachers and national stakeholders and twelve focus groups were held with pupils.

Main Findings

- Road Safety Units took different approaches to distributing and promoting Your Call; some held a central training event for schools, or visited schools individually to deliver the resource. There were some examples of Road Safety Units posting the resource to their schools.
- The majority of Road Safety Officers had not had any ongoing contact with schools since the launch of Your Call and were not able to say with certainty whether the resource was being used. A small number had maintained contact with their schools. For example, in three local authority areas, the Road Safety Officer had delivered one lesson of Your Call to a PSE class.
- The ten case study schools were all using Your Call, although the extent of use varied from minimal to regular. All were using the resource as part of their Personal Social Education (PSE) class.
- The two DVDs which were produced to accompany the Your Call material were the most commonly used part of the resource.
- Pupils displayed a good recollection of the resource. In six schools, Your Call was mentioned spontaneously, despite some pupils having used the resource several months earlier.
- Pupils and teachers felt that the messages in Your Call reinforced messages that the pupils had heard before, and that they were not necessarily learning anything new. Despite this, the S1 and S2 pupils agreed that Your Call had influenced them to change their attitude and behaviour while out on the roads.

About this Study

In 2013, Transport Scotland and Road Safety Scotland commissioned ODS Consulting to explore the use of and views on the Your Call road safety resource with ten case study schools.

Methodology

Qualitative research methods were used for this project which included telephone interviews with 20 Road Safety Officers, covering 25 local authority areas, and with two national stakeholders. Teachers were interviewed in the ten case study schools and focus groups were carried out with pupils in all of these schools. In total, 115 pupils were consulted.

Your Call Research

The overall aim of the research was to explore the use of Your Call in schools and to explore pupils and teachers' views on the resource. The objectives were to:

- find out how the resource has been distributed and promoted;
- explore differences in uptake and reasons for this;
- explore how secondary schools use Your Call;
- explore opinions about the resource from the perspective of the key user groups; and
- consider what young people have learned from Your Call and what impact the resource has had on them.

Launch and Promotion

Road Safety Scotland provided four training sessions for Road Safety Officers when Your Call was launched. The feedback from Road Safety Officers we spoke to, indicated this was a positive experience. Road Safety Officers were confident that all mainstream secondary schools in their area had at least one copy of Your Call. The majority of Road Safety Officers made appointments to meet with guidance staff at individual schools to introduce them to Your Call. Others chose a different method, with three Road Safety Units (out of the 20 we spoke to) holding a central training

event for schools, and a few choosing to post the resource to schools. Teachers who had received this training stated that it was worthwhile. The majority of Road Safety Units however have not had ongoing contact with schools since the initial launch of Your Call and were not able to say with certainty whether the resource was being used in secondary schools in their areas.

Use of Your Call

Seven of the ten had used the resource for the first time during the 2012/13 term. Three had used it since its launch in 2009. All schools used it during the Personal and Social Education class.

The DVD element was by far the most commonly used element of the toolkit. Schools tended to stick to the themed DVD which was age appropriate for their pupils – either the pedestrian (S1/2) or the passenger (S2/3) DVD.

Views on Your Call

General impressions of the resource by Road Safety Officers and teachers were positive. The use of social media was appealing and perceived as relevant to this age group. We found three teachers who had used Crash Magnets in the past. Two of these teachers reported that their preference was for Your Call.

Pupil recollection of Your Call was based around the DVD. Pupils were able to recall the storyline of the drama in detail. The content was praised for including relevant topics such as distractions and consequences.

Pupils had mixed views on the other activities in the toolkit. The DVD was by far the most commonly used element. The other activities had been used sporadically, but pupils responded well to these when conducted in the focus groups.

Pupils and teachers agreed that the messages in Your Call 'reinforced' messages that the pupils had heard before. However some pupils commented that the style of the toolkit made the learning more interesting.

Suggestions for Improvement

Pupils and teachers offered suggestions as to how they thought Your Call could be improved. These included:

Updating technology: The majority of pupils suggested that they would like to see the DVD updated to include more relevant technology, such as the latest mobile phones, and ipods. Currently the DVD features the characters 'video-blogging' and the pupils reported that this was now out-of-date.

More detail on consequences: Some pupils wanted to find out more information about what happened to the characters in the DVD after the crash. They wanted more details about the extent of the injuries the young people sustained, and how it affected their relationships with one another.

Statistics: A few pupils and teachers suggested that they would like to see more statistics included in part of the DVD, but also in the activities. These would be in relation to the number of young people killed in road accidents, for example. Some pupils felt that this type of information was more likely to stay with them and make an impact.

More shocking images: A large number of pupils were particularly keen for Your Call to be more hard-hitting and suggested that the DVDs should include images of the crash scene to make it more realistic. Currently the DVDs cut away just as a child is hit by a car. Older pupils suggested that the DVD could have been more appropriate to their age if it contained more graphic images.

Delivery format: The research explored whether there was an appetite for Your Call to be available online. Some teachers mentioned this spontaneously as a suggestion for improvement, while others had reservations as to how useful it would be. These concerns tended to be linked to the general unreliability of the school's internet connection rather than the usefulness of an online tool.

One case study school had used S6 pupils to deliver the resource to their S1 PSE classes. This had been very successful, with the S1 pupils reporting their preference for S6 pupils to deliver the resource than their teacher. The S6 pupils also reported an increase in their confidence, time management and public speaking.

More copies of the toolkit: Two of the case study schools indicated they had more than one copy of the toolkit. Schools operating with one toolkit reported that this could cause problems in terms of logistics and in many cases the resources were photocopied to share among the guidance staff, or scanned to appear electronically on the White Board.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research provided an insight into way the Your Call resource has been used in secondary schools. It involved a mix of Road Safety Officers, national stakeholders, teachers and pupils.

It found that the Your Call resource engaged pupils and prompted discussion. Pupils had a good recollection of the resource, even when it had been used several months earlier. There was good recall about the DVD storyline and pupils praised the content for including topics such as distractions and consequences.

Pupils and teachers agreed that the messages reinforced messages they had heard before. Despite most pupils stating that they had not learned anything new, S1 and S2 pupils highlighted that Your Call had influenced them to change their attitude and behaviour while out on the roads. Pupils stated they were more cautious and aware particularly in relation to distractions such as mobile phones or wearing headphones.

We recommend that the format of the resource could benefit from a complementary online resource. It could be enhanced and developed by producing a more up-to-date DVD, with potentially more hard-hitting graphics – particularly to show what happens to the characters after the accident. Researchⁱⁱ has shown that shock tactics are not effective at changing behaviours. However for the context of this research the pupils reported that the inclusion of more hard-hitting images would resonate with them more.

We do not believe that Your Call has been used to its full potential so far, and we recommended that Road Safety Scotland undertake a national relaunch of Your Call, taking account of suggested updates to the format and content.

ii <http://www.getintogear.info/experienced-ydi-educators/where-it-can-go-wrong/sensationalising>

This document, along with full research report of the project, and further information about social and policy research commissioned and published on behalf of Transport Scotland can be viewed on the internet at:

<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/analysis/research/publications>.

If you have any further queries about social research, or would like further copies of the full report or summary document, please contact:

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