

Final Report
Rider Refinement North



Summary

The aim of this project is to reduce the high number of motorcycle casualties in the North and North East of Scotland by delivering a bespoke defensive rider training package aimed at improving rider skills and enhancing safety. Roadside hazards will be gathered and passed to the Roads Authority for investigation, contributing to the Safe Systems approach. The project is multi-agency initiative delivered across the North and North-east of Scotland supported by the respective Road and Community Safety Groups.

Following approval of the grant funding members of the team have developed and produced a one day motorcycle course. The course consists of a presentation, demonstration and assessment rides tailored to the individual's needs and geographical collision causation factors. The course seeks to highlight rider's vulnerabilities, identify areas of risk and demonstrate techniques to improve safety margins. The course has very much been designed to act as a stepping stone to further advanced training and considerable focus is placed on this element.

During the course candidates receive a one and a half hour theory and safety input from an Advanced Police Motorcyclist. This focusses on key collision factors in the North and North East of Scotland and how to become safer riders. They are then exposed to a minimum of 4 hours of on road activity. The on road element of the course includes observed rides with feedback to candidates both during the ride, via helmet mounted communications, and during post ride debriefs. These inputs are delivered by Police Riders and Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) National Observers.

Rides are also video recorded and can be viewed by candidates post ride as an additional teaching aid.

At the conclusion of the course riders are provided with formal written feedback on their performance along with a verbal debrief from the Police and IAM observers.

This year we have completed 21 courses. This has included 7 in the Tayside area, 8 in North East Scotland and 6 in Highlands and Islands area. A full time table of course dates and locations is attached.

During the reporting period Police Scotland have trained nine additional police riders in order to support delivery of the courses.

In order to maximise uptake of the course a formal media launch for the project took place on 25 April 2018, in Inverurie, Aberdeenshire. The launch was well attended by the written press, television and radio with good coverage across the North of Scotland. Since the initial launch there has been a number of other localised press releases in the three regions where the courses are run. The courses have also been well covered in social media via the Police Scotland Facebook and Twitter accounts. These messages have also been replicated on all partners' social media accounts.

Feedback from the public has been very positive and following some of the initial courses we have used positive feedback from those who have attended to further promote the course and our rider improvement messaging.

Uptake of the courses has been very strong. We scheduled 252 spaces across the North of Scotland between May and October 2018. All of the courses were booked up early. In some areas - in particular Aberdeenshire demand has considerably exceeded supply. In these cases we have made efforts to offer alternative locations or refer them to post-test trainers

It has been very positive to have such significant interest in the courses. However, without additional funding the partnership is not in a position to provide extra places to meet this demand. Both Police Scotland and the other partners have used on duty resources to deliver the courses diverting staff from other core duties. Whilst we were happy to do this for the 21 dates planned we could not provide additional dates without an adverse effect on other services. The only way to provide additional places would be through additional funding. The cost of providing additional dates is approximately £1000 per day.

Financial

The funding for this project was £60,164.

Due to the nature of the course much of the funding was required for the setup of the project and included the purchase of high value items such as motorcycles and equipment.

To date three BMW RT 1200 motorcycles have been purchased with service packs. The cost of these items are £41,033. This is over the budgeted cost of £37,004 for these items. This is due to the budgeted motorcycles not being available within a reasonable timescale for delivery of the course.

The cost of the video recording devices and associated equipment has cost £1468 which is below the budgeted £3000. Through alternative procurement channels the over spend on motorcycles was saved elsewhere ensuring the project remained on budget.

We have also purchased a number of motorcycle suits, helmets etc to 'kit out' the additional motorcyclists who have been trained to support the delivery of these courses. The cost of this equipment was £13,223. This investment will support delivery in future year and provide a wider resource to support Police Scotland in its operational commitment to our Motorcycle Safety Campaign. £2504 was spent on communications sets to allow for rider to rider contact.

In order to evaluate the project we employed IBP Strategy and research to independently review the course and its outcomes. The cost of this evaluation was £2750.

Additional costs were incurred in providing lunches to the candidates attending the course and some sundry administrative costs. These costs were absorbed by charging candidates a nominal fee for attending of £30 per person.

As alluded to in the summary the course has been extremely popular with demand significantly exceeding supply in several areas.

Outcomes and Evaluation

This course has proved extremely popular with motorcyclists across the North of Scotland with demand outstripping supply. The feedback from those who have attended has been very positive with emails and letters of appreciation being sent to myself and the staff involved in the training.

Perhaps more importantly there has been a 22% reduction in fatal motorcycle collisions in the North of Scotland between April and October 2018 when compared to the same period last year. This is not replicated across Scotland where there has been an increase in motorcycle fatalities. Whilst it is too early to say if this course has contributed towards this figures there can be no doubt that the course and the proactive media work has had some impact in motorcycling in the North of Scotland alongside other pieces of work.

We will continue to monitor the number of collisions involving motorcycles across the country. This will be overlaid with our partnership work in this and other projects to monitor progress towards 2020.

The project has commissioned the services of an independent evaluation company, IBP Strategy and Research, MediaCorp House, 2 Caird Park, Hamilton, to review the project.

IBP designed a questionnaire which is issued to all candidates prior to commencement of the course. This questionnaire seeks to understand candidates riding experience, their attitude to risk and other behaviours which makes them more vulnerable. It will also review the training they have already taken, the types of motorcycling they are involved in and data about their age and sex etc.

The initial questionnaire must be completed prior to enrolment in the course.

A second questionnaire is issued to all those who attended the course within one month of attendance. This questionnaire will review their attitudes and behaviours post course, their desire to take further training and a general evaluation of the course itself.

A third questionnaire will be issued one year later to establish if the course had had longer lasting impacts on their behaviours and will confirm who has gone on to complete further post-test training.

A formal evaluation report has been prepared by IBP which is attached.

I have also included some of the messages of appreciation from those who attended the course.

'Good morning Stewart, thank you for your email and attachments. I enjoyed the course on Sunday and would like to thank you and your officers again for a very interesting day. Although I have been riding motorcycles for 38 years I now realise that my skills need improving and I fully intend to enrol in the IAM course. Job well done'. David Forsyth

'I just want to say thank you for allowing me to attend the Rider Refinement course. I had a great day and got a lot out of the course with plenty of feedback and I now know which areas I need to work on to be a safer rider. The balance with classroom presentations in the morning followed by the two road session was I felt spot on. Also on the back of the training I will be looking to join one of the local IAM groups as part of my further development. Once again, thank you for the excellent bike course which I would definitely recommend to anyone'. Jeremy Cameron.

Rider Refinement North's Framework Commitments

- RSF 19: Continue to publicise and educate people about the risks associated with speeding. - Through the formal presentation the risks associated with excessive or inappropriate speed are covered with all those who attend the course. This is further reinforced through the on road inputs and debriefs. Proactive media messaging advertising the course and why it has been set up has provided further information to the public on the risks and vulnerabilities of motorcyclists.
- RSF 20: Continue to raise awareness of speed limits and their purpose, including those that apply to different types of vehicle on the different categories of roads. Through the formal presentation the risks associated with excessive or inappropriate speed are covered with all those who attend the course. This is further reinforced through the on road inputs and debriefs.
- RSF 76: Provide support for motorcyclists, e.g. through advanced rider training schemes and raise awareness of bad or dangerous riding behaviour, through safety awareness initiatives such as Operation Zenith. The course provides a one day input to a number of candidates across the North of Scotland. Considerable emphasis is placed on the importance of further advanced training. The theory input provided focusses on key causation factors for motorcycle collisions in the north of Scotland and provides advice to riders to reduce these risks. There has been a reduction in respect of fatal motorcycle collisions in the North of Scotland by 22% between April and October when compared to the same period last year. This is not replicated across Scotland where there has been an increase in motorcycle fatalities.
- RSF 60: Encourage younger drivers to undergo post test training, by engaging with the private sector including the insurance industry to explore incentivisation, and to support national coordination of the use of outcomes based evaluation of post test training. The course is aimed at riders of all ages. Already we have seen riders aged from early 20's through to riders in

their 60's. We have also had a number of motorcyclists who have very recently passed their test attend the courses.

- RSF92: Consider the needs and vulnerabilities of motorcyclists in developing motorcycle friendly roads and roadsides where this may support casualty reduction, while insuring that motorcycle safety is fully considered when other traffic calming schemes are introduced. During the inputs discussions have taken place with motorcyclists and we have encouraged them to highlight and report 'problem roads' or engineering issues to Road operators or local authorities.

Organisational Development

This course has enhanced Road Safety partnership work in the North of Scotland. It has brought together key partner agencies, who are already involved in general road safety work, to deliver a tangible project to support casualty reduction in a vulnerable group of road users.

The project has also re introduced an addition element of Road Safety work for Police Scotland which has not been in place for a number of years. This is not without its challenges in terms of resources, however we will monitor its success over the next two years to ascertain its longer term impact on casualty reduction.

Future

We plan to run Rider Refinement North initially until 2020 as we work towards the current road safety targets. Based on the feedback from those who attended and the report from IBP Strategy and Research the course itself will remain relatively unchanged. Due to challenges in implementing the administration of the course within tight timescales this year we will seek to develop an amended back office function with additional support from the many partners involved in the project.

IBP will carry out one further questionnaire with those who attended the courses to further evaluate the longer term effects of the course on rider behaviour. Police Scotland and the other partners will closely monitor the effects on motorcycle casualties over the next two years to ascertain the wider impact of this project.

Equalities

All of the Police Officers involved in the training have undergone a minimum of one day's diversity and equality training to ensure their delivery can meet the needs of a broad range of individual needs taking into consideration people's age, disability, gender, race, religion and sexual orientation.

This training course is available for everyone who is able to legally ride a motorcycle on our roads. Of those attending thus far we have had a range of candidates aged in their 20's through to late 60's. There has also been a mix of both male and female candidates.

