

NATIONAL TEN-YEAR TARGET EXCEEDED

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Staffordshire has exceeded a national ten-year target to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the county's roads.

A raft of measures and work has been undertaken by the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership to reach, and consequently exceed, the national casualty reduction target of 40 per cent. In fact, a 56 per cent reduction has been achieved.

The partnership, which includes Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, has managed to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured by combining education, training and publicity, engineering and enforcement. The strategy employed targets four main groups – child pedestrians, young drivers (aged 16 to 24), motorcyclists and drivers who are more likely to take risks.

There are on-going operations to target anti-social use of vehicles, people exceeding the speed limit or using mobile phones whilst driving. Depending on the level of the offence, drivers are offered the opportunity to attend a diversionary course aimed at changing their attitude to how they drive. It costs them the equivalent of the fine they would have had to pay.

There are a wide range of education courses including Speed Awareness, Driver Alertness and the hard-hitting Crash course which is based on real-life incidents and designed to put the audience in context as an offender, victim or a relative of a victim or offender.

Motorcyclists represent just one per cent of vehicular traffic but in 2007, 27 per cent of people killed or seriously injured on Staffordshire's roads. However, through a programme of initiatives including training, awareness raising events, campaigns such as 'Ride it Right' and education in 2009, this reduced to 21 per cent.

Operation Octane, carried out by the force's road crime team and the partnership's speed enforcement team, aims to engage with motorcyclists to discuss safety issues. They are offered DVDs, leaflets and advice and checks on their bikes for roadworthiness. The partnership also offers national courses such as BikeSafe and BikeSense.

24 Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs), that show the driver the speed they are travelling, are deployed where specific incidents identify a pattern, or in response to a community concern request.

Head of the force's Justice Services department and vice chair of Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership, Superintendent Juliet Prince, says the devices enhance diversion and education measures rather than penalising offenders. "The SIDs support Community SpeedWatch, and can support the work of Police and Community Together (PACT) activity but other measures may be appropriate and we try to

design a solution that is appropriate to the location and problem. Where drivers are seen to exceed the speed limit, diversion activity is sought rather than enforcement.

“Enforcement plays an important but minor part of the overall solutions in Staffordshire but speed cameras have been shown to have a significant impact on collisions, especially when sited at junctions and hotspots.

“Their success shows a 63 per cent reduction of people being killed or seriously injured in collisions near camera sites. Casualty reductions achieved since speed cameras were implemented are estimated to have saved at least £23 million each year based on the average cost of a collision.”

Staffordshire County Council’s Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste, Mike Maryon, said: “These fantastic results are accountable to the unique approach we have in the county to reducing road casualties. Through the Safer Roads Partnership, Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services seamlessly deliver an effective combination of education, enforcement, training and publicity.

“Working with communities that have road safety concerns, providing a comprehensive programme of pedestrian and cyclist training in schools and co-ordinating a raft of rider development and safety awareness initiatives for bikers are just some examples of how the partnership reaches every sector of our community with its road safety messages.

“Making our roads safer is the priority. We have exceeded the national targets but there is much more to do. Every person killed or seriously injured is a tragedy. Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership will continue to work with local communities and respond to their concerns over road safety.”

A videocast about the Crash course can be seen on www.youtube.com/staffordshirepolice or via Twitter, Facebook or the force website www.staffordshire.police.uk.

For other information about the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership, visit www.staffsaferroads.co.uk