



News

Communications Unit

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CLUNK CLICK – children go to the top of the class

A new survey finds more children are wearing seatbelts in North Yorkshire. But there's a slight drop in adults wearing them.

North Yorkshire County Council working through 95 Alive the York and North Yorkshire Road Safety partnership has revived one of the most recognised campaigns in living memory to emphasise the importance of wearing seatbelts.

Clunk Click every trip, was launched by Sir Jimmy Savile in 1972 for the Department for Transport. It's been illegal since 1983 not to wear a seatbelt, and it's estimated since then that over 50,000 lives have been saved. Despite that some people are still not Clunk Clicking.

A lot of work has been done in schools to show children how important it is to wear a seat belt. And in a recent survey of more than 8,300 vehicles carried out in North Yorkshire the youngsters did well. Numbers not wearing their seat belts more than halved from 11.3 per cent two years ago to 4.6 per cent. But drivers and adult passengers aren't keeping up with the children, numbers wearing seatbelts were slightly down.*

In this one survey this represents 444 adults who were not using a seatbelt compared to the 109 children who weren't.

Today a five year old boy and one of the County Council's Road Safety Mascots, the Seatbelt Sheriff, joined forces to promote the Clunk Click campaign. Nathaniel Todd is the face of one of 95 Alive's Clunk Click posters, and a special assembly was held at his school, Sharow Primary, near Ripon with the Seatbelt Sheriff..

Cllr John Fort, North Yorkshire County Council executive member for road safety, said: "For most people, putting their seatbelt on is automatic. We need everyone to be like that, but it seems there are a small number of people who are not, even though it could save their life."

Roads Policing Inspector Dave Brown of North Yorkshire Police said: "After nearly 30 years of attending road traffic collisions I am still astounded at the number of people who refuse or fail to wear a seatbelt. The impact of being unrestrained and thrown forward is devastating. I have lost count of the lives saved by the simple practice of wearing a seatbelt, which takes just a few seconds."



David Bowe, Assistant Director of Highways for the County Council and Chair of 95 Alive, said: “The attitudes of drivers and passengers are improving, but it is concerning that the survey found a slight increase in the number of adults not wearing their seatbelts. This campaign reinforces this simple but totally effective message, wearing a seat belt really can make the difference between being slightly injured in a crash or being killed. Drivers have a moral responsibility for the safety of themselves and all their passengers and are legally obliged to ensure they and any passenger under the age of 14 are wearing a seatbelt.”

The campaign strengthens the work done in schools by the Seatbelt Sheriff, who helps children to think about the importance of wearing a seatbelt on every journey and to remind adults to do the same. To date, the Sheriff has visited more than 40 schools and sworn in more than 3,500 children as Deputies.

Veteran broadcaster Sir Jimmy Savile, now aged 83 who launched the original Clunk Click campaign is supporting 95 Alive. He said: “Most accidents in cars occur within the first mile and a quarter of a journey, which means that if you don’t belt up straight away you could be in trouble just round the corner. Clunk click every trip is a good idea because it would take only ten seconds to mush your face up but it would take a hospital ten years to put it back together.”

Chris Anderson, Deputy Chief Fire Officer of NYFRS said: "North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service is acutely aware of the consequences of people not wearing seatbelts. As a partner organisation of 95Alive we are actively supporting the re launch of Clunk Click campaign by having several of our operational vehicles fitted with large eye catching graphics to press home the message that not wearing a seatbelt is literally a life or death decision. In particular, parents need to realize that children must be fastened in correctly, they do not have a choice in the matter, no seatbelt, no journey!"

For more information contact Janet Gleeson on 01609 798304, Charles Friskney on 01609 533501 or Road Safety and Travel Awareness Officer Gary Stoneman Roberts on 01609 533768.

Notes for editors:

PHOTOGRAPHS

Nathaniel Todd and the Seatbelt Sheriff

Nathaniel with fellow pupils and teachers at Sharow Primary School with the Seatbelt Sheriff

* The numbers of drivers not wearing seat belts went up from 3.9 per cent two years ago to 4.1 per cent. The numbers of adult passengers not restrained rose from 5.8 per cent to 6.1 per cent.



About the 95 Alive Partnership

The 95 Alive York and North Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership is a partnership of local authorities, emergency services and other agencies that have a common interest and duty to reduce the number of people who are killed and injured on the roads of York and North Yorkshire. They have set themselves a target to save an additional 95 lives by the end of 2010. This is over and above the 40 per cent reduction in casualties that is already demanded of them by Government.