

News

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Road safety partners welcome fall in casualties

Figures released today by the Department for Transport on reported road casualties in Great Britain, show that numbers killed or seriously injured in 2014 fell significantly compared to 2013.

Nevertheless, North Yorkshire County Council and its partners in the 95Alive Road Safety Partnership continue to prioritise road safety.

North Yorkshire is England's largest rural county with a road network of 9,000 km. The county, which includes two National Parks attracts high numbers of bikers and other tourists and the number of cyclists on the road has also increased, partly due to the staging of the Tour de France Grand Depart and the Tour de Yorkshire in the county. This means that road casualties in the county tend to be higher than in other parts of the Yorkshire region, but the road safety partnership continues to work hard to bring the figures down.

The partnership works with schools through junior road safety officers, the pre-school Children's Traffic Club, Bikeability – which is national standard cycle training for 9-11 year olds – and road safety curriculum resources. The team also runs Drive Alive aimed at young drivers and Enhanced Passed Plus, a training and education programme for newly qualified drivers as well as carrying out older driver skills assessments.

The partnership also works with bikers through its campaign Think Bike and has engaged increasingly with the biker community through social media as well as direct engagement at biker rallies, cycling and other events such as the Great Yorkshire Show. For example a Facebook Post about a biker event reached 163,000 people and two tweets about biker activities reached over 50,000 each.

The partnership also carries out many themed publicity and engagement campaigns on drink/drug driving; Be Bright Be Seen; mobile phones, summer and winter driving.

The county council's traffic engineering team also introduces a number of local safety schemes every year to address specific locations with a known collision history. The aim of these engineering remedial measures is to reduce the number of personal injury collisions occurring on our network. All collision cluster sites and routes of concern are analysed and addressed where necessary.

“A fall in the number of deaths and serious injury on our roads is very welcome news indeed”, said County Councillor Don Mackenzie, North Yorkshire's Executive Member for Road Safety “But we must never be complacent. We continue to be vigilant and work with our partners and the public in keeping our county's roads as safe as possible”.

Deputy Chief Constable Tim Madgwick, of North Yorkshire Police, said: “Road safety is a top priority for North Yorkshire Police and our partners and we have worked tirelessly for a number of years to try and reduce the number of casualties and fatalities across the county.

“It is encouraging that figures show there were fewer fatalities on our roads in 2014 than the previous year with fewer motorcycle deaths. However, the figures are still too high and our work with the 95Alive Road Safety Partnership, numerous road safety charities and the Government, will continue as we strive to make our roads as safe as they possibly can be.

“We are working closely with the Department for Transport to analyse how we can reduce the number of fatal motorcycle collisions, as well as offering Bike Safe courses and other educational engagement activities with motorcyclists to try and educate them about responsible riding.

“As national policing lead for motorcycling, I have worked closely with the MCIA (Motorcycle Industry Association) and a wide range of experts nationally to prepare a new strategic framework document for the future. It includes plans for how we would like to try and reduce serious and fatal collisions by working with an even wider range of partners, organisations and charities. North Yorkshire Police has taken the lead for this nationally, with the aim of increasing the awareness of motorcycling on our roads as part of a long-term strategy to reduce the number of serious injuries and fatalities.

“We also work with our partners to educate young and inexperienced motorists about driver behaviour and the risks associated with speeding and irresponsible driving.

“Excess speed is a key factor in many serious and fatal collisions. To combat that we have increased the number of mobile safety camera vans we have in the county, from one to three, and we are working with local residents to monitor traffic if they have any speeding concerns in their area.

“Clearly some collisions are down to driver or rider error and all road users have a responsibility for their own actions and a duty to stick to the road laws and speed limits. Despite the educational activities we are undertaking, enforcement is still a key part of our approach to road safety and anyone putting lives in danger by driving irresponsibly will be appropriately dealt with.”

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