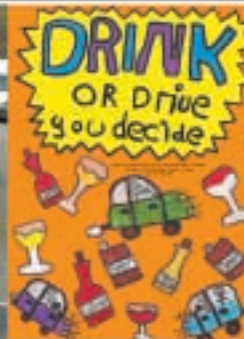




Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government



# Road Safety Strategy for Wales Executive Summary



January 2003

## **Acknowledgements**

### **Front cover photographs:**

20mph sign – courtesy of Vale of Glamorgan Council

Children crossing the road – courtesy of  
Conwy County Borough Council

Drink or Drive You Decide – courtesy of  
Road Safety Council of Wales

Children cycling – courtesy of City and County of Cardiff

### **Executive Summary**

Safe Routes to School project at Newtown – courtesy of  
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20mph zone sign – courtesy of Vale of Glamorgan Council

Children cycling – courtesy of Carmarthenshire County Council

Horse riders – courtesy of Department for Transport

Driver and mobile phone – courtesy of  
Carmarthenshire County Council

Mega Drive – courtesy of Capita Gwent Consultancy

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# Foreword

## By Sue Essex AM Minister for Environment



The issue of safety on our roads and in our communities affects us all. Almost all Welsh citizens are road users on a daily basis – whether on foot, on a bicycle, in a car, on a bus, on a motorcycle or on a horse.

Despite a reduction in the number of casualties in the last few years, road safety statistics in Wales make grim reading. In the year 2000, 1,823 people were killed or seriously injured and a further 12,319 were slightly hurt. Road collisions and casualties are costly to all of us as taxpayers. However, no monetary figure can ever compensate for the death of a loved one.

The "problem" of road safety is not simply a question of the number of collisions and the resulting casualties. Pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders often perceive Welsh roads as dangerous places to travel. The long-term decline in the number of children walking and cycling to school is just one indicator of this.

For far too long, road safety has been seen as someone else's problem. Quite often, it is said that a section of road is "dangerous". However, this implies that a collision is "caused" by the road when, in reality, it is **the road user** that is ultimately responsible.

As road users, each and every one of us is responsible for our own safety and that of others. Our behaviour on the road means that we are all part of the road safety problem and solution. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that everyone, either as individuals or organisations, plays a part in implementing the actions needed to improve safety on our roads.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sue Essex".

Sue Essex AM  
Minister for Environment



## Road Safety has been improving...

Since the early 1980s, the number of recorded casualties in Wales has fallen.

## ...but much more needs to be done!

The overall number of collisions and casualties is still far too high. And there are particular problems:

- **Child pedestrians** – 56% of Killed or Seriously Injured child road casualties are pedestrians (1994-98 average)
- **Links to poverty** – pedestrians in poorer areas are far more likely to become a road casualty.

There is also a concern that:

- A significant number of collisions and casualties are not reported (meaning that official figures under estimate the problem).
- The reduction in casualty numbers is partly the result of a decline in walking and cycling.
- Dangerous road user behaviour – such as inappropriate speed – is still far too common.

## We have set ambitious targets for casualty reduction...

By 2010, we want to reduce recorded casualties compared with the average for 1994-98:

- 40% reduction in the total number of Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) casualties.
- 50% reduction in the total number of child Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) casualties.
- 10% reduction in the rate of slight casualties per 100 million vehicle kilometres travelled.

## ...that will require a significant effort from everyone!

Three organisations will have the ultimate responsibility for delivering this strategy:

- **Local Authorities:** for safety schemes on local roads and local road safety education, training & publicity.
- **The Welsh Assembly Government:** for safety schemes on Trunk Roads and national road safety initiatives.
- **The Police:** for road traffic law enforcement and road safety advice.

In addition, there are many initiatives that are being promoted by the Department for Transport (DfT) at a UK level.

The focus for improving road safety is the need to change road user behaviour – given that the majority of all road collisions involve human error.

The problems of poor road safety are most keenly felt in local communities – and this is where we wish to focus much of our effort. Many collisions and instances of excessive and inappropriate speed involve people local to the area.

## This Strategy has a number of key objectives...

The vision for this Strategy is to reduce real and perceived danger on Welsh roads in order to promote safe and sustainable access for all members of society.

Our *Transport Framework for Wales* has outlined three strategic objectives:

- Sustainable development;
- Tackling social disadvantage;
- Promoting equal opportunities.

In road safety terms this requires:

- Improving safety for children – especially as pedestrians and cyclists.
- Promoting safe use of "vulnerable" transport modes – walking, cycling, motorcycling and horse riding.
- Reducing excessive and inappropriate speed of motor vehicles.
- Targeting other poor driving practices – use of mobile phones, drink-driving, drug-driving and driving whilst tired.

In September 2001, we published our consultation document *Safe Roads, Safe Communities* and we received many detailed comments. The consultation revealed widespread support for innovative solutions to current road safety problems.

## The Strategy must be based on robust research...

This Strategy recognises that road safety solutions need to be based on evidence as to the **causes** of road collisions and casualties. Throughout the Strategy period, there will be a continuous programme of research into road safety problems and their solutions in Wales.

In order to inform this research, there is a need to collect and analyse more information on:

- **Where** collisions and casualties occur.
- **The victims of** collisions and casualties.
- **Why** collisions and casualties occur.

## **...and more information needs to be made available.**

The road safety problems faced by road users, and the potential solutions, must be shared between organisations responsible for road safety and with the general public. This is especially important because we want to encourage local road safety projects to be developed within local communities by those who will directly benefit from improved safety.

We intend to set up a dedicated web site covering all aspects of road safety in Wales (as well as giving links to numerous other road safety web sites).

We will also examine ways of improving delivery of road safety policy, making it easier for members of the general public with an interest in road safety to become involved.

## **Safety for Children**

- **In the period 1994-98, an average of 14 children per year died as a result of a road collision in Wales.**
- **Over 70 % of Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) child road casualties are pedestrians and cyclists.**
- **Child car passengers make up the largest number of casualties in the Slight category.**

We will give children the support they need in order to walk and cycle in safety to schools, shops, playgrounds, parks and leisure centres. We aim to give parents more confidence in allowing their children to travel independently.



Practical road safety measures for children will include:

- Continuation of the **Safe Routes to School** initiative – new footpaths, cycle routes and traffic calming measures for the journey to school.
- Researching the links between **child safety and social deprivation**.
- **Practical pedestrian training** for children in real traffic conditions.
- A **review of road safety education** – placing more emphasis on changing behaviour and improving skills in children.
- Establishing **Childrens' Traffic Clubs** throughout Wales:

### **Childrens' Traffic Clubs**

Childrens' Traffic Clubs are aimed at pre-school children. Health Authorities supply local authorities with names and addresses of children approaching three years old. Each child receives a book containing ideas and activities that parents can use as a teaching aid in order to develop basic skills. If parents decide to join the "club", their children receive six books at three-monthly intervals. Some local authorities are providing children with free membership eg. Denbighshire and Wrexham.

- A **strategy for teaching road safety in schools** – with more support and guidance for teachers.
- **Child Road Safety Audits** – which will assess transport schemes with the focus on the needs of children.
- **Practical training for child cyclists** at Secondary School age.

## Speed Management

- **In the UK as a whole, a third of road deaths (around 1,300 per year) are the result of excessive or inappropriate speed. If applied to Wales, this would translate to around 70 people killed every year through excessive or inappropriate speed.**
- **85 % of people admit to exceeding the speed limit themselves and consider that everyone else is doing it.**
- **On average, for every 1 mile per hour reduction in average speed, there is a 5% reduction in the number of collisions.**

The popular term "speeding" can relate to both **exceeding** the signed speed limit and driving **inappropriately** for the road conditions (even if the signed limit is being observed). Driving within the signed speed limit is not always appropriate – especially if factors such as adverse weather conditions are present.



From the point of view of the non car user, excessive or inappropriate speed is one of the most important safety concerns. There is some evidence to suggest that the decline in walking and cycling in the UK is partly the result of the safety fears brought about by traffic speed.

Speed limits are not always applied consistently and as a result are hard to understand. This lack of understanding can lead to speed limits being ignored.

We are determined to tackle the issue of vehicle speed – in order to reduce casualties and to increase walking, cycling and horse riding. Practical measures to achieve this will include:

- Promotion of consistent speed limit setting through **local speed management strategies** – for areas and routes.
- More information for road users on the **reasons for lower speed limits**.
- More areas where the **speed limit is reduced to 20mph** – particularly around schools, town centres and residential areas.
- **High visibility signs and traffic calming measures** – especially at the entrance to urban areas.



- More use of **environmental techniques** such as shrub planting to change drivers' perception of the road and reduce speeds.
- **Community speed reduction campaigns** based on identified local problems.
- Greater use of **safety cameras** to reduce speeds in areas where there are known to be casualties.

## Safety for Pedestrians and Cyclists

- **Over a quarter of people killed or seriously injured and nearly 1 in 5 of all people injured are pedestrians and cyclists – even though these modes only account for some 4% of travel per year.**

Pedestrians and cyclists are often referred to as "vulnerable" road users – because in a collision with a motor vehicle, they inevitably come off worst.

Many short journeys previously undertaken on foot or bicycle are now undertaken by private car, partly because walking and cycling are not perceived as safe. This results in increased congestion and damage to the environment.

**The health benefits of regular walking and cycling far outweigh the "dangers" associated with their use.** The British Medical Association recommend 30 minutes walking five times a week as the minimum required to maintain a healthy lifestyle. **Regular cyclists live, on average, seven years longer than non-cyclists.**

We intend to actively promote safer journeys (on roads, footways and paths) and training methods for cyclists that will teach people how to safely deal with motorised traffic. In particular, it is vital that the needs of people with mobility impairments are recognised and given the highest priority.

Practical measures will include:

- An assessment of **safety problems for elderly people** and development of solutions.

- A greater priority for **maintenance of pavements** – in order to address the problems associated with pedestrian falls.
- **Practical cycle training for young people and adults** – giving people more confidence to cycle skilfully and courteously both on and off-road.
- More **on-road priority facilities for cyclists:**
  - Cycle lanes;
  - Crossing points;
  - Advanced stop lines at traffic signals;
  - Exemptions from banned turns and road closures.



- More **road space allocated to pedestrians:**
  - New and widened pavements;
  - More road crossing points;
  - Dropped kerbs and tactile paving for mobility impaired people.
- Safer **walking and cycling routes to public transport services** – such as bus stops/stations and rail stations.

- Promotion of "**Home Zones**" in urban areas – where street activity takes priority over motorised traffic.
- Designation of "**Quiet Lanes**" in rural areas – where pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders have priority over motorised traffic.

## Safety for Horse Riders

- **In the UK as a whole, there are estimated to be 3,000 collisions involving horses per year.**
- **Over 100 horses are killed on the roads every year.**
- **Over 50% of horse collisions occur on minor roads.**

Horse riding is a popular activity in Wales and an integral part of the economy – especially in rural areas. In England and Wales as a whole, owners and riders spend around £2.5 billion per year on horse purchase, care, equipment and lessons. Horse riding is a significant generator of tourist activity. For Wales, this equates to a figure of around £200 million per year to the economy.



We are therefore keen to promote horse riding as a mainstream activity in order to develop tourism initiatives. However, this can only be done if there are safer conditions for horse riders, especially for those people who are new to the activity.

Practical measures will include:

- Consider the improvement of the **collection and publication of statistics** for collisions involving horses.
- **Local publicity campaigns** and **more warning signs** to highlight safety issues in areas where there are large numbers of horse riders.
- A **national campaign** to make drivers more aware of horse safety issues.
- Promotion of **training for horse riders**.

## Safety for Motor Vehicle Users

- **Around 70% of all recorded road casualties in Wales involved car users**
- **52% of all casualties occur on roads in built-up areas, two thirds of KSI casualties occur on motorways and non-built up roads**

Road danger is the result of interaction between the road, the vehicle and the user. Although road design will continue to play an important role in improving safety, it is both impossible and undesirable to alter a network to accommodate all human error.

People must come to accept the reasoning behind responsible driving practices. Those who will always drive irresponsibly in spite of warnings of the consequences will be dealt with by the criminal law. Responsible driving will be actively promoted.

Our strategy for improving safety for motor vehicle users (drivers and passengers) in Wales therefore addresses both road user behaviour and highway design issues. Practical measures will include:

- Research into the location of collisions occurring as a result of **driver fatigue**.
- A review of the provision of more **serviced rest areas** on long distance routes.
- Police enforcement of the law relating to **use of mobile phones** whilst driving.



- **Anti drink-driving campaigns** will take place throughout the year and not just at Christmas.
- **"Designated Driver" schemes** will be promoted throughout Wales.

### **Designated Driver Schemes**

"I'll be Des" is a campaign that encourages groups of people to "designate" one of their number to drink only soft drinks – and then drive everyone home safely and legally. The campaign, launched in August 2001, included radio commercials, bus-back advertising, distribution of free literature as well as support from various pub chains, major sports clubs and the Police. Some pubs have provided free soft drinks for the designated drivers as an incentive to participate.

- More research into the **problems of drug driving**.
- A **national publicity campaign** will raise awareness of the dangers of driving under the influence of drugs.

- Promotion of **practical pre-driver training programmes** for 16 and 17 year olds.

### Mega Drive

The Mega Drive project is a road safety course for children in the 15 to 17 age group that includes a practical training session using either a car or moped.



- Wider promotion of **post-test newly qualified driver training programmes** – such as "Pass Plus".

### Pass Plus

The Pass Plus scheme aims to develop and refine the skills of newly qualified drivers.

Denbighshire County Council offer free places on the Pass Plus scheme to encourage the take up.

- **"Freight Quality Partnerships"** between hauliers, local authorities and communities to promote safer Heavy Goods Vehicle access in local areas.
- Exploring the adoption of a national code of conduct setting out **safety and customer service standards for taxi drivers.**

- Promotion of **advanced driver training courses** – focussing on defensive driving skills needed to avoid collisions.
- Continuation of long term programmes to address safety problems through **improved design of existing and new roads**.
- Identification of areas and routes where **road markings can be improved**.
- A **review of existing road signing** to assess maintenance and correct positioning.

## Safety for Motorcyclists

- **There has been a two-thirds decline in the number of motorcyclist casualties between 1981-85 and 2000.**
- **There has been a decline of 29% in travel by motorcycle since 1986 although more recently there has been a large increase in registrations in the UK as a whole (a 226 % increase since 1993).**
- **The 16 to 19 age group is most at risk of being a motorcyclist casualty, although the rate has declined significantly since the early to mid 1980s.**
- **In contrast to all the other age groups, the casualty rate is growing among people in the 30-59 age range.**
- **Over twice as many motorcyclist KSI casualties occurred on roads in non built-up areas – a reflection of the greater speeds when a collision occurs. In total, there are more casualties on built-up roads but a higher proportion of these result in slight injuries.**

Motorcycling is often perceived to be the most vulnerable of all the transport modes - a combination of the fact that motorcyclists ride on only two wheels, the lack of rider protection from any metal bodywork and the potential of these vehicles to reach high speeds.



The growth of urban traffic congestion and the realisation that motorcycles offer a flexible and efficient means of transport has led to an increase in usage in recent years. We intend to promote responsible motorcycling, greater awareness of motorcyclists amongst other road users and hence better rider safety. The practical measures that will be promoted will include:

- **A strategy for motorcycling for Wales** – which will identify safety solutions necessary to reduce collisions and casualties.
- **Promotion of high visibility motor cycle clothing.**
- Campaigns to **raise awareness of motorcyclists** amongst other road users.
- Wider promotion of post-test motorcycle training schemes such as **BikeSafe Cymru.**

## Further Information

The full version of this strategy is available from:

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**The full document is also at:** [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)