

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority
7 December 2007

Open for the purposes of FOI
Report of Assistant Chief Constable Operations and Crime

Road Traffic Collisions

Recommendation(s):

- (i) That members of the authority note the contents of the report.

1. The number of people killed on the roads of Devon and Cornwall is unacceptably high. The force is not set to meet the reduction target of 20 people by the end of March 2008.
2. The number people of Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) was initially raised within the Force Strategic Assessment and subsequently became part of the Force Control Strategy. Department of Transport figures show how Devon and Cornwall Constabulary compare to other forces within our region in terms of KSI casualties. Over the past five years most forces have seen a steady decline in the number of people killed or seriously injured. The trend line shows that Devon and Cornwall is no exception to this. However, despite an overall reduction over the five-year period, we have actually seen a slow but steady incline in the numbers from 2004 onwards.
3. For the period 01.04.07 to 31.10.07, there were 61 fatal collisions with **69 people killed**, and 58 serious injury collisions with 75 people seriously injured.
4. For the same period in 2006, there were 45 fatal collisions with **48 people killed** and 56 serious injury collisions with 86 people seriously injured.

Geographical Spread, Temporal Factors and Frequency of Occurrence

5. 64% of KSI collisions occur upon 'A' roads within Devon and Cornwall.
6. Analysis of data shows that KSI accidents are entirely random with the exception of the third week of June where, there has been a surge every year since 2004.
7. Overall many of the accidents appear to involve the loss of control of a vehicle on a bend, possibly as a result of driving too fast or through drinking. Figures show that
 - 36% of all accidents occur as a result of **careless behaviour**. Saturday this changes to 28%
 - 15% **inappropriate speed**. Saturday this changes to 17% inappropriate speed
 - 10% through **alcohol impairment**. Saturday this changes to 24% impairment alcohol
 - 3% occurred through **drug impairment**.
 - There are a wide range of other causation factors, the main focus for this report is those linked to behaviour.

Victims

8. It is difficult to identify who has caused each accident and to therefore separate victims from offenders. However, it is fair to say that anyone killed or seriously injured whether as a result of their own actions or otherwise, is a victim.
9. There is a very apparent increase in the number of victims who are aged around **18 and 19 years** suggesting that their lack of driving experience may have contributed in some way to the collision. This data relates to all casualties and not necessarily the driver. However, analysis shows that the majority (at least 60%) of those killed or seriously injured were driving the vehicle at the time of the accident.

Offenders

10. Although no data is held that actually apportion blame to a specific driver, in many cases it's likely that those involved in KSI's will have played some part in causing the collision. Whilst this is probably true and is supported by the investigation data, there are many innocent people who will have been the victim of another persons careless driving. The following figures are based on the inference that those involved in KSI collisions have contributed in some way to them occurring, even if this was just by driving too fast to take evasive action from another drivers error.
11. **80% of drivers involved in KSI accidents are male** according to PSPD figures. Of these, **31% are aged between 17 and 25 years**. This compares to only 10% of drivers involved in KSI collisions being aged over 65. There is a perception that the elderly are more dangerous on the roads but they appear to be involved in far fewer serious accidents than young and inexperienced drivers.

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