ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

What’s the issue?

“The UK has one of the best road safety records in the world, but more can be done to prevent deaths and serious injuries” [303]. The cost of road traffic accidents is high both to individuals affected and insurance companies (and ultimately the drivers), as well as to public services including emergency and health services, and the community and economy in terms of traffic congestion [303]. Nationally, “the number of cyclists seriously injured has increased in recent years, faster than the increase in cyclists out on the roads, and motorcyclists account for 19% of all road user deaths despite representing only 1% of vehicle traffic ” [304]. Children and young persons are at increased risk of being involved as pedestrians or cyclists due to their lack of experience at being able to assess risk and vehicle speed, and are more likely to be distracted.

What’s our situation?

In 2015, 105 Hull residents were killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic accidents, including 18 children. Most of these KSI casualties involved cyclists (35; 33%), motorcyclists (23; 22%) or pedestrians (33; 31%) and there was one fatality. For 2015, there was a KSI casualty rate of 133 per billion miles, three-quarters higher than England (76), more than half higher than the region (84), and higher than each of the 10 comparator areas. Hull, as any city, will tend to have a high concentration of pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and drivers, so it is not especially surprising that the KSI rate is higher than England. Hull is relatively flat and there are a relatively high number of cyclists in Hull. Between 2013-15, there were 343 residents KSI on the roads giving a rate of 44.3 per 100,000 residents which was higher than England (38.5) [26].

For more detailed information, see the JSNA Toolkit: Accidents report.

What are the strategic needs?

The risk of road traffic accidents can be reduced through reducing the number of drivers on the road that should not be driving (those drinking alcohol and taking prescribed and illegal drugs, disqualified drivers, drivers without licences, and uninsured drivers), ensuring drivers and their passengers are as safe as possible in their cars by keeping to speed limits and not using mobile phones when driving, and ensuring seatbelts and proper child restraints are used. Ensuring pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists are as visible as possible with their clothing, lights and protective helmets and clothing where appropriate, and increasing training for all road users.

Nationally, the Department for Transport (DfT) are working to reduce road traffic accidents though new drug driving legislation and more sophisticated road side testing devices [303], revising and reissuing speed limit guidance to help local councils improve safety on their roads [305] as well as providing a speed limit appraisal tool, a computer-based database to help councils assess the full costs and benefits of any proposed speed limit changes [303], reviewing the motorcycle test [303], extending Transport for London’s THINK! Cycling ‘Tips’ to other cities [304], and promoting THINK! education resources and other road safety campaigns [303]. The DfT are also looking at ways to reduce the number of uninsured and unlicensed drivers on the roads, looking at driving and riding tests and standards, and adding case studies to the theory test to improve attitudes to driving, and offering more support to new drivers [303].

Locally, a number of interventions have been used to reduce road accidents, including regular free car seat clinics (80% seats were unsafe), resources for any nursery or primary school to play out traffic intervention scenarios, pedestrian skills available to every primary school in Hull (classroom resources and independent assessment of each child), Bikeability program for any Year 5/6 child (ages 9-11) to build confidence on the road (free cycle helmet), transition to secondary training (an hour long session encouraging children to pre-plan their commutes to their new secondary school), “Rusty Rider” cycling programme for adults, and young and old driver assessments (through
Institute of Advanced Motorists at a discounted rate focusing on speed and judging situations for young and age reactions and medication interactions for older drivers).

References


