

Travelling with Confidence Practice Exemplar

Name and Timescales

Travelling with Confidence was initially launched on 29th May 2018 in Edinburgh, Falkirk and Stirling. Work is now ongoing to roll this out across the rest of Scotland.

Summary

Travelling in Confidence is a Road Safety initiative which aims to reduce the number of persons aged 60 and over who are injured whilst travelling on a bus. Police Scotland are the lead organisation and worked in partnership with First Bus, Lothian Buses, Roar – Connections for Life, Age Scotland, Road Safety Scotland, RoSPA, Transport Scotland, City of Edinburgh Council.

The initiative was initially focussed on the Edinburgh, Falkirk and Stirling areas and now includes the Lothians and Scottish Borders. Following positive feedback, Police Scotland has decided to roll this out nationally in 2019.

The initiative is aimed at educating bus drivers, passengers and family/friends/carers of those that may be affected.

Need for Initiative

Police Scotland is alive to the risk surrounding injury to older passengers on buses. There is a desire to work with key partners to ensure that we are doing all we can to minimise these occurrences which can have severe consequences and adversely impact national road safety performance. During the year prior to the initiative launch, two people died and many others were seriously injured following falls on public transport. In addition to the tragic human cost, these incidents are resource intensive and put a physical and economic strain on the road network.

It is important to appreciate that every injury sustained to an older person, no matter how innocuous it may seem, has the potential to have serious or even grave consequences for that individual. Falls often result in hospitalisation and months of treatment, and recovery can be long, arduous, and with varying degrees of success. Such individuals are our parents, grandparents, neighbours and friends and the tragic human cost of these incidents can be very high. The affected person may lack the confidence to continue using buses and then find themselves having less social interactions and a reduced quality of life.

Aims and Objectives

The initial aims and outcomes of the project are:

- To reduce the number of persons aged 60+ who are injured or killed as a result of incidents on buses.
- To positively influence bus driver behaviour in respect of the above.
- To educate passengers and any relevant person in respect of the above.

Delivery

An initial meeting with the Head of Risk at Lothian Buses provided reassurance around developments in vehicle standards and safety whilst also highlighting opportunities around driver and passenger education. A short life working group was formed and a series of multi-agency meetings were thereafter chaired by Police Scotland and attended by representatives from Lothian Buses, First Group, Transport Scotland, Road Safety Scotland, RoSPA, Edinburgh Council and also older person charities Age Scotland and Roar for Life. Following discussion it was agreed that success could come from education work aimed at:

- **Driver Behaviour:** There was appreciation for the high standard of training that First Bus and Lothian Buses provide. All collisions are subject to internal investigation which ensures standards are maintained. Both operators expressed a desire for a police video which would be shown to drivers during their initial training and support key messaging.

- **Elderly Passenger Behaviour:** Education work necessary to encourage use of appropriate seating and remaining seated until the bus comes to rest through confidence that it will stop when the bell is pressed. Desire to produce a leaflet comprising of travel safety advice which would be included with the concessionary bus pass and circulated through various forms of media using the group's contacts/reach. There is potential funding options available through each agency.
- **Other Road Users:** Work on this area would focus on the courtesy of other bus passengers, drivers and pedestrians in the vicinity of buses to appreciate the consequences of buses having to stop suddenly. The Travelling with Confidence project will be included in future police Vulnerable Road User campaigns and be relaunched on social media to increase awareness.

The group designed a leaflet which incorporated key messages for passengers. Funding was secured from Road Safety Scotland and 20,000 copies were distributed to the target audience and promoted through various channels.

An educational training film for drivers was filmed by the Police Scotland AV Unit and has been produced to national broadcast standard featuring a professional voice over, volunteer actors with Police and Bus Driver inputs. The package was well received by partners and is now fully incorporated in Lothian and First Bus driver training. A media strategy was set and includes a series of clips and animated GIFs to be used on social media. The Police Scotland media team coordinated a public launch event in May 2018 at Holyrood Park, Edinburgh. An article was published in local newspapers. The initiative was launched in the Edinburgh, Falkirk and Stirling areas but both the leaflet and video were ensured to be suitable for national distribution.

Successes and Challenges

The project has received universal praise from bus companies, relevant local authorities and age related charities. The project was not a 'tough sell', with all parties very keen to be actively involved when approached.

Impact/Change

The success of the project will be determined by year end casualty statistics and awareness shown in social media reach analysis. Due to the relatively recent launch the full extent of the impact in relation to casualty statistics is not yet known. Analysis carried out on 1 March 2019 for the areas impacted by the project is encouraging, revealing that the time since launch has seen the least number of relevant persons killed or seriously injured in these instances in the past 5 years.

Analysis of the social media activity shows:

Twitter

Impressions: **60,751**
 Engagements: **549**
 Engagement Rate: **0.9%**
 Video Views: **9,320**

Facebook

Reach: **35,635**
 Engagements: **1,332**
 Engagement Rate: **3.7%**
 Video Views: **8,799**

Overall

Reach: **96,386**
 Engagements: **1,881**
 Engagement Rate: **2%**
 Video Views: **18,119**

Reflections

The development of this project was initially challenging but highly rewarding. From a personal perspective, it has revealed a real desire in both individuals and key organisations to positively impact in Road Safety and the lives of older people in Scotland.

Additional Information

Training video for drivers: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73VDVZA_yd8

Social media video: <https://youtu.be/U7DP9ZqosG0>

Police Scotland web page:

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/whats-happening/news/2018/may/new-initiative-help-older-bus-passengers-travel-confidence>

Media Reporting:

<https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/our-region/edinburgh/new-initiative-launched-help-older-bus-passengers-travel-in-edinburgh-1-4746567>

<https://www.theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2018/05/initiative-to-make-bus-travel-safer-for-vulnerable-people/>

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