

# LEARNING THE LESSONS

## > Roads policing

**Issue 38**

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Improving policing policy and practice

# YOUR FEEDBACK ON ISSUE 37: YOUNG PEOPLE (JANUARY 2020)

## Thinking about the content of issue 37

96%

(26) said the mix of cases and feature articles felt about right

96%

(27) said the feature articles complemented the cases featured in the magazine

96%

(23) said the case summaries were clear and easy to understand

96%

(23) said the case summaries were the right length

97%

(27) said the key questions helped to identify key learning in the cases

## Thinking about the impact of issue 37

88%

(25) said they would think differently about how they interact with young people during their work after reading issue 37

67%

(12) said they intend to look at one or more sections of APP/PACE/other guidance signposted in issue 37

84%

(16) said they will consider changing policies/guidance/training they are responsible for to reflect learning in issue 37

**Note:** Based on 29 responses to the survey. Not all respondents answered all questions.

“ I believe they [issues of the magazine] are of great value to the force and I circulate them widely, particularly to staff in the business areas to which the cases/articles relate. ”

“ From the last few editions I have particularly liked some of the smaller hints found within the articles, and more of these would be brilliant. I know this issue was about young people, but thinking back to the previous edition about mental health, one that stood out was the importance of clarifying comments on incident logs. This was really helpful (I think it mentioned the phrase ‘she’s taken her medication’ could have two meanings of having consumed the medication or stolen it – both would have a very different risk attached). Maybe these kind of snippets could be summarised somewhere in the publication? ”

“ ...the publication is of the right length and content and needs to remain the case, avoiding extensions unless absolutely necessary. I circulate the document across the force and it needs to be kept at a length that will not overwhelm the recipients. ”

“ Although I predominantly work with adults, quite a few of my colleagues work with young people. This magazine helps us to discuss and learn from issues discussed from two professional perspectives. ”



**OUR NEXT ISSUE FOCUSES ON CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE.**

Please get in touch if you have a suggestion for content.

# FOREWORD



Welcome to issue 38 of Learning the Lessons, which focuses on roads policing – a key area of focus for our work.

As our [annual statistics on deaths during or following police contact](#) show, in 2019/20, there were 24 fatal police-related road traffic incidents (RTIs). The majority of police-related RTIs are investigated by police force Professional Standards Departments with the IOPC investigating the most serious cases. These investigations play a critical role in establishing what happened and identifying any learning to help improve policing practice.

In early 2018 we created our roads policing subject matter network. Its aim, amongst other things, is to identify and share learning arising from road policing incidents. The network also makes sure our operational work around roads policing reflects best practice.

By improving policing practice on the roads, we hope to reduce the number of incidents resulting in death or serious injury. This aim underpins this issue – applying learning from ten cases we have selected to help protect the public from harm and ultimately save lives.

The cases in this issue cover high-speed pursuits, driving authorisation and the use of life hammers. We include articles about police driver training, the work of Brake's national road victim service, and we hear from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). The Roads Policing Academic Network has also contributed an article about three key pieces of research into roads policing.

I hope you find this issue useful. We really are interested in any feedback you have, so please do get in touch.

Michael Lockwood  
Director General of the IOPC

# CONTENTS

	CASE	PAGE
<b>CASES</b>		
Suitability of different types of vehicles for pursuits	4, 6	14, 19
Authorisation of pursuits	1, 3	6, 12
Communication of changes to levels of authorisation	2	8
Red mist during police pursuits	8	26
Authority to execute tactical manoeuvres	5, 6	15, 19
Taking account of road conditions	9	30
Activating audio equipment	10	34
Guidance and training on the use of life hammers	7	22
Knowledge of the definition of a pursuit	6	19
<b>ARTICLES</b>		
Changing police practice inside and out: The IOPC roads policing Subject Matter Network		4
Taking a national view on roads policing		10
A driving force for safer roads policing		16
A helping hand: The work of Brake's National Road Victim Service		24
HMICFRS inspections into roads policing: Better roads policing needed to prevent increase in deaths		32
Introducing the Roads Policing Academic Network		36

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# Changing police practice inside and out

## The IOPC Roads Policing Subject Matter Network

**In the relatively short time since its formation, the IOPC's Roads Policing Subject Matter Network (SMN) has helped inform new government legislation, contributed to the shaping of police policy for certain types of pursuit, and overseen internal improvements aimed at boosting our investigators' specialist knowledge.**

### Setting the framework

SMNs were introduced to increase our impact and credibility, develop in house technical expertise, and ultimately improve the quality of investigations. The Roads Policing SMN was one of the first of seven established early in 2018. Each network has a similar structure, with a strategic lead supported by a network chair. They also have representatives from different areas of the organisation, including policy and public affairs, legal, knowledge and oversight, operations,

learning and development, and communications.

Steve Noonan, strategic lead for the Roads Policing SMN, said: "Our subject matter networks help to ensure our operational work reflects good practice, and is credible and trustworthy. The networks support our aim to identify learning, which we share with forces to improve policing and protect the public from harm."

### Informing the review

The Roads Policing SMN had a head start on other subject areas as it morphed from an existing working group set up late in 2017 to consider the IOPC's response to a Home Office review of the law, guidance and practice surrounding police pursuits. That led to us broadly welcoming government proposals for change, which we understand will form part of new legislation in the forthcoming Police Protections

and Powers Bill.

Early during that exercise, the working group recognised the need to gather and submit relevant data to inform the review. It is an approach underpinning many of the IOPC's initiatives since. The SMN is striving to build and better understand the bigger picture, given that while we investigate the most serious police-related traffic incidents, the majority are still investigated by the forces.

### Updating guidance

Infrastructure is in place to increase our expertise and influence with the development of strong links with the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and College of Policing.

That helped to pave the way before making a formal national learning recommendation last year updating guidance for police drivers using tactical contact with a moped or

motorcycle ridden by a suspected criminal.

The recommendation came from five of our investigations involving tactical contact with two-wheeled vehicles. We identified a gap in national policing guidance for using the tactic, which posed risks to the police, riders and public. The updated guidance is now clearer over when it is appropriate to carry out tactical contact in these circumstances. It covers use of alternative tactics, weighing up the severity of the suspected offence, and the likelihood of causing injury to the riders, others and themselves. It also reinforces that use of tactical contact must be authorised.

### National recommendations

The SMN has also promoted national learning recommendations around police use of life hammers to extract people trapped in vehicles after a collision; and the activation of audio recording equipment by officers during pursuits.

Other work carried out by SMN members, with the NPCC, includes improving the process for accessing expert advice for our most serious cases. We have also been part of a national technical group looking to set minimum standards for in-car data systems.

### Consistent communication

The SMN's drive for more consistent communication with stakeholders led to a roundtable event organised in January last year. It brought together a range of stakeholders with expertise in roads policing and road safety. They discussed and developed the criteria used to capture learning from cases that might not reach the statutory bar for investigation. This aimed to help focus work on

where we could maximise learning and influence change.

The SMN's strategic and technical leads also attended the Police Federation's annual roads policing conference to take part in a panel discussion about pursuit investigations. They also gave a presentation on the IOPC's work to improve its understanding of roads policing procedures.

They highlighted an in-house project which has seen the appointment of eight roads policing technical advisors across England and Wales, with at least one in each of the IOPC's six offices.

The advisors have received internal training to gain specialist knowledge, and have been given access to publications available to police officers so investigators can have their own reference material and build professional networks within roads policing. There have been opportunities to visit force control rooms and attend some police driver training courses such as Tactical Pursuit and Containment (TPAC).

### Analysis and opinion

These developments have led to technical analysis and advice on key areas being provided for senior management. Operationally, the SMN now also provides early investigation advice on evidential gathering, direction for technical support from forces experts, interpretation of video footage, and opinion on use of driving tactics and standards.

Steve Noonan said: "The advisors are there to act as a conduit between technical knowledge and individual investigations. Looking forward the aim is to increase their capability to be

able to provide guidance at their respective locations. This will help to embed common practices within investigations, with a view to improving timeliness, national consistency and quality."

This is a good example of how SMNs have been integrated into our day-to-day work and are contributing to the IOPC's strategic priorities by sharing learning from our work, helping to improve confidence in police accountability, and working with others to improve the police complaints system.

Steve Noonan continued: "Since we became the IOPC there has been a very deliberate move away from apportioning individual blame for incidents and a stronger focus on identifying opportunities for learning and systemic issues. This culture shift has meant looking more closely at a wider range of investigations to highlight good practice as well as areas for improvement.

"To that end we have been undertaking a series of improvements to our own investigations, to streamline and strengthen our RTI case work. While we must make sure our investigations are robust and independent, we are keen to work jointly with the police service to make sure our processes are aligned and compatible with police procedure and best practice.

"Ultimately, by increasing the IOPC's capability and capacity to deal effectively with RTIs and pursuit-related cases, the Roads Policing SMN aims to help improve policing practice, better understand the cause of roads policing incidents and hopefully reduce the number of them resulting in death or serious injury."

# Case 1 HIGH SPEED CROSS-BORDER PURSUIT

In the early hours of the morning police received a 999 call reporting a burglary.

Two officers responded to the call. They found a burglary in progress with a dark coloured Transit van parked outside. The Transit van drove off at speed.

Units were called to assist and another officer responded. He activated his blue lights close to the Transit van. It did not stop. The van was travelling at more than 100mph and a suitable advance driver was requested.

The relevant officer gave authority to pursue. The risk was assessed as 'medium' because of the time of night, road traffic, and weather conditions (which were dry). The officer explained neighbouring forces would often collaborate on such incidents. However, once a pursuit crossed into a different force territory, that force would take full responsibility of it.

The pursuit was placed on the dedicated pursuit channel, Intop1. This allowed neighbouring forces to liaise over cross-border pursuits. This worked by two forces being patched together by the force area the pursuit was entering.

The force that received the initial call notified a neighbouring force the pursuit was likely to enter their force area and would therefore 'come under their command.' The two forces had difficulties patching together their communication channels. It took around ten minutes to achieve.

Soon after, it appeared the pursuit was fast approaching the



territory of a third force. An officer from the force now in control of the pursuit made contact with the third force to make it aware, and to set up a patch between the channels. However, the original two forces were still linked.

The forces had difficulties linking the channels. An officer at the third force, whose area the pursuit was now entering, suggested the force whose area the pursuit was leaving patched onto them instead.

It was accepted this was unusual practice. The control room supervisor at the third force said when this happened it quickly became apparent they could hear transmissions from pursuing units. However, they were unable to hear the dispatcher and units were talking at the same time.

Four officers in two cars were made aware of the incoming pursuit and the issues with communications over their radio. They were also made aware of the approximate location of the Transit van on the motorway. The officers decided to go ahead of the Transit van and try to stop it using a stinger device at the next junction of the motorway.

Several officers involved in the pursuit told the IOPC they were aware of the ongoing issue with communications on the radio channel. They were also aware the pursuit had been authorised in the first two force areas in which it had taken place, but were not aware if it had been authorised in the third. The force policy of the third force stated an authorised driver should ask for authority to continue a pursuit in their force area.

**“ The control room supervisor at the third force said he did not give permission to pursue in the force area as he could not communicate with the lead vehicle in the pursuit ”**

He said this was broadcast by the dispatcher but he was unable to say if any units had heard it or whether it had been relayed by the second force's dispatcher. There was no evidence to suggest this information was relayed.

One of the officers driving a



photo: Alamy

vehicle involved in the planned deployment of the stinger, said he was not concentrating on radio communications as this was his operator's job. The operator in this vehicle told the IOPC he heard the third force controller say several times the pursuit was not authorised yet. The driver of the vehicle said he did not hear this despite the volume on his radio being at maximum.

The stinger was used at the junction as planned. The Transit van approached the junction at around 70mph. It drove through the stinger which deflated the two front tyres.

Several officers said they knew the stinger had been successful because the van immediately began to slow. However, the driver of the police vehicle who said he was not concentrating on radio communications, said he did not believe the stinger had been successful or the van was slowing down.

The officers who believed the stinger had been successful said they slowed down in preparation to get out of their vehicles and make an arrest. However, they saw the officer who did not believe

the stinger had been successful overtake them at speeds of more than 60mph before colliding with the Transit van. There was no evidence the driver discussed or agreed this manoeuvre with the control room or his colleagues. This was in contradiction of force pursuit policy.

A collision report indicated the driver drove too fast and too close to the Transit van. As a result, he was not able to stop in time. The force policy stated: "Whilst pursuing a vehicle, drivers must remember to keep an adequate distance from the vehicle being pursued to give them sufficient time to react to any circumstances that may develop." ●

#### Key questions for policy makers/managers:

- What steps has your force taken to identify potential barriers to communicating or working effectively with other forces during cross-border pursuits?
- Does your force give officers clear guidance and training on patching with other force channels? Does this cover any possible workarounds for frequently encountered issues?
- Does your force give officers clear advice on how to respond when clear authorisation to continue pursuits which cross borders has not been heard?
- How has your force worked with neighbouring forces to ensure the smooth transfer of command and control from one force to another where a pursuit crosses into another force area?

#### Key questions for police officers/staff:

- As one of the police drivers in this incident, would you have ended the pursuit when you were not able to communicate with the control room?
- What action would you have taken if you were unsure whether the stinger had been successful or not?

#### Outcomes for the officers/staff involved:

- The investigation found the officer who collided with the van had a case to answer for misconduct. This was in relation to allegations he may have pursued the Transit van when it was not clear he was authorised to do so, and when engaged in the pursuit he drove in a way which led to the collision. He attended a misconduct meeting where the conduct level was not proven. It was recommended he receive training.
- The force suspended the officer who collided with the van from driving until he was able to re-take some of his training modules to a satisfactory level.
- **Read the full learning report**

## Case 2 ISSUES WITH AN OFFICER'S DRIVING AUTHORISATION WHEN TRANSFERRING FORCE

A police officer transferred from one force to another. He gave his training records to the new force. They showed he was standard response and initial phase pursuit (IPP) trained. A team leader in the force's driver training unit arranged for the officer to receive the same authorisations within the new force. They were added to the officer's training records.

Shortly after, the officer contacted the team leader from the driver training unit to find out if he would need to undertake any form of driving assessment. The team leader established the officer had not driven operationally within the last 12 months, as required under force policy. Therefore, a driving assessment was arranged.

Approximately a week later a staff member in the driver training unit printed a permit for the officer. This included IPP authorisation. It was sent out by internal post.

A few days later, the officer undertook a driving assessment and lost his IPP authorisation. The officer signed paperwork acknowledging this. He was not allowed to engage in pursuits under any circumstances. Force policy stated standard response drivers were subject to a maximum speed of 20mph above the posted speed limit and must be IPP trained to engage in the initial phase of a pursuit in a reporting role.

**“ Approximately two to three weeks later the officer received the permit, which included IPP authorisation. He said he believed this meant he was IPP authorised because he had completed IPP refresher training within the previous five years with his previous force. He did not query this permit with the driving school. ”**

The driving school did not amend the officer's driver training record to reflect he had lost IPP authorisation until a month after it came into effect. A revised permit was printed for the officer without the IPP qualification. This was placed in internal post, which was not traceable. The officer said he never received the revised permit.

Around eight months later the officer became engaged in a pursuit with a female driver. He believed she was a drug user who had been parked in a layby on an A road.

The officer notified the control room soon after becoming involved in the pursuit. He said he was an 'Amber' driver. 'Amber' drivers are trained in standard response and IPP driving. An initial phase pursuit was authorised.

Data from the vehicle showed the officer was travelling in excess of 20mph above the posted speed limit during the pursuit. This breached force policy. At different points in the pursuit, the officer travelled at 85mph in a 30mph zone, 104mph in a 50mph zone, and 90mph in a 60mph zone. The officer admitted to knowingly breaching force policy during the pursuit. He said he was using speed exemptions afforded

to him under the Road Traffic Regulations Act, which he said superseded locally set policies.

The officer said he reported his speeds to the control room throughout the pursuit. However, the control room supervisor told the IOPC he understood the speeds reported by the officer to relate to the speed of the subject vehicle.

The officer reported the subject vehicle had crashed approximately 10 minutes after the pursuit began. ●

### Key questions for policy makers/managers:

- How does your force make sure all relevant checks are carried out before officers who transfer from other forces are authorised to drive with your force?
- What steps does your force take to make sure when changes are made to the level of authorisation an officer holds, these are clearly communicated to the relevant individuals and force systems are updated in a timely manner?
- How does your force make sure relevant officers are aware when changes are made to the level of authorisation a driver holds?
- How does your force make sure control room supervisors actively risk assess ongoing incidents?
- How does your force make sure police drivers and control room staff communicate proactively about speeds used in a pursuit?





photo: Alamy

### Action taken by this police force:

- The force agreed a process to review and record training records received from external forces. They agreed to make sure officers are aware of the agreed level of transferrable skills and the subsequent driving authorisation for the force, as well as any training requirements.
- The force agreed a process where officers and staff can view their driving record in order to dispense with paper licences. The force also agreed to formally remind driver trainers that where a driving authorisation has been revoked or changed, more emphasis should be applied to make sure the student police officer is aware of the impact. Their acknowledgement should be properly recorded.

### Outcomes for the officers/staff involved:

- The officer involved in the pursuit had a case to answer for misconduct. This was for the allegation he breached force policy with his speeds during the pursuit. The force dealt with this through learning for the officer, rather than a formal disciplinary process.
- [Read the full learning report](#)

# Taking a national view on roads policing

In this article, we talk to Anthony Bangham, the Chief Constable of West Mercia Police and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Lead for Roads Policing to find out what's on the national roads policing agenda.

**What do you regard as the main achievements or areas of progress made by the NPCC on road policing in the last few years?**

The establishment of the Home Office, Department for Transport and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Roads Policing Review Board in 2019 was major progress. The board is overseeing a review of a wide range of roads policing activities and consequently commissioned Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to complete their first thematic inspection into roads policing.

The review board has also made a strong submission to the Home Office team considering changes to the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR). Inclusion of roads policing in the SPR is a key HMICFRS recommendation I strongly support. If the submission is successful this would be the most significant achievement in recent years for roads policing.

**What do you consider are the main issues facing roads policing in the coming years?**

Without doubt the biggest single issue we all face is how to reduce the number of people killed on our roads. There are 1,800 deaths on our roads every year. That's five every day or 150 every month. Whichever way you count them, they are generally preventable and unnecessary deaths, and they have a significant impact on victims, their families and our communities. I can't think of any other area of public policy that would tolerate such a number.

The way our roads are used is always evolving. For example, this year has seen an increase in cycling for both commuting and leisure activity and a reduction in traditional commuting by vehicle during lockdown.

All of these things will require

us to keep a close eye on collisions and reducing them.

**Do you feel the relevant Authorised Policing Practice (APP) could be strengthened or revised to support officers in decision making for spontaneous pursuit scenarios?**

We have a well-established NPCC working group focussed solely on police pursuits. This group is well represented by police and partners, including the IOPC and it's my expectation the group takes every opportunity to provide advice and support to all of those involved in police pursuits.

APP is something we continually review and evaluate - as with all guidance it cannot remain static. We also work with the College of Policing to make sure we're offering the most up to date, well thought out and appropriate advice to everyone





involved in the management of police pursuits.

### **How can we work collaboratively to ensure that when learning is identified it leads to real change in roads policing practices?**

NPCC has a strong roads policing portfolio with a number of specialist working groups. For example, our Operations, Intelligence and Investigations working group has membership from Police Forces, Highways England, HSE, Motor Insurers Bureau, the Roads Policing Academic Network, the Department for Transport and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners. It is through such groups and their diverse membership that we strive to make sure we understand and implement learning, however and wherever it is identified.

### **How do we ensure that learning is disseminated to police drivers and fleet managers so that they are aware of these issues before more formal measures, systems or policies can be implemented?**

Finding the right route to ensure relevant information gets to those who need to know it as quickly as possible is really important to us. We're engaged with a wide range of partners, internally and externally, and have a very good working relationship with those who lead the NPCC Fleet working group and the National Association of Police Fleet Managers.

### **How is the NPCC planning to deal with the issues arising from the imminent expiry of exemptions for officers using in-car technology while driving?**

We take the safety of our officers and staff extremely seriously. A new Vehicle Standards Order (VSO) came into effect on 1 November 2020 and means the police remain compliant with Regulation 109 Construction and Use Regulations 1986. The VSO allows the use of in car technology to support policing activity and protects officers and staff who are driving from distraction.

We know the risks of operating on roads are significant across policing and we're involved in work from this year's NPCC Officer and Staff Safety Review to ensure we provide the right kit, equipment, training and support to all officers and staff working on roads.

### **Is wider community-based education being considered**

### **as a way of reducing the number of pursuit-related injuries and deaths? What else might be considered?**

Thousands of pursuits are concluded safely every year. This demonstrates the high level of training officers receive and the skill they apply in dealing with one of the most challenging operational activities we undertake. Our police pursuits working group works hard to identify new tactics and innovative ways to reduce the risks associated with police pursuits. We all want to see these risks reduced and ultimately completely negated.

When a pursuit does end in a collision that results in death or injury, it attracts widespread media coverage and of course proper scrutiny from independent investigations.

Like some other areas, such as drug taking or carrying knives, sometimes the message from policing about understanding those risks is not well received and often it is other community groups, parents and other role models that can have a much greater impact when it comes to explaining the risks people are taking. I welcome support from anyone that can help reduce risk in this area.



**Anthony Bangham** is the Chief Constable of West Mercia Police and NPCC Lead for Roads Policing, which oversees a

**range of roads policing activities including police enforcement campaigns, collision investigation, police pursuits, motorcycles, pedal cycles and intelligence.**

## Case 3 UNAUTHORISED PURSUIT OF A MOPED LEADS TO A COLLISION

Two officers were on patrol in a marked police vehicle when they became aware of a moped with a driver and pillion passenger. The moped did not display a registration plate, its lights were not illuminated, and the rider and passenger were not wearing helmets.

The officer who was driving was a basic trained driver. The officers followed the moped into a supermarket car park. The driver and the officer, who was initially the passenger, swapped places as the officer was advanced driver-trained. While this officer did hold advanced driving authority, he was not permitted to take part in pursuits.

**“ The officer who swapped into the driver seat explained to the IOPC the officer now in the passenger seat was a very new officer. They had never taken part in a pursuit, nor given commentary to the control room on a pursuit. ”**

For this reason, the advanced trained driver said he assumed all roles while pursuing the moped.

The advanced trained driver continued to report his location over the airwaves while pursuing the moped. He asked if any additional resources were able to assist. A control room operator told the police driver no one was able to assist.

The police driver informed the



### College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP): roads policing; pursuit management

#### Authorisation

Officers should seek authorisation for their decision to engage in a pursuit from designated control/communications room staff. The time available between recognising the need for action and the deadline for taking action may be too short to acquire the control/communications room authorisation. In such cases officers may self-authorise and justify the decision at a later time in line with the National Decision Model. No additional authority is required to move from the initial phase to the tactical phase.”

Find out more:

[www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/road-policing-2/police-pursuits/#pursuit-management](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/road-policing-2/police-pursuits/#pursuit-management)

control room operator he had his blue lights on yet the moped was failing to stop. He asked if anyone could authorise a pursuit.

The control room operator replied the control room supervisor was not available. Therefore, a pursuit could not be authorised from the control room.

**“ The police driver said he self-authorised the pursuit, justifying this on the basis there was a lack of people or traffic in the area. ”**

The police driver also mentioned to the control room he was travelling alongside the bike in order to try and get Body Worn Video (BWW) footage of their faces. College of Policing guidance does give officers the option to self-authorise and justify the decision later in line with the National Decision Model (NDM).

The police driver’s training record showed he was not pursuit trained, and therefore should not have self-authorised the pursuit. He told the IOPC he was shocked as he believed he had authority to undertake pursuits. He stated he completed an advanced refresher



course a couple of years before. He believed his previous pursuit authority rolled over by completing the refresher course.

The IOPC obtained an email sent from a force trainer to the police driver involved in the incident around the time the refresher course was completed. It said: “as discussed this does not include pursuit and therefore it is not included on your driving authority”.

The police driver in this incident described how the force used to issue cards with an officer’s details and level of driving authority on them. This had been discontinued in recent years.

**“ The control room operator asked the police driver over the airwaves “... just confirm you have aborted?” The police driver told the IOPC he did not hear the command requesting him to confirm he had aborted the pursuit. ”**

At one point during the pursuit, the moped turned around in the driveway of an industrial premises. The moped headed back in the

direction of the police vehicle on the wrong side of the road. Fearing a head on impact, the police driver turned the police vehicle back to the nearside of the road. As he did this, the moped turned right to try to cut across him. As the police driver turned and braked, the moped accelerated across his path and collided with the front of the police vehicle.

The pillion passenger, who was 14 years old, fractured his left leg. He was subsequently arrested on suspicion of theft of a motor vehicle. ●

#### Key questions for policy makers/managers:

- How does your force make sure officers are aware of their current driving authorisation for pursuits? Do you provide any physical or electronic record which confirms driving authority?
- Does your force give clear guidance on how officers should respond when a control room supervisor is not available to authorise a pursuit?

#### Key questions for police officers/staff:

- What steps would you have taken to avoid engaging in a pursuit?
- If you were working in the control room, what steps would you take to make sure the police driver understood the pursuit was not authorised and should not be continued?
- Would you have advised officers to continue pursuing the moped to capture an image of the drivers’ and passengers’ faces?

#### Outcomes for the officers/staff involved:

- The police driver had a case to answer for misconduct. This was because he allegedly engaged in a pursuit when not authorised to do so, and without having properly checked his driving authorisation and adhering to its constraints. He received management action.
- **Read the full learning report**

## Case 4 COLLISION INVOLVING AN UNMARKED POLICE VEHICLE WITH CONCEALED LIGHTS

An advanced police driver, driving an unmarked vehicle, responded to a request from a fellow officer for assistance during an incident. He travelled to the scene using an A road at speeds of up to 154mph. He displayed blue lights in the front grille, fog light clusters and wing mirrors.

In-car footage showed the officer repeatedly flashed his headlights during the journey. At one point, while the officer was travelling at around 145mph, a Ford Transit light goods vehicle (LGV) pulled out in front of the unmarked police vehicle. The officer reduced his speed to 101mph and moved into lane one, reducing his speed to 92mph.

There was a car in lane one in front of the officer. Therefore, the unmarked police vehicle moved immediately into a layby at 85mph, reducing his speed to 65mph. It collided with a stationary heavy goods vehicle (HGV).

When interviewed by the police, the driver of the LGV said he did not see blue lights on the police vehicle when he first saw it 400m away. He said as it got closer he saw the headlights flashing, and then the blue lights.

Later, an investigation was carried out into the causes of the collision.

A vehicle examiner looked at the police vehicle. He found no mechanical defects but did find nylon covers placed over the blue lights in the front grille.

The force commissioned the opinion of a cognitive psychologist specialising in visual perception and situation awareness. He

concluded a nylon cover on the blue grille lights reduced the measured illuminance to approximately 14% of the uncovered level.

The head of the roads policing unit explained when he took on the role, the force's fleet vehicles needed replacing. He allowed the fleet department to take the lead over technical or scientific issues, and compliance with guidelines and regulations. He explained the lights should not be visible when not in use.

A technician at the force explained he was instructed by the commissioning manager to begin a conversion of a fleet vehicle. It was explained the vehicle would need to be externally visually covert.

Once the conversion was completed, the technician said he was approached by the commissioning manager and the head of the roads policing unit who said the front grille lights were not fit for purpose as they were too visible.

The technician said he suggested the lights could be covered by black nylon material, such as women's tights. The head of the roads policing unit said he asked the technician how this would affect the brightness of the lights. He said the technician told him he had done this many times before and it would be ok.

The head of the roads policing unit said he sourced a pair of tights to be fitted to an unmarked vehicle, but did not assess their suitability. The commissioning manager and the technician said they assessed the use of the tights between 15m and 20m from the vehicle. They concluded there were no issues. The technician completed their modification on a further three vehicles.

There were no national guidelines, regulations, or force policies and procedures about the modification of emergency lighting on unmarked police vehicles, or the requirement to scientifically test and validate any modifications made as fit for purpose. ●

### Key questions for policy makers/managers:

- What does your force policy say about modifying lights on unmarked vehicles?

### Key questions for police officers/staff:

- What other steps would you have taken to make other drivers aware of your presence as a police vehicle driving at high speed?

### Action taken nationally:

- The National Police Chiefs Council has commissioned a national working group to produce national guidelines about installing and modifying covert lighting.

### Action taken by this force:

- The practice of using nylon coverings to modify lights on unmarked vehicles has stopped.

### Outcomes for the officers/staff involved:

- There were no disciplinary or criminal outcomes for any police officers or staff.
- **Read the full learning report**

## Case 5 COLLISION WITH A PEDESTRIAN WHILE 'OFFSIDING'

Two officers began a mobile patrol in a marked police vehicle. At around 5.45pm, the force received phone calls about a disturbance involving three men fighting. One of the men reportedly had an axe. Witnesses had seen a man with an axe drive away in a black car. The control room notified the officers of the licence plate of the car.

The two officers arrived at the place where the man had reportedly been fighting. A member of the public flagged them down. They told the officers there were two cars involved in the incident and both had driven off in the same direction. The officers agreed to try to intercept the vehicles.

Around 10 minutes later the control room informed officers of another incident involving the subject vehicles. The men involved were reportedly fighting with hammers, and one man had been run over.

**“ The police officer who was driving explained to the IOPC there were two calls in a short space of time. They said the “climate” they were in contributed to the feeling this could be a terrorist incident. ”**

The police officers were diverted to the second incident. It was recorded on the incident log all people involved in the incident

were no longer in the area. The control room informed officers the incident had moved to a different location. Shortly after this, the officers received a report of a third incident involving dangerous driving, including vehicles driving at each other. The officers agreed to attend the incident and continued along the road they were travelling on.

The officer who was driving said he noticed traffic blocking his route, but was unable to recall the cause of the traffic. Witnesses at the scene later said the traffic was due to red traffic lights at a pedestrian crossing, preventing them from moving forward.

The officer who was driving said he believed he could either fight his way through it or move offside of the vehicle to overtake. The offside lane was clear of traffic, so the officer moved onto the opposite side of the road to overtake into the direction of traffic. He said he believed fighting his way through the traffic would have taken too long. Three witnesses said the police vehicle was travelling between 40 and 50mph.

A force driver training instructor explained to the IOPC ‘offsiding’ (moving onto the wrong side of the road) should only be attempted when there is good visibility of the road ahead, and should be completed slowly and appropriately to the circumstances. Officers must justify their decision-making when doing this.

The officer who was driving justified his decision due to the time it would have taken if he had not done so. However, he did not give an account of other potential hazards he considered when making his decision.

The officer who was driving

said he noticed the pedestrian crossing once he moved onto the opposite side of the road. As they approached the crossing, a man began to cross on the same side of the road as the police vehicle.

The officer who was driving braked hard when he noticed the man. However, he collided with the man. A collision investigator concluded it was likely the police vehicle was travelling at approximately 28mph.

The man was taken to hospital. He suffered three broken ribs and cuts to his face. ●

### Key questions for policy makers/managers:

- How does your force make sure officers adequately risk assess and justify their decision to ‘offside’?

### Key questions for police officers/staff:

- Would you have done anything differently to prevent the collision in this scenario?

### Outcomes for the officers/staff involved:

- The officer who was driving pleaded guilty to the charge of ‘careless driving’. He received a 12 month conditional discharge and paid a victim surcharge. He resigned from the force before a misconduct hearing.

- [Read the full learning report](#)

# A driving force for safer roads policing

**How has police driver training responded to challenges and changes in roads policing over the past decade? Neil Reading, Lead Tactical Pursuit and Containment (TPAC) Instructor, West Midlands Police, reflects.**

After more than ten years as an advanced police driver trainer, I can look back on the challenges we have faced and overcome with a sense of achievement, while recognising there are many more waiting on the road ahead.

Organisations such as the College of Policing (CoP), my own policing experiences, and learning from local and national cases, are drivers for change that lead us to continually review our practices. We are bound to follow the guidelines, set out as minimum standards by the CoP, leading to course lengths being compressed over time.

This is always a hot topic of discussion between trainers and their organisations. I've found myself thinking of very different ways to assist student learning, to make sure my students meet their own objectives.

Officers attend driver training for different reasons, related to their own individual roles within the force. For example, response officers need to help members of the public and communities by arriving safely at the scenes of ongoing situations.

We deliver a three-week standard response course with one trainer and three students. This enables those officers to attend in good time, arriving in a calm but alert frame of mind ready to face whatever scenario they are confronted with.

“ One of the biggest changes over the past decade has been adapting to training the mind, rather than just the required physical skills ”

Adjusting our drivers' attitudes and behaviours is vital to this process. We want drivers who can balance safe orderly driving, often in very challenging circumstances, with the expectations of acceptable response times placed on them by the wider public.

Our staff should be aware of how the public perceive our driving actions, and how this can affect their view of the police service as a whole.

Driving at a higher level means attending an advanced police driving course. This is a four-week course looking into the more technical aspects of driving. Consideration is given to driving vehicles with greater capability. This often relates to the roles the officers carry out, such as traffic, firearms or surveillance.



We also deliver further areas of specialist driver training. Examples include TPAC, escort courses and national protection. We also conduct standard and advanced police motorcycles courses on-site.

I am very conscious all of our training must relate to operational policing roles.





Students must be able to understand the reasons why we train the way we do and replicate that out on the road. The capability of police vehicles has increased dramatically over the years and we have had to adapt to new four-wheel-drive systems, complicated automatic transmission systems and in-car technology. Electric or hybrid vehicles will no doubt be our next big mechanical challenge

and we maintain a watching brief on such developments.

Pursuit training has changed the most and is an area of real vulnerability if carried out inappropriately. The application of good practice and decision making can really enhance the police's ability to resolve serious criminality. However, any error could have serious

consequences for our staff and/or the communities they serve.

West Midlands Police has therefore adopted pursuit training for certain standard and advanced grade police drivers.

This involves two different levels: Initial Phase Pursuit (IPP) and TPAC. We build the confidence of our students, giving them the knowledge, understanding, skills and correct mind set to assess and deal with any given situation.

An assessment is made at the end of the course. Students are faced with live scenarios, each one offering different circumstances so we can evaluate their decision making in a stressful, but safe training environment. In order to pass the course students must show they have achieved the required learning.

We now devote more time to delivering newly developed, classroom-based training on our driving courses.

Traditional sessions on response and open road driving have been complemented with such subjects as the human factors of driving, incorporating the European Goals for Driver Education, night driving and management of police pursuits.

Our style of training has also changed considerably, using a more coached approach when appropriate.

We now ask our students to consider how they arrive at a particular driving decision. This can really impact on their learning in the long-term. We also ask them to reflect on their decisions and actions. This is done in a



de-brief. However, they are also asked to record their thoughts in a reflective journal. This is a really useful training tool.

Reflective practice is important within training and modern policing practices, so we learn lessons immediately from those areas requiring development. Of course, direct instruction still has its place, especially if a safety intervention is needed!

We are constantly reviewing emerging trends in the criminal use of motor vehicles and how that could relate to the operationally focused training we deliver. Any issues identified must be assessed, peer reviewed in a timely manner and checked against CoP learning programmes to shape how we adapt our training.

For example, the criminal use of vehicles to forcibly disable those used by our officers has been rising for some time. While the technical aspects cannot be discussed here, I can tell you we have changed how we train our staff to best avoid such situations.

We use many methods to gain knowledge of new criminal trends. We constantly review sources of information such as the CoP, Authorised Professional Practice, force policies, the experiences of our operational staff at user group sessions, and publications such as this one. We also feed our knowledge and experiences back to the CoP, which helps to make sure the training curriculum remains relevant and up-to-date.

Technology is a big enabler but occasionally it can throw up inconsistencies within certain training that we have to adapt to. This might be because it

interferes with a traditional police tactic in some areas of training, such as actively getting closer to a subject vehicle of interest. We can adjust easily to such conflicts. However, the use of satellite navigation systems and modern safety features have contributed enormously to public safety.

One last area we have really improved upon is how we develop our new trainers.

Apart from completing a seven week initial driver trainers' course, we also undertake a three week Police Trainer Roles Learning Development Programme and/or outside educational accreditation.

Current trainers also follow a structured up-skilling and CPD process. Diverse skills and viewpoints brought into the police by a variety of new trainers are also incorporated to ensure a balanced and forward-thinking mindset within the department as a whole.

We have become much more aware about being inclusive, and making adjustments where possible to make driver training accessible to all, whether as a trainer or a learner.

We have recently moved our highway code and roadcraft exams on to the officers' hand-held devices, where we can change the colour and font size to help learners with different needs. We also recently supported a dyspraxic student by researching the best methods of training and supported them with an individual development plan.

Police collisions have a serious impact on lives and we need to continue to prove our training is compliant with standards, and

above reproach. As lead TPAC instructor, I am often involved in internal post-incident examination. This role has grown over the years, as we have adopted new police training practices or tactics.

West Midlands Police and a number of other forces invested in Drivermetrics, a psychological assessment specifically designed for police drivers. The results will feed into an overarching process where those drivers identified as requiring greater input will be monitored and supported to improve standards.

**“ As police driver trainers, we strive to provide a learning environment that can enable our staff to operate safely, in which they can achieve their aims and be effective police drivers. ”**

Looking internally at how we do things and being receptive to positive change is part of that overall delivery plan. Our core role is always to assist our staff, so we can serve our communities as safely and effectively as possible.



**Neil Reading works as a police driver trainer for West Midlands Police. He retired after serving for 30 years as an officer and has**

**been a member of police staff for the past two years. His background includes various operational departments, including roads policing, driver development unit, and in police aviation as an air observer.**

## Case 6 OFFICERS INVOLVED IN UNAUTHORISED PURSUIT AND USE OF TACTICS

Several plain clothed officers in two unmarked police cars were part of an operation to tackle drug use and supply in the local area.

All officers involved in the operation communicated on an operation specific radio channel. This channel was not monitored by the force control room. Therefore, communications on this channel were not recorded.

One of the officers said he saw a man and woman from a group of known drug users get into a white vehicle. The vehicle was in an area commonly known as a place where drug dealing occurred. The officer was instructed to stop the vehicle.

The officer said he got out of his vehicle and shouted 'Stop'. The white vehicle wheel spun, mounted the kerb, and accelerated away.

The officer followed the route taken by the white vehicle in his assigned police vehicle. He said he did this to find out where it had gone, thus informing other units who could help to stop it. The other officer in the other unmarked vehicle said he heard over the radio the vehicle had made off. He also set about following it.

One of the officers driving one of the unmarked cars was trained and authorised to pursue in the initial phase using marked police vehicles. The other officer in the other unmarked police vehicle was not authorised or trained to pursue in any capacity. Neither unmarked vehicle was fitted with blue lights or sirens. Neither officer was trained in techniques to conduct tactical contact or containment on

subject vehicles.

A nearby officer broadcast over his radio on a different channel for local officers to help stop the vehicle. An officer from the Roads Policing Unit (RPU) agreed to help locate and stop the vehicle. He was driving an unmarked vehicle with blue lights and sirens fitted and was trained and authorised in Tactical Pursuit and Containment (TPAC).

The two officers following the vehicle both arrived at a pedestrian crossing displaying a red light. One of the officers crossed through the red light, sounding his horn to alert other users.

**“ Throughout the incident, both officers who originally began following the vehicle remained tuned into the operation specific radio channel. This meant at no point did they directly communicate with the control room. ”**

The TPAC trained driver made his way to the incident and activated blue lights and sirens. He became the lead vehicle in the pursuit. Upon interview with the IOPC, all the officers agreed the white vehicle had no intention of stopping for police. It was driving at approximately 20mph.

The officer who was not authorised to take part in pursuits said he did not believe this was a pursuit, but accepted he was unaware of the definition of a pursuit. The officer who was trained to carry out pursuits in the initial phase in marked police vehicles said he believed a pursuit was occurring at this stage. However, he also said he did not

believe his continued presence constituted active involvement in the pursuit.

The operator in the TPAC trained driver's vehicle gave the control room details about the pursuit and requested authority to continue the pursuit. The inspector in the control room authorised continuing the pursuit into the tactical phase. He said it was only when he saw CCTV footage following the event that he became aware of the other two vehicles following closely.

The TPAC driver attempted tactical contact, driving into the right-hand side of the white vehicle. This forced the vehicle onto the pavement where it collided with a post. During the contact, the officer who was not trained to carry out pursuits steered sharply to the left and mounted the pavement. He said he did this to prevent the white vehicle from reversing. This is a tactical manoeuvre called 'boxing'.

The white vehicle did not stop and he re-joined the road. The TPAC driver updated the control room to say the risk was medium to high as the vehicle was approaching a built-up area.

The white vehicle went through a red light. It was followed by the TPAC driver and the officer who went through a red light earlier. Soon after this, the white vehicle went through a 'No Entry' sign. It was again followed by the TPAC driver and the other officer who also went through the red light. The other officer who had waited at the red light earlier also passed through the 'No Entry' sign.

The white vehicle turned onto a busy main road. The officer trained and authorised to carry out pursuits in the initial phase in marked vehicles passed the TPAC trained driver and undertook the white vehicle. In



› doing so, they became the lead vehicle in the pursuit.

After doing this he drove into the left side of the white vehicle. This caused it to move rightwards onto the wrong side of the road and into oncoming traffic. A vehicle on the opposite side came to a sudden halt. The officer who drove into the side of the white vehicle said it was only at this stage he believed he had become actively involved in the pursuit. He acknowledged he was not trained or authorised to carry out this manoeuvre. Following the event, the TPAC driver said he did not believe this was a suitable place to conduct the manoeuvre as he assessed the risk as high.

The white vehicle steered back onto the left side of the road. The TPAC driver resumed his position as the lead vehicle. The white vehicle turned off the main road.

The white vehicle failed to give way to an oncoming vehicle. It collided with it, as well as two other parked cars. Officers gathered at the white vehicle and arrested its occupants.

**“ After reviewing the CCTV footage, the inspector in the control room said he became aware local force officers were also involved in the pursuit. He said he was confused why these officers were involved and never received any information to explain their involvement. ”**

The inspector also expressed his frustration that officers involved seemed to have attempted an

unplanned ‘boxing’ manoeuvre and tactical contact. He said he was not aware of the incidents happening at the time. ●

### Key questions for policy makers/managers:

- › What steps has your force taken to make sure all officers authorised to drive police vehicles understand the definition of a pursuit?
- › How does your force make sure officers are aware of the limitations of their driving authorisation?
- › How does your force make sure officers communicate with the force control room when they are following subject vehicles?
- › How does your force make sure officers adhere correctly to traffic exemptions?
- › What steps does your force take to make sure officers are fully aware of whether or not they have authority to execute tactical manoeuvres such as ‘boxing’ or tactical contact?

### Key questions for police officers/staff:

- › What action would you have advised the officers not authorised to be involved in pursuits to take once the pursuit began?
- › What steps would you have taken to avoid becoming actively involved in the pursuit?
- › How would you have made sure someone made contact with the force control room to make them aware of your involvement?

### Actions taken by this police force:

- › All standard response drivers attending training now receive it in unmarked response vehicles. However, standard response trained drivers are still prohibited from involvement in any stage of a pursuit in an unmarked vehicle. This is in line with force policy and the National Pursuits Directory.

### Outcomes for the officers/staff involved:

- › The officers who were not trained or authorised to carry out a pursuit under these circumstances were found to have a case to answer for gross misconduct. They both attended misconduct hearings. One received a final written warning, and the other management advice.
- › Read the full learning report

## Case 7 INEFFECTIVE USE OF A LIFE HAMMER

After midnight, two police officers were in a marked police car at a set of traffic lights. The officer driving the car said he became aware of a white van. It stopped extremely close to the police vehicle, virtually on the carriageway markings dividing the lanes.

When the traffic lights turned green, the police vehicle followed the van into a residential estate with the intention of stopping it. The police officer activated the car's sirens very briefly and his blue lights.

The van suddenly accelerated away as it approached the end of the estate. The police driver said he believed the van was failing to stop so activated his sirens and lights.

Shortly after starting the pursuit, the officers in the police vehicle lost sight of the van as they went round a bend. One of the officers said they heard a loud bang.

After exiting the bend, they could see the van in the distance. It had collided with something. It travelled backwards before stopping on a grass verge. It was not possible for the officers to see what the van had collided with.

The officers ran to the van and arrested the driver.

The passenger of the police vehicle contacted the control room to report the collision. He requested an ambulance and said he thought the van had collided with parked vehicles.

One of the vehicles had smoke coming from it. The officer believed it was parked when the van collided with it. No lights

were visible in or on either of the vehicles. A man on the road near to this vehicle waved his arms at the officer and told him there were people inside it. The other officer remained with the van.

**“ A collision investigator said the van had collided with this car and sent it spinning in a direction that made it appear as if it was parked at the side of the road. ”**

The officer and the man who waved him over unsuccessfully tried to open all the car doors. This officer informed the control room there was another vehicle involved in the collision with

people trapped inside. They requested the fire brigade and another ambulance.

The officer who was trying to open the car doors got a life hammer from the police vehicle. A life hammer is an emergency tool with a double sided hammerhead. It is stored within vehicles and designed for breaking vehicle glass.

Around this time, two emergency medical technicians (EMT) were passing by and stopped to help.

The officer used the life hammer to strike the bottom left corner of the driver's window 12 times in quick succession. However, the window did not break. The officer did the same to the bottom right corner of the window but the window still did



not break. He turned the hammer round to try the point on each side but the window still did not break. The officer used his baton to break the window.

Evidence suggested the life hammer was used correctly, despite no guidance or training available to officers on its use. The force said the life hammer in use at this time was solely designed for breaking the glass from inside a vehicle in order to escape in an emergency.

The officer spoke to the man, who was the driver of the vehicle, but he did not respond. He did manage to get a response from the man's wife. The officer tried to smash the glass on the passenger side of the vehicle with his baton but was unsuccessful.

The man who originally waved



the car over was able to smash the glass on the rear passenger side of the car. The officer spoke to the woman in the passenger side to see if she was ok.

One of the EMTs asked the officer for assistance with the male driver. When they got him out, the two EMTs gave CPR. Another officer arrived at the scene with a defibrillator and assisted with first aid.

The first fire engine arrived around 10 minutes later, and the first ambulance a few minutes after that. The paramedics then took control of the first aid.

Around 30 minutes later, both the man and the woman in the car were pronounced dead at the scene. Cause of death was later identified as chest injuries due to the collision. ●

### Key questions for policy makers/managers:

- Do you give officers clear guidance or training on when and how life hammers should be used?
- How does your force make sure where life hammers are used, these are replaced when required in line with manufacturer guidance?
- What training, guidance or equipment does your force give to officers to help them gain access to vehicles when needed?

### Key questions for police officers/staff:

- Are you aware life hammers are provided solely as an escape tool?

### Action taken by the NPCC

- As a result of IOPC recommendations, The National Police Chiefs Council circulated a letter to all chief constables outlining the concerns raised by the investigation. It encouraged them to note the IOPC recommendations made to the force.

### Action taken by the force:

- The force agreed to include information on the use of a life hammer and a video recording of the life hammer in use in all driver training courses.
- The force communicated to officers the current in-vehicle hammer was solely a piece of safety equipment to be used as an escape tool to exit a vehicle. It also communicated the process to be used for requesting a replacement, and that the local fire and rescue service has specialist equipment to rescue people from a vehicle in an emergency situation.

### Outcomes for the officers/staff involved:

- There were no disciplinary or criminal outcomes for any police officers or staff.
- Read the full learning report

# A HELPING HAND: THE WORK OF BRAKE'S NATIONAL ROAD VICTIM SERVICE

**Every road death or serious injury is a tragedy that touches many people. A crash not only changes survivors' lives forever, its impact ripples across their loved ones and those assigned to support them.**

Brake, the road safety charity, understands the uniquely painful challenges that each road death or injury presents to everyone involved. Through its National Road Victim Service (NRVS), Brake supports anyone who has been bereaved or seriously injured following a road crash, and those who help them. The Brake service is an accredited, professional source of emotional support, practical information, referral to other sources of help, and advocacy to help people during some of the most difficult times in their lives.

Through the National Road Victim Service, crash victims and their loved ones can talk to trained and experienced case workers on a confidential helpline. The case worker listens to their thoughts and feelings, and provides them with any information they may need, on topics from criminal prosecutions and court hearings, to financial challenges and campaigning for road safety.



The case workers can also help them seek healthcare support and find local grief support groups to help them process their feelings.

The team aims to help victims feel able to cope, emotionally and practically, to adjust to their new reality, and to provide help for as long as necessary.

Brake also offers free printed copies of its guidance for bereaved adults and children for police Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) to distribute via the service. A bereavement pack is available for each region of the UK, and can be found online

at <https://www.brake.org.uk/support-literature>

Brake also offers a booklet *Coping with Grief*, which aims to help people understand common emotions and feelings following a road death, as well as straightforward advice on how to cope and who can help them.

These printed resources are accompanied by a regular programme of events for professionals who support people bereaved or injured by road crashes, or bereaved by any type of sudden death. For example, in 2020 Brake has





## Coping with grief when someone you love is killed on the road

For more help and support call our helpline

**0808 8000 401**

or email [helpline@brake.org.uk](mailto:helpline@brake.org.uk)

Go to [www.brake.org.uk/support](http://www.brake.org.uk/support) for this booklet online

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Department  
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Author: Mary Williams OBE

broadcast webinars focusing on meeting the needs of people suffering life-changing injuries. These informative sessions feature best-practice advice from experts in the fields of health and social care, legal representation and law enforcement.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated the cancellation of Brake's police FLO conference, but in its place, they are running a series of five 10-15 minute webcasts to help provide a deeper understanding of the services Brake provides to support professionals.

### These will cover:

- **The National Road Victim Service**
- **Professional Awareness Training**
- **The Independent Road Victims Advocate role**
- **Brake's Bereavement Packs**
- **Brake's Serious Injury Guide"**

For more information about the National Road Victim Service, call 0808 8000 401 or email [help@brake.org.uk](mailto:help@brake.org.uk)



## Case 8 USING A POLICE VEHICLE TO APPREHEND A SUSPECT

Two officers were travelling in a marked police vehicle. The driver was a police-trained advanced driver.

The police vehicle entered a roundabout behind a silver car. According to the officers, the silver car lost control at the roundabout and moved away quickly from the police vehicle.

The police driver later said he believed the silver car reacted to the presence of the police car and was failing to stop. The police driver activated the police vehicle's lights and sirens and followed the silver car. It reached speeds of 80mph in a 30mph area.

The silver car turned left, followed by the police vehicle. The driver of the silver car lost control and the car spun roughly 180 degrees.

Dash cam footage showed the police vehicle steer towards the silver car. It made contact on the driver's side. The collision occurred at 9mph, causing the window in the driver's side door of the silver car to smash.

The police driver later stated he used the National Decision Model when he decided to make tactical contact. He also assessed all of the information available, the risk posed by the driver, and the driver's behaviour which led him to suspect a serious offence may have been committed. *"An opportunity presented itself for me to bring the pursuit to a swift conclusion by making tactical contact with the driver's door."* He stated the purpose of the contact was to prevent a further pursuit

### College of Policing – Authorised Professional Practice (APP) – public order – police use of force

#### Core questions

- Would the use of force have a lawful objective (eg, the prevention of injury to others or damage to property, or the effecting of a lawful arrest) and, if so, how immediate and grave is the threat posed?
- Are there any means, short of the use of force, capable of attaining the lawful objective identified?
- Having regard to the nature and gravity of the threat, and the potential for adverse consequences to arise from the use of force (including the risk of escalation and the exposure of others to harm) what is the minimum level of force required to attain the objective identified, and would the use of that level of force be proportionate or excessive?

It is essential that these core questions are considered in line with ten key principles governing the use of force by the police service.

Find our more:

[www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/public-order/core-principles-and-legislation/police-use-of-force/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/public-order/core-principles-and-legislation/police-use-of-force/)

and stop the subject from fleeing.

The silver car did not stop. The police vehicle turned in the road and pursued. The occupants of the silver car got out and began to run.

The police passenger stated he took his seatbelt off and opened his door ready to run after the occupants of the vehicle.

Dash cam footage shows the police vehicle behind one of the occupants of the silver car, who appeared to be running away. The police vehicle struck him at around 18mph. The man fell to the ground.

**“ The police driver later stated he used no more force than necessary to knock the man off his feet. He stated, referencing terrorism threats and organised crime gangs, he was concerned about why the man was so desperate to evade capture. ”**

He also said he had a duty of care to protect the public and his colleagues from potential harm. The police driver gave no comment when asked in interview to explain the threat he perceived.

The police passenger stated the police driver said to him “go get him”. Before he could get out of the police vehicle, the man got back up and continued to run.

Dash cam footage showed the police vehicle veer right towards the man, mounting the kerb and striking him for a second time at around 11mph.



**“ The police passenger stated he was in disbelief, did not believe this was proportionate to what he had seen, and fully expected the man to be under the wheels of the police vehicle ”**

> The man was not under the wheels of the police vehicle. He sustained a dislocated shoulder and a cut to the head.

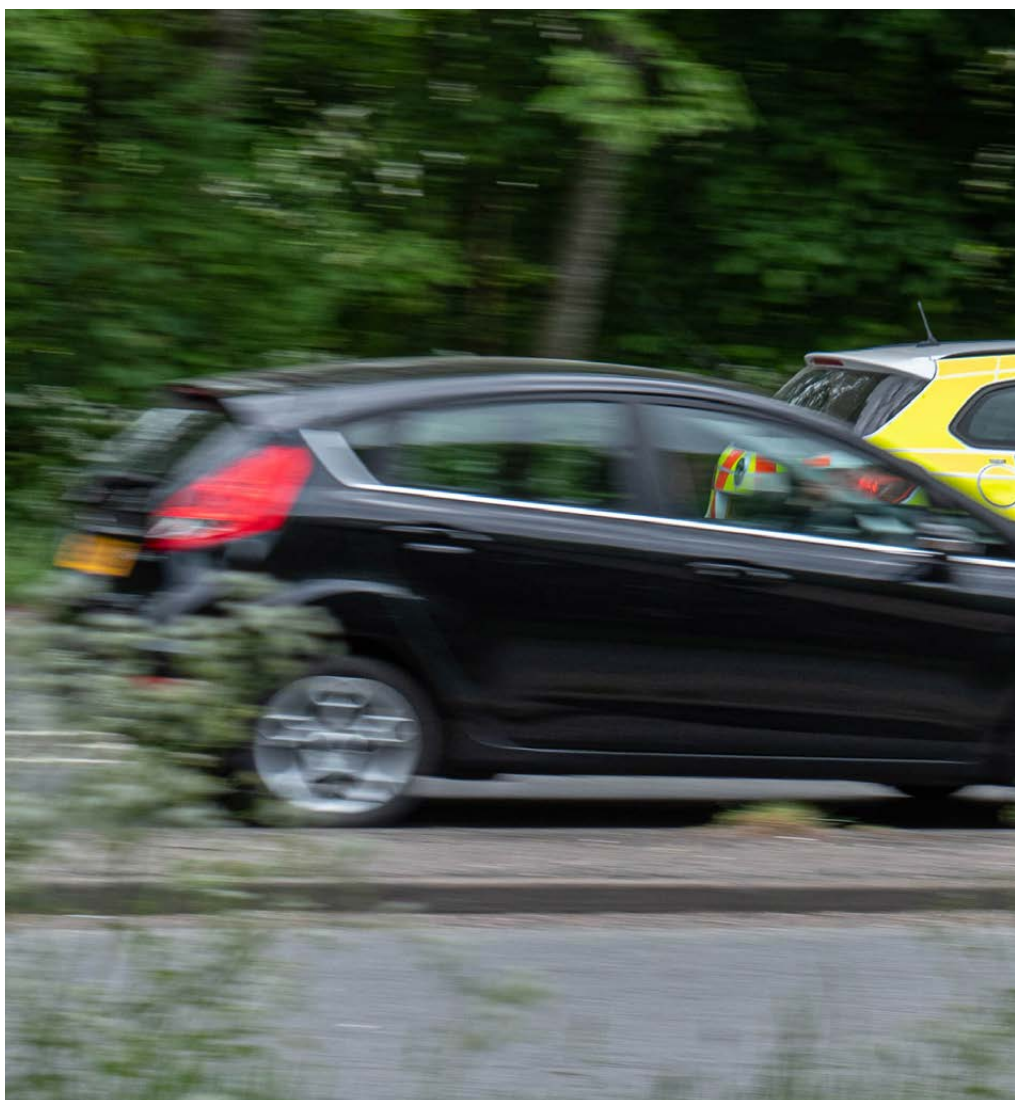
The body cam footage of the police passenger showed the man express his concern about being hit by the police vehicle. The police driver replied: “Then you shouldn’t be driving like an ass.”

The police driver later stated he did not intend to strike the man the second time – he believed he steered the vehicle in the direction he was looking, accidentally hitting the accelerator instead of the brake. He stated in his mind he was already out of the car and in pursuit of the man on foot.

He declined to comment when asked in interview whether he experienced ‘red mist’.

At no point during the pursuit was a Police National Computer check requested for the vehicle.

The sergeant responsible for police driver training in the force confirmed during the IOPC investigation *“We do not train officers to use the vehicle as a weapon to stop someone evading the police.”* ●



## College of Policing – Authorised Professional Practice (APP) – road policing – police pursuits

### Red mist

“This is a term used to describe a complex emotional situation affecting the state of mind of drivers who can become so focused on an objective or outside influence that their ability to accurately assess driving risk is severely reduced.

Persons engaged in pursuit management must be equipped to identify indications of red mist in themselves and others and take appropriate actions. Such actions may involve removing themselves from the situation, changes in the roles of individuals, calling a specific unit off a pursuit or discontinuing the pursuit itself.”

Find out more:

[www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/road-policing-2/police-pursuits/#red-mist](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/road-policing-2/police-pursuits/#red-mist)



### Key questions for policy makers/managers:

- What training do you give officers about when and how to use tactical contact?
- What training and guidance do you give officers about what to do when a suspect exits a pursued vehicle and begins to flee?
- What guidance do you give to police drivers, and other officers, about how to identify the signs of red mist in themselves and others?

### Key questions for police officers/staff:

- If you were the police driver, what steps would you take to draw the pursuit to a halt?
- If you were the police driver, what steps would you take to apprehend the driver and the other occupants of the car?
- If you were the passenger in the police vehicle, what steps would you take?
- What assessment do you make before pursuing a vehicle?

### Outcomes for the officers/staff involved:

- The police driver was charged with dangerous driving. He was acquitted at trial.
- The police driver was found to have a case to answer for gross misconduct. This was in relation to the tactical contact with the vehicle, and both incidents of use of force. At a misconduct hearing, gross misconduct was found for use of force, but not for tactical contact. The officer retired prior to the hearing. It was not found he would have been dismissed had he still been serving, but a final written warning would have been appropriate.
- **Read the full learning report**

## Case 9 POLICE VEHICLE AQUAPLANES WHILE RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT

At around 11.25am police received reports of a man refusing to leave a job centre and being abusive to staff. The control room graded the call as “immediate”.

Two officers were dispatched to the incident. They were reassigned from another incident approximately 18 miles away. They travelled towards the incident with blue lights activated throughout. They were in a marked police vehicle and the officer driving was a standard response trained driver.

At around the same time, two further officers were assigned to the incident. They arrived approximately two minutes after the call. One of these officers said the man became uncompliant, so they asked for another unit to assist.

They arrested the man. The officers were told the two officers driving from 18 miles away were still on their way.

Shortly after, the two officers who arrested the man requested for officers with a van to attend the job centre. A further officer was assigned and another arrived at around the same time.

A number of others responded about bringing a van and one of the assigned officers

was cancelled. A minute after the latest officer arrived at the scene, a further officer was dispatched and a further officer arrived at the scene. The force did not have a specific policy which set out rules or considerations for the number of vehicles to dispatch to an incident.

The incident data recorder (IDR) in the marked police vehicle being driven 18 miles away showed the vehicle driving at approximately 85mph. Force policy stated standard response drivers were subject to a maximum of plus 20mph above posted speed restrictions, if safe. The speed limit on the road was 60mph. The car soon reached its fastest speed of approximately



97mph. This was 600m and approximately 15 seconds before the collision. Shortly after, the police vehicle lost control. It went through some standing water on the road, spinning out before colliding with two vehicles.

**“ A collision investigator explained the factors which provoke aquaplaning. These include surface water depth, tyre aspect ratio and pressure, vehicular load, and vehicle speed. ”**



He explained vehicles needed to travel at speeds above 50mph for aquaplaning to occur, but the lower the speed, the less chance of it happening. In terms of conditions on the road, the collision investigator said the driver of the police vehicle would have encountered other water on the road that day given the weather.

Officers were reassigned from the incident at the job centre. They drove to the scene of the collision and provided medical attention to those involved. The officers had life threatening injuries and were sent to hospital.

While carrying out the investigation, the IOPC uncovered issues with the force's telematics system. This directly affected the validity of the data they were collecting, and brought the system into disrepute. Further analysis of the system highlighted issues with software updates and internal processes for data validation and initial configuration.

Internal processes were put in place by the fleet department to address configuration and calibration issues. A schedule was also introduced to regularly undertake system health checks and to record and track remedial work. The supplier developed a new process to make sure all devices operated on the latest version of the software. They updated all devices accordingly. The force is now in the process of replacing the telematics system/provider, along with the lessons learned during the investigation. ●

### Key questions for policy makers/managers:

- How does your force make sure officers are aware of policy and guidance on speed restrictions?
- What guidance does your force give around deployment and cancellation decisions where significant distances for travel are involved?

### Key questions for police officers/staff:

- How would the conditions on the road affect your decision making and manner of driving?

### Outcomes for the officers/staff involved:

- The officer driving the car involved in the collision had a case to answer for gross misconduct. This was for not considering the prevailing road conditions and failing to apply force guidelines over speed restrictions (reducing the opportunity to react to changing road conditions). He attended a hearing and received management advice.

- **Read the full learning report**

# HMICFRS inspections into roads policing

## Better roads policing needed to prevent increase in deaths

**The importance of how roads in England and Wales are policed has diminished, according to a report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).**

The report, published in July this year, found that despite the high number of people killed on the roads in England and Wales each year, often force police and crime plans made little or no reference to roads policing.

The inspection found:

- some good initiatives, but too often the effect of these was unclear due to a lack of analysis and evaluation
- when it was identified, good practice wasn't shared across forces in an effective manner
- support provided to national road safety campaigns wasn't consistent, which adversely affected their effectiveness
- too often we found officers that hadn't been given the appropriate training and support to allow them to carry out a critical role.

According to the report, this lack of importance placed on roads policing has serious implications for road safety.

The report said this inhibited forces' ability to:

- enforce the law and educate those who, due to their behaviour, increase the risk of death or serious injury on the roads
- develop effective partnerships and co-ordinated joint working with highways agencies and local authorities
- exchange information and intelligence with these organisations about dangerous roads and road users
- work effectively with vulnerable road users, such as motorcyclists and young people
- evaluate the effectiveness of police initiatives intended to make the roads safer.

HM Inspector of Constabulary Matt Parr said at the time of publication: "We found that almost half of local crime plans didn't include reference to roads policing. This, along with an unclear national strategy, is doing little to help reduce the number of deaths and life-changing accidents which occur on our roads.

"Spending on roads policing has been cut by 34% resulting in

fewer officers dealing with offences that cause road deaths. However there is a clear, and pressing, need for government, police and crime commissioners, chief officers, and the College of Policing to recognise the importance of roads policing in reducing death on the roads."

HMICFRS made 13 recommendations to help the police improve the effectiveness of roads policing in England and Wales. This included recommendations to the Department of Transport and the Home Office, as well as to chief constables.

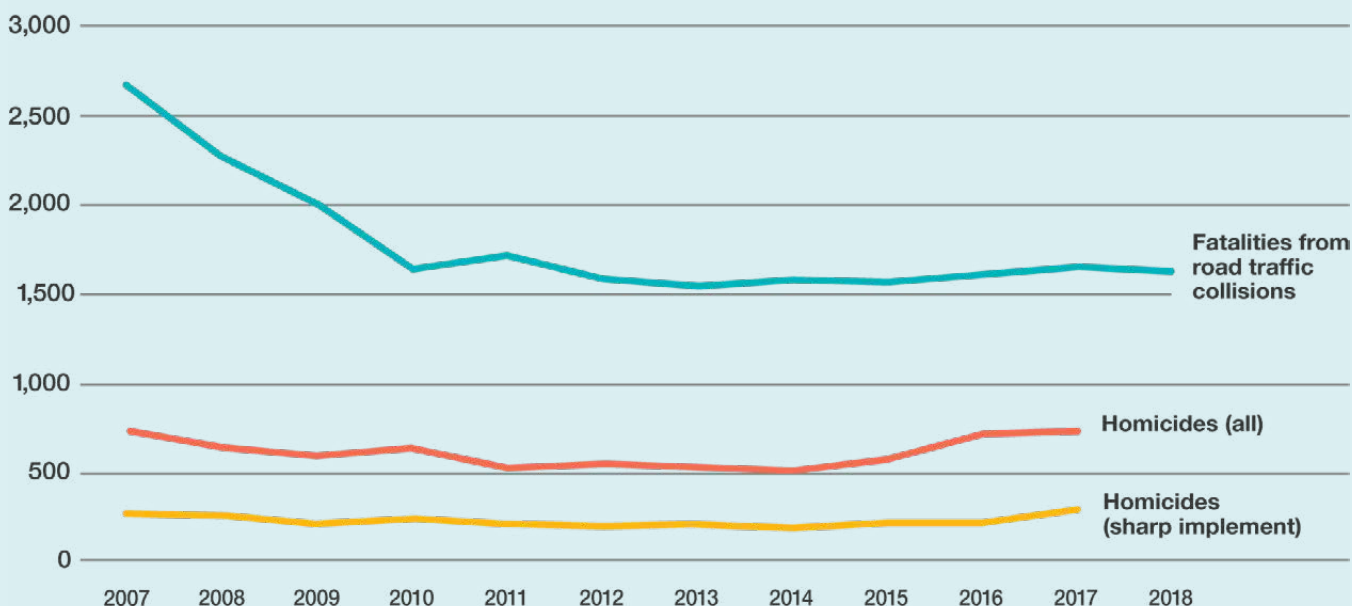
According to the report, after 1979 the number of road deaths in England and Wales fell steadily. But since 2013 the number of road deaths has gradually increased.

The inspection found the importance of roads policing has been in decline for some years with a reduction in enforcement activity by police officers and fewer fixed penalties issued for offences such as not wearing a seat belt or using a mobile phone while driving.

At the same time, roads policing has evolved from traffic officers to a wider concept of policing



## Road traffic collision fatalities compared with homicides in England and Wales, 2007 to 2018



Source: Department for Transport. This diagram appears on page 9 of the report

Note: Homicides are in financial years, and road traffic collisions are in calendar

the roads, including using roads policing resources to target those who use the road network for their criminal purpose.

The inspection examined how effectively the road network of England and Wales is policed. It sought to establish:

- are national and local roads policing strategies effective?
- does capability and capacity match demand?
- do the police engage effectively with the public and partners?

- how well police officers are trained to deal with roads policing matters?

Along with 13 specific recommendations, the report recommended the following areas for improvement:

- Force-level support to national roads policing operations and intelligence structure is an area for improvement.
- The efficient and effective exchange of all collision data with other relevant bodies is an area for improvement.

- The awareness and understanding of the changes in the Professionalising Investigation Programme within police forces is an area for improvement.

A full copy of the report, *Roads Policing: Not optional. An inspection of roads policing in England and Wales* can be found on the HMICFRS website <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/not-optional-an-inspection-of-roads-policing-in-england-and-wales/>

“Roads policing officers have a much broader function than the conventional notion of a ‘traffic officer’. However, alongside additional duties, these officers are still expected to fulfil a ‘traffic’ role. This requires specialist training and support from forces. Yet we found roads policing officers whose training was so inadequate they couldn’t identify and prosecute

offences relating to heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). In one force, a lack of intelligence support left the roads policing team relying on social media and their personal mobile phones to share intelligence. This wasn’t the case in all seven of the forces that we inspected; West Midlands and the Metropolitan Police Service were notable

exceptions. Strategic leaders, officers and staff were all able to demonstrate a strong commitment to roads policing and the positive effect that this had on road safety.”

Source: *Roads Policing: Not optional. An inspection of roads policing in England and Wales*, HMICFRS, July 2020, page 1

# Case 10

## PURSUIT WITHOUT THE ACTIVATION OF AUDIO RECORDING

At around 1.30am two officers were on a routine patrol in their police vehicle. The driver of the police vehicle said he became suspicious of a car. He saw it move down a small service road and into a closed car park. The driver of the police vehicle said he suspected the car was using small side streets to avoid detection.

The officers followed the car into a car park. The officer said the car accelerated significantly towards the exit on the far side. The officer activated the blue lights on his vehicle to signal his intention to stop the car. The officer moved close enough to the vehicle to establish its registration number. However, the car reversed a few feet before accelerating through the exit of the car park at speed.

The operator in the police vehicle began active commentary on the basis they were now involved in an initial phase pursuit. The driver of the police vehicle said he decided the risk was low as there were no other vehicles or pedestrians in the area. Another police vehicle joined the pursuit.

The driver of the police vehicle who initially began the pursuit acknowledged he was driving close to 90mph. He explained the car was getting away as the police vehicles were showing restraint when arriving at traffic lights/signals, while the car was not.

The risk assessment changed to medium. The control room



“ The driver of the police vehicle who initially began the pursuit acknowledged he was driving close to 90mph. He explained the car was getting away as the police vehicles were showing restraint when arriving at traffic lights/signals ”

Driving on Church St

authorised the pursuit to continue.

The operator in the police vehicle explained the car went offside on the road before trying to make a right turn. 'Offsiding' is where the driver moves into the wrong side of the road. It collided with a pedestrian crossing and a set of traffic lights before finally striking a building and ending up on its roof.

Examination of the Cleartone system after the pursuit showed

audio was never activated during the pursuit. This meant it was not possible for the IOPC investigation to examine this.

The force confirmed the video element of the system was automatic once the ignition started. They said there is also a button on the dash board which activates the audio. The force said it was not mandatory to press this button in a pursuit situation but was 'best practice'. ●

### Key questions for policy makers/managers:

- Does your force require officers to activate all cameras and audio in the police car when a pursuit starts?

### Key questions for police officers/staff:

- What steps do you routinely take to make sure all relevant recording equipment is switched on and working when preparing to drive a police vehicle?

### Action taken by this police force:

- The force raised the IOPC's recommendation that activation of audio equipment during pursuits should be mandatory at the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) National Pursuits Meeting. It was noted College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice only states activation of audio equipment is "highly desirable". While the recommendation is considered nationally, the force agreed to mandate activating recording equipment at the start of a pursuit for all officers.

### Outcomes for the officers/staff involved:

- There were no disciplinary or criminal outcomes for any police officers or staff.
- Read the full learning report

## College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice – police pursuits – recording real-time evidence

### All those involved in a pursuit must consider the need to provide evidence of:

- any criminal activities occurring during the pursuit
- the decision-making processes involved in conducting the pursuit during the initial phase, together with any further decisions to allow the pursuit to continue.

Advice offered by the pursuit tactical advisor should also be recorded for future reference. This can be done using control/communications room voice recording systems and/or other forms of official electronic or paper systems such as incident logs and pocket notebooks.

It is highly desirable in pursuit situations to use vehicles fitted with IDR/driver and vehicle data management systems (DVDMS), together with visual recording equipment, for evidential purposes. Such vehicles should be deployed to take part in pursuits where possible.

### Visual recording equipment must:

- be properly maintained and used during pursuits and emergency responses
- not be switched off prior to or during pursuit activities
- be in working order, if not, force reporting procedures should be followed and repairs undertaken at the earliest opportunity.

If a pursuit ends in a serious collision, accurate information will need to be available for investigators. The actions of the police drivers are a focal point of post-incident investigations. Accounts from the driver, passenger and independent witnesses are vital to investigations, as are traditional techniques and findings from collision reconstruction units.

Read more: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/road-policing-2/police-pursuits/#recording-real-time-evidence](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/road-policing-2/police-pursuits/#recording-real-time-evidence)

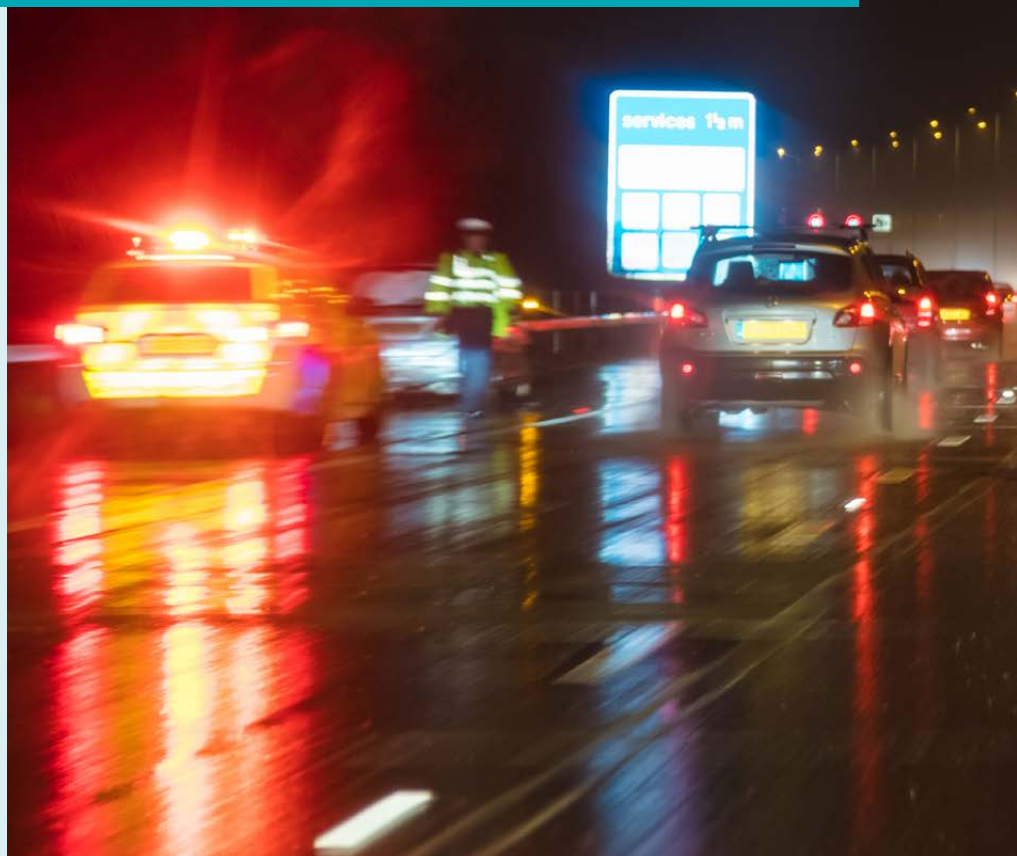
# Introducing the Roads Policing Academic Network

**The Roads Policing Academic Network is a group of academics and academically-engaged practitioners across institutions and organisations. Our aim is to build connections between ourselves, and between the research community, practitioners and policy makers.**

We have more than 100 members from over 60 different institutions, on three continents. Members bring expertise from disciplines including psychology, law, criminology, sociology, gerontology, neuroscience, social marketing and engineering.

The network was established because academics in this area rarely have the opportunity to cross paths (the subject touches so many disciplines). Academic conferences tend to be arranged by discipline, and frontline and practitioner-focused conferences naturally have a more practical focus.

Members receive a weekly email featuring opportunities to answer specific requests from practitioners, feed into consultations, apply for funding, and engage with media requests. Conferences and events are publicised and new reports and publications shared. Members can also advertise studentships, recruit participants for research projects, or seek out collaborators for new research ideas.



We were established in November 2018. To date, the network has held four events (with a further two suspended due to COVID-19), presented as panels (RPANels!) at international conferences, and enabled at least 60 connections we believe would not have happened otherwise. These have included successful funding bids for major research projects, recruitment to studentships, academic publications, inputs into national projects, consultations and inspections, student placements, and more than 40 direct contacts between a practitioner seeking advice and an academic with expertise in a relevant area. We hope to launch

an Australasian branch of the network next year.

To join The Roads Policing Academic Network, email [h.m.wells@keele.ac.uk](mailto:h.m.wells@keele.ac.uk)

Follow the Network on Twitter [@roadspolicingAN](https://twitter.com/roadspolicingAN)



**Dr Helen Wells** is Director, of the Roads Policing Academic Network and Senior Lecturer in Criminology, University of Keele

## Promoting safety for vulnerable road users: assessing the investigation and enforcement of endangerment offences

Professor Sally Kyd and Dr Steven Cammiss recently completed a project on the enforcement of road traffic offences. The report 'Promoting safety for vulnerable road users: assessing the investigation and enforcement of endangerment offences'<sup>1</sup> outlines their main findings. The authors worked with three police forces, interviewing officers and examining 300 case files of allegations of dangerous driving, driving without due care and attention, and using a mobile telephone while driving.

### Their main findings are:

#### The significance of harmful results

All three offences are endangerment offences; the risks they aim to reduce do not have to materialise for a prosecution. As a result, all three offences were prosecuted in the absence of harm. However, in the absence of a collision, a case is only likely to proceed if there is a police witness, video footage or an independent witness.

#### Third-party footage

There has been huge growth in the use of third-party footage for enforcement purposes. However, this has created extra demand, impacting upon decision making practices. There also appears to be wide variations in acting on submissions, leading to a problem of postcode justice. The report

recommends all forces use third-party footage.

#### The exercise of discretion

Discretion is an inevitable part of roads policing. However, some forces are better at structuring this discretion to efficiently use resources and ensure consistent decision making.

#### CPS and police relationship

Under the statutory charging scheme, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is responsible for the prosecution of dangerous driving cases. The forces in the study complained this system was not working efficiently; the police were subjected to burdensome and unnecessary requests from prosecutors and the CPS was too reluctant to charge dangerous driving. The report recommends the CPS uses specialist roads policing prosecutors.

#### Using a mobile telephone while driving

Officers see this as a straightforward offence and, as a result, do not gather sufficient information when prosecuting for these cases. This is particularly problematic, after the case of Barreto [2019] EWHC 2044, which interpreted the mobile telephone offence as requiring handheld use for an interactive communicative purpose. Therefore, simply handling a telephone is not enough to fall within the range of the offence. As a result, officers should record more details of the offence, such as how the phone was being used. Officers should also speak to the driver for an explanation. Alternative offences should be considered, such as not being in proper control or careless driving.

#### Evidence led policing

There were many examples of good practice in the forces examined, such as Operation Close Pass, Operation Zig Zag and Operation Top Deck.

#### Importance of staff and structures

The work of traffic processing units (TPUs) is central to effective roads policing. Good TPUs are well resourced, structure decision making, maintain excellent relationships with frontline officers, and check for consistency of decision making.

Read the report online:

[www.le.ac.uk/departments/law/people/drivingoffencesresearchreport.pdf](http://www.le.ac.uk/departments/law/people/drivingoffencesresearchreport.pdf)

For further copies of the report contact [sally.kyd@le.ac.uk](mailto:sally.kyd@le.ac.uk)



**Professor Sally Kyd** is Head of Leicester Law School. Her specialisms are homicide and road traffic offences, with a sub-specialism in the overlap of these two fields.



**Dr Steven Cammiss** is Senior Lecturer at Leicester Law School with interests in policing and criminal courts.

## › Managing the safety of police pursuits: A mixed method case study of the Metropolitan Police Service, London

Pursuits are one of the most risky activities the police undertake and research suggests it is not always a proportionate response. To strengthen the evidence base, more information is needed to understand circumstances which trigger a pursuit, how safety is managed and the proportion involving injury.

Analysis of Metropolitan Police Service pursuit data (2016–18) was carried out and 24 interviews were conducted among police drivers and control room staff to explore factors which generate pursuits and influence their safety. The proportion of pursuits resulting in an injury was 3.7%. Only 1% of pursuits involved an injury to a member of the public not involved in the pursuit.

### The research identified:

- Police pursuits are one of the riskiest activities police undertake.
- Non-fatal injuries provide information to understand pursuit safety.
- The proportion of pursuits resulting in a non-fatal injury was low at 3.7%.
- Poor risk assessment, red mist and bravado were viewed as decreasing safety.
- Policies, control room checks and risk aversion were viewed as increasing safety.

Interview data suggested pursuit safety could be improved by

drivers giving clearer justification of why they decided to pursue, more training of operators to perform risk commentaries, greater use of pre-emptive strategies, and continuing checks and balances provided by control room staff. Moreover, fear of personal repercussions, concerns of facing criminal investigation in the event of a crash, and public scrutiny made all staff involved in the management of pursuits risk averse.

### Recommendations for improving safety include:

- Refresher driver training in-line with other operations which can involve lethal force such as firearms.
- Improving risk commentary training for operators.
- More widely available technologies that track or immobilise a vehicle and curtail a pursuit. In the future drones could be used as an alternative to helicopter deployment.

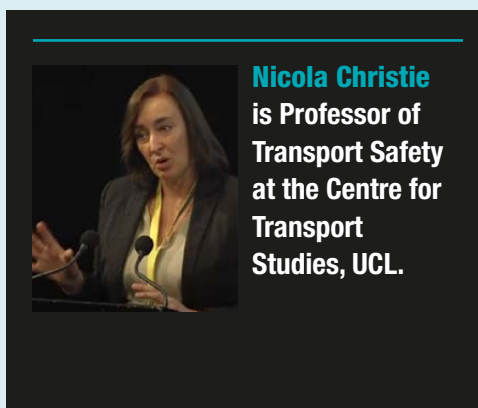
Christie, N., 2020. *Managing the safety of police pursuits: A mixed method case study of the Metropolitan Police Service, London*. Safety Science, 129, p.104848.

### Read the report online:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssci.2020.104848>

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**Nicola Christie** is Professor of Transport Safety at the Centre for Transport Studies, UCL.

## Perceptions of compliance and enforcement on the Strategic Road Network

**This research explored drivers' perceptions, attitudes and experiences of compliance with road regulations and enforcement of driving offences on the Strategic Road Network (SRN).**

The SRN includes approximately 4300 miles of motorways and major 'trunk' A-roads in England. It is managed by Highways England. By understanding the factors affecting how people experience the network, we aimed to develop an understanding of where there are points of driver resistance, challenge, or complaint in response to police activities.

Highways England commissioned the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) and Dr Helen Wells of Keele University to explore drivers' perceptions, attitudes and experiences of compliance and enforcement on the SRN. Police enforcement contributes to compliance and, in turn, to reduced collisions, deaths and injuries. However, the success of this approach relies on several assumptions being accurate:

- The law being enforced appropriately reflects what is safe and what is dangerous.
- Enforcement is an effective deterrent (it is sufficiently swift, certain and severe to affect the choices people make).
- Enforcement does not undermine the legitimacy of enforcement bodies, so

offending becomes more likely rather than less likely.

The study involved five focus groups and four semi-structured telephone interviews with 34 drivers who had experienced using the SRN. This approach fed into the design of a survey that could more accurately access and understand the subtleties of driver beliefs and attitudes.

When classifying ‘annoying’ or ‘worrying’ behaviours, participants’ main focus was on behaviours displaying a lack of road etiquette (such as failing to indicate or ‘cutting in’), rather than focusing on the law. Etiquette offences are largely subjective and cannot be easily identified by technology. Therefore, addressing such offences could require the use of other enforcement methods. The findings on road etiquette highlight the need for future research to achieve a rounded understanding of road user behaviour.

Participants also found some driving behaviours to be less socially acceptable than others (such as handheld mobile phone use, drink-driving or drug-driving), and therefore more dangerous and worthy of police attention. Participants explained these behaviours were less acceptable because they are perceived to be intentional.

Participants frequently mentioned practical and social consequences of penalties as deterrents (such as embarrassment, shame or inconvenience), but rarely mentioned safety consequences as deterrents. Further exploration of how drivers perceive consequences of penalties could help us understand whether

compliance is normatively or instrumentally motivated.

Key aspects of deterrence to participants included the likelihood of being caught, speed of punishment, and visibility of police. The way these attitudes differ by driving behaviour is important. Participants felt the ‘wrong’ behaviours are often targeted by enforcement activities, instead of other behaviours more worthy of being targeted.

Findings related to punishment avoidance suggest automated enforcement methods can lead to a perception other drivers’ offending is ignored, as these methods give little external indication of detecting an offence. Participants also reported feelings of satisfaction upon seeing other drivers’ offending being addressed.

Participants displayed a passive and untrusting stance towards authorities on the roads; they showed a desire to be persuaded they should alter their behaviour, rather than trusting the authorities when they made such requests. Further exploration of this stance towards authority could inform future attempts to change behaviour (for example, attitudes towards education campaigns, signage, overhead messaging, patrols and cameras).

### Implications

Drivers are more likely to uncritically accept police enforcement activity for offences they perceive as socially unacceptable and dangerous. Some drivers also display a hypocritical attitude to enforcement, seeing their own law-breaking and dangerous behaviours as ‘lapses’, while judging the same behaviours by other people as deliberate. Drivers

may therefore welcome police activity against other drivers, but resist and challenge it when it impacts on their own freedom to drive as they see fit.

When drivers think of their own experiences, some enforcement methods are considered more acceptable than others. Some drivers preferred automated technology (perhaps because they know how to exploit its limitations), whereas others preferred human enforcement (perhaps because they feel there are opportunities for discretion to be used). There was also a desire among drivers to see offences punished in most cases, though low-level speeding remains an offence that appears to be socially acceptable (perhaps because drivers believe everyone benefits when traffic can move a little faster).

Understanding driver perceptions, attitudes and experiences through qualitative methods reveals things often missed in large scale surveys. However, these subtleties can (and should) be built into survey instruments to make sure we are better able to understand how the policed are likely to respond to being policed.

Read the report online:

<https://trl.co.uk/reports/perceptions-compliance-and-enforcement-strategic-road-network>



**Rosie Sharp** is a Behavioural Sciences Researcher at the Transport Research Laboratory.

**Dr Helen Wells** (see page 36)



# Want to get **involved** in the **development** of Learning the Lessons?

We have created a new virtual panel, bringing together a range of stakeholders from the police, the community and voluntary sector, and academia, to support the development of future issues of Learning the Lessons.

**If you are interested in joining the panel, please complete our online registration form to register your interest.**

Panel members will be invited to review and provide feedback on drafts around six to eight weeks before publication.

**For more information email [learning@policeconduct.gov.uk](mailto:learning@policeconduct.gov.uk)**