

# Police launch national Vulnerable Road Users campaign



Police Scotland has today launched its national Vulnerable Road Users campaign with a focus as the schools across Scotland return for a new school year, for children to stay safe on their journeys to and from school.

The campaign will focus on three categories of people – children, cyclists and the elderly.

Figures show that child pedestrians are more at risk before and after school hours at 0800 hours and from 1500 to 1800 hours, with a peak at 1500 hours.

This phase of the campaign urges children who are settling into a new school term to remain vigilant whilst crossing the country's roads.

71 of the 200 people who died on Scotland's roads in 2014 were from these three groups – which equates to 36 per cent of fatalities. A further 2,664 vulnerable road users were injured in the same period.

Figures show August is the month during which fatal collisions are most prevalent, with adults most likely to be killed or seriously injured on our roads on Fridays and Saturdays, between 1500 and 1800 hours.

The campaign will also highlight the changes other road users – specifically cyclists and the elderly – experience at the start of the term, having adapted their driving, cycling and pedestrian behaviour to suit quieter roads and pavements during the summer break.

Supported by a range of organisations, including Road Safety Scotland, the Scottish Ambulance Service, the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Age Scotland and Brake, the campaign will run from August 2015 until Spring 2016, and focus on people throughout the Road Users Life Cycle, highlighting the risks faced by each category of road user.

Officers will take every available opportunity to educate both drivers and vulnerable road users, including pedestrians and cyclists, as to the inherent dangers uniquely associated with their circumstances

Chief Superintendent Iain Murray, Head of Road Policing, said: "Pedestrians, especially the young and the elderly, are particularly at risk, and as kids across the country go back to school, we want to make drivers think about how their actions, carelessness or inattention may impact these vulnerable groups.

"After nearly eight weeks of holidays, the roads will again be busier in the mornings and during the late afternoon. The area in the immediate vicinity of schools and residential estates will see more activity, and there is always the chance a child could step onto the road without looking properly.

"We are therefore asking drivers, parents and children themselves to be careful, and to develop new stay safe routines as the school term starts. To help to focus minds, officers will prioritise activity in and around these areas of vulnerability to make sure that the roads are safe for all.

"The roads of Scotland are used in a myriad of ways by differing groups of people, and each has its own needs, risks and vulnerabilities. We all share the same roads, and it is therefore vitally important we all further develop our understanding of what these risks and vulnerabilities are if we are to maintain respect for each other, and to use the roads safely."

Michael McDonnell, Director of Road Safety Scotland, said: "Protecting our most vulnerable road users is vital as we work towards Scotland's Road Safety Framework commitment to reduce casualties across all road users while making it clear we have a shared responsibility. In built-up areas across Scotland, there are thousands of interactions every hour between motorised vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists, and everyone needs to be on their guard to prevent these from going wrong. "We all share the road space and need to be constantly aware of what is going on around us and of what other people are doing. As drivers that means good observation skills and making good decisions about appropriate speed for the circumstances; as cyclists it means following the rules of the road and being aware of dangerous manoeuvres; and for pedestrians it means crossing where it is safe to do so and not taking any chances.

"Ideally, people should be able to complete every journey safely but, sadly, statistics prove that is not the case. If we foster mutual respect for other road users and take responsibility for their safety as well as our own, we will help make safer journeys a reality rather than just an aspiration."

□ Gary Rae, campaigns manager, for Brake, the road safety charity, said: "We welcome this campaign from Police Scotland. Roads are for everyone, so drivers do need to look out for others. The casualty statistics are too high; every road crash is preventable, one death or serious injury, is one too many."

Brian Sloan, Chief Executive of Age Scotland, said, "We welcome Police Scotland's efforts to highlight the issues around increased road usage at this time of year and the hazard that it can represents to vulnerable road users. The roads are for all of us to use and we should be able to do so in a safe and secure way whether in a vehicle, on a bike or on foot. Moreover, we would encourage drivers to be cautious about cyclists and pedestrians all year round so that people

can continue using the roads confidently.”

Assistant Chief Officer Lewis Ramsay, Director of Prevention and Protection, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service said: “Part of our work at Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is to respond to road traffic collisions (RTC) and ensure people and the incident scene is made safe as quickly as possible. “Sadly, we know all too well the tragic consequences an RTC can have. That’s why SFRS is keen to support Police Scotland’s vulnerable road users week and help share the message with children, pedestrians and cyclists that there are simple and effective safety precautions that people can take to keep themselves and their loved ones safe on the roads.

“We’ve also recently launched a road safety page on our own website that has lots of information for drivers and pedestrians about staying safe while they travel – visit the ‘Your Safety’ section of [www.firescotland.gov.uk](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk) to find out more.”